

An Extract from

**“Maitreya  
a spiritual adventure”**

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*I dedicate this book to the numerous teachers and their students who have maintained the precious knowledge about inner light alive throughout the passed millenniums. Without them jyotish—astrology of ancient Vedic rishies—would today be merely a legend.*

## A short note before reading

At this moment hundreds, maybe even thousands of people throughout the world, in India and outside of it, are again discovering the unusual depth of the knowledge called *jyotish*. The astrology, whose roots are hidden in the mist of lost times, is far more than mere entertainment or even a prediction skill. *Jyotish* can aid every individual—but also mankind in general—to better understand his or her own spiritual goal and purpose. Our contemporaries, who have felt the urge to devote a part of their lives (and often their whole life) to studying *jyotish*, are successors of the great sage Parashara and surely possess the soul of his student Maitreya.

Studying *jyotish* requires a lot of time. However, the reward for the invested effort is so valuable that it escapes the possibility of words. The undertaking of writing and publishing of this book was begun with confidence in the supreme intelligence that governs the life of every human being, as well as the whole universe. If after this story about Maitreya at least a few readers are stimulated to start on the path of discovering the secrets of *jyotish*—inner light hidden in the depths of a human soul, I will consider my intentions fulfilled.

This book is written like a story, but since it is about *jyotish*, some technical terms are used. They are all explained in the text, so the reader can easily understand them.

Wishing you great light and love, in hope that I have succeeded at least partially in conveying experiences and ideas that surpass lingual possibilities, I leave you over to the story about Maitreya.

# Prologue

On the bank of the great slow river, about two hundred meters from the remains of the funeral fire, stood a great sage and teacher, Parashara. His head was covered with an orange cloth, the same colour as his *dhoti*. Although he was tall for a person of his time, at first glance he looked like a woman in her later life who had kept the outline of her previously perfect figure. Watching him from a distance, I felt a warmth in my chest. Suddenly, my veneration for him gave way to something much more poignant. He looked fragile, almost as if he could disappear at any moment. This thought evoked an invisible smile—for am I not the one who doesn't belong in this world? *I* am the one who looks fragile, and if my perceptions are correct, I am the one who will soon truly disappear, even from him.

Gently moving the ends of his scarf, Parashara turned to face me. His dark eyes flashed. At that instant, the impression of his fragility disappeared; I was "standing" in front of a being of incredible spiritual power. If you were to see him surrounded by his contemporaries (disregarding the circumstances in which we met and the fact that you would be looking at a man from a completely different culture), perhaps you wouldn't even notice him. He was only distinguished by his height—around 190 cm (giant-like compared to the average 160 cm of his time). However, once he transfixed you with his gaze, any doubt of his uniqueness would be gone. Like me, you would be drawn into those brilliant depths, which in one infinitesimal instant revealed more than a thousand spoken words.

"Thank you for returning," he said.

So simple. I returned, and he is thanking me. But from where did I return? And how did I return? I would be much more at peace if I knew the answers to these questions. *He* most certainly knew them, or at least I was convinced that he did. Just as the one who brought me to him knew them. Concerning this whole situation, I was confused not only by the circumstances but also by the most basic question: that of my identity. Sometimes he addressed me as if I was one of his people, and sometimes as if I was from some completely different time (which, at least to my perception, was the truth). He had explained—as much as it was possible—his reasons

for doing so. Nevertheless, questions remained to which I felt I might never receive answers.

In fact, I felt that we had reached the end of our common adventure. That thought initiated another one: "This time is the real end." Why "this time"? Were there "other times"? What is it that I have forgotten—that separates me from fully understanding what is going on?

It would be useless for us to discuss it again. Time was precious, and we both knew that we didn't have much of it left. In only a few minutes, my last "visit" would be over. Unlike the previous times, this time I had come alone. I hadn't come to learn; I had come to say goodbye.

The river lay before us, to the south. The land was rich and lush; its greenness radiated fertility. I remembered that, when seeing it for the first time, I had had the sensation of protection, of security, of home. Even now, after many such "visits," I still had the same sensation: I was at the Source. Everything began in this place, and for that reason, I knew that I would always be coming back to it.

In my time this country would be considered primitive. But one could feel the heart of ancient times beating in this place. Although it was in its decline, the ancient wisdom was still alive here. I knew now that things would soon change, but at this time the people who lived here were happy. They still appreciated their inheritance from the Golden Age, and they had woven their knowledge of it into song, tradition, and wisdom, all of which flowed in this river along with its waters.

