

•••

**Stopped in Our Tracks**

**Stories of U.G. in India**

**From the Notebooks  
of  
K. Chandrasekhar**

**Translated from the Telugu and Edited by  
J.S.R.L. Narayana Moorthy**

**Triveni Publishers  
Masulipatam, 522 001 A.P.  
India**

**Stopped in Our Tracks**

**Stories of U.G. in India**

**From the Notebooks**

**of**

**K. Chandrasekhar**

**Translated from the Telugu and Edited by J.S.R.L. Narayana Moorthy**

---

*My teaching, if that is the word you want to use, has no copyright. You are free to reproduce, distribute, interpret, misinterpret, distort, garble, do what you like, even claim authorship, without my consent or the permission of anybody.*

—U.G.

---

#### EDITOR'S NOTE

K. Chandrasekhar Babu has been a longstanding friend of U.G. in India. Soon after his meeting U.G. in 1969, Chandrasekhar started a journal and has maintained it all these years. The journal now comprises many volumes. We thought that some of the contents of these volumes would be of interest not only to U.G.'s Indian audiences, but also to his international readers. Our main interest in bringing out this book is to make some otherwise inaccessible material, particularly concerning events surrounding U.G.'s movements in India from about the time of his Calamity, available to the reader.

It was hard to keep any strict chronological order in the journals, as the journals flash back and forth in time. However, to give the reader a sense of time, we have, wherever possible, included a time reference in each excerpt. The Table of Contents reflects the range of topics of narration in the text. There are no other chapter headings as such.

Book Two, *Excerpts from U.G.'s Dialogues*, is Chandrasekhar's compilation of excerpts from U.G.'s dialogues from various audiotapes. Book Three is a list of excerpts from book reviews and radio or T.V. interviews with various well-known personalities. Sometimes, the excerpts only contain a quote or two of U.G. But that is perhaps what the reviewer found significant in U.G.'s writings or speech, and what Chandrasekhar found significant in the review.

Thanks to Wendy Moorty for her invaluable editorial assistance.

Seaside, California

—**J.S.R.L. Narayana Moorthy**

January 15, 1999

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### BOOK ONE

#### PART I

...1

Who is this U.G.?

1. Introduction
2. A Bonfire; My life before I met U.G.
3. Why did this U.G. happen to me?
4. U.G. arrives in Bangalore; You put me on a pedestal; David Barry; Brahmachariji brings the *Brahmajnani*
5. “Where is the glow in my face?”; U.G. took away my tiredness....; Brahmachariji and U.G.; Brahmachariji invites U.G.
6. U.G.’s first visit to Brahmachariji’s ‘Cave’; There is no *moksha*, no Jivanmukti, and no Atman; The questioner is the question; I report on U.G. to Chalam’s family

#### PART II

...37

7. Dr Desiraju
8. First Visit to Madras; Meeting with the Sankaracharya of Sringeri; Coffee estate guest house in Chikkamagaluru; The Natural State is being able to act efficiently....
9. The basis of all relationships is the same: “What will I get?”; Dr Prabhu; Sastri Sadan in Bangalore – Viswanath
10. If not *moksha*, at least a transitor – Krishna Bhagavatar; “If I don’t torture you, who will?” – Kalyani; Meeting new friends – Indian Institute of World Culture; Kumar, U.G.’s son; A Sardarji’s palm reading; “Consider me as part of the furniture” – Nagaraj; “You are the only one who gives me what I need free of charge” – Rochaldas Schroff; “That Krishna and this Krishna say the same thing” – the Swami of Udipi; B.L. Narayan; Sitaramayya – U.G.’s father; Shanta of the Oasis School; Swami Poornananda Tirth

#### PART III

...73

11. Jnanasram and Jnanachakravarti; No difference between an *ashram* and a brothel...Chamundeswari Temple; Dr Kameswari; “This is not the time and this is not the place to die” – Kodai; “Get lost” – vision of J.K.

12. Kusuma – U.G.’s wife
13. Valentine de Kerven
14. Do what you can and forget all about it...; “My actions are not run by my thoughts...” Kangaroo and basketsful of avocados; “One machine gun will wipe you all out...” Keeping a promise – a rose for Aruna; Praise and blame are the same to a true sage...; Going public...; “Keeping your rules to yourself is part of wisdom...” No prior appointments...
15. If she gives me this house, I will turn it into a brothel...; “There is a lot to be done by the body...You cannot die!” Why is the moth attracted to the flame? Dr Sriramachandra Murty, U.G.’s brother; The Aquarian Age – Mr Raju; “You and I are stray dogs...” The body’s functioning is opposed to this pleasure movement...; Before the body dies, God must die...; “It will not do to give them away to your neighbours...” “What if the husband dies after marriage...” “Isn’t a registered marriage enough?” “Am I not better than Rama? “Why should you become a victim of infamy?”

**PART IV** **...126**

16. I said to the sages: ‘Drown and never rise again...
17. He did not utter a sentence to comfort her...
18. Childhood memories; “I used to do astral travel too...; Teo acres and freedom...; The setup is nice...; The body is like an animal...; “How did I come into this world?”...; The four aims of life...; “All my ambitions have crumbled” – Vinod; My touch will multiply life...” Final message: “Drop dead...” “If Einstein were here right now, I could shut it’s even more acceptable...” Either you kill me or I’ll kill you” – Hanif; “I tried to skip my own wedding...” “What good is it to have all those lines?”...; “Didn’t you say my vibrations were horrible?” You also feel the ‘vibes’ of the place...Because you drank the coffee, your ancestors are gratified...; All sounds are the same...; “I am only speaking from a practical point of view...”
19. In Conclusion

**BOOK TWO: Excerpts from U.G.’s Dialogues** **...157**

**BOOK THREE: What the Press and Others Say About U.G.** **...183**

**List of U.G.’s Books** **...205**



**Who is This U.G.?**  
**–By Brahmachari Sivarama Sharma**

Not confined to a place, he is always on the move. Unbound by tradition, he is above morals and rules of conduct.

At times more demonic than Kamsa, Hiranyakasipu and Jarasandha and at other times a guileless youth attracting young maidens, he never lets go of his uniqueness.

He may be in the company of celebrities and lunatics, debauchees and drunkards, but he remains untarnished. He is unmoved by blame and praise. He is ferocious as Rudra spewing the fire of dissolution.

He belongs to no fraternity, *ashram* or association. Reaching over the globe, he is unique in the way he spreads his tenets. Subtle in his manner, he never misses an occasion to achieve his ends.

Not caught in a groove, he condemns sages and saints and ridicules them all. He scolds and scoffs those that gather, yet wins them back.

Mysterious is he in helping true aspirants. Unheard, unknown and unseen, brilliant are his ways into the hearts of men.

Majestic in adversity, simple in opulence, he is unaffected and unattached. Sex or crime, family or money – he discusses freely anything from disease to divinity.

He roams the world undaunted. He looks ordinary but draws people to him. He is the embodiment of immeasurable spiritual power. HE IS U.G. I took the pen to condemn, demolish and tear apart his teachings and utterances, piece by piece. I wanted to destroy the very basis of his thought. How come, then, this poem?

**Stopped in Our Tracks**



## **Book One**

**By K. Chandrasekhar**

## Stopped in Our Tracks

### 1. Introduction

In the first years of my acquaintance with U.G., until 1973, U.G. and Valentine had been coming every winter to Bangalore and staying there for three or four months at a time.

In 1973, U.G. wrote to me suggesting that I should look for a permanent residence for them, and thus avoid having to find a house each time they visited Bangalore. Henry, a friend of U.G.'s from England, had a house and a business office in Bombay, and U.G. and Valentine had been guests in their house ever since they started visiting India after the Calamity. However, Henry's business in Bombay had closed and U.G. needed another place to stay. Henry felt that U.G. should not be inconvenienced, so he offered three hundred pounds a year to U.G. for accommodations elsewhere. This was the same amount of money he had been giving to Sri Anandamayi Ma and Sri Ramana Maharshi's Ashram. U.G. suggested that we should use those funds to pay for the new house in Bangalore.

My friend Sivaram showed me a new three-storey house called Sastri Sadana in Basavanagudi, facing the Anjaneya Temple. The construction of the house was nearing completion. After talking to the owner, Mr Viswanatha Sastri, I wrote to U.G. describing the location and other details of the house. I offered to rent the house if he wanted me to.

A reply came at once asking me to go ahead.

Later, Valentine told me that U.G., on one of his morning walks the previous year, happened to notice the same house while it was under construction. Apparently, he already had the feeling that they two would be living in that house, long before he had any idea that I would rent it for him. After receiving my letter in Switzerland, he even described to Valentine the surroundings of the house in minute detail. I was surprised to hear this from her.

For a person like U.G. who says, "If a thought enters my head, it has to take effect," this coincidence is nothing extraordinary. But for someone like me, who does not observe events such as these often, they are indeed marvellous. U.G. makes fun of me for saying such things. He says, "Chandrasekhar is writing a book of all the miracles and marvels that I have never performed."

One day, Julie heard this and said smiling, "Chandrasekhar himself is a miracle. What's wrong with writing about *your* miracles?" How true! When I look back and reflect on whatever happened to me after U.G. entered my life, my whole life looks like a miracle.

In those days, every word that U.G. uttered sounded wonderful. It was child's play for U.G. to upset ancient truths and demolish, in a second, beliefs which seemed sacred and precious.

U.G. made statements such as:

Liberation means total extinction. It means the extinction of 'you' as you know yourself and as you experience yourself. Why would anyone desire such a thing?

Bliss, wisdom, permanent happiness, *jivanmukti*, rebirth – all such ideas are all stories concocted by you. Mere illusions. It's a waste of time to seek such non-existent things.

When we heard such pronouncements of U.G., the ground under our feet which we so trusted seemed to cave in. All our illusions were destroyed and we tried to run away from ourselves in fright without ever looking back.

Is there any way out? All this – the incessant striving and search – is all this a waste of time?

No. There is one solace. That is U.G. himself. If he weren't as he is, there would be no need to write any of this.

In the early days of my association with U.G., I collected much information about U.G. with the intention of writing his biography. I kept a journal believing that it would be useful for this purpose some time later.

"Why do you want to tell my story?" asked U.G. one day.

"You are a unique product of human history. Everyone must know about you."

"How has this been of use to *you*? How did your acquaintance with me all these years help *you*?"

I didn't expect such a straight question from U.G. I kept pondering for awhile. "If it didn't help you, it's an illusion to think that it would help someone else," U.G. said, brushing aside my good intention. It was hard to figure out what U.G. meant by "being of use".

"What I am saying is that there is nothing to understand, and there is no need to understand. If you get the 'hang' of this, you will never want to see my face again. Not only that, you won't go to anyone else either, seeking the meaning of life. That will be the end of your search," said U.G. That is what U.G. meant by [his teaching] being "useful".

Was there no other usefulness, then? The same question haunted me even after I returned home that night.

That night was the holy night of *Siva Ratri*. It was truly the *Siva Ratri* (it is customary to keep a watch on that night). I still remember giving form to thoughts which arose in my mind that night. Thus

twenty years ago I resolved that if I ever published U.G.'s biography, I should include these two poems:

**I**

You say there is no faith, no mind  
You do not accept a single teacher  
You reject Siva and his powers  
You teach us to see ourselves as Siva  
You stress that release is empty  
You forbid practices vehemently  
You smile at me in pity when I ask you  
How I will attain that State  
I wrote your story in Telugu  
Who knows how defective it is  
With this I give myself to you  
Please accept this gift

—U.G.

**II**

You loosened my worldly bonds and formed my character  
When everyone made fun of me  
You stood by me as my shadow  
When all those I trusted let me down  
You held me by my hand and took me to the shore  
When my life was dreary you gave me a new one.  
You patted me on my shoulder, gave me strength and made me stand like a man

I salute you and your magnificence

—U.G.

October 15, 1964 was an unforgettable day in my life. That was the day when I first met Mr Chalam (1) who was firmly implanted in Arunachala. It was the day when my friendship through correspondence, which began in my student days, took me in my nineteenth year into his presence. Incidentally, I told him, “I sometimes feel like writing something.”

Looking steadily into my eyes, Chalam asked, “For whose sake?”

I was stunned. I had never asked myself that question. True, whom should I write for? For others or for myself? After a while, Chalam spoke again, “‘Is it just for ourselves that we write, because we can’t live without writing?’ – That question must keep arising till we feel that way.” Exactly 28 years later, I feel that I have the right answer to that question.

Ever since I made friends with U.G., Chalam and Nartaki shared my enthusiasm, my joys and my sorrows and vibrated with me. Chalam is no longer with us. Nartaki has settled down in Arunachala. When a draft of what I wrote about U.G. was read to him, Chalam nodded his head in satisfaction and said, “Good.” I was amazed at myself. Chalam talked about U.G. in every letter he wrote to me in those days.

Chalam travelled to Bangalore to see U.G. year after year, disregarding his own ill health. Because U.G. noticed something special about Chalam, he travelled to Arunachala when Chalam was on his deathbed. This pleased Chalam and other inmates of Ramanasthan (the house where Chalam lived in Tiruvannamalai). Here are some of Chalam’s letters to me:

i.

Arunachala

January 4, 1973

Chandrasekhar:

I was happy to read your letter. Although I never had any such experience, I can picture how great it would be when a saint’s love alights on us and mingles with us intimately.

[People] living here with ‘Shau’ [Chalam’s daughter Sowris who was a devotee of Sri Ramana Maharshi. Chalam had dedicated himself to *Iswara* (God) who revealed himself to Sowris in 1951 and

began working through her] lack the proper perspective [in understanding their relationship with her]. They suffer too much from their loving familiarity. I suppose that Sri Krishna deluded people without letting them know who He really was.

I wish you would make a recording of your days and nights with U.G. Perhaps it is difficult to write from such a perspective.

With the blessings of *Iswara*,

—Chalam

ii.

Arunachala

January 10, 1973

Chandrasekhar:

Your letter is exciting. Don't hesitate [in what you are doing]. *Iswara* is getting a great deed done through you. It's enough if you remain as an instrument.

Shau is conveying this suggestion to you. You should put him [U.G.] in a [talking] mood and put a tape recorder before him. It doesn't matter in what language he speaks. If you first record what he says, then we can think of the rest.

My idea is that you should record every day whatever is happening there, just as in the book *Day by Day with Bhagawan* and just as M. recorded the Daily Routine of Paramahansa [in the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*]. I know it is difficult to do that.

I tried to do the same in Ramanasthan. But I was unable to. Unless orders come from above, these things are not possible for ordinary men like you and me. However, it may be a great relief in these matters that there won't be any regret that 'we couldn't do them' because these matters are not in our hands.

The title U.G. suggested is very good. What couldn't be done if he wishes it?

I feel that we are on the brink of exciting times. So be it. We too will follow you from here jumping and hopping....

With *Iswara*'s blessings,

—Chalam

It was December 1976. Three o'clock in the afternoon at Secunderabad railway station. Sri Sripada Gopalakrishnamurti came running just as our train for Bangalore was scheduled to leave in half an hour. He had the draft of U.G.'s biography that I had written. Handing it to me he said, "It's great. But you must collect more details of U.G.'s life," and gave me a copy of the book he wrote on Sri Jillellamudi Amma.

"Have you ever seen Amma?" I said I hadn't. What I had heard about her before was through Chalam. "You must meet her. I think U.G. and Amma are the two great teachers of today. I feel that their teachings are the same. Somehow we must arrange for these two masters to meet."

It was wonderful to see Mr Sripada's face glow with enthusiasm and joy as he was saying this, regardless of his advanced age. However, he passed away without his wish being ever fulfilled. I heard that year, when U.G. was staying in the Oasis School in Hyderabad, Sri Sripada had several discussions with U.G. regarding death and the afterlife.

The picture of Mr Sripada bringing the manuscript of U.G.'s biography to the train station was firmly imprinted in my mind.

In writing U.G.'s story, my friend Vazir Rahman helped me to steer away from the traditional style of writing, and polish the writing somewhat by urging me to render U.G.'s words into simple and clear Telugu. I still remember the days of our spending hours together in Kodambakam. Our common interests were Chalam and U.G. We also listened to music when we were bored. That was in 1976 when I was going through an orientation course in the Indian Institute of Technology in Madras. We two would meet every weekend.

In March 1980, the article I wrote on U.G. was published in the Sunday Supplement of *Andhra Prabha* daily. I sent a clipping of that article to Vazir. Here is part of what Vazir wrote about that article:

Madras

March 17, 1980

Dear Friend:

I have your kind letter and the press cutting. I read the article carefully twice. You know how I am – I am never satisfied easily. I always find something lacking in what I read, if it doesn't come close

to my own ideas. Your effort and the interest you have shown in your article are evident. It looks good to a degree. But if you ask me my final opinion, I would say that you should polish it some more.

Another thing. Philosophers like U.G. use language in an ingenious way. They wield unimaginable meanings through their words. If they use language in so many nuances, it means that their language is alive. Notice that neither U.G. nor J.K. use language artificially. They can express any complex idea in colloquial language and in a conversational style. I feel that the live quality of their language is the essence of their ideas.

Please review your essay keeping in mind what I said above. You have moved away from a conversational style to an artificial language loaded with heavy Sanskrit. As a result, instead of being lively, your writing has become heavy and acquired the style of a philosophical lecture.

I am writing all this just so you won't fall into this sort of pitfall when you write your larger originally contemplated book.

Yours,

V.R.

Vazir Rahman passed away in 1983, before he ever could see how many other big defects slipped into my larger work. He sent me a copy of his poetic work *Sahasi* as soon as it was published. In it are included the poems – “Sport,” and “At the End” – inspired by U.G. When U.G. heard the paragraph Vazir wrote about him at the end of the book, he said, “He summed it up very well.”

This is all – nothing remains

It has to happen

One early dawn a red-tailed bird drinking oil

Suddenly it must fly into emptiness

That's all – at the end, nothing remains. You flew singing thus Vazir! The Daring One! You left me here alone Where did you go tonight? To the other shore? What is there? A big nothing (Lit. Donkey's Egg)!

\* \* \*

How many changes this biography has gone through before it is finally ready for publication! How many colours and forms it has assumed! For some years I fell into lethargy along with my work. I



walked with weak feet for some time, and then I ran as though the world was collapsing. Whatever I was going through, the unknown force called U.G. has been supporting me like a strong pillar.

## **2. A bonfire...**

It was the night of September 13, 1992, Yercaud. The world didn't know yet that U.G. is staying in an abandoned house in a remote area in Yercaud, India. Can anyone imagine a better heaven on earth than Switzerland? What can one say about the fact that U.G. now fixed his residence in this country at Yercaud near Salem, abandoning in one moment his 28-year-long association with Switzerland and the garden-like valleys of the Alps in Gstaad-Saanen? It is not because he lacks the economic means to satisfy his needs in Switzerland. When he consents to stay, there are innumerable friends who can arrange for royal comforts at a moment's notice. Then why is he coming to Yercaud? What's there for him on this mountain? He could at least stay in Bangalore. No, apparently there is no place for him there either.

The day before arriving in Yercaud, the visage U.G. manifested in Purnakutee (our residence in Bangalore) reminded one of Siva at the scene of Daksha's sacrifice. All things that belonged to U.G. in Purnakutee were moved to Yercaud. Things collected over many years – files, photos, video and audiotapes – all of them were moved at U.G.'s insistence. He caused a bonfire in my heart: I used to cherish these objects every day, considering them to be U.G.'s archives. He trampled ruthlessly on my devotion. He sold the benches and almirahs in my own presence. He scattered everything without giving me a moment's time to realise what was going on.

It's all over. Nothing is left for me. All my dreams are shattered. Will Bangalore remain only a past nightmare? Why? Why is this happening?

It's useless to try to find the meaning behind U.G.'s actions. It is perhaps his intention not to leave for later generations even a trace of his coming into this world. Nothing must remain. U.G. is very clear that no one will benefit from collecting memorabilia and keepsakes pertaining to him.

In a Doordarshan interview with U.G., Deepak Vohra asks him: "U.G., I have one final question: How do you imagine the world should remember you after five hundred years?"

U.G.'s reply is unique in world history: "I will feel blessed if the world burns away with my body all the memories and memorabilia pertaining to me."

U.G., you are your own equal. There has been and will be no one like you in this world. As I was sitting in the living room of the building in Yercaud, my mind became restless and chaotic. My mind

was dreading that something untoward will surely happen. There was a heavy wind blowing outside the bungalow. It was penetrating through the closed-door spaces and striking my spine. Murty, U.G.'s handyman, was kindling fires in the fireplace. Murty had let go of his entire Bangalore life and had dedicated himself to U.G.'s service.

U.G. was sitting leaning against the wall. Whenever the fire glowed in the fireplace, U.G.'s face glowed red with it. Other friends in the room – the Major, Prabhakar and Suguna, my wife – all sat scattered on the floor with arms around their legs. Everyone looked pale. Mahesh sat on my right side leaning against the wall and looking pitifully at me. The scene looked like Yama's court ready for a trial. In the middle of it I sat with closed eyes like a sacrificial goat at the altar.

“Why can't Chandrasekhar understand? An *ashram*-like atmosphere can't grow around me,” roared U.G. Mahesh sat up collecting himself. “Neither my tapes nor books nor letters must be in anyone's control. I am going to return all those photos to those who have taken them. Nothing must remain after me. I won't let even Chandrasekhar know where I am and what I am doing. It's all over. After Valentine's death, everything is disintegrating.”

A flame flared in the fireplace when some of the kindling caught fire. A loud crackling sound of a piece of firewood. U.G.'s white clothing. U.G.'s body shone like a flame covered with snow.

Mahesh said after a little while, “U.G. I couldn't have written your biography if Chandrasekhar had not collected all of the correspondence and kept it in one place. That was necessary.”

“Who benefits from those biographies? I said this before. Autobiographies are pure lies. And biographies are double lies. O.K. you wrote something. But what is *he* doing? Why should *he* collect all these? To burn them with me when I die?” U.G.'s eyes were showering coals on me. The fire in the fireplace seemed cooler. There was a conflagration in myself. There was an oven in my heart. Mahesh looked like an executioner from Yama. My body trembled when I realised why this soldier holding a drawn sword and waiting for a wink of the eye from the master had come from Bombay.

U.G. said again: “Why do you write letters to everyone informing them that I am here? Why do you hesitate to say ‘I don't know where U.G. is,’ to anyone who asks for me? The other day Julie called me on the phone in Bangalore. I told her, ‘There is no place here for even Chandrasekhar and Suguna. What makes you think that I will let *you* stay?’”

God, what is going to happen? You dragged me here to show me this terrible form [of U.G.]? It's all going – all my hidden fears, endless deluded hopes, colourful dreams, the beautiful dreams I had made up about my future – all of them were being shattered.

They were all burning away. It was not U.G. in front of me. It was an active volcano on fire. Near it were solid rocks melting like lumps of wax. The tears in my eyes were evaporating before they trickled down.

“Chandrasekhar is the cause of all these miseries,” U.G.’s voice sounded like thunder in the sky.

Far away, the bells of the Convent of Carmel rang, as if they were warning me, “These are your last moments, get ready.” The crime I had committed knowingly or unwittingly, the emotions that had been mingled with my blood, the flaw of considering U.G. as my own, that he was my life outside of me, my subliminal hope of becoming the high priest for the temple of U.G.’s teaching – all passed through my mind clearly.

The ‘criminal’ in me drooped his head. “Whatever has been going on so far cannot continue any more. It must all end here and now. This moment.” The swing of his hand gathered strength and his resounding voice shook the bungalow. The executioner’s sword flashed in the light of the dying fire.

“Here, now, this moment. It has to end now, Chandrasekhar!” Mahesh’s howl mingled with my death scream.

Slowly the fire in the fireplace died down. The flames that shone red settled down in the ashes. The sky for once breathed in relief. The assembly came to a close. All the witnesses exited as though they were innocent. U.G. went into his room leaving me to my fate. My mind had never known such a terrible onslaught. Although I lay on my bed, I could not sleep. A series of thoughts whirled around like snakes in my mental snake pit. I got up from my bed and walked outside. ‘Blackie’, the dog, saw me and crawled around me wagging her tail. What had happened that night? How come the world was still sleeping so peacefully? To whom should I speak about my turmoil and my internal struggle? Why was I bothered about all this? Who is this U.G.? Who am I? What is the connection between us? True, what is he to me? What am I to myself?

I was walking to the edge of an abyss in the dark. I could see, four thousand feet below, the city of Salem flickering with lights, as though the sky had with all its stars collapsed on the ground.

I asked U.G. on the night of my arrival in Yercaud: “Why doesn’t the truth of your words apply in our lives? Our minds can see reason and consent to the logic [in what you say], but we lag behind in carrying it out in action. Why is that?”

U.G.’s answer blasted my brains: “Because you are afraid of losing me if those words work. Because of that fear you try to use those words securely, as gloves on your hands, to protect yourselves.”

Those words of U.G.'s whirled around in my head, "You are afraid of losing me," and I felt as though they were mocking me.

It's true: U.G. is my life, my everything. Who is it that still lives after losing U.G.? I? Who am I? I have no alternative: I must solve this puzzle.

U.G. is no one to me. There is this connection, this blunt bond that entangles me, and unless this is broken, I am not free. U.G. and I – the memories I have treasured so much, the memories which I thought were special to both of us, my countless experiences – if U.G. himself is nothing to me, why should I bother with them? Why should I hoard them? For whom? Never. I should expel all of them. I should tear myself, break myself open, destroy myself, plunder all my memory treasures which I had so carefully hoarded, and scatter them to the dust and the wind. I must stand alone, helpless as a destitute without a past, while all these memories are shamelessly crushed under the feet of every village pig.

The sacrifice has started, the serpent sacrifice of Janamejaya. All the serpents, the thought-serpents that have been hiding inside my head, in my blood and in every nerve of mine, must all be dropped into this sacrificial fire. There is no protection for any of them. All of them must be consumed. All my memories must assume the form of letters and be offered in the sacrifice of this book.

I don't know how long I stood outside that night, by the side of the abyss, in the dark, under that tree. Utter silence around me. An abyss inside of me and an abyss outside. Utter darkness all around.

"Is this all there is to my life?" The question arose in me all of a sudden. "If you let that question arise, then you have no scope to live." No sooner I had heard this than all the darkness disappeared. A cloud curtain crossed the abyss touching me softly.

### **"Why did this U.G. happen to me?"**

It was September 20 of 1992. Just a while ago U.G. spoke to me on the telephone. I have been waiting for three days for his call. Just today they installed a new telephone in U.G.'s cottage in Yercaud.

"When are you coming here?" asks U.G.

"When would you like us to come?"

"You don't need to come. You are not needed," says U.G. in a joking voice. "The owner of this house is offering to build a special *ashram* for me. He says he will call it 'U.G. *Ashram*'. I vetoed it saying 'Never'."

I told him I was going to Hyderabad. “Don’t invite my daughter Bharati here.” U.G.’s admonition made me smile.

What sort of a person is this? Is he a *Jivanmukta*? Is he an *Atmajnani*? I was reminded of what Marissa, an Italian friend of U.G., said many years ago. Those were the early days of her acquaintance with U.G. After hearing from her about U.G. and after meeting him, her father apparently said: “Damned be the day you met that man called U.G. Your life will never be the same again.” I have no doubt that these words are literally true, not just in Marissa’s case, but with everyone who has met U.G.

“Why did this U.G. happen to me? It seems as though that I have voluntarily invited the devil into my house at my own expense.” There is not a day on which Mr Brahmachari Siva Rama Sarma, who had undergone tremendous upheavals after meeting U.G., does not wail: “By inviting him [U.G.] to Bangalore, I brought total disaster for myself.”

“But isn’t that a great blessing? Does that happen to everyone?” some inquire thoughtfully.

“On whomsoever I bestow my grace, *him* I shall rob of all that he has.” It’s amazing to notice in how many ways and in how many contexts U.G. demonstrates the truth of this statement of his. Be that as it may, the number of Brahmachari’s friends such as myself, who regard the “disaster” that happened to him as a great blessing, is increasing day by day.

#### **4. U.G. arrives in Bangalore**

When was it that I met U.G. in Bangalore for the first time? It was long ago, in December of 1969. Even now I am deeply saddened when I think of my condition before I met U.G.

What sort of life did I live! I wasn’t interested in worldly values. My goal in life was to strive for some undefined spiritual experiences. I was wandering around visiting different gurus and *ashrams*, listening to their various teachings, and running around ceaselessly with the belief that there was something to be found somewhere. Those were the days when, at last, there was a respite in Ramanasthan, (my elderly friend Mr Chalam’s residence) in Arunachala presided over by Sowris (Chalam’s daughter). I tasted a new life in the compassionate company of the sage Chalam. Those were the days when I dedicated my entire life to the worship of the Lord of Arunachala. Ever since I found my refuge in Chalam in 1964, how many times did I run to Ramanasthan each year! Shau (Sowris) was my revered deity; she was for me the Lord of Arunachala in person. As the devout Prahlada said in the myth of Bhagavata, I longed to stay in the remembrance of the Lord even while

drinking, eating, talking, sleeping or engaged in any other activity. Nothing concerned me except my worship of and meditation on the Lord of Arunachala.

Extraordinary experiences and visions occurred during my meditation. I felt as if my liberation was close at hand, that there wasn't much more to be striven for, that I had 'crossed the bridge', and almost arrived at the point of self-realisation. What enthusiasm!

I had been working at a job in Bangalore. Some friends and I ran the Sankara's School of Culture and a hostel for college students. Not caring about the consequences for my family, which depended for their livelihood on the salary that I earned, I lived in Arunachala that year (1969). A series of letters from my friends and well-wishers trying to persuade me to return to Bangalore did not move me out of Arunachala.

When I look back after 27 years, that year of 1969 seems unthinkable even now: how I walked crazily into danger without looking back or ahead, and how many shocks had I experienced!

In just two months of my stay in Ramanasthan, I came to realise the extent of my spirituality. I saw how much were my spiritual experiences weaker compared to the strength of my sexual urges. My sexual and romantic passions gradually clouded the presence of the Lord of Arunachala in my heart, where I mistakenly believed I had permanently established Him. This struck a great blow to my ego, which believed that I had become very holy. In a word, my spirituality was quickly transformed into a sexcapade.

"The source for both God and sex is the same. As long as you think of God, there is always sex in its shadow," says U.G.

I now understand the value of this saying. But in those days I was very confused. "Why am I so deluding myself? The mind that freed itself from so many attractions, why is it pining so much for such a trifle? Is this a test? O Lord, please give me strength. Please get me out of this mire." Just as I was praying thus, I felt that I was sinking deeper into the mire.

\* \* \*

That evening, I spoke to 'Father' [Mr Chalam] who was sitting alone: "Father, I want to talk to you about something."

Chalam looked at me with attention. A poem from Chalam's work *Sudha* crossed my mind: "My life came to the point of saying, 'Lady, let me go,'" I quoted without much elaboration. From the little I said that sage of love immediately understood my condition much more clearly than I had myself.

He looked at me intently for a moment and said in a quivering voice, “But you don’t have a lady here....”

“Yes, I do. That is why I have this torment,” I said.

There were a few moments of silence. Then Chalam said emphasizing each word: “Present all this precisely to *Iswara*. He will take care of it. You don’t worry.”

*Iswara* (God) [is believed to] reside in Sowris, also called Shau. My unshakable faith in the idea that *Iswara* in person was conducting through Sowris all the affairs [of Ramanasthan] had already been shaken. Regardless of how much I wanted to keep my faith, there was only betrayal and rebellion in me.

I had doubts about all my beliefs and all the truths, which I had adopted as the foundation of my life. But why should such doubts and aberrations occur in me when I had dedicated myself to spiritual practice, when I had resolved to myself that I had no other goal in life than self-realisation? Was this the result of the impressions of my past lives? Must I suppress them? Must I go on battling these phantoms? What was the advantage of that?

“Watch Jagadish Bhai. See how carefree he is? He is carefree because he has submitted himself totally to *Iswara*,” said Chalam. Jagadish renounced everything twenty-five years ago when he was still only twenty, and like Bhagavan (Sri Ramana Maharshi), wore a loin-cloth and had firmly implanted himself in Arunachala. Only the day before he was complaining, “These kids are shouting saying, ‘M.G.R., M.G.R. (2) I can’t meditate in the middle of all this noise. I am even dreaming of the shouting about M.G.R.’”

I was shocked at the manner in which Jagadish complained about his problems. Was that all? Must all that renunciation and spiritual practice come to naught in the face of some noise about M.G.R.?

Soon after that I broke away from Ramanasthan and left Arunachala. After almost four months of absence, I returned to this world, to Bangalore, to my usual mechanical life, and to my job, which I managed to retain with friends’ help.

All those who knew me expressed concern over my welfare, but ridiculed me behind my back. They considered me as sort of crazy and gave me counsel to try and save me. That was a hellish torture. I spent hours alone, sitting on a pile of boulders behind the Ramakrishna Ashram, pondering over the state of my life. My mind was filled with disgust at the very thought of spirituality or spiritual practice. Around that time, when I became tired of Vedanta, the teachings of J. Krishnamurti attracted my attention. His *Commentaries on Living* became my routine reading material.

\* \* \*

### **"You put me on a pedestal..."**

One morning I was trying to call U.G. on the phone. I hadn't succeeded even after an hour. I was tired of trying, so I hung up the receiver and sat down. Just then the telephone rang. "Hello," said U.G. "Hello U.G., I have been trying your number for half an hour."

"We too have been trying on this end. The important thing I wanted to tell you was that our Major got an electric shock while he was ironing clothes a while ago. He yelled so loud that we all thought that he might have died. He is still trembling from the shock. He was ironing my clothes. He squeezed them, dried them and started ironing them. He ignored my request not to do it. He thinks that he will get some spiritual vibrations if he washes my clothes. When I assure him that the only shock he will get is an electric shock and that there are no spiritual vibrations or other vibrations, he still doesn't listen to me." So U.G. goes on. You can't extract spiritual undertones from his words, no matter how much you try.

"There are no moral values in what I say; nor is there any social utility. There is no spiritual or religious content either." No matter how vehemently he asserts this, it is hard for us to accept it.

How strange! There is no wise man who can listen when U.G. keeps repeating, "I am not a *jivanmukta*; nor am I an evolved being." People such as Mr Vedantam Satyanarayana, a friend of U.G., try to pull him into an argument saying, "You say you don't know what state you are in. What you say indicates the Advaita state described in Vedanta texts. If you could just come down to our level and..."

Then U.G. complains pointing out, "Where do you think I live? I live right next to you. You put me on a pedestal, on a height. What can I do?" They do not pay attention.

I have been observing this sort of exchange for twenty years, ever since I had met U.G. for the first time.

\* \* \*

**David Barry**



U.G. inevitably comes to mind whenever I see the Vedanta Book House, a bookshop at Chamarajapeta in Bangalore. It was in this shop that I first heard of U.G. I know the owner of the bookstore, Mr Ashwattha Narayana, well. One morning when I went there to see if there were any new books in the store, as if waiting for me, he said, “Come in. You came just at the right moment. The gentleman here says he needs books explaining the philosophy of Sri Ramana Maharshi.”

He introduced me to an American gentleman named David Barry who lived in Ojai, California. We learned a lot about each other in about ten minutes. The interest Barry showed not only in the Vedanta of Ramana Bhagawan, but also in other Vedanta texts impressed me.

“How long have you been in India?” I asked him.

“The last time, I came from Switzerland with a great man called U.G. Krishnamurti. But I stayed behind in this country,” he replied.

When I heard the name Krishnamurti, I mistook it for J. Krishnamurti. “No, no. Not J.K. This man’s name is U.G. I do know J.K. pretty well. U.G. is a brand new *jivanmukta*. If you compare the two, U.G. far surpasses J.K.,” said Barry. Then he talked about his acquaintance with J.K. and U.G., and the manner in which U.G. criticized J.K. After listening to all that he said about U.G., I thought he was some disciple of U.G.

Some days later, when I had met U.G., our conversation turned to Barry. “He is the only man who is my first and last disciple.” I couldn’t stop laughing when U.G. spoke this way.

My acquaintance with Barry, which started in the Vedanta Book House, did not stop there. I took Barry to the Sankara School of Culture, which we ran at that time, and introduced him to all my friends there. All the things which Barry described about U.G. that day interested us very much: U.G.’s Calamity, the strange way in which his senses functioned independently of each other as a result of the chemical changes that took place in his body, the colours that emerged in the places of the Yogic *chakras*, the visitations of personages such as the Buddha, Jesus, Mohammed and Siva, the manner in which he attained naturally the ‘half-woman’ state (attributed to Siva), nullifying the difference between the male and female sexes, (a state which occurred as a result of a hormonal imbalance in his body) – when Barry was describing all these in a dramatic fashion, we listened to him with rapt attention.

We couldn’t believe all the wonderful things that had happened to U.G. Can such things happen to anyone in this day and age? Even if they did happen, can such a strange person be a true *jivanmukta*, if he regarded such unique experiences as natural occurrences and did not give any importance to them? Was the Calamity a real event in U.G.’s life? When did it happen?

“The Calamity occurred in the year 1967 on July 9, exactly on his 49th birthday. There is a beautiful place called Saanen in Switzerland. When U.G. sat under a chestnut tree on that day, it happened,” said Barry.

“What happened?”

“Enlightenment,” said Barry. He talked casually as though he was describing a natural event such as a sunrise.

How strange! Could enlightenment happen in someone’s life as an event like a fruit falling from a tree? Then too, that it happened on that day, his 49th birthday? Apparently the Kaumara Nadi had already predicted that U.G. would attain self-realisation on his 49th birthday. Barry was an eyewitness to all that happened to U.G. after that.

“Barry’s staying with us in the days of my Calamity was in some ways of great use to us,” I heard U.G. state on a later occasion.

“I used to have strange visions. ‘Vision’ not in the sense of seeing something ‘out there’. Rather, my whole consciousness, my existence suddenly assumed the form of the Buddha. I was not there. In my place it was either the Buddha or Siva – sometimes it was some women’s forms – with dishevelled hair and naked breasts – even my sex organs were changed.

“Just for a moment. The moment I looked at that and asked what it was, the division disappeared.

“What is all this? Why is it happening like this? Who are all these forms? There was no fear, only curiosity. Because Barry was there, and because he knew Hindu, Greek, and Chinese myths, he was able to interpret and comment on all these phenomena. He would look for parallels for the things that happened to me in those myths,” says U.G.

I can never forget the scene of three years later, one morning, when U.G. was prodding this best disciple of his with a stick with thorns on it, threatening him. Barry by nature is slow in doing things, and generally lazy. U.G. does not tolerate any dullness or laziness among the people around him. Indeed, efficiency and promptness are synonyms for U.G. “This machine does not know laziness,” maintains U.G., referring to his body. “If your heart gets lazy and stops beating for a few minutes, what will happen to you?” he asks.

That day as U.G. was goading Barry for his laziness, Barry’s imposing figure was grumbling pitifully, pleading, “Is this how you show your compassion?” while he gave U.G. a frightened look. The scene made us all laugh along with U.G.

\* \* \*

### **Brahmachariji brings the *Brahmajnani*:**

After Barry left, all the friends in the hostel talked for a long time about the things they had heard from him about U.G.

That same night, about 9 p.m., suddenly Mr Brahmachari, a spiritual teacher who later became a friend of U.G., appeared outside the hostel. “I don’t have much time. I am just arriving from Mysore to tell you of an important event. Tomorrow morning a *Brahmajnani* is coming to our ‘cave’. Take a leave of absence in your offices, come to the Cave and meet him,” he summoned.

Who is this *Brahmajnani* that was going to sanctify Mr Brahmachari’s Cave? Normally Brahmachariji did not invite anyone to the Cave.

“He is U.G. Krishnamurti. Everyone calls him U.G.”

These words of Mr Brahmachari resounded in my ears. I couldn’t believe myself hearing them. “Who? U.G.? The man who recently arrived from Switzerland?” I asked, containing my amazement and excitement with great difficulty.

Mr Brahmachari turned pale: “How do you know him? When did you meet him?”

“I have heard about him. But I haven’t met him yet. I am going to see him tomorrow morning,” I briefly reported to him what had happened earlier with Barry.

“So, the publicity has started even before he has arrived in Bangalore. I met him in Mysore. When he told me he was coming to Bangalore, I invited him to the Cave.”

“What sort of a man did he appear to be when you saw him?” I asked Mr Brahmachari.

“I have no doubt that he is a true *Brahmajnani*. Wisdom dawned on him in a peculiar way. If you look at his eyes, it is absolutely certain that he is a *jivanmukta*. No matter how long I observed him, I could not find him blinking. His skin is soft and smooth like silk. Why try to know the taste of the curry when you are going to eat it? You will see him tomorrow.” So saying, he left hurriedly.

That night I marvelled: “What is this? Is this a dream or is it true? Or is this an illusion of Vishnu?” Such was the state of my mind. “I heard about him this morning. And tonight I have this news. Are these events coincidental? Or is this a grace from a mysterious force? Or is this merely my good fortune?” I pondered for a long time. “Tonight is a long night. When will it be dawn?” I laughed at my own craziness and dropped off into sleep.

### 5. "Where is the glow in my face?"

It was October 19, 1992. The Major's Maruti car was racing from Yercaud towards Mysore. The Major and U.G. were in the front seats, and Suguna and I were in the back. U.G.'s innocent question, "Why are we going to Mysore?" caused the Major to laugh. Our friends in Mysore did not know that U.G. was coming there. U.G. had no need to see anyone there. Rather, just because we had wanted to see how this circuitous route to Bangalore actually went, we had started on it. It was 1:00 p.m. by the time we stopped at Chamarajanagar on the way to Mysore. We sat at a small table in a restaurant called Sringer. Although it was an inexpensive restaurant, it looked clean.

One of the persons sitting at a table next to us was staring rather intently at U.G. The gentleman looked as if he was struggling with the dilemma of whether or not to talk to U.G. At last he got up, walked to U.G. and asked politely, "Excuse me Sir, I don't know who you are. But I see a glow in your face. Who are you?"

Indeed, it is not easy to identify a *Brahmajnani* in crumpled clothes, untidy hair, and with the tired face of someone who has travelled for six hours. The gentleman didn't seem to be satisfied with the answer given to him by U.G. He said, "You are not an ordinary man. I see a great glow around your face. I am an employee in LIC (Life Insurance Corporation). I am also the President of the Brahma Kumari Sangha." He introduced himself thus and requested U.G.'s address, which U.G. gave him.

The man's name was Nagaraj. The last look of his while walking away from U.G. told me how deeply he was attracted to U.G.

\* \* \*

### "U.G. took away my tiredness...."

The car started moving again towards Mysore. On the way, the Major asked U.G. quietly, "Why did that man Nagaraj feel that way when he saw you? He said he saw some glow."

"How should I know? I even went into the bathroom and looked at myself in the mirror to see if I would find anything. There was no glow or any such thing. I don't know why he felt that way," said U.G. smiling. We all broke into laughter.

“Changing the subject, you made me eat seven *dosais* (pancakes with potato stuffing) today. I am used to having a nap after my lunch. If I happen to doze off while I am driving, that would be the end of all of us. Whatever suits you...” warned the Major, smiling through his thick moustache.

