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Self Discovery

FALL
1983
ISSUE
FREE



*"Whenever you make a mistake, remember that you are God.
God doesn't make mistakes. God only has experiences."*

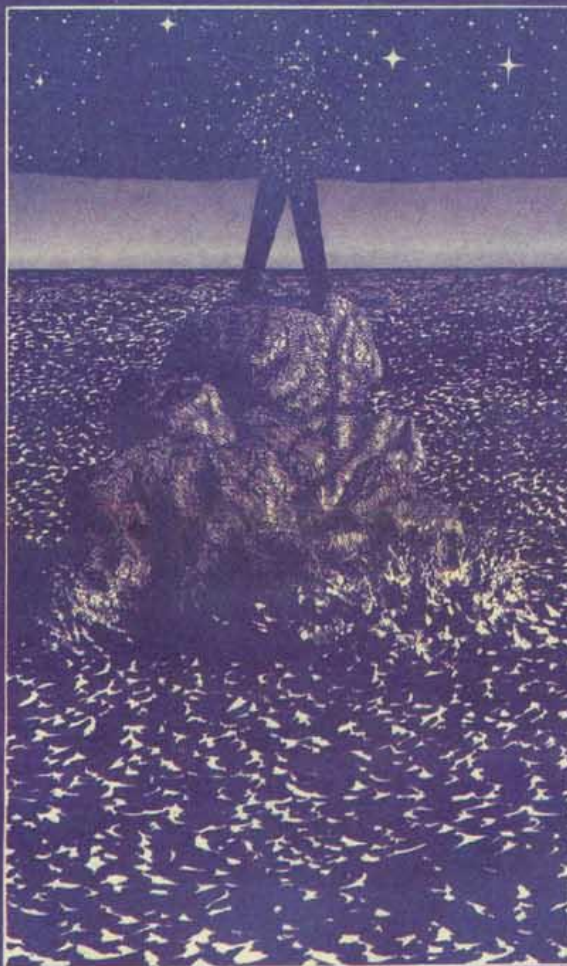
— By Rama

THE LAST INCARNATION

EXPERIENCES WITH RAMA IN CALIFORNIA

"His Body Turned Gold..."

...he began to shrink, then grow to tremendous heights. He raised his arms and a shower of energy rushed down onto us while lines of power pushed up through my spine. His body turned gold, then it turned into a doorway. It became an absence. I felt myself drawn into it and through it into other realities. I felt myself spinning, floating, turning in various directions, then expanding and contracting. Then, gradually, I found myself back on the beach in a peaceful, calm, yet very electric state. Rama then stood in front of each of us and meditated on us. I felt myself merge with him. The level of energy in my being began to rise in intensity — I knew he was dissolving my human form. I felt that I had no boundaries. My mind was not able to conceive of myself as a fixed being in a solid body."



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THE MATTERHORN

By Cathy

When I woke up that day I decided I had to see the Matterhorn.

This was on my last vacation in Switzerland during Christmas, 1982, when I was visiting my family and friends in Zurich. Actually, the idea had come to me earlier back in California where I was living at the time. It was in Disneyland, of all places, where I realized that although I had lived in Switzerland the major part of my life I had never seen that famous mountain whose double seemed so strangely out of place in the middle of Los Angeles.

This morning, then, I made plans to see the real thing. Everybody in my family thought I was crazy to travel four to five hours by train (one-way) in one day just to see a mountain.

My niece, however, was more adventurous. She welcomed the opportunity to take a day off from work. At five o'clock the next morning we set out. Dawn was approaching as we left my mother's village on the local train to Zurich. The sky was clear except for a few rosy-colored clouds in the east. It promised to be a beautiful day.

Soon we left the town and villages of Zurich behind as we passed through the Bernese countryside with its soft, rolling hills. The train was picking up speed. Trees, houses, lakes, and the prosperous farms were zipping by us as if pulled by an invisible string.

A few hours later we arrived in the mountains. After changing trains we approached the last part of our journey. A mountain train took us on a steep climb towards Zermatt past the small villages which always seem on the verge of falling off the mountain slopes, past the many waterfalls, and past the grapevines in the vineyards of the Wallis, which in summer become the source of excellent wine. The final stretch of the climb became increasingly steep. The train slowed down considerably, and I wondered at times if it was going to make it at all. As if slightly vexed by my lack of confidence in its performance, it gathered its last strength, pulled itself into the last tunnel and out of it, hugging the curve and then, breathless, let itself roll down the hill towards the valley of Zermatt.

"There it is," Claudia exclaimed, pointing towards the mountain range surrounding Zermatt. There it was, indeed, the enormous rock in the shape of a huge horn. It stood alone, towering over all the other mountains in the area, which, although by no means small themselves, stood back in reverent awe, as if seemed, before their master.

When we got off the train in Zermatt we noticed, to our

pleasant surprise, that the famous tourist resort was delightfully empty at this time of the year. Zermatt is the normal kind of resort frequented by tourists from all over the world, where the old and the new meet, sometimes successfully, sometimes painfully at odds with each other. The power concentrated in the rocks, in the snow and the ice of the surrounding mountain range, however, does much to even out human volition. The Matterhorn, above all, radiates a strong, clear light whose purity was increased by the snow. The only people who ever come in direct contact with its rocks and steep walls are those few who care enough to be willing to climb it with their bare hands and on foot.

After admiring the mountain for awhile, Claudia and I went on a stroll through the town. We spent some time in real tourist fashion, window-shopping and taking pictures of the landscape and of the many chalets tucked away in the back of elegant hotels.

Whatever we did, however, our eyes were irrevocably drawn to the mountain. More and more I had the feeling it was alive, so overwhelming was its presence. I finally gave in to its beckoning and suggested we sit down somewhere. We found a nice-looking inn with the significant name "Bergsicht" (View of the Mountain), sat down on the wooden porch in the

Claudia must have read my mind. "Tell me, what is Rama to you?" she asked, her dark eyes glancing at me inquiringly over the rim of her wine-glass. "Would you call him a sage?" We had talked about meditation earlier and I had told her a little bit about the study I was involved in. She had read the stories I had written for *The Last Incarnation*. Together we had listened to some of Rama's tapes. There had been a moment during *The Yoga of Love* when I had witnessed Rama's voice touch her heart and change something in her. Now she wanted to know more, and I was struggling to convey to her in words something of the immensity of the world which had opened up to me two years earlier.

"This is not the easiest thing to talk about," I began, "but I'll try anyway. Rama is eternity

changing the landscape and transforming everything in its way. This love changes the course of your life, and like the water it rejuvenates you."

"Rama is like this mountain," I continued, pointing towards the Matterhorn. "He is the mountain," I corrected myself, suddenly realizing why I had come here and understanding my feelings about mountains. "He is the power radiating from the mountain, intense, clear and pure. Rama is also the trees and the meadows at the foot of the mountain. He is the snow, the wind, the lake, and the rivers. He is the flowers in summer, the rain, and the clouds in the sky. He is the sun during the day and the stars and the moon at night. He encompasses the whole of nature, and everything that's genuine in man. He is the smile in your eyes."

I stopped short, realizing that I was getting carried away, and although I might have sounded a little more prosaic at the time, my infatuation with images definitely got the better of me.

"You are getting poetical," Claudia said, smiling at my embarrassment. Her face, however, expressed genuine interest, so I continued. "One reason why it is so difficult to express what Rama is like has to do with the fact that it changes all the time. He is a human being, but what's coming through him goes

Claudia was nodding her head thoughtfully, then asked me a few further questions. In my attempt to answer them, I got hopelessly lost. The longer I talked about the subject, the more I got entangled in words and ideas. Finally I gave up: "You have to see for yourself," I suggested, "when you come to visit me. I can't really tell you."

We continued taking sips from our wine glasses, admiring the landscape changing color in the evening light. The sun began to disappear behind the mountain. "Rama is also in the wine," I said suddenly, remembering his great sense of humor. "Does he drink?" Claudia asked, slightly incredulous.

Perhaps she had the popular misconception of spiritual teachers being ascetic and walking around in robes and sandals.

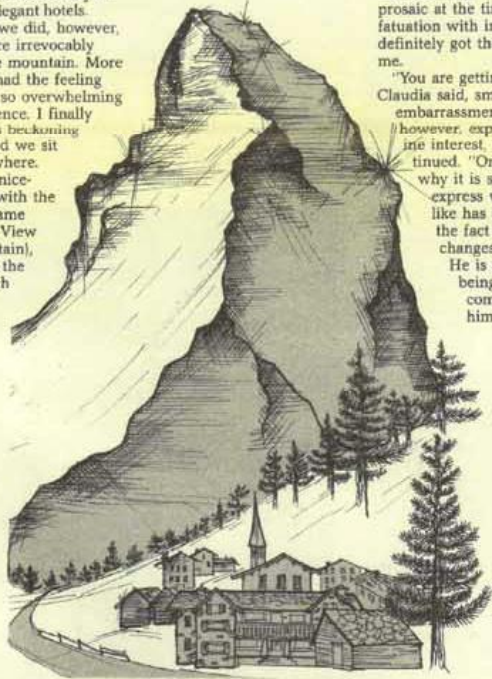
"I don't know," I said, "but I bet he would enjoy a glass of this excellent Tropfen. He is extremely funny, and very often he behaves as if he had had a glass too many." Claudia could relate to that. "This calls for a toast," she exclaimed, lifting her glass towards the Matterhorn.

In the meantime, evening had set in. Let's take a coach to the train station," Claudia suggested, pointing towards the horse-drawn sleds waiting in front of the restaurant.

Wrapped in blankets against the cold, we let ourselves be drawn through the wintry landscape. The driver, a gentleman in the old style, gave us an extra tour around Zermatt. At the train station he let us off, saluted to us, and drove away cracking his whip again. We waved goodbye to the Matterhorn and hopped on the train, exchanging old Europe for modern-day conveniences.

A small mountain train took us back down to the valley where we boarded the express to Zurich. Overcome by the excitement of the day, we let ourselves be lulled to sleep by the monotonous tam-to-tam of the train. We were awakened from our nodding by the screeching wheels coming to a halt at the main station in Zurich, and by the loudspeakers announcing departing and arriving trains.

Fighting my way through the crowds, trying hard not to get overwhelmed by the energy of a cosmopolitan city, I wished for awhile I was back in the peaceful mountains. "Look at this!" a voice said next to me. Claudia was pulling my coat-sleeve, trying to get my attention. She pointed at a poster hanging at the far end of the main lobby. There on the wall of the train station was a big color picture of the Matterhorn in all its glory. We both burst out laughing. The mountain had followed us home.



"The Matterhorn, above all, radiated a strong, clear light whose purity was increased by the snow."

sun, and ordered some food and wine. We ate and drank, chatted of this and that, and continued gazing at the Matterhorn. Again I saw and felt its strong light, which was intensified by the midday sun. I thought of Rama, my teacher, and like so many other times during my vacation in Switzerland, I marvelled at how strongly I felt his presence whenever I was in the mountains.

to me. This sounds somewhat vague, I know. Let's try again. Foremost, Rama is somebody I love. This love, however, is somewhat different from the emotion we normally associate with the word. It is more encompassing, fluid, and liberating. It is like the sun melting the snow, gathering the water into a mountain stream. It is the water increasing in power as it flows towards the valley

beyond the human. He is an experience, a state of consciousness. When I meditate on him, he, as a man, disappears, and a world strange and fascinating opens up, a world of colors, light, feelings, perceptions. Existence in its many forms manifests through him. Each time I see different aspects of it, depending on my mood and my level of awareness at that moment."

LAKSHMI MEETINGS

MEDITATING WITH CHILDREN

By Carmen

I had just recently been accepted as a student of Rama's, and since I didn't have to work at the time I found myself meditating more and more. My son, Matt, and I would always spend time together after he came home from school or during the evening. Now he realized that the only way he could do that would be to come into my bedroom and watch me meditate, so that's what he started doing. He was nine at the time and still into *Star Wars*. He would bring all his *Star Wars* figures with him and quietly play with them while laying on my bed.

One evening, just as I was beginning to get into the meditation, I became aware of a very excited little voice saying, "Gee, Mom, you just came out of the top of your head, and there's this golden light all around you, wow!"

What I had just heard pulled me completely out of my meditation. I just sat there staring at him, trying to think of something to say. I told him since I had been meditating with Rama, I hadn't been the only one who had been changing, that we were all changing, and that he was beginning to see on other levels. Then I'll never forget what his next words were.

He said, "Mom, I was almost like everyone else, wasn't I?"

"Almost, but now you know, Matt."

Then he asked me when Rama would have a meditation that he could go to, since he knew that only students were allowed to attend the weekly meditations. I told him there were public meditations coming up in a few weeks.

He was pretty excited about seeing Rama for the first time. We weren't able to sit together because I had to help out with the sales, but because I had to be there early he was able to sit up front.

I didn't get to see him or talk to him until after the meditation was over. I asked him how he liked the meditation. His answer was that it was fun and that he really liked Rama, and that he wanted to go to all of them. I wanted to ask him about what he had experienced, but I could see that he was tired and really didn't want to talk any more.

