

The Unreasonable Solution

My life after coming into the orbit of Sabyasachi Guha

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Struck by lightning

Guha arrived again on the 5th of June, 2017 in Mumbai just two and a half months after his last visit. Kishor and his wife vacated their entire apartment for him and went to live at their brother's house nearby. Both of them worked hard to keep the place in order, cook for everyone and take care of G (short for Guha). I took a week off from work and came to Mumbai. G had arranged for my stay at Sanjiv's house which is a twenty minutes drive from Kishor's.

When I came to see him this time I felt incredibly excited, but I had little idea that my life was about to take an unexpected turn. Before I knew, a pulverising attraction for him developed in me. So much so, that everything about him suddenly became irresistible. This gave rise to a razor-sharp attention to his physical presence, his words and body language. It gripped me like a fever, wiping out everything else magically. I could not take my eyes off him even for a second. They would ache from staring unblinkingly at him for hours, yet I had no control over it.

G was in superb form. His delicate body dressed in white was a vision to behold. He sat on a single sofa next to a wide window, with the light falling on his face, talking to friends for hours. Sometimes, he would make his point forcefully. Sometimes, he would be quiet for several minutes. Fire and ice, I thought. I observed him almost choicelessly. His hands, his fingers and how they formed various *mudras*, his eyes with their slanting corner lines like the ones in beautiful idols carved in stone, his slender frame, the lines on his face, his forehead with a small bulge on the right, his ears, the curls of his hair touching his shoulders - my gaze gobbled up everything as if meditating on him. One day he whispered to me that the eyes get fixed when certain glands in the body get activated. He also said that it affects the tonal quality of the voice.

I felt a tremendous upheaval all the time, as if everything inside me was churning violently. I became oblivious to my surroundings and moved around like a robot sticking to him. I would wake up at 3 am every morning and wait impatiently for the day to break, tossing and turning in my bed, thinking about him. I would wait for Sanjiv to get ready and then we would leave in his car to go Kishor's house, where G was staying. The urgency was unbelievable. I didn't know what I was doing or why. All I could feel was this sudden yet undeniable pull towards a giant magnet called Guha. My focus on him was effortless, unpracticed and completely unknown to me until now. This man who had just stepped into my life was doing something! I pondered about the effect he was having on me. A big rush of energy in my body was keeping me up at nights. I could barely eat and felt full all the time. There was a huge pressure inside my chest and stomach. Sometime later I realised that I had forgotten to comb my hair for over ten days. I used to cry often. His presence was so powerful that I felt I won't be able to take it and would go blind. I would pass out almost everyday on my way back to

Sanjiv's house. G told me much later that he noticed this sudden shift in me and that it was the turning point in my life with him. He often says, "If somebody focusses on me, I have no choice but to pay attention to him or her." I couldn't fathom what this man was. I had met him only twice before, yet I was consumed by his thoughts, I was possessed. I was sure what was happening to me was not my imagination and I could in no way generate such things through my thinking.

He is the only person I had ever met who seemed to know deeply about the nature of the mind and its working and was not tormented by it. I was awestruck when I heard him discussing about the nature of human conditioning for the first time. His powerful emphasis on the need for using discrimination to filter out conditioned responses that have deep emotional tags inside us, and leave the rest in the field of the unknown, struck me like lightning. I felt I had finally found someone whose presence could end my misery. I stuck to him like a drowning man sticks to a floating log. My body was pulverised by his energy. I could barely breathe at times. I think he was acutely aware of everything that was happening to me. His coming into my life is the rarest of rare events. I felt I could give up everything to be with him. Nothing else mattered.

It is a mystery how this burning focus suddenly landed in me without any preparation or practice. Maybe it couldn't develop earlier because it never found a suitable subject worthy of such attention. I have no clue really. As a child I didn't like any subject or activity enough to pursue it with passion. Be it studies, music (which I was naturally good at) or sports, I did everything half-heartedly. I couldn't understand why I lacked motivation and drive. Since I became conscious of my existence, I remember seeing sorrow in everything and everyone around me. I used to scan the faces of people on streets, in shops, buses, trains and within my immediate and extended family to see who looked happy. None did in my eyes. I had loving parents and everything that a child could ask for, yet I had a deep-seated pain which I didn't know how to address. I wanted to desperately break free from the oppressive, goal-oriented living with its share of cyclic highs and lows; I just didn't know how. I would ponder night and day, "Is there no other way to live? Do I have to live miserably like everybody else? Isn't there anyone in this whole wide world who is free from the burden of sorrow?" When I found that none of my friends or family felt this way, I thought I had some weird problem. I never shared my misery with anyone. This struggle continued until I met G at the age of 36.

