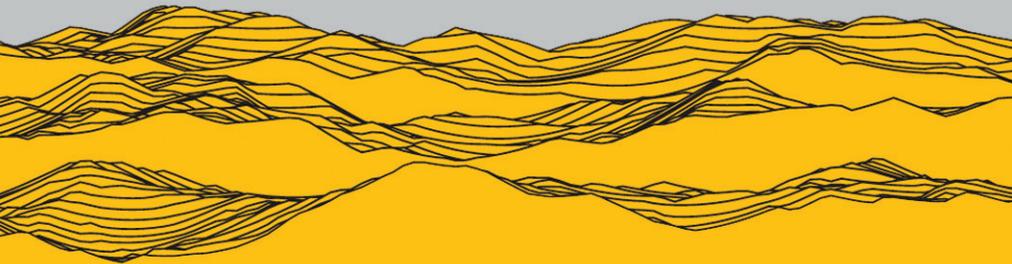


BASED ON REAL EXPERIENCES



Naina is a young woman; curious, angry, and lost in purpose just as most of us are. An incident embarks her on the inner journey where she finds answers through letters left by her grandmother. The letters are nothing but stories. With every story, she discovers a novel truth that breaks the wall of ignorance.

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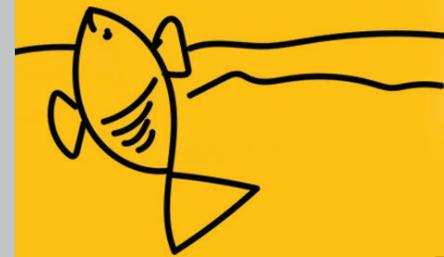


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let the fish fly

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LET THE FISH FLY

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May you find your wings to fly



Preface

Ancient wisdom across all cultures is generally imparted through stories. A couple of years back I was particularly drawn to the Ancient Indian Vedic texts which are a repository of spiritual wisdom. My interest led me to reading Upanishads that contain information regarding the philosophical principles, including *karma* (right action), *brahman* (ultimate reality), the *atman* (true Self or soul), *moksha* (liberation from the cycle of reincarnation) and Vedic doctrines that explain Self-realisation through yoga and meditation practices.

Upanishad is a Sanskrit word that translates in English to mean 'sitting at the feet of' or 'sitting down near'. This illustrates the position of receiving wisdom and guidance humbly from a teacher or guru. I was blown away by the way these texts were structured to deliver the most complex concept in simplest way. Mostly all Upanishads are a mix of stories, esoteric wisdom, and conversations. This revelation triggered my curiosity in learning Sanskrit, the ancient language in which they have been originally documented. The newfound knowledge was mind expanding and permeated to my core effortlessly.

Knowledge is momentarily and dormant unless it's applied and experienced. The application of knowledge in everyday life gives rise to wisdom. Knowledge becomes transformational when wisdom establishes in action, words, and thoughts. The normal sequence one would

assume will be to attain knowledge and after deep contemplation extract the essence of wisdom through it.

In my case the complete opposite happened. I experienced first, extracted the wisdom, and then found the root of that experience through knowledge. I experienced multiple dimensions and a parallel world, and my life has been a quest to decipher the messages that came and discover the route to the root.

Growing up, I always knew that something was different in the way I see life. While my friends were busy indulging in everyday childhood games, I was wondering whether the life we are living a dream or real. When my friends were dating, I was bargaining a deal with the universe to speak the name of the one meant for me in my ears. When my peers were building dreams of a successful career, I was indulged in an inner detective work of deciphering the message behind a vision or a message that was passed to me in my dream by astral beings. My world was never one dimensional. It still isn't.

The first time I experienced the presence of a parallel dimension I was probably just 10-year-old. The vision did not bring fear, it brought curiosity. As I grew, so did the visions. In ancient times, spiritual knowledge by esoteric beings was generally imparted as *Shruti*, which means that 'which is heard'. The four Vedas in the form of poetic hymns; *Rig, Sama, Yajur, and Atharva Vedas, as well as 108 Upanishads, are known as Shrutis*. It's because these were absorbed by rishis as mantras or

aphorisms which were further passed on orally to the right student.