"*Tut Savitur vareniam...*" The song made its way to us, carried by the wind. Someone, hidden by the trees, was singing the morning *Gayatri mantra*. Naturally, wherever Earth—the mother—is, the divine Sun—the father, creator and patron—must also be. Is it not polite to greet him every morning when he is rising on the horizon?

Hearing the singing, Parashara smiled. "Good sign. We have the Sun's blessing." He gazed at me (or actually, through me) for a little longer. (This wasn't at all surprising, because he was the only one who could even see me.) Then he turned back in the direction of the river. Parashara was watching the remains of the funeral ceremony.

Yesterday his closest student, Maitreya, had last been seen on earth. I was present at many of their meetings, and I know that the teacher especially respected him. Maitreya was a solitary, quiet, and slightly distant man. Actually, I didn't understand why Parashara had dedicated so much attention to him. It was obvious, however, that he was preparing a special place for him. It was commonly believed that Maitreya would be Parashara's successor, even though Parashara—and especially Maitreya— had never mentioned it. When Maitreya had passed away a few days ago as a result of snakebite, it had come as a shock to everyone. Everyone except, it seemed, Parashara. Now, however, watching the river into which Maitreya's ashes had been scattered, Parashara looked sad.

"...*bhargo devasya dhimahi...*," soared the voice again in honour of the Sun. "We meditate about the divine Creator, become one with him, and discover him in our own being." These people knew how to awaken the natural laws in their consciousness. Some lived them more, some less, but as a community, they didn't wander far from the path that was written down for them. It was the path of their destiny, which I knew would fade away with time. But in my eyes, it was precious precisely for that reason. The world I was coming from had forgotten this destiny and had started following its own concept of life. The truth is that following this concept has brought us to the edge of destruction—one that I might yet even witness with my own eyes.

"...*dhiyo yo nah prachodayat,*" sang the voice. "Let the divine Sun inspire and lead our intelligence." Yes, let it lead us, so that we don't make a terrible mistake and destroy His work. Perhaps that's what I need to pass on to my people? In any case, that is what I want to let them know—however hidden the purpose of my "visits" to this country in this time remains, even from me.

Maitreya, like his teacher Parashara, was also a well-known teacher. When Maitreya was dying, they said that it was quick and easy. And his student Vidura, once a mighty king, happened to be with him at the moment of his death. Maitreya told Vidura about a vision of a time that would come. And he mentioned a name—Salivahana—who in times to come will bring back the glory of his teacher and the holy knowledge of jyotish. Vidura also said that Maitreya spoke about his mission, and that he mentioned Salivahana as if he was talking about himself. At the end, just before he was going to pass away, Vidura said that Maitreya was quiet for a

moment. And then he said that he could see further than that, but that he could not understand what he saw, and that his learning was not yet finished.

The circumstances of Maitreya's death were not fully explained. The way he died was not typical for death from a snakebite. Also, Maitreya collapsed under a tree, in a clearing by the river. When Vidura found him, completely by chance, it was already too late. Maitreya at the end also said the word *Shiva*. That is why Vidura concluded that it had been a snake, but there were no traces of a snakebite. For these people, to die because of a snake meant that the soul, in the life to come, would incarnate with Shiva's strength, and that it would rule with *kundalini* energy. Thus Maitreya, in the eyes of the majority, became a great soul. A soul with a mission.

But Maitreya's death left behind other consequences. Parashara, son of Saunaka, Narada's student, was the basis for and incorporation of the teachings of *gyotish*, the knowledge and skill by which human destiny becomes known and as transparent as a glass curtain. Parashara, by his very nature, *had to* know in advance of Maitreya's death. However, he had never mentioned it. What's more, the time and energy he had spent on Maitreya clearly indicated that he was counting on him and on the *time*, as it was understood, that was forthcoming for Maitreya. According to that logic, Maitreya's too-early departure could have undermined the trust in Parashara's knowledge. All kinds of rumors proliferated. But most people were wise enough to understand that perhaps Parashara could see further than they could—perhaps even over the wall of death.

I *did* know that he could see over many walls. For instance, the wall that separates him and me is so unfathomable that even I don't know how to explain it. I wonder whether even the curtain of death could be thicker than the one through which the two of us were seeing each other. If he could see through that, and even enable me to see through it—to share his world with him—then I didn't doubt that he could know and understand Maitreya's mission. And I comprehended that it was precisely for this reason that Parashara worked so much with him. In addition, I suspected that Maitreya's life and mine were intertwined in more ways than I was capable of accepting at this moment. If this was so, Parashara was aware of it. I was sure of that.