G had stepped out of Kishor Bhai's apartment to attend to some work. It was one of those rare breaks when the house was empty, so Kishor bhai's wife and I decided to sweep and mop the place. As we were cleaning G's room, I found a clump of curly black hair on the floor. When I picked them up and held them between my fingers, I felt a gush of excitement. I thought, humanity has preserved things like the Buddha's tooth, Jesus' shroud and what not, for which there is no historical evidence whatsoever. And here is the hair of a man living amongst us, a force of nature, who can ignite the life of another human being like fire ignites a dry branch. Isn't his hair a precious thing and shouldn't I preserve it?" Just then G's voice echoed in my head. "Life cannot be captured by thought. The living moments have a quality that cannot be captured by you. Your idea that

I am different from you is an illusion. I have nothing that you don't have." I shuddered and dropped his hair on the floor, swept them into a dust collector and tossed them into the dust bin. G had a good laugh when I narrated this incident to him later.

A week or so after I had met him for the first time in Kolkata back in 2016, a friend of G's invited us for lunch at her house in Belur, near Hindmotor. This young woman, now a feisty political leader, was once a docile housewife whose only job was to take her daughter to school and bring her back home in the afternoon. A common friend brought her to Guha. Something happened to her when she saw him. This shy and reserved woman couldn't take her eyes off G. She used to stare at him as if she was possessed as long as he was in front of her. After G went back to US, she would call him everyday. She didn't care what people thought or said about her. A year later, her husband asked her if she would like to join politics. When she asked G's opinion, he encouraged her and asked her to groom herself to be a successful politician. So, we were at her house and she and her mother were busy bringing food to the table. The living room was teeming with people. I got to know there were singers, dancers and painters amongst them. G requested a couple of friends to sing. They sang some beautiful Bengali songs. Then he turned to me and asked, "Do you sing?" the prospect of singing in front of a room full of unknown people made me nervous. I said, "I don't" He looked surprised and remarked, "Oh, a Bengali girl usually learns to sing or dance or picks up some other art form. You never learnt any music?" I kept quiet. He asked me again a few days later and I lied again. Then I felt guilty. When I came to see him this time in Mumbai, I confessed to Sanjiv that I had professional training in music since the age of seven and my teachers thought I had a gifted voice. Sanjiv exclaimed, "Guhaji is extremely fond of music, he will be very happy to know!" I said, "If he ever asks me again, I will tell the truth!" And lo and behold, in a few days he asked me again! I told him all about my music and felt relieved. He looked very happy and said, "Why don't you sing something? Anything you like". I said I was out of practice for almost thirteen years and had forgotten the lyrics of most songs. "I will sing along with you, don't worry!", he assured me affectionately. I nervously started singing the first song that came to my mind - Tagore's very joyful *Jagate Anando Jogye Amar Nimantran* (*I have an invitation to the universe's festival of joy*). Singing for the first time in several years, I was self-conscious and shaky. To my ears my voice sounded like there were layers of rust on my vocal cords. Moments later, I heard the hum of a soft voice. I opened my eyes to find G singing with me with an angelic smile sweeping his face. I was deeply moved. A week or so later, one afternoon, a big gang of friends was sitting around G at Sanjiv's mother-in-law's house, Kiran. This is the first time I met Venky, a talented musician from Bangalore who had met G in 2016. G was speaking animatedly and the room was buzzing with high energy. I was sitting on a divan with other people opposite to him. I was observing keenly his fluid body language and the peculiar relaxed ease that characterizes his presence, when he turned towards me and started asking, "What kind of songs did you learn? Who was your teacher? For how many years did you train? Did you ever perform anywhere?", as if wanting to know everything about my background in music. I said my mom took me to a music teacher when I was about seven. I continued taking regular lessons in

Hindustani classical vocals and Nazrulgeeti (songs of the renowned Bengali poet Kazi Nazrul Islam) till I was about seventeen. During those years I performed at several musical events and competitions and won many awards. When I had finished speaking, G literally jumped out of his seat, pointed a finger at me and declared emphatically, “All that will come back to you. In the next six months you will start singing like anything!” Even before I could react, he looked the other way and continued chit chatting with friends as if nothing had happened. I thought to myself, “What is he saying? Is that even possible?!”

