

"Happy Was the Time When You Saw Me"

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My life was not worth much in August 1973 when I went to India on a special quest, leaving behind the chaos of my existence. In my diary I wrote such sentences as, "Always this idea that it might as well end now," or "Is this life done?"

On August 27, 1973 after nine o'clock in the evening I booked into the Connemara Hotel. It was dark outside as well as inside myself. I called Dr. C.A. Rajagopalachari (Parthasarathi's father), whom I had got to know in Munich, and I told him I was tired and would sleep somewhat longer tomorrow. But no, this was not possible. Rajaji, as we came to call him later, had already disposed of my time.

At eight thirty Rajaji was at the hotel. A distinguished refined man, was my first thought. I liked him immediately. Very soon a deep affectionate friendship had developed between Rajaji and myself. We often drove to the surroundings of Madras, enjoying their very special charm. We had very many beautiful discussions mainly about spirituality. This was how I learned about the existence of this "guru" in Uttar Pradesh called Ram Chandra.

I was equipped with the books about this "Raja Yoga" for our present time, which Rajaji practiced. Sahaj Marg, the Natural Way, was said to be very simple and to lead with Master's help to the realisation of God. "Why don't you try it with my Master?" said Rajaji after a while. Even before coming to India I had been thinking of separating from my Zen practice and there had been so many other things. Still I hesitated to take such a decisive step only because I hated to do things by halves. However, Rajaji had succeeded in gaining my total confidence.

"If you come back," he said, "I would meet you in Delhi and go with you to see Master in Shajahanpur." It was only much later that I realised the tremendous help offered to me by Rajaji who was always present in critical situations, supporting, correcting and helping. How precious indeed was this upright, reliable man of India

where countless temple steps were crowded with crazy, young European and American drug addicts, and so-called 'gurus' haunted railway stations and street corners.

And so we met again in August in 1974 at the Ashoka Hotel in Delhi. After two days in the city, we took the Varanasi Express for a rattling journey through the night until the train stopped early in the morning at Shahajahanpur. Around six o'clock we reached Babuji's half-open gate of the ashram, showing the arcades of loggia. In contrast to outside here everything was clean. My first impression was that here was a place of peace! Then Master appeared between the columns of loggia, moved slowly towards us, a slim, luminous, almost transparent figure dressed entirely in white. Rajaji and I bowed and he hugged Rajaji first and then me in silence with an earnest smile. Shortly afterwards we were seated in silence with a few abhyasis and Master sat in front of us in a big chair, silently smoking his hookah, his eyes fixed in the distance, as if we did not exist.

I never felt so insignificant in my life, since this strange silence was absolutely frustrating my ego. What was I doing here? And the temperature went up and up. Nobody spoke. I was perplexed. Was it permitted to interrupt this silence? Was this already the first lesson I had to learn?

After a while Master got up rather unexpectedly and gave me a hand sign that I should follow. We moved to the so-called guesthouse to one end of the courtyard. I was carrying my rather heavy trunk. Monkeys were playing funny games on the flat roof of the guesthouse. Master opened the door to a modest room with a desk inside, a wooden bench, a wooden bed, bare walls except for a big oil painting of a bearded man with piercing eyes sitting in a yoga posture. It was a portrait of Lalaji, the founder of Sahaj Marg, as I learned later and his stare made me feel uncomfortable.

"Will this be all right?" said Master abruptly, indicating the room. And his voice seemed to imply, "For you with your pretensions, will this be sufficient at all?"

I said, "Yes." Master closed the door and disappeared without saying anything else. Now I was alone with these piercing eyes looking at me from the wall. It was very hot. I tried to unpack the

many useless items one carries along on such a journey 'for eventualities'. However, this was not possible since I was too entangled in myself. Dripping with perspiration, my face unwashed, I finally dropped down on the hard bed. I tried to sleep but this was impossible too because now my thoughts started rotating all the more. After all I was a burnt child due to past occult experiences which I am not going to talk about here. What kind of Master was this? I started asking myself. He smokes and preaches detachment. Would drugs be involved by any chance? Was this Master nothing but a medium 'utilised' by people like Rajaji for whatever means? Had I run into a trap? Should I better leave immediately? This went on the whole morning.