It wasn't until after the Intensive, six meditations later, that he started sharing his experiences with me.

After the meditation we went out and had something to eat. While we were waiting for our order, I mentioned to him that I felt that Rama had really zapped us tonight. Matt said he felt the same way. He said that Rama had done a lot of things for us that night. I asked him what he had experienced.

"Well, Mom, remember when he put his hands up? Well when he did that, water came out of them. It didn't splash all over. It came out nice and neat, and filled the whole room with water."

I asked him how high the water was.

"It came up to my knees."

"Then he made two domes. One on each side of the aisle. They covered everyone. To make these domes, he shot energy out of his hand, and the beam stopped at a certain point. Then the beam started going back and forth like a sewing machine until it met the other half of the dome at the top. After he made the domes he shot energy into them. Once the energy went into the domes it stayed there and bounced off the walls. The beams were different colors and when they hit the walls their color would change. The beams also bounced off of the people, but sometimes a beam would go into a person. These, I felt, were special people. Then Rama took what looked like seeds and threw them into the water and fountains shot up and sprayed all over everyone. I also felt that Rama wanted to teach us about energy so I opened both my hands and a beam of light shot out of each of my fingers. I started playing with the beams, and trying different things, but then daddy made me put my hands down and told me to be still."

"What happened to the water?"

"He left it there."

"Then we all walked through it?"

"Yes."

"What did it feel like?"

"Well, it didn't feel wet like water. It felt soggy, and as I walked out of the room I could still feel it, but I couldn't see it any more."

"Mom, do you think that the pizza is almost ready? I'm so hungry!"

"Yes, it should be here any minute."

"Mom, I wish you could see the things that I see, because when you ask me to tell you about it it's hard for me to describe exactly what I saw. It's just too beautiful!"



WHAT IS AN INTENSIVE?

By Julia

Well, it's the morning after, that is, the morning after an Intensive. An Intensive is a type of meditation Rama holds about three or four times a year. They are as they sound — very intense. But, here it is the morning after. I wake up to see energy streaming down my bedroom walls. I look around my room and nothing is solid. The air sparkles and I can see light spiraling and spinning throughout my room. The floor and ceiling both seem to be undulating.

By this point, I figure I am still asleep and having a very weird dream. I decide I'll just go along with it. I cannot feel my body and I am not quite sure how I am going to be able to get out of bed. My mind has no trouble observing what is going on, yet I am unable to think or propose any type of action. I feel detached and unemotional, yet my disposition is happy and light.

I am finally able to sit up and awing my legs out of bed. I sit looking at my legs. Then, suddenly I am looking at the carpet and my legs are nowhere to be seen. But then I remember, "Oh yes, I am really dreaming. I am not awake." I figure, "Well, I am sure that in dreams one's arms and legs can disappear. No problem."

I get up and start walking to the bathroom. Mind you, I said "start." The distance is maybe ten feet maximum. But today it's like in one of those twilight zone movies where the destination keeps getting further and further away. I walk a good five minutes. Then, all of a sudden, I

am in the bathroom. Definitely a strange experience!

I get in the shower and I feel the water spraying right through my body. It just did not seem to hit and bounce off my body like it usually does. I get out and brush my teeth. Putting the tri-color AquaFresh toothpaste on my blue and green striped bristle toothbrush is probably the best part, because I cannot taste the toothpaste or even feel that my teeth are being brushed.

A part of me is beginning to consider the possibility that I am really awake and all of this is happening. I figure, "Better sit down and meditate. Then everything will become clear." I sit down and begin focusing on my yantra. The yantra seems to come alive and explosions of geometric shapes and color spin out of it. I close my eyes to escape all this and feel my being dissolving into light.

I begin to feel calm and peaceful. Everything seems to go away and I feel still within myself. I feel myself relax and let go. I feel light fill me and feel myself become that light for a moment. I feel myself floating in a reality where there is no time and no motion. In this moment, as time stops, a realization flashes before me. I see a little more of what this process, the search for light and eternity, is. I am no longer the same person I was before the Intensive. I realize that light really does transform one's being and that my concepts of reality do not even begin to encompass reality at all. I am awake.

THE SECRET OF THE MUDRAS

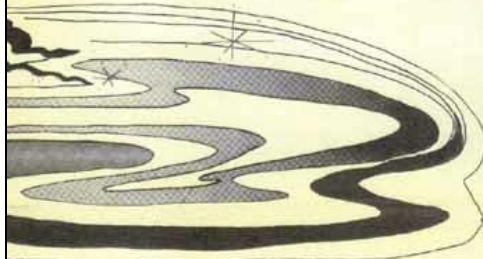
By Andrea

It was a Tuesday night center meeting in Los Angeles. I hadn't been experiencing a lot of visual phenomena, like I used to. Rather, when Rama would meditate and do his mudras (specific hand movements that transmit the kundalini energy), I would feel what he was doing with my body. I would try to feel how he felt by meditating on his consciousness.

During our last meditation of the evening, Rama absolutely blew me away. I was just sitting there meditating when all of a sudden he turned towards where I was sitting and these waves of light streamed over all the students in front of me. Everything went hazy, as if everything was vibrating so quickly that nothing had any edges. Then he reached his arm out in my direction and started moving it very slowly, as if he were twisting something. Then he spun his hand around, very quickly, palm towards me, and I saw this beautiful shining gold symbol inscribed on the palm of his hand.

It happened so quickly that my mind didn't have a chance to block it out. My being recognized the symbol and I started laughing. Rama smiled and, with a slow exhalation, blew the wind in my direction. I started to dissolve.

My mind doesn't remember what the symbol looked like. It appeared to be Sanskrit, but I got the feeling that it was even older... from another cycle. It was beautiful.



VISION OF VISHNU

By Karen

It was a Tuesday night in August. I sat with a large gathering of Lakshmi students in an elegant old theater in Beverly Hills. Rama was on stage conducting our weekly Center meeting. Once again, he was trying to show us that we are not who we think we are. We are not the person who has a personal history which defines us. Someone asked a question about how to change yourself if you don't like some aspect of your being. Rama answered, "You're driving down the street and you see a kid in the middle of the road. Do you try not to hit him? No, you definitely miss the kid. You don't try not to hit him. You miss him, because it matters!" His voice was full of conviction.

He told us not to hold each other back with negative thoughts about each other. Each time we meet it's for the first time.

"We are all magical beings," he said, "capable of change at any moment. Now let's meditate."

He put on a Tangerine Dream tape and we all sat up straight. I closed my eyes and stilled my thoughts. When I opened them to look at Rama, he was totally transformed. I saw a golden child, a young boy surrounded by a brilliant radiance. His face was filled with delight and wonder as he watched himself play with balls of light that he held in his hands. As I watched, I saw that he was playing with all of existence. In his hands he whirled galaxies and spun solar systems with joy and abandon, while light and energy shot through the room. Something in me said that this was the child Vishnu. It was a vision of pure delight.

Then I saw him as my teacher, Rama, again. He reached out his hands and rotated them in a slow circle. As he did this the room and all of us in it turned with his movement as if we were on a wheel.

We do have interesting Center meetings.

WORDS ARE GOOD, NIRVANA IS BETTER

By Patricia

"No one here will ever attain God Realization or become enlightened." I had been drifting into a peaceful meditation lulled by the waves of energy projecting from Rama. That phrase caught my attention and evidently woke up the people around me as well. I felt everyone sit up a little straighter.

"What does he mean? How can he say that?"

"Before you can become enlightened or enter Nirvana, you have to change. Your personality needs to be refined again and again. All the rough edges must be worn away. This is done through selfless giving. When all that matters to you is the welfare of others, when that feeling is all that exists for you and you wake up every morning thinking to yourself, 'What can I do today to make someone's life a little better?' then you can begin to consider higher spirituality."

"But selfless giving is not enough. You must learn to meditate. In order to become enlightened you must be able to enter into samadhi."

"Each time you enter samadhi, you dissolve. In that state, Nirvana, there is absolutely no sense of self. You have no separate existence. It's not that it is nothingness or emptiness, it is just that Nirvana cannot be explained in words."

"Each time you reach the threshold of Nirvana, the point of dissolution, the part of you that is still human cries out, 'Now wait just a minute. This meditation stuff is all well and good, but I'm not ready to dissolve yet. I like this world. It has good food, fine desserts, and great movies. And you know how I like the mountains and the ocean. How do I know that in Nirvana, I'll be able to find those things?'"

"What makes a person go on, push past the human attachment to this world and let go? I cannot really explain it to you. That's part of the mystery of existence. One day it just happens. Then you dissolve. You are gone. You enter Nirvana."

"Who returns from samadhi? Who knows? But certainly not the person who was there before. What makes a person come back? Another mystery. One minute you are dissolved, lost in infinite awareness, then the next minute you are here, dealing with the electrician, the dentist or income taxes."

"It's a strange experience being enlightened. Everyone always thinks that it is an escape from this world. But it is really just the opposite. When you are here in this world, you are completely immersed in the physical."

You work as hard as you can, doing the office work, trying to keep the spiritual center running as smoothly as possible. But then sometimes you just go away. Poof, you're gone. And each time you come back you are different."

"A supraconscious state of awareness in which a person is fully absorbed in God."

a new person."

I watched Rama as he talked. I had been to many public meditations. I had probably heard this same talk a dozen times, but this time for some reason it was different. Suddenly, I was detached. It was as if I was watching a movie. I realized that even though I had heard the words that Rama was speaking, and understood them intellectually, he was speaking from a level far beyond my limited awareness. He was beautifully erudite, his words and phrases were a flow of ideas and concepts that transcended this world. I felt through his words the timeless quality of his message. He had given this talk in many lifetimes, the text changed only slightly to match the conditions of the society. Every now and then tonight, he would laugh, use a "Valley Girl" phrase, make a reference to a commercial product or a recent film. It was as if he were reminding himself and his audience that this was 1983, planet earth. Los Angeles, and we were as much a part of enlightenment as India was thousands of years ago.

By now the room had filled with a soft golden light. The restless people in the back had either left or decided to enjoy the meditation. The

room was quiet. Rama paused and told us it was time to meditate.

He switched on the tape player to Tangerine Dream. The strains of electronic music filled the room. I felt myself let go of the frustrations I was still carrying from the drive into the city.

Rama closed his eyes, then opened them again and swept his gaze from one side of the room to the other. The intensity increased and with a feeling, a yearning that came from deep inside me, I felt myself crying out to eternity. My being strained for the light, wanting that feeling of completeness beyond everything else. I felt the light flood my being, dissolving my thoughts, my desires, and even my yearning. It felt as if a wave of electricity swept through my body. I was on fire. I was no longer aware of the room around me or the people. There was only light.

Then gradually it diminished. The intensity eased and I was left with a feeling of peace. As Rama ended the meditation, he said, "You see, words are not enough to express eternity. I can talk to you all night, but in five minutes of meditation, I can share with you more about Nirvana or God than any lecture I could give."

DONNA SUMMER AND THE TIBETAN MASTER

By Joanne

I walked into the Public Meditation a few minutes late. Rama had already begun his talk on "Reincarnation and the Tibetan Rebirth Process." As I entered the theater, I could barely see. The room was completely enveloped in a golden fog. As I walked down the aisle, I felt myself change levels of attention. I felt lighter and at the same time I felt as if I were spinning. I sat down and focused my attention on Rama. I felt the intensity of the energy in the room permeating my body. I felt my being expanding, dissolving and merging with the air. I felt completely still.

Rama was talking about Tibet. After a few minutes, I noticed that he had changed. Sitting on stage was an oriental man. His eyes were piercing. I knew they could cut right through illusion and find truth. I saw we were no longer in the Beverly Theater. We seemed to be in a temple or monastery. There were all sorts of cloth banners and various ritual objects in the room. The oriental man disappeared and I saw a series of beautiful goddesses and bodhisattvas. This scene concluded with the return of the little oriental man. He sat smiling.

We were now back at the Beverly, and Rama was sitting up front again. He was scanning the room, formally meditating on the audience. I saw him filling the room with golden light. Everyone in front of me was dissolved in an ocean of golden pulsating energy. For a moment I felt myself let go. I felt myself soaring into light. I became completely charged with energy. I felt ecstatic. Energy was rushing through me, at what seemed to be over 100 miles an hour. Then everything disappeared. I lost all awareness of my thoughts and my body. I was caught up in a whirlwind of light. It gradually stilled. I felt I was floating, weightless, as if I were in outer space. I was at peace.

The room began to take form again. Rama had just finished meditating and was bowing. He was surrounded by red and gold light. He was so dissolved, I could see right through him to the curtains behind. He began to get up (quite a feat, the thought of even moving my arm seemed like an impossibility to me). He flipped on a cassette: Donna Summer's *She Works Hard For Her Money* blared over the speakers. Rama's smile grew, he winked to the audience and half walked, half danced off stage. I had to laugh.

