

### ***The family servant, Bhoora***

The man who was put on guard to save me, I called him strange. Why? Because his name was Bhoora, and it means "white man." He was the only white man in our village. He was not a European; it was just by chance that he did not look like an Indian. He looked more like a European but he was not. His mother most probably had worked in a British Army camp and had become pregnant there. That's why nobody knew his name, everybody called him Bhoora. Bhoora means "the white one." It is not a name but it became his name. He was a very impressive-looking man. He came to work for my grandfather from early childhood, and even though he was a servant he was treated like one of the family.

I also called him strange because although I have come to know many people in the world, one rarely comes across such a man as Bhoora. He was a man you could trust. You could say anything to him and he would keep the secret forever. This fact became known to my family only when my grandfather died....

What a man! But such men used to exist on earth. They are disappearing by and by, and instead of such people you find all kinds of cunning people taking their place. These people are the very salt of the earth. I call Bhoora a strange man because in a cunning world, to be simple *is* strange. It is to be a stranger, not of this world. *glimps03*

Bhoora may have been just an obedient servant to my grandfather, but to me he was a friend. Most of the time we were together--in the fields, in the forest, on the lake, everywhere. Bhoora followed me like a shadow, not interfering, always ready to help, and with such a great heart...so poor and yet so rich, together.

He never invited me to his house. Once I asked him, "Bhoora, why do you never invite me to your house?"

He said, "I am so poor that although I want to invite you, my poverty prevents me. I don't want you to see that ugly house in all its dirtiness. In this life I cannot see a time when I will be able to invite you. I really have dropped the very idea."

He was very poor. In that village there were two parts: one for the higher castes, and the other for the poorer ones, on the other side of the lake. That's where Bhoora lived. Although I tried many times to reach his house I could not manage it because he was always following me like a shadow. He would prevent me before I even stepped in that direction.

Even my horse used to listen to him. When it came to going towards his house, Bhoora would say, "No! Don't go." Of course he had brought the horse up from its very childhood; they understood each other, and the horse would stop. There would be no way to get the horse to move either towards Bhoora's house, or even towards the poorer part of the village. I had only seen it from the other side, the richer, where the brahmins and the Jainas lived, and all those who are by birth, pure. Bhoora was a sudra. The word 'sudra' means "impure by birth," and there is no way for a sudra to purify himself.

This is the work of Manu\*. That's why I condemn him and hate him. I denounce him,

and want the world to know of this man, Manu, because unless we know of such people we will never be able to be free of them. They will continue to influence us in some form or another. Either it is race--even in America, if you are a negro, you are a sudra, a "nigger," untouchable.

Whether you are a negro or a white man, both need to be acquainted with the insane philosophy of Manu. It is Manu who has influenced the two world wars in a very subtle way. And perhaps he will be the cause of the third, and last...a really influential man!...

I don't think any man has influenced humanity more than Manu. Even today, whether you know his name or not, he influences you. If you think yourself superior just because you are white or black, or just because you are a man or a woman, somehow Manu is pulling your strings. Manu has to be absolutely discarded. *glimps19*

\*Note: Manu gave the ancient caste system its scriptural 'authority' in his books Manu Samhita and Manu Smriti. Nietzsche and Hitler were influenced by Manu

I was looking at some pictures of the marriage procession of Princess Diana, and strangely, the only thing that impressed me in the whole nonsense was the beautiful horses, their joyous dance. Looking at those horses I remembered my own horse. I have not told anyone about it...but now that I am not keeping anything secret, even this can be told.

I not only owned one horse; in fact I had four horses. One was my own--and you know how fussy I am...even today nobody else can ride in the Rolls Royces. It is just fussiness. I was the same at that time too. Nobody, not even my grandfather, was allowed to ride my horse. Of course, I was allowed to ride everyone else's horse. Both my grandfather and my grandmother had one. It was strange in an Indian village for a woman to ride a horse--but she was a strange woman, what to do! The fourth horse was for Bhoora, the servant who always followed me with his gun, at a distance of course.

Destiny is strange. I have never harmed anyone in my life, not even in my dreams. I am absolutely vegetarian. But as destiny would have it, from my very childhood I have been followed by a guard. I don't know why, but since Bhoora I have never been without a guard. Even today my guards are always either ahead or behind, but always there. Bhoora started the whole game.

I already told you that he looked like a European, that's why he was called Bhoora. It was not his real name. *Bhoora* simply means "the white one." Even I don't know his real name at all. He looked European, very European, and it looked really strange, especially in that village where I don't think any European had ever entered. And still there are guards....

Even when I was a child, I could see the point of Bhoora following me at a distance on his horse, because twice there was an attempt to abduct me. I don't know why anybody should have been interested in me. Now at least I can understand. My grandfather, though not very rich by Western standards, was certainly very rich in that village. *Dakait*s...it is not an English word; it comes from the Hindi word *daku*.... *Dakait* is a transliteration of *daku*; it means thief--not just an ordinary thief, but when

a group of people, armed and organized, plan the act of stealing, then it is dakaitry.

Even when I was young, in India it was a common practice to steal rich people's children, then to threaten the parents that if they didn't pay, then the hands of the child would be cut off. If they paid, then they could save the child's hands. Sometimes the threat would be to blind the child, or if the parents were really rich then the threat was direct--that the child would be killed. To save the child, the poor parents were ready to do anything whatsoever.