U.G. became drowsy after a little while. While the Major and I were talking, U.G. took a short nap and then sat up, awake. U.G. smiled and said, “Lulled by the car’s bouncing I fell asleep. I slept on your behalf also.”

I observed the Major’s face when he replied, “Very good. I am happy,” and there was not a trace of tiredness in him. I thought that he would want to sleep for a few hours after arriving in Mysore. Instead, he drove us directly back to Bangalore by 7 p.m. having driven non-stop for 12 hours through heavy traffic.

I had never seen the Major drive so long without stopping and resting en route. I congratulated him saying, “How was that possible? You established a new record for yourself.”

“U.G. took away my tiredness and drowsiness. He said it himself that he slept my share of the sleep too. It’s strange. From that moment my tiredness was gone. Otherwise, it would have been impossible to drive 450 kilometres non-stop,” said the Major.

We thought of the scolding we would get if U.G. got wind of this conversation. So, instead I included a narrative of the incident in this book.

\* \* \*

### **Brahmachariji and U.G.**

The next morning Mr Brahmachari appeared in Poornakutee, our house in Bangalore. “How come you went to Mysore while I came here from Mysore to see you?” he frowned upon U.G. People also call him Swami Sarma. Usually we all call him Brahmachariji.

U.G. and Brahmachariji are both unique. You feel that perhaps Krishna and Arjuna were like this in ancient times.

It’s commonly believed that the more adoring a devotee becomes, the more his thinking powers deteriorate. This doesn’t mean that Swamiji is a great devotee of U.G. Nor is he afraid of him. It is typical of Swamiji to fearlessly express himself. It is common for U.G., on the other hand, to tease the Swamiji about the logic of what he says. When these two get together, it is great entertainment for those who gather around them. Nagaraj would say, “You two are made for each other.”

I asked Swamiji that morning: “Swamiji, where did you see U.G. the first time? How did you bring him to Bangalore? You must tell me precisely. I must record everything you say permanently in my book.”

Brahmachariji and I have known each other for about twenty-five years, ever since he started residing in his Cave. Mr Brahmachari’s real name is Siva Rama Sarma. He was brought up in a wealthy family from Mysore. In midlife, he became increasingly detached, and dedicated himself to spiritual life for four decades. He founded the Jnanasram in Bannerughatta. There are facts about him that would amaze even those who knew him merely as the Bannerughatta Swamiji. Only people who know him intimately are aware that he graduated as an M.Sc. in Chemical Engineering and passed the I.A.S. (Indian Administrative Service) examination. As he disliked government jobs, he took a position in the Indian Institute of Science (in those days Tata Institute) and worked as an assistant professor for some years. All his brothers are millionaires, and they have also been adept in political intrigue. They made their millions no matter what political party was in power, and they always capitalized whenever political power changed hands.

U.G. teases Brahmachariji by saying, “Those same qualities your brothers have are active in your blood too.” He also mocks him at times saying, “You don’t live like them. Instead, you adopted this sort of life and lost both the worldly and otherworldly goods.”

It is surprising to notice Brahmachariji, who would usually react violently to anyone saying derogatory things about him, smilingly accepting U.G.’s heckling, mocking and teasing. “He is finished. After he came to me, he has changed a lot. He has become like a cobra whose fangs have been removed,” says U.G. laughing.

When he talks about U.G., Swamiji becomes animated, and his anger and emotion express themselves eloquently more in Kannada than in English. It is amusing to see that when U.G. tries to stop him by jokingly saying, “*Kannada beda* (‘No Kannada’),” Swamiji always asserted himself with his broken Tamil, “*Sariyapocci, iduda venda* (‘All right, but we don’t want this’).”

\* \* \*

### **Brahmachariji invites U.G.**

“First, Dr Ramakrishna Rao wrote a letter to me in 1969,” recounted Swamiji, as though he was recalling that letter. “He not only narrated the unique happenings that had happened to U.G., he also wrote: ‘You haven’t met a person like him before in your life. Ordinary terms like *Brahmajnani* and

*jivanmukta* have to be given new meanings in order to describe this man.’ He also sent me a copy of U.G.’s horoscope.”

Dr Ramakrishna Rao was a boyhood friend of Swamiji. He was a Professor of Philosophy in Mysore University. Swamiji has great belief in astrology. He believes, on the basis of his own personal experience, that we can know a person’s true character more clearly through an examination of his horoscope rather than from his friends’ opinions and accounts of him. He showed the horoscope sent by Professor Ramakrishna Rao to a close friend and well-wisher, Mr Devudu Narasimha Sastry. Few do not know the name of Mr Narasimha Sastry in the Kannada region. He is a great scholar. He not only knew Kannada and Sanskrit well, but was also an astrologer and a devout man. Mr Sastry’s residence was near the Sankara Math in Bangalore, and was also close to the Cave of Mr Brahmachari.

After examining the horoscope of U.G., Mr Sastry said candidly, “No doubt there is something great about this gentleman. However, company with this man is not beneficial to you. That is all I want to say. The rest is up to you.”

Brahmachariji was confused. He knew it was useless to ask, “Why or how?” Brahmachariji wailed, laughing, “In spite of Mr Sastri cautioning me so clearly, if I still went to Mysore to see this great man, what could all this be except my fate?”

Professor Ramakrishna Rao used to live in Saraswatipuram. Brahmachariji was visiting him there. There was a water tank near his house. Suddenly Brahmachariji saw in a small crowd a man in white pajamas and shirt and a full-statured foreigner of medium height. “From the description Ramakrishna Rao gave in his letter, I identified the former as U.G. On the bank of the tank I noticed that U.G.’s chest was more elevated on the left side,” he recalled.

U.G. took Brahmachariji to Professor Ramakrishna Rao’s house, and they talked for quite a while. If the acquaintance that started thus had ended with the meeting, then there would be no need for this story.

When U.G. told Brahmachariji that he was thinking of going to Bangalore, the latter invited him to his place. “Ever since I invited U.G. to my Cave, my life has become like that of the person who invited the passing goddess of pestilence to visit his house,” sighed Mr Brahmachari.

\* \* \*

## **6. U.G.’s first visit to Brahmachariji’s ‘Cave’**

In December 1969, one morning we all gathered in Brahmachariji's Cave, waiting for U.G.'s arrival. I was anxiously awaiting my first meeting with U.G.

There was a big peepul tree in the yard of the Math, and there used to be a two-storey house near the tree. All those surroundings have changed now beyond recognition. There is a legend that the head of the Sringeri Pitha, Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati Swami used to meditate in an ancient cave under that house. When Sri Vidyatirtha Swami permitted Brahmachariji to live in that Cave, Brahmachariji got a two-storey house built on the same rocks and made it habitable.

Around 10:00 a.m. a car stopped in the vicinity of the Cave. As soon as I saw the figure clad in white alighting from the car, I had a strange feeling that I was looking at a very familiar person. "That's U.G.," said someone.

"Hello," said U.G., touching both Brahmachariji's hands. I looked at him intently. Although he looked simple in his white dress, there was some powerful dignity emanating from U.G. His black hair covered his ears. He had a broad forehead indicating a richness of intellect. His large ears hidden behind his hands, which were trying to arrange his hair, reminded me of a sculpture of the Buddha.

His fair complexion seemed fairer in the cool sunshine of December. He appeared almost indistinguishable from the Europeans who were with him. However simple and natural he seemed, there was something strange about him. In his gestures and movements there was the innocence of a child. Most striking of all were his eyes! Although his lips were smiling, there was an uncanny depth to his eyes. I felt as though I was looking into an abyss, as though I was slipping into the depths of an ocean. I stared at him for a while, spellbound.

As soon as U.G. sat on a stone seat in the Cave, some of the friends in our company were ready to shower him with their questions. "I am tired from travelling. We will talk more when we meet again in the evening," said U.G., avoiding the questions, and making some small talk. Valentine, a Swiss lady who had been U.G.'s friend for many years, however, did not sit still for even a moment. She was walking around the Cave, examining its surroundings as though she were familiar with them.

\* \* \*

**There is no *moksha*, no *jivanmukti*, and no *Atman***

Later, I heard U.G.'s voice ringing like a bell as I was climbing the stairs of the Cave. In the library room upstairs about twenty pairs of eyes were riveted on U.G. sitting in a corner. I found room for myself and sat at the threshold of the room on a reed mat. Outside was the cool sunshine of the winter afternoon, and the sound of the peepul tree leaves moving with the wind.



“There is no *moksha*, no *jivanmukti*, and no *Atman*. And there is no such thing as self-realisation. Those are all lies. There is only the ‘natural state’. I don’t like to use your terms such as enlightenment, *jivanmukti*, *nirvana*, or *moksha* to refer to this state. Those terms suggest some other meanings. They sound weird to me. When I talk about the ‘natural state’, it is not the state of someone who has attained self-realisation or God-realisation. It is not something created through self-effort. This natural state is always living and spontaneous. This happens to one in a billion, accidentally. It does not result from your effort. It is acausal. And why this natural state happens to that one and not anyone else, I don’t know.”

**Q:** When did this happen to you?

**U.G.:** In my forty-ninth year.

**Q:** Then are you saying that none of the spiritual practices you did for so many years, that none of the means you adopted, were useful in attaining that natural state?

**U.G.:** Without a doubt. Not only that. I would say that they were obstacles. I am saying that it is a wonder that the state occurred *in spite of* my doing all those things.

First of all, what is all the search and seeking for? It is your search that takes you away from the natural state you always are in. All your seeking is in the wrong direction. Wouldn’t you remain in your natural state forever if your search stopped?

It is foolish to try to purify your consciousness through some practices in order to attain the natural state. That consciousness is so pure that all the experiences you consider as sacred and holy are a contamination of it. They are an unbearable filth, intolerable contamination. Once the barriers within your consciousness are broken – not because of any act of will or volition on your part – once the flood gates are open, everything will be washed away, all experiences – good and bad, sacred and profane, divine or demonic – all divine visions, all ultimate states will be washed away from the consciousness. Krishna consciousness, Buddha consciousness, God consciousness, sages, saints and prophets, Jesus, Mohammed, Mahavira, enlightened men, yogis – all of them must be washed away in that flood.

It is only then that consciousness becomes clear. There is a song called ‘The Saints Go Marching In’ in Christian devotional literature. I change it to ‘The Saints Go Marching Out’. Their very existence is filth. When all that is flushed out, when consciousness remains pure and clean, no contamination, no filth will ever touch it again. After that your past will never stick to you, or bother you, and that will be the end of you.

While I was listening to U.G.'s words, all the things which Barry told me about, such as the way in which Calamity happened to him, ran through my head. Suddenly, images of Shau (Sowris), and the manifestation of *Iswara* in her in August 1951,(3) flashed through my mind.

There was a commotion in the room – the group of friends was smothering U.G. with questions. My own mind was filled with questions. What's going on here? What's the truth of the matter? Whom should I trust? Should I believe Shau who says, "There is God. Seek *Iswara*'s refuge from moment to moment." Or, should I believe U.G. who was saying, "God consciousness, Buddha consciousness, extraordinary visions are all equal to dirt. Until they are all flushed out, consciousness will not become clear." I continued to listen to U.G. while my mind struggled with these thoughts.

### **The questioner is the question**

**U.G.:** Why do you ask me such useless questions? "Is there a God? What is the meaning of life? Is there rebirth? What will happen to us when we die?" Why do you torment yourself with such endless questions?

As for myself, I have no questions except questions about day-to-day affairs: "What is the way to the Cave of Mr Brahmachari? When is such and such a plane flight?" Except for such questions, no other questions occur to me. Many great teachers have been answering your questions for centuries. Why are you not satisfied with them? You believe that I am a *Brahmajnani* and a *jivanmukta* and you want to know if what I have seen confirms your beliefs. As a matter of fact, all these questions are others' questions, not your own. If there is a question that you can call your own, it won't let you rest for one minute. There is no question apart from the questioner. The two are the same. If the question goes, the questioner goes with it. Because you don't want to come to an end, you hang on to your question forever. That's why you cannot stop the question even if you know there is no answer to it.

\* \* \*

**U.G.:** Is there such a thing as enlightenment? As far as I am concerned, what is there are only bodily processes. That is the natural state. Your existence is a physiological state, not a psychological transformation. It [enlightenment] is not a mental state of being unconscious one day and conscious the next day. If this natural state ever happens, it will explode every cell, every nerve and every gland. This is a chemical change, a strange alchemy within the body. Unless such an irreversible change occurs, there is no release for the body from the stranglehold of thought. You cannot imagine how deeply, into every cell, thought penetrates throughout the body.

\* \* \*

**Q:** Why am I not in this natural state you are describing now?

**U.G.:** Because you are trying to understand what I am saying. Through thought and thinking you cannot understand anything. But that [thought] is the only instrument. When that [instrument] cannot be used, and there is no other instrument, what is there to understand? There is nothing to understand. That's what you need to know – that there is nothing at all to know. Here [in me] that is clear. Nobody knows how that became clear [to me], *viz.*, that there is nothing to know. That's why I am unable to explain it to you. If the understanding that there is nothing to understand, nothing to know, arises in you, then you wouldn't be here with me for one moment. Then you wouldn't go to someone else either. Your search would stop, forever.

\* \* \*

I listened to U.G. talk about many things to the same group of people in the same room for the next six evenings.

When U.G. talked about the Calamity that happened to him, and told us about the irreversible chemical changes that occurred in his body during the following six days, describing the colours that surfaced on his skin in the places where there are ductless glands [inside the body], Vidwan Seshachala Sarma asked if the marks were still present. U.G. answered: "Many of them have subsided. Look and see if you can see some of them on my back." As he spoke, U.G. removed his shirt and showed his back. We could see some traces of coloured bulges in blue and green colours. "That's it. There is no spiritual or metaphysical content in this. This is purely biological and physical."

"If the endlessly continuing thought process is cut off even once, even for a thousandth of a second, then thoughts can never be linked again. That break will create tremors throughout the body like a terrible earthquake. Like an atomic explosion it will shake, move and burn every nerve and blood cell in the body. With that the thinker is gone. The senses start functioning independently of each other. From then on all bodily processes are carried on automatically, like a machine. Only the 'you' who you think runs the machine is not there."

When I heard U.G.'s words, on the one hand I was amazed and astounded, and on the other hand, I had an unknown fear, an uneasiness, an anxious feeling as if the ground under my feet was slipping away.

Was there nothing? Were all my hopes for a spiritual life in vain? Were all my endeavours a waste of time?

How true is the poem in Chalam's *Sudha!*

It is unwise to go round in a circle leading nowhere for some unknown,  
chasing mirages which delude us into thinking there is something which,  
if we strive for it, will be revealed.

It's a futile waste of an invaluable lifetime.

One afternoon, I went to the Cave early before the crowd gathered there. I felt that I must talk to U.G. in person. I could not remain quiet with all the chaos created by the storm raging inside me. I saw U.G. standing on the upstairs balcony. It was 4 o'clock in the afternoon. Ranganatha Rao and I made our salutations as we climbed the stairs.

A smile flashed on U.G.'s face. All three of us sat on the balcony overlooking the big and tall peepul tree. There was a paved square bench around the tree. The peepul leaves were shining, reflecting the cool sunshine of the afternoon. U.G. was asking casually about the standard of living in Bangalore and the jobs in our factory. After a while, a question suddenly broke out of me: "U.G., you say there is no such thing as release or *moksha*. Then what is the meaning of self-realisation?"

He answered, "To realise that there is no such thing as *Atman*, self or the ego is self-realisation," and paused.

"All right. Ramana Maharshi also answered this question in the same way," I thought to myself. "If there is nothing, then who is it that knows this? For whom is the self-realisation?" I asked U.G.

"That is why I say that even that self-realisation is a myth," U.G. smiled as he said this. I couldn't think of a response. How could I proceed further if my feet were tied down like this?

U.G. was looking at me intently. Was self-realisation all false? Or was this reply an evasion? How true were his words? Why should I believe them? My mind continued to question. Didn't all those wise men, prophets and *avatars* announce that we should know ourselves? All that they ceaselessly emphasised – that to know ourselves is our sole aim in life, and that to attain unity was the goal of our life – was all that false? Were all the assurances given by them merely writing on water? Were all the teachings that great sages ranging from the ancient Buddha to the more recent Ramakrishna and Ramana Maharshi taught in a unanimous voice – were all of them lies?

U.G. responded, "I don't know what they taught. If you ask me, all I can say is that all those people are misleading you. What they said and taught might be true for them. But you know yourself that those teachings don't operate in your daily life and in your own experience. They all deceived

themselves thinking that they had achieved something, and they deceived others and are still continuing to do so. This was evident to me even when I was young. Since then I have lost all my beliefs. To question the beliefs and teachings which you have taken as true is to question those who taught them. You are not ready to throw out as bogus all those whom you have revered. You are afraid that that will put an end to your very existence.”

There was trembling inside me when I heard U.G.’s words. What was the use of my living if those whom I trusted as my teachers and whom I adored – Shau and Ramana Bhagawan – were false? How would it [their teaching] benefit anyone?

The birds were flying through the sky in flocks. From the peepul tree came noises of various kinds of birds. My mind was groaning with untold agony. Suddenly U.G. turned to me. He said, “Why are you so concerned about all these things? You are young and you must still marry. You must rise in your job. Why bother with all this nonsense?”

For a moment I was stunned. My face blushed like the setting sun at his words. “I don’t have much interest in those [worldly things]. I feel all those pleasures are momentary,” I said in a low tone.

U.G. said, “If you think they are momentary, then you must think that the pleasure of self-realisation is permanent. Right?” There was a mischievous smile on his lips. I turned pale at these words.

“It’s not permanent?” thought a big demon in myself.

Looking at me compassionately, U.G. said, “You must believe my words. There is nothing permanent. Permanent happiness and infinite wisdom are illusory notions created by the nostril-closing [indicating meditation] phonies who endlessly discuss ‘This is real and that is unreal’, and who have nothing better to do. You trust those people and lose your interest in things which are real, and then search for non-existent things. If that is not slipping into a lowly state, what is?”

All the ancient sages who had taken residence in my blood boiled in anger at U.G.’s words. All the scriptural testimonies they had quoted remained as mere prattling in my mind. There remained one last weapon in my endless arsenal: “You say that there is no God. You say that God is an illusion which man has created out of fear. Then you don’t think there is a power beyond the reach of the mind that orders this universe?”

U.G. answered: “I will say with certainty that there is no superior power outside of man and different from him. If there is any such power, that power is not different from you. The lowly mosquito that is sucking your blood is the expression of that divine power. That is why I say it is

irrelevant to discuss the question of God. But I am not advocating, like Ramaswami Naicker [a South Indian leader who advocated political rights of non-Brahmins], the destruction of temples or burning of scriptures. Nothing is gained by doing such things.”

We could hear the sound of Vedic recitation (of Rudra Patha) from someone’s house far away. Some ladies were under the peepul tree, perambulating around the tree with folded hands. I felt like parodying a Gurajada poem:

If men keep saying “Oh God”, how will the country prosper?

It was getting dark. U.G. said in a low voice, “These questions are not new. Many have asked them before. In reality, they are not your questions. Besides these, do you have any question that is your own, that is not anyone else’s?”

I started to think. “Who am I?” Is that my own question? Isn’t it Bhagawan’s question? Yes. How can that question be mine? Just because I became identified with Shau’s song which said ‘Who am I, Bhagawan, indeed, who am I, Bhagawan?’ does the question then become mine? What is that question, the one question that will not let me rest, that will not let me get entangled, the question that will haunt me, torment me, that will burn me alive – what is that question?” I leaned against the wall and remained staring into nothingness. The street lamp flashed on, dispelling the darkness. I woke up from my reverie and looked for U.G. by my side. U.G. had gone inside, and I heard him talking with the friends there.

“If there is any help I can give you, it is this: to help you formulate your own question by yourselves. Beyond that, I cannot help anyone. Beyond that, no one needs any help,” U.G. was saying to someone. While I was listening to these words, I felt as if a thousand lights went on all at once.

\* \* \*

### **I report on U.G. to Chalam’s family**

It was January 1, 1970. I was travelling by bus from Bangalore to Arunachala. The events of the past week were rolling around in my mind like a series of movie pictures. I felt a sense of longing when I recalled the last day on which I had said goodbye to U.G.

U.G. was talking to some friends upstairs. “U.G., goodbye,” I said, joining my hands together.

Saying, “You are leaving?” U.G. came close to me in one big step.

“I am leaving tomorrow morning for Arunachala,” I said. He already knew that I was a friend of Chalam.

“Please say hello to Mr Chalam and his family. When I was living in Gudivada, I knew Mr Chalam. Mr Chalam’s wife, Mrs Ranganayakamma used to write a lot of letters to me, some crazy letters,” he said, quickly reaching for my hands, pressing them and letting them go. Then, again, he put both his hands on my shoulders, and squeezing, slid his hands down to my elbows and instantly let them go. He said, “O.K., you go now,” and without another word moved towards other friends as though nothing had happened. I was speechless for some moments, as if I had a shock, and stood motionless.

From my shoulders to the tips of my fingers I felt a strange numbness from U.G.’s touch. “What happened? Why am I feeling like that?” I was thinking to myself as I was going down the stairs to leave. In all the years since this occurrence, I noticed U.G. doing similar interesting things like this to a few others. “I don’t know anything. Whatever you feel is your own illusion. There is no energy transmission, nothing,” says U.G., if you ask him about it.

It was evening by the time I arrived in Arunachala. When I arrived at Ramanasthan, Chalam, Shau and other friends were out on a walk. I went looking for them. I found them at the Draupadi temple. I was eager to relate my U.G. story to ‘Father’ and Shau. The latter made me talk a lot. I showed her the photo of U.G. that Valentine gave me. She said, “We see his body, but for him his body was burnt long ago.” These words impressed everyone.

“What is his full name?” Shau asked.

“Uppaluri Gopala Krishnamurti,” I said.

“What? Uppaluri? Father, he seems to be the grandson of Mr Tenali Venkatappayya,” she said, as she showed the photo to Mr Chalam. In two minutes the question was settled. The unknown person, U.G., was found to be a close relative of Shau; they are cousins. “We saw him long ago in my childhood. At that time he was of the age of Ravi [Chalam’s eldest son]. Ever since we were children we would practise Yoga and meditation. We would address each other by our relationship. My mother tried her best to marry us in those days,” said Shau with great mirth.

At that time ‘Amma’ (Mr Chalam’s wife, Mrs Ranganayakamma) was in a life-and-death crisis in Arunachala. “Amma, apparently your Uppaluri Gopala Krishnamurti came to Bangalore. It seems he has become a great guru. Chandrasekhar brought us the news that he said hello to you,” spoke Shau in Amma’s ear. There was some change in her facial expression. She said, “Sadasiva,” and closed her

eyes.

On January 17, 1970 Amma closed her eyes for good.

### NOTES

1. Mr Gudipati Venkatachalam ('Chalam' was his pen name] was a well-known writer in Telugu. His many essays, novels, short stories, plays and poems reflected his revolt against oppression of women, against the caste system and against various social injustices; they also expressed his lifelong spiritual quest. Later in his life, along with his daughter, Sowris, and the rest of his family, he moved from Andhra Pradesh to Tiruvannamalai, the abode of Sri Ramana Maharshi, where he spent the rest of his life practising the teachings of the Maharshi.
2. M.G.R. is a movie star in Tamil movies. Children in Ramanasthan spend time constantly talking about his movies.
3. In Sri Ramanasthan they would celebrate every August 15 as the day of God's incarnation. Shau stopped these celebrations in 1971. What was the reason? Shau said that U.G. appeared to her and commanded that such celebrations in Ramanasthan should no longer take place.



## Stopped in Our Tracks

### Part Two

#### **Dr Desiraju:**

The day was October 10, 1992. Suguna arrived in Yercaud with Mr and Mrs Satyanarayana and Sashidhar, all friends of U.G. Suguna said, “Dr Desiraju died from a heart attack. They announced it in the papers.” I was shocked to hear the news. He was a renowned neurophysiologist with the National Institute of Mental Health. He was from Andhra. Although I didn’t know him well, the reason for my shock was that, seventeen years ago, he was the one who was responsible for letting U.G.’s view of life be known to the public in U.G.’s own words.

I can never forget that event in my life. It happened on December 23, 1976. That year U.G. had set up his camp on the street opposite the Mallikarjuna temple in an old building. The rooms upstairs were big. In the long hallway the red-cemented floor was polished well and covered with a rug. Dr Varma, Dr Desiraju, Dr Kapoor (the former director) and six other doctors came from NIMHANS (National Institute of Mental Health and Neuroscience) to talk to U.G.

My friends and I were waiting eagerly for a discussion to take place. U.G. spoke continuously for two and a half hours, answering the doctors’ questions. After hearing U.G.’s description of his Natural State and how his senses functioned in that state, Dr Desiraju asked, “I would like to know precisely how all these things happened to you. I will be happy if you could tell us about them in as much detail as you can remember. Just assume I am a Nachiketa.”(1)

U.G. smiled in a mild manner and said, “That’s a long story. It’s not so easy.”

**Dr Desiraju:** We would like to hear it.

**U.G.:** I can’t. I’ll have to tell you the whole story. It takes a lot of time. My biography goes only so far; then it stops. After that, I have nothing to report.

Any of my biographers’ aim is only to establish that my childhood upbringing, my education, the spiritual practices I performed, all brought about this Natural State. If I try to tell them that all those things were only obstacles and that whatever happened to me happened in spite of them, they don’t want to listen to me, because then they can’t make their story juicy. They all want to know how this sort of thing happened, and in what way it happened. When I tell them that this is acasual, they become disappointed. My background is of no value to me. How can this be a model for you? Your background is different. Each background is unique.

**Dr Desiraju:** It is not that I want to make your biography into a model. It's just like looking at the sun and the moon or the pole star flickering in the distant skies. I am not necessarily requesting this in order to imitate you. That's why I said I am a Nachiketa. I shall not leave this place until I learn the truth from you.

**U.G.:** I am not opposed to your request, but I am unable to tell you. I don't know where to start. It looks like I have to tell you the whole story.

**Dr Desiraju:** We are ready to hear it all.

That was how Dr Desiraju, the veritable Nachiketa, provoked and persuaded U.G. to tell his whole life story. We recorded all of it on tape. Rodney Arms edited the material and published it as the first chapter in the book *the Mystique of Enlightenment*.

## **8. First Visit to Madras**

U.G. underwent much physical turmoil after the Calamity that befell him in 1967. Either because of the chemical changes that occurred in his body, or because of energy outbursts, his whole body would undergo contortions as though a wet cloth was being wrung out. At the time, Mr Desikachar, who was well known as a Yoga teacher in India, happened to be in Saanen, Switzerland, where U.G. was also. He became acquainted with U.G. and would visit U.G. and spend time with him under the pretext of eating South Indian meals prepared by U.G.

Observing U.G.'s bodily condition, he opined that if U.G. practised Yoga his body would quiet down. He told U.G. that his father, Sri Krishnamacharya, was in fact more capable of teaching Yoga than himself.

At Mr Desikachar's insistence, U.G. came to Madras with Valentine at the end of that year. There he started practising Yoga under the guidance of Sri Krishnamacharya. Sri Krishnamacharya was even more renowned than Mr Desikachar as a Yoga teacher. He was also a scholar and a centenarian. U.G. was surprised to find that the Yoga postures Sri Krishnamacharya taught proved contrary to the natural energy movements in U.G.'s body. U.G. remarked about this to Sri Krishnamacharya. The latter quoted verses from the *Bhagavad Gita* substantiating his methods. With that, U.G. lost the little faith he had had before in the worth of Yoga practice. Because, by his nature, he wouldn't brush aside anything so quickly, U.G. wanted to give this Yoga practice a good chance, and continued to practise it for three years. So, he practised all the postures prescribed by Sri Krishnamacharya faithfully. He examined minutely all the effects of Yoga on his body, and thus proved to himself beyond doubt that

those practices were all of no avail to him.

At that time, U.G. lived in the house in Hanumanthanagar in Bangalore. I too stayed in that house for a few days. As was my practice, I got up early in the morning, took a coldwater bath and practised some Yoga postures in the manner taught to me by Sowris. During my practice, U.G. sometimes came in and corrected me in some places. For instance, he admonished me not to open my eyes during the headstand.

The truth that U.G. finally realised from his own experience was that Yoga does more harm than good to the body. U.G. says that the movements the body goes through spontaneously as it is coming out of the state of 'death' are closer to the Tai Chi movements than to the postures of Yoga. Also, U.G. says that it's a mistake to perform the 'Corpse Posture' (*Savasana*) at the end of the Yoga practice. He insists that it should come at the beginning.

\* \* \*

### **Meeting with the Sankaracharya of Sringeri**

That year in Madras, U.G. ran into his boyhood friend, Mr Tummalapalli Ramalingeswara Rao. Mr Tummalapalli was a great scholar in the Sanskrit, Telugu and English. He was also adept in mantras. U.G. at that time was looking for a more suitable place in India, a place with a more temperate climate than Madras. When he heard of U.G.'s interests, Mr Tummalapalli suggested Sringeri as the proper place. "I am well acquainted with the Jagadguru [literally 'World Teacher' – the title of Sri Sankaracharya] of Sringeri Pitha, Sri Abhinava Vidya Tirtha Swami. Things will work out well for you there," he assured U.G. and Valentine and led them to Sringeri.

U.G. liked the environs of Sringeri very much and also the peaceful climate of the banks of the river Tunga. He wanted to rent or buy a place and live there. Mr Ramalingeswara Rao introduced U.G. to the Swami of Sringeri.(2) When he heard of the Calamity that had happened to U.G., he said, "I must talk to you in private," and led U.G. into his private chambers, which were located in a garden called Narasimhavana on the far side of the river Tunga. It is noteworthy that he allowed Valentine also into that room. The Swami sat on the Teacher's Seat (*Guru Pitha*), and U.G. and Valentine sat in front of him.

"When I heard of the extraordinary things that happened to you, I was reminded of my guru Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati," the Jagadguru said. "I don't know of these things in my own personal experience. But my teacher used to describe his experiences just the way they have occurred in your

case. We were afraid that perhaps his mind was deranged. It is very rare that the body survives the shock of such a thoughtless state. According to the scriptures, within twenty-one days after such an event the body dies. If the body could sustain its vital force and not die, it must surely be for the sake of saving humanity. There is no doubt about it.”(3)

U.G., on the contrary, had no inclination to save the world or uplift humanity. He listened silently as the teacher spoke. Then he presented to the Jagadguru his proposal for establishing his residence near Sringeri in a solitary place away from people. In reply, the Jagadguru said, “I will be responsible for getting you any place around here, if you so wish. But your idea of living alone will never work. Whether you stay in a jungle or in a mountain cave, people won’t stop coming to see you.”

The teacher’s warning made U.G. abandon his resolve to stay away from people.

At that time, Dr K.B. Ramakrishna Rao was the principal of the JCBM College in Sringeri. The Jagadguru invited him to visit and introduced him to U.G.

The following are the highlights of Professor Ramakrishna Rao’s account of his early acquaintance with U.G.:

“In those days I was studying Kundalini Yoga deeply. My chief daily activities then were reading books about that Yoga, discussing it with people who had some experience of it and practising it as much as possible. After I met U.G., in the presence of the Jagadguru, I invited him to my home. I detected some uniqueness and divinity in him. When I saw him walking with shoes even inside the house, I thought it must be a habit he had acquired in the West. I was surprised when he said that this was not the case, but that if he put his bare feet on the ground, he would be bothered by the electromagnetic energy transmitted from the ground. When I heard later all the things that had happened to U.G., I was amazed and wonderstruck.

“To satisfy my curiosity, U.G. showed me the colours that appeared on his skin at the base of his neck, on his chest and around his navel. The common opinion is that the energy centres called *Nadi Chakras*, which Kundalini Yoga talks about, are merely psychological. I would wonder how, if that were the case, the ancients were able to ascribe forms, measurements and colours to them? When I heard the things U.G. had undergone, I felt that, for the first time, I had new answers to my doubts, answers I had never heard before. U.G. explained that at precisely the same locations as the Nadi centres there are some ductless glands, and that when and if the mechanism of thought comes to a stop, all the energies that are dormant in those glands become active and bring about biological and chemical changes, and that the result was indeed the Natural State. As I continued to observe U.G.’s actions and movements, I gained the firm conviction that he was truly a living example of the Natural

State he had been describing. I felt that such new truths from such a unique vision must become accessible to as many people as possible.”

That evening, Dr Ramakrishna Rao and a group of his friends led U.G. and Valentine to the top of Rishyasringa Hill adjacent to the Tunga River. They all sat under a tree. They were curious to hear the story of U.G.’s Calamity. U.G. didn’t like to disappoint them; so he narrated, for about an hour, all the things that had happened to him. It turned out to be a long lecture. It must be in Sringeri that U.G. probably first started lecturing again after he quit his lecturing in the USA. many years before.

From that day till now, in all of these twenty-five years, how many thousands of people, from all corners of the earth, have come to hear U.G.’s talks! Between then and now U.G.’s manner of speaking has not changed. He never gets up on a platform. He never accepts invitations from institutions. If anyone comes to him and asks him questions, he answers in the manner he feels appropriate.

\* \* \*

### **Coffee estate guesthouse in Chikkamagaluru**

That year U.G. stayed for a month in the guesthouse of a coffee estate in a place called Tirthagundi. There is an interesting story behind his coming to this coffee estate:

In the state of Karnataka, Chikkamagaluru district is famous for its coffee estates. It is five thousand feet high from the sea level. Many places in that district compete with each other for their natural beauty. That day, U.G., Valentine and David Barry were staying at a Travellers’ Bungalow in a place called Jayapura. Suddenly, U.G. announced, “Valentine, we are not going to stay here any longer. Let’s leave.”

Valentine was shocked. She knew that it would be useless to ask him, “Where are we going?” So she packed her luggage and got ready to go. Meanwhile, a stranger came into the Bungalow saying that he had heard that there was a ‘Yogi’ there.

“How does that Yogi look?” asked U.G.

“Just like you,” he replied, saluting U.G.

His name was Subbarao. He was the manager of a coffee estate in Tirthagundi near Jayapura. One night his servant had a dream in which a Yogi appeared in white pajamas and *jubba* and taught him many interesting philosophical truths in a language that he could understand. After relating his dream, he said to his master, “What that Swami taught was completely opposed to what you say. What you

say is all false.” As the servant spoke with such conviction, Subbarao did not question him.

That morning the servant saw U.G. near the Travellers’ Bungalow and identified him as the Yogi who had appeared in his dream. He ran to his master and reported that the Yogi who had appeared in his dream was staying in the Travellers’ Bungalow on the outskirts of the town.

“If you have no objection, you can stay in our coffee estate guesthouse. You will be quite comfortable there. There is also a cook,” he said. U.G. went in his car to look at the place and then accepted his invitation. He moved there with Valentine, David Barry and the luggage. All this happened in a matter of minutes.

Since then, until 1973, U.G. and Valentine would go to Tirthagundi whenever they came to India.

\* \* \*

### **The Natural State is being able to act efficiently....**

When U.G. left Bangalore for Bombay in December 1969, I never thought that I would meet him again. After six months, I unexpectedly got a picture-postcard from him. By that time Brahmachariji had vacated his Cave and no one knew where he was. U.G., in his note, enquired after everyone’s welfare and asked me for Brahmachariji’s address. I did not reply to that letter. I can’t explain why I didn’t. I didn’t quite understand why U.G. wrote to me when he had so many other friends. “Maybe he wrote to many others as well. Maybe one of them will reply to him.” I now feel guilty for not replying.

Before a month had elapsed, I received another letter from U.G. This time he wrote care of Chalam in Ramanasthan. He must have thought that I had gone there. Sowris forwarded that letter to me. U.G. didn’t mention anything special in it, but hinted that he was thinking of coming to Bangalore that year [1970], also. I received another letter from Mysore from Valentine. By this time it was December again.

Valentine wrote that she and U.G. would be passing through Bangalore on their way to Madras and asked me to rent a cottage for them in the Woodlands Hotel. When I saw that letter, I reproached myself for not replying to U.G.’s previous letters. Just then, a friend of mine called Jagannath was getting his newly-built house ready for a house-warming function. I felt that a separate house for U.G. and Valentine would be better than a cottage in a hotel and wrote accordingly to Valentine. I received a telegram within four days asking me to rent that house and send U.G. confirmation of the rental.

I spoke to my friend, rented the house for the first week of January 1971 and wrote accordingly to U.G. “We are arriving next Sunday by car,” U.G. informed me by telegram a week before he came.

We were at that time involved in arranging a programme in Bangalore for the following Friday, to celebrate Sri Ramana's birthday under the auspices of our Sankara School of Culture. For that day, we were planning different sorts of meetings, a big dinner for the invitees, and group devotional singing. As I was immersed in those arrangements, I didn't think of making arrangements for U.G.'s minimal needs in the new house.

Unexpectedly, on Friday afternoon, U.G. and Valentine got out of a taxi at our hostel. I was so surprised to see them, as I was expecting them on Sunday. The celebration was still going on in the hall. U.G. and Valentine waited patiently until the festivities came to an end. I still can't believe even now that along with all the others, U.G. received the "Grace" when incense was burned to signal the completion of the celebration, by showing his hands to the incense and pressing them against his eyes.

U.G. even dined with all of us in the hostel that day. I must pay a tribute to U.G.'s patience: he never made himself conspicuous, he never caused any anxiety or worry to anyone as a result of his presence, and he patiently bore all the commotion of the celebration until I had time to attend to his needs. It was evening when at last I was able to take U.G. and Valentine to the house I had arranged for them. We had the house all right, but the rooms were barren, with not a single piece of furniture in them, not even a reed mat. An empty house welcomed us. I thought regretfully that if I had had another day at my disposal, I could have catered to all their basic necessities.

"I like this house. If the house owner has no objection, we will rent it for three weeks," U.G. said. Then he turned to me and said, smiling, "You eat with us tonight."

"Is he making fun of me?" I thought. There was nothing in the house. The kitchen was empty. There wasn't even a spoon. What would they cook and what would we eat? I was completely at a loss. But before my eyes something spectacular happened that day. U.G. went out accompanied by me and arranged to buy all the necessary things, including chairs, tables, beds, and mattresses and got them all arranged. As I was watching, the kitchen looked full, with the necessary pots, pans and utensils. U.G. did not even forget a rag to clean the floors.

I marvelled at U.G.'s actions: "What sort of a *jivanmukta* is this? He surpasses even a staunch family man in his ability to furnish a house." The efficiency he had shown in shopping for the household things made the ego I had developed regarding my own efficiency feel very deflated.

U.G. seemed to have taught me a lesson without saying anything: "The Natural State is not closing your nose, sitting in some cave and falling asleep. It is being able to act efficiently without a flaw even in the marketplace."

All of my friends and I ate a full meal of *upma* with U.G. in the new house.

### **9. The basis of all relationships is the same: “What will I get?”**

It was January of 1972. The mere thought of that time sends chills through my heart even now. It was the time when India had scored a victory over Pakistan and was puffed up with the pride of that victory. There were celebrations everywhere. But there was only chaos in my heart. The torment, the torture U.G. deliberately subjected me to, the battles I waged within myself, my God – I felt that I wouldn't want them to happen even to my enemies.

U.G. and Valentine arrived in Bangalore in January. The enthusiasm of anticipating U.G.'s arrival did not last long. As soon as he came, he started making fun of me. I couldn't endure U.G. making it his business to laugh at my beliefs, convictions and the persons whom I revered as deities. But what could I do? I knew my weaknesses. Moreover, however much I tried to brush it aside, the truth in U.G.'s words would sink into my head. I knew clearly that he was only trying to enable me to throw away my crutches and stand on my own legs without faltering.

Despite these insights, when in his presence, my feelings would be hurt, the more hurt I felt, the angrier I became. One night I boiled over. I didn't want to stay with him, or his teasing, for one more minute. “No, I don't want the friendship of gentlemen like him anymore. I am fed up with what I have already had,” I fumed as I headed home. My mind was seething with emotion and anger. As soon as I got home, I grabbed the framed picture of U.G. and Sowris – the picture of the two persons I adored as deities – and flung it hard on a stone and broke it. With continuing vengeance I took the photo out of the broken frame and tore it up. Surprisingly, I then saw that among all the torn pieces U.G.'s face was still intact and untorn on one of the fragments. I was dumbfounded for a minute. Collecting myself, I threw away all the pieces. “Finished, I am done with both of these people. I will live my own life. I will never see their faces again,” I was talking to myself in anger.

For two days, I didn't go near the house where U.G. was living. I suppressed my longing for U.G. “No, don't fall into that fascination again. What do you lack if you don't see U.G.?” I consoled myself. On the evening of the third day, half an hour after I came home from work, I heard someone knocking at my door. I couldn't believe my eyes when I opened the door. There was U.G., with a smile on his face, and Valentine, standing before me.

“Chandrasekhar, what happened? We haven't had the pleasure of your visit for three days. Who can take care of us if not you?” U.G. said, walking in. I felt like embracing his legs and crying. At that very moment all my anger disappeared. I became normal. I wondered how I had been able to carry on without seeing U.G. for those three days.



That year, U.G. stayed in Bangalore for five months. He never stayed in Bangalore that long ever again. There was an old abandoned bungalow in the Vani Vilas Street across from the Lal Bagh Gate. We arranged U.G.'s residence in the second floor of that building for that year. That floor of the house had been abandoned because three years previously someone had committed suicide there. After U.G. and company started living there, the house acquired an inhabited look. My friend, Hanumantha Reddy, was unemployed at that time. So, he would live with U.G. and Valentine to help them out.

“Psychological fears are of two kinds: the fear of not getting what we want, and the fear of losing what we have,” says U.G. In those days these two fears would ride over me like two demons, day in and day out. I would be in turmoil at not being able to find a solution to some personal problem that was tormenting me. I wouldn't listen to anyone's advice. I was choking in a mire that I had voluntarily thrown myself into, and I didn't have the guts to get myself out of it. I groped around hoping that I would get a helping hand from some trusted unknown force. Unable to express my suffering to anyone, I was instead consumed by it.

One night, U.G. and I were sitting on the terrace of the abandoned bungalow in the open air at the dinner table. U.G. knew my problem. I knew the solution that U.G. would suggest to me. He knew that I was not prepared for the solution he was suggesting. For many days this peek-a-boo game had been going on.

“The basis of all personal relations is the same: it is ‘What will I get from this relationship?’ All relationships are based on exchange. If the exchange does not work out, the relationship will collapse. It [a relationship] is not so easy, and it is not so easily broken. But your welfare lies in its being broken,” said U.G. Meanwhile, the power in the electric lines went out. A small lamp that Hanumantha Reddy lit was fighting the darkness as best as it could.

My heart was moaning in silence: “Is this inevitable? Is there no way to avoid this goblet of poison? Can there be no grace from God?”

Suddenly I heard U.G.'s voice, “If there is such a thing as grace anywhere, it will certainly separate you two [myself and my wife].” There was neither harshness nor softness in that voice. Words came out of him as though from a robot. That was it. After that, my heart became very lonely. My sorrow cried out silently. Then U.G.'s clouds of compassion burst down on me. That compassion instantly broke dams, made me breathless, and filled my barren existence with new life.