OUT OF THE BODY

Flashdance

By Margaret

"Busted," I said to my friend. She knew exactly what I meant. I always seem to get caught with my hand in the cookie jar. It was a Friday night, opening night of the movie, *Flashdance*. It was now about 10:00 p.m. We had been in the theater since 5:00. In other words, we were about to sit through this movie for a third time. We felt we were safe in that we were sure that Rama would not see this movie, especially on opening night. But there he was and there we were, sitting in the front row, dead center. By the looks of us one could tell we had been there a while. When Rama asked us how many times we had already seen it, I knew we were caught. I meekly told him this would be our third time. He laughed and said he could see our subtle bodies dancing around the theatre, so he knew we had seen it once. But three times, even he seemed a little amazed.

Then the movie started and my friend and I were back to rocking out to the music, totally absorbed in the movie. Mind you, this movie is not very involved nor the least bit complex, but the music and dance really makes it worthwhile. Rama was sitting a few rows behind us. My attention was fixed on the screen when suddenly it began to undulate and waver. First, I thought there was something wrong with the film, but then when the theatre walls and floor began moving and dissolving, I realized Rama was at it again. The theater became a vortex of colored sparkling lights and energy swirling and jumping around. I began to laugh. These silly lights were dancing to the music in the movie, yet the movie and the theatre had completely vanished. Then I saw beams and little orbs of light reflecting the beat of the music. I felt like I was in some Walt Disney Cartoon where you see sound along with hearing it. My being became filled with joy and I started laughing uncontrollably.

In that flash my guard was down and Rama grabbed the opportunity to spin me into other worlds. When I say "grabbed," I mean it figuratively as well as literally. I felt my navel yanked, my whole being seemed to be pulled right out of my navel area and sent spinning like a missile with incredible velocity. I felt myself speeding through worlds and planes of energy and light. I felt like I was on Space Mountain at Disneyland, only the speed had been turned up about ten times the normal rate. The intensity of the experience must have caused me to blank out because suddenly I found myself back at the movies. I sat there in a stupor, not quite knowing what had happened. The theater was filled with a sparkling light, but I could not feel my body or even hear the movie. I just sat there in wonder. Then the credits came up on the screen and the movie was over. I still sat there not knowing how I was going to get up. I turned my head and saw a mischievous glitter in Rama's eyes. I figured I had better get up before he asked me if I was planning to sit through the movie again.

Of course I have seen the movie since then, though I shan't incriminate myself by telling you just how many times. Part of me figures I keep seeing it to re-experience the worlds Rama sent me through that night, but to be completely honest, I think it is because I liked the music and the dance.



Rama in the Dreamtime

By Paul

I had been a student at the San Francisco center for three months, and I had heard from other students accounts of Rama visiting them in their dreams. I was beginning to wonder if it would ever happen to me. Although I had previously seen Rama in a few dreams, it was often vague and distant. But this particular night was to be very different, with an interesting twist.

I was tired on this certain night, as the night before I had attended a center meeting and had blazed late into the night listening to several new discourse tapes and drinking coffee. When I got into bed I was out like a light. Anyway, the next thing I knew, I found myself standing face to face with Rama in the neighborhood I had grown up in as a child. We were standing in a driveway-sidewalk area next to an old Victorian house. The house and driveway were familiar. It had been a boundary where my mother said I could not go past on my bicycle. So when I was a kid, I turned my bicycle around 180 degrees there. The yard at this house was always well kept, but in this dream it was not. It was grown up with anise (licorice) bushes. So Rama is standing in front of me, and he appears to be joking with someone who isn't there (or I can't see). Anyway, he starts jumping up and down and suddenly leaps thirty feet into the air and lands on the ends of his fingertips, upside down. Then he springs into the air thirty feet again, landing on his feet. Rama continues repeating these giant cartwheels as I roar with laughter over his acrobatic display. Finally, he lands in front of me and presents his fingertips for inspection. They are a little red, but remain completely unscathed from the rough street pavement. The dream faded there. For several days afterward I laughed to myself about how silly my dream had been.

About a week later I was taking a long walk with an old friend, and we ended up in the vicinity of my old neighborhood. I looked up and spotted that old Victorian house. I recalled the dream. I looked down and saw several anise bushes in the now unkempt driveway.

Hmmmm... strange how things grow.

Rama A.M.

By Jennifer

Sitting here, thinking about Rama and the various experiences I've had since I've encountered him, one particular instance stands out in my mind. It occurred one morning after a Public Meditation held in Los Angeles. I woke up early — it was barely light — yet I was wide awake... I sat up, leaned over, looked at the clock — quarter after six... Quarter After Six... Oh God... "Now what am I going to do?" I thought with a huge sigh, and from across the room I hear, "Well, why don't we meditate?"

And there he was... Rama. Now he wasn't there in the solid physical sense of his body being there in the room — it was more like a Light assuming his physical form... but it was definitely him. He was sitting there beaming and twinkling.

Thinking to myself, "I must still be dreaming," I rubbed my eyes, shook my head and looked again. He was still there, smiling at me, nodding his head...

"Want to meditate?"

Completely disoriented, I stuttered, stammered, hemmed, hawed, and came out with "Well, aahh, I think maybe I should take a bath first..."

He looked at me, grinned, and said, "That's a good idea... why don't you take a bath?"

So in I stumbled, took my bath, and wondered about the whole scene I had just experienced. I shook it off as my imagination, dried off, and came out into the living room only to find him still sitting there. Hmmmm...

"Well, so... are you ready to meditate?"

"AAHHHHhhhhh... wellll... hmmm... I... ahhh... think that I should straighten up my apartment."

He gave me this look like, "Ahah, I know what you're doing," but said, "That's a good idea, why don't you straighten up your apartment?" So, straighten I did. Only having three small rooms, it doesn't take much time, but I was stretching it this day. Finally I was all through.

Patiently, Rama looked at me, "Well, are you ready to meditate?"

Still not believing this could really be happening, and sure that if I put it off long enough he'd tire of me and these games I was playing with myself, I said to him, "Oh... I really think I should write a letter to my sister first."

Rama looked at me. I mean he looked at me. It was like a mirror. I could see exactly what I was doing; couldn't understand why I was doing what I was doing when I always enjoyed meditating, and realized he wasn't going to leave until I did meditate with him... yet he still said, "That's a good idea... why don't you write a letter to your sister?"

Inwardly squirming under his gaze, and my folly, I relented sheepishly, saying that perhaps I could write her later and that we could meditate first. "Oh, Good!!!" He settled himself, I settled myself, and we meditated together.

When I opened my eyes, the whole room was filled with a strong but soft white light. He looked at me, smiled "bye," and disappeared. Thoughts of Rama and what had happened stayed with me all day and night.

The following morning like an alarm, quarter after six. Booooo... my eyes opened. I was wide awake... hmmm... I peeked over to the hassock... Yep, there he was... Beautiful Light... grinning away. "Want to meditate?"

With a smile and a shake of my head, "yes," I sat up, got into a comfortable meditative position, and in I went. This happened a third day as well, until the fourth day I woke up and my first thoughts were to meditate. This was how Rama got me to start meditating each morning on a regular basis.

one cold, foggy, late afternoon at the end of December 1980, Rama took Mark, Jan and me to the Del Mar beach.

The fog was so thick you could not see twenty feet ahead. The beach seemed deserted. The only sound was that of the waves crashing on the shore, sometimes softly, other times roughly. Nothing seemed real or constant, even the waves broke at strange intervals. The beach I knew so well looked totally unfamiliar to me. I felt very open and receptive and the air felt very ancient and mystical. I knew that we had entered into another reality or plane of existence. We walked down the beach in silence, scanning with our subtle vision. We were fog gazing. Rama had taught us how to fog gaze before. He said the fog was a powerful elemental (like the wind and the sunlight) that could be used to see and enter into other realities. The advanced mystic could manipulate the fog and other elementals in various ways to change levels of awareness. As we continued, Rama told us to practice our fog gazing.

I looked up at the cliffs above the beach, and there I saw ancient Indian warriors on the rim. They were not American Indians, they were far more ancient, and were wise and powerful. They radiated light and power, yet they were also very calm and controlled. As my attention shifted back down to the beach, I saw different forms or beings of light. I had the sense they were scanning us, as in turn, we scanned them.

I felt acceptance and detachment as we moved down the beach. I no longer felt I was a person, I could not feel my body walking or my mind thinking. I was being absorbed into this ancient world of fog and warriors. As I walked further, I

saw a large orb of white light in front of me. It must have had a fifteen-foot diameter. As I approached it, it dissolved and reappeared further down the beach. I walked further, and again as I approached it, it dissolved and reappeared still further down the beach. This happened a few more times; it was becoming almost comic. Then suddenly it exploded into a shower of light. We moved on. I felt the air thickening; now there were many subtle and astral beings around us. I knew we, in a sense, were completely alone in this timeless and boundless world.

The Phoenix

By Laura

At this point, Rama stopped and told us to sit down on some large rocks in the sand. We sat, about six feet apart, facing the ocean. It was quite strange hearing the waves pounding, yet not being able to see them. Rama walked into the fog. We could not see him. A moment or two later he walked back out, about fifteen feet away from us. He was different in appearance and feeling. He was now pure power, and he felt and looked like one of the ancient warriors on the cliffs above. He stood before us,

awesome and powerful. He began manipulating energy in different ways. His body began to shrink, then grow to tremendous heights. He raised his arms and his subtle body flew into the fog above us. A shower of energy rushed down onto us while lines of power pushed up through my spine. His body turned gold, then it changed into a doorway or a keyhole. It became an absence. I felt myself drawn into it and through it into other realities. I felt myself spinning, floating, turning in various directions, then expanding and contracting. Then

back on the beach in a peaceful, calm, yet very electric state. Rama then stood in front of each of us and meditated on us. I felt myself merge with him. The level of energy in my being began to rise intensely. I knew he was dissolving my human form. I felt that I had no boundaries. My mind was not able to conceive of myself as a fixed being in a solid body.

Rama told us to try to dream ourselves back to this place on the beach, back to this reality. He said that these moments were eternal and powerful, that we could enter back into them in our dreams. We then walked back up the beach in silence. My whole being was tingling with energy. Both Mark and Jan were glowing brightly; they did not appear to be solid. They both looked like masses of swirling energy. Rama was completely golden, there was no form to him. He was clear energy and power. As I continued down the beach, I saw different civilizations on the cliff. Buildings, temples, whole cities, some populated, some vacant, appeared before me. I saw more warriors on the cliffs; they had a certain depth and knowledge that struck me. As we reached the stairs that led us from the beach up to our car, I noticed it was dark. We had been there for a few hours, yet it seemed no time had passed. At the same time, I knew an eternity had passed. Everything was unfamiliar to me, it was as if I was seeing this place for the first time. We stood beside Rama, I felt his energy, I scanned Jan and Mark. I realized at that moment that we were not of this world of men and women. We were different. We were neither better nor worse, yet our energy and radiance were not the same as the people of this world.

THE OCEAN



John's Near-Death Experience

By John

To my knowledge, the closest I've come to dying was on a sunny afternoon during the summer of 1978. That day I went for a swim I almost never returned from. I'm here to write about it only because Rama saved my life. I think it makes for a good story.

Rama was in a Ph.D. Program and I was an undergraduate at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. We lived fairly close to the beach, as does almost everyone on Long Island. I've always loved the beach, and Rama is a great swimmer. Naturally, the summer often found the two of us and our friends at one of Long Island's many beaches.

We frequently swam at one particular beach near the university. It was located at the mouth of a large inlet that emptied into Long Island Sound. The Sound is the body of water separating Long Island from Connecticut. It is big, and the tidal changes are great. The tidal changes were responsible for a very swift current that ran past the beach on the inlet where we swam. In fact, the current was one of the main reasons we used this beach. It was possible to ride the current and stay close to shore. This was a lot of fun. Venturing further out in the current was risky though, because an outgoing tide would sweep you into the Sound.

We were satisfied with riding the current for several weeks of beachgoing, but another adventure tempted us. Across the inlet's mouth, at a distance of about a quarter mile, was a small peninsula. We always thought of swimming over to it, but never had because of the danger involved. The danger amounted to the fact that unless the swim was made precisely and strongly, the current would sweep you out into the Sound, exhausted and with no land to cling to. The only

time to attempt such a swim would be at a peak tide when the current would have lessened enough to consider swimming across it.

It so happened that Rama and I, and two friends, went to this beach one day at just such a peak tide. We quickly decided that this was our chance. Leaving our friends on the shore, the two of us plunged into the water. The point we hoped to reach was about 300 yards down the current from our departure point, so we had to cover the quarter mile across before we were dragged beyond the peninsula and into open water.

We swam from the shore at a brisk pace, and I soon became aware that the current was much greater than I'd anticipated. It would have to be a strong, hard swim or the results would be disastrous. Nevertheless, we continued swimming. I knew Rama was a stronger swimmer than I was, but I had faith I would keep up with him.

