

SATYAM TALES

The Car of Life

On the yogic route



Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India



Satyam Tales

Commenced on the occasion of World Yoga Convention & BSY Golden Jubilee, 2013

The Car of Life is the thirty-ninth in the series of *Satyam Tales* depicting the life and teachings of our guru, Sri Swami Satyananda Saraswati. Through the medium of these simple narratives, we hear the voice of Sri Swamiji inspiring all, irrespective of age.

Two young boys are taught an invaluable lesson of life by their mothers as they embark on their journey to college. The mothers' voices resonate within at every critical juncture steering them forward on the road of life. This route is one of *sanyam*, balance, and *maryada*, appropriateness. The two boys learn the fine art of blending spirituality with material living and realize that it is the yogic path which brings fulfilment, contentment and peace in life.

This story is a delightful read for children, adults and old alike. It is an invaluable message for those engaged in the world and for those seeking the spirit. This journey is your journey, these challenges are your challenges, and this victory is your victory. It is a story that will touch your heart, give you joy, hope, conviction and, above all, faith. Perhaps, you may also be inspired to adopt the yogic route for the journey of your life . . .

— Editor

© Bihar School of Yoga 2020

Published by Yoga Publications Trust

First edition 2020

Printed at Thomson Press India Ltd., Faridabad

Please note:

- This collection of *Satyam Tales* is dedicated to our masters, Sri Swami Sivananda Saraswati and Sri Swami Satyananda Saraswati, and is the vehicle to bring their spiritual and yogic teachings in an understandable and applicable form into the lives of individuals throughout the world.
- *Satyam Tales* will be exclusively published by Yoga Publications Trust to ensure the accuracy and correctness of the teachings and the context in which they are being presented.
- *Satyam Tales* is a loving offering to all the children and the future generations of the world to remind them of their true nature and inspire them to explore and enhance their own potential.
- We invite all aspirants to share these tales with your group and if you have some tales of your own, we request you to contribute as well. You can also publish these tales in your own language, fulfilling the conditions of YPT, for which you may contact:

Yoga Publications Trust, Ganga Darshan, Fort, Munger, Bihar, India 811201

Tel: +91-6344 222430, Fax: +91-6344 220169

The Car of Life

Rohit and Rahul are good friends. Both are five years old. Both go to the same school. Both are in the same class and both boys' families are good friends. Both boys study together, play together, eat together and sleep together . . . one day at Rohit's house and the other at Rahul's.

It was on one such bright, cheerful, sunlit afternoon as the two boys were playing with their toy cars that an argument erupted. Rahul said, "My Chacha has the best car in town."

Rohit looked at him with a scrunched up face and retorted, "Your Chacha! No way! My Phupha has the best car in town."

"Chacha" "Phupha" "Chacha" "Phupha" "Chacha" "Phupha" went on for some time, and then Rahul smiled, "My Chacha's car goes at 100 kms."

Rohit replied, "My Phupha's car goes at 200 kms."

"You press a button and the windows come down."

"You press a button and the roof opens."

"My Phupha's car has leather seats."

"My Chacha's car has a TV."

Sitting at a distance but within earshot were Rohit's sisters who were a fair bit older than him, and their mother. The girls let out a giggle and the mother smiled. Unbeknownst to the two boys the cars under contention were not two, but one and the same car, a powder blue Mercedes. After all, Rohit's



father's sister was married to Rahul's father's brother. The phupha and the chacha were one single individual, Mr Ram Mohan Rajputana.

The argument got steamier. Then, all of a sudden the two toy cars crashed into each other and the boys burst into peals of laughter. The argument subsided as quickly as it had started. Life continued. Through all their fights, feuds and frustrations Rohit and Rahul remained good friends. One could even say, they thought of themselves as dear brothers.

As the boys grew older they understood their folly and this anecdote became the joke of many a family reunion. Sometimes Rohit's mother would tell the story, sometimes Rahul's mother would narrate it, sometimes Mr Rajputana would recount it and sometimes the boys themselves. Each retelling had a different spice and a different flavour. Nevertheless, every time it brought forth the images of childhood innocence and everyone laughed at it good-humouredly.