\* \* \*

That year [1972] U.G. had to carry dual burdens of the persons of Brahmachariji and myself. We both

clung to U.G. like mindless leeches: we had been playing with life foolishly, had been hurt terribly and had lost all interest in life. We felt only U.G. could hold us each by his hand on either side and save us from danger.

\* \* \*

### **Dr Prabhu**

U.G. sometimes runs into a problem with his oesophagus. His assessment of it is, “This is a plumbing problem.” The problem sometimes causes anxiety to those around U.G. A famous cancer specialist in Germany once examined U.G. and said that it might be a cancer of the oesophagus. Valentine began worrying. “I am ready to go at any time,” was U.G.’s response.

Dr Prabhu was one of the doctors who took upon themselves the task of preserving U.G.’s health when he came to India that year. He hailed from Mangalore and he was a great Ayurvedic physician. He was acclaimed as unequalled in diagnosing a disease on the basis of examining a person’s pulse.(4) Whenever U.G. visited Mangalore, he would stay in Dr Prabhu’s house as his guest. That year Dr Prabhu set up camp in Bangalore for a month to attend to U.G. Sometime before that U.G. stayed in Manipal Medical College Hostel for a week as Dr Prabhu’s guest. Dr Prabhu was treating U.G. at that time for his oesophagus trouble. He had a special medicated oil prepared for him. He had his eighteen-year old daughter, Pratibha, massage the whole of U.G.’s body with that oil. The reason, he said, was that U.G.’s skin was more delicate than a newborn baby’s. His nervous system, Dr Prabhu said, had become so sensitive that it couldn’t stand the touch of men. Dr Prabhu claimed that the oil could only be applied delicately by a 16 to 18-year-old girl. He gave holy water to the girl and supervised her massage standing by her side. The process went on for hours each day. U.G. would sit almost naked with a loincloth and she would apply the oil on the whole of his body and massage it. Dr Prabhu would sit by his side chatting and feeling his pulse.

Until the day he later told us in Bangalore, we didn’t know that he was subjecting U.G. to a terrible test. “I have the skill of detecting the thousand ways that a pulse can beat,” Dr Prabhu said. “If even for a moment sexual feelings arise in the body when a young woman touches it all over, it will be registered in the pulse instantly. But there was no reaction at all in U.G.’s body. It doesn’t mean he is a eunuch. Even eunuchs have sexual feelings. It became extremely clear to me that U.G.’s nervous system is beyond emotions and passions.”

We listened to this in amazement.

### Sastri Sadan in Bangalore – Viswanath

It was May of that year. The summer was unbearably hot in Bangalore. The rains were late in coming. U.G. and Valentine couldn't stand so much heat. U.G. said, "If it does not rain and the weather does not cool down in the next couple of days, we are going to say goodbye to Bangalore." The ultimatum worked. Before he left for Europe at the end of May, U.G. made me make two promises: one, that for the next six months, until he returned from his trip, I would go to work regularly without applying for leave; and two, that I would choose a course of study related to my work and apply myself to it. I had to undergo a lot of hardships during those six months to keep my promises to U.G. When I look back on those months, it looks like they were the ones during which I started to stand on my own legs.

Six months later, when U.G. returned to Bangalore in December 1972, we reserved Sastri Sadanam opposite the Anjaneya Temple for his residence. U.G. wanted to rent that house not just on a short-term basis but for two years. He also wanted me to vacate my current house and move to Sastri Sadanam. He asked me to speak to the owner, Viswanath, regarding the rental arrangements. Later, when we were all chatting that same evening outside the house on an open porch, Viswanath came by. U.G. told him of his plans and asked him to build a bathroom upstairs for his convenience. Viswanath agreed to everything, but they had a disagreement over money. Viswanath wanted a hundred rupees more toward rent. U.G. was adamant and refused to pay more. When U.G. shouted at him saying, "We don't want this house; please return our advance money," Viswanath shouted back louder saying, "Never, I won't give it until you vacate the house!"

The next moment U.G. went into a rage: "We won't vacate the house; nor will we pay the rent! We will see what you will do!" I was dumbfounded when U.G. thus squared himself off for a fight.

"If you don't vacate, I will take you to court," threatened Viswanath.

U.G. pounced on him with a fiery face saying, "No one here is afraid of your stupid threats, get out!"

"We shall see," said Viswanath and he left hurriedly.

The whole fight took place in the presence of all those gentlemen and gentle ladies who came to U.G.'s place to have his *satsang* [literally, communion], believing him to be a *Brahmajnani*.

My friends slipped away one by one. Not only U.G. and Valentine, but also their guests Volcker, Dr Lynn, Julie [Wellings] from California and John Allen were also staying there at that time. U.G.'s anger did not subside even after he came back into the house. "He is threatening to drag me to court. He thinks I don't know the law. The house is in our control. No court will get us out of here," said

U.G., turning to me. “Chandrasekhar, you are the one who is going to stay in this house. We will be going away. Don’t be frightened by the threats of Viswanath. If you want to stand up and fight bravely, you will have all my financial, moral and physical support. What do you say?”

Everyone present was looking at me in pity, as though I were an innocent bystander caught up in trouble unawares. When U.G. asked me thus, I had an unknown courage: “I am ready U.G.,” I said.

“Right. Tomorrow morning I will give you a plan about what you should do and how you should conduct the case. Good night!” U.G. said and retired into his room. All the foreign friends were commenting on what happened in whatever way they thought fit.

Julie looked at me and said, “Chandrasekhar, think carefully. U.G. and his company will all leave. You will be the only one who will take care of the court affairs. Why do you want to get caught in these tangles?” She advised me to wash my hands off this affair.

I came to a decision that night. Whatever might happen, even if the sky above collapsed on me, I would stand by my words and listen to U.G. If he wanted me to jump into fire, I would. I was already in hell. What could be worse? When I came to this decision late in the night, I fell asleep soundly.

The next day was Sunday. At eight o’clock in the morning U.G. called me and asked me to send word to Viswanath to come. He came immediately. As if nothing had happened the night before, U.G. said ‘Hello’ to Viswanath and told him, “We will pay you the rent you want. I will also pay you now for two years rent, so that you can make those changes and repairs. O.K.?”

Viswanath was immensely pleased with this offer. “I myself wanted to reduce the rent,” he said.

U.G. said, “No, no. Don’t. It’s only five hundred rupees. In Switzerland we spend that much money in a week.” That was it. In three minutes the transaction was closed. All the friends who had come with worried minds let out sighs of relief when they learned of the latest developments. When U.G. could settle matters so easily, why did he make so much fuss the evening before? Why did he enact that drama? Even now I can’t fathom that.

\* \* \*

#### **10. If not *moksha*, at least a transistor – Krishna Bhagavatar**

Thus began the time of my moving into the house on Anjaneya Temple Street. That winter was cold. A sonorous voice could be heard passing on the street every morning singing to the accompaniment of cymbals the chant “Hari Narayana, Hari Narayana.” U.G. had noticed him, too, and remarked one day:

“I see someone going on the street everyday singing *bhajans*. His shoulders are covered with a shawl. I wonder who he is?” When he came into our house on the *Siva Ratri* day in the same attire, then we knew that he was no less than Mr Bangalore Krishna Bhagavatar, known not only in Bangalore, but throughout South India. Everyone called him ‘Bhagavatar’. He was a guru to many. He wore a white Glasgow Mull dhoti, a white shirt, a Kashmir shawl on his shoulders, and a rosary around his neck. His body being fair shone through the clothes. He wore marks of *vibhuti* (ash) on his forehead. In the middle of those marks, he wore a round red vermilion mark. The Bhagavatar was an attractive man. Although he was over seventy-five, he looked healthy and strong. He had a college degree in agriculture and had worked for some years. His wife and son’s deaths when he was 25 caused havoc in his life. He renounced everything and took to travelling. There was no holy place he did not visit. There was no *ashram* he did not go to. At last, he attained peace in the presence of a guru in Srirangam. When the guru provoked the artistic talent in him by showing him a way of attaining self-satisfaction through entertaining everyone by singing *Hari Kathas* (Stories of Gods; lit. stories of Vishnu), Bhagavatar’s life gained a new purpose. Since then, for the next 50 years, he had a steady life. He not only studied Indian culture and tradition thoroughly, but also practised them in his everyday life. As a last living witness to the Indian Tradition, he went around the city singing devotional songs. The Rama temples he had built by singing *Hari Kathas* and collecting contributions remain today as a tribute to his memory. He was a great scholar, and was fluent not only in the Kannada, Tamil and Telugu but also in English. He wrote *Hari Kathas* in all four languages.

One day, when he was on his City Singing rounds, he visited my friend Sanjiva Rao’s house. As Sanjiva Rao knew about the Bhagavatar’s spiritual quest, he told him, “In this same street there is a *jnani* called U.G. Krishnamurti. He just arrived from Switzerland. Go and visit him.”

Bhagavatar received this information rather lightly. He replied, “You can’t fool me. I have seen and heard many Krishnamurtis before.”

At the same time my friend’s wife, who was standing next to them asked, “Swami, what’s the significance of today?”

“Today is *Maha Siva Ratri*, my lady. I must go to the Siva Temple from here.”

She said, “If you really want to visit Siva in person, there is a living Siva in Viswanath’s house at the end of this street. Go and visit him.” Bhagavatar was shocked by her words. He was more inclined to believe her than her husband.

He straightaway arrived at the doorway of U.G., and since that day U.G.’s house became Bhagavatar’s second home. He ran to it whenever he thought of U.G. Ever since he found U.G., there

was never an end to his jubilation. Although U.G. was twenty years younger than him, he would address U.G. as 'Appa' (lit. 'Father'). This reminded me of how Sri Ramana Maharshi addressed Mr Ganpati Sastry, who was older than him, as 'Nayana' ('Father'). Bhagavatar also called Valentine 'Mother'. He would sit by U.G.'s side and relate many stories about devotees (of gods) in a tasteful manner, acting them out. Whenever Bhagavatar's eyes rolled in tears, U.G.'s eyes too became moist. Bhagavatar would appreciate that in U.G., "Appa is really a lover of devotees. He is moved by their devotion." When he quoted a saying in Sanskrit "*bhaktireva gariyasi...*" ('with *bhakti* thou shall excel') and looked meaningfully at U.G., the latter merely smiled and collected himself. The smile could be read as, "As if you know what *bhakti* really means." But U.G. never condemned Bhagavatar's faith or beliefs.

When at times U.G. started his tirade on human culture and civilization, Bhagatar would immediately get up and run out saying, "Father, it's time for me to go. Goodbye." He didn't have the courage to withstand the attacks.

Even after U.G. had left for Switzerland, Bhagavatar would come and chat with me everyday. He was quite keen on composing a *Hari Katha* on U.G. in English. But he was terribly disappointed when he couldn't find even a sampling of any of the elements that would normally be found in the lives of spiritual people (or devotees).

Meanwhile, it was getting close to U.G.'s birthday. Bhagavatar was enthusiastic about celebrating it along with all of us. We all agreed. But how could we do it without informing U.G. about it? What would he say if he knew about it? I decided to write to him, no matter what the consequence might be. Just as we expected, U.G. replied scolding us: "Celebrating the birthday of anyone is an immature, childish, infantile activity. How can you do such a thing to me?" He concluded the letter with, "...That is your house. You may spend your time in fasts, feasts and festivals, but leave this individual who has neither birth nor death severely alone..."

That was a lesson to us. When I showed the letter to Bhagavatar, he started laughing: "That's right, Appa, That's right. True, we are still children. We keep playing." Then he borrowed a photo of U.G. from me to get an enlargement and frame it.

U.G.'s birthday tradition that began thus continued uninterrupted for ten years. We would set up the picture of U.G., listen to some tapes of U.G.'s, and make someone speak about U.G. We would send greetings to U.G. and all of us would sign it. "My birthday gathers bigger crowds than I do," U.G. joked. Apparently, once, when no one was around, Bhagavatar held U.G.'s feet saying, "Appa, no one else cares for me. Only you can show me the way to Release [*moksha*]."

U.G. instantly picked him up trying to prevent him from holding his feet. He said, “You spent so many years with Ramana Maharshi. Why didn’t you ask him?”

“At that time, I didn’t have either that interest or yearning. Now, I feel I don’t want anything else,” he answered.

U.G. said, “That’s the only thing I cannot give. It’s not something that someone can give and someone else can receive. You ask for anything else. I will give that.”

As soon as he said that, Bhagavatar asked U.G. to get him a small transistor [*from abroad*], U.G. reported. U.G. jokes about him saying, “His interest slipped fast from *moksha* to a transistor.” But I had no doubt about the earnestness of Bhagavatar [*in spiritual matters*]. He treasured his acquaintance with U.G. Even when he was 92 and unable to move, he would come and see U.G. every year. Bhagavatar moved his camp from this world the same year that we changed our residence to Poornakutee.

\* \* \*

#### **“If I don’t torture you, who will?” – Kalyani**

One evening U.G. was speaking, sitting on a carpet spread on the floor. The room was filled with audience. Except for U.G.’s voice, there was total silence. A lady pushed the gate open, came inside and sat at the threshold. She must have been just under sixty. She wore a blue saree, the same coloured blouse, wrists full of blue bangles, a thick layer of talc powder on the face, a blue beauty mark on the face, blue flowers in her hair, a necklace with blue beads on her neck – she was all blue. She carried an aluminium bowl. When U.G. was speaking she occasionally wrote something down in her book of scrap paper. She looked rather amusing. I was wondering where I had seen her before. I later remembered that I had seen her four or five times in the marketplace panhandling with the bowl for coins. “Why did she come here,” I asked myself. She heard the discussion with U.G. for about an hour.

Then she stood up and said in good English, “Sir, do you think anybody in this assembly understands what you are saying? Only these walls seem to have benefited by your talking.”

She then walked out in a hurry. We were all thunderstruck. Who was this? “She is Kalyani. She is crazy,” said someone.

After that Kalyani would come everyday. She had total liberty in U.G.’s presence. She laughed and made others laugh. She sang and danced around. If there was anyone in the audience whom she

didn't like, she would insult them with words. She would ask U.G. for money. "Don't beg for money anymore. I will give you whatever you want," U.G. would tell her and give her a lot of money. Even then, she would still beg for coins with her aluminium bowl in front of the Anjaneya temple. She was always glad to see Valentine. She would call her, 'Madam'. When she became more sentimental, she would hug her, calling her, "Dammu, Dammu [vernacular variation of 'madam']." Although Valentine did not care for Kalyani's behaviour, she liked Kalyani's decoration of herself.

Kalyani was born in a rich Ayyengar family. She graduated from college with a B.Sc. and used to work as a mathematics teacher in a girls high school. Her husband was a senior I.A.S. [*Indian Administrative Service*] officer. He was a joint secretary in the Central Government in Delhi. She was used to giving charities from early in her life. Her family would give freely to monks and heads of Maths. She performed many worships and rituals and as a result she lost her mind. Her family could no longer manage her behaviour, so they admitted her in the mental hospital. Since then her manner changed completely. Even after she was discharged from the mental hospital, she could not go back to her normal life. Unable to help her, her husband left her to her own devices. Her daughter's husband was also an I.A.S. officer. They both lived in Hyderabad. The two hundred rupees her husband sent every month, and the fifty rupees that the management of the school she had worked in paid her, these were her only monthly income. Until she came to U.G. she had no one to care for her. U.G. arranged a room for her in the premises of Sastri Sadanam. Whenever she asked, U.G. would give her ten rupees. "U.G. Sir made me a rich beggar," she would say. Noticing her manner and ways, U.G.'s friends, Mahesh, Parveen Babi and many others became fond of her. Mahesh's wife Kiran liked Kalyani very much.

Kalyani used to keep a tab on how much money people gave her. In some fashion or other, as she saw fit, she would help them. Once she asked me for five rupees and got it. Later, on my birthday, I received from the Kanchi Kamakoti Math Office some sacraments and a receipt in my name for five rupees. I wondered who sent them that money. Another time she gave me a package and asked me to deliver it to the Swami (monk) residing in the Avani Sankara Math on the outskirts of Bangalore. I did not have the time to do that. Kalyani would ask me everyday, "When are you going to go there?"

One evening I went there straight from my office and delivered the package to the Swami telling him that Kalyani asked me to give it to him. In the package there was a brand new sacred golden necklace worn by a bride on her wedding day and kept for the rest of her married life. The Swami and I were both surprised. Apparently, just two days before, thieves broke into the temple and stole valuable jewellery. Just as he was regretting that the image of the goddess didn't even have the sacred necklace, I brought this package. "That lady is not really crazy, I know her," the Swami affirmed and



pressed the necklace to his eyes.

I related the incident to Kalyani upon returning home. "Did you know before that this was going to happen?" I asked Kalyani. Kalyani heaped abuse on me in response.

To show her gratitude to U.G. for his help, Kalyani performed the services of cleaning the house and decorating it. U.G. would say, "I can't afford a rich servant like you, Kalyani." She would never let anyone else do the household chores. When U.G. got angry with her, she would hurry everyone with an authoritarian tone. One day after she finished her work she said to U.G., "Goodbye, Sir, I'll see you again."

U.G. said, "Why see me again? Don't."

"I shouldn't come? If I don't come to torture you, who will?"

"Why do you want to torture me? What did I do to you?"

"Because of the sins you committed in your past life. You must suffer the consequences of torturing your wife in this life," she said this and left. We all laughed loudly.

I felt that Kalyani must have had some extrasensory powers. U.G. says that they are commonly found in crazy people. But Kalyani's case is different. She is a veritable deity for Dr Siromani of Hyderabad. Some friends of U.G. would make fun of Dr Siromani by calling her Devotee Siromani. She would send clothes and lots of mangoes to Kalyani and to U.G. Once U.G.'s daughter, Bharati, came to Bangalore. That morning her husband, Mr Rayudu, was asking about the Skanda Nadi in Bangalore. He was wondering if the *nadi* could find any solution to some of the problems that bothered him. Kalyani said, "Sir, you are the son-in-law of such a great man as U.G., yet how come you are seeking the help of the Nadi man? Show me your hand, and I will tell you what you need to know." He was surprised at this and showed his hand to her. She looked at his hand from some distance and said, "You will get a promotion in your job. Your boss who has been pestering you will get transferred and you will get his job." After a few days, it exactly happened just as she had predicted.

Kalyani would collect a lot of flowers from somewhere and shower them on U.G. She would ask, "Sir, when will my ex-[husband] take me back? When will you send me to my daughter?" When U.G. would reply, "Forget all that Kalyani. None of that will happen," she would look disappointed and leave.

Finally, I did run into her husband once in Bangalore. He told me he didn't have any objection to

her coming back. “But she must quit her roaming around and begging and remain at home,” he said.

Kalyani smiled apathetically, on hearing this. “I can’t see any difference between the street and my home, what can I do?” she explained. Her husband returned to Delhi. Her daughter, Sobhana Rangachari, was a great singer. She died in Hyderabad in a fire accident. I offered to take Kalyani to Hyderabad. She said, “Never.” She said with conviction, “My daughter is still alive. I don’t believe all those rumours.”

Kalyani had a good singing voice. She was born in a family of great singers. I would go into ecstasies hearing her singing the compositions of Tyagaraja, sitting before the picture of her favourite deity in her room. When I offered to record her singing she turned down my offer. When I once began recording secretly without her knowledge, she stopped her singing, became abusive and cried. But U.G. would always ask her to sing whenever he gave her money. Sometimes he would stop his conversation and ask her to narrate incidents of her life in the mental hospital.

Kalyani continued her visits even after we moved to Poornakutee from the Anjaneya Temple Street. Meanwhile, she had an attack of breast cancer. No matter how much we tried to persuade her to undergo treatment, she refused. Finally, her chest became like a big open wound. Before she died in 1990, U.G. went to visit her once. She came running to the gate, crying. I was so sorry to see her in that state. U.G. tried to give her some money. She did not take it. “Please grant me death, U.G. Sir! That’s what I need,” she begged, crying. U.G. remained silent. He stood quietly holding her hand. She died soon after. The day before she died, Suguna and I went to see her. She gestured for us to come before her bed where she was lying. She showed us all her belongings in the room and said, “All these and whatever else I have belong to U.G. Sir.”

Within a year after Kalyani died, Valentine passed away. The seven thousand rupees that remained of the money the Australian friends of U.G. gave Kalyani for medical treatment became the seed money for the school founded in Valentine’s name.

\* \* \*

### **Meeting new friends – Indian Institute of World Culture**

In Bangalore, everyone knows the name of the Indian Institute of World Culture. The late B.P. Wadia and Sophia Wadia founded the Institute in the Basavanagudi area in 1945. It served as a platform for many great native and foreign persons and intellectuals. Many intellectuals consider it a great honour to have the opportunity to speak there. In 1972, the then Secretary of the Institute, Mr

Venkataramayya, invited U.G. to give a talk there. U.G. was already renowned as an international lecturer. He lost the urge to speak in public even before the Calamity. “We talk a lot when we don’t know much. If we know a little, there is nothing to say,” says U.G. After the Calamity, U.G. found no need for meetings and platforms. No matter how much U.G. tried to explain to him his situation, Venkataramayya would not take “No” for an answer. Finally, either because of Venkataramayya’s insistence or because of our persuasion, U.G. gave a talk on the stage of the Institute in the month of May 1972. After the Calamity that was his first and last public lecture.

That day the lecture hall was filled with people. Mr Dilip Kothari, former Chairman of the Film Censor Board and U.G.’s friend from Bombay, introduced U.G. Notwithstanding the interruptions by Dr Kothari’s comments, the audience listened to U.G.’s talk spellbound. Many persons like Nagaraj, Radhakishan Bajaj, Rochaldas Shroff and Narayanachari, who were sold on J. Krishnamurti before, became even more attracted to U.G. as a result of that talk.

\* \* \*

### **Kumar, U.G.’s son**

In 1957, when U.G. was living in Chicago with his family, Kumar was born. U.G. raised his son for the first two years. Kusuma, U.G.’s wife, was working at *World Book Encyclopaedia*. The turbulence in U.G.’s life, which started then, caused a break-up of U.G.’s family. He sent his wife and children back to India. Kumar stayed with his mother till her death in 1963. After this, he lived with his relatives, struggled to finish his matriculation in 1973 and ended up in Bangalore. He would live with me and my younger brother at the house in Anjaneya Temple Street. ‘Bujji’ was his pet name. A bright and active kid, he didn’t have a clear memory of having known his father. A belief that his father was responsible for the sad plight of his family was firmly implanted in him. No matter how much I tried to convince him, I couldn’t make him give up his hatred and anger towards his father.

U.G. came to India in September that year. That was the first time Kumar met his father after many years. Kumar was then 17 years old. When his father said ‘Hello’ to him, he did not respond; instead, he turned his head reticently. He would avoid his father as much as he could. He didn’t seem to notice what U.G. said or did.

One afternoon, when we were all sitting on the front porch, Kumar was killing red ants marching in a row on the floor. “Why, mister? Why are you killing them?” asked U.G., unable to bear that violence in front of him.

“How shall I vent my anger, then?” replied Kumar, continuing to squash the ants on the floor with his foot.

“Take it out on those you are angry with. What did the poor ants do to you?” As U.G. said this, Kumar looked at once at his father with rage and left the scene.

That same son came to adore U.G. within a month. Even I, who was observing these incidents at close quarters, was astonished at the transformation in Kumar. U.G. would give him money and ask him to do small errands for him. He bought him a bicycle to ride to his college.

One evening, as Kumar was about to leave on his bicycle, U.G. enquired, “Hey, mister, where are you going?”

“I am going to a movie.”

“You are going at this late hour? Will you be able to get a ticket?”

As soon as U.G. said this, Kumar brought his bicycle back inside the gate. “Why are you not going?” asked U.G., surprised.

“When you mentioned it, I knew I wouldn’t be able to get a ticket. Why should I go that far? It’s a waste of time,” said Kumar, as he was going inside the house.

I was astonished at the faith Kumar had acquired in even casual remarks of U.G.

When Kumar was completing his 18th year in 1974, U.G. said to him, “You are an American citizen by virtue of your birth in the US. You must make up your mind, before you are 18, as to whether you will find a place for yourself in the US, or whether you will waste your talents staying here in India.”

By that time, Kumar already was in the habit of treating his father’s words as gospel. U.G. rendered him the minimal help he needed to get to the US “This is all I can do for you. Whether you sink or sail will all depend on your own abilities,” exhorted U.G., saying goodbye to him.

Kumar arrived in a country where he had no one to support him. He faced many odds there. Yet, in about ten years, he started an independent business and got married. When I met him at a hotel in New York in 1986, now a bona fide American entrepreneur, my joy and amazement knew no bounds.

\* \* \*

**Sardarji’s palm reading**

My marriage with Suguna was settled in 1974. After U.G. and Valentine returned to India, they kept asking me when my marriage would take place and on what day. Valentine was curious to see my prospective bride. I wrote to Suguna's brother asking him to bring her to Bangalore. Valentine was very pleased to meet Suguna. "She looks like a baby squirrel," remarked Valentine. Valentine was very fond of squirrels.

"From now on, Chandrasekhar's life will be smooth sailing," said U.G. contentedly. "What day is the wedding? We are leaving the country on December 25. We want to see Chandrasekhar as a married man before then," U.G. told Suguna's brother, persuading him to arrange a date for the wedding before then.

But even in November we didn't get word from Suguna's family about the day the wedding would be performed, and U.G. kept asking: "The wedding must take place before we leave. Why haven't they contacted you yet?"

One afternoon, we were all sitting on the porch when an old Sardarji walked in and asked if anyone of us wanted our fortune told. U.G. asked him when Kumar would be going to the US. The Sardarji looked at his palm and said, "He is going to go in six months."

Then U.G. pointed me to him and asked him when I would be marrying. I was never interested in showing my palm to anyone, but I showed it on U.G.'s insistence. "The marriage will occur in a month," the Sardarji said.

"That's enough. We need not know what will happen later," U.G. said, pulling my hand away from the Sardarji.

That day Volcker, John Allen and Dr Lynn all had their palms read by the Sardarji. Everyone was astonished at how accurately he spoke about everyone's past and future. We all gave him some money. "All this is because of your grace; I don't have much to do with it," as he said this, the Sardarji bent forward to touch U.G. U.G. moved away from him, and no matter how many times the Sardarji asked to touch him, U.G. did not let him touch even his hand.

We received the wedding invitations a week later. The wedding was to take place on December 20. Valentine was very eager to witness the wedding. But U.G. prevented her. He told her: "It's hard to arrange for your stay in a remote village. The couple will come to Bangalore on the third day after the wedding. You can see them then."

When Suguna and I arrived in Bangalore on December 24, Kumar met us at the doorway. "U.G. is at Brahmachariji's *ashram*. He told me to tell you to come there tonight even if you are late," Kumar

said. We instantly hired a taxi and drove to the *ashram*, about 20 kilometres away from Bangalore.

“I told you that they would come, no matter how late it is in the night,” U.G. said to those around him, seeing us approaching from a distance. The next day was Christmas. Our wedding feast and our bidding farewell to U.G., both happened rather unostentatiously.

\* \* \*

### **“Consider me as part of the furniture” – Nagaraj**

Nagaraj was the private secretary to the Postmaster General of Karnataka and also the secretary for the Shorthand Association. He never married. “The cigarette is my beloved,” he would say. After hearing of U.G. and meeting him, he became disillusioned with J.K. [J. Krishnamurti]. After that, whenever U.G. came to Bangalore, Nagaraj would apply for two or three months’ leave from his office and spend that time with U.G. Just as he would usually go to his office carrying his lunch in a tiffin, he would also bring his lunch to the house in the Anjaneya Temple Street. “U.G., consider me as part of the furniture here. I have nothing to ask of you. Please let me just hang around here. That’s all I want,” he would say. He wrote down in shorthand in his notebooks the questions U.G.’s visitors would ask and also reported on the events that occurred around U.G. Those records became our major preoccupation after U.G. left India: Nagaraj would type his notes, make copies and distribute them to all our friends. We would read and enjoy them. *Mind is a Myth* is a book that came out of those notes prepared by Nagaraj.

Nagaraj retired after we moved to Purnakutee. He asked U.G. to help him quit his habit of cigarette smoking as he was wasting a lot of money on it. U.G. answered, “Double your quota. Don’t stop smoking.” Nagaraj didn’t heed this advice. In spite of U.G.’s advice, Nagaraj quit smoking and sank into heavy depression.

About a year later, one morning, he got up from sleep, drank his coffee, went to bed again and went to sleep forever. It took me a long time to collect myself after his death. Whenever there was a mention of Nagaraj during conversations, U.G. would say to divert us, “Where did Nagaraj go? He is here with us.” Maybe he is with us while I am writing this. Nagaraj, are you listening to your story? Among all the friends that gathered around U.G., Nagaraj was my most intimate.

I can’t speak enough about him. The Sundays we spent transcribing his notes on U.G. in his office working for hours together, the phone conversations we would have with U.G. from that office, the funny jokes Nagaraj would tell – the more I think of those memories, the more forlorn I feel.

\* \* \*

**"You are the only one who gives what I need free of charge," – Rochaldas Schroff**

Rochaldas Shroff was a billionaire. His ancestors migrated from the Sindh area of Pakistan. He was a member of the Radha Saomi Path started by Sawan Singh Maharaj. For 40 years he practised the *Surat Sabd Yoga* taught by his teacher. He was over 60 years when he met U.G. At first, in his broken English, he would pester U.G. for liberation. "I have nothing to give. Go and ask your guru," U.G. would tell him.

"Your teaching that 'There is nothing' is our everything. You please give me that," he would say cleverly. U.G. would get angry with him and start scolding him. If U.G. said, "You have so many gurus. Why do you come here instead of going to them?" Rochaldas would reply: "U.G., all they want is my money. You are the only one who is giving me what I need free of charge. When you ask me to get out, I feel as if you are saying, 'Get out of these worldly involvements,' and if you tell me not to come back, I feel as if you are saying, 'Don't come back into the cycle of death and rebirth,' and, if you tell me, 'You will not get anything here,' I feel as if in this moment, right here, I am filled with the Infinite. How can I not come to you again and again?"

When U.G. would hold his head, unable to answer Rochaldas, Nagaraj would then jump with joy saying, "Great, you have met your equal in Rochaldas, U.G. I will salute you if you can silence him."

One day, Rochaldas was reluctant to leave even after spending a long time with U.G., and stayed downstairs even after Valentine and U.G. retired upstairs after their lunch. He had a habit of muttering some holy names or prayers to himself when he wasn't talking to anyone, and he was doing so this time. In a little while, U.G. came downstairs and sat in a chair before Rochaldas. He said seriously, "Look Rochaldas, it's useless to think of *jnana* and *moksha* after amassing millions and billions. You must let all that wealth go. Not just give it to your children. That won't mean anything. There is a line in a poem which says, 'On whomsoever my grace falls, him I will rob of everything.' You must first let everything go and become a pauper. Then God will think of bestowing grace on you."

Rochaldas was truly terrified by these words. Ever since then, he stopped pestering U.G. about liberation. But he still would go look for and bring people who would provoke U.G. with their questions, and thus make him talk. He would go on missions to visit great scientists, doctors and philosophers, and he would tell them about U.G. and bring them to him. It was owing to his initiative that the NIMHANS doctors came to U.G. for discussions. He would call the visitors of U.G. *bakras*. *Bakra* means 'sheep' in the Sindhi language. His implication was that all those visitors were sheep

that were victims of U.G.'s eloquence. If a new *bakra* arrived who could stand up to U.G. in conversation, Rochaldas would be mightily pleased. He would say, "U.G., when you talk I hear the divine flute of Krishna. All I want is to keep listening to it." He would even listen to U.G.'s tapes during the nights.

Rochaldas had three heart attacks before he was 75, but he didn't worry about them. He visited U.G. everyday whenever U.G. came to Bangalore. Although he had three or four cars, Rochaldas would travel in an auto-rickshaw to save money. A day would not go by without U.G. making fun of Rochaldas's miserliness: "Would you have come here if I charged you one rupee per visit? Tell me the truth, Rochaldas!"

Rochaldas would smile, nod in agreement and say, "It's true. I would not have come."

Once Rochaldas invited U.G. to his house for lunch. Julie Thayer accompanied U.G., and Rochaldas introduced his whole family to U.G. "Did you complete all the arrangements for the distribution of your property [to your successors after you]? Did you prepare your will yet?" U.G. asked Rochaldas.

Rochaldas replied, "No, not yet." He was not willing to distribute his property even to his own immediate relatives. Finally, U.G. made Rochaldas agree to soon make those arrangements. The faces of the family members expressed gladness at this.

In this context, U.G. asked Rochaldas, "If you had a way of saving all your property for your next life, would you have distributed your property to your children?"

"Not on my dead body," replied Rochaldas with conviction. U.G. laughed.

One day, Rochaldas was not feeling well. Doctors asked him not to get out of bed. Soon after they left, he called U.G. and told him that he felt like visiting him, and asked him if he could come. "I won't let you, if you come in an auto-rickshaw. You must come in a car," said U.G. He came and sat for a long time that day in Poornakutee. He left for home around two o'clock in the afternoon. Two hours later we received the news that Rochaldas had died.

"What an easy death!" I thought. I remember him saying goodbye to everyone before he left.

\* \* \*

**"That Krishna and this Krishna say the same thing," the Swami of Udipi**



In 1972, U.G. went to Udipi along with Valentine. If one goes from the Tirthagundi Coffee Estate to Mangalore, Udipi is on the way. There are eight *Maths* [monasteries] there, all belonging to the Madhva tradition. The arrangement whereby a different head of Math ascends to the Principal Pitha once every two years is called *paryaya* [turn]. That year it was the *paryaya* of the *Acharya* [teacher] of the Adamara Math. The Adamara Math Senior Swami had heard about how a younger swami, belonging to one of the eight maths, had relinquished the headship of the Pitha after meeting U.G., and had then taken to family life and also supported himself by working at a job like everyone else. The Adamara Swami too felt like seeing U.G. and invited U.G. to accept his hospitality.

“If I come to your Math, would I have to wear clothing appropriate to your ritual rules? I wouldn’t be allowed with my pajama and *lalchi*. Besides, Valentine also will have to come with me. She is a foreigner,” said U.G., trying to discourage the Swami from inviting him.

The Swami reassured U.G. that he could come dressed just the way he was and bring Valentine as well. “But please don’t force me to sit with you to eat. That’s all I ask,” he said, repeating his invitation. He arranged to serve U.G. and Valentine a tasty meal with 25 items. He sat in front of them while they ate their lunch, and they talked about many things. After listening to U.G. for a while, the Swami told his disciples, “That Krishna and this Krishna say the same thing.”

Then U.G. remarked, “Among the three Acharyas(5) I like Madhvacharya the most.”

The Adamara Math Swami was flattered with this remark, believing that U.G. was admiring his tradition. “Why, U.G., why?” he asked with excitement.

“It is because of Madhvacharya that Udipi restaurants sprung up all over the world.(6) Whether we go to New York or London or some other place, thanks to those restaurants, I can find the *idlis* I need.” When U.G. finished saying this, the Swami looked hurt.

Being bluntly honest and outspoken is unique to U.G. He doesn’t wait to consider how the other person will take what he says. I think he alienated even people close to him by this quality. As for U.G., he would say, “I can’t lose a friend I don’t have.”

The following happened about 20 years ago, when we were in the Anjaneya Street House. One day, Professor N.A. Nikam came with Dr Ramakrishna Rao. Prof. Nikam had retired from being the vice-chancellor of the Mysore University. Dr Ramakrishna Rao did his doctorate under his supervision. Rumour had it that, years ago, the then Maharajah of Mysore, Jayachamaraja Wadayar, recognised the high level of scholarship that Nikam had in Advaita Vedanta, and got him to write his speeches. Prof. Nikam handed a copy of the brand new book he wrote called *Bhagavan Ramana* to U.G. and said, “I want your candid opinion on this.”

U.G. replied without taking the book, “I am sorry. I don’t read biographies, much less autobiographies.” Nikam’s face turned pale upon hearing this. U.G. must have been the only person who had ever turned down a book offered by him.

\* \* \*

### **B.L. Narayan**

Before he ever met U.G. for the first time in Bombay in 1972, B.L. Narayan, having been influenced by the teachings of J. Krishnamurti, had started the Oasis School in Hyderabad. He came to Bombay to hear J.K.’s talks and thus heard of U.G. He had invested all his personal property in the school and became bankrupt. He was keen on making the school into a model school. He wasn’t concerned about its revenues. After he met U.G., his outlook underwent a change. “There is a great demand for schools today. It’s best to set aside all your ideals and run a school merely as a business,” U.G. advised Narayan.

Narayan invited U.G. and Valentine to visit his school in Hyderabad. The Oasis school is situated in a big building on a large site of four or five acres. Apparently, it is still one of the best residential schools in Andhra Pradesh. After Narayan’s death, the school changed hands many times.

From 1972 to 1980 – for seven years – U.G. and Valentine would spend two to three weeks each year at the Oasis School. It was there that U.G.’s boyhood classmate, Mr Prasada Rao, came to see U.G. He, Mr Sripada Gopalakrishnamurti, Narayan and some other friends, all had discussions with U.G. Upon U.G.’s suggestion, Narayan gave Hanumantha Reddy a teacher’s job in his school. Thus, a fairly large group of people gathered there, including Gopal, Shanta, Satyavati Reddi, Siromani, and Rajasekhar Reddi, whenever U.G. visited Hyderabad.

In April 1980, U.G. came to India unexpectedly and stayed for a month. In May, he went to Hyderabad and stayed with Narayan for a week in the Oasis School. That was the last time he saw Narayan, for just a few days later he heard the news that Narayan died of a heart attack.

\* \* \*

### **Sitaramayya – U.G.’s father**

In 1977, when U.G. was in Hyderabad, news arrived that U.G.’s father, Mr Uppaluri Sitaramayya, was on his deathbed. Relatives sent word to U.G. conveying his wish to see U.G. U.G. said, “If he sees me, he will die. If he wants to stay alive, he shouldn’t see me.” But he couldn’t very well turn down the request of Valentine and Narayan; so he went to see his father in his step-brother’s house. Apparently,

his father cried holding U.G.'s hands. "I probably met my father about seven or eight times in my life. I haven't had any more contact with him than that," says U.G.

\* \* \*

### **Shanta of the Oasis School**

A young lady called Shanta worked in the Oasis School office. She was 25 years old at that time. Narayan gave her the job of taking care of U.G. and Valentine when they were guests of the school. Shanta felt that she could ask for nothing better. She would spend all her time accompanying U.G., or running his errands, and taking Valentine for walks.

I think it was in the year 1978 when U.G. came to Bangalore that he thought it would be nice if Shanta visited Bangalore for Christmas. He asked Nagaraj to write a letter to her on behalf of all our friends. "U.G. says that he won't stay in Bangalore if you don't come. You must come at least for our sake. If Mr Narayan doesn't grant you leave, you should resign from the job, if necessary," Nagaraj wrote in the letter.

Shanta rushed to Bangalore as soon as she got the letter. Since then, her enthusiasm knew no bounds. Her feet wouldn't stay on the ground, as she felt that U.G. invited her specially to take care of him. She was overwhelmed with the regard he showed for her. In just a few days, she became so dependent on U.G. that she felt she couldn't live without him. She made serving U.G. the purpose of her life. At times, when U.G. was annoyed with her, she would cry.

Meanwhile, the time came for her to return to Hyderabad. Just then U.G. fell ill. He was lying in bed one day with fever. She sat outside his room, without eating or drinking, with a crestfallen face. She would pester U.G. hour after hour asking him each time, "Would you like me to mix some gruel? Would you like some fruit juice now?" She would listen repeatedly to Balamurali's song, "I can't live without you..." on the tape recorder. She would think of U.G. while listening to it and start crying. It was sad to watch her in that state.

That evening some people came to see U.G. "U.G. is resting; you can't see him yet. Please sit down and wait for a while," Shanta told them. Usually, if anyone came to see him, U.G. never liked to make them wait. U.G. did not tolerate it even if Valentine did something of that sort. After about half an hour, U.G. came out of his room on some errand, saw those people waiting for him, felt sorry, and asked Shanta, "Why didn't you tell me that someone was here to see me?"

Shanta answered, "You weren't feeling well. I thought you were asleep. So I didn't wake you up." Then, while U.G. was talking to his visitors, Shanta went to the post office, phoned Hyderabad, talked

to Narayan and told him that U.G. asked her to stay because he was ill, and requested him to extend her leave by four days.

After his visitors left, U.G. scolded her: “I was lying in my room reading the *Time Magazine*. Don’t you know that if anyone comes to see me, you should tell me at once?” Then he asked her, “What did you tell Narayan on the phone?”

She replied timidly, “I told him I will come after four more days, when you get better.”

He asked, “Did you tell him that I asked you to stay? Or, did you tell him that you wanted to stay?” Then she told him the whole truth: she was afraid that if she told him that she would like to stay, Narayan wouldn’t grant her the leave. Therefore she told him that U.G. wanted her to stay. When he heard this, U.G. got furious. “You can’t stay here for one minute longer. You leave right now. You had the audacity to tell Narayan that I wanted you to stay! Pack up! You must not stay here even for one minute.”

Thus he made her get ready to go right then. Shanta broke down in tears. Her apology was of no use: “It was a mistake, U.G. Please forgive me just this once.”

Nagaraj and I also pleaded with U.G. to let Shanta stay at least for that night: “Why should she go alone on the evening bus? It will be safer for her to go tomorrow in the train,” we tried to explain to him.

“Nothing of the sort. Crying and tears don’t touch me. She must pay for her mistakes. Let her go,” he said and did not even let us escort her to the bus stand.

Shanta left that evening, crying loudly.

Later U.G. said, “The girl developed an attachment for me. That’s not healthy. It’s not good for her. It has to be nipped in the bud.”

Shanta never came to U.G. again. Later, after she married another teacher called Gopal, they both left the Oasis School.

\* \* \*

### **Swami Poornananda Tirtha**

It was in March 1986. That being a Sunday I didn’t have to go to work. I went up to U.G.’s flat early in the morning. Around 10 o’clock, Swami Poornananda Tirtha showed up at the gate parking his car on the side of the narrow road. We all addressed him as ‘Swamiji’ even after he renounced his

Sannyasa and became a householder.

During the early sixties, when he was delivering lectures on Vedanta in the city, people thronged in thousands to hear him speak. He was well known for his revolutionary ideas in the spiritual field. He always stressed on the practical aspects of Vedanta and ridiculed the traditional ritualistic approach in attaining self-realisation. He had a huge *ashram* in Kerala State from where he hailed. Every year he would visit Bangalore where followers would arrange his lecture series. He encouraged some of our friends like Dr H.R. Nagendra, Professor Satyanarayana Sastri, Srikantaiah, Anantaram and others to form a spiritual group called ‘Jnana Sadhana Sangha’.

Those were the heydays for Swamiji – until he got involved with one of his lady disciples running a women’s hostel in Basavanagudi. Eventually, when he announced to the world his decision to give up Sannyasa, his own admirers became sworn enemies.

It was at that time that we were attracted to Brahmachariji living in a cave near the Shamkara Math and leading a secluded life. Though all my friends deserted Swamiji after his marriage, for my part, I always continued my contact with him. By then, Swamiji had come under the influence of J. Krishnamurti’s teachings. He was meeting J.K. regularly and was intimate with him. Swamiji told me once that he considered self-realised masters like J.K. and U.G. as his own fathers and revered them. He said that he had taught J.K., who was eager to learn any technique to keep his body fit, a special kind of breathing technique called *Antariksha Pranayama*.