"I wanted to finish what we had started," he said, not turning

toward me anymore. "Now go back. Go back to the beginning.  
*Namaste!*"

And I did return to the "beginning," all the way back to the present moment. But at the time, standing next to Parashara, I wished I could tell him something or show him my gratitude somehow. Embrace him? That wouldn't even be possible, because I was just a spark of consciousness to which he could talk, and who could (by God knows what miracle) see the images and scenery of his world. If, in the end, we did embrace, it was not a physical embrace.

I left, but unlike my earlier departures, this one did not include submerging in the river. I simply felt my image blurring. In the region that (if I could ascribe it to my body) would be above my head, I felt warmth. It suddenly descended to (what would be) the base of my spinal cord and further down to my feet. I felt a mild dizziness, but there was no sense of passing through light, as there was during my earlier departures. Instead, I immediately, and rather abruptly, opened my eyes. My physical eyes, in my real time. Before me were the familiar objects in my own room: the chair, the desk, the bookshelves, and the few paintings on the wall. I had come back like this many times, but this time was different. The doors had closed behind me, and I knew that they wouldn't open again. Except, perhaps, when I begin travelling that path along which Maitreya started many centuries ago...



# Part I

## THE LIGHT WITHIN

# 1

It all began with Ganesh.

When, sometime around the beginning of 1990, I started researching jyotish, Ganesh wasn't in the picture. Actually, he wasn't even mentioned. And that is, according to what I now know, a rather strange beginning. It is strange because Ganesh's very origin, his "birth," is associated with introducing order into the created world. Laws that direct the appearance and disappearance of beings and things are the reflection of the fundamental order of the universe in which we live. Despite the fact that we are sometimes blind to that order, and that we tend to give way to chaos rather than order, the formulas of our existence are engraved into the weaving of the universe, together with the formulas of existence of rivers, mountains, seas, planets, and stars—in other words, of everything.

It is interesting that, for completely unknown motives, a friend I knew at the time gave me a framed drawing of Ganesh. I think it was precisely in the year 1990. Later, that drawing stood on a shelf, then on the wall. At times I would take it down and put it away, only to take it out again a few months later and put it back on a table. So Ganesh, as if by chance, accompanied me in my research of jyotish (through mid-1995). At that time, chances ceased to be chances; Ganesh's presence in my life no longer depended only on my good will. Rather, it greatly, or actually exclusively, depended on him. However, it might be a good idea to slow down a bit before I begin that extraordinary and sensitive story.

Do you know what Ganesh looks like? When one sees his picture or statue for the first time, to many he looks very strange. Ganesh is a being who is portrayed with a human (often plump) body with four arms and an elephant's head. Presented in this way, he looks like a typical Hindu deity. However, the stories of his creation say that he doesn't belong to the deity class (at best, he is a demi-god). However, he embodies powers that none of the "gods" of the Indian pantheon possess.

Ganesh is the "son" of Shiva and his wife Parvati. They conceived him while they were thinking about how to put the universe in order

so that it would be clearly understood which deed brings about which consequences. I first read a story about this conception in a book describing Indian mythology, but it was later confirmed for me (with a few slight corrections) from almost the very source. (Although I was going to explain all of this later on, it is obvious that it is going to have to be "sooner." Nevertheless, I will restrain myself for a little longer, because despite everything, it is hard for me to talk about events that are so strange and unusual. Doing so requires a thorough change in the way of thinking to which we are generally accustomed.)

So Shiva and Parvati, in that ancient age at the very beginning of time, took on the thankless job of putting the universe in order. They accomplished an enormous job, but it seems they didn't precisely determine the law of cause and effect. This omission had the consequence that if you did something, anything could happen. For example if you dropped a rock from your hand, sometimes it would fall (as it should under the law of gravity), and at another time it would stay in the air as if you were still holding it. There was also the possibility that it would fly up in the air (and any number of other unexpected possibilities). In this interesting situation, the problem did not originate on the physical, but rather on the spiritual, level. Specifically, the legend says that the gods rebelled because it wasn't understood which deeds would lead human souls to better worlds (heaven), and which to worse ones (hell). It seems this law was misused, because one of the gods used this situation and arranged things so that almost every person who thought of him with respect at least once was sent to heaven. Of course, this created a great unbalance, because people soon realised the trick, and the heavenly worlds became vastly overpopulated.

