

## Love and Blessings

Realization comes not by seeing everything as unreal but by making every moment real enough to love and adore it. (422)

When I say “God,” it only means the experience of Beauty, Goodness or Truth in a given situation. (600)

If you do not want to be caught in the ever-horizontalizing mesh of a structured institution, be a respector of each person’s freedom to be what they are and don’t expect more than what they can sincerely and spontaneously give without any demand from you. (472)

We cannot sit around as passive witnesses of the doom that is steadily and systematically coming to a crucial point. The watchword that was given to us by Nataraja Guru was to take upon ourselves unlimited liability as the *Satya Dharmis*, the responsible custodians of the conscience of humankind. (450)

Anything taken as a discipline or a means to be happy is sure to lose its attraction after a few days. So like children who go from one toy to another, we have to invent fresh games to amuse ourselves. If you know, after all, these are all games, then you can comfortably sit back and see the world maya going on. (424)

Personally, I am never tired of meeting conflict after conflict. (335)

There is an assumed superiority in the mind of all the aggressive races who have built up their fortune on the unwilling meekness of slaves. There is a concealed cruelty right in the heart of all their enthusiasm and kindness. As I see this ugly face sometimes very pronounced behind their sweetness and sincerity, I cannot help pointing my finger at it. (350.)

\*The Christian notion of mysticism is an act of surrender to do service to others as an instrument of God. The favorite examples are Joan of Arc in the battlefield, St. Francis among the lepers, and St. Teresa organizing charitable institutions. This is what Bergson calls the “model of the throbbing machine.” The other variety is what is seen in the models of the meditating Buddha or Sri Ramakrishna or Ramana Maharshi in states of beatitude. In oriental mysticism, there is no idea of the “other.” The so-called other person is seen as one’s own Self, so there is no dualistic sense of duty to do service to oneself or to another. Instead, they only keep themselves true to their own inner rhythm that flows in harmony with the universal rhythm.

In a country where for centuries people have acted because of environmental forces, such as mineral deposits and consequent gold rushes, no realization makes much sense without relating it to action. Tales of yogis and seers attaining God-realization, brought to this country through books and by word of mouth, have fired the enthusiasm of many people to seek God-realization. This has somehow created in the mind of most people an idea of a far off realm to which one has to move for realization.

There is no world other than this, and there is no experience that is removed from one’s earthly life. However, the idea of worldly responsibility should be changed to an understanding of the world in terms of the Divine. (L&B, 358)

Depression by itself is not a disease. It only shows that there are some kinds of air pockets in your personality that are not fully plugged-in with life interests. For long you were running away from life and were seeking hideouts for your psyche. Now you’re coming out of the bush to face the challenge of the city and the burgermeister. It’s an education in itself. Even the most sublime song can be sung sitting on solid ground. (395)

I admire your courage to love without wanting the loved one to change or transform to make life easier for you. I think only God loves that way. (425)

Do not get caught in any web of social obligation. All that is expected of you is to share your smile with the morning sun and the gladness it brings to the heart of flowers. Your good work, charity, cooperation, fellowship, compassion, friendship, wifehood and husbanding, fatherhood and motherhood, are all only the commentaries of that one smile. (426)

It is not by doing good deeds, speaking nice things or showing affection that you become good. It is by being good that you do all these things spontaneously. We're neither good nor bad by nature. We become good by falling in love with the Good One. You can neither go out and find the Good One nor force yourself to love her or him. It happens when it happens. Fortunately it happens everywhere and always. This fortune is the rare grace that is paradoxically abundant. To know this is to feel relieved. It is like being reunited with the lost parent. (426)

Many questions stem from their answers. So if we wait for some time, the questions will transmute into their answers. (426)

Obligation changes into sweet occasions of dedicated service when we are offering ourselves by free choice and not in response to a demand. Minds and marriages are alike. They can bind or free, destroy or create, debase or ennoble, hinder or help life's fulfillment. (427)

The person who is looked upon as a guru by a disciple and who tacitly agrees to do justice to the disciple's trust should be an exceedingly conscientious person who knows how to keep his own paces well balanced on the sharp edge of a razor. The razor's edge lies in between the two spheres of the universal and the particular.