That day, when Swamiji visited U.G., the conversation naturally turned to J. Krishnamurti’s death, which happened a few days before. “How can such a man die of cancer?” wondered Swamiji.

U.G. smiled and said, “Why not? Why do you think that such people will not die of cancer?” He added: “Do you know that in his interview with David Bohm, J. Krishnamurti even made statements to the effect that such people [like himself] would live eternally? What sort of a fellow do you think he is?”

Swamiji looked a bit puzzled. “Why can’t you brush him aside, Sir!” U.G. asked him.

Swamiji smiled and said, “He was a nice man. A lovable man.”

“I agree with you. But that doesn’t mean you should swallow whatever he said. I always said, ‘I like Mahesh but not his films.’ So, that fellow [J.K.] may be a phoney. Why can’t you brush him aside?” asked U.G. Swamiji was silent.

After some time, he narrated an incident concerning J.K. At that time Swamiji was suffering from

acute pain due to the formation of stones in his kidneys. One day, during his informal chats, Swamiji told J.K. about his problem. “What is the best treatment for that, Sir?” enquired J.K. Swamiji replied that he was advised to undergo ultrasonic treatment. In that treatment the stones in the bladder are pulverised, without need for surgery. Swamiji added, “But if a person like you has intense feeling towards me, I am sure of being cured without having to go through any treatment.” J.K. looked into his face and said, “Do you know that Sir? Then you can forget about the treatment.” However, after six months, Swamiji had to submit himself to the same medical treatment in London and free himself from the pain.

“So, it was medical technology that came to your rescue ultimately,” quipped U.G. Swamiji nodded his head.

I remember vividly the first meeting of Swamiji with U.G. That was in the year 1976 when U.G. and Valentine were staying in Sannidhi Street. Rochaldas accompanied Swamiji. I felt very happy that at last Swamiji could come to meet U.G. As he heard of U.G.’s anti-J.K. approach, Swamiji was reluctant to see him earlier. U.G. sat with all of us on the carpet. Swamiji looked very relaxed in U.G.’s company.

He then fired the first salvo at U.G. “Sir, I want to know the difference between the two happenings – enlightenment and Kundalini awakening: which one happens first to a person?”

U.G. instantly replied: “They both occur simultaneously. There is no time gap at all.”

Swamiji was visibly shaken at the tone of authority in U.G.’s voice. After that U.G. harangued non-stop, for more than an hour, touching various aspects such as enlightenment, spiritual sadhana, the Natural State. Luckily we had recorded the talk on that day. Nagaraj later transcribed the tape and most of its contents found their place in U.G.’s first book *The Mystique of Enlightenment*.

That day, just before taking leave from U.G., Swamiji hesitantly asked, “U.G., I quite agree that nothing needs to be done to come into our own Natural State. But should we not at least try to keep the doors and windows open and wait for the Otherness to enter?”

With all seriousness, U.G. slowly said, “Sir, if that were to happen, it hits like a hurricane uprooting the whole edifice. It doesn’t really matter whether you close or open the windows or doors.” Swamiji stood speechless for a while. U.G. smiled and gently touching his shoulder showed him the door.

From that day Swamiji always came to see U.G. whenever U.G. happened to be in Bangalore. Having observed both U.G. and Valentine supporting themselves on their own meagre resources,

Swamiji many times offered to pay for their expenses. He asked me whether he could bear a part of the burden of their maintenance. When I declined, trying to explain the fiercely independent nature of U.G., he started pleading: “Shall I at least send my cow’s milk for their use? Shall I offer rides in my car whenever he feels like going out?”

Tears well in my eyes when I recall Swamiji’s genuine concern for U.G. and Valentine. Swamiji would never miss a chance to talk about U.G.’s high spiritual stature in his public discourses and talks. “If you are really interested in meeting a true *jivanmukta*, there is one here right now in the city, camped in Basavanagudi. Go and meet him,” he would exhort his audience. Shanta Kelker, the lady who later authored the exquisite book, *The Sage and the Housewife*, on U.G., was one of those who were inspired by Swamiji’s remarks.

The last time U.G. saw Swamiji was when he received the news that he was dying of brain cancer. Swamiji wanted to see U.G. It was such a pathetic scene. His wife, otherwise a bold lady, was all shattered. She wept bitterly praying to U.G. to save her husband. U.G. stood silently at his bedside. He took Swamiji’s hand into his own for a while. There were tears in Swamiji’s eyes when he bade goodbye to U.G. with folded hands.

## NOTES

1. The young boy in the *Katha Upanishad* who wanted to know the secrets of life and death from the God of Death, Yama.
2. Mention of this event is also made in the book *Sringeri Revisited*, which Mr Tummalapalli published in 1969.
3. The Swami’s private chambers were located in a garden called Narasimhavana on the far side of the river Tunga.
4. When he started his practice in Mangalore, he would collect a fee of four annas per family per month. No matter how many people fell ill in the same family there was no extra charge. Dr Prabhu thus earned a reputation as a four-anna doctor in Mangalore. Soon his practice prospered and he earned millions of rupees.
5. Sankara, Ramanuja and Madhva were the three Acharyas [teachers] who founded three separate religious traditions, one after another. Each of them wrote commentaries on the three Books of Vedanta [*Upanishads*, *Bhagavad Gita*, and *Brahma Sutras*] in support of their own traditions. They

condemned one another's tradition. "My hats off to them for performing such an unparalleled feat," says U.G.

6. All Brahmins who run the Udipi restaurants are from the Madhva tradition.



## Stopped in Our Tracks

### Part Three

#### Jnanasram and Jnanachakravarti

It was October 1995. Swamiji [Brahmachariji] many times described dramatically the events that occurred around U.G. in Mysore at that time. Mahesh Bhatt reported in his own book [his biography of U.G. called *U.G. Krishnamurti, A Life*] the affairs that happened in Kodaikanal.

It started on September 30, 1979. At 3:00 p.m. U.G. got off the plane with Valentine in the Bangalore airport, having arrived from Hyderabad. That was the ninth day of the Dasara festival. Ranganatha Rao and I were taking them to Jnanasram in a taxi.

“When will Viswanath’s house be ready?” U.G. asked. I told him it would be two or three days. Because he had no other place to stay, we had arranged for him to stay temporarily in Jnanasram. U.G. normally doesn’t like to inconvenience anyone. But he does take liberties with Brahmachariji. On the way, he announced his immediate plans: as his friends Parveen Babi and Mahesh Bhatt were visiting him, he was planning to stay for a month in Kodaikanal in the south of India.

Jnanasram is about 20 kilometers south of Bangalore, close to Bannerughatta. After Brahmachariji avoided with great difficulty the possible [mis]fortune of ascending the Seat of the Kudli Math, U.G. created for him the opportunity to build this *ashram*. With his ingenuity and incessant hard work, Brahmachariji transformed the seven-acre barren land donated to him by the Government into a luscious garden. He also built the Sakti Ganpati Temple in the Ashram. In course of time, he also built a school, a guesthouse, and quarters for those who would look after him. Brahmachariji said he owed it all to U.G.: when U.G. had first seen the barren land, he had put into Brahmachariji’s hand the two rupees that remained after he had paid for a taxi that day, and he told Brahmachariji that this was his donation for the building of an *ashram*. Ever since then, whatever Brahmachariji touched turned to gold.

Our taxi arrived in Jnanasram. Looking at the sign of the Ashram outside the gate saying, “Jnanasram”, U.G. remarked that the major defect that the sign had was not to have an ‘a’ before the word “*Jnanasram*” [instead of ‘Abode Wisdom’, the sign ‘*Ajnanasram*’ then would read ‘Abode of Non-wisdom’]. We all laughed at the joke. Brahmachariji, whom we expected to see waiting for us at the gate, was nowhere to be seen. We surmised that he must have waited for us, and thinking that the plane arrived late, he must have gone to town to do some urgent chores. So we ourselves had to take care of the guests that accompanied us.

Early the next morning at five o'clock, U.G. came and sat in the living room. "Last night that cobra came to visit me," he said. Our curiosity was aroused. Whenever he visited the Ashram, a big cobra would visit him at least once. It was an almost 20 feet long venomous serpent. It would make big sounds with its large hood and wake up U.G. U.G. would open the back door of his room and go out and walk with the cobra for a little while. "Maybe because of the big rain last night, the snake was not as fast as before. It crawled and moved slowly. It has become very old. Still, how beautiful it looks when it crawls in its zigzag fashion!" U.G. told us.

"In this desolate place, the cobra has been protecting me for all these years. Some great person is visiting in this form," said Brahmachari. His cook sometimes fed milk to it. Other people normally couldn't find it, but when U.G. arrived at the Ashram, the cobra seemed to know and would visit U.G. at night and then disappear.

The next afternoon at exactly 3:00 p.m., Jnanachakravarti, an astrologer, entered, opening the gate with a friend of his called Anand. Jnanachakravarti was well dressed in the Indian fashion with a red shawl around his shoulders and a glow on his face. As they approached us, we all promptly made room for the two guests on the green lawn. After being introduced to U.G., Jnanachakravarti sat with everyone on the lawn. U.G. was mocking the Hindu traditions and religious ways in his usual manner.

Within half an hour, Jnanachakravarti abruptly interrupted U.G. and raised an objection: "Mr Krishnamurti, many of the criticisms you have made have been made before by others. You must have the spirit of tolerance to not only reject the useless elements in our tradition, but to select the best. The scriptures don't approve of someone being a teacher merely because they are engaged [lit. *rooted*] in Brahman. He must also be tradition-bound. Only such persons are fit to be world teachers."

U.G. did not reply. "Please furnish me the horoscope of U.G. Right now I will examine it minutely and analyse the status of his spirituality on the basis of scriptural authority. If I am offending his admirers, please forgive me. But I can't tolerate blasphemy," he said emotionally.

U.G. quietly went in, brought a copy of his horoscope and handed it to Jnanachakravarti. Just as Jnanachakravarti started studying the horoscope, his facial expressions changed. He admitted that, without a doubt, it was the horoscope of a *jivanmukta*. He quoted many verses from astrological texts to support his statements. We were all stunned.

\* \* \*

**No difference between an *ashram* and a brothel...**

The next day, October 3, 1979, Mahesh Bhatt and Parveen Babi arrived from Bombay. That same evening they all went with U.G. and Valentine to Mysore in a car. My friends and I also went and everyone stayed in the University Guest House arranged by Professor Ramakrishna Rao of Mysore University. We all ate at Prof. Rao's house. As Brahmachariji hails from Mysore, he stayed in his own large house built by his father, the ownership of which was a source of dispute between himself and his brothers.

Something interesting happened on October 4. Prof. Ramakrishna Rao went to the university on some business. U.G., Mahesh, Brahmachariji and some other friends of Brahmachariji were sitting in the hall [of the guesthouse]. One of them was Mr Gundappa, a retired commissioner of police. Brahmachariji and his friends were all ardent followers of Sankara. U.G. seems to take pleasure in making fun of Brahmachariji when he gets a chance. Sometimes this can go on beyond tolerable limits and Brahmachariji would fly into a rage. Then they would both calm down and laugh very loudly.

That day, however, Brahmachariji was in a terrible mood. As if he didn't notice any of that, U.G. kept making fun of him: "Why start an *ashram*? What's the difference between an *ashram* and a brothel? Prostitutes are better: they merely sell their body for a livelihood. In your *ashrams* you sell gurus. After so much education and becoming an IAS officer, why did you have to stoop down to selling Sankaracharya?"

Brahmachariji was furious that he was being ridiculed before others. "Mahesh, I am not going to remain with this man for one more minute. When Ramakrishna Rao returns, tell him that I went back to Bangalore," he said angrily, and without heeding Mahesh's requests, rushed out of the house.

"U.G., Brahmachariji is really leaving in anger," Mahesh was shouting loudly.

But U.G., on his part, said quietly, "He is not going anywhere. He will come back. Wait and see."

Meanwhile, just as he left the house and went some distance, Brahmachariji ran into Prof. Ramakrishna Rao. All his anger returned when he saw the latter, "What kind of a demon are you having as your guest? Is he a *Brahmajnani* or a big demon?" he shouted in anger.

Ramakrishna Rao held him by his shoulder and tried to comfort and pacify him.

Meanwhile, a Brahmin passing by saw them and begged pitifully, "Sirs, I am hungry. Please give me a rupee. I will read your palms and tell your fortune."

Ramakrishna Rao found a golden opportunity in this. “Brahmachariji, I agree with what you say. Let’s take this palmist with us and expose U.G.’s true colours. If it turns out that he is a trickster and a phoney, we will drive him out of the house. Come, let’s go home,” he said.

Brahmachariji was pacified. “Hey, you Brahmin, you must look at the palm of someone and tell us the exact truth. If you read his hand carefully and tell us what kind of a man he is, I will give you ten rupees. If you talk gibberish, I will make your head sing songs! Be ready!” he said threatening the Brahmin.

In a couple of minutes they came into the house. As Brahmachariji looked at U.G., he curtly asked that U.G. show his hand to the palmist. U.G. extended his arms to show both his palms like a good boy. None of the people who had assembled in the hall understood what was going on; they were watching the spectacle. The lean Brahmin looked at U.G.’s right hand for a couple of minutes and started blinking with wide eyes, howling, “O ho ho!”

Brahmachariji held him by the arm and shouted at him, “Speak clearly in words.” The Brahmin didn’t hear him, and kept on studying the palm. After a little while, he said again, “Abbabbabba, ahahaha....!” and was gloating in ecstasy.

Brahmachariji could not contain his anger and got ready to hit him, “Are you going to say something in words, or should I break your head?”

“Sir, what can I say? I have never seen a palm like this before in my entire life. It surpasses that of the Rama Incarnation and the Krishna Incarnation. This palm is that of Srimannarayana [Vishnu],” the Brahmin said.

Brahmachariji couldn’t utter a word in response. He collapsed on the sofa dumbfounded. U.G. assessed the situation. He looked at the palmist and made an offer: “If you can look at his palm and state how many children he has, I will give you 20 rupees,” and showed him Brahmachariji’s palm.

The Brahmin scrutinised it for a minute and laughed, “He is a staunch bachelor. He was never married. How can he have children?”

Brahmachariji then also joined the roomful of people there who laughed at this accurate deduction. Thus U.G. and Brahmachariji tested each other and found out that the stuff the other person was made of was genuine and not bogus.

\* \* \*

## **Chamundeswari Temple**

That evening Dr Ramakrishna Rao offered to take Mahesh and Parveen for a *darshan* in the Chamundeswari Temple. U.G., Valentine and Brahmachari also accompanied them. No one knows how he got wind of it, but by the time they arrived there, the priest in the neighbouring Lakshmi Narayana Temple, Anandji, came running to U.G. to receive him.

Anandji was a devout man who remained a bachelor all his life, performed daily worship in the Temple, and, like Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, spent his life meditating upon God. Many years ago, a friend had taken him to U.G. As soon as Anandji had seated himself before U.G., intense movement of the Kundalini energy had started within him. Ever since then, he placed a picture of U.G. at the altar and worshipped it every day.

The priests of the Chamundeswari Temple, showing great respect, led Valentine, Parveen and Mahesh, along with U.G., directly into the inner sanctum. Brahmachariji later said that the honour done to them that day was not normally accorded even to the Maharajah. It was inconceivable that people like Valentine, Parveen and Mahesh, considered untouchable [Mlecchas] by orthodox Hindus, would be allowed into the inner sanctum where even orthodox Brahmins would not normally be allowed. A special puja was performed for them. It was another wonder that the sacred conch shell [called *Panchajanya*] belonging to the Goddess, and the Sri Chakra(1) that was installed there were also brought to them, and U.G. was allowed to touch them. That honour too is not normally accorded even to the Maharajah. From the moment he stepped into the inner sanctum, U.G. felt the effect of the energy in there and appeared to be in a semi-conscious state. The Srichakra and Panchajanya stirred the energies in him. When he was about to stumble, Brahmachariji held U.G.

Mahesh later said that he had seen on U.G.'s forehead a swelling of the skin in the form of the vertical marks worn by Vaishnavaites (*namas*). (2) The swelling had remained for some time. For the duration of his stay in the Temple, there was also another mark evident around U.G.'s neck in the form of a serpent.

When asked about the nature of these swellings, U.G.'s explanations were always of a scientific nature. He said that the worship that was done with great devotion and devoutness, and the Yantras [*mystical diagrams on metal plates*] that were installed there all fill the area with powerful vibrations. These swellings are an end-result of U.G.'s body mechanisms reacting to these energy vibrations. They show up for a little while and then subside. U.G. says there is no need to attribute more spiritual significance to such manifestations. (3)

Brahmachariji's body mechanism, however, cooled itself down by drinking milk from four coconuts as soon as the group came out of the Temple. Valentine was the only person who remained

unaffected by any of this. Everyone else was affected in some fashion or the other by the energy present there.

\* \* \*

### **Dr Kameswari**

Anyone who knew Kameswari would feel as if they had known her for many years. No one knows how she acquired that special trait. “She is a child of the Devi [the Mother Goddess, called *Ammavaru* in Telugu],” says General Ramanayya, a friend of Kameswari. While she was still in her mother’s womb, her father, Pillalamarri Sundararamayya, adopted monk-hood and acquired the monk’s name of Ramananda Swami. He gave her the *mantra* of the Sixteen Syllables and taught her to worship the Goddess Lalita Parameswari. Since then, she filled her life with the Goddess. She later got married, bore children and became an Army doctor, but she never left the presence of the Supreme Goddess Lalita. Her world was immersed with the Goddess. Even when she worked in the Army, she would take leave for the ten days of the Dasara festival and dedicate herself to the Goddess. The Goddess is not just a conventional goddess to her nor is she an abstract idea in her mind. To Kameswari the Goddess is a unique expression of energy, which embraces the whole universe, comforts it with love, and showers mercy upon it.

Since Kameswari’s was stationed as an Army doctor in Wellington, a town in the Nilgiri hills, it prompted U.G. to go to Ooty that year. Ever since she became acquainted with U.G., Kameswari had been inviting him to visit Ooty. For some reason, the climate of Ooty did not appeal to U.G. Although he liked cool mountainous places, he did not like Ooty. Nevertheless, because Kameswari lived there, he wanted to go to Kodaikanal via Ooty.

Kameswari’s joy knew no bounds when she learned that U.G. was coming with Parveen and Mahesh. “I ran immediately to the Post Office and sent a telegram saying, ‘Welcome.’ I also wrote a letter sitting right there. I asked him not to disappoint me, as I was so happy about his coming. Just before I got U.G.’s letter that day I was thinking during my Puja, ‘It would be nice if U.G. would come here. I can’t even take off from work this year on leave.’ I had that intense desire to see U.G. I went to the hospital, and in the morning mail I received the letter from U.G. saying they were coming. I can’t express adequately my joy,” she wrote to me in a letter.

On October 5, 1979, two days after Mahesh and Parveen arrived from Bombay, U.G. started with them on a trip by car to Ooty. Kameswari’s anticipation was like that of Sabari in Ramayana. After U.G. and company set foot in her house, she had one of her two feet in the kitchen and the other in the

living room. Unable to bear that, U.G. settled himself down in the kitchen. He would taste the curries she made, add salt to her cooking and converse with her. Kameswari enjoyed this very much. He even kept her company when she sat for her Puja, so that she wouldn't miss him even there. He and Parveen would seat themselves on either side of her. He asked her to utter the *mantra* aloud when she was meditating. When she finished, he said, "Good, perfect."

One day, when she was doing her Puja, he said, "Parts of the *mantras* are very powerful. They feel as if a great energy is flowing. But at some places the flow is interrupted. I will correct them if you recite them aloud." When she corrected them and recited them again the next day, he said, "Now they sound right."

U.G. once commented on Kameswari's Puja: "When she recited those *mantras*, those sounds caused strange movements and experiences in me. It must be such experiences some people aspire for when they do *japa* [uttering holy names] and *tapas* [austerities]. The question, 'No matter how mechanically they are recited, is it right to brush them aside as foolish?' arose in me.

"No, you mustn't," came the reply. It doesn't mean from that moment U.G. encouraged Puja and Japa. It's not U.G.'s manner to condemn anything as a foolish practice if it is done in good faith, sincerely and with a pure mind.

Kameswari's Puja altar includes U.G.'s photo along with the pictures of all the gods and goddesses. When she was offering food ritually to the gods, U.G. said in a chiding fashion, "I am here in person. Why do you offer the food to my photo? Give it to me. I am hungry."

"There are other 'dignitaries' there besides you. So you must wait till the Puja is over," she said, calming him down.

Kameswari thus had the good fortune of, after identifying U.G. as the fulfilment of her thousand wishes, having him come in her own home, of serving him, of worshipping him, of making offerings to him, and of enjoying such worship. On the full moon day in October, during her Puja, Kameswari was overwhelmed by her devotion and emotions, lost her senses, fell into U.G.'s lap and started crying loudly. Parveen, too, put her head in U.G.'s lap and cried like a baby. Perhaps, the full moon filled U.G. with the splendour of motherly love: quietly he consoled them both.

U.G. told me later that it was on that day he had a vision of the Sage Agasthya. He is not wont to talking about such visions in a respectful manner. His manner is to treat with equal lightness visions of both Donald Duck and Sada Siva. So, it is not easy to extract details of such visions from him. When I

asked him, “How did Agasthya look?” his answer was, “He looked short, fat and dark.” Everyone knows that Ooty is called the Place of Agasthya. Yercaud also is said to be a residence of Agasthya.

U.G. and company stayed in Ooty for four days and then left for Kodaikanal. “As soon as they left for Kodai, I felt that my body became lifeless, as though all the energy in it was pumped out of it like air,” Kameswari said.

\* \* \*

**“This is not the time and this is not the place to die,” – Kodai**

U.G. wanted to stay in Kodaikanal for a month. Parveen and Mahesh accompanied him there. Also, Mr Narayana from Hyderabad and an English friend called Bernard Selby wanted to come there to spend a few days with U.G. Meanwhile, in Bangalore, we received an unexpected telegram from U.G. saying, “We are cancelling our stay in Kodai and starting back on the 18th. Please arrange for our stay in the Ashram, if the house is not ready.” We were at a loss as to what to do. We had to hurry to Jnanasram to prepare for their arrival.

U.G. went directly to the Ashram on the evening of his arrival on Thursday, October 18, 1979. The next day Mahesh brought us to the Ashram in his car. “What happened, Mahesh? Why did you come back from Kodai so soon without spending at least ten days there?” I asked.

“*Ayyo, Kadavalai, Andavane!*(4) [‘God’ in Tamil – one of U.G.’s pet phrases],” he screamed, but didn’t answer my question. I felt that he hadn’t recovered yet from some shock: something extraordinary must have happened. In the course of time I was able to extract the story, some from Mahesh, some from Valentine and some from U.G. The article that Mahesh wrote later called, “To Hell and Back,” was published in the *Times of India*. It mirrors the incidents that occurred in Kodai. In that article, he says, “...Kodai took the ugly shape of a page from Dante’s *Inferno*.”

They had found an old bungalow called the Bhoot Bungalow in Kodai to stay. Mahesh did not like the place, and was panic-stricken as if it was a Ghost Bungalow [*bhoot* means ghost in Hindi]. As soon as they got there, it rained torrentially. The nights were pitch black. Parveen was mentally ill, and her illness became worse from the bad weather. She would sneak into her room and lock herself in. U.G. was unwell because the air was so humid and his oesophagus problem recurred again. U.G. looked like Yama in person. If anyone tried to talk to him about anything, he flew into a rage. There was a fireplace in the hall with a fire going on, which seemed to serve as a constant reminder of U.G.’s fiery visage. If anyone by mistake mentioned J. Krishnamurti, U.G. would rise into a fury like



a cobra whose tail had been stepped on. “You and I are going to witness in person the demolition of J.K.’s teachings. I am not exaggerating,” U.G. roared fiercely. “J.K. is merely a medium. He is used to speaking as if some spook possessed him. Otherwise, there is nothing to him,” he would say, brushing J.K. aside.

One day, his oesophagus closed completely. U.G. couldn’t even swallow water. If he forced himself to eat anything, he would throw it up. He was thus unable to eat or drink anything for 36 hours. To add to the illness, as if in sympathy, Parveen stopped eating and drinking as well. Thus, there was more than one crisis on hand. U.G. felt as if his body was all stirred up and wrung out. He would writhe in pain on the bed. No one knew what would happen. One night, his pain became unbearable. He felt as if his end was nearing. Mahesh was at a loss about what to do.

U.G. said to Valentine, “It looks as if my time to die is nearing.”

Valentine replied quietly in a jocular fashion: “This is not the time and this is not the place to die. It’s not practical.”

U.G. could not help himself from laughing at these words. “That was the only laughter that echoed between the walls of the Bhoot Bungalow in a week,” said Mahesh. Perhaps because of the irrepressible laughter that burst out of U.G. in response to Valentine’s remark, his oesophagus loosened up. He was able to sip and take in water. A little later, he was able to eat food.

When U.G. said, “That’s enough of the Kodai experiment. Let’s go to Bangalore,” everyone breathed a sigh of relief. The chauffeur of the car was also gladly relieved. Immediately, everyone said goodbye to Kodai and left.

“In the Natural State there are no higher or lower levels. Even before [I went to Kodai], there were no boundaries in my consciousness. It seemed like consciousness flowed with the body as its periphery. This is not an experience. In order to communicate with you I have to use a metaphor. After I returned from Kodai, even that ‘bank’ [boundary] has disappeared. Everything is a vast unitary stream. There are no obstacles to this flow. It’s hard to express it in words. It’s even more difficult to understand what I say,” said U.G. the day after he returned from Kodai.

\* \* \*

**“Get lost” – vision of J.K.**

It was November 4, 1979, the full moon day of Kartika. When he saw me early in the morning, U.G. said to me, “You know what happened today? Earlier this morning J.K. appeared.”

I was shocked. How could J.K. appear? Was that in a dream or was it real? U.G. smiled. “This was not a vision; nor was it a dream. I never have dreams. J.K. appeared in person,” he said.

What did he say after he appeared? “He looked at me and said, ‘Old chap! Your teaching is too radical and too revolutionary. Water it down.’

“I told him, ‘Get lost!’ and he disappeared,” said U.G.

## **12. Kusuma – U.G.’s Wife**

“I used to hear that there were great loyal ladies who lived in such unity with their husbands’ lives that they didn’t even preserve their own lives. I didn’t realise until after she had died that none of them would even stand comparison with my mother,” said Bulbul [Usha, U.G.’s daughter] speaking the other night about her mother, Kusuma.

“You became a great king because our Janaki kept your company, or else was it your own achievement?(5) so said Tyagayya defiantly. True. What did Sita gain by marrying an ideal person like Rama? How happy was Kusuma made by loving with all her heart an idiosyncratic individual like U.G., let alone being married to him? Kusuma was a faithful wife who suffered for her husband’s pleasure, and with a view of not standing in the way of his attaining his goals. She was caught in the dilemma of, on the one hand, wishing to provide for her children’s future and, on the other hand, wanting to be in her husband’s presence, a presence which was so vital for her own well-being.

Finally, she punished herself cruelly and separated herself from him. She became an object of scorn in her relatives’ eyes, but she wouldn’t care about whatever they said about her. If anyone even hinted at blaming U.G., no matter how close a relative that person was, she would lash out at him like a veritable Kali. For the sake of her children, she sacrificed her life of 35 years living in the remote village of Pulla. Apparently, she told her sister Minakshamma before she died, “Sister, thus I not only became unwanted by my husband but also am becoming useless for my children. What good is it for me to live?”

When Bulbul was narrating these events to us on the terrace that night, we could clearly imagine Kusuma’s suffering. We could understand why she had moved away from U.G. We also knew how inevitable the occurrence of such an event was in U.G.’s life, this separation from his wife. When

Bulbul was crying loudly because she couldn't contain the pain of her memories, we too cried with her silently.

If a person who first didn't want to marry at all, melted like snow as soon as he saw Kusuma and decided that if he ever married it would be only to her, we need not be surprised. Her personality, beauty and nature were of that sort. Why did such a person move away from U.G. in her final days? U.G. had told her that she could leave the US and return to India. All her efforts to persuade him to return with her to India, to live together as one family with him and the children as before, failed. U.G. was not interested in family life.

When she thought of the future of her daughters, her heart sank. She insisted on keeping them in India because she worried: "In this god-forsaken country my children will get used to this culture and will marry Christian men." She wanted to send them to school in India. She wanted to raise them according to the Indian cultural tradition, and not play with their lives. At least that was her intention.

U.G. was adamant: "If you want, you can go. You can stay in India with them. I will live alone in this country or another country, but I won't return to India." By then he knew that separation with his wife was inevitable. He knew that his life was like a rudderless boat tossed away by Fate, drifting in the ocean of existence.

Having no alternative, Kusuma returned to India alone. She left her life behind with her husband and landed in India looking like a lifeless corpse. It's a wonder why the earth didn't take her into its womb immediately. Circumstances in India were topsy-turvy. Nevertheless, Kusuma was brave and would not admit defeat. She believed that U.G. would someday return to India for her sake and for their children's sake. She kept her hope alive as long as she believed that even though U.G. had no use for her, her children needed her. She bore and defied all hardships as well as her ill-health.

One day in Pulla, Bharati [U.G.'s eldest daughter] and Bulbul came from Visakhapatnam for vacations. When she assigned small tasks for them, they wouldn't do them. She was hurt by their complaints.

No matter how low a state she was in, she was so proud that she wouldn't let others know of it. When she was trying to feed him, and he wouldn't eat, she learned that the four-year-old Bujji [*Kumar, U.G.'s second son*] had gone to someone's house and ate a full meal that afternoon. She put the little kid down and made marks on his stomach with a hot pancake turner. Then she started crying. How many could understand the agony and tears of that mother!

She didn't like to inform her husband of her hardships. "Wouldn't he suffer pain knowing that I and the children are going through such hardships? How sorry will he be!" she thought.

Her brother-in-law, Mr Mrutyunjaya Rao, trying to set right the affairs of this family, and with the intention of calling U.G. to India, wrote a pleading letter to U.G. When she learned of it, Kusuma became a veritable Durga [*a fierce form of the Mother Goddess*], picked the gentleman up by grasping him from the sliding chair he was sitting on and threw him on the floor. She was so proud.

"Sister, he will come. U.G. will certainly come. Didn't he treat me like a princess? My prince will come on seven horses," Kusuma would daydream in this fashion. She had great imagination and an artistic bent of mind. There was not a moment when she didn't think of U.G. She used to reminisce about the days of her married life with U.G. and talk about them to her sister.

She recalled that one day she and U.G. went to some town. The hosts had given them a room to sleep in. There was only a camp cot, which would accommodate one person, in the room. Kusuma became angry when U.G. told her, "Kusuma, you sleep on the cot. I will spread my bed on the floor and sleep on it."

"He would bring me anything I wanted. He would send me a *sari* wherever I was. When he asked me what I wanted for my birthday, I told him I wanted a *sari*. I was so foolish. Why did I ask for a *sari*?" she said, sobbing. Perhaps Kusuma was regretting that she should instead have asked him to stay with her.

"Sister, my husband would look like Nagayya [a famous South Indian movie star]. He was fair, with long hair, white shirt and a *panche* [loin cloth] – he looked like a prince. Her *tapas* was only to constantly think of U.G.'s appearance."

Kusuma's daily routine was to recall the memories of the days she had spent with U.G. in the US and talk about them.

### **13. Valentine de Kerven**

It was January 20, 1991. That night Valentine died suddenly. She simply dropped off while she was sitting in a chair eating her dinner. The houselights were shining brightly. The light of Valentine, however, which had been shining brightly in our Poornakutee in Bangalore, went out permanently. Just the day before, my wife Suguna had gone to Bapatla after she had heard of the news of her brother's death. She had been quite distressed at the prospect of leaving the company of Valentine. She had grown fond of Valentine during the past five years, during which time Valentine became like a small baby in the cradle. The lives of our children, Aruna and Archana, were intertwined with

Valentine's, as they had known her ever since they were little. They had played games and sang songs to her while she sat in her chair. They teased her and argued with her. As soon as they came home from school they would hug her and shower her with kisses. How could the children bear this sudden death while they couldn't even imagine living in her absence?

Unfortunately, I wasn't present when Valentine died that night. Just about an hour and half before her death, I had to go out on an errand. When I left I told her in English that I would be returning soon. She tried to smile and held her right hand out as if to shake hands with me. That once-strong hand which had previously given comfort and solace had now shrivelled. I pressed her hand gently and said, "Au revoir, Valentine." She replied, "Au revoir," in a weak voice. That was her last goodbye, her last handshake. All was over by the time I returned home. Those hands had become cold and lifeless. My children and her servants were the only ones present when she closed her eyes forever.

It was pitch dark that night. Valentine's dead body was in the front room. And I was there, like a zombie, keeping a watch over the corpse on the sofa. The city had quietened down. Everything was still except for the occasional roar of a vehicle rolling down the street. I heard a mild moaning from the next room, which died down after a while.

How could I carry on the next day without Valentine? My brain was getting numb as soon I began to think about it. I felt my stomach turning. I was suffering from some inexpressible anxiety. What, indeed, was my connection to her? Who was she? What brought her that great distance, from the place she was born, the Jura mountain region of Switzerland, to Poornakutee in Bangalore, the place where she died? Who was she? Who were we? Who was U.G.?

It was 30 years ago when an anonymous person who lost all his roots and bearings, and who was roaming in foreign countries like a vagabond, was blown into the Indian Consulate Office in Geneva. Valentine sponsored him with her generosity and handed over to him all she had without a second thought. It was a new turn in U.G.'s life. Who of us had ever dreamt that a person like Valentine would live her last days and die from Alzheimer's disease right before our eyes in Bangalore?

In her years of stay here, our neighbours had also become involved with Valentine. How could I console them? What should I say to comfort them? I was reminded of the mocking voice of Chalam in a letter he wrote to me many years ago, "Am I still in that lowly state of pining after those who are dead?" I laughed apathetically. This had to be my plight. My mind was to be ripped apart over and over again. Valentine lay still over there, as if she was sleeping.

“The body is a fortuitous concourse of atoms. There is no death for the body, only an exchange of atoms. Their changing places and taking different forms is what we call ‘death’. It’s a process that restores the energy level in nature that has gone down. In reality, nothing is born and nothing is dead,” I was recalling U.G.’s words with Valentine’s dead body before me.

The mind was in no state to contemplate philosophy or science. As ocean waves break upon rocks, all my thoughts were being shattered within myself – I was frozen with the weight of my sorrow.

Suddenly the telephone rang, breaking the silence in the hall. It was U.G.’s voice on the other end. He was calling from California. There was no emotion in his voice even when he learned of Valentine’s death. He reminded me of the important things I had to do: “Valentine is a foreigner. That’s why you should inform the police of her death. They may give you trouble if you don’t. You must also inform the Swiss Embassy. When will Suguna return?”

I said, “She may be returning by tomorrow afternoon. I will wait till she comes back.”

“All right. Cremate the body in the corporation crematorium. Valentine never believed in the rituals performed after death. She was born a Christian, but she never attended the Church even once,” U.G. said. There was a moment of silence. U.G. again asked, “What will you do with the ashes after the cremation?”

“I will immerse them in the Western section of the river Kaveri near Srirangapatnam,” came the spontaneous from myself. U.G. was laughing mildly. There was pity in that laughter for the sentiments I couldn’t free myself from.

\* \* \*

Some days later, in the morning, Archana was peering from behind me at the papers I was writing on and asked, “Are you writing the biography of Valentine, Daddy?” I nodded ‘Yes’ and looked into her face. The shadows of memories of Valentine flashed in her facial expressions.

I think her greatness would not have been any the less if Valentine had never met U.G. U.G. does not exaggerate it when he says, “In fact, Valentine’s life story is more interesting than mine.” When asked to talk about her life, Valentine rarely opened her mouth. Nevertheless, I gathered many details – some were extracted out of her, some were from what I collected from U.G. who told them to me according to what her sisters had narrated about her to him. I will briefly relate what I know of Valentine’s wonderful life by piecing together all these various details.

Valentine's full name was Valentine de Kerven. She was born in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, on August 1, 1901, in a village called La Chaux de Fond in the Zura mountain region of Switzerland. It is noteworthy that that day is the National [independence] Day of the Swiss people. That might be why Valentine was so fond of her freedom.

Valentine's father, Alfred de Kerven, was well known in those times as a great brain surgeon. His books were translated into almost all the important languages of the world. As he was the one who thoroughly researched a certain glandular disease of the neck, this disorder, the De Kerven Syndrome, mentioned in current medical textbooks, was named after him. Valentine was the second of his three daughters.

Valentine had an unusual personality even as a child. She never believed anything blindly. She had to find things out for herself and act accordingly. She thus developed her artistic tastes and ideas of freedom. When she was 18, she decided to leave home and move to Paris. She wanted to mould her life in her own fashion by mingling with the artists of that time. But no one in her family liked her plan. When they all tried to prevent her from carrying it out, her father stopped them: "Don't force her. We all know what she is like. If we come in the way of her freedom, there is a risk of her leaving us forever. Let her go wherever she wants to go." He persuaded them, and they bade her farewell. He arranged for a yearly income of 2,000 francs wherever she lived.

Valentine never forgot her father's generosity. She indeed loved him deeply. Even after she had married, she was reluctant to adopt her husband's family name, contrary to the custom there. She insisted on keeping her maiden name. Even when she lost her memory because of Alzheimer's disease while she was under our care, her face would shine with joy whenever there was a mention of her father or she saw a photograph of him.

Valentine's big eyes always shone. There was some intense light in her eyes. I believe that no one could express herself with her facial expressions and eyes as well as Valentine could. Even when her body withered away in her last days, the shine in her eyes never went down.

Valentine was an artist from birth. Combined with her free and defiant spirit, her artistic tastes took peculiar forms after she arrived in Paris. Her interest in drama enabled her to become intimate with many prominent artists in the modern arts theatre of that time. Antonin Artaud was a great poet and philosopher as well as a playwright. Spectators crowded to watch his plays, but knowing his eccentricity they always kept a respectable distance from him. Valentine was one of the select few who came close to him. Valentine used to produce in Paris, along with another artist called Dullin, plays written by Artaud. She did her own designing of the costumes for the plays. The new designs for

the dresses she had created earned her a notable reputation in Paris, the centre of fashions, as an apparel designer.

Valentine loved photography. She practised it as an art. It did not take long for her to enter filmdom. She was more interested in cinematography rather than acting in movies. She founded de Kerven Films and produced a variety of documentaries. The film she made on the life of the Gypsies earned her a reputation as a prominent director. To settle down in life was repugnant to Valentine. That might have been why she was attracted to the life of the Gypsies, which involved living without security, and in different places, as long as one pleased, and being jovial like a stream. The famous film institute called Gomo British Theatres showed her documentary in all European countries. She also made documentaries about the medical researches of her father.

When she started coming to India with U.G., Valentine would observe with interest the movie industry in India. She watched some Telugu movies in Madras. In her opinion, Bhanumati was an unsurpassed artist in south Indian movies. According to Valentine, she was quite unique in her acting skill.

At the time of her stay in Paris, Valentine met a Swiss man called Walmar Schwab. As he and Valentine were of one mind, they worked together amid the artistic and cultural areas of Paris. Gradually, their friendship turned into romance. But she turned down the idea of marriage when it was mentioned, due to her independent spirit. Swiss women are by nature quite tradition-bound. Revolutionary ideas and independent spirit are scarce among them. It is perhaps hard to believe that until recently Swiss women had no voting rights. Strangely, it was the women in that country who led a movement against their own rights. Valentine was unique in the sense that, although born in such a country, she had very independent ideas, and was interested in free living within her own life. Although she never participated in any women's movements, her own life, from the beginning to the end, seemed like a liberation movement in its own right.

Valentine never wanted to marry. She detested the institution of marriage. She wondered why a woman should become subservient to man's authority, and why men and women shouldn't live together without marrying. When she wore pants in Paris, the centre of fashion, women would throw rotten eggs at her. As her lover had respect for her independent ideas, they lived together without marrying for 20 years, until the Second World War. Schwab had not had much schooling in his youth. So, when he was 40, he wanted to get some education. Valentine encouraged him, and gave him whatever support he needed so he could go to school. He was eventually awarded a doctorate in chemistry, but because he was over-aged, no one gave him a job.



Meanwhile, the Second World War broke out. Valentine and Schwab escaped from Paris and took shelter in Switzerland in an attempt to avoid the Nazis. The laws in Switzerland were very strict at that time: it was a crime, according to Swiss law, to live together without marrying. When the Swiss police learned that the couple was unmarried, they went after them. Valentine and Schwab ran into trouble trying to avoid the police, and had to change their residence several times. They sometimes hid in potato storehouses. At last, unable to bear the pressure of the police chase, they both decided to flee the country and get married.

Although they had already lived together for 20 years, Valentine still felt that marriage was bondage. Just to prove her independence from the institution of marriage and authority of man, she prepared a marriage contract. According to that contract, although they were husband and wife legally, neither of them could exercise any rights or restrictions on the other. They both could feel free to lead their own lives without permission or interference of the other. Their incomes were also kept separate. When they married they both signed the contract.

It was not in Valentine's blood to lead a life without turbulence. She never liked that sort of uneventful life. She felt that a life without adventure or adversity was not her kind of life. She would compete with teenagers in cross-country running competitions. They were tough competitions and involved running uphill for four or five kilometres. Such competitions required her to get a medical certificate saying she had the stamina to run against women far younger than her. In spite of these odds, she got her way and participated in the competitions.

Before World War II, Spain was under the dictatorship of General Franco. In those days, when most of Europe was resisting Franco's aggression, some artists started a movement called the Revolutionary Association of Artists. Valentine joined this movement, along with her friend, and actively participated in its anti-Franco activities. She even received training, along with other fighters, in the use of firearms. The fact that she, who wouldn't hurt a fly, became a fighter and took to guns in order to bring down a dictatorship in a neighbouring country indicates how deeply the love of freedom was implanted in her personality. She dreamt of going into Spain with her friend secretly, joining hands with the Republicans there, and fighting against Franco. She had even gotten the necessary false passports ready. But when Schwab backed out at the last minute, she too had to cancel her plans.

After the World War started, Valentine also worked in the Red Cross Society. Earlier, she had received training as a nurse. I think that only someone like Valentine can express her talents in multifarious ways – as a fighter, a nurse and an artist.

In 1939, before the onset of World War II, Valentine contemplated the conquest of the Sahara Desert along with her friend. Even today, it is not an easy matter to cross the Sahara Desert on a new motorcycle. Half a century ago, most adventurers would not think of such daring deeds. Except for adventurers who contemplated crossing the English Channel or the Atlantic Ocean, no one would have had the guts to attempt to cross a 3,000-mile desert, finding her way even in the middle of frequently raging desert storms. Valentine had great faith in her powerful 7.5 HP motorcycle. If one were to write an account of how she sat Schwab on the back seat and then travelled day and night for three months in the desolate, terrible desert under the hot sun and in the hot winds, this account would be more interesting than a Jules Verne novel. The struggles they went through getting supplies and gasoline for the motorcycle, the meals they ate sitting on the cadavers of camels because they couldn't set their feet on the burning sand, the hospitality of the residents in the occasional desert villages – adventures of this sort can only be told by a person such as Valentine. The album of photos that she assembled still remains with us as a witness of their Sahara conquest. Weekly magazines at that time gave high praise for their adventurous journey.