Time passed quickly. Soon the boys would turn 18 years old. The families planned a gala event. On the actual day everyone came – friends, family, neighbours – to be part of the festivities. The celebrations started in the mid-morning. Amidst mouthwatering food, refreshing drinks and entertaining company nobody realized when evening set in. Slowly, one by one, people started leaving. First, the neighbours went. Then the friends. Just as night was rolling in the last of the family members bid goodbye.

It was a full moon night. The moon's silvery beam lit up the living room with a most magical light. Both boys sat on the sofa soaking up the day's events. Just then both mums came in, each jangling a ring of keys in their hand. This was the moment the boys had waited for. This was their birthday gift – each one was getting his very own, personal real-life car. The boys leapt up in tandem to grab the keys. They could not wait to take their new prize for a spin. Just as quickly the mums withdrew their hands. In unison they said, "No, no, not yet. First you have to listen to the story of the Car of Life."

The boys slumped back onto the sofa. It had been a beautiful day. The last thing they wanted was a motherly





lecture. Yet, these were obedient boys and they knew their mothers to be loving, doting ones so they listened with an empty mind, attentive ears and an open heart.

Rohit's mother was the first to speak. She began in a measured tone, "What keeps a car moving is its four wheels and the steering wheel. So let's start with these. The first wheel of the car of life is called artha." The boys scrunched up their faces and gave each other a knowing look. When the maternal mouths spewed Sanskrit words it was all very serious business.

Mother dearest continued, "Artha means wealth, money and the means to live." 'Oh not so bad after all,' thought the boys, 'After all isn't that what the good life is all about: speedy cars, beautiful girls, good food and good drink'. Back from their musings they listened to what mama had to say next. "Material wealth is very important. Without it we could not live. We would not have any food. We would not have clothes nor would we have this beautiful home. Money is essential to our existence and it all begins with a good education." The boys nodded. They could not agree more with these words of wisdom.

Rahul's mother interjected, "So don't believe those who say 'money is evil'. It is not. Neither fall into the trap of those who sell you riches and fame, who entice you with moolah, moolah, moolah; who tell you that money makes the world go round. It does not.

“Money is a necessity. It is required to meet our basic needs, it helps us achieve our dreams and it provides us the opportunity to enjoy the beauty the world has to offer. Money, my boys, has the power to make you very, very happy and it also has the power to plunge you into the depths of extreme sorrow. If you keep the other three wheels of the car in balance with artha, artha is your greatest friend. If you put too much air into the tyre of artha, the pressure will make it your greatest enemy.”