My faith began to give way though, about two-thirds of the way across, when I realized I was tiring rapidly and falling behind Rama. I also noticed that at my reduced rate of speed, the current would sweep me into the Sound before I reached the point. I mounted a desperate effort to catch Rama, who looked like he would make it. I failed.

I looked up, utterly exhausted, only to see myself drifting past the point. I noticed Rama had just made it to the tip. As I poked hopelessly for the bottom with my feet, I realized that I was going to die. I had absolutely no strength left, and I was being dragged well beyond land. I was surprisingly calm, and resolved to my fate, although it did seem sad to be dying so young. I looked

over at Rama and saw him jump back in the water. In my confused state, it didn't really register that he was coming to save me. I was about seventy-five feet past him, but he reached me in seconds. Despite his own exhaustion, he had come back into the current to save me.

Rama held me up as the two of us floated in the current, waiting for my strength to return. Rama had brought hope with him. I felt we would make it, though the odds were against us. We were well away from land, and there were no boats in sight. Our best chance appeared to be a swim of about three-quarters of a mile into shore. The prospect of this, in my state of exhaustion, was not too pleasant, but Rama assured me my strength would return, and that we'd do it.

At that moment we saw a boat, and miraculously it was heading in our direction. The boat came up to us, and the people on board lifted me to safety. Our friends back at the beach had noticed our problem and had flagged down this boat to help us. To my total amazement Rama stayed in the water and decided to swim for shore. I urged him against this, but he insisted and said he'd see me at the beach.

The boat took me back to our friends and I related the incident to them. Our concern immediately shifted to Rama because he had a long swim still ahead of him. We spent some anxious moments, but Rama soon came walking down the beach to us.

This happened five years ago. As my spiritual teacher, Rama has saved me inwardly numerous times since then when I faltered spiritually. We have often joked about this incident, but ultimately it is the bottom line in spiritual practice: he risked his life to save mine.

Manifesting the Double

By Melissa

I had been a student of Rama's for three months when it came time for a desert journey. I've always loved the desert; one can look in any direction and see forever, losing oneself in the vastness and endless silence. Needless to say, I was very excited to be going with an Enlightened teacher.

Rama told us to make sure that our lives were in perfect order before we left. We were to take care of all unfinished business, clean out our closets, making sure that we had no worries to carry with us. In other words, we were supposed to go to the desert with the attitude that we might never return, that we might meet our deaths out there.

He told the new students that we could expect anything from an uneventful to slightly unpleasant evening. We probably wouldn't "see" anything out of the ordinary. We should only anticipate going for a nighttime walk in the desert under the stars with occasional stops for meditation and food.

I had been ill, running a high fever for several days prior to our departure. I had been looking forward to the journey for a long time, but that morning I seriously questioned whether I should go at all. I was so weak that I had almost passed out in the laundromat. In my noon meditation I inwardly asked Rama whether I should go. I received a very adamant "yes." So, that was that, body or no body.

During the drive out my fever subsided, and the nausea and weakness entirely disappeared. By the time we arrived, my energy level had reached a peak. I hopped out of the truck and started bouncing around doing warm-up stretches.

We gathered together and headed up the gorge, about three hundred of us. Rama and company walked in front, sweeping the bushes with their flashlights, eyes peeled for snakes. I felt like part of Rama's body. He was the eyes, director and coordinator of awareness. We were the legs and arms, a huge caterpillar creeping along the desert floor.

We entered into an ancient world of harsh, dry beauty. The rock formations on either side of us grew taller as the gorge fanned out in width. I got smaller and smaller. My consciousness expanded to encompass the experience as thoughts about the world and my life fell away. I felt as if I extended about four feet above my head, as if I were riding on my own shoulders. As we walked, that "me" grew very white, clear and radiant. I felt clean.

We stopped at a circular clearing, nestled against the side of the gorge. Rama stood near a large group of rocks and we sat around in a circle. He talked a little about the desert, then he stood silently, arms outstretched, calling the wind. . . .

"The wind," he said, and it started rushing down the gorge, sweeping over and through us. He introduced us to the different types of wind which come at different times of the day, each one bringing a very distinctive quality of energy. He said that the wind was our friend, and if we listened very carefully we would hear its message. Again it came, gentle but strong, swirling around me, touching every part of me lightly. It felt as if it were erasing my edges, melting away my skin, the illusory border between myself and the universe. Then I opened up my being and let it inside. A feeling of sadness overcame me and a vague memory of who I've been started to form, but the wind turned it into dust and blew it away.

"Dissolution," he said, and I watched his form fade into the darkness until there was no one there. I felt empty and a little scared, insecure as my reality lost its realness.

"Levitation," he said, seated cross-legged on top of a rock. His body lifted up about four feet in the air, and then returned to its original position. There was no sense of motion or spatial displacement. It was much more gentle and still than any movement I had ever perceived. It seemed not to take place in time or space. It was very soft yet threatening to the part of me that operates in a fixed universe of "natural" law.

"Heat," he said, and the air around me got very dry and hot.

He had us fix our gaze on some distant mountains. Then he raised his arms and pointed at them. As I watched, I saw two streams of light shoot forth from his hands and extend to the mountains. As the light hit them they seemed to lose their solidity, and they became fluidly viscous. The slopes and tops of the mountains began to move like waves, undulating, until there was no peak. The mountains had vanished. Then I started to see tongues of lightning licking the tops of the surrounding ridges.

At one point Rama said he was going to send his double up to the mountain peak. As I watched, I saw him start bouncing back and forth between the desert floor and the mountaintop. He was traveling along a wide band of light, almost like a huge sliding board, which joined the two points. All the time there was an excited knot in the pit of my stomach, almost as if I'd drunk too much coffee. We took turns speaking, sharing our experiences with the group. I was amazed at the variety of perceptions. Some people saw more than I did, some saw less. Nevertheless, we had all been transported into a reality that most human beings never witness.

We had something to eat, and, bathed in moonlight, headed back down the gorge. During the walk back I wanted to stay out there by myself. I didn't want to return to the world, but right behind me were two of Rama's staff members, following up with walkie-talkies to insure that no one was left behind. I walked very slowly and turned around every few minutes to soak up the beauty. The sun was beginning to rise and the colors were constantly changing. At some point I remember a staff member asking me if I was okay. I was quite fine, indescribably so.

When we reached the entrance to the gorge, we stood in a huge circle around Rama. Everything shimmered and I wasn't sure if we were really there at all. He focused on each one of us for an instant, directing his eyes and palms towards us. I felt a tremendous surge of power rise up inside of me, and I knew that this power would enable me to make certain necessary changes in my life. A deep gratitude filled my being. Then he shifted his gaze to the person on my right. After completing the circle he went around again and again, faster each time. I felt like we were one unbroken ring of energy, instead of separate individuals.

He told us to say goodbye to the desert and to offer it our gratitude. Rama told us that we couldn't be sure if we would ever return here again and that we should seal this moment within our hearts forever; that way it would become a part of us and we would never lose it. Needless to say, I have never been quite the same since.

4th of July in the Desert

'Impeccability is to do your best in whatever you're engaged in.' — Don Juan to Carlos in "Tales of Power"

By Bill

I was not impeccable in arriving at the starting point for the Fourth of July desert trip. I underestimated the time it took to drive there, and when my wife and I got to Borrego Springs, I could not find the starting point for the hike. After exploring most of the roads in and out of Borrego Springs, I decided, "This is a test. I don't want to fail."

We saw a man sitting in his pickup with his lights on. Odd, to be sitting on a road miles into the desert with your lights on. Maybe he was waiting for someone.

"Where is Grant's Ridge, please?" He pointed up the road. We had been up that road, but had turned back some time before. He had been waiting for us, to show us the way. We arrived at the place fifteen minutes after Rama had led his students up the gorge. It was with a renewed sense of humility that we started up after them.

After a forty-five minute walk under a dazzling desert sky, we caught up with Rama as about four hundred of his students were forming a circle around him. I felt an overwhelming gratitude. We had found him. We found a spot at the outer edge of the large circle.

Rama was crazy and giddy and funny right from the start. He started



THE

The Ancient Dance

By Sue

I am lying on my back in the middle of the desert, watching the stars whirl around the sky. Or perhaps it is the earth that is whirling and the sky is still. I cannot tell any more. I have been in the desert with Rama for almost two hours now and my ability to make concrete statements about the physical realities long ago faded away.

Rama tells us to sit up again. He is standing in the middle of the group. I see him reach his arms to the sky and point toward a star. Two columns of light stream upward from his hands. As they reach the star, it jumps, as if jolted from its orbit by the energy he projected. I feel myself jump at almost the same instant and I am suddenly aware that the same light is streaming from his body to all of us. The air is like a thick golden mist. It envelops us.

Rama lowers his arms from the sky to chest level. He stretches his arms toward me. He focuses for a moment on his hands and I see them dissolve, then reappear. The edges of his hands are no longer distinct. They are wavy, fluid, as if I am watching them move underwater. I realize I am seeing into another dimension.

For a moment Rama stands quietly, lost in the stillness of the desert night. When he stops moving, he is gone. Where a moment ago a human form stood before me, now there is nothing. A second later he

by reminding us that it was midnight and the two-hundred and seventh anniversary of America. We all joined him in singing "Happy Birthday" to America. Two versions. Fast and slow. He walked in continuous circles inside the circle. I saw a trail of golden light flowing behind him and an arc of light above us, protecting us. Rather than try to strain and see what Rama was up to, I meditated with my eyes open and tried to pick him out when he came close. As I saw his jacket come closer, there was nobody in the jacket. And then the jacket disappeared as well. He was gone.

"Stop thinking so much. It's only to be witnessed," Rama said, loudly. Finally Rama, in his best Godfather voice, told us to lay on our backs and look at the sky. "Now I'm gonna do da Fourt a July miracle for ya. Same ole one." As I lay there, the stars immediately started moving from place to place in the sky. The movement was so fast and furious that I had to close my eyes for a moment to get my bearings. When I opened them again the movement had stopped. I was looking at a group of stars with two brighter ones among some less luminous. The group started descending slowly, getting bigger and bigger until they seemed to be pressed against my face; sitting on my nose. I blinked a few times and it remained the same. I was covered with a blanket of stars. Then they slowly rose to their original positions. The sky then became liquid golden light, lapping at the stars in gentle waves. The stars were floating on an ocean of light and I was there floating with them, on the ocean. I heard Rama say, "Alright, everyone sit up now." But I didn't want to. I lay there a while longer until my wife poked me and asked me if I was alright. I sat up, and only then did I notice the tears in my eyes and on my face.



DESERT

is back and I wonder if I have imagined it. Rama says nothing.

The silence of the desert is almost deafening tonight. Rama moves to the edge of the semicircle that we have formed. He peers into the night as if examining the horizon.

Rama stands back. He begins to move his hands in graceful motions. There is a rhythm to his movements and I feel that he is performing an ancient dance, almost a ritual. He creates a scene in the air in front of us, breathes it with life, presents us with the vision, then allows the desert wind to dissolve and disperse the particles of light that compose its essence. I am reminded of the stories that I have read about Brahma as he creates the worlds. I have a fleeting realization of what Rama is, what he has become. He is creation. Or perhaps it is better to say that he has become one with that life force or energy that we call God or Brahma or eternity. He uses the instruments of his work to perform miracles for us. Light, matter, energy... all are woven into patterns of form that we name as physical, astral or mystical worlds.

Rama stops again and surveys the group. He seems to sense some need in us and begins to move around the semicircle dancing a perfect Charleston to some unheard tune. Soon we are all laughing again as we watch his knees elongate, stretch and move through each other as if they had no substance.

I realize I am saturated. I think I will burst if I see or feel one more thing. Others must feel the same way for Rama says that it is time to leave. Already the sky to the east is turning pink around the edges and soon the Los Angeles traffic will be picking up momentum. It is time to return to the world.

Golden Lines of the Wind

By Connie

This desert trip was different from all the rest. The outer structure was simpler. We simply went to the places of power, had our experiences, and left. We went to places where few in the group had been before. There were fewer people present. It was a spontaneous trip, which usually means that we are in a better consciousness. We were happy to have been invited along.

I feel as if I had two distinct "insights" (for lack of a better word) on this trip. Two concepts I had heard before, but not really understood, were illustrated. I have been told that the physical body is only a shell for our true selves which dwell within. I have read in Carlos Castaneda's books that the wind is alive and has substance. But I hadn't really experienced these ideas. On the May 31st desert trip I did.

We began our experience in the parking lot of the Los Angeles Professional Center. It was one p.m. on Memorial Day, 1983. There were 56 of us present. The ratio of women to men was fairly even. When we had formed carpools and Rama had spoken with the drivers, we headed to a mountain in San Diego County. There, we gathered together and watched the sunset. Rama said several times that this was a good place to come when making important decisions. The energy was very clearing. The sunset was beautiful. I felt at home here with everyone. It was as if we had watched the sunset here many times before.