When I first heard this story, I laughed heartily for almost ten minutes. And the more I thought about it, the funnier it seemed. Imagine angry gods rebelling because people are too well off! But later on, Ganesh explained (just give me a little more patience, and I will get to that) that it was not a matter of good or evil, but rather a matter of order and balance. (After all, it does make sense that those who are undeserving don't belong in heaven.)

Faced with the great problem of creating order in the universe, Shiva and Parvati retired into a long meditation that they concluded with a ceremonial coupling. Out of their love, Ganesh was born—and they spread the news that their son was the answer to the problem

of chaos and that he would know how to solve it. It happened that Ganesh was an exceptionally beautiful baby, and Parvati a very proud mother. She wanted all the gods and “mighty people” to come to Ganesh’s *darshan* (meaning blessing by encounter or sight). In other words, she wanted everyone to come and see him.

At that darshan a lot of things occurred. The most important thing was that Ganesh lost his exceptionally beautiful head, and it was replaced with an elephant’s. It happened that one of the guests at the darshan was Shani, an old and lame ascetic and a great enemy of worldly pleasures and amusement. Shani was capable of a powerful curse: whoever he looked at directly would turn into ashes. Of course the darshan was repugnant to Shani, but Parvati insisted, and she persuaded the unwilling ascetic to look at the baby. Obviously, she believed that nothing bad could happen to *her* Ganesh. Unfortunately, she was wrong. As soon as Shani looked at him, Ganesh started turning into ashes. Although Shani immediately turned away his look, it was too late: the head was already gone. A commotion erupted, and Parvati desperately cried for help. Knowing that they had to do something, the gods combined their strength, and by taking the head of Indira’s elephant, Puroshotama, they revived Ganesh. To somehow make up for the baby’s loss, and knowing about his special task, the gods agreed to pass on parts of their powers to Ganesh. So that is how Ganesh lost his head, got a new one, and with it special powers from the gods, which he later used (and is still using) for the protection of order in the created world.

I apologise if this whole story sounds a bit ridiculous. Sometimes, when I would tell it to my friends, they would say that it was a nice story but that they were not going to take me seriously because I was obviously telling a joke. Actually, I told it very seriously, but I couldn’t avoid Ganesh’s influence: one of his most emblematic characteristics is an uproarious sense of humour and playfulness that never ceases. He has infected me with it. For instance, I have to really restrain myself not to talk about Shiva and Parvati as “the chairman and chairwoman of the domestic council” (as he once—and I am sure it was not out of disrespect—called his parents)! If you observe Ganesh’s picture, you will notice a number of other significant details. For example, the cobra wrapped around his waist, which of course symbolizes kundalini energy—the energy of his father, Shiva. That jester told me that it represents powerful protection. And when I asked what it protects him from, he answered that it protects him from his short skirt— his *dhoti*—falling off!

Can you imagine how it must have felt to be standing in front of a legendary divine being who was saying a thing like that?

In one hand, Ganesh holds a shell; in another, the staff of knowledge; and an attentive observer would notice that one of his tusks is broken. All of these characteristics have meaning, because his appearance, as well as his behavior, are symbols of spiritual energies of great strength. He is benevolent, but also dangerous. He is the entity who instituted the law of *karma* (cause and effect) into the world; the one who connected the formula of existence of all living and nonliving things in the universe; the one who proclaimed light (*jyoti*) to people and established the laws of spiritual astrology; the one who can put an unavoidable obstacle before you if you don't obey the eternal laws that everyone must obey. But he is also the one who clears the path before you and removes the obstacles if you obey those laws.

Ganesh is the patron of *jyotish*, *yagyas*, spiritual, and mundane activities. On the other hand, he is by no means some sublime and unreachable deity, but rather a playful, rhapsodic being. He will join a child's game without hesitation, but can just as easily solve the greatest and most inconceivable of problems. Ganesh is also a poet and a writer, a great teacher, and a spiritual guide.