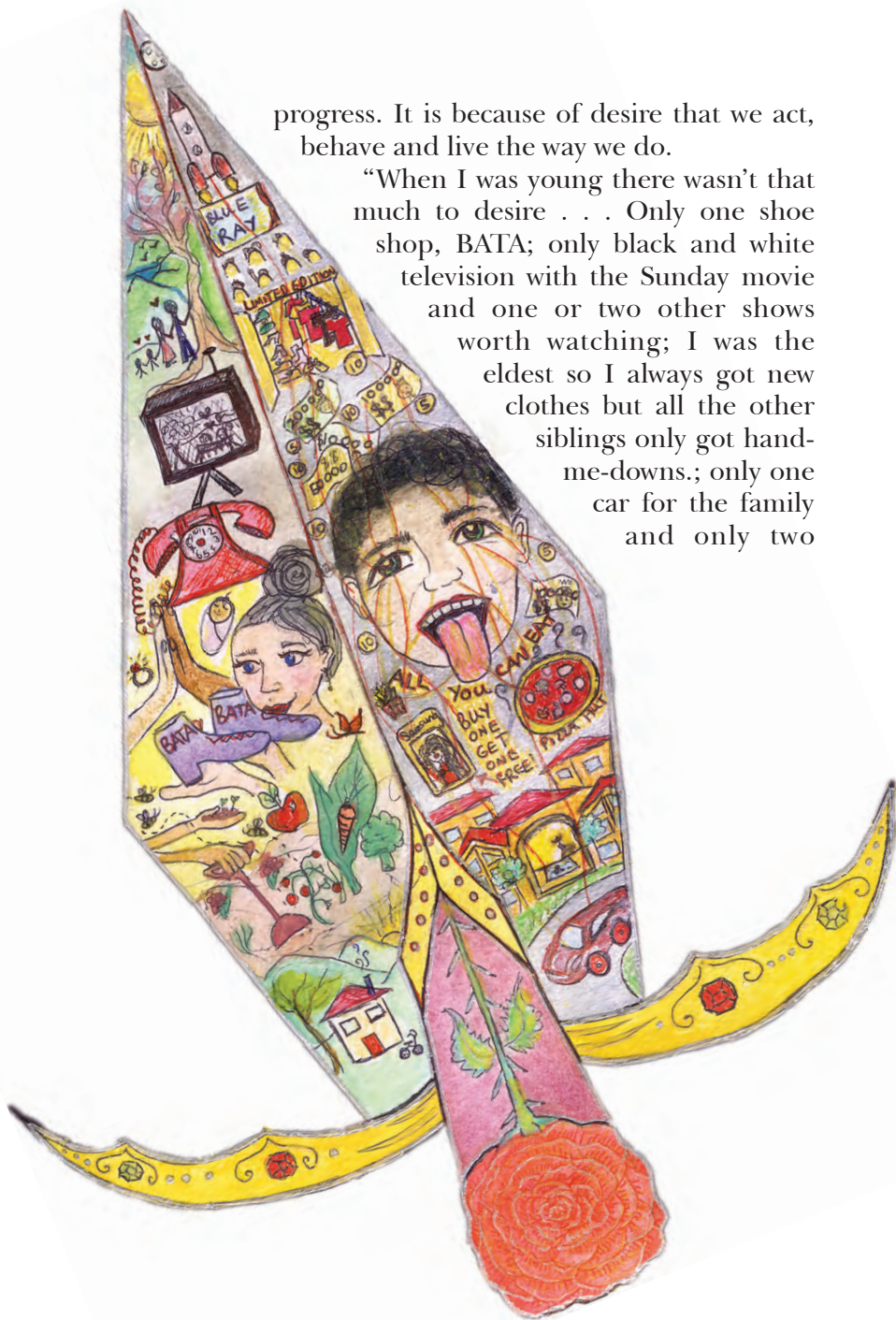
The mothers had got their boys’ attention. Rohit asked, “So what is the next wheel in the car of life?” “Kama, desire.” Rohit and Rahul almost fell off their sofa seats. They looked at each other in disbelief. Images from the Kama Sutra popped into their heads. ‘Are we really going to discuss love, lust, passion and desire! This ancient culture is really much cooler than we thought.’ They looked on with eyes that said, ‘tell me more’.

Rahul’s mother warned, “Listen my lovelies, to the double-edged sword of desire. It is because of the desire to be successful that you study hard. It is because of the desire to give you a good education and to give us a good life that papa works so hard. It is because of the desire to capture the beauty of the world that I learnt photography. It is because of desire that your father and I got married. And it is because of desire that you were born. Thoughts come from desire. Ideas are born of desire. Without desire there would be no



progress. It is because of desire that we act,
behave and live the way we do.

“When I was young there wasn’t that
much to desire . . . Only one shoe
shop, BATA; only black and white
television with the Sunday movie
and one or two other shows
worth watching; I was the
eldest so I always got new
clothes but all the other
siblings only got hand-
me-downs.; only one
car for the family
and only two



companies to choose from – Fiat or Ambassador; the phone had a dial and when it rained too hard it went kaput.