Next we headed to the northern end of the Anza Borrego Desert. The spot we stopped at was barren, unemotional and other-worldly. It was about ten p.m. The moon had not yet risen, and it was quite dark out. Dramatic rock formations shot up from the level desert floor. A few shrubs dotted the

landscape. We began walking down a gorge about a quarter-mile wide. I was surprised at how good walking felt, even though the sand was pretty deep. I usually do not enjoy this part of desert trips. But this time I felt light and happy as I walked. I tried to stop my thoughts and open up to the desert energy. I looked down from what seemed to be a point about 6½ feet high. I marveled at how quickly the ground was moving beneath my feet. I didn't feel my body; I was above it, looking straight down. The ground sometimes appeared blurry because it was moving so quickly. I realized upon reflection that I was out of my body. I was above it, looking downward at such an angle that it would have been impossible to walk without tripping over my own feet.

We reached a flat ridge and settled down for the evening's events. Everything that followed was different, though. Rama did not talk. He did not encourage us to ask questions. He raised his arms and began pulling us into another

world. His world. The wind was blowing strongly. I felt it washing through me, ridding me of the energy I had picked up from the world and its inhabitants. It blew through me again and again. The wind had substance. I could see it. It was made up of golden light. Sometimes I saw golden lines, other times I saw only gold sparkles in the air. I saw Rama play with the wind. He would catch some gold lines in his hands and slowly turn them. Then the wind would change direction. Rama was helping us to see the true nature of the wind.

Rama's body appeared to be empty. It really looked like a shell, a simple vehicle he used for his earthly existence. I saw Rama split apart into two Ramas. They both were physical, though. I have seen Rama duplicate his subtle body before, but never have I seen anything so visceral, with as much mass as this. I noticed that both Ramas weren't walking on the ground. Rather, they were darting about, slightly above the ground. Each Rama moved independently of the other. I remember at one point seeing only one Rama again. Throughout the evening Rama would approach us very closely, and stand before us. At these moments I was especially aware of his voidness. He did not have physical features. I saw only the outline of his body, as if he had become a translucent shadow.

Then I saw something really incredible. Rama's back was turned to us. He was approximately 20 feet away from the group, in the center of my field of vision. Rama stretched his arms straight out to either side. With each hand he grabbed the golden lines of the wind. They lifted him up a few inches above the ground, and he physically turned around. It was as if he was riding the wind. It happened in an instant. Now Rama was facing us.

Rama called the allies. He whistled very softly. I thought of Don Juan and Don Genaro. The world became foggy and surreal. The energy shifted, too. I sensed the intense, resolute world of the warrior. I tried to feel what the allies were like. I remember in the past Rama has said that the allies are the exact opposite of human beings. They are our counterparts in vibration and substance. For a human to touch an ally would mean certain death. I squinted my eyes and tried to see the allies. Nothing. I promptly decided not to get frustrated and I resigned myself to feeling them. Suddenly, a huge bird made of white light flashed before me. It was very close to me, maybe three feet away. It was around four feet tall, and its wings were outstretched. I could not make out what kind of bird it was, perhaps an eagle or a crow. It hovered in mid-air for a moment. I felt it looking at me. Then it disappeared, as suddenly as it had appeared. I don't think I shall forget that encounter.

I felt more a part of Rama's world this trip than ever before. Maybe it was because we were in a new, unfamiliar part of the desert, and I had little to hang on to. I don't know. Perhaps I need to think it over for a little while longer.

Rama Meets the Guru — In 3-D

by Morton

Rama had been contacted by an internationally famous Indian Guru who expressed a strong interest in meeting him. The guru had sent Rama his press jacket and other materials. Rama usually doesn't meet other "spiritual teachers" because he finds that most of them tend to engage in a competitive game of "my spiritual realization is greater than yours." Rama refuses to play this game, so he usually ends up spending most of the interview politely listening to the other teacher talk about how wonderful and powerful he is and thinking about how much fun he could be having if he had skipped out on the interview and gone to a place of power in the desert instead.

Rama had agreed to the interview without knowing why. He had asked myself and Jerry to come to the meeting, which was to be held at Rama's house. About an hour before the scheduled meeting we received a cryptic message from the guru's secretary on our answering machine. She announced that the guru would not be around very long and he was looking for someone to pass on his powers to. He was going to check Rama to see if he measured up.

I told Rama about the message and Rama asked if we could cancel the meeting. He said that the guru was using power as a ploy to

While Rama certainly doesn't fit my description of what a guru should be like, I have seen and experienced countless wonders in my adventures with him. Rama is more like a crazy old zen master — and he never allows himself to be put on a pedestal by his students.

I had hoped that this guru might be different. Rama likes to endorse real spiritual teachers and he spends a great deal of time exposing us to the teachings of Lao-Tzu, Ramakrishna, Don Juan, Shankara, and Zen and Tibetan masters. Rama has told us that there are twelve fully enlightened teachers presently on earth. I had secretly hoped that this guru would have been one of them.

The guru told us for awhile what a humble dresser he was. Then he asked Rama if he wanted to meditate with him. He indicated that Rama should sit in front of him. Because he had been meditating, Rama was not much in his physical body. He walked slowly and unsteadily — what I refer to as his "B.T." walk. At first I thought he might object to sitting before this pompous guru. It seemed ridiculous for an enlightened being to sit before this guy. Then I realized that Rama was in one of his "up for my type of experience" zen moods. Rama sat in front of the guru and meditated. I watched a beautiful

"The Guru is dying. He doesn't have long to live and he's looking for someone to pass on his powers to. He's coming to check out Rama."

throw him off balance. Rama further explained that while it is possible for an advanced master to transfer certain powers to someone else, it would never be done in this fashion. Rama intuited that the guru was up to no good and didn't want any part of it.

I tried to cancel the meeting, but the guru and his party had already left and were headed for Rama's house. When I informed Rama, he sighed and gave me one of his quizzical zen looks, which is a humorous mixture of "what is the universe up to this time?" and "Are you sure they sent me to the right planet?"

As I watched Rama accept his fate, I thought of the temptations of Christ in the desert. I mentally prepared myself for what was to come and wondered how Rama was going to handle this one.

I greeted the guru at the door. He was accompanied by two women and a young man. The younger of the two women was his personal secretary, the other woman was his host in Los Angeles. The young man was her son. All three were his students.

The guru bowed to me in Indian fashion and I bowed back. Just then Rama floated down the stairs in his light, bouncy style. The guru held out his hands to Rama and said, "My son, my son!" I thought that Rama might correct the guru or at least make a joke out of it by saying something like "Hi, Dad!" but he let it go by.

We all sat down in the living room and I asked the guru if he would like a Perrier or something else to drink. He told me that he wanted tap water. Then he asked if the tap water was drinkable. I recommended the Perrier, but he opted for the tap water. His two women students who had ensconced themselves at his feet followed suit and also ordered tap water.

Jerry and the young man who had come with the guru, were sitting on the flower-print couch. I asked them what they wanted. The young man ordered tap water and Jerry opted for ice coffee. Before I could leave the room to fill everyone's orders, the guru began to speak.

"Oh, very good, Jerry! Even though I myself and my students ordered tap water, you went ahead and ordered coffee! I admire your independent spirit. That's all right with me, you order whatever you want!"

I couldn't believe it. He was putting Jerry into a subservient position through quasi-spiritual double talk. He was, in effect, giving Jerry permission to order something other than he did and in a condescending way congratulating him for his spirit, within limits, to be different. What B.S.

I glanced over at Rama to see how he was taking all of this. Rama had closed his eyes and was meditating. The room was beginning to fill with a soft golden light that was emanating from Rama's body. I thought that Rama was lucky to have ducked out of the scene and

reddish gold light come out of Rama's body and swirl around the room. Then the guru put his hand on Rama's head and I noticed that the light around Rama started to turn a little greyish. After a minute the guru removed his hand and the light got brighter again.

Then the guru said, "What sort of vision did you experience, my son?" Rama informed him that he hadn't experienced any vision since he was absorbed in Nirvana — and there are no visions or forms in that stateless state. The guru must have assumed that he had provided Rama with the roundtrip ticket to Nirvana with his touch because he then asked him, as if he was Rama's Teacher and giving him some kind of a spiritual quiz, what Nirvana was.

At this point I started to get a little put out. Even a first year student of meditation knows that Nirvana cannot be described in words. I couldn't believe that this guy was even in Rama's house, let alone a spiritual leader of thousands.

Rama didn't say anything at first. He was zoned. Then, in playful zen fashion, Rama said, "This is Nirvana," and put his hand on the guru's head.

Light shot out of Rama's hand and the guru and Rama became diffuse and then disappeared. While I've seen Rama disappear lots of times, I had never seen him take anyone with him before.

In a timeless moment they were back. The guru's physical mind did a double-take and I could see that he was trying to sort out what had just happened to him. I knew he couldn't lose face with his students, so he began to talk about his powers again — although rather weakly this time.

The guru told Rama that he wanted to speak to him in private. Rama agreed and they walked into another room. Rama later told Jerry and I what had happened when they were alone.

Rama asked the guru what he wanted from him. The guru told him that he had developed the power of physical immortality. He wanted to pass this power on. Rama smiled at the guru and directed the conversation elsewhere. He made small talk about other spiritual teachers, but the guru kept trying to steer the conversation back to the power he wanted to give away.

Rama told us that he didn't think that it was much of a power. After enlightenment there is no fear of death — so why should the guru put so much stock in a power to prolong physical life? Rama "saw" that the guru had successfully used this line before to manipulate other people. Most people would do almost anything for the power to stay alive forever. Since Rama is not like most people, he wasn't impressed. Rama has told us many times that if powers are supposed to come to a person, God will provide them, and to seek powers is to postpone one's enlightenment.

"The guru's physical mind did a double take and I could see that he was trying to sort out what had just happened to him. I knew he couldn't lose face with his students, so he began to talk about his powers again — although rather weakly this time."

imagined that he was off in some other plane having an adventure.

When I returned with the drinks the guru was lecturing everyone about his spiritual greatness. I passed out the drinks and sat on an adjacent chair. The guru lectured us as if we were all so naive that we had never heard of meditation. Rama continued to meditate and a subtle smile crossed his lips.

The guru rambled on for about half an hour. He told us of the famous people he knew and how much they like him. I couldn't believe that this guy was the spiritual leader of thousands. Rama has taught us all how to "see." As I watched the guru I didn't "see" any light or power emanating from him. I saw a man trying to make points by impressing us with his contacts. What would have impressed me would have been a little humility or concern for his audience.

Still Rama said nothing. He was absorbed in the supraconscious and I doubted at this point that he was even aware of the physical world.

The guru then told us that he had given thousands of talks and that they were all being transcribed and would amount to hundreds of books. Rama interrupted the guru and quietly said that it was not the number of books that a person wrote that mattered, but what was in them. The guru ignored his remark and plunged on with further stories of his greatness. I was getting really sick of the whole thing.

At this point I should point out that I have had experiences before with Indian gurus who have come to America. Before I met Rama I had studied with several and I had gotten badly turned off. I had seen hundreds of my friends taken advantage of by these men. They impressed us with their ability to quote Hindu scriptures, flashed us with a little shakti, dressed us in Indian clothes and put us down. I had given up on ever finding a real guru and then had run into Rama.

When the guru perceived that his usual conversation stopping ploy wasn't working, he told Rama that it was time to go. Rama and he came back to where we were and then they all left.

After the guru left I felt awful. I felt as if my whole body was covered with a larry, sticky substance. Jerry said he felt the same way. Rama started to hop around the room, laughing, and we joined him. The three of us hopped and laughed until we were out of breath.

Rama didn't say much about the guru except that it was unfortunate that such people call themselves spiritual teachers. He said that many sincere westerners have become discouraged by their meditation and other experiences with teachers like the one we had just seen. He wished that they would not get discouraged but would feel that there are real teachers in the world who can help a person in their spiritual evolution.

I told Rama that I was tired of father figure gurus who promise you everything as long as you play their game. As a woman, I am sick and tired of the daddy's little girl syndrome that these men catch women up in. Rama said that gurus like the one we had just seen were afraid of the spiritual power of women, so they like to wrap them in saris and keep them at their feet. Then he suggested that we put the whole experience out of our minds and enjoy the rest of the day.

One more note: We received a letter about a week later from someone who had attended one of the guru's talks. The guru had spent about half an hour putting Rama down and saying nasty things about him in public. The guru claimed that Rama had recognized his spiritual greatness and all kinds of other, even more absurd, things. I asked Rama how the guru could do this when Rama had been so kind to him. Rama smiled and laughed and didn't say anything.



Personal Experiences



Luminous Forms in the Night

By James

Rama had fallen asleep. I sat on the couch across from the one that he slept on. It was about five a.m. on a Wednesday morning. We had returned to Los Angeles from San Diego at about 3:30 and had spent the time in-between talking about the night's events at the San Diego center meeting. Rama had asked me to tell him what or who was in the consciousness that early morning. This is a process that tests one's ability to "see" in an intuitive sense. Rama has often asked us to do this because seeing is a very important skill to master.