After the World War, in 1954, Valentine contemplated another adventure. This time she travelled to India from Switzerland with her friend Schwab in her Volkswagen car. She came to India for the first time via Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan. She and Schwab drove across India, from Kashmir to Kanyakumari, in their car. It may be from this trip that she developed, unbeknown to herself, a deep attachment to India. Indian people, especially people from small villages with their simple living, interested Valentine very much. She was so fascinated by the Indian sleeping cot, with woven twine, that she had one transported, along with her Volkswagen, on a boat from Ceylon to Switzerland. She used the cot for a long time after she returned to her country.

After she returned from India, Valentine accepted a job in the Indian Consulate in Geneva as a translator. It was about that time that she severed her relationship with Schwab. Valentine never had any children, even though she lived 20 years of her life with him as an unmarried companion before their marriage, along with 20 more years after marriage.

Meanwhile, an 18-year-old lady had come between them. It was such an unexpected and sudden development that the 60-year-old Schwab fell in love with this woman and began a relationship with her. In the light of her own marriage contract, although she couldn't find any fault with her husband, Valentine could not swallow the harsh truth of losing someone whom she thought was her own. That is why later, whenever a discussion about woman-man relationships came up, Valentine would say, "As long as there is a tendency among men and women to own each other, no matter how sweet the relationship is, it will have to turn bitter. No matter how many ideals you cite, and no matter what you

do, that tendency will not go away. If the lives of married couples are horrible, the lives of unmarried couples are even more horrible.”

At that time Valentine was living in a house given to her by her father. Valentine could not tolerate Schwab carrying on an affair with his new girlfriend. When, not stopping with that, Schwab went ahead and filed a lawsuit in court asking for a divorce from her, Valentine’s mind was closed to him. At the time of the verdict, the judge read their marriage contract and asked in shock, “What kind of a marriage is this? How could you call this sort of a contract marriage? With such a marriage, why would you still need a divorce?” He immediately annulled their marriage and sent them off.

“I never saw Valentine shedding tears. She had the courage to face any kind of hardship,” says U.G. “The word ‘sentiment’ does not exist in her vocabulary.”

After the 40-year-old relationship with her companion broke up, Valentine felt that her life was in vain. What must she do? Why should she live? She was crestfallen, unable to find any use or aim for her life. One midnight, unable to sleep, Valentine sat on the banks of Lake Geneva. For one who had never cared about her future before, now it seemed terrible. When she told me much later about the mental agony she had experienced that night, U.G. was with us. U.G. asked, looking at Valentine mischievously, “You didn’t feel like jumping into the lake?”

She replied, “No use jumping into the water. I knew how to swim.”

U.G. later joked about her saying, “She must have been afraid that the water in the lake would be frozen from the cold. Or else she would have jumped in it.”

She seemed to have been fated to return home that night without attempting anything drastic on herself, and it was the very next day that U.G. stepped into the office of the Indian Consulate. The lifelines of those two seemed to have merged on that day and started to move in the same direction: they both had not the faintest idea of how they were going to live, what their future was, or why they should live. And both their lives were like kites cast off to the winds of fate.

\* \* \*

Who cares about Valentine now? She never even cared about herself. Even when others reminded her of her adventures and sacrifices, she would smile as though they were quite ordinary. Valentine had no more interest in her own extraordinary personality than the interest a flower has in its own fragrance. Even those who knew U.G. intimately knew her only as a companion to him in his world

travels, and as an extraordinarily generous person who made it possible for U.G. to stay in Switzerland. But who knew of the heights of her magnanimity?

Ever since the time of the Calamity, U.G. and Valentine would come to India every winter. U.G. would say, “We are migratory birds: we come to this country to escape the winter in Switzerland. Here, unlike in that country, we can find all our conveniences. There is no other higher purpose in coming here.”

Valentine always liked to travel to India, and particularly to visit Bangalore. She enjoyed spending her time in Bangalore standing in the upstairs balcony of the house and watching the huge *peepul* tree in front of the Anjaneya temple. She would watch the large bats that hung on its branches upside down and made screeching noises, as well as the ladies who circumambulated around the statues of snakes installed at the bottom of the tree. Also, there were the lazy buffaloes chewing their cud and swatting themselves with their tails, and the vendors selling a variety of wares from their pushcarts on the street. Everyday she would go enthusiastically half a dozen times to the nearby Gandhi Bazaar to buy something there. Until she was past 80, she would go around alone in the vicinity of Basavangudi in Bangalore. Valentine had the habit of walking fast. At times, I myself found it difficult to catch up with her. When one of us tried to hold her hand to be sure that she would cross the street safely at the crossroads, she would shake our hand off and walk away swiftly.

Everyday in the evenings many friends would gather to talk to U.G. Usually the conversation turned around trivialities. If there were any serious discussions with U.G., Valentine never moved out of the room. She would sit there for hours and listen to the conversations with keen attention. I asked her once, “For how many years have you been listening to U.G.? Don’t you get tired of it?” She would reply, “No matter how many times I’ve heard him, each time it seems new.”

Valentine would cook for U.G. while they were in Switzerland. Even there she enjoyed walking several times from their home on top of a hill, about a hundred feet high from the street level, to the marketplace, going with ease down and back up the narrow pathways, on the pretext of needing to buy things.

In Bangalore, in the house where we lived, children would gather around Valentine. She would be nice to them and pass out food. Children played with her and sang songs to her. She would clap with them in joy, even though she did not understand their songs. Aruna and Archana felt great pleasure in spending time with her. They would bring their friends and introduce them to her proudly and showed her off to them. It was Valentine’s habit to say “Voila” for “All right”. When she rolled her eyes and nodded her head while looking at the children, saying, “Voila”, they would join her by singing,

“Voila, voila, voila, voila, Valentine.” She too would burst out laughing along with them. The children liked to make her say their names. They would have great fun when she had trouble pronouncing their names.

Valentine had other close friends in Bangalore: the squirrels which jumped off from the coconut tree to the balcony and came close to her, the stray street dogs that approached her when she walked on the street fast, the baby monkeys saying ‘Hello’ from the *peepul* tree across the street from the temple, the lambs nibbling grass in the park – Valentine was great friends with all of them. She took photographs of each of them and preserved them carefully. When she made a photograph, even the ugly face of a baby donkey would look like the face of a royal horse.

Once she took me upstairs, offering to show me something interesting. She took me to her table and silently signalled me to be quiet. After a little while, she very gently pulled the drawer open and asked me to peep in. There didn’t seem to be anything in there except rubbish. When I looked in more closely, there were four dark mice moving around. Their mother, sitting in their midst, lifted her head and looked at me fearlessly. In her look I could see the confidence she had that as long as she had the protection of Valentine no one could harm her family. Valentine closed the drawer quietly and said looking at me, “Aren’t they cute?” I can still remember clearly the glee of joy I saw in her eyes. She was quite preoccupied with that family of mice, as though feeding them breadcrumbs and cookies and protecting them from the cat that came to say ‘Hello’ to her were her life aims.

By nature, Valentine was not very talkative. She could communicate much better with her eyes and facial expressions than with words. She knew several languages. Her mother tongue was French. She also knew English, German, Spanish and Italian well. After coming to India she learned a few Hindi words. When I sang poems that I wrote about U.G. in Telugu, I could see her feeling sorry that she wasn’t able to grasp the poems directly in Telugu, rather than in my English translation. I felt that I didn’t need any more recognition for my poems than that. Later, she bought the book called *Telugu in Thirty Days* and tried seriously to learn the language. But she got confused with the Kannada vocabulary that was used around her, and soon quit her effort. Soon after that, Valentine reached a state beyond our words and language, a thought-free state where there was no need for words.

When Valentine was 82 years old, that summer she fell ill for a week in Bombay with sunstroke. From that time, although her physical health recovered, her memory deteriorated day by day. The doctors who examined her in the United States determined that she was suffering from Alzheimer’s disease. Medical experts are now of the opinion that the disease is spreading worldwide without

regard to young or old. Scientists are still unable to fathom this disease, which afflicts memory-storing neurons in the brain.

Here, it's appropriate to remind ourselves of U.G.'s warning: "Man's brain is intended to run efficiently this machine called the body. If the brain is used for any other purpose, mankind cannot but be subject to the horrible disease called Alzheimer's. It's not cancer or AIDS that will wipe out mankind which has appeared on the earth as a scourge among living species; Alzheimer's disease is soon going to spread like an epidemic."

With her memory loss Valentine also became less active. That's when U.G.'s troubles started. It was not easy for him to take her along on his travels. Sometimes an American friend called Kim Lawrence would take care of Valentine's needs and go around the world with both of them. For some days, famous movie star Parveen Babi also served Valentine while she was travelling with U.G. But as Valentine grew older, and as her Alzheimer's disease was advancing, it became clear to U.G. that she could no longer travel. He felt that she needed to stay in one place for the rest of her life. It was our sheer good fortune that U.G. decided that Bangalore should be the last stage of Valentine's life journey and that she should be in our care. It was indeed our good fortune to have been of service to that extraordinary person in her last days.

Before he moved Valentine to Bangalore permanently in September 1986, U.G. arranged a get-together of Valentine with her younger sister Rose and her elder sister Adrian. "Valentine has gone past the stage of being able to travel, and I cannot stop travelling for her sake. So, I am going to make arrangements for her to spend her last days comfortably in India. If you can arrange better facilities for her, I have no objection. I can hand her and her money over to you this instant and go my way," U.G. said to them.

The two sisters declined: "Look at our own state. We ourselves are dependent on others in old-age homes. What good is our money to us? Valentine is many times more fortunate than us. Who else besides you can look after her better? You do whatever you feel is appropriate, U.G.," they said and bid Valentine a final goodbye.

Later, a year before Valentine died, her younger sister, and then, a year after she died, her elder sister, died in Switzerland.

\* \* \*

Alzheimer's disease, which wipes out the self and erodes the ability to recognise things, may be a frightening disease; in Valentine's case, however, it created situations that were amusing to everyone. The first incident of Valentine's forgetfulness that perturbed U.G. occurred in Switzerland: that year, as always, Valentine and her sister Adrian were reminiscing about their childhood events. After two or three hours, Valentine suddenly turned towards Adrian and asked her seriously, "By the way, how did you happen to know about my childhood events?" Her sister was shocked: "What do you mean 'How'? I am your sister!" "How could you be my sister? My sister is with me here. Look!" and she pointed to U.G. No one could say a word.

Ever since then such forgetfulness became quite common. On some occasions when she was forgetful, we could not contain our laughter at the timely jokes Valentine would make.

When an acquaintance once asked her in the way of greeting, "Who am I Valentine?" Valentine answered, "If you don't know yourself, how am I to know who you are?"

On another occasion, when U.G. said, "If you keep forgetting everyone like this, Valentine, you may finally forget me too." She replied mischievously, "You deserve that!" We all broke into laughter.

Once when U.G. and Valentine were travelling on a bullet train in Japan, suddenly Valentine looked around and wondered, "How come there are so many Japanese in this train?" She calmed down when U.G. explained to her that the reason was because they were in Japan.

When she noticed that U.G. continued to talk to some friends even after dark, Valentine would get worried that they might remain there. U.G. explained to her as though she were a child, "They have their own homes, Valentine. They won't stay here. They will leave after a little while." Then she asked U.G., "If they all leave, what will happen to them?"

Valentine had no real anxiety. No worries. She was always calm. If she became angry, it was just for a moment. Then she would laugh happily like a baby.

Sometimes, after she ate her dinner, when someone asked her, "Valentine, have you eaten your dinner yet?" she would reply emphatically, complaining to U.G., "No, they haven't fed me, yet! They haven't given me a morsel of food in ten days. They have been starving me," with conviction, as if she were expecting everyone would believe her. It would be difficult to convince her that she had just eaten a full meal. She would read newspapers holding them upside down. She would try to read them aloud in French, and not being able to make sense of them, she would throw them aside.

U.G. used to describe her by saying, “She is in what you would call the state beyond *Turiya*. There is no state higher than that. If that isn’t the *Turiya* state, what else is *Turiya*?” When he asked that question, he didn’t sound like he was joking.

In earlier days, Valentine’s forgetfulness caused problems for U.G. Once he took her to the Swiss Passport Office in Berne to get the date of expiration on her passport extended. A couple of other friends accompanied them. When he observed Valentine, the official in the Passport Office grew suspicious and said he wanted to talk to her alone. U.G. tried in vain to explain to him her condition. Having no alternative, they left the room, leaving Valentine alone with the official. The official came out of the room in just a couple of minutes, wiping the sweat off of his pale face. He had extended the duration of her passport, but he said, “You can take her now. I don’t need to see her again.” He reported that he asked her, “Who were all those people who came with you?” and she replied that she didn’t know who they were. When he showed Valentine her passport and asked her, “Whose passport is this?” she apparently replied that she didn’t know. The official was shocked. Then he showed her photograph to Valentine and asked, “Is this your picture?” she answered seriously, “That’s not mine. Do I look like that?” The official got very confused by her answers.

What was the relationship between U.G. and Valentine? There is no doubt that this question has bothered many people in different ways. There are friends who have whispered among themselves, “When they both met in Geneva in 1964, Valentine was 63. But her age could not have been a big barrier for a physical relationship.”

There are others who gossiped, “If there was no relationship, why would she give away all her property without hesitation?”

What’s interesting is that U.G. and Valentine were never concerned about such rumours. However, after the behind-the-curtain affairs, the secret romantic adventures of the world famous philosopher J. Krishnamurti, who was reputed to be a world teacher, became public through a recent book, some close friends of U.G. were worried that future generations might misunderstand and gain a mistaken impression of the relationship between U.G. and Valentine.

U.G. replied to this worry unperturbed, “Let them misunderstand. What do I care?”

Once U.G. went to the Bali islands accompanied by Valentine and Parveen Babi, the Indian film star. Parveen needed a change of weather for health reasons. Everyone knew how even a responsible magazine like *India Today* reported in big captions that U.G. had been married to Parveen, and that they both had gone to Bali for their honeymoon. When he returned to India from Indonesia, press reporters surrounded U.G. and asked him how true those reports were. Then U.G. replied, “I wish that



news were true. What more could an aged person like myself want? What more could I want than a beautiful and famous movie star like Parveen Babi landing in my lap with a lot of money!” The reporters were disappointed at U.G.’s answer. When some of his friends suggested to U.G. that he should sue the *India Today*, U.G. smiled and brushed the idea aside by saying, “If what they wrote was false, it doesn’t bother me. And if it were true, I still am not bothered.”

Valentine was never concerned about the rumours that speculated about a relationship between U.G. and herself who was already 60 to 70 years old, nor was she annoyed by people’s curiosity about the nature of her relationship with U.G. When asked at different times about why was it that, on the very first day of meeting U.G. she was so mesmerised by U.G. that she deposited 20,000 dollars in a bank in his name, Valentine would answer with silence. How can a mind that insists on believing blindly that for every action of ours there must be a motive accept the idea that there can be actions without motives?

U.G. has said that there can be a true relationship between men and women only when there is no sexual involvement. In our experience it seems only the relationship between a mother and her children is such a pure relationship. Many believe that the relationship between Valentine and U.G. was such.

When U.G.’s life was taking a crucial turn, Valentine entered the scene and stood as his support. However, she always knew clearly that U.G. had no need of her, and she knew that at any moment he was capable of dropping her and her money and going his own way. She led her life with U.G. in a precarious fashion, a life that could be described in India as: “Within every day lurks a danger, but you live till you’re a hundred anyway,” or living as if “wrestling standing on the edge of a knife”.

As soon as U.G. took her financial affairs into his own hands, she found no need to continue working at the Indian Consulate. U.G. directed her to sell all the gold she had in her possession, the antique art pieces she had inherited from her father, as well as other valuables, so as to convert these items into cash. He then arranged, on the basis of that cash, a fixed monthly income sufficient for Valentine’s needs. In addition, she also received additional money in the form of a pension from her erstwhile job. With that limited income Valentine and U.G. financed their living in the Saanen area of the Alps mountains.

U.G., when talking about the intermingling of their lives, has said: “Ever since she met me, Valentine has had no life of her own as such. She has pretty much led my life.”

#### 14. Do what you can and forget all about it....

That evening Lulu and Eddie, friends of U.G., brought some nightgowns for Valentine. Valentine did not like them. By the next morning she forgot that they were hers. She asked, “Whose gowns are these? How did they get here?” She continued to deny that they were hers, even after we told her they were.

Suguna, U.G. and I were standing outside the front gate and talking about Valentine’s forgetfulness and laughing about it. Only Nagaraj was upstairs. “I will be back soon. I will have to go to Eddie’s house and talk to him about some important things,” said U.G. and started to leave.

Before he could go a few steps, a boy in a torn shirt pursued him begging, “Sami, Sami, alms, please.” While I tried to shoo him away, U.G. walked away quickly. I turned around to go towards my home. The boy continued to follow U.G., pestering him for alms. After walking about 20 yards, I could see U.G. taking some money out of his *lalchi* [shirt] pocket. The next moment, a currency bill was flapping in the boy’s hand. U.G. cleaned his hands, and started walking quickly as before, as if nothing had happened. There was no trace of the boy anywhere.

“That was a lucky day for that boy. U.G. does not think of how much he is giving away,” I said to myself and walked into the house.

That night, during a conversation with U.G., Suguna brought up the incident of the morning. “I don’t know how much I gave. If I had a hundred-rupee note in my pocket, maybe I would have given that,” said U.G. It is surprising to see a person like U.G., who normally says that he does not believe in charity and generosity, in action.

“Isn’t it better to do what you can, depending on the circumstances, and forget all about it? If you start institutions and collect donations in order to remove poverty in the world, would you be really helping the poor and the destitute?” U.G. asks. “Three quarters of what they collect goes toward the operating expenses of the institutions. Who benefits in the end?”

“How did you get to be in the position of giving charity to someone else? How can there be paupers if the rich don’t rob them in some fashion? First, we smite their mouths and fill our bags, and then we drop a few grains in the name of charity just so we get the credit for being a generous donor.... Isn’t this what happens?” U.G. asks.

\* \* \*

**“My actions are not run by my thoughts....”**

"I don't want to leave at all; but I must," said Venkataramayya sadly. He had to leave town the next day. He came from Delhi hoping to see U.G. here. Luckily for him U.G. was in Bangalore. So, he stayed with a friend and visited U.G. But the day arrived when he had to leave. It was his ardent wish to be around U.G. as much as possible and spend time taking care of U.G.'s affairs. On the other hand, he had to go to Delhi for a job or go to Rajahmundry to find some way of making a livelihood. His way of life consisted of doing a job that he liked, when he wanted to do it, and when he needed the money, and to live as he liked the rest of the time. He had spent 40 years of his life with this lifestyle. Now, he was caught deeply in his attraction for U.G.

The next morning, Venkatarmayya came to say goodbye. He perhaps didn't imagine even in his dreams the marvels that were awaiting him: "I have been waiting for you. I was thinking of sending Chandrasekhar to the train station, if you didn't come. You stay here till 2nd April. I will give you the money to make arrangements for yourself," said U.G., handing him hundred-rupee bills. Venkataramayya was flabbergasted with joy. His wish was fulfilled. He would not have imagined that U.G. would treat him so generously. He was very happy. U.G. appeared as if he was sharing Venkataramayya's joy.

"My actions are not things I do after contemplation. Every moment, the circumstances around me determine my response. I don't know what I do. That doesn't mean I am thoughtless about the future. We believe that if we don't think before every situation and plan for it, we may be causing hardships for many. On the other hand, we believe that living without forethought is some sort of spirituality. But in reality that is foolishness and superstition. I am not saying to do any such thing."

"In my case, my actions are not mine. They are not run by my thoughts. Thoughts have no influence on them. My senses are what drive this body. Circumstances are the basis for what decision I should take at a given moment, and how I should act."

"The orders must come from above," U.G. says sometimes, smiling. I believe that he is not joking when he says that.

"This *Ajna Chakra* plays a major role in the functioning of the body. The yogis call it the *Ajna Chakra*, but I say it is the pineal gland. That gland which is beyond the forehead between the eyebrows becomes very active in the Natural State. It controls all the functions that the body performs. That's why they call it the *Ajna* [command] *Chakra*," says U.G.

\* \* \*

**Kangaroos and basketsful of avocados**

“I am a very lucky man that I met a man like U.G. Oh, U.G. is a precious gem. He is very unique.” When the Australian, Max, was talking about U.G., he looked as if for the first time he found himself close to realising the significance of his life.

There were four of them. Three of them were brothers; and a sister called Mary. She listened to U.G.’s conversations with a fixed smile and rapt attention. The four of them had the courage to dedicate their lives to spiritual practice. They quit their own tradition, adopted the Hindu tradition, served gurus, and tried to realise the mysteries of spiritual truths. They were spiritual aspirants who had made spiritual practice their mission in life.

They saw and heard U.G. and talked to him. I heard in Max’s words the sentiment of Kabir expressed in his song “*Ram ratan mai payo....*” [“I gained the jewel of Ram”]. It wasn’t the conversation, it wasn’t his jokes, nor U.G.’s eloquence in English. There was some other authenticity in U.G. that made them slaves to him.

“Where is U.G. going now?” asked Max.

“He went to our house. He will eat there and come back soon.”

Max looked thoughtfully at the sky for a moment. He talked to his brothers and asked me hesitantly, “Could we come too. We are curious about watching U.G. eating his lunch.”

“Surely, please come. No problem,” I said and took them to my home.

Meanwhile, U.G. and Brahmachariji were coming down the stairs. “Where are the Kangaroos [the pet name U.G. used to refer to the Australians – *kangaru* in Telugu means ‘confusion’]? Have they left?” asked U.G.

“They want to watch you eat. They are sitting inside (downstairs),” I replied.

He said as he greeted them, “It’s time to feed this animal. So, you want to see the animal chew its cud!” We all laughed at this.

U.G. explained to them the details of his meals. “I don’t have any requirement that I should have *sattvic* [mild and gentle] food. Because there is a defect in my alimentary canal, the food, instead of going into the intestines directly, sometimes makes trouble. Just like cattle, I too have formed two stomachs as a result of this defect,” he said laughingly.

“I can’t tolerate green chilli, ginger and pungent spices. If I eat even a bit of them, I get hiccups. I have been a vegetarian ever since I was born. No matter how much you try to avoid it, in foreign countries they mix some meat stuff in the vegetarian food. It’s difficult to explain to them what I want.

So I have difficulty in the restaurants. Once, in a foreign restaurant, the waiter brought me tomato soup with beef stock in it. First, I didn't find any difference. After I drank a little, my friend told me that 'Those red bits are meat!' Yet, it did not cause any disgust in me. 'Meat' is just a sound. Because I had no idea of meat, there was no reaction in me even when I knew that it was meat. If the same thing happened to me earlier in my life, I would have vomited the next moment.

"All the protein I need I get from this *pappadam*. That's enough. Normally people eat their ideas and tastes. They sprinkle them on their food and mix their food with them, and they ruin their stomachs and their heads with theories such as: there ought to be vitamins in a diet for good health, nutrients must be in equal quantities, and the diet must be balanced.

"I like cheese. Yoghurt is important. In Switzerland you can find as many as a hundred different kinds of cheese. I am used to cooking semolina, spaghetti, noodles etc. with cheese."

Suguna would buy buffalo milk for U.G., and curdle it in a clay pot. U.G. would relish it.

"If you eat *idli* and *dosai* [south Indian breakfast dishes], they have everything in them: in the *urad dal* [in these dishes] there is protein and in the rice flour there are carbohydrates. And that's enough. However, *idlis* can only be eaten when south Indians make them. On the other hand, I don't like *chapattis* [a common north Indian bread] made by south Indians," says U.G.

Once Shanta Kelkar brought some coffee in a thermos. "Whom is it for?" asked U.G. "Is there enough for everyone? If you want me to drink it, I must have cream with it," he said. The next day cream was brought. "Your coffee is wonderful," U.G. would admire Shanta's coffee. Since then, she brought coffee everyday. "If I say something is good, you shouldn't understand it as 'I want more of it'," he would say.

"I don't have any special interest in eating fruit. Every morning Suguna gives me some orange juice. I like avocado very much." It was a mistake on U.G.'s part to express his likes and dislikes in this fashion. The next evening the Australians brought baskets full of avocados, and several kilos of cheese and cream. U.G. didn't quite know how to store them and so he became annoyed at this. Much of the stuff was left over after we all ate.

\* \* \*

### **"One machinegun will wipe you all out...."**

This was an event that happened many years ago. U.G. was then in Bangalore. A correspondent sent by YNK, the editor of *Prajavani*, a Kannada newspaper, came to interview U.G. that evening. The

conversation took place in English. When the conversation turned to Hindu religion and culture, U.G. in his usual style started condemning all things we normally consider to be great.

The correspondent asked, “Is there not a single good factor in our culture?”

“No. Not even a single redeeming factor in this culture. I am sorry,” emphasised U.G., and elaborated on his viewpoint.

A week later, the newspaper published an article on U.G. written by YNK. The next evening, some RSS [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh – a paramilitary Hindu communal organisation] volunteers presented themselves with canes in front of our house. “How can you say that our culture is inferior? What do you know about it?” so saying they started a commotion.

Unperturbed, U.G. made them sit in the hall and asked them quietly: “Who among you knows about Hindu culture and religion?” No one answered. They all looked at one another. “I know more about Hindu religion and culture than any of you. If any of you can prove that my statements are not true, then I will accept that,” said U.G. “Do you think you can protect the great heritage of India by wielding those canes? One machinegun will wipe you all out!” U.G. chided them.

It is irrelevant to report what particular arguments U.G. used to justify his position. U.G. does not like debates. He knows clearly what he says. He feels that what he knows clearly does not need to be proved. He is also clear that it will not be clear to others. That’s why he does not try to impose his opinions on others.

“The opinions we form, almost all of them, are based on hearsay and other people’s values. ‘Hindu religion and culture are very ancient.’ ‘They are sacred.’ ‘The ancient Hindus were all sages’ such popular opinions have gone into our blood.”

Mere emotion is not useful [and sentiment even less so] in looking at things from U.G.’s point of view when he questions, “In this country which has been proclaiming for ages the oneness of life and Advaita Vedanta, how come there is such untouchability and such foolishness?”

“Our respect for and unshaken faith in Hindu culture and civilisation must help us look at the current situation from a proper point of view, but not make us mere blind sheep. Something went wrong somewhere. There is no use blaming politics, history or circumstances. If every word the ancient sages and wise men had uttered were true, and if the ways of living they formulated were all so great, then what is the reason for our society to deteriorate and disintegrate so much?”

“What is the difference between other religions and your ancient religion which you are so proud of? What difference is there in your behaviour? You claim to be the stewards of such an ancient

religion? Whatever we say must be expressed in our actions. Mere sentiment that is not translated into practice is just a show.”

The only problem for those who listen to U.G. is that U.G. does not have a social outlook. “If man is eradicated from the face of this earth without a trace, there is no reason to be sorry.” No wonder such words of U.G. sound like complete extremism.

\* \* \*

### **Keeping a promise – a rose for Aruna**

Normally, U.G. keeps his word, even if he gave it casually. This event occurred some years ago. Aruna [my daughter] was four years old. When she noticed that U.G. and I were going to the Bazaar, she refused to go to school one day because she wanted to go with us instead. “You tell me what you want, and I’ll get it for you,” said U.G. She said she wanted a rose.

When we were returning home after finishing our business in the Cantonment, U.G. did not forget his promise. “We must buy a rose for Aruna,” he reminded me. We went to the flower market. It was not the season for roses, so we couldn’t find a single rose. We came out empty-handed. On our way home, we stopped our car at several flower shops and looked for roses.

“Never mind, we will get it when we find it,” I tried to get U.G. out of the bargain, but he wouldn’t budge.

“I promised it to Aruna,” he said and went into the shops of Gandhi Bazaar. We couldn’t find any there either. When we returned home, U.G. sent Valentine to the City Market asking her to buy what she needed and also a rose. And Valentine bought a rose. U.G. wouldn’t leave the matter until he got the flower and gave it to Aruna.

I was surprised to see the true colours of U.G. who normally says, “I have no commitment to consistency. I don’t care for my promises. They are like writing on water.”

\* \* \*

### **Praise and blame are the same to a true sage....**

Just as Sri Rama pleads with the sages in the *Ramayana*, “I am no God, I am merely Rama, son of Dasaratha,” U.G.’s greatness seems to lie in the fact that he does not seem to have any awareness of himself as someone important. U.G. would say, “Who am I? And where am I?” In whatever context he is, whomever he is with, he mingles with them. “No matter how many people are around me, I am

always alone,” says U.G. He may appear to be doing many things, but he is not aware of himself doing anything, saying anything, not even that he is eating. That state of unknowing is unimaginable, something that cannot be experienced; it is uncommon. “You are among people, but you are not yourself any person; you appear as non-appearing,” these words of Suryanarayana written long ago about Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi seem apt when used in reference to U.G.

Mr Adri narrated the following event. A while ago, U.G. was in Bombay. A gentleman called Pratap would visit U.G. Pratap was one of the people who argued with, criticised and condemned U.G. strongly. That day in the middle of the conversation, when the argument became heated, Pratap said, “I feel like throwing this ashtray at your face.” If it were someone else, there would have been a great altercation as a result of such a remark. But U.G. appeared unconcerned about what Pratap had said. He told Pratap in his usual affectionate manner, “Throw it!”

Speaking on the occasion of U.G.’s birthday, Jnanachakravarti Satyanarayana said, “Perhaps he is the only man who encourages his critics. I am sure he would be the happiest person if someone calls him a scoundrel to his face. That is his greatness.”

As the *Bhagavad Gita* says, “Praise and blame are the same to the true sage....”

But is this a purely insensitive state? U.G. says, “No. If someone blames me, I too am pained just like you. But as soon as there is a division in the awareness saying, ‘This is pain’, that feeling burns itself out. The pain does not continue. Its existence is for that moment only. There is no thinking about it. There is no reaction in me. There is only the response.”

A long time ago, when U.G. lived in the house on Vani Vilas Street, Dr Bhaktaram came to visit U.G. He reacted to U.G.’s words and started abusing U.G. in foul language. U.G. did not show any reaction to this. All the time Bhaktaram continued to talk, U.G. remained indifferent, as if the abuse was not addressed to him. It would have been impossible for someone else to remain so indifferent.

In Europe, when a Westerner got angry with U.G. and said, “I feel like hitting you with this chair, U.G.,” it was to U.G.’s credit to encourage him without being upset, “Do it!” How many people can understand U.G. when he says, “You must throw stones at me. I wonder how you people sit around and listen to this crap?” U.G. says, “By giving expression to this state, I am paving the way for somebody else to come after me and blast what I am saying. That has been the greatest tradition of India.”

\* \* \*

**Going public....**



It was the year 1989. The letter U.G. wrote saying, “Hereafter the cascade [of my letters] will reduce itself to a trickle,” puzzled me. We received a copy of a letter he had written to Mahesh, and the following lines disturbed me as well as my friends.

“Our visit to Pune and what happened there forced a major rethinking of the whole way of my lifestyle. I refuse to let myself be transformed into a cult figure or allow what I have been saying to be turned into an institution. It is possible that I might fail miserably, but the time is approaching, if it hasn’t already come, when a great change has yet to take place. Actually, this year, both in Rome and here this summer, I asked those who come to see me to leave and tell everybody else that no useful purpose would be served by coming to see me. My theme song to those who persisted in staying on has been: “I don’t want to answer any questions on meditation, yoga, or the teaching of J.K., much less questions that arise from reading the *Mystique of Enlightenment*.”

“It is not that I am observing a vow of silence, but the media will be the medium through which I will express myself from now on.” These last couple of lines were confusing. I could not believe that the same U.G., who normally takes care not to let media journalists come near him, would express his opinions through the media. I wonder what he was going to do? [6]

\* \* \*

### **“Keeping your rules to yourself is part of wisdom....”**

U.G. is an archenemy of ancient traditions, beliefs and customs. He also condemns the ignorance, ostentation and pride that have accumulated in our minds. At the same time, he is moved by the humanness shown by those who sincerely follow ancient ways.

The following event happened seven years ago. Suguna’s grandmother lived with us here then. She was about 85 years old and in good health. Wearing ritually cleaned clothes, maintaining ritual cleanliness, fasting, eating only once, in the daytime – her world consisted of these spiritual disciplines. Yet, she was very much interested in knowing and understanding about things that were going on around her. It’s not clear what she thought of U.G. One day she apparently asked U.G.: “What is *moksha*? How can one attain it?”

Normally U.G. doesn’t give disturbing answers to the questions of elderly people. “Why should I cause unrest in them? Let them die in peace with their beliefs,” says U.G. When the elderly lady asked this, U.G. asked in reply, “What makes you think I know the answer?”

“You are a great man. What don’t you know?” replied the lady.

“Who told you that I am a great man?” said U.G.

“Nobody needs to tell me. If you are not a great man, why would all these people come to see you? Why would they sit in your presence?” replied the elderly lady.

He smiled and said, “I don’t know anything. Ask Chandrasekhar. He knows about such things very well.”

Some days later, during the course of a conversation, I was speaking to the old lady about Vedanta, our Upanishads, and codes of conduct. She patiently heard me and said, “That’s why that great man told me to ask you. You explained those matters to me very well,” she said. I was stunned. “Who told you that? Whatever happened?” I extracted the whole story from the elderly lady.

When U.G. was staying on Sannidhi Street, ‘Father’ Chalam came along with Nartaki and others. A small crowd gathered in the yard in front of the house. Several college students gathered around Chalam and talked to him. Suguna’s grandmother and Valentine were talking to each other under the corner tree. A little while later, Valentine proceeded to distribute some cookies brought by Nartaki and tried to give one to the old lady too. U.G. was watching all this. He called me and said, “Watch them. See if your grandmother will take the cookie.”

She indeed took the cookie, smiling. When Valentine signalled her to eat, she signalled back as if saying, “It’s O.K. I won’t eat it now. I’ll eat it later.”

U.G. said: “It takes a great amount of self-education to learn not to pain others with one’s rules of discipline [cleanliness, in this case]. It’s part of her rules not to eat food not only offered by friends such as Valentine but also any food prepared by others, but it’s her wisdom to keep her rules to herself. Valentine would have been offended if the old lady hadn’t taken her food. It’s rare to live with the sophistication of not offending others and yet not violating one’s own rules.”

U.G. often criticises Brahmachariji and Krishna Bhagatar for eating snacks from the restaurant down the street or *pakodis* on the street and yet bragging about their ritual cleanliness and discipline.

\* \* \*

### **No prior appointments....**

As everyone knows there is no need to wait for a fixed appointment or time to see U.G., people come at different times. On Sundays, from morning until night various people continuously come and go. When U.G. came this year [1985–86], one day he was talking incessantly without respite. The visitors

came and left one after another. Even after it was past the time for lunch, the hall did not become vacant. One group of people went downstairs and left. Then Jagadish arrived. U.G., who was sitting leaning against the wall, stood up and said to us, smiling, "This has turned into a barber shop. One after another, people come and get their hair cut. They have been coming since morning without a break."

We all laughed aloud. True. What U.G. performs is the Big Tiru Haircut.(7) Without a penny's expense the burden of their Karma is diminished. If we offer to regulate the inflow of people, because their uninterrupted visits are an inconvenience to him, U.G. refuses. "This is how it should be. There should be no special duration, prior appointment, and such," he says.

### 15. "If she gives me this house, I will turn it into a brothel..."

It was perhaps in 1977 that U.G. first went to Ramanasthan. I accompanied him there. Ms Talyarkhan, a devotee of Sri Ramana Maharshi, invited U.G. to her *ashram*. We all went with him. That afternoon, Arunachala acquired a real beauty in the cool sunshine. U.G. went up to the terrace of the house of Talyarkhan, and looking at the hill of Arunachala in front of him, he remarked, becoming breathless with excitement, "Look, how great is the scenery! It's fantastic; it's wonderful. The hill is so near! I feel like staying here forever."

Talyarkhan pleaded with U.G., "I will give this whole *ashram* to you. Please stay here."

U.G. laughed and shook his head as if to say, "That's all of no use."

Nartaki too pressed U.G. "You feel good here. Why not stay here?" she said.

Talyarkhan begged many times, "I will change the title of this *ashram* to your name. I will be happy if you stay here."

"No way," said U.G. turning to me and laughing. "Tell her this: if she gives this house to me, the next day I will turn it into a brothel or a bordello."

I was shocked at this. How hurt Talyarkhan must have been when she heard this! Who could imagine that words of this sort would come from a person like U.G.? Why did U.G., who wouldn't normally hurt a fly, say something so offensive and hurt someone's feelings? Sometimes, U.G.'s words and deeds are so shocking. What was his intention? I think now that U.G. used such abusive language to break down Talyarkhan's pride and egotism. She never mentioned the question of the *ashram* again, perhaps because she became frightened of U.G. Once before this incident she came to

Bangalore in a car with 'Father' and others to see U.G. I think she avoided U.G. altogether after this incident.

\* \* \*

**“There is a lot to be done by the body.... You cannot die!”**

This morning at 9 a.m., Suguna, the children, Nagaraja Rao, a friend, and I all talked to U.G. I want to relate here the details of the experience that happened to U.G. last night – not an ordinary experience, but the divine experience which U.G. described in Telugu. Why I am calling it a divine experience is that such experiences do not happen normally to anyone, not that I want to attribute any spiritual value to them.

“Last evening, I had such inexpressible anger. How I condemned the Buddha, Jesus and other incarnate prophets! How I poured abuse on them! I was furious. Irrepressible anger. It hasn't subsided even now as I am talking to you. My anger did not subside with all that abuse. I went to bed with it. My whole body was burning. Flames, flames. Everything was burning with that irrepressible anger. It felt as though the whole house was burning along with my body. Everything was gone. The whole body was going to turn to ashes. I was saying [to my body], 'You can go [die] now.' Meanwhile, someone said, 'No, you cannot. There is a lot to be done by the body.' It sounded like a dialogue that J.K. had with Death. Slowly, the burning in the body calmed down and the body became normal.

This morning Sampat came and said he had a dream last night that U.G. had died. “There was a huge wail inside myself; irrepressible sorrow. How much I cried in the dream! I set out right away to come to see him,” said Sampat.

“In Bangalore, in Subbanna's house, something similar happened once to you,” I said to U.G. I asked him, “You mentioned that your experience was that your body was burning. Was this experience the same?”

“When compared with this, what happened then was not worth mentioning. When compared with this heat – the flames that happened last night – that was nothing. It was pleasant. Last night, the rage, the anger and the flames haven't subsided yet,” said U.G.

Sampat spoke later: “I never had such an experience before. Normally I am not moved by death. In my dream last night, U.G. was talking sitting in a chair and suddenly breathed his last. Then I was looking at a photo of U.G. in a dancer's house. Immediately there was a big cry within myself, an unceasing cry. I felt that I was never going to see him again. That's why I came running early in the

morning. I didn't even feel like phoning first before I came. I felt that I couldn't very well ask someone on the phone, "Is U.G. still alive?"

\* \* \*

### **Why is the moth attracted to the flame?**

Why is the moth so attracted to the flame? What kind of courage enables it to throw itself into the fire? Julie, a friend of U.G. from New York, has similar courage. She must possess that foolish bravado of burning everything and turning everything into ashes in the fire of U.G. Toward the end of last December [1995] U.G. came to India. He told Julie not to come with him. He told her nicely, and he threatened her too, that if she came there would be no place for her around him. She knew the consequences of not doing what U.G. told her to do. Yet, it is beyond me to understand why Julie couldn't remain in California.

One morning she landed in Madras without notice, with the excuse of bringing some computers to India. Her bags, which contained two computers, many videotapes, couscous which she bought specially for U.G., oats, and other food stuff, were all missing. In the attempt to trace them, she spent four days in Madras. U.G. was then in Yercaud. Julie called U.G. and said, "My luggage is lost. What should I do?" Finally, U.G. agreed to let her come to Yercaud. She came, and three days later we all started back to Bangalore. Three days after that, on February 6, U.G. sent her away. He made her take her computers back with her. He scolded her in the presence of everyone in the Bangalore Holiday Inn, and furiously told her not to show her face to him again.

Why did Julie want to carry all that silly food that far for U.G.? Why was U.G. so adamant in not letting her stay for a few days longer, and why did he make her take the return trip to the US? U.G. can't stand her presence. Yet, he loves to have other friends like Bob and Paul [Robert Carr and Paul Arms]. But he gets annoyed by Julie, who would kill herself for him. Julie is a great lady who would hug the very feet that would kick her.

\* \* \*

### **Dr Sriramachandra Murty, U.G.'s brother**

In February U.G.'s younger brother Dr Sriramachandra Murty came to visit U.G. People generally address him as 'Ramu'. He is one of the most distinguished mathematicians in the world. He is

professor at a university in Canada. I took him with me in a car to Yercaud. He liked the weather there, U.G.'s presence, the friends around U.G., and the surroundings of Yercaud. We stayed in Yercaud and returned to Bangalore on the 8th.

On the way, in the car, when I asked Ramu what he thought of U.G., Ramu said, "I saw him long ago in my childhood. Later, perhaps in 1970, I spent a week with him in Switzerland. Recently U.G. came to Canada and stayed with me for a couple of days. The time I have spent with U.G. hasn't been much. The more I observe him, the more remarkable a man he seems to be. I notice that the ring of authority behind his words seem to silence everyone. Even scientists seem to have to bow before that authority. It's amazing how he acquired that strength of authority."

True. The tone of authority in U.G.'s words, and the unhesitant certainty, the undefiable authority – who knows how many people's lives it is meddling with!

\* \* \*

### **The Aquarian Age – Mr Raju**

In February, for a few days U.G. camped in the Malladi's [Malladi Krishnamurti, a friend of U.G. in Madras] old residence. One day, the Bob and Paul(8) duo put on an amazing performance of their magic in Mr Krishnamurti house for everyone's entertainment. Bob Carr had been a professional magician in the past. By the time, on February 16, Mr Raju [an astrologer friend of Mr Krishnamurti] arrived, the whole atmosphere around U.G. was filled with the perfume of astrology.

Mr Raju had come from Masulipatam to see U.G. U.G. repeatedly showed him his palm and pestered him to tell him about his future. "Ingram Smith read my palm in Australia and said that the lines in my left palm have been changing. He interpreted the lines as indicating that the femininity in me is growing stronger than the masculinity." He showed us the lines in his left palm.

Mr Raju said, "On April 2 the planet Uranus is entering the constellation of Kumbha." In U.G.'s horoscope Uranus is in Kumbha. Mr Raju opined that it was very significant that at this time in the planetary movements Uranus also happened to enter Kumbha. "The Aquarian Age which the whole world has been awaiting for years is going to start on April 2. Those who will be born in this age will be able to easily grasp U.G.'s message and incorporate it in their lives. The essence of U.G.'s message must reverberate throughout the world in every area," said Mr Raju.

