

## Another Love Letter

Guru Nitya was an indefatigable letter writer, and a number of his best English examples are reprinted in his autobiography, *Love and Blessings*. Here's one that appeared in a rare earlier work, *Love Letters of a Sannyasin*, compiled by Josephine Warren Saracino and edited by Nancy Yeilding and Peter Oppenheimer, published in 1977.

In the Preface to the Love Letters, Nitya wrote, "One of my greatest childhood pleasures was to sit and watch my father writing letters and also reading letters which he received from his several friends. This created a great desire in me to write letters and get responses from others. During my high school days I became almost crazy to relate myself to total strangers such as cinema stars, political leaders, poets and authors, and whomever I thought was important. Although it was started in fun, correspondence became a powerful medium to educate myself. When I became conscious of this, I was filled with a certain attitude of earnestness whenever I took up my pen to write an intimate person."

Guru Nitya excelled at interpreting the highest wisdom of the ancients in easily understandable contemporary terms. He felt one of his most important roles was to offer advice on specific conundrums to those who asked for his help. Meeting disciples exactly where they found themselves in difficulties was his special talent; in the following letter he refers to this as muddying the clear waters of truth. In actuality it would be better described as bearing precious water to the thirsty, wherever they might be. Where some gurus might open a glittering Water Emporium at an exclusive oasis, this guru had a cherished perennial spring from which he could draw cool, fresh water, which it was his delight to deliver to his dehydrated friends. If it sometimes tasted like strong medicine, when imbibed it would invariably restore a tired psyche to vital functioning.

It adds to the letter's impact to know that Ananda is a woman, and Harvey was a charlatan-guru who was a rapacious womanizer. Don Berry was an esteemed author, and one of the few affiliated with Nitya who could maintain a respectable argument with him. He had been urging Nitya to distance himself from his mediocre followers and seek out the elite, who could really benefit from his superb teaching style.

To Ananda  
Palo Alto, California  
May 18, 1976

My dear Ananda,

My voice is very sweet. No wonder it came to you as a nectar. I thank you very much for having good ears to listen. Reuven read out your letter to me, so there was no need to thank him separately. I am glad to hear that Peter's love is flowing in all directions, and that he is keeping one of the streams flowing in that direction.

The Gita says, "Doubting souls perish." Have no doubt. I am truly, really, and actually your Guru. Gyanimon [Ananda's son] did not take David's permission to make David a father; you don't need my permission to make me your Guru. In the philosophy of Leibnitz there are monads which are dark and dull. There are others which are comparatively brighter. There are clear crystal monads like Ramana Maharshi. There can be monads which clearly mirror the entire universe, like the Buddha or Jesus Christ. In principle all are monads. I may be a dark and dull Guru, but it is enough for you, at least for the time being. I am glad you decided to empty all your doubts on me.

It was good you had lively discussions with our friends Berry and Harvey. I have nothing but praise for Don Berry's candid observations. He is perfectly right that the people who support me are not very productive, and they are not great lovers. It took many years for me to find out how I could enter the big world without seriously damaging my veil of obscurity. Two great maxims that I

prize very much and still hold in high esteem are of Jalaluddin Rumi. They are “poverty is my pride” and “obscurity is my refuge.” I could have become very rich in India. At least five times big fortunes came unsought to my doorstep, and it was by God’s grace that I was not caught in the trap of the glittering devil.

I had the privilege of facing ten to twenty thousand people and on a few occasions even fifty thousand people to talk to and play on their sentiments whatever games I liked. I also rejoiced seeing my name appear on posters and in daily papers. Again it was by God’s grace that I could turn away from the world of public media to the cloister of spiritual obscurity. I certainly do not want to return to the world of money and publicity. My friends are not rich. Some of them are extremely poor. But they have no poverty in their hearts. They are not the emotionally charged followers of Christ consciousness. I have seen how dangerous cults can become. My friends may be shallow; I like that. They will not keep any dangerous secrets hidden in any inaccessible depths.