“Today your life is no longer like that. Your eyes, your ears, your nose, your tongue, your emotions and your sensibilities are bombarded every minute, every second, even every nanosecond with a thousand, million, trillion inputs. Remember, all that glitters is not gold. You cannot have everything. It is just not humanly possible. You do not need everything. There is a line that spells enough. Recognize it. Just as you apply the brakes when you drive to avert an accident, you will have to learn to apply the brakes in the car of life to subvert desire and to avoid crashing out of life.”

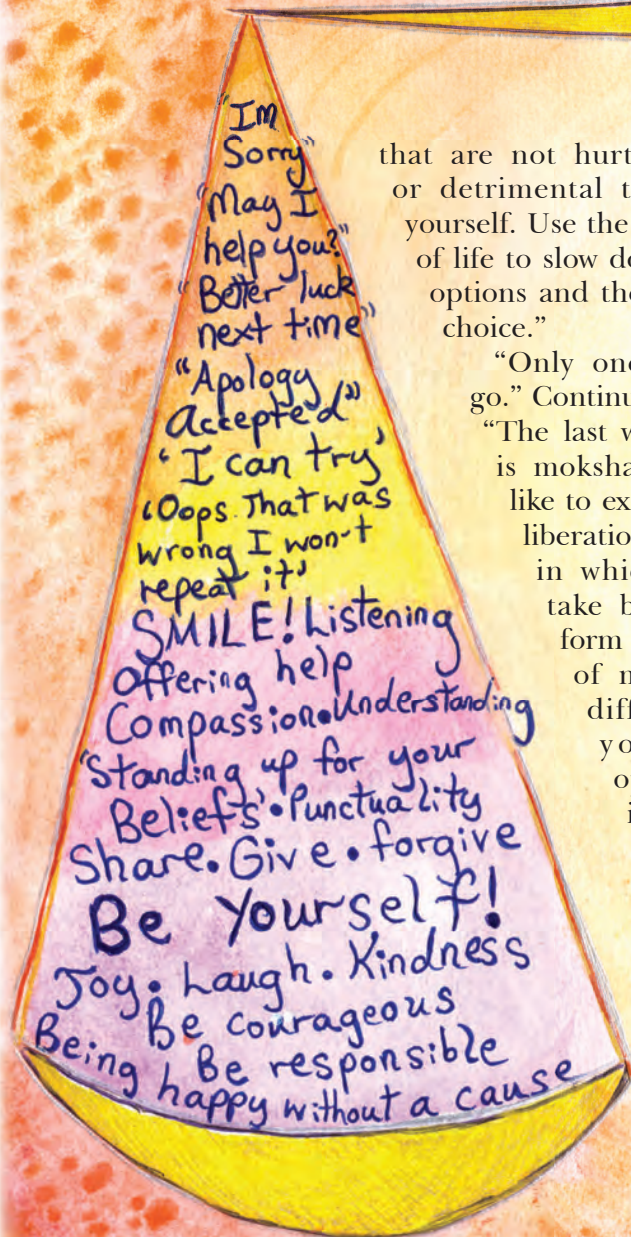
“That brings us to the third wheel,” said Rohit’s mum, “which is dharma.”

“Don’t look at me in that way,” she admonished as she saw their expressions change again, “I am not going to tell you to go to the temple, offer flowers to the idol or pray to God. Rites, religion and rituals are not dharma.

“Dharma is choosing the appropriate words to use when you speak, choosing the most apt action when you behave and therefore choosing the right thought in every situation. In a nutshell, always following the right path. Now this might seem like a really tall order but hold your horses for a second.

“‘Always’ does not mean you cannot play that practical joke on April Fool’s Day. ‘Always’ does not mean you cannot reach out for that packet of Lays chips once in a while. ‘Always’ does not mean you cannot tease your elder sister for those absolutely ridiculous pants she has bought that she thinks make her look so fashionable. But teasing should not become taunting, neither junk food a habit, nor a practical joke a cause for ridicule. These would be adharmic behaviours.

