"He who gives a life of love gains a life of love."

by

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OCEAN IN A TEACUP

THE STORY OF
SREE SREE THAKUR ANUKUL CHANDRA

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things were in proper order, Satsangees could go to the Ramakrishna Mission and feel we were still in Satsang and you could come to Satsang and feel you are still in the Ramakrishna Mission. So, how can I charge money from members of my own family?"

In 1966, Kazal was married to a girl that Thakur had himself chosen from many possibilities and to whom a daughter was born a year later. Kazal’s constant trips between Patna and Deoghar, performing operations in both places, often gave others the opportunity to observe that beneath the apparently simple, unpretentious exterior was a steel-like tenacity and courage. When a poverty-stricken slum dweller couldn’t afford an operation in the hospital, Kazal would gather a make-shift staff, wash down the shack with disinfectant, and proceed to perform hernia, appendix, and even a gall bladder operation in the bustees in Patna. Whether it was skill, luck, or faith that Thakur would save the patient, Kazal established a reputation among the hospital staff and his poverty-stricken clientele of courage, compassion, and success.

On March 16, 1967, I became aware firsthand of another of Thakur’s innocent yet ultimately so meaningful indications of his plans for the future. I had gone to Thakur’s room to bid farewell, along with Kazal and Chotto Ma, before leaving for Patna. Sudhir Choudhury, Janardan Mookerjee, Prafulla Bannerjee, and several others were present. It was around 3:30 in the afternoon and conversation was going on desultorily. Suddenly, Thakur irrelevantly remarked, looking at Kazal, “The astrologers say I’ll come back as your son.”

“Father, please don’t say that,” Kazal’s hands were folded in appeal. “You always remain my father.”

A few months later and a few days before Kazal would receive his Ph.D., he and an old friend were sitting on the verandah of a rented house in Rajendranagar, a well-to-do suburb of Patna, where many professional people lived. “Kazal,” the friend observed, “did you ever stop to think that with all your experience and degrees, you could start a private practice here in Patna and easily earn 100,000 rupees a year and quickly have a nice car, house, and if you made only a couple of free operations a week, you would be
overwhelmed with praise: ‘A worthy son of Thakur...’ But, going back to Deoghar and the ashram, you’ll have to face criticism, blame, slander, and you’ll always be in financial trouble.”

“I’ve never given the idea any importance. Do you know why?” Kazal became very serious. “Because Ma used to tell me that she prayed to Thakur for me and then, after I came, she prayed to him so she could make a perfect flower to put on the altar of her Lord. I’m not sure just how perfect it is, but I know I can’t disappoint her. Even more, Thakur’s mission - not just the hospital or university, but all the people who are searching - I can’t ignore him or them and be happy. So I guess on Wednesday, it’s back to Deoghar and the slow, stumbling effort to make his dream of a hospital and medical college a reality.”

As the winter slowly gave way to spring, Thakur’s physical condition deteriorated rapidly. Big fans replaced the heaters in Thakur’s room. In late March, four of us were sitting with him as he smoked his waterpipe. He kept looking at Kazal. Abruptly, he put aside the stem of the pipe and, child-like with an almost piteous, helpless appeal, asked, “If I come as your son and I don’t like to read all these messages I’ve said, you won’t beat me will you?”

“Father, please don’t say this again and again.” There were tears in Kazal’s eyes. His voice shook with emotion. “You always stay my father.” By this time similar comments had been made before many and varied people. It was to become a further step in what has, in retrospect, proven to be a very careful and yet so apparently innocent plan for the near and distant future.

By the rainy season, 1968, Kazal was back permanently in charge of Thakur’s medical treatment. Bor’da was in almost constant attendance except for a few hours he spent at his home dealing with the problems of administration. Bor’da’s eldest son, Asoke, now a lawyer - and having spent much of his time organizing and integrating the huge Satsang following in Assam - was called back to Deoghar by Thakur and requested by his grandfather to take care of him and assist his father, Bor’da, in his increasing responsibilities. Asoke quickly became for his father what Bor’da was to Thakur. So, from July, 1968, besides Bankim-da, Pyari-da,
group that creates everything.” Asoke nodded and then lapsed into silence for several moments. Finally, Bob said, “You should come to America. It might be as enjoyable for you as my coming to India has been for me ...” He paused and there was a twinkle in his eye, “...and I suppose you know, we can use Thakur’s spirit a lot more than we need another sect.”

As Bob got up to leave, Asoke smiled and said, “You must come back here again, too.” And with that delicate finesse that was so characteristic of this grandson of Thakur, he said, “We, too, can always use more of the spirit of Thakur.”

I saw Bob off at Dum Dum Airport in Calcutta and returned to Deoghar. After completing the editing of this book, I stopped in to see Bapun on my way to Calcutta. As I drank the tea his mother offered me, I told her about this book - that I was reprinting and bringing it up to date, how it was divided into four parts: the Roots about Thakur’s childhood and the thrashings from his mother; the Branches when he built up the Satsang movement; the Foliage that tells how Satsang spread; and now the fourth part, called the Fruit, was telling of Thakur’s departure and the roles of Bor’da, Kazal, and Bapun.

“Please don’t say much about Bapun being Thakur,” she interrupted. “Wait until he grows up and proves himself. Now, let him live his childhood normally.” There was the appeal of every Mother in her eyes.

“Do you think it is possible?” I asked. It didn’t seem the place for misleading sentiment.

“Thakur started all this himself many years ago. If he hadn’t said it so often to so many, it might have been possible. But now, I’m afraid the die is cast.”

I pointed out the window of Rangan Villa where an elderly disciple of Thakur was standing in the road, barefoot with folded hands and bowed head. “Look, they even bow down from out there because they think he’s in here somewhere.”

I finished my tea and stood up. “I can understand how you feel, but it looks like the options are gone. There’s no going back. He