*The drawing of Ganesh that my friend gave me  
which stands framed on my desk.*

When, already armed with a fair amount of technical knowledge

about jyotish, I realised Ganesh's significance, his drawing found its permanent place on the shelf beside my bed. I began my meditations watching him. Moreover, when I finished a meditation and opened my eyes, my gaze automatically fell on Ganesh. The identical thing occurred both before sleep and after waking up. At first it was spontaneous, but after a few months, it began to be a routine. What's more, I felt comfortable with it. Meditations became deeper, and my jyotish practice became more engrossing. It began to fulfill and gratify me in a different way, which I quite spontaneously connected with my constant thinking about Ganesh and observation of his image.

I'm not sure exactly when the event that changed my life occurred. I didn't write it down, because it happened gradually—over a few months' time. At first I thought it was just a side-effect of meditation: occurrence of pictures and thoughts of no major significance. But, as it turned out, it was something completely different.

How can I explain what happened? It is an thankless task, because obviously it exposes me to criticism—even ridicule. But over the years I have learned that, whatever you do, things will always be this way—especially if you try to initiate something new. This will be true whether it has to do with politics, economics, entertainment, or spirituality. Moreover, I tend to believe that when an idea has the unreserved support of the masses, there is a strong probability that it should be questioned. Perhaps I'm wrong about this. However, I didn't let criticism scare me off more than twenty years ago, when I took my first step on the path of spirituality. Therefore, I suppose I can endure it now as well.

So, the changes began internally but gradually spread to my surroundings, and they reached their peak the day a rat entered my room. I couldn't believe my eyes, but there it was: not too big, rather skinny, but—most definitely—a rat.

At that time I lived outside of town. Thus, there probably were rats in the fields and cellars, but not too many. I never saw them except when the neighbor's cat caught one. The house was clean and closed. Therefore, the probability of an animal's entrance was very slight. At any rate, the presence of a rat in my room was a great surprise. Its behaviour was even stranger. It appeared out of nowhere. (At the time, I thought it had somehow broken through the

attic door, come down the ladder, and found its way to my room.) It ran, rather slowly, to the center of the room and stopped there, exactly opposite me. (I was sitting on the bed.) It raised its head and watched me, and I watched it.

This incident alone would have been startling enough for me to remember, and later recount to my friends and family. After all, something like this doesn't happen every day. I remember thinking, *Dear Lord, how am I going to get this animal out of the house?!* But then my rat did something I truly will never forget. And as a consequence, I had an adventure that determined the subsequent course of my life.

## 2

So: there was a rat in my room. I was watching it, and it was watching me; a very uncommon situation. But before I go on with this story, I would like to describe what had been going on for the past few months (which was, in retrospect, definitely a preparation for his arrival.

At first it was like a visual afterimage, a phenomenon that occurs when you look at an object for a long time—especially if it is shiny. If you close your eyes afterwards, at first blackness will appear, then a picture—a mirror image and in negative—of the object you were observing. My meditations began with just such an afterimage of Ganesh's picture.

At first I didn't pay any attention to it, even though I didn't look at the picture long enough to justify the appearance of the "afterimage." Sometimes this mental picture would disappear after two or three seconds; at other times it would linger for several minutes. Because I am an experienced meditator, I related to it the same way as to all other meditative experiences: passively, and with the attitude of an impartial observer. I remember first considering it more seriously when the "reprint" occurred not only at the beginning, but also at the end, of a meditation (and therefore could not be connected with observing the picture). By that time, the manifestation of the mental picture had already become so common that I didn't come to any special conclusions about it.

After a few months, I got so used to this mental image of Ganesh that it was completely normal for me to see it whenever I closed my eyes, whether or not I was meditating. I started gently joking with myself, greeting him with, "Namaste, Ganesh-ji!" (which would mean something like, "I greet you, honored Ganesh!"). How else would I address a being whose origin has been hidden for thousands of years and obscured by the secrets of the ancient Vedic language, Sanskrit?

This situation continued for several weeks, and as I greeted him so nicely, I don't know why I was so surprised when the greeting was returned! Although it is true that Ganesh didn't actually say anything, he unmistakably made himself known, and then



miraculously began appearing more and more often.

The first time it happened was during one of my jyotish consultations. These are special occasions for me. My clients are not always as aware as I am of the depth of their meaning. To come to such a consultation requires a great leap in consciousness. You come to a person who knows practically nothing about you (at least in the usual sense of the word) and yet you are offering him the opportunity to become a part of your destiny. In a way, coming for a jyotish consultation is like an initiation. It is highly probable that your life will change afterwards. In any case, you will look at it from a different perspective. That change is what we call spiritual development. One hour of jyotish consulting often proves to be more effective than long-term periods of working on oneself. But it is also true that sometimes coming to a consultation is the result of such work. Even in the mind of a skeptic who comes just to "see" what it is all about, or even to "test" the astrologer, there is a tiny part that desperately wants to give the jyotishi a chance. This part wants all of it to prove itself right, because in that case—hurrah!—one has found the wisdom of life on which one can rely. One has found something that does not alter, something that can withstand the criticism of the other part of that same mind, which will continue to doubt.