“Dharma’s boundaries are quite wide. They do not preclude fun. They do not make you a rank bore. They just teach you and urge you to stay within those limits

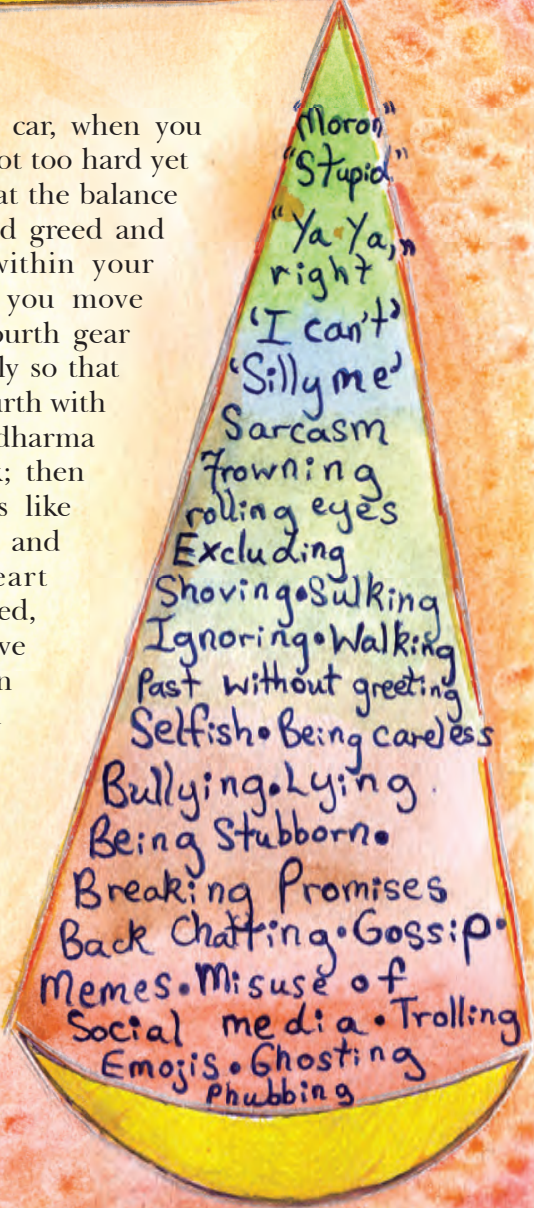


that are not hurtful or harmful or detrimental to others or to yourself. Use the gears in the car of life to slow down, weigh your options and then pick the best choice."

"Only one wheel left to go." Continued Rohit's mom

"The last wheel of the car is moksha. Many people like to explain moksha as liberation, a final stage in which you do not take birth in human form anymore. I think of moksha slightly differently. When you maintain optimal pressure in the other

three wheels of the car, when you step on the brakes not too hard yet not too lightly so that the balance between unwarranted greed and healthy desire is within your control, and when you move from first gear to fourth gear smoothly and steadily so that you can cruise in fourth with the foundation of dharma firmly on your back; then your mind becomes like a serene lake, calm and peaceful, your heart feels full and satisfied, and you learn to give and take equally, even to give more than to take. This state of general well-



"Moron"
"Stupid"
"Ya Ya, right"
'I can't'
'Silly me'
Sarcasm
Frowning
rolling eyes
Excluding
Shoving • Sulking
Ignoring • Walking
Past without greeting
Selfish • Being careless
Bullying • Lying
Being Stubborn •
Breaking Promises
Back Chatting • Gossip •
Memes • Misuse of
Social media • Trolling
Emojis • Ghosting
Phubbing



being is *manah prasad*, the state of happiness and perfect contentment. This is moksha, the ability to stay clear-headed and content as you manage the rocky road of the trials and tribulations of life.”

After a brief pause she resumed, “There is one last thing I want to say. Just as the chassis protects you from rain and wind, heat and cold, and heavy duty injury in times of accidents, there is a powerful force that covers you in an invisible protective shield. Some call the force Ram, some call it Rahim. Others say Krishna, Christ, Allah, Ishwar, Durga or Lakshmi. By whatever name you call the force, believe in it! Have faith in it! Trust it! For it is that force that guides your car as you steer it on the pot-holed road of life, and it is that force that helps you reach your destination intact.”

