



MOTH & THE FLAME
'TIS PILGRIMAGE ENOUGH

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A rather fateful telegram arrived one day before my scheduled departure from New Hampshire to India:

*I WILL BE ON CONSTANT TOUR DURING NOVEMBER
DECEMBER AND TILL END OF JANUARY WITH EXCEPTION
OF FOUR DAYS. BETTER POSTPONE YOUR AND OTHERS TRIP
TILL END OF JANUARY PLEASE STOP KIRPAL SINGH 10/25/68.*

In numb shock, I read the telegram over and over. The hand of the Beloved moves in mysterious ways; obedience meant forfeiture of my prepaid ticket. Far worse, I would remain a fish out of water, far, far from the Master's enlivening presence.

That entire night I was kept awake by a titanic struggle: to go or to obey. By the first flush of dawn, resigned to my fate, I sent the following telegram to the Master:

*...FLIGHT POSTPONED FARE FORFEITED
IF ONLY I MAY PLEASE THEE TIS PILGRIMAGE ENOUGH...*

The last line, a quote from *Jap Ji*, expressed my struggle and submission in a single phrase. The others who were to go with me decided to disregard the telegram, or perhaps interpreted it more liberally. I was bound and could not escape his order even one iota. By bus, I headed back toward the West Coast three thousand miles away. I was met at the Columbus, Ohio depot by initiates David and Pat Hughes, and accepted their kind offer to stay overnight. The moment we arrived at their apartment, the phone rang. Judith Perkins from New Hampshire was on the line with an urgent call for me, 'I didn't know if you would be there or not, but took the chance. I don't know how to begin, or even if I should be telling you this, but...'

'But what?' I asked, my heart in my throat.

'It's not going to be easy on you, but another telegram just arrived from Master and he says:

*YOUR TELEGRAM RECEIVED ON RETURN TOUR
YOU MAY COME...KIRPAL SINGH*

What a quandary! I was down to my last \$100. David and Pat came to the rescue, loaned me \$600, which covered my ticket, and drove me to the Columbus airport at breakneck speed. My hastily

boarded plane reached England's Heathrow Airport several hours later, alas, too late by five minutes to connect with my charter flight! I watched it lifting off into the sky. With the last of the money, I bought a one-way ticket to Kuwait, hoping to intercept the charter group scheduled to stay overnight there before departing for Bombay.

When, many hours later, this fatigued wayfarer arrived in sweltering Kuwait, he was arrested and interrogated by the military, under suspicion of being an Israeli spy. Admittedly, it did look rather odd—a white man in a turban with a Jewish-sounding name, a one-way ticket, and no money whatsoever. With bright spotlights shining in my jet-lagged eyes, I tried again and again to explain, but no one listened. Questions, accusations, and threats were shouted at me. Initial fear turned to resignation as I began to do simran. After several rounds of the holy mantra, I looked over the heads of the crowd which had gathered to gawk and noticed a BOAC stewardess making her way towards us. She listened to my story and spoke urgently in Arabic with the officials. After listening to and translating, she convinced the authorities that I was okay, that my story must be checked out. After some tense minutes and telephone calls, I was released. My stewardess-angel confided, 'They were about to take you to a prison in the desert. No one would ever have heard from you again. Very fortunate I came along.'

The familiar faces of Bruce and Misha from Vancouver bobbed through the crowd of burnouses and veils. On the way to the charter group's hotel, we stopped in the Arab bazaar to purchase a branch of the most delicious fresh dates I had ever eaten. It is said that Prophet Mohammed lived off dates, camel's milk, and barley bread. Such morsels are truly Allah's blessings in this sea of sand and barren rocks. *Hamd'ullah!* Thank God! After more delays in Kuwait and strange experiences in a run-down Bombay hotel, we finally reached Delhi, tired and starved for darshan.

How blessed it was to pass again through the gates of Sawan Ashram, into its timeless and almost blindingly bright dimensions. It was high noon as we approached on foot within a hundred yards of Master's house. Suddenly he emerged from the Porch to step outside to an awaiting car. Turning from its open door, he suddenly looked in our direction. His powerful glance took away my breath, and the time/distance between us disappeared. My storm-tossed boat again found its harbor. How happy, how loving this reunion! His gentle hand patting my back as I touched his feet. For my ears alone, he

confided, 'When your telegram arrived, I felt pity on you.'

That night, he synchronously shared an episode from his own life, illustrating how love and surrender can change even the mind of the Beloved.

Once Hazur left Dera with the instruction, 'No one should follow me to Dalhousie.' Many others did not obey him but I considered that I was bound by his orders. After two weeks I was deeply feeling the pangs of separation.

In the madness of that separation I wrote a poem to the Master. It was the season of springtime, of Basant. I wrote, 'For others this is the season of Basant—of springtime and happiness; others are enjoying the eternity of your existence, but for me this is Baas-aant.' Baas-aant is a play on the word, changing its meaning from 'springtime' to 'the end of happiness.' This poem was duly conveyed to Hazur, and on hearing it, Hazur suddenly announced he was returning. He came straight to me in Lahore.

You see, the slenderest strands of love are more powerful than thick ropes of steel. Just on these few words, the Master changed his plans and came to me.