There are people sent by God with definite missions and purposes. I am not sent by God. I came with a flock which he is grazing on his hills and in his meadows. I am not a savior but one on whom great saviors are lavishing their grace. I am telling you this so you don’t have to fight my good friend Berry to defend me and my friends.

My words appear to be wise. I happen to be listening to a wise man who sat at the feet of another wise man. All wisdom really belongs to them. My contribution is to water down their wisdom and sometimes make it muddy because my pigs do not like clear water.

When Valmiki wrote his Ramayana and Vyasa wrote his Mahabharata, they did not print a thousand copies, let alone bring in a mass production of paperbacks. My poor shallow nonproductive friends at least help me in neatly typing and making five xeroxed copies for me and twenty or thirty for others. I don’t think I deserve more than that during my lifetime. If these words have the worth and dynamics of the eternal words of the Buddha or

Christ, they will rise up from the typescript and immortalize themselves without anybody's aid.

I am not suggesting by this that I do not prize the help of a wise and sincere friend like Don Berry. If the muddy waters which I turn to my pigs who drink with relish is also to be given to noble men and ladies who would appreciate pure and distilled water, I need someone who can filter and remove the dirt from what I cater to people. I wouldn't stop anyone from doing that. I am not good at it.

The simile I have adopted here is not my own. About ten or fifteen years ago when I was enthusiastic in giving wide publicity to Guru's philosophy, I used all sorts of devices to make it look popular. Then Nataraja Guru told me that the clear water of Narayana Guru and the muddy water of my relativism were both coming through the same hose. I learned to filter it as much as possible. I can do a pretty good job of it when I present my understanding in my own language. English is a foreign language to me, and everybody knows how clumsy my expressions are when I speak or write in English. I am not ashamed of it. Every man has his limitations, and I admit mine. It is my wish and prayer that good friends like Don Berry will see through my wrong idioms and erroneous grammar the right meaning of my intention and re-articulate my words in a worthy manner. In the eyes of some of my would-have-been-admirers Peter is only a lame duck. But God gave me Peter, and so to me he is my golden duck. I wouldn't throw him out for all the promises of the world. I know he is a poor businessman. Does that not go along with my prayers to be poor and unknown? For that reason I consider that God in his infinite mercy sent me the most innocent man available in the highly efficient city of the crooks in Chicago. I cannot complain that God did not give me what I honestly deserve.

Jesus came to this world to preach the Gospel of eternal life. About a dozen simple folks who were also unproductive, shallow and abominable like my friends tried their best to preserve the memory of his words. They did not know the high administrative

skill of Caesar's regime. The first two generations of believers did a shabby business and did not find any better reception than what Jesus received. Then there came the Roman organizers, and they took upon themselves the noble business of making Peter's church a well-systematized unit. Of course they were more clever than Jesus. What can easily make a man pay is not the love of eternal life but the fear of being mangled in an eternal hell in the fire of brimstone. The last assurance to a dying man against this tragedy is by giving him a decent burial, with proper prayers and adequate recommendations to reserve a seat in the high heavens, even for the man who is like a bandicoot [an Indian rat]. The marriage and burial ceremonies, which normally belong to town and city municipality, when properly grafted onto the great teachings of Jesus Christ, made the Church the most successful economic corporation of the world. Compared to that, the organizing abilities of the Madison Avenue advertisers and others are only satirical smiles in the world of success. Dear Ananda, my daughter, disciple, and never failing friend; your church is built upon the rock of simplicity. It will not rise into the heavens like a Himalayan cliff, but like the humble grass which has legs to walk, it can creep around the globe and make our good earth ever more green and fresh.

Why did you want to know about celibacy from our dear friend Harvey? There was no violation of Mary's virginity when Jesus was born. She is still the eternal virgin and universal mother. But no mention is made anywhere of God's celibacy. Of course it would be a contradiction to say "the only begotten son of God."