"Well," I thought, "my seeing has put him to sleep." I began to doubt the power of my mystical vision. Had I stumbled on a very practical cure for insomnia? Was I really as boring as all that? Before I could indulge in any of these thoughts I realized that this was actually a rather neat opportunity. It's not every night that one gets the chance to see an enlightened being sleep. I had heard Rama speak about his sleeping state on some occasions in response to questions from his students. He had described it as being different from what we knew as sleep in that certain aspects of his being were always on-line working with his students. He had also said that many of our inner beings actually came to visit him as we slept. He had described his house as being packed with all manner of non-physical beings late at night.

To be perfectly honest, though, I was a little apprehensive at the same time as being conscious of this rare opportunity. What if he slept for several hours? What should I do? Should I quietly let myself out? He had no blanket. Should I go to the closet and get a blanket for him? Would my movement wake him?

Thoughts of the gospel about Christ's transfiguration went through my mind. The disciples had been turkeys and fallen asleep while their teacher went through some amazing stuff. Would I be like them? You begin to get a sense of the magnitude of the dilemma Rama's falling asleep had put me in.

I opted for the role of the silent observer, at least for a little while, and settled into a meditative state. I was already in a good consciousness from the hours spent with Rama. I only hoped that I would be able to "see" what was happening as Rama slept.

I didn't have to worry about this for very long. I began to see the room fill with a thick golden haze which was quite a bit more intense than the light that I usually observed around Rama. I felt my own level of consciousness expand radically as I meditated more deeply.

The room began to fill with all manner of beautifully luminous forms, which moved with a delicacy and grace that I cannot find words to describe. These were forms of beings that Rama seemed to be having some interaction with. They hovered in the room and gradually moved towards him and around him as he lay on the couch. It was as if Rama's body was a landing strip for aircrafts. His sleeping form drew these beings closer to him, much in the way that airplanes circle an airport before landing or communicating with the control tower.

I got a sense from some of the luminous forms as to what they were and what their purpose with Rama was. Some seemed to be the inner beings of people that study with Rama. They seemed to be there to communicate with Rama's being on a different level than was possible physically. Other forms seemed to be simply lovely beings of light that just enjoyed the level of luminosity around Rama.

I felt that other forms in the room were very powerful beings from another level of attention who were communicating in some way that I couldn't understand. It seemed that others were just old friends from other levels and cycles dropping by to say hello.

Rama slept peacefully throughout. The light and power that emanated from his sleeping

Dave Meets the Invisible Man

By Dave

It's really strange sitting less than six feet away from someone and not being able to see them, but there I was in a friend's living room one evening, seated next to Rama, looking directly at him and for the life of me, I couldn't see him.

It was Friday night and a bunch of people from our spiritual center, Lakshmi, had decided to go to see the latest James Bond movie, *Octopussy*. Rama was at the theater too. After the movie, a few of us went over to the Magic Pan to get something to eat. It was there that Rama suggested that we meet somewhere later that evening. One of the guys in the Center, volunteered his house for a meeting place.

At his house, I found myself seated on the living room floor, next to Rama. About twenty other people from the Center were in the room, sort of meditating. A few minutes earlier, Rama had been upstairs and everyone had been laughing and talking about the movie. It was quiet now and I looked over at Rama.

He was sitting in one of those director's chairs, sipping a Tab and gazing down at the carpet. Clouds of bright gold light were rolling off his body. The room got brighter and brighter as it filled with golden light. After a minute or two, the light became so thick that I could barely see Rama even though I was sitting only a few feet away from him, looking directly at him.

Later that evening, Rama meditated on each one of us individually. He would look at one person for a short while, then close his eyes and turn to the next person. Each time he opened his eyes, waves of light emanated from his body and filled the room. As I watched with amazement, Rama kept disappearing and all I saw was light.

form was of another octave than I'd seen before. It was beautifully clean and pure, seemingly free from the conditions of the earth plane. I sat and continued to watch for what must have been close to an hour.

The sun began to come up and I felt the chill of the early morning. Rama still had no blanket, so I determined to get him one and make my way home. I tried to get up as quietly as possible, but I woke Rama in the process. He looked much more peaceful than usual. He asked me briefly how I'd enjoyed the show. I told him a few of my impressions. He got up to let me out and wished me a "good morning."

I went out to my car and drove home in the crisp morning air. I passed joggers at the beach. The sky was an intensely deep blue. It looked like the dawn of another lovely Southern California day. I pulled up my driveway and quietly opened the front door. My roommate was getting ready for work. He asked what had kept me up so late. I told him, and then drifted off to sleep. ■

You Could Have Had Anything

By Carolyn

It was the first week back after the spring trimester break. It seemed like Rama had been going through a time of re-evaluation. He is always carefully considering where the center should be, and how we can "keep it clean," and in line with the dharma.

That Friday evening, there was a special meditation for the students who lived in Los Angeles. It turned out to be one of our major potluck feasts, but during the dinner I wasn't very hungry. I'd been wanting to discuss a personal question with Rama, and he was just sort of strolling around the rooms. So I approached him and asked if we could talk.

He was exceptionally gracious and kind, and suggested that we sit down to talk. I asked him some of my questions, and he gave me his impressions. I noticed that he seemed very different in a way. He seemed to be much more distant, yet still unbelievably kind. We reached a point in our talk where I no longer knew what to say, so Rama began to describe some of the changes he'd been going through.

Referring in part to my questions, and in part to all of his students, Rama explained that he wanted to distance himself from the human world: "I just don't want anything to do with it any more." His tone was very gentle, but also very firm. "If that's the world that people want, then I'll just wave and say hi." He gestured, showing me how he'd act when his friends would walk by. He smiled and waved, and even asked how things were going.

While we sat there, a few people actually did walk by, and Rama spoke to them just as he had shown me. I watched his manner and his eyes, and began to see the changes that he was referring to. He's like a Nobel laureate, and we're like kindergarten children. He says he'll help his students, no matter what level we're at. But there are infinite wonders we'll never see, unless we rise above the human world and start to access more light.

I listened to him, but my personal concerns still pressed upon my mind. I wanted to ask him a few more questions, and Rama was still very gracious and patient with me.

So there I sat with a fully enlightened being for quite a long time, and asked my human questions. While he was there, I could have asked him for anything in the world. I could have asked him if he would help me lose my human form, or open up the next few doorways that lay ahead for me. I could have asked him to shoot me through the next hundred incarnations, or spin my being through countless levels of attention. And he could have given me any of those things. All he would have needed from me was enough receptivity, and my sincere aspiration, equal to the task.

But I didn't ask him for any of these things. . .

Rama says a spiritual teacher often sits at home at night, alone, just waiting for someone to call. But he says that no one ever calls. We ask for his attention; we ask him for his help. We send him all our turmoil, and we send our deepest love. But we ask for only a minuscule fraction of what his being can do. We never send him the call that says we're ready to give it all.

So he graciously gives us the level we ask of him, and he helps us in every way he can, and he patiently bides his time. He waits for someone who can really use what he has to offer. Maybe one day one of us will really reach high enough. Or maybe he'll find someone out there who's just been waiting to fly.

Until then, he'll sit by his phone, and travel the world, still looking and waiting. ■



Dharma at Denny's

By Linda

I drove out alone to our July 4 desert trip, and stopped for coffee at Denny's. I saw Rama's and Anne's cars in the parking lot, and found the two of them, and Sally eating ice cream at a table. They invited me to join them, and after a little introductory conversation, Rama asked the three of us what the mood of the day's trip was. After a moment Sally answered, saying "It feels important, serious."

Rama agreed, "Yes, not frivolous."

earth, practical suggestions can you make to her that aren't aloof and above her head?"

We sat there looking stupid. "C'mon you guys, selfless giving. Selfless giving burns away the emotions, the rough edges. Emotion is like a river. We all have several rivers flowing inside us, and once we're in one, we get swept along by it. The river of emotion that you all get caught in is very cloudy and murky, and it's very difficult to get out. Some rivers are much clearer. We can control which river we enter."

Rama looked at us. "Now — let's think of a woman in the Center who is clear, and doesn't get entangled in emotions."

We couldn't come up with any names. Rama pointed out that I'm clear once in a while, but had been slipping

emotion altogether?"

We all tried to come up with an answer, and Anne finally said, "Caring for others."

Rama replied, "Yes, caring for the welfare of others. When you are concerned about yourself, then each time a storm of emotion appears you will get swept into it. But if you care more for others than you do for yourself you won't allow yourself to get taken out by emotions. You'll go beyond yourself and do remarkable things for others that you wouldn't do for yourself."

Rama asked us, "If I were

spiritual progress are: meditation, selfless giving, and a spiritual teacher. You should be able to go anywhere in the world and give a talk on this subject, with all these

points clear in your mind. So, when you get home, I would like you to write a story about this conversation. Make it a dialogue."

ON THE ROAD

I added, "It feels like a real opportunity to raise our level of attention."

"What was the essence of my talks at the last few meetings?" Rama asked.

"Well," I offered, "You've been talking about spiritual refinement and purity."

"Well what is the purpose of that? Why have I been talking about that?"

"To get people to tighten their physical lives, to be more aspiring," I tried.

"Yes, but what for, why should they do that? Look around at each other, it's easy to see."

As I looked around the table, something clicked from his talk the night before. "To purify the emotional body!" I blurted out.

"Yes. Exactly. Now, what does that mean? How would you explain that to someone who didn't speak our language? If you were giving a talk somewhere, what would you say?" Rama looked at us expectantly.

No one spoke for a minute, so I tried, "Well, it means to see clearly, uh, to not be ruled by desires, to not be confused."

Rama tried another tack, "If you were talking to someone who was in an emotional state about clearing their emotional bodies, what would you say? Let's think of someone we know."

We came up with two or three suggestions, and picked one person.

"Great! Now you know what she looks like when she's in an emotional state, and when she's in a clear state. What would you say to her to help her clear her emotional state?"

Anne spoke up. "I would tell her to look at her emotions, feel where they're coming from, and sort them out inside."

"Yes, but what down-to-

badly for a couple of weeks;

Anne had been doing well for a week or so, but had crashed that day; and Sally had been doing well for about a week, but had been slipping back for the last several days. We tried to think of some guys who were not caught up in emotion, and couldn't.

"You see — what I've seen about all you is that you're swept around so much by your emotions that all the high spiritual teaching I've been doing has been going way over your heads. Yes, you've absorbed some of it, but in an abstract philosophical way. All the information about caretaker personalities and dreaming isn't any good until you've cleared your emotional bodies. There's only one person who's got control over their emotions, and you know who that is? Me. Sometimes I experience emotions, as you know, but they are very gentle, pretty ones. The river is very clear. Can you tell me why? How was I able to gain control over my emotions?"

"You found you didn't like being in an emotional state?" I tried.

"Well, partly. Pain can only take you so far, though. Pain inspires you to go beyond pain, but it doesn't take you any further. What else?"

"Liking the clear water of higher emotions better?" I tried again.

"Yes, partly also. Love of light takes you above emotion. It's like a one-two punch. Pain inspires you to get out, love of light lifts you higher. But these can only be temporary. When the next wave of emotion comes along, you can get taken right down again. What sustaining force can take you beyond

to send you to Boston to set up a spiritual center, what would you have the people do to make spiritual progress?"

We all sat quietly, thinking up complicated schemes for spiritual advancement.

After a few seconds, Rama said, "Meditation and selfless giving! You should be able to answer these questions automatically. This is basic philosophy. You can't go on to more advanced issues until you have this down. Now, what about meditation and selfless giving? Someone can spend hundreds of hours practicing meditation and selfless giving and not make much spiritual progress. What makes them work?"

I answered, "You have to have both of them together."

"Yes, but how should you approach them?"

Anne replied, "You have to meditate with intensity, with your whole being."

"And you have to practice selfless giving with the right attitude — without selfish motives or attachment," I added.

"And what else do you need?" Rama asked.

Sally tried, "Purity and humility?"

"Well, those qualities are actually signs of emotional balance. You need a third element: meditation, selfless giving, and . . ."

None of us caught on.

"A spiritual teacher. A spiritual teacher is necessary for rapid progress. A teacher can tell you whether you are off or on. They are mirrors, reality checks. If you don't have a teacher you can fool yourself and believe that you are doing very well when you're not."

"So the three basic elements necessary for

Rama Meets the Bee

By Rama

We were sitting on one of the many rims of the Grand Canyon. There were about twenty of us plus Rama plus Don Genaro in the form of a bee and Don Juan in the form of a crow circling overhead. Rama was playing with the bee, giving it instructions, which it carefully followed. Rama was laughing and enjoying the encounter.

Rama stopped playing with the bee, which would not leave him alone, and asked each of us what we thought was our greatest obstacle on the path to enlightenment. There was complete silence, except for the bee diving-bombing each one of us in turn. Rama said, "Well, I can see this is not going over well. Let me phrase it a different way. What is your doorway?" Everyone perked up, except for me. For the first time in two years, since I had known Rama, I had an answer to a question he had asked and now he had gone and changed the question.