U.G. immediately retorted by saying, "That's inevitable. Even scientists cannot swallow what I say. I am uprooting the very theories they use as foundations to build their edifices of scientific theories. It's not possible for them to accept [my attack]. Thus, it's not just the nostril-closing religious buffs that pick up a fight with me. It's certain that the best of the intellectuals in every field will declare a war on me."

U.G.'s German astrologer friend, Nataraj, says the same thing. Mr Raju argued that there must be some link between the [position of] Uranus in the horoscopes of those close to U.G. and the [position of] Uranus in U.G.'s horoscope. "What about you?" I asked Raju.

Raju smiled and replied, "In my horoscope Uranus is in Kumbha, just like in U.G.'s horoscope." There was then a discussion about how the Uranus in the horoscope of each person present was linked to the Uranus in U.G.'s horoscope.

\* \* \*

### **"You and I are stray dogs...."**

A young man called Ashok came to see U.G. that evening. Apparently Sashidhar, who works in the J.K. Library, told him of U.G.'s arrival in Madras. Even after I invited him in, he hesitated for a while wondering whether he should or should not come in. After lingering by the doorway for a while, he came in and sat on the edge of a sofa in a cringing fashion. It was apparent that he was overwhelmed by the joy of meeting U.G. "I read a couple of your books. I don't feel like talking about them to anyone. I can't express in words how strong a hold they have on me," he said in a faltering voice.

"If you still came to see me this far after reading those books, it's evident how little effect they have had over you," said U.G. in a ridiculing fashion.

At this remark, the boy turned pale. He didn't move his lips after that. U.G. didn't give him an opportunity to speak either, and talked incessantly for a long time. The following are a few samples of the gems that came out U.G.'s mouth that evening:

"There is more life in the chorus of the barking dogs than in the music of the singing performances of famous singers like Balamurali and Musuri Subrahmanyam.

"You and I are two stray dogs. We make some sounds. You are not listening to me if you are finding some marvellous meanings in my barking. You are not understanding a bit.

"What is music? It's a pause between two sounds, between two notes. All our tastes are a result of the conditioning imposed on us by our culture. We form our likes and dislikes according to our tastes.

We call one sound ‘harsh’, and another one we call ‘the sound of gods’ and go into ecstasies. I don’t like north Indian music. All the things that come from north of the Vindhya are taboo to me – north Indian music, north Indian foods, north Indian dresses and languages – all of them.

“The body is not concerned about tastes. What it needs is some food for energy. You can eat sawdust and fill your stomach. For taste you can add a little glue to it. In that you will find all the nutrients necessary for the body. I have been a vegetarian all my life. Yet, I don’t eat vegetables nor do I drink milk. I don’t like fruit. What is lacking in my health? All the doctors who have watched me eat cream warned me that I would die of a heart attack from the cholesterol in it, and they are all dead now. I am now 75 years old. I have no diseases. Eating more than you need is the cause of all diseases. I don’t need any medicines or treatments. Still, I wish that the pharmaceutical business of the Malladi’s should prosper for a long time!

“Man is the architect of his own fortune and the moulder of his destiny. However, when we have to share our lives with someone else, we need give and take. Everything changes after that [after a relationship starts]. After I married, I couldn’t avoid compromising sometimes. Yet, I was firm in some matters. My life principle is and has always been, “Get along [with me] or get out!”

“The middle class is a threat to this society,” U.G. elaborated this by saying that the middle class stands in the way of the poor class revolting against the rich class and destroying it. The middle class is a solace for the lower class. It creates the hope [in the poor] that they too will attain that status some day. Thus, the poor suppress their discontent and intolerance.

“Who will benefit from technological progress? How has it helped the lower classes?” asked U.G. All the countries in the rest of the world are plotting to see how they can trap the two hundred million middle class people in India. There is no other idealism than that for the rich nations. U.G. handed out a new slogan that day, “The middle class must perish!”

“Religious fanaticism is a disease that afflicts this society. It is that fanaticism that made this country emaciated and useless. The Americans are going to turn this country into a body-selling prostitute. At least now, P.V. [Narasimha Rao, then Prime Minister of India] should resign from his office, dissolve Parliament, and hold elections,” said U.G. commenting on P.V.’s politics.

\* \* \*

### **The body’s functioning is opposed to this pleasure movement....**

In Yercaud, many Western faces gathered around U.G.: The duo of Bob and Paul had brought a Sony video camera with them for which they had paid 3,000 dollars. They wanted to make a documentary



on U.G. As they didn't quite know how to make a documentary, they were taking videos of the rocks, the trees and the flowers. Whenever they got a chance, they not only made U.G. talk of this and that, but they also made him curse as explicitly as possible by encouraging him to use expletives. They were trying to preserve on videotape such situations, so that future generations can witness the Natural Man's cultural message and be saved! The future generations should also be grateful for the fact that Mahesh Bhatt not only directed this activity, but also participated in coaxing these particular words of wisdom out of U.G.

In March, the German astrologer Nataraj came to Yercaud with a friend of his called Peter, who was also a Rajneeshee. U.G. nicknamed Peter, who is strong, tall and burly like a bodyguard, 'the Bouncer'. The name his guru gave him was 'Neerava' [silence]. The glory of that name fizzled next to U.G.'s nickname.

I didn't realise that the scene at Yercaud from U.G.'s drama of wilderness living would soon come to a close. He prepared the stage for the end of it on March 7 early in the morning. He had contracted to have the wooden wall between his room and the Major's room opened and a door put in it. He vacated his room and arranged for all of his things to be moved to Bangalore, then handed over to the Major the whole of the south side of the Yercaud Bungalow, and he himself became homeless.

That day Mahesh was arriving in Bangalore from Bombay. Early in the morning the Major, U.G. and I were travelling in the car to the airport. The young sun was sparkling with colours all over the sky like an orange. The Major looked out the windshield, unable to contain his excitement. "Look how bright the sun is today," he said, and it was as if he was giving expression to the feeling inside me.

U.G., who was sitting in the front seat next to the Major, took him on right away. "To get so excited is exactly what a pleasure movement is. I am not saying it is wrong. I am only saying that if you want liberation, that same pleasure movement is an obstacle. The body's functioning is completely opposed to this pleasure movement. It won't get excited like you, saying, 'Ah, oh!' As soon as I saw the sun, my eyes closed automatically. There is no movement in my head saying, 'How beautiful!'" U.G. said. Our mouths shut up.

\* \* \*

### **Before the body dies, God must die....**

When we were returning with Mahesh from the airport, U.G. said, "Unless you abandon the idea of God in yourself, the life in you cannot carry on. Before the body dies and becomes immobile, God must die in you. That is true immortality. [True] Living is only possible after God dies."

\* \* \*

**“It will not do to give them away to your neighbours....”**

When we were still in Yercaud, one morning I was cooking oats in the kitchen for breakfast. U.G. came in to eat his second breakfast. Once early in the morning, he usually eats a first breakfast of parched rice and milk. Later, he eats another breakfast of oats and cream. He looked at all the pots and pans on the stone bench in the kitchen and asked impersonally, “Why does a single person need so many pots and pans?” referring to the Major. “This is what I mean by hoarding. It is weird for a person who cannot let go of his pots and pans to want liberation,” he said and took some empty cups, spoons and a plate into his room. For U.G.’s taste the kitchen and the refrigerator must be empty. “If not for mere craziness, why keep vegetables in the refrigerator?” he says, annoyed.

When U.G. saw the Major, he interrogated him about why he should keep so many pots and pans. “I don’t need all those things. If you want me to, I will get rid of them instantly,” said the Major angrily.

“It will not do to give them away to your neighbours. That would be giving to the undeserved, which is a great sin,” said U.G., reminding the Major of the movie *Maya Bazaar*, which they had watched on the video the night before. It wasn’t clear to the Major, then, who was the deserving receiver of the gift! Not just to the Major, to no one else was it clear!

\* \* \*

**“What if the husband dies after marriage?”**

In March, U.G. stayed in the Purnakutee for many days. That morning Shanta, a friend of U.G. in Bangalore, came to Purnakutee with Mittu, her daughter. As soon as she saw Bhaskara Rao, a Vedanta scholar and palmist, also a friend of U.G., she held out her left palm and asked him, “Please look at my palm, and tell me how my future looks!”

As Bhaskara Rao was reading her palm, U.G. came downstairs into the hall. As soon as he noticed Bhaskara Rao, U.G. said, “I only want to know of one thing: how is her love life going to be? That’s all I am concerned about. She has plenty of beauty and she has money. She is also intelligent. She just doesn’t have a husband. Anyone would jump with joy to have her.”

Then he asked Mittu, “What do you say?”

“What you say is right,” Mittu answered, supporting U.G.

Shanta was considering a prospective bridegroom for Mittu. Some astrologer had warned Shanta that Mittu has a Kuja *dosha* [defect], and that if she were to marry before she was 24, there would be a danger of the husband dying too soon. Shanta was frightened. She asked me if it was advisable for her to consult Satyanarayana. “When U.G. is here, why should you consult someone else? Present your problem to U.G.,” I told her. She duly reported the astrologer’s bad news to U.G.

U.G. listened and said, “Let there be Kuja *dosha*. You have told me that the groom’s family is rich. So, what if the husband dies after marriage? No problem. Mittu will inherit a lot of property. Then she can marry someone else.”

When U.G. solved her problem so easily, Shanta was horrified, and Brahmachariji, who was right there also, covered his ears in shock saying, “Rama, Rama!” He continued, “My God, what kind of a *Brahmajnani* is this?” and then left quickly.

\* \* \*

#### **“Isn’t a registered marriage enough?”**

Rangarajan was a design engineer in the HMT [Hindustan Machine Tools] factory. He had been mentally ill for the last ten years. He had been given some shock treatments and was now managed to be normal with the help of medications. He never quit coming to see U.G. all those years. He had been a follower of the Radha Saomi Bhakti Pantha, a spiritual sect in north of India. He was now a staunch devotee of Charan Singh Maharaj, a spiritual master in the same path. He is an innocent man who gave thousands of his hard-earned rupees to the *ashram* and became indebted. Recently, he had a strong desire to marry. About four months ago, he advertised in the papers, wrote letters, and chose a bride. All that happened suddenly. When he heard that U.G. was in town, he came, accompanied by his prospective bride.

“You are all-knowing. You know everything,” he said introducing the girl next to him as his prospective wife.

U.G. looked at them both alternatively. The girl hailed from Tanguturu in Ongole District. She went to school in Andhra University. She appeared intelligent. “You couldn’t find a better fellow than this?” he said to her, smiling sympathetically. The girl dropped her head. Rangarajan explained that he announced in the advertisement that he used to be mentally ill, and that he had already explained to the girl his condition. “How much are you spending for your wedding?” asked U.G.

Rangarajan replied, “Fifty thousand.”

“Why spend fifty thousand? Isn’t a registered marriage enough?” asked U.G. Rangarajan said his elders would not agree to that. “If they don’t agree, poison them and kill them. Why waste money unnecessarily? What merit will you gain from that?” asked U.G. We were all worried that after listening to U.G.’s words Rangarajan would lose his mind again.

When U.G. asked, “All these years, you only beat your mother. From now on will you beat your wife too?” Rangarajan turned pale. I didn’t know whether to laugh or cry when I witnessed the manner in which U.G. greeted the new couple about to be auspiciously married.

\* \* \*

**“Am I not better than Rama?”**

We all watched the movie *Sita Rama Kalyanam* on the video. U.G. admired the character of Ravana, as played by N.T. Rama Rao in the movie, very much. “I don’t understand why all those old fogies consider Rama a great man and praise him. Ravana appears to me to be many times superior. He treated Sita with great respect. Rama, on the other hand, asked her to walk into fire. Without pitying her because she was pregnant, he sent her away into the jungle. I, on my part, sent away my wife with honours by seating her in a jumbo jet. Am I not better than Rama?” We couldn’t stop laughing at U.G.’s words. He said, “I liked very much the portrayal of Ravana in this movie not as a demon, but as a unique person.”

\* \* \*

**“Why should you become a victim of infamy?”**

U.G. likes to make fun of Brahmachariji. This time there was a young lady called “Gorgeous” [Lisa] present. The young lady jokingly exhibited her beauty as if saying, “Look at me and look at my beauty.” U.G. accused Brahmachariji of eyeing the lady from the corner of his eye. “Oh, no, I am not even thinking of her,” complained Brahmachariji. When U.G. started calling him names such as, “Brahmachari, peeping Tom,” Brahmachari seemed indifferent. That indifferent response surprised all of us very much.

A similar incident occurred two years ago. Brahmachariji had rented an apartment upstairs in the house of a friend of mine, with a plan to be near U.G. U.G. had only one objection to his staying in Poornakutee: Brahmachariji's craving for tasty food would commit and confine Suguna to the kitchen. U.G. remarked to Suguna in front of Brahmachariji, "The farther he is from Poornakutee, the better it is. Or else, he will establish himself right here and sit on your shoulders."

My friend then reported to U.G. the 'good news' that Brahmachariji had hired a widow, a distant relative of his, to cook for him. U.G. was worried that Brahmachariji, a staunch bachelor, would undergo all these troubles for his sake and become a victim of bad reputation. Immediately, U.G. got us all up saying, "Let's go, let's find out what's happening."

Brahmachariji had no idea that we were all going over to raid his house along with U.G. suddenly, without notice. When we arrived, as U.G. pushed the front door open, the widow saw him and withdrew into the kitchen. While Brahmachariji, being both overjoyed and confused, was spreading the mats for us all to sit, U.G. said with a serious face, "There is a verse in the Upanishads in which the father looks at his son's shining face and says to him, 'Your face is shining now like that of someone who has realised Brahman.' Similarly, your face now is shining like that of someone who has experienced the pleasure of copulation last night."

We all broke into laughter at this. Brahmachariji covered his ears saying, "Siva, Siva!" U.G. also kept laughing with us. Brahmachariji tried to defend himself by saying, "No, U.G., she sleeps in the kitchen, and I sleep in this room," and pointed to his cot.

U.G. teased him some more: "How can this small cot be big enough for both of you?"

Finally, U.G. said, "Brahmachari, I wish you well. You earned a good reputation for yourself all these years. Why should you, at this age, become a victim of such infamy? Even if you both intend well, if she lives in this house with you, wouldn't everyone talk ill about it? You first send her off to her hometown," said U.G., averting Brahmachariji's fall into ill repute.

## NOTES

1. Sri Chakra is a design for meditation with sacred syllables carved on a metal plate worshipped in the temple.
2. When this passage was read to U.G., his explanation was that his 'fainting' occurred because the plate was too heavy and he was feeling weak, and that it had nothing to do with 'energy'.

3. When this passage was read to U.G., his 'editorial comment' was: "And such things happen to me even when I am in the toilet."
4. Mahesh's taxi driver was a Tamil-speaking man. When they were in the Bhoot Bungalow, he apparently offered his prayers to God in this fashion.
5. First line in a song of Thyagaraja, south Indian composer who, in this song, was singing the praise of Janaki, Rama's wife.
6. Later, when asked why he suddenly decided to go public, U.G. explained that he became sick and tired of the religious buffs of all shapes, sizes and colours coming to him, and so he thought that the media men would do a better job in putting across what he wanted to convey without involving themselves. "I have a motive in going public. Somebody out there, struggling to find answers to his questions, may listen to what I am saying and stop in his tracks," said U.G.
7. Tirukshavaram – the shaving of the head at a ritual hair offering to the God Venkateswara in Tirupati, the idea being that U.G. relieves people of their burden.
8. Bob Carr and Paul Arms are old friends of U.G. and were visiting U.G. in India from San Rafael, California. Bob and Paul's lives were in transition. Trying to figure out their futures, they came to Yercaud following U.G. They were thinking of opening a coffee house after returning to San Francisco. Since they had previously sold the restaurant they were operating in Marin County, California, they now needed to find another means of livelihood.

## Stopped in Our Tracks

### Part Four

**“I said to the sages: ‘Drown and never rise again....’”**

This was perhaps in December 1976. We arranged for U.G.’s stay in Bangalore at Sannidhi Street, across the street from the Mallikarjuna Swami Temple. That evening, Brahmachariji came to visit U.G. from his Ashram in Bannerghatta. It had by then become customary for U.G. to spend two or three nights without fail in Brahmachariji’s Jnanasram whenever he came to Bangalore. It was from U.G.’s first donation that Jnanasram came into existence.

In the Ashram, Brahmachariji had built not only a school, but also a Ganpati temple. He had just gotten the image of Ganpati installed and was deeply immersed in the construction activity of the temple. U.G. forced Brahmachariji to stay in Bangalore without returning to the Ashram. Brahmachariji tried to excuse himself saying that he had to perform the worship of Ganpati, but U.G. said he could perform the worship in Bangalore.

It was a winter night. The cold wind outside was penetrating through the holes of the closed doors. We all listened to Brahmachariji’s recitation of the Ganpati Upanishad. U.G. sat on a rug on the floor in the lotus posture. Brahmachariji sat facing him. The recitation went on for about 20 minutes. All that time U.G. sat motionless, eyes closed, in his lotus position.

The things U.G. said after the recitation stunned everyone: “I feel as if the sounds of the *mantras* are coming out of myself. I had the experience of the sound going around in circles with a sort of rhythm and spreading throughout my consciousness.” He demonstrated those circular movements with hand gestures. “Suddenly all that took the shape of Ganpati. In my consciousness my face became the face of Ganpati. My nose stretched and drooped down like an elephant’s trunk. Then, as though something snapped, the movement stopped. The form was erased. Perhaps there was some mistake in your recitation at that point.”

Brahmachariji admitted that was true. He said that he forgot the *mantra* at a certain place, and repeated those portions of the mantra to the end without errors. “Now it’s all correct. There are no gaps in the movement. Everything is quite rhythmical. Perhaps the sage who wrote that Upanishad must have been reflected here because of the sounds,” said U.G.

U.G.’s words sounded astonishing. I felt that we could believe in those experiences because it was U.G. who was narrating them. The thought that the sage Ganaka, who wrote the Upanishads hundreds or thousands of years ago, took his own form and appeared in U.G.’s consciousness thrills me even

now. How was this possible? U.G. explains this process in terms of modern physics. According to it, sound waves can be transformed into electromagnetic waves and those in turn into light waves. The light waves can again be transformed back into sound waves. But all that is achieved through scientific instruments. Perhaps in the case of U.G., all that is possible without the help of those instruments.

The sage's existence must somehow be embedded in the *mantras* created by him, in their sound. U.G. said, pointing to himself, "Because there is no division here, all those sounds, along with the form imbedded in them, have echoed in my consciousness."

Something similar was said to have happened when U.G. was once living in the Tirthagundi Coffee Estate. That town is in the Chikkamagaluru District of Karnataka. Around 1968, U.G. was in its guesthouse for almost four months.

One day, a scene suddenly presented itself to U.G. It wasn't quite a vision, nor was it a dream. It was as though it actually occurred before his eyes. Three sages in the middle of a big lake, with bushy beards, and submerged up to their necks, appeared in the scene. They stretched their arms toward U.G. and cried, "U.G., we are drowning, please rescue us."

"Who are you?" U.G. asked them.

"We are your ancestors. Hurry up and save us," they said. Then U.G. understood that they were his clan sages whose names were Atreyasa, Arjunasya and Syavasya.

"You deserve the punishment. Drown and never rise again," said U.G. to them. Then, helpless, they drowned and the scene disappeared. U.G. said that all the visions that started occurring after his Calamity ended with this.

How do all these strange events occur? This wasn't a fabricated story, nor was it magic. If, on the other hand, we think that U.G. somehow imagined them, we know that he never believes in such things. "If a miracle happened right in front of my eyes, I still won't believe it," says U.G.

Then how do we explain this? Why do such accidental events occur? Why do they happen only to someone like U.G.? While Brahmachariji was reciting the Ganpati Upanishad, we were all present. Why didn't that sage Ganaka appear in our consciousness? If we asked such questions, U.G. tries to evade them saying, "They are all mere experiences. Don't torture your heads with such questions." If we persist in our questioning, he throws us into some more confusion by talking about light and sound; he talks as if this is a very ordinary matter known even to a fifth grade kid. When I think about it, it appears to me that we should just observe such events and keep quiet, and that it is foolish to try



to know about their true nature or understand them scientifically. We don't know anything. I am also certain that U.G. too does not know [about these things] in the way we try to know. We have no way of knowing at what level he knows. All we can do is gossip about strange events like this.

All the genteel folk in Bangalore came to know of that night's incident. U.G.'s ability to find errors in Brahmachariji's recitation surprised our friend Satyanarayana, who was utterly devoted to studying scriptures like the Vedas. He was even more interested in what U.G. had said about how he would know the original sounds from the movements [within himself], which recreate the *mantras*, regardless of any errors that might have rolled into the recitation, and regardless of the additions and modifications made to the original *mantras* of the *rishi*.

There is a belief that the Vedas were authorless revelations, and were handed down for thousands of years from generation to generation in accordance with tradition. There was always a possibility of additions and modifications seeping into them. Thus, Satyanarayana became keenly interested in selecting and memorising, as much as it was possible for him, the portions of the Vedas composed originally by the *rishis*. For many years before that, he had already been studying the Vedas with a teacher.

Every year, when he came to Bangalore, U.G. would stay for two or three months. Satyanarayana, along with his friend Sashidhar, started reciting the Vedas every Sunday early in the morning, for two hours, in U.G.'s presence. Before they started, when they asked U.G.'s permission to recite the Vedas in his presence, U.G. responded, "Go ahead, by all means. As far as I am concerned, there is no difference between a dog's barking, cat's mewling and Vedic sounds. Recite the Vedas and as for myself I will sit down and listen." That was how the sifting of the Vedic *mantras* began.

Every Sunday, early in the morning, Satyanarayana, Sashidhar, and sometimes their fellow student Chandrasekhar, would come to U.G.'s residence in the Anjaneya Temple Street, after their early morning oblations. U.G. got ready after his bath and sat on the mat in the hall before they arrived. By that time, a couple of other friends and I joined him to hear the Vedic recitation of Satyanarayana and company. Before they started, not heeding his attempts to stop them, they would prostrate before U.G. They excused themselves by saying, "This is our Vedic tradition, U.G. The *Rudra Patha* we are going to recite is full of salutations [to Shiva]."

"But," U.G. complained, "when I keep saying that there is no power apart from you, why do you do me such honours?"

When they countered, "Please excuse us, we have not grown into that state yet," U.G., being helpless, kept quiet. After finishing the recitation they would again prostrate before U.G., reciting,

“*Na karmana na prajaya...*” We too followed suit. We weren’t aware of it in our single-mindedness, but U.G. felt irked by such behaviour on our part.

U.G. wore *pajamas* and *jubba* at the time of the recitation. It was bitter cold outside. Amidst those four walls we were all clad in *dhotis* and had ash on our foreheads. We would doze off every now and then, while watching U.G. from time to time. As for U.G., he would sit straight in the lotus posture with closed eyes. One day, as he sat, he removed his *jubba* and undershirt, and remained there until the recitation was finished.

Mahesh too was in Bangalore with us then. Those were the days when Parveen was living with U.G. Learning that U.G. sat down removing his upper clothing, Mahesh teased U.G. saying, “Oh, I missed U.G.’s striptease show!”

We sat there even after the Vedic recitation was all over. Sometimes, U.G. would mention what sort of movements of energy the Vedic recitation would cause within himself, where the recitation was flawed, and in what stages of the recitation there were breaks in the energy movements. All those details sounded marvellous to listen to. Satyanarayana kept a record of them.

One day, they were reciting *arunam*. U.G. was, as usual, sitting in his lotus posture. Nartaki was also with us then. After they finished the recitation U.G. said, “While you were reciting, I felt that suddenly I too joined my voice and recited with you for about 15 minutes.”

When she heard this, Nartaki became excited and said, “That’s very strange, U.G. I too clearly heard a third voice along with theirs. I was wondering whose voice that was and looked around.”

Later, U.G. told us: While the two [Satyanarayana and Sashidhar] were reciting, they disappeared and in their place two dark and bulky sages appeared, reciting the Vedas. One had his hair knotted on top of his head, and the other had a big bushy beard. U.G. thought that the portions of the *arunam* that were being recited were authored by them and the remaining portions made place for themselves in the text [of the Vedas] in course of time.

Another time, the two scholars [mentioned above] were reciting Sikshavalli and Bhrguvalli in the Taittiriya Upanishad. After listening to it all U.G. said, “Those *mantras* all sound like the trashy lectures given by the vice-chancellors in the universities at the time of giving diplomas. They sound as if the writers of the Upanishads were repeating what they had learned, but the sounds do not express any experience.”

When we were listening to him, U.G. reported that the movement of energy in him was attempting to form circles, and was subsiding before it completed a circle – like an aeroplane making futile attempts to lift off into the air from the ground.

I remember that when we were listening to the Mahanarayana Upanishad also, U.G. said similar things: "Those sages are ordinary aspirants; they are not wise men. Just like college professors, [they] debate with their pupils and teach them philosophy. Or, like today's scientists, they make speculations about the origins of the universe. That's all you see in them [the *mantras*]." But things were more interesting when we heard the *Rudrakrama*. U.G. said, "The sounds of the *mantras* you have been reciting have been producing divisions in this undivided consciousness."

Satyanarayana responded to this saying that was the right effect: "The *rishis* all gathered together and recited the *Rudra Krama* with the intention of bringing Rudra, who was united with the unlimited consciousness, to their level. They created *Rudram*, *Namakam* and *Chamakam* – all three with the same intention. Thus, there came about a division in the one Lord, He became a family man and caused the birth of Kumaraswami," he said.

Then U.G. said,

"The spine [spinal chord] is a very important part of the body. Most of the experiences we go through, our feelings and thoughts, have a basis in the spine. The spine takes care of them before it lets them reach the brain. Once, when I was listening to the Veda, my spine felt like it had suddenly sprung up and stretched about three feet higher than my head.... Maybe because the movement of energy also took the form of circles, the Yogis talked about chakras. The energy of consciousness coils around like a snake, rises upward swiftly and goes out of the head. But the experience is never one of it descending, but always spiralling upwards. All these are experienced only when I listen to the Vedic mantras, not when I listen to music or some other sound. What is the use of such experiences? None. From listening to the Vedic mantras and Upanishads divisions arise in that consciousness."

It is clear that it is by [listening to] the recitation of the same Rks [hymns], which all the sages recited with the aim of attaining undivided consciousness, that divisions occur in the undivided consciousness of U.G.

U.G. says,

"This has no use for me either. It's not of any use to you at all. Three quarters of those Upanishads are [reflections] of the yearnings of those sages for that undivided state. Those

were the verses. The remaining one quarter were descriptions of that state saying, ‘It is like that, it is like this.’ In some places, in some remote corner, we hear the essential truth, viz., ‘Whatever you do, you won’t get it.’

“They say that by reciting the Upanishads, the nervous system will be purified. But no one has explained what that purification means. Even less, is there someone who can guarantee it? If we accept claims of this sort, orthodox people will force us, will provide sacred meanings to threads, tufts of hair and shaven heads. They will justify them, will rub ashes on us and make us sit among the *Bairagis* [spiritual mendicants]. As if that’s not enough, they even burn the incense of science to get us more intoxicated [with tradition].”

Because U.G. is an archenemy of such superstitions, he has been able to avoid the many strategies devised by the followers of his religion to fit him in their orthodox framework. U.G. says emphatically that no one can attain any higher state by merely reciting the Upanishads, or by contemplating, digesting and assimilating the truth in them. He says, “Those sages too know that. That’s why they claim that all will eventually burn down and turn into ashes and they pray, “*Tryambakam yajamahe [I worship Tryambaka]*.”

### **17. He did not utter a sentence to comfort her....**

It was Friday, October 13, 1995 – the day after U.G.’s arrival. We just received the bad news at 11 a.m. that Pramila [Suguna’s niece] died. She was in the hospital in Madras for a month, suffering from cancer. Suguna and I went to see her a week ago. Meanwhile, this horrible news... Suguna couldn’t bear to hear the news. Everyone in the Poornakutee was sorrow-stricken with the news of Pramila’s death. “If you like, you and Suguna go [to Madras],” said U.G. We all decided to go with U.G. to Madras on the 15th and from there go to Kalpakam. That evening, U.G. took Suguna with him to the Bazaar on the pretext of buying something. We were out for about an hour. While the Major and I were going around the shops, Suguna was talking to U.G. about Pramila and her life. Apparently, U.G. listened quietly to what Suguna had to say, without himself saying anything. “Poor Shyamamma [Suguna’s elder sister] is in trouble,” U.G. apparently said during the conversation. By talking to U.G., Suguna felt a bit relieved about her sorrow. I thought it was a great solace to have U.G. around us at times like this. He didn’t have to comfort us with so many words. The awareness that he was there, sharing our sorrow, was enough to relieve our suffering.

I remember another incident, similar to this, from seven years ago. Sailaja's [an acquaintance of U.G., a postmistress and the daughter of a musician-brother, Papanna] lost his mind while struggling with hypnotism, when he was studying for his B.A. in Psychology. There were times when he wouldn't leave the company of U.G. Once he suddenly disappeared from his home. About a month later his parents came to know that he died in some remote village with no one around to care for him. That year when U.G. came, I told him casually about the young man's death. U.G. said, at once, "Let's go and visit Sailaja's mother and see how she is doing." I knew how much U.G. liked that family. Still, I was surprised at U.G.'s readiness to go and visit them. That morning we went to Vagiswara Sastri's home in Tyagarayanagar. As soon as she saw U.G. at the door, she rushed out of the kitchen to receive him. She was about 60 years of age at that time. She was born and grew up in a middle-class household and she had a huge family. It was a family of great musicians. She compiled thousands of folk songs she had learned from her grandmother in a Kannada volume called *Sampradaya Hadugallu* [Traditional Songs], for which she received an award from the Sahitya Akademi.

She was for a moment overwhelmed with the excitement of seeing U.G. unexpectedly at her doorstep. "Alas, if Papanna [her dead son] were alive today, how he would have been pleased to see you visiting us in our home!" Her eyes were filled with tears. She related all the events from the time before Papanna ran away from home till the end of his life. [Apparently, Papanna told his mother that he had exactly the same sort of experiences as U.G. had. When she admonished him saying, "You crazy boy! Don't mind all those things. You just returned from the lunatic asylum. Don't compare what you have experienced with U.G.'s experiences." With that he stopped talking to his mother.]

She would control her crying at times, and at other times cry loud. She thus poured out all her maternal sorrow in U.G.'s presence. U.G. listened with full attention to all she had to say for an hour and a half. He didn't say a word to interrupt her, and did not utter a sentence to comfort her. All the time he sat like a statue. I must have said a couple of things to console her.

After she calmed down, U.G. got up to go saying, "Shall we go now?" as though he had finished the business he had come for. No matter how much she pressed him, U.G. turned down offers of food and drink.

"I blurted out something all this time. After I told you of all my sorrow, I feel relieved," she said, wiping her tears.

U.G. didn't reply.

"Let's go now," he said and walked out.

It seemed as if U.G. removed all the mother's suffering as though he had cast a spell on her.

### 18. Childhood memories

Rajasekhara Reddy brought with him from Hyderabad the manuscript of his philosophy of U.G. He stayed in a hotel for a week and came to U.G.'s place to read everyday from his book. He read almost the whole of it. He had a special style. He made a study of all the events of U.G.'s life, and even created certain imaginary characters in the biography. He wrote the book in the fashion of a novel, with dramatisations.

While listening to the reading, U.G. recalled many events of his childhood. He never did like to let people serve him. He wouldn't even let his servants run errands for him. He had always thought, "Why do I need these servants? Why can't I do things for myself?" He always found it strange that a man had to serve another man. He could not understand the hierarchical differences among men. He could not tolerate it when his grandmother fed him meals with firm yoghurt and cream while she gave leftover food to the servants. He would insist on eating with the servants and eating the same food as they ate. A servant would sit on the verandah in the burning heat of the summer and draw a fan with a rope attached to it, so his grandfather could have his siesta in the cool breeze provided by that fan [made of *vatti* roots]. U.G. would sit by the servant's side and chat with him.

Although there were a number of servants in the household, U.G. would wash his own clothes and do his own chores. Sometimes, his grandmother would be vexed with his behaviour and remark, "It's as though the chief raised a dog as big as a horse, and yet when burglars came, the chief himself did the barking [a Telugu proverb]."

At one time, U.G. gave away all his books to fellow students at school. And there is no count of the pens and pencils he gave away. On his grandfather's account he bought copies of the *Oxford Pocket Dictionary*, shoes and textbooks and gave them away. At the end of the month, the owner of the store sent his grandfather a bill for the amount of the purchases. U.G.'s grandfather was shocked. Why did U.G. buy so many books and so many dictionaries? Why so many pairs of shoes for just his two feet? When he questioned U.G., the latter revealed the truth. His grandfather then cancelled his account in the store. Then when he gave money to U.G. to pay for the school fees, U.G. instead paid the fees of his poor friends with that money. When the school authorities reported to his grandfather, threatening to remove U.G.'s name from the school's rolls, his grandfather came to know of his grandson's generous deeds.

How did U.G. acquire such a tendency of sharing with his fellows what he had? Had he absorbed the communist mentality ever since his childhood, or had he absorbed the Vedanta philosophy that all living beings are one? U.G. says that it was none of that: “I could not understand why differences existed and how they came about. How did I happen to have so many things, beyond my need? How did I accumulate them?” It seems as if that questioning eventually led him to a state where he would not tolerate division even in his consciousness.

\* \* \*

### **“I used to do astral travel, too....”**

When Rajasekhara Reddy was reading out his book that day, U.G. revealed some other details about himself. When ‘astral travel’ of J. Krishnamurti was mentioned in the reading, U.G. said, “I have done astral travel, too. There was nothing so special about it.”

We were astounded. When? Where did he go? “Not just to the library of the Masters. When I was living in Madras, I could not find the right quotations that I needed for my talks. I used to lie down to sleep while thinking about them. In my dream it felt like I was going on astral travel. I would go to the Connemera Library, take out a book I needed, and make a note of the quotations from it. Then, like a bird, I would fly back and land on the ground like an aeroplane. I would remember the notes very clearly. I would use them the next day in my speech,” said U.G., as if that was a common occurrence.

\* \* \*

### **Two acres and freedom....**

In his youth, U.G. read a book called *Two Acres and Freedom*. He didn’t remember the story of the book, but he remembered concluding that there was no higher heaven than owning a couple of acres of land. He asked his grandfather to give him two acres of land. Smiling at his innocence, his grandfather said, “You fool. Why do you ask for two acres, when you have in your name 40 acres of land?” and sent him off.

\* \* \*

### **The get-up is nice....**

The book written on U.G. by the editor of *Kannada Prabha*, YNK, called *U.G. Alla Guruji*, was published in October 1995. Along with three other books, the former High Court Justice and senior savant, Honourable Nitturu Srinivasa Rao, released that book on the 22nd in the Gokhale Institute of Public Affairs. He had spoken with U.G. many years ago. On the occasion of the release, he held up

the book to everyone in the assembly and said, “You need great courage to read this book. You need greater courage to meet and talk to this gentleman called U.G. Krishnamurti.”

A Kannada litterateur, Lakshmi Narayana Bhatta, as well as the head of the Psychology Department in Bangalore University, Prof. Timmappa, both spoke to the assembly introducing U.G. Timmappa described that, as naturally as a caterpillar would be metamorphosed into a butterfly, U.G. too went through a bodily transformation and attained divinity. He explained that such transformation is acausal and elaborated why U.G. emphasises that it is useless to search for a way to attain it.

I showed U.G. the book written by YNK. U.G. held the book in his hand, looked at the back cover and returned it saying, “The get-up is nice.” He didn’t show the slightest interest in finding out what the author wrote in the book

\* \* \*

### **The body is like an animal....**

It was Tuesday, October 24, 1995 – a day of the total solar eclipse. For a week before that day, newspapers, radio and TV all talked about the eclipse, and made a big hoopla about it saying that something remarkable was going to happen on the earth for the first time.

On February 16, 1980, it had also been a total solar eclipse, and U.G. had been in Bombay. That day, the sun was eclipsed in the shadow of the moon, and the day became dark. U.G. noticed that the sex glands in his body became active and energetic. He commented on the phenomenon to Mahesh who was standing with him in the balcony, “I have such a strong sexual desire that I could rape any woman that comes into my sight. If you wish, touch my organ.”

Mahesh hesitantly groped for it and the organ was stiff and erect. Mahesh was shocked. The next day, while the newspapers catalogued the effects of the eclipse, they mentioned how during the time of the total eclipse all the animals in the zoo had copulated freely. “There is no difference between me and the animals. The body is like an animal. That may be why the sexual instinct was so active yesterday,” said U.G.

It was revealed in the papers that this time, the total eclipse could only be observed in northern India. It was to start at 7:45 a.m. and last for an hour and a half. About 32 groups of scientists from different countries came to India and set up their instruments in order to conduct various researches on



the corona of the sun for the one minute at the time of the eclipse that it would be visible. U.G. had no sympathy for all the exercises of these scientists.

“All this hoopla is a waste. What do they know? They are fools.... Man, who supposedly has achieved so much progress in the scientific field, cannot even predict precisely when an earthquake is going to occur. How can he know of the astronomical secrets occurring millions of miles away?” he argued.

U.G. gets irritated with scientists who claim that they know everything. “There is not the slightest difference between their theories and the superstitious beliefs of my grandmother. The contemporary astronomer’s theories are just as ridiculous as the belief that Rahu [a dragon] swallowed the Sun, and the Sun emerged out of the throat of Rahu,” he said. “Science supplies the technological know-how to the world. Our lives became easier and more comfortable because of it. Because of our faith in that technology, we believe implicitly whatever gains currency in the name of science. In fact, none of those theories are true; they are mere speculations.”

On the morning of the eclipse, U.G. took his bath after the eclipse had started. He ate his breakfast of *idlis* before the eclipse. He made us all eat *idlis*, too, saying, “Nothing will happen. Don’t believe all the warnings and advice of the scientists published in the newspapers.”

\* \* \*

### **“How did I come into this world?”**

After Brahmachariji, Vedantam Satyanarayana is the gentleman who became the target of U.G.’s teasing on this trip [1995]. U.G. cut him off with his replies whenever Satyanarayana opened his mouth. The day before U.G. was leaving, Satyanarayana pleaded, “You are leaving without giving us anything....”

“Maybe I am not leaving anything for you. But what about you? You made sure that there is no one left behind to leave anything for. If you have had no children, in all these years, it must be that there is some defect in both of you. Nevertheless, you have accumulated property and hoarded money. For whom is that? And then, you talk about release and liberation?” Vedantam’s head dropped.

Another question came from Vedantam after a while: “How did I come into this world, U.G.?”

“Your father and mother went to bed together, performed some unmentionable act and produced you,” U.G. replied. That silenced Vedantam.

Decency prevents me from mentioning the name of that unmentionable deed, but U.G. says that without any hesitation. He looked around at everyone who gathered there that day and asked, “Why

do you all crowd here? You just come here to spend your time. You can't watch dirty movies sitting in your own house. So, you come here for your entertainment. My going along with you and talking to you, answering your useless questions, only amounts to encouraging you. I know that my words are of no use to anyone. What should I do? Should I throw stones at you? Should I call the police and not let you in?" He then got up and said, "Don't come here tomorrow. I won't be here. I will go shopping in the Commercial Street."

\* \* \*

### **The four aims of life...**

The interpretation U.G. gave for the four Aims of Life [*Purusharthas*] addressing Brahmachariji: "Of the *dharma* [moral action], *artha* [monetary gain], *kama* [sensual desire] and *moksha* [release], the first and the last are plain lies. In the remaining, there is no use thinking about the second in old age. The only thing that remains is money. That's important for living. Try to practise that. That's the only aim of life."

\* \* \*

### **"All my ambitions have crumbled," – Vinod**

It was the morning of October 30, 1995. U.G. was sitting in the hall downstairs in Poornakutee. The hall was packed with friends: there was no room even to walk through. U.G. was sitting on the sofa next to the T.V., as usual, holding his head in his hands. People kept coming in. The ones that were sitting were making room for the newcomers. Getting up to go, the Major said, "I am going upstairs; one of you can sit here."

U.G. looked up at him once, but didn't say anything.

Then another young man peeped into the hall from the doorway, "My name is Vinod. I phoned you earlier," he told me. I suddenly remembered: he came from Hubli ten days ago and asked me the previous night at 10:30 on the phone if he could come to see U.G. Early next morning U.G. was leaving for Madras. Hearing this, the young man was disappointed. After he made sure that U.G. had arrived, he came today to Bangalore and phoned. "Come in, come in Vinod," I said. He didn't quite know how to come in from the door or make room for himself. After he tried somewhat, he finally sat down in a small rattan chair near the door.

He picked up some courage as soon as U.G. smiled at him. All his shyness disappeared within a moment. He didn't notice anyone else in the room besides U.G. He looked into U.G.'s face, and got

immersed in U.G.'s words forgetting where he was, and where he was sitting. He said he had read U.G.'s books in the Hubli Public Library. He had an M.A. or M.Sc. degree.

"I had ambitions of doing many things in life: I wanted to become an important officer by passing the IAS [Indian Administrative Service]. After reading your books, all my enthusiasm has gone. All my ambitions have crumbled. Only despair and hopelessness have remained. Just eating, drinking and living. You are the reason why I have become like this," said the young man. Everyone laughed.

U.G. laughed, too, and said, "What did *I* do? I too hope that you would pass the IAS and become an important official. Don't read my books and don't come to me. You forget about everything and live happily."

The young man said that was not possible any more. He pulled out a copy of the *Mystique* he had just bought and said, "I just bought this book today. Please autograph it."

"Why did you waste your money buying that book? The book is not even useful to boil water to make coffee," said U.G.

"I didn't spend 125 rupees to boil water. You must sign this book," the youth said, getting up.

"I don't know how to sign my name. I am illiterate," said U.G., trying to avoid him.

"I don't believe it. What's your problem? What will you lose by signing this book?" Vinod insisted. Everyone was watching this amused and laughing at the argument.

Finally, U.G. took the book and pen and asked, "Tell me your name." As soon as he told his name, U.G. wrote it in big letters on the first page of the book.

Noticing that, Vinod started again, "Not my name, yours."

No matter how much U.G. tried to avoid signing the book, Vinod kept insisting. I tried to tell him that U.G. never puts his autograph in anyone's book, and begged him not to insist. We were all astonished at his aggressiveness. He held U.G.'s hand by sitting next to him and made him write 'U.G.' by leading his hand. Then he bent down to pick up the pen that slipped and fell. U.G. thought that perhaps he was going to touch his feet and folded his legs into the sofa, admonishing him, "Hey, don't do such things!"

Then Vinod realised what had transpired. "By mentioning that, you gave me the idea. I must touch your feet," he said, trying to reach U.G.'s feet. He asked U.G., "Why do I have so much self-forgetfulness when I see you?"

U.G. replied, “Forget all that. Just go and do your IAS examinations.”

Vinod thus spent an hour and half with U.G. and left very reluctantly. He left making U.G. promise that he would let him see him again next February.