Morning walks with G were something! He would wake up everyday at the crack of dawn, have coffee and then get out of the house by 5:30 am. We would usually go to a park at the foothills near Kishor Bhai’s house. I had never seen anybody walk so fast ever in my life. Younger men, women and boys huffed, puffed and ran struggling to keep pace with him. By the time he completed a full round, I would barely cover less than half the distance. I was overweight and I hated walking. One day he told me, “Lady, you need a good pair of walking shoes!” Soon he took me to a Sketchers store in a swanky mall and in less than a minute after entering the store, picked a pair of blue sneakers for me. I bought them without any second thoughts although they were damn expensive! They were so much better than all the shoes I had ever worn! Looking back, I think this is how he initiated me into walking, which has now become an integral part of my daily routine.

Since I had a new job in Pune, I was unable to travel with him out of Mumbai. Then I did something I had never done before. I spent 8,000 rupees on two occasions to fly between Pune and Mumbai so that I could spend an extra thirty minutes with him in the airport (he was flying to Kolkata most probably). A luxury bus ticket from Pune to Mumbai costs around 350 rupees and is a comfortable three hours journey, so most commuters prefer it over other modes of transport. When a friend of G’s who is a wealthy industrialist in Mumbai, heard about what I had done, he exclaimed, “Who flies between Pune and Mumbai? It is insanely expensive, I myself have never done such a thing! Is this girl crazy?!” G kept narrating this incident to his friends for several days. He joked with me much later and said, “That was when I knew you were bitten by the crazy bug!”

As the time for him to leave India drew closer, my whole existence became heavy with sorrow. I couldn’t imagine not seeing him. The day he was supposed to leave, I was miserable. He asked me to sing something in the morning. I remember I sang a Tagore song which goes ... *Dear friend please stay with me on this rainy night*. He packed his suitcases, came down the building and put them in the trunk of the waiting cab. I stood away from him sobbing. I couldn’t believe he would be gone in a few seconds. Just then he suddenly asked Sanjiv to find out if it would be possible to get a business class ticket in the next two or three days from Mumbai. My heart skipped a beat as I began wondering, “Is he going to stay a few more days? Will I be that lucky?!” To add to the uncertainty, G asked another friend to check for tickets from Delhi the same night, and kept the mystery going by not giving any inkling of what he actually wanted to do. He said, “If I get a business class ticket from Delhi tonight, I may take that. But if I

get a ticket in a couple of days from Mumbai, I don't mind that either." The tension kept mounting and I felt my brain would explode! Then Sanjiv found a great deal from Mumbai a couple of days later. G jumped at that and said, "Just take it!" He junked his existing ticket, laughed and said, "I don't care about the ticket or the money. Looks like I am staying for a few more days!" All the friends gave out a cry of joy and ran towards him and took out his luggage from the cab! I couldn't believe what had just happened! I was numb for a few seconds. Then my misery transformed into utter joy and I hurriedly wiped off the tears from my cheeks and followed him up the stairs to his apartment. Through this incident I observed something unique in him. He was not invested in the outcome of a situation and was ready to flow with whatever happened. Every action of his struck me as new, free of motives and fearless.

The next two days were full of high energy and fun. On the 21st of June, he flew out of Mumbai. Sometime later he traveled to Switzerland and stayed there for a month. I used to get glimpses of him in Switzerland from the photos and videos which some friends used to post on chats. I used to think he was from another world, his face was sorrowless. I resumed work in office but my mind was consumed by his thoughts and tormented by his absence. I would get up in the morning look at his pictures, watch his videos and get ready for work. I would do the same after coming back from work. I had no social life, no friends and no hobbies. I remember calling him one day. Two or three months had passed after his exit from India and I was desperate to see him again. I asked him, "Will you please come?" He was startled and said, "What happened dear?" I started crying profusely. He said in a clear voice, "Don't worry, I am coming."

"You don't do anything. Your system picks up the signal. That's how the biological organism works" - Guha



At Kishor bhai's house



In Switzerland