Now think about the situation in which this puts a jyotishi (the astrologer who performs the consultation). He is also a man of flesh and blood who carries his own destiny on his shoulders—one which is not necessarily any less difficult than the one belonging to the person coming to him. And yet this situation transforms him. All of a sudden, unimagined spiritual depths are opening up, ones which that same jyotishi skillfully hides in his everyday life. Suddenly, chains and padlocks fall off all the doors, and all secrets can be uncovered. The jyotishi has had enough courage to put himself in this position. At the same time, he is praying silently to the Almighty for enough knowledge, skill, and wisdom to bear this burden. Although he is in everlasting doubt that perhaps he is not good enough, that perhaps he has not sufficiently studied all the essential material, or that his intellect or intuition may fail at key moments, the jyotishi instantaneously feels the beneficial influence of knowledge cleansing him from the inside. And as a rule, when the key moments arrive, so does the right information. Mistakes are also possible (and the jyotishi will think about these for a long, long time afterwards), but everyone who experiences a jyotish consultation once knows that it is a spiritual experience of rare quality. Powerful; extremely powerful.

Thank God that before Ganesh's arrival I had had the chance to enjoy hundreds of such inner transformations. Nevertheless, until that moment it had occurred solely on the inside. It belonged only to me, and I was actually glad that I really couldn't explain it or share it with anyone. At the instant he arrived, however, all of this changed.

The consultation was flowing more or less as usual. At first, we were a little reserved. Later, when we established contact and set aside the blockages, the conversation became spontaneous and warm. At one juncture, Mrs. Vesna asked me about the future of her health problem. I paused a little, observing the relevant factors concerning health. Suddenly, somewhere to my left, light appeared. I turned my head toward the window, expecting to find the source of the light. But, as I turned my head, the light moved as well—farther to the left. I thought that I had just imagined it, so I turned my head back so that it was in line with my body, directing my look to the computer screen. The light then appeared fully to my right. Again I searched for its source by turning my head, but again the same thing happened: the light moved farther to the right and then disappeared. By now I was really confused. I gave Mrs. Vesna a questioning look, wondering what had happened. But she suddenly opened her eyes wide and covered her mouth with her hand. Her eyes grew moist and she stuttered: "Oh, no! I knew it, I knew it."

I watched her with alarm for a few moments, and then I realised what had happened. The poor woman thought that my head-turning, followed by confusion, signified a resolute negation of any positive solution for resolving her health problems. Light? She didn't even see it. She only saw me turning my head, and she thought that this meant that she would end up in the hospital—or worse.

"No, don't worry," I said, trying to calm her down. "You misunderstood. Did you see..."

What? Did she see what? It wasn't light, I realised that very minute. It was *him*. Now I could see him more clearly. He wasn't in front of me, but rather all the way towards the corner of my eye. Did you ever notice, after looking at the sky, or even at the sun, that light images remain before your eyes? After a while they disappear, but they always disappear from the center to the corners of your eyes. In the end, they remain only way at the edge, so they don't bother you any more. Actually, you no longer even see them, unless you direct your eyes parallel to one another, as if you were looking

into the distance. Only then can you notice them, and if you try to catch them by moving your eyes, they disappear. It was there that Ganesh took his stand. I could see him clearly. He was similar to the image on my drawing, except that he didn't have such wide hips and he looked more boyish. Oh yes, he also didn't have four arms; just two. He waved one of them at me (the right one, I think), smiled, and remained standing there, with the sole of his left foot slightly raised. The cobra around his waist moved its head, and I thought I heard a hiss.

As you can imagine, it took a lot of self-control for me to finish the consultation. I explained to Mrs. Vesna that I had imagined something (Ganesh, in the corner of my left eye, laughed out "loud"). I told her that her health problems would continue, but that her condition was not critical—especially if she followed the advice I had given her. The lady had a few more questions, which took ten long (and, under the circumstances, seemingly endless) minutes, and then she left satisfied.

