



STUMBLING
INTO INFINITY

An Ordinary Man in the
Sphere of Enlightenment

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New York

STUMBLING INTO INFINITY
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A Reading Group Guide is available at www.stumblingintoinfinity.com.



A few days later, at the end of February, another American arrived at Gyan Mandir. She was an attractive Hispanic woman, with dark skin, a flat stomach, small hazel-blue eyes, and an open smile. I was smitten. Her name was Margarita Emilia Lopez, but we knew her as Rita. A Colombian immigrant, Rita was a professor of political science at Cornell University. Now on sabbatical, she was traveling around India and had already visited several ashrams.

Rita moved into the room next to mine. She wasn't shy, and kept me up for hours, telling me stories about her adventures traveling through India. In the morning, she attended her first Art of Living Course, with Rajshree and me as her instructors.

An uneven number of participants were on the course, so I volunteered to fill in as her partner during one of the processes. Charmed by her beauty, I didn't pay much attention to the process. Afterwards, Rita extended her arms, indicating that she appreciated me and wanted a hug. But I couldn't respond. My right knee was completely locked.

As I forced myself to straighten my leg, I heard a rip in my knee. The pain was excruciating. Then, in less than a minute, my knee blew up like a balloon. Rita didn't seem to notice. She looked confused and walked away.

"Rajshree, help me!" I screamed. "See if there is a doctor somewhere. I'm in so much pain. I think I've done something horrible to my knee."

Rajshree rushed off to tell Guruji what had happened. In a few minutes, she returned. "Don't worry, Michael," she said. "Siddha and Buddha are upstairs with Guruji. They'll be down in a minute to help."

Siddha and Buddha were two eccentric elderly gentlemen with big bellies, who had long retired as medical doctors. They often came to Gyan Mandir to visit Guruji, entertaining him for hours as they spoke about the science of *ayurveda* — the Vedic approach to health.

I often wondered why Guruji spent so much time with them. To me they were two old screwballs, but Guruji treated them royally. He laughed uncontrollably whenever he sat with them, and had given them pet names that flattered their massive egos. Now I realize that however off I might find someone, Guruji will love that person all the same.

First, Dr. Siddha arrived. He looked at me with bewilderment as I clutched at my knee in agony.

“Yes, my dear American friend. What is the problem?” His pure white dentures clattered as he spoke. “I have been a chief medical doctor for more than forty years. I am at your service.”

What type of doctor was he? Couldn't he see it was my knee?

“It's his knee,” said Rajshree, pointing to my obviously puffed up knee. “It's swollen.”

“Ahh, yes, yes, of course. Does it hurt if I pull it like this?”

“Yes!” I screamed, as he yanked my leg from side to side.

“I see. Now tell me, how are your teeth?”

“Fine!” I grunted.

“What about your mother's teeth?”

I nodded affirmatively.

“And your father's?”

“Rajshree, please,” I protested. “Isn't there a real doctor somewhere who can help me? Please get someone. I'm in so much pain.”

In a few minutes, Dr. Buddha arrived and looked at me sympathetically. I think Guruji called him Buddha because of his shining bald head and the perpetual smile on his face. “What is all the fuss about?” he asked. “Do you have a problem, my American friend?”

“It is his knee,” said Dr. Siddha.

“Yes, of course. It is swollen. Does it hurt if I pull your leg like this?” Dr. Buddha asked.

“Yes!” I screamed. “Don't do that!”

“So tell me, how are your teeth?” he asked.

“Fine!!” I growled.

“And your mother's teeth?”

I held my head between my hands and began to cry. All the doctors in India must be crazy, I thought.

Then Guruji came down to see what all the shouting was about. Dr. Buddha greeted him with his professional diagnosis, declaring, “His knee is swollen, Guruji.”

They all huddled around me and stared at my knee as though something was supposed to happen.

“It is much like a situation I experienced when I was the chief of surgery at the army medical hospital in Bombay,” Dr. Buddha exclaimed. “There was a patient that came to the hospital with a growth protruding from his skull. Many of the surgeons said that it was a brain tumor and wanted to operate immediately. They conducted a biopsy and diagnosed it as malignant and did not think the man had any chance to survive. But I used my intuition to assess the situation. Immediately, I got a bowl of cold water and put it near the man’s head and shouted, ‘Jump! Jump!’ And in no time, a frog jumped out of the man’s head into the pot of water and the tumor was gone. It was completely gone and the man was able to walk home!”

Guruji and Dr. Siddha shook their heads in amazement, as though he had shown them a miracle. I couldn’t believe my ears. Had they gone mad?

Guruji looked at me reassuringly and said, “Don’t worry. Nothing is broken. Just put ice on it. It will take some time, but you’ll be all right.”

I thought my trip to India had come to an end, and it was time to go home to a hospital. But I rested in bed with ice on my knee.

In a few days, the pain subsided and I was strong enough to hop around Gyan Mandir. I still had a strong desire to leave India and return to the United States to see an orthopedic surgeon. But Guruji insisted I stay and that my knee would be fine.



After some months and numerous visits to a physical therapist, my knee was pretty well healed.