\* \* \*

**“My touch will multiply life....”**

U.G. tries to keep himself away from people who want to get physically very close to him. Day in and day out, he takes care not to give any opportunity to people who come to see him either to touch his feet or to fall on him by forgetting themselves in their passion of devotion. Notwithstanding this, there have been occasions, although rare, when some people have forgotten themselves, caught in the intoxication of U.G.’s personal magnetism, and created problems.

For instance, every time Jitendra Reshamwala saw U.G., no matter how much U.G. tried to stop or prevent him, even trying to keep himself beyond reach, wouldn’t let go of U.G. without hugging him with both arms and showering his cheeks with kisses. He wouldn’t stop with that. He would hold U.G.’s hands and squat down on the floor near his feet. It is not by virtue of his age that he gained such liberty with U.G. He was no older than U.G. He was probably a bit over 60 years. When he came five years ago to see U.G. for the first time, he was renowned as a *guru* only among his Gujarati devotee groups in Hyderabad. In course of time, his fame spread not only in the rest of this country, but also abroad, and earned him many disciples. Although struck with blood cancer for the last six years, he always looked jubilant like a young boy. Everyone addressed him as ‘Baba,’ and he addressed everyone else as ‘Baba’. “I am still alive only because of U.G. Baba, or else the cancer would have got me a long time ago,” he would say.

That day, on October 29, I told U.G. that Jitendra Baba was on the phone. Jitendra would never hesitate to travel from Hyderabad to Bangalore. He had to see U.G., touch him and kiss him – that was his only aim in life. “Where is my U.G. Baba?” he was asking me on the phone. U.G. was signalling me as if to not tell him.

“You want me to tell you the truth, Baba?” I asked.

He laughed loudly on the other end: “I know, U.G. Baba doesn’t want you to tell me. He is afraid that I will come to Bangalore again. Tell him that I want to talk to him once.”

U.G. picked up the phone. I was listening to their conversation from another phone. “U.G. Baba, I would like to come and stay in your London flat,” he said.

“You are most welcome. But I will be away. If you want, you can stay there alone,” said U.G. abruptly.

Jitendra laughed aloud: “Baba, it’s just your love for me that is keeping me alive. The cancer has stabilised at a certain stage. Although the condition is not improving, it has not deteriorated,” he said.

U.G. replied, “It is not because of my love. If it is from my love, it would have sent you to the grave by now. Cancer means living cells spreading without limit. And my touch will multiply their life and energy. It won’t try to stop their spread and extend your life.”

I didn’t feel like listening to their conversation anymore.

\* \* \*

### **Final message: “Drop dead...”**

Vedantam was asking U.G., “What is your final message?” He was the last one to leave the hall.

U.G. replied emphasising every syllable, “Drop dead!”

\* \* \*

### **“If Einstein were here right now, I could shut him up in one minute....”**

“Chandrasekhar, please come here,” called U.G., leaning against the parapet wall on the terrace.

I approached him quickly, wondering what he might show me. U.G.’s attention was on the road. The branches of Valentine’s tree spread widely above us like an open umbrella. “Can you see the space between those branches and the vehicles passing on the road?” asked U.G.

“Yes, why not? No matter how bent the branches are, the eyes can see the space between them and the road behind them,” I replied.

“I cannot. All that seems like a two-dimensional picture to me. My eyes can see everything in front, one thing after another, but they cannot see the space between them. There are no measurements such as length and breadth, let alone depth. I maintain that the physical eye cannot see the third dimension. Our minds interpret what we see as the third dimension, but the eyes don’t tell us that there is space. When the present-day scientists talk about the fourth dimension on top of the three dimensions, I feel like breaking their teeth. Where is that fourth dimension? I say that even the third dimension is a lie. If Einstein were here right now, I could shut him up in one minute,” U.G. said.

With that my mouth closed shut.

\* \* \*

**“If the house has cobras, it’s even more acceptable....”**

This time after his arrival in Bangalore [1996], U.G. became keen on looking for a farmhouse. The house had to be located on the outskirts of the city. There had to be a garden around the house. In the garden, there had to be a big tree, so that the Major could climb and sit on it. The house must, however, not be located within the city corporation limits. These were the prime qualifications for U.G. to move into a house. If there were cobras moving in or around the house, it was even more acceptable. Of course, nothing was more desirable than a house inhabited by ghosts or spirits. However, U.G.’s friends who were helping him hunt for a farmhouse couldn’t quite understand what U.G. and the Major would do in a haunted house of that sort. Once every couple of days they would take him around and show him a different house. The house shown by Radhakishan qualified in every way except for the fact that there was a chicken coop next to it. The ‘cocka-doodle-doo’ sounds and the odour of the chickens prevented any possibility of our ears and eyes going on a strike in that house.

\* \* \*

**“Either you kill me or I’ll kill you,” Hanif**

When we were in the middle of this house-hunting effort, one afternoon the telephone rang: The voice was of some stranger. “Whom do you want to talk to?” I asked.

“I need to talk to U.G. When can I do that?” someone asked in clear English.

“What’s your name?” I asked mechanically, without knowing what to say.

“Hanif Mohammed,” he said.

“You are the same Hanif who is studying Engineering?” I asked, wondering if he was one of the group of young men who once came to see U.G.

“No, no. I am a drop-out,” he replied in a low voice. He repeated his request: “I need to talk to U.G. When can I do that?”

I asked him to come around 6:30 that evening. I did not notice when he came in that evening and sat among the group. I didn’t know him and he had never met me. Around 8 o’clock in the evening, U.G. said he was closing shop and asked everyone to leave. The ‘customers’ who had spent a couple of hours there were moving close to the steps reluctantly. When U.G. was about to go into his room, this young man was muttering something to himself looking at U.G. U.G. at once stopped and looked

at him intently.

The young man said, "I must talk to you alone for a little while." Then I figured that he was the one who talked to me on the phone. U.G. at once asked everyone to go downstairs. We were all surprised at U.G.'s complying with the stranger's request, as U.G. normally does allow such an opportunity even to those who know him well.

After about 15 minutes, Hanif climbed down the stairs with faltering steps, looked at me, said "Goodbye," in a weak voice and left. He looked as though if someone had stirred him a bit he would have poured himself out. He was trembling from head to foot. We didn't know what transpired until U.G. came and told us about it.

"He moved close to me, and showing the knife he wore around his waist, he said, 'Either you kill me or I will kill you. I can't go on living like this.' Then he began crying," said U.G. unperturbed.

I had a shock of my lifetime listening to the story. I felt: "What would have happened if that crazy fellow did something ghastly?"

"How did you calm him down?"

"I didn't. I told him, 'Why should I kill you? You kill me. I am always ready.' With that he calmed down," said U.G. "I then told him, 'If I die, it's no loss to anybody. If you kill me, however, they will put you in jail. But I will write a letter so that the police won't bother you.'" U.G. concluded.

Incidents of this sort are not unusual to U.G., but when we listen to him, we feel as if we are going on a roller coaster. Is it the absence of any urge in U.G. to protect himself that really acts as an armour for him? We don't know. Whatever it may be, why is it that some people behave in that way with U.G.? We can understand their helplessness to some extent. When the very ground which they have trusted and stood upon crumbles under their feet, some cannot bear it and act as if they have gone crazy. U.G. does whatever it is that he does, and puts on an innocent face. That makes these people even more infuriated, and they feel like pulling their hair. They feel like drawing their swords on him, not being able to stand this ruthless compassion. U.G.'s books had destroyed Hanif's beliefs. His elders had been trying to force him to fast for Ramadan. When he refused, they said that he was possessed by a demon. Then they tried to confine him forcibly, at which point he ran away.

The way Hanif smiled at me upon leaving told me how many volcanoes had exploded within him. I understood how many heavy burdens were disturbing him so that he couldn't stay calm. There was a conflict between the commandments of his elders, who were hardened with religious zeal, and the human values aroused within him by U.G.'s words. All this was reflected in that feeble smile he

managed.

\* \* \*

**“I tried to skip my own wedding....”**

“You must come to our wedding tomorrow,” Rangarajan invited U.G., saluting him with folded hands. By his side stood his prospective wife, Vijayalakshmi, standing in a curved posture and watching him innocently. She covered herself around her shoulders with her *sari*, and had her arms crossed. She was looking into U.G.’s face. What could U.G. say in reply?

He laughed: “I tried to skip attending my own wedding.”

Rangarajan too laughed at this. “How is that possible, Sir? How could you hold your own wedding without yourself being there?”

“As Rama did when he put a statue of Sita next to himself when he performed a sacrifice, I asked them to perform the wedding ceremony with only my picture there. But that didn’t work. I didn’t even attend my children’s weddings,” U.G. said.

\* \* \*

**“What good is it to have all those lines?”**

After a while, Rangarajan said that his wife knew palmistry. That was it! U.G. immediately sat up and made room for her on the sofa, holding out his palm, “Come, come, look at my palm,” he said, inviting her.

The young lady hesitantly sat on the sofa and held U.G.’s palm. “I don’t know much. I taught myself by reading Cheiro’s books and some other palmistry books in Telugu,” she said and proceeded to study U.G.’s palm. “They say that if the heart line goes into the Mount of Jupiter, one lives for a hundred years. Looking at the lines in your palm, we could say you will live for ten years beyond hundred.”

She pointed to the line that took off from the lifeline into the index finger and said, “The science of palmistry says that if a line goes from the Mount of Jupiter and touches the index finger, it means the individual is a great person. And if it goes further up into the index finger, we can definitely say that the person is superior to *Jnanis* and *Yogis*.”

I thought at first she was a mere amateur in palmistry. But I was amazed at her analysis of the lines in U.G.’s palm, one after the other. “There are lotus lines in this gentleman’s palm; also a fish line,”



she said suddenly. We all looked into U.G.'s palm with curiosity. Meanwhile, Vijayalakshmi traced all the lotus lines on U.G.'s palm. We were awestruck: there was an outline of an eight-petalled lotus, at the centre of which there was another small lotus. As if that wasn't enough, she looked for other lotus lines and traced them all and filled the palm with them. "There is also a Swastika mark here," said she, pointing to the Venus Mount.

"What good is it to have all those lines?" asked U.G.

\* \* \*

### **"Didn't you say my vibrations were horrible?"**

Professor Gottfried Meyer and his wife Bodil from Germany were now residing in the North Wing of the cottage in Yercaud. It was February 1996. They came to Yercaud after travelling in north India for some days. U.G., the Major, Suguna and I were staying in the South Wing. U.G. took his previous room. In U.G.'s absence, the Major had been sleeping in that room for the past year. "I liked that room. It had good vibrations," U.G. said later to the Major on the way from Salem.

Major shook his head as if he didn't believe U.G. and said, "Don't say that. Didn't you remark only the other day in Madras that my vibrations were horrible?"

Mr Malladi Krishnamurti built a special room for U.G. on the second floor of his house. The Major apparently slept in that room for five days, spreading his bed on the carpet. No one had told U.G. about this. Nevertheless, when U.G. entered the room this time, he asked the Major, "Have you been sleeping here?"

The Major was surprised. When he asked how U.G. knew this, U.G. replied, "Don't I know your vibrations?"

Then the Major asked him curiously, "Were they good or bad?"

"If they were good, there would be no need to talk about them," remarked U.G. sharply. "You know I don't say anything to please you. This time your vibrations here [in Yercaud] were truly pleasant." U.G. smiled.

\* \* \*

### **You also feel the 'vibes' of the place....**

No matter how convincingly he speaks, it is hard to tell whether U.G. is making fun of you or truly appreciating you. Especially this vibrations business – I haven't been able to make head nor tail out of

it, although I have been observing it for the last 25 years. What indeed are these ‘vibes’? Do they really bother him?

U.G. says that just as you feel the humidity in the air or changes in the weather, you also feel vibes in a place. What can you do even if you know the weather is bad? It’s the same with vibes too. The fears and anxieties, the emotions and passions of the people who lived in a place before us stay on in the surroundings like clouds. But why don’t they bother everyone else? The others don’t even know that they exist. When we talk about this matter seriously, U.G. says that the reason they don’t touch us is the armour of thought that we wear around ourselves that shields us from them. He says that we never live in the present. We are always filled with either things that had already happened or things that might happen in the future. Is that why we are blind to all the subtle vibrations that surround us?

If we somehow could break that thought armour, then could we understand all these things? U.G. ridicules us, “If only the thing called ‘you’ exists.” The thought armour *is* our existence. There is no separate thing called the ‘I’ anywhere. This thought armour is the Emperor’s Clothing that we weave around ourselves to protect our illusory existence. My God! I am going out of my mind! Do you understand all this? Don’t ask me [if I do].

\* \* \*

**“Because you drank the coffee, your ancestors are gratified....”**

I am reminded of another incident narrated to me by Vedantam Satyanarayana. This happened about two years ago. It was the death anniversary of his father. When he heard that U.G. arrived in Bangalore from Yercaud, he felt strongly that he had to go visit and talk to him. Because of the anniversary ceremony, he was fasting [until the priests finished the ritual and were fed]. If he came to our house, Suguna would give him coffee without fail, and he would have to break his fast! He wondered what to do. So, he came to our house anyway, thinking that he would let U.G. decide what he should do.

As soon as he came, U.G. made fun of Brahmachariji. “Yesterday was his mother’s death anniversary. Without going to his home, he has been hanging around here. He quit his funerals and daily worship. Brahmachariji has become blasphemous,” U.G. said.

During the conversation Suguna brought some coffee. Vedantam said, “It’s my father’s death anniversary. I cannot eat or drink anything.”

But U.G. insisted, “Don’t worry about it. I am telling you. Go ahead and drink it.”

Vedantam emptied the coffee cup without a second thought. The conversation continued for another 45 minutes. In the middle of the conversation, U.G. suddenly turned to Vedantam and said with a serious face, “Sir, because you drank the coffee, your father, your grandfather and his father – all three of them are gratified. They are completely happy.”

Vedantam couldn’t believe his ears. He automatically got up, saluted U.G. with folded hands and wiped his tears off without anyone noticing. Vedantam believed without a doubt that all his three ancestors appeared in their subtle bodies to U.G.

There have been many such incidents. If I write about all of them, this will be a huge volume. U.G. scorns me saying, “Chandrasekhar is writing a myth about all the miracles I have never performed.”

\* \* \*

### **All sounds are the same....**

It was February 15, 1996 – the eleventh day of the lunar month. I got up early in the morning, finished washing and was sipping coffee sitting in a chair on the verandah. The noise of the fan of the heater inside was reminding me of the sound of *Om*. The Major was on the floor doing the exercises his brother had prescribed him for his backache. Suguna had not gotten up yet. It was quiet all around. The occasional cries of a crow from the trees or bushes in the valley could be heard breaking through the silence of the morning. When I told myself how peaceful it was there, I recalled the conversation I had with U.G. the day before. I had asked him in the verandah then, “Don’t you feel like living in a peaceful place like this, away from the city noises like in Madras or Bangalore?”

“You think it is city noise. It’s all the same to me whether I am here or there. I don’t find any difference,” replied U.G.

“How about the noise of vehicles passing in the city....”

Even before I had finished my sentence, U.G. interrupted: “All that is your imagination. All sounds are the same. You like to avoid some of them, calling them noise. All of them are the same for the body.”

“Then there is no truth in the doctors’ opinion that if sounds are too harsh or loud they have a [detrimental] effect on the body’s nervous system?”

“What do scientists know? They won’t be able to know the nature of the body’s intelligence even in another hundred years. I have been saying this for 25 years now – that the importance of the brain

in the human body is minimal. They are realising that just recently in their experiments. They wrote in the *New York Times* that scientists discovered that the intelligence necessary for the digestive system exists in the stomach itself. That's why I have been saying for so long that the food you eat is not important for the body; that Yoga, health food or whatever you think is useful for the body are in fact harmful for it. You eat not food but ideas. What you wear are not clothes, but labels and names," said U.G., emphasising each syllable.

\* \* \*

**"I am only speaking from a practical point of view...."**

The couple who were the caretakers said goodbye to U.G. saying, "*U.G. da kadavul* [U.G. is God]." Ever since U.G. had started renting this cottage in Yercaud, in all these four years, their family has improved. The Major had been looking after for their needs and helping them monetarily, even more than U.G. had been doing.

U.G. had not given a penny for the marriage of Nagaratna's son. However, he had given enough money for the couple's cot and bed. Before six months were over, the daughter-in-law became pregnant. U.G. tried to persuade her, "Why do you need children? How are you going to raise them? Get an abortion. I will pay for it."

When Suguna saw U.G. giving her money, she couldn't help laughing. "Why shouldn't there be children once they have been married? Besides, this is her first pregnancy. Why would she get an abortion?" asked Suguna.

The Major, too, could not understand why U.G. was asking her to get an abortion. He asked U.G., "Are you trying to prevent the birth of a deformed child? Why do you say she shouldn't have the child?"

"Not that, how should I know any of that? I am only saying this from a practical point of view. Economically, it's a big burden to give birth to and raise a child. I am only asking why you should give birth to a child if you cannot bear the expense," explained U.G.

I felt that this truly was a matter everyone should think about. If we don't try to excuse ourselves by saying, "Could the tree be a burden to the mountain? Could the berry be a burden to the vine?" then we cannot but see the practicality in U.G.'s words.

U.G. was also insistent in a similar fashion in Suguna's case once: Our second daughter was more than a year old. U.G. heard that Suguna missed her period again. I don't know how he gets to know

about such things. There were times when he could decipher that a woman was pregnant even when the woman herself didn't know that she had been missing her period. "That's all part of the body language: I can tell as soon as I see the person's face," says U.G., but I can't believe it. Whatever it is, ever since he came to know of Suguna's pregnancy, whenever an occasion arose, he kept dinning into my ears to get an abortion for Suguna. "Please listen to me. To play with and have fun you have two daughters. That's enough. Why do you need a third child? Don't you know in how many ways you will face financial difficulties if you give birth to more children?" he tried to persuade me. But Suguna longed for a male child. She hoped that this time around she would have a son. U.G.'s counter-question was, "What will you do if you only give birth to a baby girl this time again? Why do you need sons? Your two daughters will bring two sons-in-law. What else do you need?"

One day U.G. told me, "Maybe you are afraid that you will go to hell [called *Punnama*] for not having a son. I guarantee you: such hells won't afflict you, O.K.? You persuade Suguna and make sure she gets an abortion before it's too late. Or else, you will regret it later very much."

U.G.'s words truly frightened me. I knew that unless there was a forcible reason, U.G. wouldn't insist so much.

Suguna, however, was not in favour of the idea. "Let's see what we will have this time. Later, if we want, I can get a hysterectomy, so that we won't have any more children."

Two months passed by quickly this way. The day neared when U.G. would leave the country. Before he left, he warned us both again seriously. Then I decided not to delay the matter anymore. I persuaded Suguna to agree to toss a coin. She should pray to her favourite god and toss a coin. Head or tail, whatever the coin says, we must do that. We shouldn't hesitate. Suguna agreed to that.

Our elder daughter, Aruna, was four years old. We asked her to flip a rupee coin. I was thinking of U.G. in my mind. "The child must be aborted," was the verdict. In all three trials, every single time it was the same verdict. With that, Suguna's agitation subsided. In just a couple of days we did whatever was needed and I felt as if a big burden had lifted off my chest.

Many years later, when we were consulting Suguna's astrological chart in *Skanda Nadi*, there was a mention of this matter in a certain context. That amazed us. In the *Nadi*, Parvati asks her son Kumaraswami: "Because of the previous life's merit of her husband, the native of the chart must have a son in this life. How come you say, then, that she only has two daughters?"

Skanda replied, "It's true. But because of the defect stemming from her previous life, even if the native had a son, the son would have been born short-lived or deformed. But because of divine

intervention, the native escaped such a horrible prospect.”

Suguna and I sometimes talk about what might have happened if U.G. had not insisted thus. Who else is that divinity except U.G.?

### **19. In Conclusion....**

This story has no head or tail. Of what use is it for anyone? Maybe, it's useful to those who are curious to know more information and details about U.G. It seems unwise to try to understand U.G. any more than that.

In all my 25 years of acquaintance with U.G., I have realised that I cannot decipher him as such and such, nor cast what he says in a specific mould. He slips right through my fingers. Just the moment I think, “I understand it. I have an idea of what you are saying,” I get another flash, I see another facet of him, something which is totally opposed to what I had previously understood. As I look at him and observe him, just as what he says sinks [into my head], the boundaries I fixed for myself in my mind keep expanding. “U.G. is so simple that he becomes alarmingly complicated,” says Harindranath Chattopadhyaya in his radio talk reviewing U.G.'s book the *Mystique of Enlightenment*.

U.G. says, “That book should not be called ‘Mystique,’ it should be called the *Mistake of Enlightenment*... If I have a goal, it is to destroy all the ideas in my books one by one.”

When U.G. says this, I begin to understand how U.G. is opposed to any fixed ideas formed about him.

Yet, after reading his books when someone asks U.G., “Didn't you say such and such or do such and such?” I don't know whether to laugh or cry. We don't need great knowledge to understand U.G.'s words. They are not only unnecessary but are a great obstacle. “To express what I want to say, I only need a vocabulary of two hundred words. Not even that. I only need one word: ‘No, No, No.’ Just that word is enough,” says this ‘No’ Master!

\* \* \*

After reading all this, if you ask me, “What would you say: that U.G. is a great man or that he is an ordinary man?” I would say that it depends on what you believe. When asked about reincarnation, U.G. says, “There is reincarnation for those who believe in it, and there is no reincarnation for those who don't.” Just the same way, he is great to those who believe that he is great. To those who don't,

he is an ordinary person.

If you ask me, “What is your opinion?” I say that U.G. is an extraordinary person, a unique man, and a riddle that will remain unsolved forever. It’s difficult to say anymore.

If you feel like meeting U.G. after reading this book, by all means do. Not just meet him, talk to him. If possible, go near him and observe him. You won’t know what will happen next. U.G. doesn’t know. I know even less.

---

**Stopped in Our Tracks**

**Book Two**

**Excerpts from U.G.'s Dialogues**

**Compiled from Audio Tapes**

**By K. Chandrasekhar**



## **Excerpts from U.G.'s Dialogues**

### **My Approach....**

I am not a 'thinker' in the sense in which the word is used. In fact, I have been pointing out to those that come to listen to me that man's problems cannot be solved through thinking. Since he cannot solve his own problems through thinking, there is no question of the world's problems being solved by any thinking by anybody.

This is the essence of my communication to those that come to listen to me. At the same time, I point out that it is also not possible to communicate, because no communication is possible and no communication is necessary.

So, how do I go about this funny way? By making people realise that they cannot solve their problems through thinking. They are suffering and the suffering must come to an end. How can man put an end to his suffering? Naturally it [what I suggest] runs counter to all traditional approaches, both the Indian and Western religious approaches, and also the modern approaches, [the approaches of] the psychologists. And through conversation and communication we try to understand that it is really not possible to understand or communicate what I am saying.

In other words, my objective in carrying on the conversation is to silence [the audience] in a way and put them in a state of silence. And in that silence something can probably happen, and will certainly happen. That's all.

So, I try to meet their arguments. They come with preconceived ideas, concepts and ideals, and then try to argue and debate with me. My approach is to suggest a counterargument and thereby neutralise their argumentative approach to the problem. This is all I do.

\* \* \*

We all talk of the mind. The religious thinkers, the psychologists – all talk of the mind. So, every individual has to discover [this state of being] for himself, by himself, and without relying on any authority – be it religious, scientific or psychological. It has to be your discovery. Otherwise, it has no value.

The state of being I am describing is a state where there is no effort at all. I am just a mirror here reflecting things exactly [as they are].

**It Is Bound to Affect the Whole Human Consciousness....**

The human race will somehow survive. But the only thing that one can do is to free himself, because it is a pure, unsullied and uncontaminated consciousness that is operating. So, it is bound to affect all those who come into its orbit. You don't have to do a thing. You can sit in one corner of the world, yet it is bound to affect the whole of human consciousness, because it [consciousness everywhere] is the same; it is exactly the same. It has no frontiers; it has no boundaries. So, it [consciousness here] is bound to affect the whole human consciousness. That is why I say that this so-called religious experience is an explosion. When this explosion takes place it is bound to affect the whole of human consciousness. You cannot measure it. It is not a thing to measure and statistically prove that so many people have been benefited by it. It is a very slow process. It takes time.

It is not a spectacular thing. You cannot produce results with all those that come into contact [with it]. Not all those that come into the presence of this consciousness have exploded.

And this happens to one in a million. Not because of what he does or does not do; but because it just happens. You call it grace, chance or....

\* \* \*

**Thinking Is the Problem....**

What causes the pain there? It's not your inability to do.... "I just can't do a thing," you begin to think. Thinking is the problem. Sadness is not the problem, but thinking about sadness is the problem.

Stop thinking. Can you stop thinking? You are trying to stop. That means thinking. I am not suggesting that you should not think. Thought is you. If you are not thinking you are not there. Nothing is there. What is there will begin to express itself. Let that express. Then there is no question. Just leave that alone. It will begin to act.

\* \* \*

**You perpetuate sorrow through your thinking....**

Nothing is wrong with you at all. You don't have the courage. Accepting whatever there is is courage. That is intelligence. "I don't want to be other than what I am" – that is courage. It is there! It is not a thing to be acquired.

\* \* \*

### **You Are That Movement of Thought....**

It is very difficult to understand the area between opposites. If I say I have no friends, it does not mean that I have enemies. If I say that I have no enemies, it does not mean that everybody is a friend to me.

So, how can you understand the state of being where you have neither friends nor enemies?

So, you always swing like a pendulum from one end to the other. That is the movement of thought. It is always between these pairs of opposites. You cannot conceive a state of being where these pairs of opposites do not exist at all.

**Q:** But why is it so natural?

**U.G.:** Don't say it is so natural. It is so unnatural – the unnatural thing you have accepted as natural. That is our tragedy. You have never questioned that because, if you begin to question, your existence is at stake. You are that. You are not different from this movement of thought.

What is necessary for you is to understand the machinery that is functioning inside of you – the movement of thought. Supposing I tell you, "This is the way," then where are you? You experience what I tell you. This knowledge you are going to use and create a state of being and think that you have experienced God, that you have experienced Reality or that you have experienced truth. But that is not the truth. That is not God.

\* \* \*

### **The Courage to Be Yourself....**

You have never let desire just stay there without tampering [with it]. That is life. What can you do without desire? The more you want to tamper with it the more it is suffering. You are always suffering because you want to be other than what you are. You just don't have the courage to be yourself. That means you have to be alone in this world – one without a second.

\* \* \*

### **Questioning the Movement of Thought....**

Somebody looked at the millipede and wondered how this small worm is able to walk with a thousand

legs. So, he asked, “How do you manage to walk? I find it so difficult to walk with two legs.” And so the millipede started thinking. And it died.

In exactly the same way, the moment you begin to question the movement of thought inside you, you will find that you end up in a very surprising situation – which is a very frightening thing for you.

\* \* \*

### ***Samadhi and Ultimate Samadhi....***

There is no use of your talking as if you are born. You are never born and you never die. How can there be any death when you are not born?

Neither your birth nor your death can become part of your experiencing structure. That experiencing structure must come to an end. Every one of you will become a self-realised man 48 minutes before you die. I can assure you. But it will be too late. Your body is not in a position to take it. Otherwise, you cannot die. Death always takes place in an unconscious state. You will never die in a conscious state. So, these 48 minutes is the time when you attain *Moksha*, liberation or whatever you call it. Why do you want to wait till your body becomes useless? You might as well die to the whole thing and begin to live, live in the sense that you understand that there is no beginning and no end.

\* \* \*

The senses are functioning at their peak capacity all the time. They cannot go on. So, every now and then – that is decided by the circumstances and not by any entity inside – the defences must be cut out from outside challenges. So, the eyes may be open, but you see nothing because the senses are tired. The recovery takes exactly 48 minutes – the so-called *Samadhi*. But the ultimate *Samadhi* – I don’t want to use the word, it is very misleading – it is [occurs for] one second by the clock. This body, this nervous system, cannot stand that. It is its physical death. You come to the point of physical death – it is not the death of the mind, death of the psyche, or the death of thought. The body goes through the process of physical death. And why it comes back [to life] God alone knows.

\* \* \*

### **Basic Needs....**

Food, clothing and shelter – these are the basic needs. Beyond that, if you want anything, it is the beginning of self-deception.

\* \* \*

### **Discover Your Own Path Rejecting All Others....**

The path has to be yours. I don't want to use the term 'path', because it has mystical [overtones].... "My" path, Ramakrishna's path, Jesus's path, or the Buddha's path – they are all worthless. Nobody can come into this unless or until he rejects all the other paths. Then it becomes his path. So, only if you reject all the other paths can you discover your own path.

Just look at yourself and find out what the hell you are doing with yourself, how you are kidding yourself all the time – how you follow the path of this man, that man and the other man. You are not interested in my path. The path is not going to lead you anywhere. And the path is going to give you what that man has experienced.

\* \* \*

### **“Silence Is Brahman....”**

How can you understand that silence – chaotic or otherwise? Is it possible for you to capture that silence? When that silence starts operating through you, it is something extraordinary, something vital and living. This structure that is trying to understand the nature of it, capture it, contain it or give expression to it, cannot co-exist with it.

The difficulty is you seem to know a lot about this state – you have imagination. You imagine it to be what's described as “Silence is Brahman” and begin to think about it. This imagination must go. That [silence] is something living and the structure that is trying to capture it is a dead structure. You are all dead. You are not living human beings at all. You have never known one living moment in your life. You are living the lives of your thoughts. All thoughts are dead – it doesn't matter whose thoughts – whether those of Shankara, of Ramanuja or of the hundreds of sages, saints and saviors we have had and perhaps have still. It is useless to try to understand that. How can you capture it?

If there is any such thing as silence, chaotic or otherwise, living or dead, it will begin to express itself. When it expresses itself you are not there. So, you will never know the nature of that silence at all. What you call silence is not silence at all.

\* \* \*

### **Thinking Cannot Solve Your Problems....**

**Q:** You say that the ‘silence’ will express itself. How is it that it failed in our case?

**U.G.:** Because you are waiting for the silence to express itself or because you still have the knowledge of that silence.

**Q:** If the natural state is an equilibrium how come [there is] this disturbance [in us]?

**U.G.:** Because you are pursuing and seeking a phoney equilibrium that does not exist at all, and this [idea of an equilibrium] is the thing put into you by your culture and society. It is the knowledge of self or silence that is creating this disturbance. The idea or concept of silence you have about silence is causing this disturbance. You are that idea and you want to understand how that idea has come into being.

**Q:** Is there a way to be thinking and at the same time be free from the limitations of thinking?

**U.G.:** No. That will be another, parallel, movement of thought. It [thought] is a mechanical thing and can solve only mechanical problems. But you want to use it to understand something living; that is the problem. It is not intended for that. Human problems are something living. You cannot use thinking to solve those problems.

### **Beauty....**

What is beauty? Where is beauty? Is it in the object or in the eye?

You project your idea of beauty on the object you are looking at. That is all. There is a beautiful sunset there. The moment you even say to yourself that it is beautiful, you are not looking at it at all.

Beauty is not in the object. It is not in the beholder’s eye either. It is in the total abandonment of yourself.

So, what is beauty? You really don’t know. You wouldn’t know what you are looking at. And in that state of not knowing, what is there fills the whole of your being. That you may call beauty. But there is nobody who describes that beauty and says he is enjoying it. If you capture that in terms of your experiencing structure, then it is lost.

\* \* \*

### **Philosophy of Life....**

**Q:** What is your philosophy of life?

**U.G.:** None whatsoever. Do you need a philosophy to live? Do you need to know the purpose of life and meaning of life [in order to] live? You are not living. For only a dead person is interested in asking such questions, not a living man.

Whatever meaning you give to life, those ideas are picked up from here, there and everywhere. If it [life] has any meaning, I would never know.

\* \* \*

**Q:** How do you distinguish the living from the dead? You say that we are dead.

**U.G.:** Any question that comes from anybody is born out of death, not out of a living thing.

\* \* \*

#### **You Will Never Know a *Jivanmukta*....**

**Q:** What are the features of a *Jivanmukta* or a *Jnani* or a Yogi?

**U.G.:** I wish I knew. If a *Jivanmukta* is sitting right in front of you, you will never know [that he is one]. You have no way of knowing whether a man is a *Jivanmukta*. You have a definition, a behaviour pattern. If he fits into that framework, you call him a *Jivanmukta*. If there is anyone like that, he will never know that he is a self-realised man or a *Jivanmukta*. Somebody has told you that I am a *Jivanmukta*. I may be a phoney, a clever chap. I have picked up the art of elocution and all that. I have travelled around the world. Any actor could do that. How would you know?

\* \* \*

#### **This Has No Religious Content....**

What I have been trying to say to those that come to listen to me and to those that care to listen to me is that what I have been saying has nothing whatsoever to do with religion. We have all been told, and some of us have been brought up with the belief, that by accepting certain beliefs and trying to live up to them in our daily life, and by due steps, we can aspire to become religious or whatever you want to call it. I am only describing a state of being which is a pure and simple physical and physiological state of being. It has no religious content. It has no mystical overtones at all.

Probably you want to discuss very serious subjects like attachment and detachment, refinement, sensitivity, and so on and so forth. I have precious little to say on those subjects. You will practise attachment or detachment for the rest of your life, but will never be free from either attachment or detachment. You will always be caught up in the two.

\* \* \*

**Selflessness....**

Selflessness is a great big myth. Anything you do, any movement in any direction on any level is strengthening the self.

\* \* \*

**This Is Not an Experience....**

This is not an experience. I cannot share it with you. If it is an experience, I can at least try to make you experience it through words, through descriptions, through phrases, through painting and musical compositions and so on.

You cannot capture this, contain this or give expression to this. This is outside the range of experience.

I don't know if you see the total helplessness of the situation.

\* \* \*

**It Is a Molecular Activity in the Brain Cells....**

The eyes are there like two camera lenses. You don't have to do a thing at all. That [the object outside] is moving the lenses. It is just a reflection of that on the retina – like a mirror. You do not look into the index card system and say to yourself that it is a mountain.

This is what I mean when I say that it is a pure and simple chemical activity, a molecular activity in the brain cells. Nothing else. You don't have a religious mind. There is no mind apart from thought. There is nothing.

\* \* \*

The mind is always closed. As long as the mind is there, it is that which is preventing you from understanding things.

\* \* \*

**Sensitivity and Total Attention....**



You can talk of total attention. But it is not that. The object that is outside of you is demanding total attention. Not you. When that demands total attention, you cannot even blink. When the eyes stay open for a long time, they become dry. And you may even go blind. That is a pathological condition. But there is a built-in mechanism. The other glands are activated and they supply the water.

The sensitivity is the sensitivity of the senses. As long as you interfere with the senses, that is gone.

\* \* \*

### **Religion Is Filth....**

All the religions – no matter what country they come from – what all they teach you, all that is false. Because that is not real. That is falsifying you.

There isn't anything you can do. But you are still doing. There isn't anything to be done. You listen to some chap talking and to the descriptions of somebody. You open a book and read. There is nothing to be done whatsoever. If that is so, you wouldn't listen to anybody. You wouldn't read any books, except those you need to make a living. You wouldn't touch this stuff. If you touch it, you need a detergent to wash your hands. It is so filthy. Because it is false. You will have nothing to do with it.

\* \* \*

### **You Cannot Be Aware....**

Do you know what you mean by the word "aware"? Probably you use it in the sense that "I think," "I feel," and so on. It is very important to understand. The dictionary says: "The condition of being aware."

You cannot be aware of anything. Somebody has fed people with this kind of 'bum-dole'. You have been fed so long on this bunk that anybody saying anything on this probably creates some kind of indigestion there. You want the same thing there. What exactly do you mean by 'aware'? You cannot be aware. There is no you. When there is awareness, there is no you. It is not there. It [the awareness] is aware of itself. It sounds mystical, but it is so. The anger or the feeling is aware of itself.

The 'you' separates you from that. That is the movement of thought. There is nothing else other than what you are looking at.

\* \* \*

My emphasis is that awareness cannot be separated from the activity of the brain. It cannot be used as an instrument to understand anything, much less to bring about any change.

\* \* \*

### **The Purpose of My Conversation....**

Questioning is not a hallmark of intelligence. Cessation of questioning is intelligence.

You do not seem to realise that it is not possible for you to break yourself free from the methods of thought that prevent you from seeing the limitations of all these concepts and direct experiences.

These are all metaphysical questions. I have no answers for any metaphysical questions because I am not thinking metaphysically. I am not thinking in concepts. You may very well ask whether it is possible to use words without concepts. I say it is possible. There is no content to these words. These are not born out of any concept. They are just words.

To imagine that there is a state of nonverbal conceptualisation is just a myth.

The purpose of this conversation is to enable you to break free from the methods of thought as a means to understand anything.

\* \* \*

I cannot help you. You cannot help yourself. This is the situation. I want to push [you] into.... Maybe it helps.

\* \* \*

### **The Knowledge You Have About the Mind Is the Mind....**

The knowledge you have about the mind is the mind. If it is possible for you to be free from this knowledge, then [for you] there is no mind. The mind and the knowledge you have about the mind are one and the same. There may be something like the mind, but you will never know that. It can't become part of your conscious thinking.

\* \* \*

### **Wanting Is Thinking....**

Wanting is thinking. As long as you want to do anything – ‘I want to understand myself,’ ‘I want to be free from this movement of thought,’ [that] is thinking. You need thinking just to function in this

world. But other than that, anything you want is thinking. You get the material for thinking always from somebody. Otherwise, there is no thinking.

\* \* \*

Love is also thinking. 'I love my wife,' 'I love my house,' 'I love my bank account' – all that is thinking. That is why I say that it [thinking] is destructive. If there is any such thing as love, there is no thinking. No relationship.

What you call love is just a vibration. If it is not reciprocated, it turns itself into either apathy or hatred.

\* \* \*

### **Monkeys Who Sit Around the Red Ochre....**

I was telling my friends yesterday about the simile we had in one of our books. Those who go to listen to spiritual discourses, those who read books of a religious nature, and those who are looking beyond for something are like the monkeys who sit around the red ochre trying to warm themselves. You know what red ochre is. It is red in colour, just like a flame, but there is no warmth.

There isn't anything that you can get from any religious or spiritual discourses. What I have been trying to point out to those who come to listen to me and care to listen to me is that there is nothing to achieve, nothing to accomplish, and nothing to attain. What is it that you want? And what is it that you are searching for? That is my question. If you are searching for anything, if you want anything, then the first thing you must do is to throw away lock, stock and barrel and book, bell and the candle, the stuff you are hanging on to. You have to throw the whole lot into the cocked hat. Otherwise, there isn't any chance for you to be yourself. If you follow any path – it doesn't matter what that path is – it is leading you astray. It is putting you on the wrong path. If you make anything out of what I have been saying, you are lost, body and soul. And if there is a God, out of sheer mercy He should save you all and save you from me and persons like me.

One thing I make very clear: I am not here to liberate you at all. What is it that you want to liberate yourself from? You are trying to ask for a thing that you have.

\* \* \*

### **Burning of Thought Is Energy....**

Burning of thought is energy. That is life. Combustion of thought. Another kind of energy is created by the will: the thought sphere, the antenna. Sensations are also thoughts. Anger is energy. You will never be free from thoughts. Alchemy is burning of thought.

Since I don't know what I am saying, I say I am not telling you the same thing as the "Old Man" [J. Krishnamurti]. What I am saying is not the product of thinking. These words are just coming out. I am describing the state of being. It requires tremendous courage to be yourself.

\* \* \*

### **There Is Nothing to Do....**

As long as you ask yourself the question, "Why not me? Why should this happen to somebody else?" there isn't any chance of your making it. I have to use the words "making it", because you are all trying to make it – whatever it is you want to make.

It's a thing you cannot reach or make – [it's not a] reachable or gettable thing. All this search – the search for this non-existent thing called 'enlightenment' – seems futile to me. And the futility of this search is what I have been trying to communicate to those that come to see me and care to listen to me. I also explain that the so-called enlightenment, self-realisation, God-realisation, or what you will, is a pure and simple physical and physiological state of being. It is just the pulse, beat and throb of life.

There is nothing to do. You are all the time interested in doing something. That is the one thing where you don't have to do a thing. If you can be that, just be that, you are in that state. You are not in my state or somebody else's state. That is your state. That is the natural state.

That is the way you are all functioning. What prevents that to give expression is this movement of thought.

You are all thinking about it. That is the thing you can never capture through thinking.

\* \* \*

### **Your Life Is Centred Around Eating....**

**Q:** I think that your talking carries your message.

**U.G.:** No. The talking is always emphasising that there is no message. That is the talking. If that is what you call a message, then yes. The message is that there is no message.

**Q:** Is there any conscious effort on your part in giving expression to....

**U.G.:** How can there be any conscious effort? Whatever comes out of me is the expression of that state. There is no conscious effort at all. I am not conscious of anything at any time except when there is a need for it.

**Q:** There is this *Charvaka Siddhantam* [the Charvaka doctrine] that you have only to eat and be merry.

**U.G.:** ...and borrow money and never repay. The Charvaka emphasises the reality of the world. Here he is [sounds] something like a revisionist. But I say this reality that you have taken for granted is not so real as it appears to be. Quite the opposite. I am not recommending that you should drink, eat and be merry.

**Q:** Do you mean to say that anything one does is a waste of time?

**U.G.:** Eating is not a waste of time. The whole of your life is centred around eating, Sir! Your working there in the office for eight hours [a day] and making money – the whole thing is centred around eating. Your education, your marriage also – so that somebody could cook for you, your children – so that they can maintain you in your old age – everything is the extension of the same activity.

**Q:** All activities, then, are for the sake of nothing but eating....

**U.G.:** That's all. How much can you eat? Why do you want such a huge bank balance? You want your children, great grandchildren – all of them to be secure. Ultimately your house, your food, your pleasures – that is all you are concerned with.

\* \* \*

### **'Be Selfish and Stay Selfish' Is My Message....**

I am not saying anything against your bank balance or concern for yourself. I want you to do that [keep them].

Man is always selfish and will remain selfish as long as he practices selflessness. I have nothing against selfish people because that is a reality. I don't want you to talk about selflessness. That has really no basis at all. "Tomorrow" you will be a marvellous man. When tomorrow arrives you push it to day-after-tomorrow, or the next life. But until then you will stay selfish.

I have never told anybody, "Don't be selfish." "Be selfish and stay selfish," that is my message. Wanting enlightenment is selfishness. Charity is selfishness.

\* \* \*

**“Divine Despair” – an Involvement....**

The change is only “tomorrow”. You can’t do anything about that. When tomorrow arrives you push it to day-after-tomorrow, the next life.

That is where this Existentialism comes into the picture. It creates despair in you. If you are really interested in bringing about change, you will find that you cannot really do anything. The absurdity of wanting to change dawns on you. On that foundation they have built this tremendous structure of thought called “despair”.

There are two schools of [Existentialist] thought – religious and atheistic. J.P. Sartre, the French writer, belongs to the latter one.

They also talked of “Divine despair”. It is always related to hope. One cannot exist without the other. Hope of things changing for the better, hope of finding some guru who can enlighten you.

**Q:** Is it possible to do anything without any involvement?

**U.G.:** It is possible. That means there is no relationship at all. All relationships are based on involvement. There are only temporary relationships as with your landlord. They are purely temporary.