I was twenty-five-year-old when I experienced hearing a voice speak to me in my ears out of nowhere. It was clear, concise, and authoritative. My instinct told me that it was not my imagination and that I had travelled this path numerous times before. Perhaps in my past life I was a spiritual seeker.

What followed was nothing less than magical. Over the next twenty years, walls started diminishing and I experienced revelations of my past life, creative expansion, and root level healing. I heard the voice again in my ears, conversed with celestial gurus through dreams and connected with the core of my essence, the divine feminine empowered energy that has travelled with me from one lifetime to another, Kali. The force with which I went to complete inner transformation inspired my first book, *The Voice of Kali*, which I believe is a Shruti, just like Vedas. I simply wrote the words and poetry I heard.

But there was more to share, the experiences and the wisdom that transformed my life. I didn't want to just narrate the visions; I wanted the reader to experience them just as I had. The guidance came through dreams to simply follow the structure of Upanishads. Voila! I thought. And that gave birth to this book, *Let the Fish Fly*.

This book is a mix of stories, *Vedanta* (highest extracted wisdom of Vedas) sketches, and conversations that have been entwined within a larger narrative of the protagonist, Naina Seghal. Every character is inspired by a dimension that I have myself experienced. *Every story is a truth that*

I have lived and inspired by real visions. The creative liberty of the writer has given me the wings to fictionalise the circumstances but rest assured, but the experience is real. Moksha, the character who converses with Naina is inspired by the esoteric conversations I had with masters of the parallel world after every experience. These were through dreams or sometimes the words just flowed.

Naina is a young woman; curious, angry, and lost in purpose just as most of us are. An incident embarks her on the inner journey where she finds answers through letters left by her grandmother. The letters are nothing but stories. With every story, she discovers a novel truth that breaks the wall of ignorance.

The Vedic text talk about the 6-fold qualifications for a spiritual seeker. These are *Sama* (calmness of mind), *Dama* (control of sense organs), *Upariti* (satiety), *Titiksha* (forbearance), *Shradha* (faith) and *Samadhana* (concentration of mind). With every story that Naina reads, she subconsciously goes through the steps of a seeker. I hope you as a reader will experience the same with Naina.

I also mention about the knock on the soul throughout the book. That knock is your calling of your soul to awaken to a new truth. Probably something in your life is demanding attention. If you have picked this book and read this far then certainly you are ready to embark on a transformational journey with Naina Seghal.

There is a deeper meaning behind the title of the book which will be revealed as you read the story.

May you discover your wings to fly.

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LETTER 3
The Banyan Tree
Kolkata
1992



Uff! Look at those trees. Doesn't it feel like they are alive as though someone is staring at you through them?

'They are alive Ruhi. You should know that being a doctor.'

'Dr Brijesh, you never see beyond science. I know that there is a world that exists beyond logic and knowing.' Ruhi skipped like a child on the lanes of the historic city. To be there was literary her dream come true, and she

wanted to savour every moment that passed by.

'Kolkata, you have my heart,' Ruhi embraced the Banyan tree and smiled.

For the past four months, all Ruhi had dreamt was about planning this trip. Brijesh was amused by the simple joys that made his wife happy. He partially understood the secret of her eternal happy state of mind. While his colleagues often spoke of the stress of buying expensive gifts for their wives, Ruhi was most content with a simple flower ornament, a gajra, purchased from the streets of Kolkata. She smiled with the birds, laughed with the flowers, and conversed with the trees. They had both been invited to attend a medical conference, and for Ruhi, this was a chance to spend a few days immersed in the vibe of her favourite historic city.

'Even the air here seems to be filled with poetry and wisdom. Can you imagine that this is the same air that so many revered masters breathed like Rabindranath Tagore?'

'Hmm...Not technically,' Brijesh interrupted teasingly knowing that it would provoke an instant response from Ruhi.

'Dr Brijesh, there is world....'