Throughout this time, as I answered her questions, I was aware of Ganesh' presence. He did nothing; he just stood there. He seemed to be listening. I expected that something special would happen after she left, but it wasn't like that. That day I didn't have any more appointments, so I just sat staring "through" the wall of the room. That was the only way I could see him clearly because my eyes were parallel and out of focus. This situation lasted for about 15 minutes. Then someone called me, or at least the telephone rang. I no longer remember exactly. I only know that, when I finished, he was gone from the corner of my left eye.

That is how Ganesh appeared in my life and became a part of it. Afterwards, he came to every consultation. His appearance was preceded by light that only I could see, and then I would spot him in either my left or right eye. Usually, he didn't do anything. Sometimes he would wave at the beginning, and sometimes he would shift his weight from one leg to the other. I started scheduling and performing consultations with special eagerness. I wanted to see him, especially because, after that first appearance, the afterimage in my meditations disappeared. It was as though he had found the place and situation in which he felt best. And I perceived that he was visiting me at my consultations as a sort of blessing. In the intervals between consultations, when he would stay with me, I sometimes tried communicating with him. I asked a question out

loud but mentally directed it to him. But it didn't work; he didn't respond. The first time I tried, I thought I saw him shake his head slightly in negation. But even if it actually happened, it was such a slight movement that I didn't interpret it as an instruction not to do it again. I did hear the hissing of his cobra on other occasions, but it wasn't connected to my actions or words. It looked as if Ganesh was preparing me for something. I remembered *The Little Prince* and the taming of the fox, so I resigned myself to the situation.

This phase lasted for about a month. In the meantime, I gave up on both attempting a conversation and keeping an eye on his activities (if there were any). I was aware that he would make the first move. Just as he had come, he would leave. Or we would somehow come to an understanding between us.

Faithful to his nature, Ganesh chose a perfectly inappropriate way for us to come to that understanding: a rat! My God, where on earth did he get such an idea?! Later, I realized that it could have been even worse—a lot worse. So I became grateful that he sent "only" that rat.

So: I am sitting in my room; in comes a rat; it stops in front of me; it is watching me and I am watching it. In addition to wondering how I am going to get it out of the house, I am a little frightened. I am not exactly fond of mice and rats (actually, you could say the opposite). In fact, in some movies they are interpreted as violent animals. So some rather unpleasant pictures came into my mind. This discomfort was abruptly interrupted by one of the greatest surprises of my life. The rat began to speak!

Clearly, loudly, and distinctly, he said, "Now just close your eyes, think of me, and let me take you on a journey."

*Hold it, hold it!* I screamed in my thoughts, completely disoriented. *Rats don't talk! Rats don't ask to be thought about! And, especially, they don't take people on journeys!* I was lost. *This is not good*, I thought. Ganesh in my eye is one thing. O.K., fine. As long as he doesn't bother me or cause me any trouble. As long as he doesn't make me do things I don't want to do or don't understand. And as long as other people don't see him. (Nor do I want to prove to others that he is here, and that I am still sane and alive and kicking). But a talking rat!

Ganesh has a spiritual background. He is the symbol of evolution, protection, and divine privilege. I was proud of him, even though I didn't tell anyone about his presence—being perfectly aware that this would cause doubts about my mental health. But now, a talking rat! That surpassed the compass of my spiritual horizon and most definitely belonged to pathology. No, I won't listen to it! Either there isn't a rat in my room, or the rat got in somehow, but it doesn't talk, I've only imagined it. "Get up. Get up," I said to myself. Take a broom and drive this animal out of the house (or the vision from your head).

When I think about it now, I am surprised that I lost my patience at that moment (precisely the characteristic of which I thought I had enough.) Actually, I didn't believe myself! It now seems that I also didn't believe anything I had learned up until then. (Thus, it turns out that I hadn't even learned it.) Other than that, there was one important fact that could have explained everything in an instant, but it escaped me. I became aware of it only later, and shamefully had to admit I had made a mistake.

At any rate, I abruptly stood up, yelling "boo" at the rat (or some other word that is usually yelled at animals in such situations.) The rat didn't even budge. Instead, I got dizzy. The rat blurred before my eyes, and it seemed that I fainted. It was similar to the problem people with low blood pressure have with abruptly getting up. (Actually, sometimes when I abruptly straighten up, my head spins.) So, this was like that, except that this time I lost consciousness. No, that's not quite true. Something else happened. I didn't lose consciousness; it was still there; my senses simply stopped transmitting outside stimuli. I was aware of blackness, blackness, just blackness. Nothing else. I remember thinking something stupid like, "What now?" Ganesh solved the problem by appearing in the middle of this nothingness. He looked just the way I was used to seeing him, except that this time he wasn't on the side anymore; he was in front of me.