Krishna had two legally wed wives and sixteen thousand and eight gopis who claim to be his girlfriends. But he is worshipped as a brahmachari par excellence. Brahmachari means celibate. The great prophet Mohammad in his infinite compassion married the widows of all his brave disciples who gave up their life for Allah, but nobody makes an issue of it. The Buddha was a married man with wife and child. Real virginity is not recognized in terms of one's marital status. The Indian word for celibacy given above as

brahmacharya means walking in the path of the Absolute. A deviation from the path of the Absolute is called a *vyahicharya*, which is the same as prostitution. A person is either one who walks the right path (brahmachari) or one who walks in the wrong path (*vyahicharya* or prostitute). One can ask oneself Am I a prostitute or am I a virgin? No one else can decide it except oneself, because as Jesus says “A man who looks at a woman with lust has already wronged her in his mind.” This guilt is known only to the person and not even to the one who is wronged. There are married men who are very faithful to their wives, but the relation with the wife comes under the category of prostitution because of their unilateral imposition of sex on their partners. This kind of right and wrong, being so obvious and known in our hearts, why do you want it to be known from any person, including Harvey? A seed bull is very spiritual and sacred when he can successfully mate with a certain number of cows a week and calve all of them. But a contemplative man who turns inward to get into communion with the most sublime in the cave of his heart becomes a worthless stupid if he opens his eyes to steal a glance at an external object (person) with erotic overtones. A man who has entered into the most natural and sacred covenant of sharing the bed with his wife, if he inhibits himself and thereby turns cruel to his spouse after having roused her, he also becomes as worthless as the contemplative who has falsified his covenant with God of his own sincere choice. I think I have given you enough indications to safeguard the virginity of your own familial unit.

The Lord be praised that the man with whom you eat, work, play and sleep understands you. The greatest blessing of a woman is to find a husband whose thought will make her say several times a day “how blessed am I.” The greatest blessing of a man is to have no woman in his life to whom he might become cruel.

Now we come to the most sensitive zone of this letter. In the ancient scriptures they always glorified the father, the mother, the teacher and the guest:

*mathrudevo bhava* - The mother is verily God

- pithrudevo bhava* - The father is verily God  
*acharyedevo bhava* - The teacher is verily God  
*atithidevo bhava* - The guest is verily God

An aging father and mother are not always easy people to put up with. So it is only natural that people prefer to send them to an infirmary or special home. But children are also very inconvenient beings to deal with. Parents could have put them in some orphanage-like place during their babyhood and childhood and bring them home when they know how to behave. Our parents did not do this to us. With great joy and sacrifice they gave us their best time and attention. It is only a matter of pure justice and natural reciprocation to help them in their old age, especially when they love to be helped. An average American is aggressively proud of his self-sufficiency and he would resign himself to an infirmary rather than going to a son or daughter. Under that circumstance, if there are parents who love to be looked after by their children, the trust in the nobility of their children should be appreciated. This is the bright side of the picture. I am not blind to the cultural setup of this country. The voice of a structured family in the American society is not of the mother but of the wife. The husband's parents are not the wife's parents, hence the sentiments that fashion the logic of the husband's heart will fail to appeal even to the sweet reasonableness of the best wife. The result is inviting disturbance into the family atmosphere, and a prolonged stay of the husband's parents will only make the wife's sense of insecurity a chronic paranoia.

I think David is sufficiently loving to accommodate the justifiable needs of his parents while being also wise not to make his parents step on the toes of his delicate wife. I should not tell you what to do, but these thoughts are more than enough to guarantee a sensible approach to the problem.

Dear daughter and my wonderful disciple, I am your most obedient Guru. I have answered all your questions point by point. If you write to me also what are my other stupidities of which you

seem to have doubts, I shall certainly try to make them also clear to you. A strong chinaware is made of a proper blend of white granite grains and pure china clay. The goodness in me is my china clay and the absurdities are my granite grains. Do not wash away all my grains; then I won't hold any water. My Guru once said, "Do not attempt to wash away all the lather of soap, because the more you wash, the more it lathers." I may become divine by transforming into a Buddha or a Christ. My humble prayer to God is to give me a few more births from the earth as a human being, with the virtues and vices of that species. I hope he'll listen.

Once again my love and blessings,  
Ever yours, Nitya