As Rohit’s mum finished, Rahul’s mom chipped in, “One very important thing remains to be said. We have told you about the car of life and the invisible hand that leads. Yet, the wheels of a car do not move on their own, the gears do not shift without handling, nor does the steering stay steady without a hand upon it, and the brake and the accelerator need feet to control them. While the car is ready, it is the driver who is most important. It does not matter whether you drive Archie’s jalopy or Ritchie Rich’s Rolls Royce. It is how you drive that determines how far you go, how long you take and how smooth your ride is. Drive well, my sons, drive well!



“The road map for each of you has been laid out. Take the off the beaten track, the high road or the low road, the highway or the bypass but always stay on course and keep moving ahead. Drive smoothly, drive safely, drive superbly and reach your destination with a shine in your eyes, a smile on your face, a song in your heart and a supremely sparkling, crystal clear mind.” With this blessing the mothers ended their story on the car of life and handed over the keys to each son, whispering ‘Jai Satyam’ mostly to themselves.

You see, in 1970 when the mothers themselves were teenage girls, Swami Satyananda had visited their towns. The thrust of his satsang was ‘Yoga as a lifestyle, not merely a practice’. Such an indelible impression had Satyam made on these young minds that today his teachings poured forth in the form of the car of life story to the new, rising generation.

The night had crept along. ‘Too late for a spin,’ thought the boys. Each pecked his mother on the cheek, bid both goodnight and retired to their rooms for a good night’s rest. The story had been quite engaging but as teenage boys will be, they were hardly going to admit it to themselves. As they walked back to their rooms each thought ‘Ya di ya di ya. These old fogies (though they rather considered their mothers trendy, happening middle-aggers) and their old ideas: artha, kama, dharma, moksha . . . whatever. Tomorrow a new chapter of my life begins. I’m off to college. I’m on my way to F-R-E-E-D-O-M!’ Yet, in homes where there has



been laughter, love and liberty mothers voices have a way of ringing in teenage children's heads at precisely those moments when they least want it. This was to happen to Rahul and Rohit both, but that is for later in the story.

In college both boys studied hard and played hard. Rohit joined the debates club. Rahul the drama club. Both played tennis, badminton and soccer together. Both shared a close-knit and small group of friends. Excelling at their studies, pleasant in their demeanour and rather lucky with almost anything they attempted the boys were popular with all their peers. Don't get me wrong. These were no paragons of perfection. Rather, they were perfectly ordinary teenage boys. They bunked the occasional class to hang out with friends. They drank themselves silly at bar nights. They told lewd jokes and laughed at even lewder ones. They tweeted and twittered and opened Facebook accounts, but they knew where to draw the line. Fiercely proud of their shining machines which stood out in the carpark among all the bicycles and motorcycles, they managed to see them for what they were, a means of transport from one spot to the other. The picture painted of the car of life had been so vivid that even though it had not even once flashed before their eyes from that day of their eighteenth birthday, it had permeated their being without their even knowing it.

Then on one particularly grey day trouble arrived. He arrived in a swanky new sports car, wearing designer clothes and Gucci sunglasses. This new entrant was the son of a small time Bollywood star. New money, mixed morals and entangled ethics infested his walk, talk and behaviour. A Bollywood star's son is a big deal in the metropolises, what to say about this smaller town – he was a huge deal. Every girl wanted to walk arm in arm with him. Every boy wanted to be his best bud. Needless to say he loved a fan following. In fact, that is what he thrived on. It was the only life he knew.

Rahul and Rohit watched bemusedly as most of their classmates scampered towards name and fame as bees to a honeycomb. They watched sadly as a few from their close



group of friends moved over to the other side. It is not that they had any trouble with Pinky Pandit. In fact, they shared the occasional joke, competed against each other in tennis (which incidentally Pinky was excellent at), and joyfully listened to his bragging stories over a cup of coffee or tea in the canteen. What they could not and would not do is become fans. This irked Pinky Pandit quite some, but then even the best Bollywood stars make peace with their critics.