I had to speak to Rajaji who came around noon. I confessed everything openly, my confusion, my painful thoughts, unsparing and direct. Rajaji laughed. Then we discussed it all extensively. During the first two years he had the same dreadful doubts. As a strict Brahmin he felt smoking was like treachery. We went on talking. Rajaji said, "We are brothers." There was a loving warmth in his voice, which came from the heart. So, I remained in Shajahanpur and tried to regulate my thinking. This was. August 30, 1974.

Following this prelude came dramatic days of cleaning. An enormous amount of prejudice, distrust, conceit and vanity had to be removed at once, in order not to give up one's last hope by running away.

Master achieved in a few days, what in the hands of any psycho-analyst would have taken years, because all this stuff was rooted in the uttermost depth of character and past impressions.

August 31, 1974: After an almost sleepless night in dirt and heat water suddenly stopped flowing the night before. This morning, first meditation with Master, a strong, deeply moving experience. A terrible amount of inner dirt in the depth of which I crossed with the velocity of light, as it seemed to me, with Master's help. It was like a swamp suddenly stirred up. Black and red first, then black and white figures and forms. Then calmness and a feeling of deep peace. Rajaji is next to me. I feel I can now trust.

September 2, 1974: During breakfast, strong pain in the heart in spite of a double dose of cardiolytics. I feel that I have reached the limit of tolerance. But Master seems to know my condition, because this morning for the first time there was no meditation, thus no pinpointed transmission. The fan is out of order again. I am breaking out in perspiration. In spite of physical symptoms there is a feeling of much greater stability. In the evening meditation with Rajaji as ordered by Master.

September 3, 1974: I am physically exhausted but inside there is peace. Confidence and love for Master are increasing. Hardly any more doubts. Master turns around towards me and with a vivid gesture, "Your work is going on, even if we don't sit!" Otherwise not much seemed to happen today.

September 4, 1974: Slept again until three-thirty only. Heavy crises again. After reading the first page of Voice Real had a sudden attack of despair. Obviously Sahaj Marg is not at all the 'easy way'. In the long run things may be as inaccessible as before. Am I fit at all? After breakfast I was told by Master that today for the first time I would have a sitting alone, that means without Rajaji's usual presence. During meditation I am all of a sudden getting the answer to all of my questions and doubts of early this morning. It's like deliverance. After the sitting I reported all this to Master. He smiled without saying a word. Later on he told Rajaji, pointing at me, "We did a thorough cleaning!"

After supper Master is particularly talkative. It is amazing to witness the precision, the fullness of memory, the quickness with which the brilliant brain is working. Questions are answered, stories are told, many times funny, always with a loving smile and plenty of humour. Everybody laughs. Then there is seriousness again. "I never lose my time doing any useless talking" says Master, when things are getting too exuberant. As a matter of fact every word has a connection with a problem one of us is having.

Thus we often stay until past midnight under His loving care. Master's strength seems inexhaustible. Tomorrow morning quite awhile before six o'clock he will get up again and I can never observe

any sign of fatigue in him. This is how the days and evenings are passing by. Almost daily we have meditation with Master.

My diary (September 6, 1974) tries to catch the atmosphere of these sittings: We enter Master's room and sit down in a half circle around him. Everything here is different and incomparable with any of the usual solemn meditation practices. Master sits in a yoga posture but sometimes in a completely relaxed reclined position. In the room itself there is a sort of resting silence, difficult to describe, in spite of the fact that it is permanently noisy outside. Donkeys are braying, dogs are barking, a rattling bus is driving past, birds are chirping, children are playing and crying, the printing press across the courtyard is working and makes loud and rhythmic noises. Nothing disturbs. Yesterday the phone rang in the middle of meditation. Master took the receiver, replied in a low voice and replaced it. Meditation went on like a bath in motionless water.

Later on, we are sitting again with Master either in the shade of the loggia or after sunset in the poorly illuminated courtyard. There are discussions, questions. He always answers with benevolence, practical advice and many periods of common silence. Master looks then like being absent; not tangible anymore, but within seconds he is on the spot again.