"Damn," I thought, my little mind whirling with panic. It was fortunate I was at the end of the line. I would have time to think something up. I decided to calm myself and listen to what everyone else had to say. Love, humility, purity, selfless giving and absorption in work were the most popular doorways of the day. I was in trouble. It was a power place. One had to speak the truth. You could hear in a person's voice when they had hit on the right doorway for them. None of them seemed right for me. Love: I had given up on that one long ago. Now, I only loved conditionally or from a distance, if at all. My ego took care of the humility angle. Purity had been in the way of my desires and had been firmly dealt with. I had been forced into service to others from early childhood and I was sick and tired of it. Acting had been the only work I had ever loved, but it wasn't working out and it's hard to be absorbed in something you are not doing. Things weren't looking good. Then someone said meditation was their doorway. "Of course," I thought. Perhaps through meditation I could regain some purity and humility. I could learn to love again. I might find some work to be absorbed in. I might even eventually be able to do some selfless giving.

It was my turn to speak. I heard myself say, "I think meditation is my only hope." The truth of the statement jolted my being. It didn't even sound like my own voice. My ears were ringing. I felt dissociated from my body. I hung onto the rock I was sitting on. A couple of people laughed, perhaps at the slight desperation in my voice. Rama said, "I like that." He played with the bee some more. We said thank you to the canyon and left.

What a day! The fate of the world was decided. We spoke the truth in a power place. We had a great dinner.

Airport Encounter

By Steve

After the San Francisco center meeting a few weeks ago, I was flying back to Los Angeles with Rama. As usual, we were flying on Pacific Express, a neat little airline with about seven or eight small jets. The people who work for this airline are all relatively young and happy and like their jobs. The fares are also the cheapest available. Since they are such a small airline, their terminal was located in some basement of San Francisco International. The waiting room is old, its carpet torn. But no one minds because they will not be there long.

That night we were waiting for our flight in the waiting room. Only a few other people were in the room. Among them were a young lady and her daughter. We happened to sit down across from them, so that we faced them about four feet away. The lady was pretty, with big eyes and a tired smile. She wore blue jeans. She was very friendly and just started talking to us. She said she was going to Stockton. For some reason, it just seemed strange that anyone would be going to Stockton in the middle of the night. Rama asked her if she knew anyone there.

"No," she said. "I'm just going there to pick up my car."

"Where will you go when you get your car?" Rama asked.

"I'm going to drive to Utah. That's where we are going to live."

So she was flying to nowhere to pick up a car so she could drive to nowhere, with her daughter, in the middle of the night. I got the impression she once had a husband or someone she lived with, but that it was over long ago. I felt she had been on her own with her daughter for a year or two. It didn't bother her. She was doing alright.

Rama said to me, "Open up some of that candy." We had bought a bag full of candy before checking in for the flight. Rama had flown on this airline a few times before and said that they always forgot the in-flight snacks. So I gave him some chocolate. We had stopped talking to the lady for the

Football at Denny's

By Roger

While I was debating whether to order the fresh mushroom omelette or the dinner salad and onion rings I watched Rama and Dave begin playing table football. The dinner salad and onion rings are cheaper, but the omelette comes with a rasher of hash browns. Table football consists of using sugar packets as footballs and trying to propel them across the length of the table so that they stop at the other end with part of them off the table and part on the table. Rama and Dave were having a bit of trouble until they discovered that the water glasses had left wet spots on the table and this prevented the sugar packets from sliding freely. The waitress arrived and so I meditated quickly on omelettes and dinner salads/onion rings and chose the dinner salad/onion rings because that's what my intuition said was the correct thing to order. I was also almost broke.

Rama and Dave were sending the sugar packets back and forth with little success. The rest of the guys at the table had put the glasses and silverware along the side like spectators and would add sound effects every time a sugar packet would career into the spectators.

It was around five a.m. when I watched the waitress bring the dinner salad to me. We had spent the night meditating at power places with Rama and had all stopped at the usual Denny's on the way back to Los Angeles. Denny's is usually empty at this hour, but we filled up the non-smoking section. The waitress was rather surprised at the heavy load of customers.

Rama was ahead one to nothing now. Most of us were due at work in a few hours, but we didn't mind. We were in a high consciousness from being in the desert and on the mountain with Rama, and the Denny's was a luminous place for awhile. All of the students were glowing as I looked around. Dave tried blowing on his sugar packet as if it were a pair of dice, but to no avail. I felt very peaceful.

Soon we had to leave to beat the rush hour traffic in order to make it to work on time.

time being. Her daughter had been wandering around the room, in her own world. But when she saw us eating, she was across the room in a second.

"What are you eating?" she said.

"Some chocolate raisins," Rama said.

We tried to ignore her. Her mother told her to stop bothering us. But after a few seconds, "What are you eating?"

"They're raisins," Rama said. "Want some?"

"Okay." She was cute enough that you didn't mind. Her mom told her not to take too much. After I let her have a few peanut M&M's, she kept trying to see into the bag of candy. Rama asked her what her name was. She held up three fingers.

"Not how old are you. What's your name?"

She looked at her mom.

"Tell them your name, dear."

"Pam," she said. "What's your name?"

"Rama."

"Ama-ama?"

"Forget it. I have another name. You can call me Doctor Lenz."

"Doc?"

"Doc" is good. Call me Doc.

"Are you a doctor?"

"No, actually I'm a teacher. Want some more raisins?"

Pam took the raisins and

wandered off somewhere, to see what anyone else was eating, I suppose. We talked with her mom about nothing in particular for a while. We discussed the center meeting between the two of us a little bit before Pam came back. She went straight to Rama to see what he was eating now. He gave her some peanut-butter crackers. Pam climbed up on the empty seat next to him.

"My mommy loves me very much."

"That's good," Rama said.

"Can I have another cracker, Doc?"

"Sure. Here."

"I love my mommy, too. And my daddy."

"That's very nice."

"Do you love me, Doc?"

"Sure. I love you."

"I love you too, Doc. What's he eating?"

I was eating some malted milk balls. "Want some?" I said. She held out her hand, I gave her a couple. I thought Rama might be getting tired of this little three-year-old hovering around after food. But he didn't seem to mind.

"I really love you, Doc."

"That's good, dear."

"Do you love me?"

"Sure. Want some more candy?"

"Okay. I love you so much, Doc."

She put her arms around his neck and hugged him.

She started giving him little

kisses on the cheek. She had a real tight hold on his neck. He turned to me. "It's the light," he said. "She's in love with the light." He just let her hang there around his neck. I had thought she loved him because of the candy. But I realized she wasn't just saying it to get fed, she really did love him. She saw, or felt, something in him that I have only glimpsed from time to time. And she responded with love.

"Are you going to stay here, Doc?"

"No. I have to leave in a few minutes to fly to Los Angeles."

"I wish you would stay." She gave him another kiss. "I love you."

This went on for about five more minutes. Then the announcement came that it was time for our flight to board.

"Are you going now?" Pam asked.

"Yes, we have to go now. Goodbye."

We said goodbye and good luck to her mother and headed out the door.

"Goodbye, Doc."

"Goodbye, Pam."

On the way to the plane I said, "That was really something. Wasn't it?"

Rama said, "Usually I don't like little kids too much. But she was all right. She just fell in love with light."

I asked him if he thought it would make any difference in

that little girl's life, to have had such an encounter with someone who was Self Realized. I thought that maybe when she was grown she might remember what had happened and it might somehow change her life for the better.

"No," said Rama. "It won't make any difference."

"None at all?" I asked.

"None at all."

We were going up the stairs to the door of the jet. From there, we could see into the window of the waiting room. Pam was standing on a chair next to the window, waving goodbye. Rama waved back to her. She kept waving. Rama waved goodbye to her again. "You should wave to her, Steve," he said.

And so I waved to her.

First Meeting with Rama

By Bob

Here I am in 1983, on the planet Earth, studying with a spiritual teacher. This may not sound like such a strange occurrence to you, but in my opinion, it is. I will be thirty-two years old this year, and I have done my very best to live these years in the fast lane. I have developed and own a million dollar business, I have eaten repeatedly at the finest restaurants, and I have traveled over much of the world, including remote areas accessible only by helicopter where I have skied virgin snows. I have chartered boats to fish and among my catches is a 500-pound world class marlin. I have experienced the finest in drugs from all over the world and drive whatever car I choose. The list goes on and on. Nothing was handed to me on a silver platter. I began chasing these dreams when I was twelve years old, putting away empty pop bottles for fifty cents an hour. I admit that I was probably in the right places at the right times, just as I was in October of 1981 when I first met Rama, my spiritual teacher.

Being in the right place at the right time is not always by one's own choice. I know that this meeting with Rama was not because of an independent decision of my own. I had seen spiritual teachers before with my sister, and I was frankly unimpressed. I have given you some of my personal background to give you some idea of what it might take to impress me. The spiritual teachers I'd seen appeared to me to be persons educated to help lost souls. You know the types, with problems at home, who just lost their job. These spiritual teachers seemed to be group counselors with only a slight insight into life in general. My sister, whom I love dearly, seemed to get involved with this sort of person on a regular basis.

I have always been interested in spiritual teachings. I meditated for a period of time once and experimented with some spiritual theories. I was a vegetarian when most people here thought that you would die if you didn't eat meat. I had pretty much led my life being my own spiritual teacher, believing that the human race had not yet produced a spiritual teacher real enough to teach me. What the heck! I didn't think I needed a spiritual teacher. Everything seemed to be going fine for me.

One day my mother called and asked me if we could have lunch together. As we were dining, she began to tell me about my sister's new teacher. She said that even she felt drawn to him in a very magical way. She asked me if I would go see Rama. Knowing that I had been to a number of spiritual meetings and had been unimpressed, she made it sound pretty interesting to secure my attendance. She finally convinced me, and I made the drive to the Los Angeles Convention Center.

I got there early and met my sister near the door. She introduced me to a few of her new friends, and we all "hung around" waiting for the evening to begin. "Sit up nice and straight," she told me, "when he says it's time to meditate."

There I was, sitting in the back corner, figuring out what I'd do for the rest of the evening after the meeting. I was paying just enough attention so that I could discuss the evening with my mother and sister to their satisfaction.

Rama entered the room. After he made a few jokes and some spiritual remarks we began to meditate. I sat up straight and started to study him. He was young, about thirty to thirty-five years old, had curly brown hair and looked like an average kind of guy. He was dressed like people in Los Angeles dress. It was a ready-for-anything type of apparel, good for anything from a rock concert to a fine French restaurant.

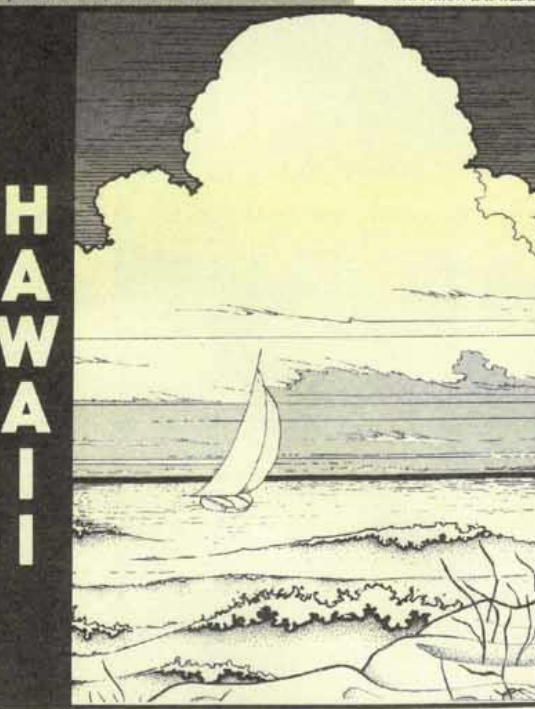
As we continued to meditate, I got more intensely involved. I quieted my mind and sat up very straight, in order to give Rama every opportunity to do whatever he could do. He

sionally stopping to look at someone in what seemed a casual manner. Suddenly he found me in my island of safety in the back of the room. Our eyes met and an inner dialogue began with a magnitude I had never before experienced. As we communicated, the room seemed to empty of all other persons. A bright gold aura filled the room and light streamed around Rama in a vivid visual display unlike anything I had ever seen. When the meditation ended, and I had had a chance to regain my composure, my conscious mind immediately attempted to deny what I had seen.

After the meeting was over, my sister approached me and asked what I thought. I answered that it had been alright, thinking to myself that I'd better keep this under my hat for a while, until I had time to analyze it.

We walked to the car in silence. Suddenly I had to tell her what had happened to me at the meeting. As I told her, I felt a great weight lifted from my shoulders. It was as if I was admitting to myself that perhaps, just perhaps, there was something to Spirituality, and perhaps there was a place for it in my life.

I applied to become a student of Rama's and was accepted. Between that night at the Los Angeles Convention Center and the first Center meeting I attended, enough time had elapsed that my mind had convinced my being that whatever I had seen had not been as vivid as I had imagined. I needed to verify the experience. As meetings go on, week by week, I am able to accept more and more of what I have been witnessing. I have had breath-taking experiences of visual light displays and feelings of inner peace. The high I experience are unparalleled by any others I have encountered in thirty-two years. The whole process is still baffling to me, to say the least. But I am a spiritual seeker, and I admit it.