If he leans too much on the universal, he becomes less effective than an abstraction given in a book of axioms. If he slips into the sticky mud of the particular, he'll make a trap for himself and others which will end up in a personality cult. The world is full of dark and dingy wells resounding with the croaks of self-seeking charlatans and their hypnotized chorus. (430)

(Letter to Deb Buchanan)

Thank God that I have not yet felt the urge to become definitive and structured. There are no things to work out, as you seem to imagine, because my only function is to interact with another person of my kind who confronts me on the spiritual path. I do not think in terms of numbers. If you or any other person who is now in the Gurukula circle sincerely puts their fraternal trust in me for guidance and finds me sincerely responsive, I should not consider such incidents as anything other than a providential operation of one of the several random hits with which everything in the world is given its natural shape and meaning. (472)

Letter to a disciple:

“Who am I? That is the great question. Go within. Find out.” So clamor all the masters. Take a break from being so serious. What is the point of knowing who you are? You are just you, a plain and simple you, like the plain and simple “I am” among a multitude of I’s and you’s and he’s and she’s. What’s more important is to watch the traffic and note the light signals at the crossroad and to understand the moods of the people and the markets you deal with. You will be a lot better off if you cultivate good taste for forms, shapes, designs and colors, a good ear for music, sound logic to think correctly, good ethical norms to conduct yourself amicably and cheerfully with others, and a sensibility to appreciate all the finer nuances of life’s music, which has a wide variety ranging from the Sama Veda to disco.

Everyone is as important and unique as I am. So let me re-frame the question “Who am I?” as “Who are all these wonderful

people including me?” Why go within? Why not be friends with this tangible world, this unending feast of colors and music in which the grand drama of life is always in full swing. Why should anyone dampen one’s spirit with a cynical philosophy of rumination on death and disease? That will be taken care of anyway.

Your self does not belong to any caste. You cannot be perceived by the senses. Unattached, formless and witness of all are you. Be happy. This suggests a drastic reduction of the solid person of flesh and bones into a rarefied abstraction. I do not have to write off the legitimate use of my senses and mind to be happy. I know caste is a barbarian prejudice, just as race is a regional scruple that can be dismissed as a pettiness of mind. We are mini systems intrinsically fabricated into the microcosmic system of the macrocosmic system. I can be genuinely happy by functioning as best I can within the frame of reference to which I legitimately belong without either exaggerating or obliterating my role and identity. (485)

Another letter:

Annoyance is the immediate reaction to any advent of clumsiness where one seeks perfection. The world is in the slow process of becoming perfect with a norm that is not fully revealed to us. So our annoyance is not only caused by somebody else’s imperfections, but also because of our lack of understanding of the patterns of the other person’s self, designed by whimsical Chance, which lyrical people call Fate and religious people call God. (532)

Friends of the Gurukula      Varkala, India      January 1, 1980

On this occasion of the new decade, the first of January 1980, it is my privilege as the Guru and Head of Narayana Gurukula to wish you a Happy New Year of unity.

There was never a time in history when people did not think that it was a difficult age through which to pass. Ours is not

different from any difficult age that has tested the patience and wisdom of mankind. With all his mistakes, man each time successfully creates a new landmark in the history of our civilization.

The characteristic problem of our age is the belligerent confrontation between communal groups. Communalism is an irrational phobia generated in the form of a persecution mania, in which both the contesting rivals fear the vilest conspiracies being hatched out in their imaginary enemy's camp. The identification of one's group is always referred to as "we" and "ours," and the hated and suspected enemy is always referred to as "they." The psychologists' cliché, "I am okay; only you are not okay," was recently revalued by Dr. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross to, "I am not okay; you are not okay; but that is okay." The reassurance of Elizabeth has an immediate effect to silence one's mounting guilt complex. A similar calming down is necessary on all fronts so that the high walls of emotion that barricade mutual communication between the self-labeled "we" and "they" can be erased, and the cordiality of a warm dialogue be introduced.

When war is declared between mutually fearing power blocks of race, caste, religion and nation, only the very brave have the knack of entering into the no man's land between fighting factions to sing the hymns of peace. This no man's land is none other than the very Self of Truth, from which everyone derives their love of life and light. The apostle St. John called it the Word, and the Chandogya Upanishad recognizes it as Aum, the word of consent.