He said, "Don't be stupid. Go back there, think of me, and let me lead you. We can't do it this way. Go back."

He was watching me with his mischievous look, and I was silent. This was interesting, because I had been trying to communicate with him all this time. And now, when I had the chance, I was lost for words. I really didn't know what to say (and I couldn't really blame

myself because the situation was so unusual). I still wasn't sure what was going on. It took me some time to connect all of it—him, my room, the rat... For example, why is he talking about himself? If I do go back, who should I think of: Ganesh or the rat? Why do I even have to think of anyone? Oh God, what should I do?

"Well you are really something," laughed Ganesh. "You have been hoping for this the whole time. You have been preparing for this journey forever, and now you're having second thoughts. I wonder what you'll do next?!"

I was still watching him without a word, perhaps still unsure whether this was a hallucination or reality. Ganesh was now watching me with a mocking smile on his face. However, something in his pose said differently. He tilted his head to the right and started playing with the shell that suddenly appeared in his hand. I could see expectancy in his eyes—as if he really cared about my decision. The cobra around his waist raised its head and spread its collar threateningly. However, I took this with equanimity, without fear. I had already learned that Ganesh was the one who rules with the cobra, and he obviously had other plans for me.

And anyway, there was something familiar about that cobra, and it wasn't threatening. Suddenly all my attention was focused on it. Why does this situation seem so familiar? As though I had already experienced it before. Along with this thought, images appeared. A scene just like this one, but not in emptiness; in the middle of some greenery... and on water... no... beside water, beside a river, an enormous river that was flowing slowly, slowly... too slowly. This river is dying. And, with it, a lot more is also dying. People, many people, a whole civilisation. I feel the pressure of responsibility. At the same time, I feel fear and doubt about the correctness of my decision. But I consent. Slowly I am bowing my head and whispering, "Yes. Take me. I consent." The cobra is threateningly drawing backwards, hissing, and getting ready for the bite that will take me over the ocean of time, to the other side, and back again, all the way to...

All the way to this moment. Oh, how easy it is to forget! How easy it is to yield oneself to the flow and waves of life and not think about its depth. And when the memory comes back, it is as if you don't believe yourself—as if the memory isn't yours. Later on, I learned that in our everyday meaning of the word, this memory doesn't really belong to "me," but to that part of me that is not denoted by a

personal pronoun. That is why it is so hard to “remember.” Because how can you remember when you are trying to remember something that doesn’t belong to the ego, and therefore, isn’t “yours”? It is hard to talk about this concept in conventional language, because it is intended to transmit messages from one individual to another. However, how are you supposed to say something that surpasses the framework of an “individual”? Who speaks to whom then? When meanings start to fill in the blank spots between thoughts, between one existence and the other, another kind of language is required—a language that people of my time have seemingly forgotten.

Today I am not so sure of the meanings of these images (memories?), or of the ones that appeared later. But at that moment, after Ganesh, his cobra, and I silently stood there in the middle of that nothingness (for perhaps a few minutes, and maybe a lot longer), everything was so clear. I knew who I was. I knew what I was doing and why I was doing it. I also knew I had to follow Ganesh’ order and return to my room and start again. As soon as this thought flashed into my mind, Ganesh gave a loud sigh of relief, the cobra pulled back, hissing, unsatisfied, and I again felt dizziness. Something flashed before my eyes, and I realised that my eyes were opened again.

I was in my room, sitting on the bed, watching the rat. It seemed as though I hadn’t even gotten up, or said anything; as if I had returned to a few minutes in the past, to the moment when the rat stopped in the middle of the room and faced me. We were observing each other again, and then the rat repeated his sentence: “Now just close your eyes, think of me, and let me take you on a journey.”

Ugh, I don’t like rats—not even when they talk and are obviously offering you a ticket for a fantastic trip to a different spiritual reality. “I have to ask him,” I thought, “why a rat?” Oh well, that isn’t important anymore. I decided. I had decided, it seemed, a long time ago. I closed my eyes, thought of Ganesh (who instantaneously appeared in front of me), and spoke the words from a long-lost memory.

“Yes. Take me. I consent.”