Then one day Pinky announced a party and the whole college was invited. It would be at his beach house home. It

was a stunning location – a rambling property opening out straight onto the waterfront. Hammocks hung from tree to tree. Waiters in white gloves served you the drink and snack of your choice. The options included anything you could think of. Bikinis and bathing trunks dotted the beach for as far as the eye could see. Was this real or was it a Bollywood set!

Everyone was having a wonderful time. One group went off for a walk collecting seashells. Another was playing volleyball in the water. Couples nestled in the hammocks. Gossipers huddled telling their stories. Slowly Rahul and Rohit found themselves becoming part of a large circle among some they knew and some they had never seen



before. All too suddenly Rahul realized why this group had been formed. He saw someone take a piece of paper, put some substance in it, lick the edges, roll it and strike a match to it. The aroma was unmistakably that of marijuana. 'My first joint' he thought, 'Not bad'. Which college student does not want to experiment with drugs. The circle was quite a large one and it took a while before the joint reached Rahul.

Just as he was going to take that blissful first drag, the image of the car of life loomed large before him and the gears took on a disproportionately immense size, and his mother's sweet voice screamed in his head: Stay within those limits that are not hurtful or harmful or detrimental to others or yourself. Use the gears to slow down, weigh your options and then pick the best choice. 'Drat!' he thought but he quietly passed on the joint. Rohit who sat next to him noticed this and shot his best friend a quizzical look. Yet, he silently followed suit. 'Phew' gasped Rahul almost audibly, 'Thank god nobody else noticed. Such peer pressure is completely out of my range'. And then he thought of his idle thank god utterance and was reminded of the chassis – the force does protect.

This party was the talk of the college for weeks and weeks and weeks, until one day it became old news. Staying on top of the popularity charts was most important, so Pinky Pandit threw out his next bait – an all-expenses paid overseas vacation. The only catch was you had to buy your own airline ticket and it had to be business class. Boys and girls begged, borrowed and stole to raise the required funds. It was shocking to see how low some would stoop for the tag of a foreign-returned me.

Rohit sat alone in a corner and pondered, 'What an opportunity to let go of! When would I ever be able to take a holiday abroad on my own? Never!' He desperately wanted to go. What to do? How to raise the funds? A business class ticket, where to get the money from? Just then an idea struck. Aha! He had his answer. Yes, it would have to do. But . . . No, no! No buts, it would have to do. A tad ashamed



he kept the idea to himself. He did not squeak a syllable, not even to Rahul.

After the mid-morning class, he snuck out into the carpark, revved the engine and drove out of the college gates unnoticed. He drove through town into the countryside and beyond it, to the next town. Here he slowed down looking for his destination. He finally brought the car to a halt under a big blue and white sign which read 'SAHU DEALERS – We buy and sell old cars'. Alas! Rohit had decided to pawn his dream machine for this newest dream – a vacation abroad.

Mr Sahu was a very genial, middle-aged man but a hard negotiator. He had obviously been in the business for a long, long time. Rohit had a dream to fulfil. He was not going to give in easily either. Back and forth, back and forth went the discussions. Just as they were going to shake hands on a deal well made, BOOM! A voice rang in Rohit's head 'You cannot have everything. You do not need everything. There is a line that spells enough'. 'Aw Mom!' thought Rohit, but his hand lost power and it dropped down onto his knee. Rohit apologized to Mr Sahu for taking up so much of his valuable time and murmured, "I've got to keep the car."

College had just ended as he drove into the carpark and Rahul had been waiting for him anxiously. As he got into the car Rahul asked Rohit, "Where have you been?" Extremely sheepishly Rohit related the whole story. THWACK! Rahul whacked him on the upside of his head. "You would do that," he said outraged. "Sell your childhood dream, your father's labour of love, your mother's hope to give her son the best for a cheap vacation with Mr Parading Parody! How could you?" Rohit said nothing. He knew Rahul was right. He just whispered a thank you to his God for saving him from the wrong side of the double-edged sword of desire.