'I know I know; a world exists that I can't see,' Brijesh laughed and hugged Ruhi. She was special and different. A rare mix of science and spirituality. A top-notch heart

surgeon who believed in healing, karmas, and angels. A doctor who healed the soul while working on the body. Ruhi was just one of her kind. While she dealt with matters of the heart, Brijesh healed bones as an orthopaedic doctor.

The conference had been a hectic five-day affair from early morning to late night every day. Brijesh had lost his steam, but Ruhi woke up that day with a childlike excitement to see Kolkata. An ardent spiritual seeker, she wanted to visit the city that had inspired numerous moments of magic in her own life. The city that taught her to believe in what you can't see, to be a karma yogi, an artist, and a healer. She owed her soul to Kolkata and wanted to spend the remaining two days savouring the vibes hoping that it might inspire her logic driven husband to believe in magic too.

Walking by the banks of Ganga, known as Hooghly in Kolkata, adjacent to the Banyan tree, a thought came in Ruhi's mind. Looking at Brijesh lovingly, she said, 'Maybe we should adopt kids. One, two or ten!' Ruhi laughed as she said casually.

'Are you completely mad?' Brijesh screamed and pushed Ruhi away from him instantly.

'Brijesh, what happened? I am just saying...'

'But you must think before you speak Ruhi. Not everything is life is a joke.'

'Think? I've never held back my thoughts from you. We've known each other for ten years and have been married

for six. You know the situation. Why are you reacting so harshly?'

'Grow up Ruhi. I don't like this stupid immaturity anymore.' Brijesh said in an irritable tone and looked away. 'And I also expect you to be sensitive. Ruhi, you must think of others in the family. What will everyone say? Why can't we have a baby? Am I not capable enough?'

'What?' Where are you taking this conversation?'

'Let it be. You can't be so selfish and just think about yourself anymore.'

Ruhi had nothing more to say. She sat down on the cemented seat encircling the huge Banyan tree. Something died within her at that moment. A pain arose from the depth of her heart as she reflected on the years that had passed. From their childhood, Ruhi and Brijesh's families had been neighbours in a quiet coastal area in Kerala. The whole community was thrilled when, one rainy morning, Ruhi called to tell her parents that Brijesh had finally proposed to her. Both were studying in the USA then. Brijesh suggested that they should marry after he completed a four-year research program. Happy for her soon-to-be husband, Ruhi returned to India and started working in Bangalore. She had suggested they marry first, fearing her family would begin to worry, but Brijesh laughed it off, saying it was just a few more years. Ruhi thought about how she never accused him of being selfish.

In the next few hours, they went for lunch to the famous Trincas restaurant, visited Victoria Memorial, sat on the Tonga ride but Ruhi could not participate with similar enthusiasm as Brijesh. He had suddenly found his enthusiasm, while Ruhi had lost hers. She could not help following the flow of thoughts running in her mind.

In past six months, she had undergone numerous treatments for PCOS, a menstrual condition which can hamper fertility. 'He loves you so much. See, he knows yet he is supportive.' Her mom and mom-in-law frequently reminded her while she sat with guilt of not being perfect and prayed that she becomes normal again. Numerous times she was also reminded that she needs to lose the nasty weight gained due to hormonal imbalance so she could match his smart lean structure. No one ever told Brijesh that he needs to manage his anger and become normal so he could match Ruhi's enthusiasm for life.

As they drove back to their hotel in the iconic yellow Kolkata taxi, Ruhi said sombrely, 'Brijesh, remember the time you ignored me for two months just because I teased you about eating golgappas clumsily at my neighbour's wedding?'

'Seriously Ruhi, you are still stuck in that thought? You have been sulking all afternoon.' Brijesh said, his frustration evident. He remained quiet for the rest of the way, mostly staring angrily out the window.

'You can order food for dinner, I am sleeping,' He slammed the washroom door. Ruhi knew what awaited next was months of toxic silence.

Sleeping was his coping mechanism when situations were unfavourable. It was only 8 PM. Ruhi chose to curl up on the bedside sofa with a book, but her thoughts kept drifting back to the riverbank and the Banyan tree—the moment when a perfect day took an imperfect turn. 'Must be the evil eye of a spirit dwelling in the tree,' she thought.