**Q:** Unfortunately, we get involved with everything we do. If I marry I get involved. If I don’t marry, I get involved.

**U.G.:** To practise non-involvement is meaningless. You are just not involved. That’s all. There is no emotional content in the involvement. I have neither rights nor duties.

\* \* \*

**Your Approach....**

You can never say anything about what I am saying. If there is to be any understanding about what is being said here, it must express itself there. Then you will not talk about me. You will not explain me to somebody. You will explain yourself. That will be something new, something radical, and something extraordinary.

If you listen to me year after year, you are only clarifying your thoughts. It is useless. If you go out without recalling anything that is talked about, that would be the best thing. Don't recall anything. Can you do that?

\* \* \*

### **They Interest Me....**

...Sometimes I read *Time Magazine*. Even then I am not involved. I am not involved with what I am reading. I don't even know what I am reading sometimes. It is very strange: when I read crime fiction, the suspense doesn't interest me at all. I am not involved with the build-up of suspense. Just read the sentences and action... somebody kills somebody else....

That is why I see mythological movies: Hanuman flying across the ocean and carrying Sanjeeva Parvata, his tail – those are the things that interest me. I read *Chandamama* – interesting stories. Comic stuff. Donald Duck, Mickey Mouse – comic strips interest me.

\* \* \*

### **You Are Very Safe. You Can't Blast Me....**

**U.G.:** What I am saying will create and intensify the neurotic situation there. Don't listen to me. Fortunately you have a very thick skin. Nothing is going to penetrate that. You are safe. Gowdapada provides the gloves; the *Bhagavad Gita* provides a coat jacket. *Brahmasutras* provide bullet-proof leather trousers. So, you are safe.

**Q:** You are condemning whatever has been said before. Don't you think you may also be condemned and blasted?

**U.G.:** If you have the guts [to do that], I will be the first person to salute you. You can't do that because you are relying upon the *Gita* and the Upanishads – not upon yourself. If you have the guts, you will be the only person who can make what I am saying false. You don't have to say that. I myself am saying that what I am saying is false as far as you are concerned.

A Gowdapada could do it. But he is not here. You are reading and repeating what Gowdapada had said. It is a worthless statement as far as you are concerned.

**Q:** It is a hopeless situation.

**U.G.:** The situation is not hopeless. You want to be in that hopeless situation because you don't want to be free from selfishness, from fear, jealousy, envy, etc. The hope is in selfishness, the hope is in greed, in anger, in jealousy, and not in the practice of opposites.

\* \* \*

### **You Don't Want This....**

Anything I do to help you would be adding to your misery – that's all. You add one more misery to those you already have by listening to me. To that extent it is doing no good to you.

\* \* \*

Freeing yourself from any one of these things [selfishness, anger, envy, etc.] is the end of you. Please – in your interest – out of compassion I am telling you: this is not what you want. This is not something you can make happen. It is not in your hands. Whomsoever it chooses – it hits him. If you really want *Moksha* that can happen now. Everybody will attain *Moksha* just for a few minutes, or hours as the case may be, before the black van arrives to reduce the body to ashes.

\* \* \*

### **Why Do I Talk?**

My dialogue has no meaning at all. You may very well ask me why the hell I am talking. I assure you that it is not at all in the nature of self-fulfilment in my case. What I am doing is not a motiveless thing. Your coming here creates a sort of motive. I feel that I must help you, that you are suffering, that you want some answers to your questions. There is a temporary motive: it is to make clear that there is nothing to understand.

\* \* \*

### **Why Stop the Past?**

Why should you stop the past from interfering with the present? You have been brainwashed by all those holy men, gurus, teachers and the so-called enlightened people that the past should die, should come to an end. "If you attain this, life would be hunky-dory – full of sweetness." You have fallen for



all that romantic stuff. If you try to suppress the past and try to be in the present, it will drive you crazy. You are trying to control something beyond your control.

It is not only your past. It's the entire past, entire existence of every human being and every form of life. It is not such an easy thing. It is like trying to stop this flow of the river through all those artificial means. It will inundate the whole thing.

What is it that you can do? Anything you do in any direction, at any level, is perpetuating that.

\* \* \*

### **It's Meaningless to Ask the Meaning of Life....**

**U.G.:** Why talk of the meaning of life? Why do you want to mystify? You are here somehow. There may not be any meaning. You obviously see no meaning in life. Everything you do seems absolutely meaningless.

**Q:** There must be some goal, aim....

**U.G.:** The moment the baby is born the goal is to survive – that is the instinct. To feed itself, survive and reproduce one like itself. That seems to be the way of life. Life is expressing itself, that's all.

The body is responding to the stimuli – the pulse, beat and throb of life. When those things stop, then what you call 'clinical death' takes place.

But life is still continuing, but not in the way you want [it to]. The form disintegrates into the constituent elements and that becomes the basis for another form of life. Anyway, that is no consolation to you because the instrument you are using to understand the meaning of life is interested only in continuing.

\* \* \*

### ***Samskara*....**

*Samskara* is conditioning. Tradition is another word for it. That is what you are, what you call 'you'. You cannot change it. Modify it and it continues. The whole thing is pathological. You separate the pathological and psychological. But actually there is only the pathological. *Samskara* is pathological conditioning.

### **Conditioning Is Intelligence....**

It is not possible for you to be without conditioning. No matter what you do, you are conditioned. The unconditioning that the spiritual gurus are talking about in the marketplace is a bogus affair. You will find out. Anything you do is conditioning. What you have to be free from is the desire to be free from conditioning. Conditioning is intelligence. This conditioning I am talking about is happening in a different way – not [through] ideations and mentations.

\* \* \*

### **Belief...**

Belief is an extension of yourself, not an abstraction. It is like the habit of drinking or smoking. The more you try to stop it, the stronger grows the habit. You talk of faith when you are not sure. Belief – where is the need for faith?

When belief is not producing the results you expect of that, you introduce what is called faith. You must have faith in that belief. That means hope.

### **Morality....**

Only a man who is talking of moral things is the one who can be immoral. Since there is no such thing as immorality for me, I do not preach morals. That's all. I cannot take any moral position. The one who talks of morals and devotion is a humbug.

\* \* \*

### **Religious Business....**

The whole religious business is nothing but moral codes of conduct. It is a social thing – nothing religious about it. There is no difference between the policeman and the religious man. The religious man puts the policeman inside you. It is more difficult to handle the policeman inside you. You can corrupt the policeman out there.

\* \* \*

### **Cultures Create a Lopsided Situation....**

All these cultures – Oriental or Occidental – have created this lopsided situation for man and turned him into a neurotic individual. For example kindness: in the very nature of things it is not possible to emphasise only kindness and selflessness. Violence is part of nature. You have to kill something to survive. One form of life lives on another form of life. But you have condemned killing. Our culture

has emphasised the one and only kindness. That is why this suffering of man, tremendous sorrow for man, because he is trying to have the one without the other.

\* \* \*

### **Pleasure and Pain....**

Both extremes – pleasure and intense pain – are painful for the body. The response is the same as far as the body is concerned. The body has no independent existence, as it is not separate from what you call pleasure or pain. The vibrations may be different. The intensity of each vibration may be different. You demand a particular sensation. So, you divide them – good and bad.

\* \* \*

### **Falling Asleep....**

When there is great suffering and depression, you go to sleep. You fall asleep. It is nature's way of taking care of the situation. It's the same with doing the *Gayatri Japa*. Since you can't stop doing that you go to sleep.

...Why do you smoke cigarettes? It [a cigarette] also does the same as Ram Nam. Having a glass of beer or a cigarette is the same as repeating Ram Nam. You attach significance to Ram Nam.

\* \* \*

### **Bliss and the Body....**

The body is interested in its survival and reproducing one like itself. The only way it can reproduce itself is through the use of thought. So, thought is very essential for the survival of the living organism. The body is not interested in spiritual activity or psychological activity. None of the spiritual experiences are of any value to the body. On the other hand, they create a tremendous strain. The bliss, beatitude, love, and compassion – all those that the religious man had placed before us are only adding to the strain of the body.

\* \* \*

### **Deep Sleep and *Turiya*....**

Why are you talking of deep sleep? If there is any such thing as deep sleep, it is not possible for any individual who is in deep sleep to know anything about that. So, don't talk about deep sleep. Deep sleep is the death of the whole body – not the fancy dying to your yesterdays. The body goes through what is called a clinical death at the moment when there is deep sleep. At that moment there is no

body there. The body may or may not come back [to life] from that deep sleep. If, due to some strange chance, it comes back to life and is able to renew itself, the whole life – genetically programmed life – is there.

After this deep sleep there is no more sleep for the body.

\* \* \*

You are talking of the *Turiya* state where there is no division. Do you know what you are talking about? All your *sadhana* is the very thing that is creating the division there. Through knowing you think you will become. Maybe that fellow who talked about it was in a state of bliss. What good is that? If you experience that, it is false. If you touch the man, it is false.

The Atman is created by that junk *Mandukya Upanishad*. You don't have to get drunk to understand sobriety.

\* \* \*

### **You Have to Be Saved from the Very Idea That You Have to Be Saved....**

You have to be saved from the very idea that you have to be saved. If it has to happen, it has to happen now. The chance is here, now, not tomorrow. But you say it is a hopeless situation. My words....., they don't operate. No chance.

Whoever is interested in spiritual matters is a candidate for the lunatic asylum. The line of demarcation between the mystic and the madcap is very thin. This one madcap is a clinical case and the other is on the way.

\* \* \*

### **When You Know Nothing....**

When you know nothing, you say a lot. But when you know something, there is nothing to say.

\* \* \*

### **Experiencing the Body....**

This body, you see, whose body is it? I have no way of saying to myself, "This is my body." I have no way of directly experiencing this body for myself. Not experiencing funny little things called 'separation of the body' – that is a neurological disorder. Many people have experienced the

separation of their body. A neurological disorder can bring about the separation of the body – as if you are something different, you experience your own body. That is not what I talking about. I cannot separate myself at all, because there is nothing here to separate myself from.

\* \* \*

### **Who Is Crazy?**

There was a psychiatrist, a leading psychiatrist, who came to see me in Marseilles. We talked for hours and hours and days. He wanted to be with me all the time. He was one of the top-notch psychiatrists and psychologists. One day I think he remained with me for 24 hours. He talked, talked and talked. “This is a textbook case, a mental case, you know. I should put you in the hospital for the way you talk,” he said, “but there is one question I really don’t know [the answer to]: whether I am insane or you are insane.” So he left his job after that encounter with me. Luckily he had some other degree. He had specialised in tropical medicine, [began practising that] and left psychiatry. “What I am doing in the hospital is something terrible,” he said. He went away because he thought that if he had remained with me for long he would go crazy. I never saw him again.

\* \* \*

### **About God and Prayers....**

To have only pleasure without a moment of pain is just not possible. That is why you have invented enlightenment, eternal happiness, God, ultimate pleasure. What is that quotation, “When you talk to God, it is called prayer, and when God talks to you, you are called crazy.” All your interests are materialistic.

Why do you pray to God? What do you want him to give you? Why should he? It is like the man who loses in his business. Somebody else is gaining, like in the stockmarket. On whose side should God be? How many millions of gods have you invented! We have seventy crores of gods. Double the number now. We have to find new animals for their vehicular movements. The old species are extinct now.

How can such a God who is supposed to be all-merciful answer your prayers? That God is a crook. If he wants you to pray to give you whatever you want, something is funny there. He should give to everybody without prayer. The one who prays gets the goodies and the one who doesn’t pray, like me, loses everything. What kind of God is he!

Stopped in Our Tracks

**Stopped in Our Tracks**

**Book Three**

**What the Press and Others Say About U.G.**

**Compiled by K. Chandrasekhar**

## What the Press and Others Say about U.G.

Feb. 2, 1971

*Udayavani*

### **“Breaking away from established thinking... only solution”**

*Reporting on U.G. 's address in the local Rotary Club:* If one could do anything in solving problems or in the direction of a new way of thinking, it is only to break away completely and totally from the established process of thinking which is repetitive in nature.

\* \* \*

May 8, 1972

*Indian Express*

### **Living by the five senses....**

Thought beyond its functional capacity is the enemy of man seems to be the central theme of Mr U.G. Krishnamurti's way of life. But this positively does not mean that he accepts the diametrically opposite view that life should be lived thoughtlessly. A pure and physical way of living by the five senses without reaching out to be something else, or trying to emulate someone is the approach to living. Here again he clarifies “living by the five senses” as not meaning a sensual life.

\* \* \*

February 1980

*Society*

Monthly

### **An enigma....**

Descriptions are always inadequate. Questions are irrelevant, and hence unanswerable. U.G. is nothing and everything, “nothing” according to himself and “everything” according to his admirers. He is no preacher, no Godman, no mystic. Perhaps he's an enigma, shrouded in mystery, with a secret. All that “is” about U.G. is his existence.



Sept. 1980

*Stardust*

Monthly

(Interview with Parveen Babi)

### **True Friend**

U.G. has been a true friend. He helped me out of the greatest crisis in my life in spite of getting the brunt of it all. Everyone has someone or something to fall back on - a *mandir*, a man, a Godman, etc. I had a friend and that was U.G. He looked after me and took me completely under his wing. But the most incredible news was that I had married U.G. I bet the people who wrote it didn't believe it themselves. But I could not follow U.G. forever. I have to live my life myself. And now that I am back I miss him, but I am not lost without him.

\* \* \*

Nov. 29, 1980

*Indian Express*

### **Coming into one's own Natural State....**

He says that the two broad capacities man has developed through the centuries – viz., the ability to control events in the environment and the ability to look ahead and prepare himself for all and every conceivable situation in life – are the very things that are the cause of man's sorrow. He says that if a man is freed from the burden of culture, be it Oriental or Occidental, man comes into his own Natural State.

\* \* \*

Jan. 4, 1981

*Deccan Herald*

**“Thought ...has now become the enemy of man....”**

“Somewhere along the line, probably, thought was necessary, but it has now become the enemy of man. Your thoughts are not your own. There are only thoughts but one creates a counterthought – the thinker – with which one reads every thought. Maybe I can convince you not to waste a lot of time and energy looking for a state that does not exist except in your imagination...” *U.G. as quoted in the Review.*

\* \* \*

Jan. 1981  
*Cine Blitz*  
Monthly

**Interview with Parveen Babi**

**“U.G. has become a part of my life that I cherish dearly...”**

U.G. helped me tremendously during the time of my illness. I regained my balance. I had the strength to embrace life in its entirety. So naturally from being the centrepiece of my existence, U.G. has become a part of my life that I cherish dearly.

\* \* \*

April 1982  
*Stardust*  
Monthly

**“U.G.’s a good friend....”**

Smita said: U.G. is a good friend. He is a lovely person to be with. In spite of being an intellectual, he is very easygoing. He has many theories to reveal. His grasp on reality is amazing. He has a tremendous understanding of life. And it is the mutual exchange of thoughts and ideas that has helped me to build up my character, and [helped] in the spiritual development of my mind. I don’t go to U.G. because I am sick and unhappy, but because I feel happy when I meet him. He is a real pleasure to be with.

\* \* \*

Apr. 15, 1982

*Times of Deccan*

**Biological Revolution ...only way out...**

Arthur Koestler in his *Janus – a Summing* writes: “At some point during the last explosive stages of the biological evolution of homo sapiens something went wrong: there was a flaw, some potential error built into our native equipment – more specifically, into the circuits of our nervous system, which would account for the streak of paranoia running through our history.” He believes that the only way out of this could be through the combination of “benevolent hormones or enzymes” or by “inducing chemical changes in the human body”. Almost everything man has done has resulted in deepening his alienation and insecurity: The only way out of this “neurotic hiatus” could be, as U.G. says, through a biological revolution. But the ‘how’ of it has remained a big question. It appears to be far beyond the scope of contemporary biology. Yet our hope seems to lie in it, rather than in spirituality.

\* \* \*

May 7–21, 1982

*Bombay*

Fortnightly

**Fire-spewing seer....**

Prophet U.G. Krishnamurti – fire-spewing seer – is in town. His estranged son Vasant – a brilliant copywriter credited with the Thums-Up jingle ‘Happy days are here again’, and producer of the first pop music show on Vividh Bharati, ‘Thums-Up Beat’ – is seriously ill in a local hospital.

\* \* \*

July 4, 1982

*Sunday Observer*

**An honest, muddled, minor voice....**

The reviewer is critical of U.G.'s attainments as reported in the book. At the end he adds: "But this much in fairness needs to be added. In an age of manipulative slave masters whose true 'avatar' is Rajneesh, U.G. Krishnamurti constitutes an honest, muddled, minor voice, for whom we must be thankful."

\* \* \*

1982

*National Herald*

**"...A rapist, a murderer, a conman, a thief has as much chance...."**

This book (*Mystique of Enlightenment*) can and will do more to awe and alarm a wide range of people, especially those who are caught up in the treadmill of traditions, trapped in the currently fashionable teachings of J. Krishnamurti, and also those who are bamboozled by the sensational gimmicks of the gurus of today.

What is our chance of getting into the Natural State? Not a chance, says U.G. In fact, a rapist, a murderer, a conman, a thief has as much chance, if not a better chance, than all the religious aspirants put together.

\* \* \*

Dec. 1984

*Stardust*

Monthly

**Parveen Babi....**

Where the doctors failed, U.G. Krishnamurti healed her, or so Parveen Babi and her family and friends had insisted, when she got back to her work after her first mental breakdown. A couple of years later, the very same people pointed an accusing finger at the Godman (he hates to be called that) when the Babi, after her second mental illness, disappeared from his fold, never to return.

U.G. says: "I know where she is. She is very well. But I am not interested in satisfying the curiosity of the people and am much less interested in providing information to film magazines to fill their pages. If she wants to get in touch with any one of you, she'll do so herself."

What the Press and Others Say about U.G.

\* \* \*

Mar. 31–Apr. 6, 1985

*Illustrated Weekly of India*

**Tempestuous association....**

“Though he lacks the fame and cachet of his illustrious namesake, J. Krishnamurti, whose acolyte he once was before he rejected him and chose to walk alone, U.G. has found himself a faithful following.”

—Mahesh Bhatt recalls his tempestuous association with the raging guru.

\* \* \*

Dec. 29, 1985

*Times of India*

**You feel the presence....**

He denies everything. But when you are with him, you feel the presence of a man who has qualities that are ascribed to enlightened men.

\* \* \*

Jan. 26, 1986

*Midday*

(Mahesh Bhatt)

**Demolishes all stereotypes....**

He has no interest in converting people to a specific way of life or new ideas. He demolishes, without compromise, all the stereotypes without fashioning new theories. None before him has attempted to present the state of enlightenment as a neurobiological state of being. What he says is unacceptable and how he says it is revolting. Yet never have I met or seen a man who is so certain about what he is saying.

\* \* \*

Apr. 24, 1986

*Kannada Prabha*

**Selfishness is the only reality....**

“Selfishness is the only reality. The other [reality] is a myth. God is your creation. He is born out of your fear.” —*U.G. as quoted in the Review.*

\* \* \*

May 25, 1986

*Illustrated Weekly of India*

**...Begins where J. Krishnamurti ends....**

Those who are evaluating the contribution of the two Krishnamurtis to mankind maintain that U.G. Krishnamurti begins where J. Krishnamurti ends. Does it mean that one era has faded out and the new one is fading in?

\* \* \*

Sept. 4, 1986

*Patriot*

**Teaches without claiming to teach....**

U.G. helps without helping and teaches without claiming to teach anything. The ease one feels in the company of U.G. is incomparable. In his presence you can be absolutely naked without any defences.

This sense of feeling is not a self-protected one, but an objective energy experience. One can ride on it, swim in it, play with it, or waddle in it without any purpose.

\* \* \*

Jan., 1987

*Society*

Monthly

**Androgynous appeal....**

The Godman business doesn't need looks, but U.G. Krishnamurti has an androgynous appeal.

\* \* \*

Oct. 7–21, 1987,

*Bombay City Magazine*

Fortnightly

**Friend, philosopher and guide....**

Mahesh Bhatt

Mahesh is quoted: "If I could play Hanuman for an hour, I'd put the torch to U.G. Krishnamurti. He is my friend, philosopher and guide. But he is like the lizard on my wall, a part of my life. He is the only person in my life who arouses a heightened emotion of rage, despair, of helplessness. My dependence on him is the dependence of a cripple on his crutch. And he evokes a gut-level emotion. I hate my dependence on him, my urge to be constantly in touch with him. I dread what would become of me if he were to die. And the fear is so great that it would be a relief to be done with him forever."

\* \* \*

Mar. 4, 1988

*Statesman*

**Rejects everything....**

He [U.G.] rejects everything, all the models, values, and theories of the collective conscious heritage that humankind holds so dear, and he does so with the confidence of a man who has seen through it.

[He says of J. Krishnamurti] “We have given him a stamp. We have all licked it, and stamped him out of existence. What you are left with is empty words and empty phrases.”

“Every individual is a saviour, not collectively. If he can find out a solution for his problem, maybe there is some hope for mankind as a whole,” says U.G.

\* \* \*

Mar. 27, 1988

*Times of India*

**“The ‘how’ is absent for me....”**

“Thought is violence because it is trying to protect itself. There is a basic contradiction in what the body demands and the movement of the thought which is interested in self-perpetuation. There is no such thing as you and me. The totality has created you and me. You have no isolated existence. The demand of being an individual is the real cause of suffering. The ‘how’ is absent for me. The ‘hows’ dished out in the market-place are not for me. The one who is living doesn’t ask how to live.”—U.G. *as quoted in the Review.*

“My hunger has not been satisfied by anything offered by teachers alive or unborn. I have stumbled into a situation where the very demand to be free isn’t there.” —U.G. *as quoted in the Review.*

\* \* \*

Mar. 11, 1989

*Sunday Weekly*



***Ardhanari...***

Khushwant Singh

U.G., whose teaching was described as destructive as Siva in his role of a destroyer, became veritably an “Ardhanari”.

\* \* \*

Mar. 19, 1989

*Sunday Observer*

**Robs the average man of the illusions of his life....**

“He who buys and reads this book must be a damn fool,” said U.G. when I asked him about his own impressions about the book, *Mind is a Myth* ... You are not a very nice man, U.G., you know. If you rob the average man of the illusions of his life, you rob him of his happiness at one stroke.

\* \* \*

April 1989

*Society*

Monthly

Review of Rajiv Mehrotra’s TV interview

**“There is nothing to say”....**

...U.G. Krishnamurti in a recent interview. What he was trying to say, we think, was that there is nothing to say really.

\* \* \*

April 9, 1989

*The Week*

**“God is irrelevant....”**

“How can you call me a Godman when I am saying God is irrelevant? I don’t want to debase myself by accepting the label... I have no interest in saving people. Much less the world.”

\* \* \*

May–June, 1989

*Mountain Path*

Quarterly

**A full-fledged knock-out....**

U.G. has no following, gives no public talks, writes no strictures, and offers no solutions to man’s mounting problems. He is a private citizen living in a house by the side of the road, talking informally with those who appear at his door. A book of vibrant talks with a babe bellicose in its innocence. A standpoint that has still to include rejection itself in its ambit of sweeping acceptance. And so, a half-baked ‘*Ribhu Gita*’, but still a full-fledged knock-out.

\* \* \*

Dec. 18, 1989

*San Francisco Chronicle*

Don Lattin

**U.G.’s message is more radical, more controversial, more hopeless....**

U.G. and J.K. have similar messages, only U.G.’s is more radical, more controversial, more hopeless. Categorising U.G. is not easy. He has been called a guru, as well as the “un-guru”. Some see him as a philosopher, while “anti-philosopher” may be more to the point. Words such as cynic, nihilist, and iconoclast could also be used to describe this disarming, charming, alarming little man. U.G. Krishnamurti is the Don Rickles of religion. He makes Madelyn Murray O’Hare, the infamous atheist,

What the Press and Others Say about U.G.

look pious. What we call religion, U.G. said, began somewhere along the evolutionary process when humans – unlike the rest of the animals – began feeling self-conscious and separate from nature. Humanity, he says, long ago started down the path of total annihilation and absolutely nothing can be done to save it. Have a nice day.

\* \* \*

Dec. 24–30, 1989

*Sunday Mail*

**The last of the nihilists....**

U.G. – the last of the nihilists, debunks God, religion, even culture. “There is nothing like enlightenment, so stop searching,” he says, recommending a Natural State where the intelligence of the body takes over *sans* the stranglehold of thought.

\* \* \*

Dec. 29, 1989

*Patriot*

**“I am not running a clinic for mentally disturbed people....”**

U.G. is reported to have said: “She is not mad. You have a Bhagwan living in Pune. He announced to the wide world and is still repeating the nonsense that the President and the Attorney General of the United States poisoned his food. Why do people swallow all that? Why don’t they call him a loony and put him in a loony bin where he should be singing loony tunes and mad melodies? This woman says that Amitabh Bachchan poisoned her food. You call her mad... I am not running a clinic for mentally disturbed people. She should go and see some psychiatrist if she is in trouble.”

\* \* \*

Jan. 7, 1990

*Sunday Observer*

**“Has spiritual energy of demonic proportions....”**

—Khushwant Singh

What irritates U.G. is that despite his denunciation of religion and godmen, a growing number of religiously inclined men and women hang on to every word he says and regard him as a modern messiah. According to him, the cause and effect theory was fallacious and operated within the religious framework. While he agreed with me that death was a full stop to consciousness, he holds that our atomic existence continued in a different shape. That also I could not comprehend. I gave up the battle – He had too many words in his armoury for me to contend with. He has spiritual energy of demonic proportions.

\* \* \*

Jan. 7, 1990

*Indian Post*

**Doesn't want the stigma of a religious teacher....**

“U.G., why are you going public? Why this change?”

“I don't want to be stigmatised as a religious teacher. Life is fire, it does not tolerate anything dead. Your ideas are dead. They falsify life. ...I say, drop the crutches. You may fall, but I know you will rise. I will not give you a helping hand. ...All relationships are based on mutual gratification. The whole thing springs from isolation. We are isolated from the rest of creation, from the rest of life around us.”

\* \* \*

Feb. 5, 1990

What the Press and Others Say about U.G.

*Deccan Herald*

**Money high on agenda....**

“To call me a Godman is an insult not just to me but to God also,” says U.G. Money is high on his agenda and he makes no bones about it. For a Godman, U.G. is incredibly down-to-earth. He walks down to the Basavanagudi post office to buy stamps, hitch-hikes to Gandhi Bazar to buy a mosquito net and loves instant coffee.

\* \* \*

Dec. 29, 1990

*Illustrated Weekly of India*

**Cosmic Naxalite....**

Undeniably, the most revolutionary master of our times, he has rightly been described as a “Cosmic Naxalite”. Extremely informal, he heads no organisation and does not believe in the personality cult or in a following. He wants mankind to be saved from the so-called saviours. He is convinced that the messiahs have created the mess that the people find themselves in.

\* \* \*

Jan. 1991

*Mountain Path*

Quarterly

**Treacherous territory right from the start....**

Treacherous territory right from the start. The man stirs up the cobwebs of dogma-and-doctrinaire rigidity. He forces his audience to question the foundation of fondly cherished beliefs and opinions. *The Sage and the Housewife* - her affection for him often borders on adoration, which is hardly

endearing to an objective reader, yet the anecdotes expose a gentle and sensitive aspect of U.G. which renders him more likable than that obtained in the question-answer format of *Thought is your Enemy*.

This book achieves a reasonable bridging of the sense of distance I felt from the first book.

\* \* \*

Mar. 23, 1991

*Delhi Midday*

**“All talk of *moksha*, *nirvana*, search for truth is pure hoax....”**

“All talk of *moksha*, *nirvana*, search for truth is pure hoax practised by spiritual conmen. Love is fascist, sex is violence, thinking is born out of some neurological defect in the human body,” —U.G. as quoted in the Review.

\* \* \*

Mar. 25, 1991

*National Herald*

**“Communism ... a warty outgrowth of religious thought....”**

Communism, as a political ideology, has turned into another warty outgrowth of the old religious thought. He thinks that Mr Gorbachev has “sold out” to the West. He has done his part and the Soviet people should pass him by. U.G., however, warns that all sorts of religious sects will attempt to fill the vacuum created by the collapse of communism and will take the masses for a ride.

\* \* \*

Mar. 28, 1991

*Indian Express*

**Why is everyone so afraid of anarchy?**

“Why are you talking to me? You earn a living by talking to me after all,” U.G. tells the reporter.

This search for solutions is futile, as any solution that people think they find is no different from earlier solutions. Why is everyone so afraid of anarchy? It is because they do not want change or disorder. What is order anyway?

\* \* \*

Apr. 6, 1991

*Times of India*

**He offers nothing....**

Looking to Uppaluri Gopala Krishnamurti for solace can be like journeying to the Sahara to escape summer. It does not help. He offers nothing. “We are not really interested in getting rid of our problems”, says U.G. “Because by getting rid of our problems, we will also lose ourselves as we know and experience it.”

When your goals and needs are the same, it all becomes very simple. Then you have enough energy to devote to living problems. There is the \$120,000 dollars that Valentine set up as his travel fund and he receives the interest on it every year, \$4,000 for his air tickets and \$1,000 a month as out-of-pocket expenses. He gives it all away. In a couple of years, half the fund will go to a kindly Indian family that looked after Valentine in her last years. “Then I will have to go and sit in some cave”, laughs U.G.

\* \* \*

Apr. 15, 1991

*Afternoon Despatch & Courier*

**“...Seeing him on TV made me sit up....”**

There is something about his eyes and his voice which is extremely attractive. His grey hair falling on an intriguing face only adds to his charm. I could stare at U.G. Krishnamurti forever. I never saw U.G. as a Godman or a Guru ... That is why, when I saw him on DD, having a dialogue with Bhatt, U.G. made me sit up. For the first time I realised why Mahesh was obsessed with him.

\* \* \*

Apr. 21, 1991

*Sunday Midday*

**“Human beings suffer from a neurological disorder....”**

Review of Mahesh’s TV Interview:

“I have come to the conclusion that human beings suffer from a neurological disorder of the brain which can be corrected with chemicals. But Mankind is not ready for it as yet,” says U.G.

\* \* \*

Apr. 21, 1991

*Indian Express*

**Privilege to meet....**

Mr Chandrasekhar (ex-Prime Minister of India) said that it was a privilege to meet a person of the stature of U.G.

\* \* \*

July 21, 1991

*Deccan Herald*



**Talks like J.K....**

U.G. also talks like J.K. The similarities don't end there. Their faces have a striking resemblance. Both of them choose similar idioms. Both share a Theosophical Society background. In the course of time, both rebelled against it. But while J.K. spoke calmly, U.G. gets provoked easily. He is loud and informal. In fact, he even becomes angry when you try to discuss J.K. with him.

On music: "It is the space between two notes and melody. The same is true of languages also."

On noise: "I will never reject the noise out there. It really doesn't matter whether I listen to the traffic noise or some popular music."

On emotions: "I am not involved emotionally, and if there is something demanding my total attention, it doesn't have to be a sunrise or sunset. My listening is just like this tape-recorder recording whatever we are talking without bothering about correcting or rejecting."

\* \* \*

Dec. 21, 1991

*National Herald*

**Delights in making statements that shock....**

He resents what he calls the "the stigma of being a guru" and the fact that only those in need of religious guidance come to him. He also resents being called an iconoclast, saying that he is not interested in destroying anything but delights in making statements that shock religious sensibilities.

\* \* \*

Jan. 3, 1992

*Delhi Midday*

Frank Noronha

**A vast canvas on which you can paint yourself....**

It was Emerson who said that if you wanted your neighbour to believe in God, first show him what God has made you like. By this standard, I am sure I will not inspire any curiosity in anybody to meet this unparalleled person. When I had known U.G. 20 years ago he was a small flame in far-off hills. The way now the U.G. flame is spreading, it seems, it is going to engulf the world soon. Mankind will not be able to ignore this man. He is like a vast canvas on which you can paint yourself. The design, the shape, the structure that appears on the canvas are your own.

\* \* \*

Jan. 5, 1992

*Kannada Prabha*

**Resents being compared to Buddha....**

U.G. resents being compared to Buddha, Ramana, etc. He calls his state a “Natural State”. There have been many in the past who talked in this strain. But he is the only one who decried everything that man has been held sacred and valuable and yet is called a “Jnani”.

\* \* \*

Jan. 7, 1992

*Hindustan Times*

**Who dares to talk like that?**

“My opinion is not of more importance than that of the girl making coffee inside. All that man had thought, felt, and experienced before me is flushed out of my system.”

No big deal, anyone can talk like that. But then, who dares to do it?

\* \* \*

Nov. 29, 1992

*Sunday MIDDAY*

**Offers no hope....**

In an age where hope is sought and given, in a sprinkling of ashes, he offers none. Yet, the faithful flock to him. The remarkable life and times of the anti-guru.

\* \* \*

Dec. 12–18, 1992

*Illustrated Weekly of India*

Mahesh Bhatt

**“The rarest of all transformations....”**

In his biography on one of India’s most enigmatic thinkers, Mahesh Bhatt recounts U.G. Krishnamurti’s experience of the rarest of all transformations – the death and rebirth of an ordinary human being.

(Review of *U.G. Krishnamurti: A Life*)

\* \* \*

Jan. 10, 1993

*Sunday*

**Biography ...a disaster...**

Mahesh Bhatt should stick to making films. This book is nothing short of a complete disaster. Fashioned as a biography, it is neither a definitive account of U.G. Krishnamurti’s life and teachings nor an honest, down-to-earth portrayal of Bhatt’s own relationship with him. Ironically, though Krishnamurti debunks all gurus, he appears to have played precisely that role in the lives of many.

One expected better from the director who displayed considerable emotional depth in films such as *Saransh* and *Arth*.

\* \* \*

Jan. 17, 1993

*Lokmat Times*

**U.G. comes across as human and fallible....**

“Today, when the book [his biography of U.G.] is out, I am happy to find that all has not been in vain. Each time I stare, secretly, at my book sitting on a book shelf amongst a crowd of big names, I feel grateful to myself for not giving up.” —*Mahesh Bhatt*.

Perhaps without meaning to, Mahesh Bhatt has written a kind of everyman’s guide to spiritualism. For those interested in U.G.’s life and works, the book with all its jerks is an invaluable asset. U.G. comes across as human and fallible, not always a likeable person.

\* \* \*

Jan. 24, 1993

*Deccan Chronicle*

**Archetypal anti-guru....**

U.G. Krishnamurti is of course the archetypal anti-guru. He declares loudly that he has no message for anybody. No guru has ever claimed that he has nothing to say, and this makes him different. He seems to practise an extreme form of humanism where God is neither necessary nor sufficient. However, precisely because he is anti-everything that mankind has traditionally believed in, U.G. is fascinating, even exciting. When a guru has nothing to offer we can only admire him and see some of the effects he has on man and nature. We are unable to emulate him because the secret is hidden from us.

\* \* \*

Mar. 14–20, 1993

*Sunday Observer*

**Positive contribution to the discourse of self-discovery....**

To him the human being is a bio-chemical organism. That's all. And the body itself is very intelligent, concerned with only its survival. U.G. takes us to the brink of the abyss, exhausting the potential of Krishnamurti's philosophy and, indeed, destroying it. While this makes him "a festering splinter that never goes away" to quote one of his followers, he does perform the salutary and necessary function of clearing whatever garbage and debris was left behind by Krishnamurti. I think he has made a positive contribution to the continuously evolving discourse of self-discovery and emancipation. All his negativism only functions to clear away every kind of falsehood from our lives.

\* \* \*

Mar. 25, 1993

*Business Standard*

**U.G. convinced his disciples ...they are masters of their own destiny...**

So, that is U.G., the man who doesn't claim to have any special powers. And yet his charisma and the simple lack of pretence drew a huge following. U.G. was a different Guru in that he did not "help" his disciples but convinced them that they are masters of their own destiny.

\* \* \*

Mar. 27, 1993

*Hindustan Times*

**"A totally negative human being...."**

As it is, one is baffled by this picture of a totally negative human being – one who specialises in despair and destruction, and yet seems to have the affection and respect of so many. A more professionally competent biographer might yet write a book on U.G., which enlarges our comprehension.

\* \* \*

Sept. 12, 1993

*Deccan Herald*

**Biography succeeds in mystifying U.G. further....**

Biographies ought to be, by definition, rigorous in their scholarship, committed to authentic details and objective in the assessment of their subject. Judged from these standards, Mahesh Bhatt's biography of U.G. Krishnamurti is, to put it mildly, disappointing. A strange aura has been growing around U.G. Mahesh Bhatt doesn't reject any of this, nor does he view it with any suspicion. If anything, he succeeds in mystifying U.G. further.

\* \* \*

May 29, 1994

*Sunday MIDDAY*

**“Answer not found through ideas....”**

“What kind of human being do you want on this globe? The only answer to this human problem, if there is any answer, is not to be found through new ideas, new concepts or new ideologies, but through bringing about a change in the chemistry of the human body. You may think as a pacifist today, but tomorrow if everything you have were to be taken away from you, I would not be surprised if you were to kill me, in spite of the fact that you claim to be my best friend.”

—U.G. as quoted in *the Review*.

\* \* \*

July 3, 1994

*Kathmandu Post*

**Spiritual terrorist....**

In my lexicon, this man is a spiritual terrorist who wants to blow up all the rotten images of Gods created by the frenzy of fertile minds. For me, there is nothing wrong in his terrorism. I too want to believe in not-believing. U.G.'s maverick personality gives me solace and shows a way in this human jungle. But, ultimately, U.G. is not what we think or write about him.

\* \* \*

July 17, 1994

*Sunday MIDDAY*

**“Science is a menace....”**

“Science is as much a menace to mankind as any other systems of thought. We have no doubt reaped immense benefit from the discoveries of science, which has resulted in hi-tech and technology. But can you get away from this fact that its benefits have not percolated down to the common man? Science is as much an aberrant as religion is. Unfortunately it has become a handmaiden of the state and tool in the hands of the leaders of mankind.”

—U.G. as quoted in *the Review*

\* \* \*

Oct. 30, 1994

*Sunday MIDDAY*

**“Health is an obsession....”**

“When you have lost faith in everything, health becomes an obsession. Nutritional wisdom cannot stop the ageing process. One day through genetic engineering the process of ageing can be delayed, but it cannot be stopped. Your willingness to accept man as just a biological being like any other species on this planet is responsible for your misery. Man is nothing but a fortuitous concourse of atoms. Death occurs only when there is a need for the reshuffling of atoms. The sum total of energy remains the same. The only everlasting love, the only undying love affair it seems to me, is with myself. This unabashed, unheldback affection for oneself and acceptance of death are mutually exclusive.”

—U.G. as quoted in the Review

\* \* \*

June 1995

*Mountain Path*

Quarterly

**Useless guy....**

Larry Morris has given us a delightful collection of so-called poems (epiphanies would be a better description) about his relationship with that scourge of fossilised traditions of God-fearing seekers, viz. U.G. himself. Iconoclast extraordinaire and unabashed scoundrel, in short, a “useless guy”.

The End

**BOOKS ON AND ABOUT U.G. KRISHNAMURTI**

**Books in English:**

**1. THE MYSTIQUE OF ENLIGHTENMENT:** The Unrational Ideas of a Man Called U.G. *Edited by:* Rodney Arms. *Published by:* Akshaya Publications, Bangalore, INDIA. 1992.



2. **MIND IS A MYTH:** Disquieting Conversations with the Man Called U.G. *Edited by* Terry Newland. *Published by:* **Dinesh Publications**, Post Betim (Volant) GOA, 403 101, INDIA, 1988.
3. **THOUGHT IS YOUR ENEMY:** Mind-Shattering Conversations with the Man Called U.G. *Edited by:* Anthony Paul Frank Noronha and J.S.R.L. Narayana Moorthy. *Published by:* **Sowmya Publications**, Bangalore, INDIA. 1991.
4. **THE SAGE AND THE HOUSEWIFE** (by **Shanta Kelker**) *Published by:* **Sowmya Publications**, Bangalore, INDIA. 1990.
5. **NO WAY OUT:** Further Dialogues with U.G. *Edited with Introduction by:* J.S.R.L. Narayana Moorthy and Anthony Paul Frank Noronha. *Published by:* **Akshaya Publications**, Bangalore, INDIA. 1992. **Price: \$10 (approx.)**
6. **U.G. KRISHNAMURTI – A LIFE** (Biography of U.G. by Indian film maker **Mahesh Bhatt**). *Published by:* **Viking - Penguin**, India. 1992.
7. **THE NATURAL MAN:** Poems on U.G. (One hundred *verse libre*) by **Larry Morris**. *Edited with Introduction by:* J.S.R.L. Narayana Moorthy. *Published by:* **Hillside Community Church**, Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA. 1993.
8. **THE COURAGE TO STAND ALONE:** Conversations with U.G. Krishnamurti. *Transcribed and Edited by* **Ellen J. Chrystal** from the original audiotapes produced by Henk Schonewille. *Published by* **Plover Press**, New York, 1997.

**U.G. Krishnamurti – A Life** can be ordered from the Viking-Penguin in India or other Branches of Viking-Penguin. Prices should include shipping and handling.  
**The Courage to Stand Alone** is distributed by Autonomedia, 55 South 11th ST., Brooklyn, NY, 11211-0568,  
 Phone-Fax: (718) 963-2603.

Most of the books listed above can be ordered directly from **Akshaya Publications, 201, Gandhi Bazar, Bangalore, 560 004 India** (Phone: 610389. Fax: 91-80-661-0666 IC-30). *The Natural Man* can be ordered from **Hillside Community Church, 435 Jefferson, S.E., Albuquerque, New Mexico 87108** (Phone: (505) 254-2606).

**Works on U.G. and Translations of U.G.'s Books in Indian Languages:**

- 1. Kannada translation** of U.G.'s conversations, titled, **Illi Vadavilla-Iruvudella Veda** was done by B.A. Ranganath, M.A., published by **Kripanjali Kalavidaru**, Bangalore, India. 1978.
- 2. The Telugu Translation** of Mahesh Bhatt's **Biography of U.G.** by K. Chandrasekhar titled **U.G. Krishnamurti - Oka Jeevita Katha** has been published in 1994.
- 3. U.G. Alla, Guruji**, a Kannada work written by Y.N. Krishnamurti, Editor of *Kannada Prabha*, published by **Akshaya Publications**, Bangalore, India. 1995.
- 4. The Hindi Translation** of the above biography entitled **NA KHATM HONEWALI KAHANI** by Jagadamba Prasad Dikshit has been published by **Vani Prakashan**, New Delhi, India in 1996.
- 5. AB MAI KAUN HUN?** [Hindi translation of *A Taste of Death* by Mahesh Bhatt] has been published by **Vani Prakashan**, New Delhi. 1997.
- 6. AVICHAR: U.G. Krishnamurti: Jivani Ra Vartaharu** [NO THOUGHT: U.G. Krishnamurti, Life and Teaching]: Nepalese work edited by K.C. Ramesh. Published by **Nirvan Prakashan**, Kathmandu, Nepal. 1995.

74,928 words (ORIGINAL)

73,925 WORDS

(EDITED)

A list of translations of U.G.'s works in European languages such as Dutch, French, German, Italian, Polish, Spanish and Yugoslavian can be found on U.G.'s Web Page located on the Internet at: