

## Cancer: a cheap bargain

Monica Gulati

### *Abstract*

Cancer, as monstrous as it might appear, can offer one something greater and different than its socially acceptable face-value. Many of us, during the process of growing up, lose touch with our inner guidance, which is the only thing that is capable of being the Driver in this life. Once lost and disconnected, we wander around with a deep hole that needs to be filled. But it never gets filled up, no matter how many relationships or jobs we might change, or how many possessions one acquires; that deep inner restlessness never goes away. Any illness, or tragedy, if it happens to reveal our true essence, is then a cheap bargain. From now, the life has just begun, as it must.

“Pain is the hammer of the Gods to break.  
A dead resistance in the mortal’s heart,  
His slow inertia as of living stone.  
If the heart were not forced to want and weep,  
His soul would have lain down content, at ease,  
And never thought to exceed the human start  
And never learned to climb towards the Sun (1).”

### **Cancer and a tête-à-tête with one’s self**

It was a bright sunny day in 2015 when my urologist broke the news that I had bladder cancer. My first thought was, “How am I going to feed Anand (my younger one) now that I will be in a hospital or on drugs of some sort? I felt sad for the young fellow who would have to be deprived of his mother’s milk. But then, as soon as I was on my way back home, with my husband Lokesh in the driver’s seat, my mind started an activity

which was surely guided by Grace and nothing else.

Somewhere in my being, there was this certitude that my emotional state was the one that had created it. I still don’t know about the source of that surety. Another thing that I was sure of was — that the cancer was just a signal and its existence wanted to tell me something through that signal.

I immediately called up a friend who was a part of healing and therapy circles. With her help I found my mentor, Hitesh, who thankfully was not far away. I would just have to travel from Delhi to Gurgaon, which was nothing. I was ready to travel any distance for this healing to get initiated. It was as if I was now in a different world altogether.

I called Hitesh and requested a meeting from him. The first day I went to meet him, I took along Anand while Lokesh, my husband drove us there. After breastfeeding Anand, I went to meet him while Lokesh and Anand waited in the car. I told Hitesh that I had heard and read and believed that emotions were responsible in major part for the formation of illnesses, and I would like his help in sorting out this mountain that was in front of me. His eyes conveyed a surety that it could be done. He assured me that he could see that I can do this! And we decided to meet once a week for sessions with him, where each time Lokesh and Anand would accompany me and stay in the car, while I took a 2-hour session with Hitesh.

It was through those sessions that I really got intimately in touch with my inner being. It would not be an exaggeration to say that that was the first time that I ever got to know of my inner being at all! Before that it was a blind life, mostly lived from just the outer surface in pursuit of temporary pleasures. I realised that my vital had played havoc on my body as the Psychic presence was not out in front, not in the Driver's seat! Thoughts and stories about everyone, about situations and about myself, went round and round in my head in the absence of awareness and inner anchoring. And in one of these sessions with my mentor, I happened to have a visceral experience of a power, a knowing, a light, more than the trivial 'me', and which must be the only guiding-force for the rest of my life. I was sure that life had taken an irreversible turn into a new dimension.

### **Intimacy with death**

One of the best things that happened was a close

encounter with my own impermanence. When I was in the hospital for my first surgery, I realised that I had always thought I was the one running all the kids' related stuff at home. It dawned upon me that they were perhaps now doing even better without me around! Things would go on, and life would run smoothly, even if I was not there. I was totally dispensable. And hence, I could drop the demands and expectations regarding people and situations to be in a certain way. But here existed a paradox. I could also see how precious this human life was, at the same time. I came face to face with the wonders of existence, of my own presence and of the presence of each and every unique being around me. Everything appeared equal, yet unique and special; and hence a great responsibility on each one of us to nurture our own inner life at least.

The fear of death went away by itself, as I realised that the 'True Me' can never die. Then what should I be afraid of? I will spend my time in service of the Truth, and then whatever happens will be for the Truth to deal with. Not me. The burden of my own life/death was dropped by itself.

Fear of the dark went away automatically, as a by-product of this new-found feeling of oneness with the Universe.

I realised that the life I had been living until now was a dead life. And I started to cherish each day, step by step and not as if in a hurry to reach somewhere. If there had to be Joy in this life, it must be NOW or it will be never. And that Joy was something I had access to, even in these seemingly dire circumstances, owing to the free-will that we all possess.

**A cheap bargain: life before and after diagnosis**

<b>Before cancer</b>	<b>After cancer</b>
A strong sense of doership	Doership replaced by presence of the Grace in action
Anxiety and stress a part of life	Anxiety and stress virtually absent from life. And whenever they visit, I take time out to see how they manage to enter
Unawareness of the body, as if the body were abandoned and the Master of the body was missing	An intimacy with the body and all its sensations. A constant checking in with the body to see how it is doing
A lack of faith in the cells of the body	Slowly, with practice, an instillation of faith and surrender in the cells
Unawareness of the body, abandoned body; which at first when met with, showed the presence of anxiety and restlessness	Presence of a deep rest in the cells of the body, an undying faith in the all-pervading Grace
Content of the mind: thoughts of others and thoughts about myself, destructive thoughts about the future, negative thoughts about the past; a background chanting of 'things must not be this way'	Contented mind: the mind is mostly at rest, not wanting to reach somewhere; although there is a lot of service work that now keeps the mind engaged with; New opportunities spring up and the mind is working directed by an inner guidance
No awareness of the free-will, life on a default automated mode run by tendencies and patterns of the mind and vital	A deep awareness of the free-will and therefore a knowing that one has always a choice to suffer or to go through difficulties without suffering, in surrender — looking for the Light masked as darkness
Attachment a way of life. Attachment in relationships and having the inner anchor wrongly placed on situations and people around, thus making their life miserable too	Detachment as a bonus gift. Once the inner anchor is rightly placed, there is no need to derive pleasure from depending on someone else
Contentment absent from life. Hence certain demands and expectations arising from situations, from people, to have that temporary satisfaction	A deep inner contentment. Plus a longing to go deeper and deeper
A life dedicated to the pleasures of the vital, the stories of the mind and an unstoppable restlessness	A life dedicated to inner growth, a childlike enthusiasm to know, to seek and to learn new things

## Inner guidance at work

It seems to me that once stabilised in or at least aware of our truth, our psychic presence, the only way is to go forward and deeper. A reversal to fall back into the lower states of consciousness run by patterns of the mind and wants of the vital is not possible. And once the anchoring has happened, a life full of enthusiasm, a life full of service for the higher, a life full of challenges for the self to deepen the inner work, and a life full of joy, is what is possible.

Divine Grace is guiding everyone at each moment, it is in the hands of our free-will to listen to it or block its path and be deaf and insensitive. I had been deaf, blind and insensitive. But I wonder if I could ever visit those lanes again for no matter how many difficulties I have to go through, there is a knowing that I must abide in the psychic forever.

I have remained in good emotional, mental and physical health since 2016. With the guidance of the Grace, I have been shown the path to serve the vision of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. It just happened by itself, as time passed. I feel extremely blessed to be on this path and look forward to the opportunities for further service.

Life is lighter now. There is virtually no mental burden. Also there is a sensitivity towards the burden, in a sense that as soon as the burden enters, I can see it and let it go. I have been shown that no mental burden is worth carrying on this delicate path.

## Life ahead

With the new-found focus within, each day is an

adventure, full of joy which is not dependent on people and external circumstances to proceed in a certain way. A joy which does not give in to the demands of the vital and the surface mind. Even if it does, it is reclaimed quickly. Every outer signal, experience or stimulus is an invitation to go deeper within. Nowhere, but within.

I have been blessed to have two little children, who are harbingers of light every now and then in their own innocent ways. It is not that I never stray from my path. It is just that I get back very easily and quickly, intimately basking in my inner light. It is as if I have become a servant of the Inner Guide. It is only now, in this newfound joy of being, that I love being around children and can care for them, can enjoy the tiny moments with them and not hurry to become something in future. I see that through my children I have been able to learn so much. As if through them, I am entering into a new World, a dimension which I could not have imagined to ever visit. How they live so fully those tiny moments of the day! How they are innately guided to act and how dangerous it can be for a caregiver to be overtly directive towards them, which only regresses their innate intelligence.

I have slowed down from the pace of my life and learnt to live each day as it comes, anchoring within time and guided by the vision of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. For this life is extremely precious. And anything is a cheap bargain to realise the preciousness of this human birth.

“The secret is to emerge from the ego, out of its prison, unite ourselves with the Divine, merge into him, not to allow anything to separate us from him. Once one has discovered this secret

and realises it in one's being, pain loses its justification and suffering disappears....

There is no illness, no disorder that can resist the discovery of this secret and and the putting of it into practice, not only in the higher parts of the being, but in the cells of the body....

If one knows how to teach the cells the splendour that lies within them, if one knows how to make them understand the reality by which they exist, gives them being, then they

too enter the total harmony, and the physical disorder which causes the illness vanishes as do all the other disorders of the being (2)."

### References

1. Sri Aurobindo. *Birth Centenary Library, Volume 29*. Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust; 1970, p. 443.
2. The Mother. *Collected Works of the Mother, Volume 9*. Cent. Ed. Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust; 1977, pp. 41-2.

*Monica Gulati, a learner and a seeker and an immunologist by education, is based in Gurgaon, India. She shares her experiences on going through cancer with faith at <https://thegiftofcancer.wordpress.com>*