The realization of one's Self at the ontological level is not anything other than giving up the diehard hatred for the "other" and recognizing the common bond that unites all men in their general good. This is done, rather than said, only by purging oneself of the natural instinct to possess and dominate and the equally strong compulsion to offer oneself masochistically as prey to some tyrant. Not to oppress and not to be oppressed is the last liberation man can achieve. This revaluation of our basic social

instinct is what we should achieve by constant self-criticism and self-education. The Upanishads characterize such an attempt as *yajna*. *Yajna* is not self-immolation but renaming the mean, the parochial, and the relativistic to qualify oneself to enter the Kingdom of God, the casteless and classless society where Love reigns supreme. May you initiate yourself to this grand revaluation of your psyche that aspires for realization. (475)

Although Narayana Guru is, in my mind, a teacher without parallel, I know that this is an attitude many people have about their own teachers. When I look at those teachers with my norms of evaluating wisdom, I see something wanting in all of them. So I naturally expect some imperfections in Narayana Guru that others clearly see that I do not. For this reason I don't want to make any exclusive claim of his greatness.

If you watch closely, you can notice that in a Christian circle, I keep myself within a Christian frame of reference; in the Ramakrishna Mission the frame of reference is Sri Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, and the Holy Mother; in the Aurobindo Ashram the familiar frame of reference is the concept of the Divine and the Supramental Descent. I'm not doing this as an opportunist to please the people with whom I move, but out of a consistent adherence to the teaching of Narayana Guru, deciphering the norms of others in terms of an overall scheme of correlation.

I respect the spiritual clichés of other schools by discerning the intention within the literal wording of their adherents' claims. I cultivated this respect for my fellow seekers' views over years, and decided that I should not put forward Narayana Guru's teaching as an alternative to any other teachers. To me he has become someone so precious and sacred that I treat him now almost as a secret. Moreover, when I think of the wide spectrum of knowledge covered by various teachers and what I have gained from every such school by keeping myself open to all, I think I'm doing a service to all who come to me by not programming them to be adherents of a single teacher for the rest of their lives.

It was by sheer luck or providential favor that Narayana Guru found in Nataraja Guru an unusual and able interpreter. If you know what Narayana Guru has written in Malayalam, Sanskrit and Tamil, and how his words and thoughts remain in a category of their own in Indian literature—which is equaled only by the Upanishadic rishis—you will appreciate that he is not a guru who could ever be substituted for. The mandate that is passed on to me by Nataraja Guru, as a guru representative, is only to be a sentinel to guard the purity of the teaching that came from the great master. No one is more conscious than myself of my ignorance and inability to fathom the full depth of many of Narayana Guru's works, before which I still stand in awe and admiration. My only prayer is that I understand all his works before this body is laid to rest.

There are certainly many Indians who were more scholarly than Narayana Guru. There are others who have excelled him as a social reformer. People with mystical insights and psychic powers are also not rare. But Narayana Guru combined in himself all these and many other qualities in such a way that his words are not to be taken merely in the letter. They can be interpreted only when we also become inwardly rich and mature enough to feel his feelings and act with the spontaneity with which he acted. His manner could be the best example of social justice and critically correct spiritual appreciation for all time.

Although I am a respector of empirical sciences and pragmatic considerations in social planning, at heart I'm willing to give due consideration to the benevolent operation of invisible forces, which I attribute to the axiological unity of an ever-evolving world order. This is something more than a religious belief or sheer faith. My expectation to be succeeded by someone equal or superior to me is as natural as a mathematician putting his faith in deriving riders and lemmas from an axiomatic formula. There is no guarantee that any guru's immediate successor will be as wise as his predecessor. By the same logic we can also expect that another one who comes in a hierarchy may even supersede all



previous teachers. Therefore I think that it does not profit anyone to speculate on the future of the Gurukula and what would happen after my death.

I never met Narayana Guru, but I accepted him as my guru and started learning his ideas and ideals much before coming in contact with Nataraja Guru. Afterwards when Nataraja Guru came into my life and enabled me to structure my world of philosophy in the light of Narayana Guru's teaching I did not consider him as a new or separate guru. (470-2)