Twice they tried to steal me. Two things saved me: one was my horse, who was a really strong Arabian; the second was Bhoora, the servant. He was ordered by my grandfather to fire into the air--not at the people trying to abduct me, because that is against Jainism, but you are allowed to fire into the air to frighten them. Of course my grandmother had whispered in Bhoora's ear, "Don't bother about what my husband says. First you can fire into the air, but if it doesn't work, remember: if you don't shoot the people I will shoot you." And she was a really good shot. I have seen her shoot and she was always accurate to the minutest point--she did not miss much.

Nani was very exact as far as details are concerned. She was always to the point, never around it. There are some people who go around and around and around: you have to figure out what they really want. That was not her way; she was exact, mathematically exact. She told Bhoora, "Remember, if you come home without him just to report he has been stolen, I will shoot you immediately." I knew, Bhoora knew, my grandfather knew, because although she said it into Bhoora's ear, it was not a whisper; it was loud enough to be heard by the whole village. She meant it. She always meant business.

My grandfather looked the other way. I could not resist; I laughed loudly and said, "Why are you looking the other way? You heard her. If you are a real Jaina, tell Bhoora not to shoot anybody."

But before my grandfather could say anything, my Nani said, "I have told Bhoora on your behalf too, so you keep quiet." She was such a woman that she would even have shot my grandfather. I knew her--I don't mean literally, but metaphorically, and that is more dangerous than literally. So he kept quiet.

Twice I was almost abducted. Once my horse brought me home, and once Bhoora had to fire the gun, of course into the air. Perhaps if there had been a need he would have fired at the person who was trying to abduct me. But there was no need, so he saved himself and also my grandfather's religion.

Since then, it is strange...it seems very, very strange to me because I have been absolutely harmless to everybody, yet I have been in danger many times. Many attempts have been made on my life. I have always wondered, since life will end by itself sooner or later, why anybody should be interested to put an end to it in the middle. What purpose can it serve? If I could be convinced of that purpose I can stop breathing this very moment....

But when she had said to Bhoora, "If anyone touches my child, you are not just to fire into the air because we believe in Jainism.... That belief is good, but only in the

temple. In the marketplace we have to behave in the way of the world, and the world is not Jaina. How can we behave according to our philosophy?"

I can see her crystal-clear logic. If you are talking to a man who does not understand English, you cannot speak to him in English. If you speak to him in his own language then there is more possibility of communication. Philosophies are languages; let that be clearly noted. Philosophies don't mean anything at all--they are languages. And the moment I heard my grandmother say to Bhoora, "When a dakait tries to steal my child, speak the language he understands, forget all about Jainism"--in that moment I understood. Although it was not so clear to me as it became later on, it must have been clear to Bhoora. My grandfather certainly understood the situation because he closed his eyes and started repeating his mantra: "*Namo arihantanam namo...namo siddhanam namo...*"

I laughed, my grandmother giggled; Bhoora, of course, only smiled. But everybody understood the situation--and she was right, as always....

My grandmother had the same quality of being always right. She said to Bhoora, "Do you think these dakaites believe in Jainism? And that old fool..." she indicated my grandfather who was repeating his mantra. She then said, "That old fool has only told you to fire into the air because we should not kill. Let him repeat his mantra. Who is telling him to kill? You are not a Jaina, are you?"

I knew instinctively at that moment that if Bhoora was a Jaina he would lose his job. I had never bothered before whether Bhoora was a Jaina or not. For the first time I became concerned about the poor man, and started praying. I did not know to whom, because Jainas don't believe in any God. I was never indoctrinated into any belief, but still I started saying within myself, "God, if you are there, save this poor man's job." Do you see the point? Even then I said, "*If you are there....*" I cannot lie even in such a situation.

But mercifully Bhoora was not a Jaina. He said, "I am not a Jaina so I don't care."

My Nani said, "Then remember what I have told you, not what that old fool has said."

In fact she always used to use that term for my grandfather: "that old fool". But that "old fool" is dead. My mother...my grandmother is dead. Excuse me, again I said "my mother." I really cannot believe she was not my mother and only my grandmother...

When she spoke to Bhoora I knew she meant it. Bhoora knew she meant it too. When my grandfather started the mantra, I knew he also understood that she meant business.

Twice I was attacked--and to me it was a joy, an adventure. In fact, deep down I wanted to know what it meant to be abducted. That has always been my characteristic, you can call it my character. It is a quality I rejoice in. I used to go on my horse to the woods which belonged to us. My grandfather promised that all that belonged to him would be willed to me, and he was true to his word. He never gave a single *pai* to anybody else.

He had thousands of acres of land. Of course, in those days it didn't have any value. But value is not my concern--it was so beautiful: those tall trees, and a great lake, and in summer when the mangoes became ripe it was so fragrant. I used to go there on my horse so often that the horse became accustomed to my path....

I used to go on my horse, and seeing those horses in Princess Diana's wedding procession I could not believe that England could have such beautiful horses....

All those people, and I could only love the horses! They were the real people. What joy! What steps! What dance! Just sheer celebration. I immediately remembered my own horse, and those days...their fragrance is there still. I can see the lake, and myself as a child on the horse in the woods. It is strange--I can smell the mangoes, the neem trees, the pines, and I can also smell my horse.

It is good that I was not allergic to smell in those days, or, who knows, I may have been allergic but unaware of it. It is a strange coincidence that the year of my enlightenment was also the year of my becoming allergic. *glimps10*

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