It is still very hot. The desiccated air is burning on the skin. We are dripping with perspiration, while weary fans stir the stuffy air. The current is weak and sometimes the electricity goes completely. Sometimes the water. The nights are almost unbearable because it hardly cools down. Sleep is out of the question. After midnight I count the hours, and listen to the rhythmic and melancholic singsong of the watchman. Sometimes I can see the man in the twilight of the lonely street. He is bearing a long stick over his shoulder. His right hand beats rhythmically in tune with his monotonous singing. It has a ghostlike quality in the sleepy night. And always this burning heat.

September 9, 1974: It is not even ten o'clock in the morning and I am already bathed in perspiration. "Master is very anxious," says Rajaji, "that this tremendous heat may harm you." Around noon however, a few clouds suddenly appear on that permanently cloudless sky. Just as Master said, he is afraid, this heat may last until

September 20th. After hardly half an hour the whole sky is over cast. It rain! A very mild thunderstorm rumbles in the neighborhood. One hour later the sun is shining again but there is a refreshing cool breeze. A tremendous benefit after eleven days of burning air! Master worked a miracle.

September 12, 1974: The heat has been increasing again. The sky is cloudless. The motionless air feels like hot lead. Everything seems caked with dirt. I go back to my room since I cannot bear it anymore outside. But even here it is not the faintest bit better. I believe I am going to suffocate. Rajaji brings me some water.

September 13, 1974: My mind is free, detached. I am 'away from my body'. This is a small word, says Rajaji. "Your condition is called 'non-attachment'!"

It is amazing what Master's work has achieved in this short time. Where is the psychoanalyst on this planet capable of accomplishing such a transformation in such a short time? In the morning Rajaji and I are sitting again in Master's company. For the first time it is for me just a simple happiness to be close to Him whatever may or may not happen. He seems to be in a very good talkative mood this morning. Just a few sentences from my memory:

"In the olden days everybody asked for realisation. Today everybody asks for peace and I start giving peace because you people ask for it, but realisation must be the ultimate goal."

"A saint has removed all his samskaras. So there is no reason for him to stay in this life and he starts taking up the samskaras of his abhyasis."

"You never leave me and I am always with you."

"Whenever you have worries, think of point B of the heart region and keep meditating on this point. This is another thing other than the usual meditation on the heart. You can do it in the daytime for five to ten minutes, whenever necessary." (Efficacy of Raja Yoga)

September 14, 1974: The last day in Shajahanpur dawns. A group of preceptors arrive. Rajaji tells of his first arrival in Shajahanpur, as usual in the very early morning.

In the twilight a very unpretentious man came toward him, took his luggage from the rickshaw and asked, "Are you Dr. Rajagopalachari?" "Yes, I am," replies Rajaji. "Then come with me, please," says the other man and picks up the luggage. "No, no," says Rajaji, "this I will do myself." It is going awhile like this until Rajaji wants to know when he will be able to see Master. "The Master," says the other man, "this is me."

Then came the external parting from Master. There is sadness in the heart. From now on I will call Master "Babuji". I longed to take Rajaji with me to Germany and six months later, at the end of March 1975, he arrived in Munich and lived in my house at the Schuleinplatz, an enormous help during the following difficult months.

It was hard work, over a long period, to get established in Germany, but in 1976 Babuji came to Munich. His health was already shaky, nevertheless he answered every question however improper and gave sittings to whoever wanted to participate. He also made me a preceptor. From Munich, Babuji flew to Switzerland, to the south of France and to Denmark. And when Master came to Munich for the second time in 1980 we had to find a much bigger place. When he left Munich on May 29, 1980 a little step for humanity had been achieved as finally, with Babuji's help, Sahaj Marg had established itself in Germany.

In 1982, my wife Karin and I saw Babuji in Paris. While parting, he gave me a piercing and most loving look as only Babuji could and said, surprisingly, "And you do what you think is good." Ever since I have tried within the frame of my modest means and with His help to live and to act accordingly....