Rama Meets the Buddha

By Patti

One night on the Big Island, after dinner, we all went for a walk around the gardens. First, we went to visit the Buddha that lived at the top of the stairs at the entrance to a tropical garden. This large stone Buddha sits on a pillar. People leave offerings of flowers and fruit in his lap. They even burn offerings at times, which has left his navel quite black. As we stood looking at him, Rama walked up to him. Rama began to meditate on the Buddha, who began to breathe. The Buddha became fluid and formless. Then he took on different forms. He even smiled. I liked him a lot. He had a really neat vibration and power.

At one point, Rama walked behind him and Rama's arms stuck out of the Buddha's sides. It seemed as if the Buddha had four arms, then a multitude of arms that were moving up and down like an octopus. We all laughed. Rama came back around in front of the Buddha and leaned on the Buddha, who seemed to tip over. This was a large stone Buddha, fully solid, heavy, and immovable, and it was now leaning over. Rama stood him back up and then he shot light through him. He changed again. We looked up into the stars and said goodnight to the happy Buddha as we headed toward the ocean's edge.

Purple Haze over Hawaii

By Douglas

We were playing on this windsurfer — James, Donald, Craig, Rama and myself. Donald seemed the best at it, but we were all giving it a good try. The thing I noticed was the absence of the usual competition of who's best, or who gets to use it next. The point was the joy in playing with your friends.

After playing in the water, Rama and I got out and walked back to the beach chairs. I sat next to him and he offered me the extra pair of earphones on his Walk-person tape player. He has this tape of some fine sixties music. The Beatles, "Turn off your mind, relax and float downstream..." "Purple Haze," by Jimi Hendrix. As I lay on my back to enjoy the music, I noticed that a dark cover of clouds had moved in. Rama raised his hands and started to bounce energy off the cloud layer. The purple clouds started to oscillate slightly, then to change color from purple to gold to blue — but mainly I saw the dark clouds flashing brightly on and off.

I realized, finally, that these light changes were occurring in time to the music. The crashing opening chords to "Purple Haze" were accompanied, in time, by the alternate flashing of purple and gold light of the cloud cover. Pow-Pow-Pow — Dark-Bright-Dark-Bright. When I realized what was going on, I laughed out loud. I looked over at Rama. He was laughing too, with his headset on, and his hands raised to the clouds, like some mad orchestra conductor. "Pretty good, huh?" he said over the music. What could I say? Yeah, I thought it was pretty good. I just lay back and watched Rama play as if he were still wrestling with the windsurfer. He was having fun. We laughed a lot that afternoon.

Later, as I was getting ready to leave the beach, Rama, still playful, pointed his hands at me and gave me a little burst of energy. I felt intense heat and my nerves crackled like very dry cellophane paper being squeezed. The molecules in the air became visible. I laughed again. Here was a child showing his friends some tricks. I don't know if it was the same night or not, but the

question I asked had been on my mind for some time. Of what use are the *siddhis*? What do these obviously beautiful manifestations of light and power have to do with Eternity? With God? I don't ask Rama a lot of spiritual questions. Most are answered in his lectures and the books we are assigned to read. You must be careful that the motive for asking the question is not one of ego, or self-importance, or of the subtle put-down variety. You must consider a question of spiritual inquiry very carefully before you actually ask Rama.

To my relief, Rama patiently answered. First of all, as you advance farther along the spiritual path, the powers come, whether you want them or not. The spiritual person must be prepared for them, to use them for the benefit of others and most importantly, not get obsessed and side-tracked by them. He enumerated a few positive uses of occult power.

- 1) To protect oneself, now grown hypersensitive on the spiritual path, from the dangers of bad energy from bad people and the world.
- 2) When you get hung up or stuck on the path, occult power can blast you through to another level of attention. A teacher can use it to help someone through a difficult period.
- 3) To change people's view of the world. Seeing miracles seriously threatens a person's description of the world. We have to change our idea of what the world is and what it is not before we can make spiritual progress.
- 4) Eternity manifests through the *siddhis*. The gold and white light that emanates from Rama during meditation is the light of eternity. That energy I saw him bouncing off the clouds in time to the music is the essential energy of the universe. Rama's extraordinary displays of power are essentially a visible manifestation of God.

THE LAST PAGE

The Force is Within Us

By Gary

Rama went with a few of his students to a movie in Westwood Village one Friday night. The Village is an area of shops, restaurants and movie theaters on the edge of the UCLA campus. On Friday nights, Westwood is usually jammed with college kids out for a good time. This Friday was not different and Westwood was busy with activity.

Rama and I were walking towards the theater from his car. We reached an intersection in the Village and the traffic light in our direction was red. It was almost time for the movie to start so we decided to jog across the street anyway. Just before we reached the other side of the street, a policeman on a motorcycle came out of nowhere and ordered us to stop at the curb.

Westwood cops seem to write a lot of jaywalking tickets on Friday nights and from his tone of voice, I knew that this one was going to write us tickets.

The cop pulled up next to us and turned off his motorcycle.

"What makes you think the 'Don't Walk' sign doesn't apply to you?" he said to Rama.

"Maybe I'm just stupid," Rama replied in a friendly, half-joking tone of voice.

"How 'bout you?" the cop asked me.

"Sorry, officer," I answered. The policeman looked us over for a second and seemed to size us up.

"You go to school here?" he questioned Rama.

"I have my own school," Rama said.

Bending down and resting his hands on his knees, Rama brought his face close to the policeman's. He stared directly into the policeman's eyes.

The cop looked back at Rama, hesitated, then looked away. He glanced up at me, then looked back down at the ground.

"Just wait a few seconds next time, until it's O.K. to walk," the cop mumbled, then started his motorcycle and sped off.

As we walked away, Rama said, "Did you see?"

I nodded.

Mimicking Darth Vader's voice, Rama said, "Never underestimate the power of the force."

Never Underestimate the Power of the Force

By Sam

I am by nature somewhat of a competitive person, and, as a matter of fact, would not let my own grandmother beat me at something. It is not my way, in this regard, to make exceptions for enlightened persons.

One afternoon, some time ago, Rama and I sat down to play his new video baseball game. Within a short time, I had extended a wide lead; something like 35-10. I then settled in for what I thought would be a complete rout.

Suddenly, something happened. My "swing" at the "ball" became erratic, in the extreme. When Rama was hitting, my fielding was so bad that even the Padres would have cancelled my contract. Within a matter of moments, I became a complete motor moron. My lead soon evaporated and Rama was firmly in control.

At some point during this victory turned debacle, I thought to myself, "I wonder if he's playing some game that isn't on the screen."

Within two, and I mean two, seconds of the time this thought passed through my mind, Rama turned to me and said with a Gaelic accent, "Now, ye wouldn't be thinking I be putting the force on ye now, would ye?"

The Case of the Enlightened Cheesecake

By Neil

"I've got to have just one bite!" Rama exclaimed, looking at the cheesecake in front of me.

I am an admirer of food. Not just any food. I have conducted a never-ending search for the most exotic and appealing tastes that can be found. I was at a restaurant eating a slice of cheesecake. It was good, but I wasn't particularly impressed by it. It was just a cheesecake.

Rama took a bite, and closed his eyes for a second. He looked at me and smiled.

"Have a bite," he said to me, "and I will show you something."

I took a bite and couldn't believe that this was the same cheesecake that I had been eating a moment ago. The taste was exquisite beyond anything I had so far experienced in this life. Food always tastes better around Rama, but this was bliss in edible form. As I experienced this, Rama spoke.

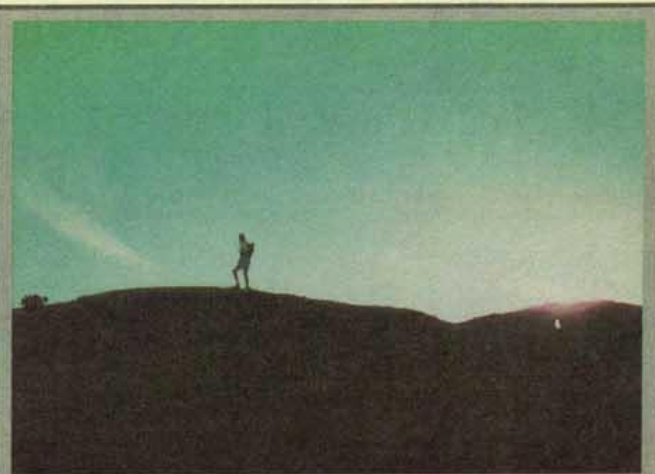
"You can see everything in this cheesecake. It is possible to see the myriad worlds of existence in it. You can see the birth, life and ultimate transformation of the multiple universes. Spinning worlds coming into being and then dissolving — all in this cheesecake."

As he spoke I saw these things — the cheesecake became Eternity, Infinity, Nirvana and Samsara.

I opened my eyes and was astounded to find myself still in the restaurant. I turned to Rama, who was smiling at me. "That was ecstasy," I told him.

"One day, Neil, when you become enlightened," he replied, "you will be able to eat this way all of the time!"

I pondered his words deeply and decided that enlightenment clearly has its fringe benefits.



EPILOGUE

By Gary

On May 1st of this year, I moved from San Diego to Los Angeles. I moved because I had been invited to by my spiritual teacher, Rama. I withdrew from my classes at UCSD, where I was about a year away from completing my Computer Science degree. I found an apartment in Los Angeles and scratched together every cent I had to make the security deposit. The rent would be double what I was paying in San Diego. Their reactions ranged from "you stupid idiot" to "you'll be back in six months." I packed what I could in my Volkswagen and drove to my landlady's office to return the apartment keys. She was keeping the \$300.00 security deposit because I was moving out under a lease. Then I drove down to the beach to say goodbye to San Diego.

The particular spot I went to was on a cliff overlooking the ocean. It was about a hundred feet high. I had come to this spot often over the years, at times when I was sad, or to watch the sun set, or to think. Sometimes I came to watch the waves. I went surfing at this spot regularly and knew the waves quite well. I knew how they broke left and right, how they broke at low tide and high tide. I knew how they broke on a big swell, how there was always this inside section that looked like a ton of bricks coming down on you. It would peel faster and faster and you'd swear you'd never make it. It was so fast, but if you shifted all your weight forward and just stayed with it you could make it every time.

I looked out over the ocean. The afternoon onshore wind made the sea a little choppy, but there were no whitecaps. It was about an hour until sunset. I said out loud to the ocean, "Now I have come to say thank you, and to say goodbye." But for awhile I just watched the scenery: the ocean, the birds, the surfers, the waves, as I had done so many times before.

Then I said, "Thank you, ocean, for always being here. I have come to you when I was sad and when I was happy, when I was in love and when I was out of love. You have seen me at my best, and at my worst. Once I even wanted to kill myself, but I came here instead. And when I found my teacher and felt more alive than ever, I came here to share my joy with you. You have seen my storms, and you have seen my calms, and you have always been here. For that I thank you."

I looked up into the clear sky and said, "Thank you for this life you have given me. Thank you for every tear. I have cried a lot

in my life. And thank you for my laughter, for I have also laughed a lot. Thank you for those I have loved, and for those I have not loved. Thank you for my good qualities and my faults, my successes, my failures, my dreams and my reality. For the day and the night. For the ocean, the sky and the mountains. For the stars, for surfing and for music. For giving me a teacher. For putting me in this wonderful world, for making me a human being. I am sincerely grateful for all these things. I would not change the slightest detail, for I see it has always been perfect. And so I thank you for my life."

And for a while I just watched the scenery. The sun was close to the horizon now. A group of about twenty seagulls flew by below me. The wind had calmed to a slight breeze from the west. A few surfers were still in the water, catching the last waves before dark.

My whole life had been in San Diego. I was born there, went to grammar school and high school there. Even when I was overseas in the Navy I knew I would be coming back. I had met the woman I married there. I was going to college there. I had met my spiritual teacher there. Now he was leaving and I was going with him. Now it was time to say goodbye.

I had said goodbye to every person I could remember in my life. Faces long forgotten came to mind and I wished them all well. I said goodbye to my parents, my ex-wife, to the women I had loved, to my best friends, my childhood friends, my high school and Navy friends. I said goodbye to people I had known for only a few hours or met for a moment in passing. I said goodbye and wished them well. And I felt true love for all of them.

I said goodbye to San Diego and to all the places I had lived there, all the experiences I had there. I said goodbye to my life and to everyone and everything in it. Then I said goodbye to myself and to all the different people I had been over the years.

I watched the sun go down and said goodbye to it and to the day. I said goodbye to this place I had come to so often, and to the waves I knew so well. I said goodbye to the moment and got up to leave.

There were still two surfers in the water, though it was almost too dark to see. One of them was paddling hard to catch a wave. He stood up as it broke just behind him. He slid to the base of the wave and snapped into a sharp left turn. As the wall of water formed in front of him, he moved forward on his board to gain speed.

I turned around and walked toward my car.

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