Pinky Pandit returned from his vacation with a gift for everyone who could not go with him. These were no mini Mars bars or little mementos to say 'I thought of you while I was there'. He brought back expensive shoes, designer T-shirts and Hollywood autographed memorabilia. Each one oohed and aahed as they received their personal gifts, and thus his tribe grew. Rahul looked at Rohit and said, "Do they like him or do they like his money?" It was one of those rhetorical questions that does not require an answer.



Then in the third year of college on a gloriously sunny morning as the birds chirped in the trees and a gentle breeze blew the flowers in full bloom in the campus garden from side to side, tragic news whistled through the corridors of S.N. Academy. In huddled groups students whispered, "Why?" "How could it happen?" "Why would he do that?" "He had everything going for him?" "Do you think it

was deliberate?” “He was a great guy.” “What a wasted life.” Pinky Pandit had died the previous night. The cause: drug overdose. There was disbelief. There was shock. There was anguish. There was confusion. ‘What made him do it?’ was on each one’s lips. Nobody cared to ask Rohit or Rahul, for if they had both would have replied, “He put too much pressure into the tyre of artha.” But then nobody would have understood anyways.

On Graduation Day three weeks later as Rahul sat in the Convocation Hall he looked fondly upon the hallowed walls of this august institution that had shaped him in so many ways. Mr Mehta who taught him how to win a debate no matter which side he argued for; Ms Mendonca who brought alive the absolutely boring subject of Accounting; Mrs Isaacs who taught him to avoid all those ‘rest in peace’ words to make a wow presentation; and Mr Fateh Ali who must have been a failed economist because he was terrible at his subject, but who taught him always to look at the lighter side of life.

Rahul smiled as he reminisced, and as he watched his friends receive their certificates of honour. He looked upon those who had fallen prey to the vast web spun by Pinky Pandit (no fault of Pinky’s though, he was just a misguided soul). In their searching eyes he saw the images of a fabled world they would never reach. In their hands he felt the itch of more and better and all. Ensnared by the false reality of this bejewelled world he prayed that life treat them well, for if they could never reach the goals of peace and contentment that we all vie for, may they at least live in the illusion of happiness.

Rohit and Rahul went on to pursue higher education. Both left Indian shores to travel abroad on merit and scholarship. Both excelled on the academic front and the social front. Today Rohit is an investment analyst on Wall Street. He lives in New York with his Turkish wife and two beautiful seven year-old twin daughters. Rahul has returned to India. He is a business magnate. The company he runs

has an over million-dollar turnover. He too is married and has an eleven-year-old son and an eight-year-old daughter. One drives a beamer – a BMW, the other a Jaguar. Both live well and both live happily. There is nothing to need and there is nothing to want. Contented and at peace with themselves they have driven and continue to drive the car of life smoothly on the rough terrain of everyday living.

At family reunions which are much fewer and farther between nowadays, the Phupha-Chacha Blue Mercedes story is still told among much laughter. Rahul and Rohit's children are now old enough to appreciate the folly and are often the raconteurs. This story has become and will remain a Rajputana tradition.

Yet, there is another story that waits in the wings for the seven, eight and eleven year olds to come of age so it may become a tradition and a much worthier one at that – the story of the Car of Life. Rohit and Rahul wonder if their wives were told similar stories. They thank their mothers silently. They wait patiently and eagerly to retell this story that has enriched and guided their life so beautifully. They hope their mothers will be there to hear it. They know it will become a Rajputana tradition.

In the meantime, they have written it for all those scores of children who may otherwise miss out on this wonderful analogy. Who knows, maybe this story can become a tradition in many a family, maybe even a worldwide tradition. Why limit it to just one family in a remote village town of India!

Satyam smiled down at the Rajputana family. A seed planted once upon a time had blossomed. In its sweet fragrance he smelt the fulfilment of his prophesy – Yoga will emerge as a mighty world culture.

Jai Ho!
Drive Superbly!



THE ROAD
OF LIFE