A strange uneasiness rose within her, a torrential mix of fear, sadness, and anger. Brooding over the past was not her nature, but she couldn't break free from the continuous loop of thoughts. Every time she closed her eyes, she saw flashes of past moments with Brijesh. Some memories were of his unrestrained anger, others of his sarcastic jokes. Even her close friends and family innocently joined him in the insensitive banter.

'Have I created this pattern in my life?' Ruhi felt suffocated by the thought. An unfamiliar rage was building within her, making her breath heavier. She noticed that her palms were radiating heat. Panicked by the situation, Ruhi grabbed the key card and rushed out for fresh air.

The streets of Kolkata in the night were buzzing with traffic and chatter. The outer chatter was far dimmer than the inner chatter of her mind. Ruhi started walking aimlessly but nothing seemed to calm her. Dressed in her star patterned dark blue pyjamas with loose grey sweatshirt and slippers,

Ruhi ignored the strange stares and comments she got on the way.

‘Dr Ruhi!’

A white car pulled up beside her.

‘Dr Ruhi, is everything ok?’

The woman in the car was a fellow delegate at the conference and a senior doctor of repute. Ruhi looked at Dr Gosh and forced a smile. Lost in her world, she could not recall where she was.

‘I am just taking a stroll.’

Dr Nina Gosh stepped out and gently held Ruhi. Her deep black eyes always radiated deep compassion and love, easily hiding the pain of losing her young son to suicide five years back.

‘You have walked quite far. I am meeting a friend for dinner in the nearby restaurant. The driver can drop you back to the hotel.’

Ruhi quietly complied and thanked Dr. Nina. As the car passed the Writers’ Building, an impulse overcame her, and she requested to be taken to the riverbank she had visited that morning. The young driver hesitated, but after receiving an affirmative reply from Dr. Ghosh on the phone along with strict instructions to keep a watchful eye on Ruhi, he agreed.

The cool, fresh breeze under the Banyan tree, the strong scent of jasmine flowers, and the soothing sound of water

brought a deep sense of relief and peace that Ruhi hadn’t felt in a while. There were many things she hadn’t done in a while, like prioritising her own choices. Nothing that Brijesh had said or done that day was particularly unusual. Smart sarcasm was his nature, just as ignoring the hurt it caused was part of Ruhi’s nature. But something had stirred within her that couldn’t allow Ruhi to overlook the anger continuously building inside her. ‘Why had she been so fearful to confront it before?’ The question kept throbbing her mind.

Sitting under the Banyan tree, Ruhi prayed for the wise spirit of the monks and philosophers who had lived in the city to offer her comfort and clarity. She wondered if her overly happy state of mind was her foolishness or escape from reality? Her eyes, searching their lost sparkle were aimlessly looking at the calm water.

Suddenly, Ruhi noticed a faint figure in the distance. Walking along the misty, muddy path that led to the bank, she could see the silhouette of a woman. ‘Is that Dr Nina?’ she thought.

The soothing sound of humming water synchronized with the rhythmic movement of ghungroo, the ankle bells worn by classical dancers. A sudden awareness of being out alone at night triggered a wave of panic in Ruhi’s heart. She looked around for the driver, but neither he nor the car was in sight. As the sound of the *ghungroo* amplified, the figure became more apparent. It was a

woman in a traditional Kolkata white cotton sari with a broad, deep red border. The beautiful young woman bowed to the Banyan tree and then walked down the steps, oblivious to Ruhi's presence. Her long, naturally curly black hair swayed gracefully, dancing with the music that her movements organically initiated. Her feet, adorned with traditional red henna, enhanced the simple divinity that enveloped her. Decked in pure gold jewellery and a simple white jasmine *gajra*, a hair accessory made of flowers, that dangled freely in her liberated hair, the mysterious woman walked with a certain authority and ease. Something about her felt familiar and comforting. The woman stood at the bank of the river, gazing dreamily at the Hooghly.

'Maybe she is offering prayers,' Ruhi thought. Eager to get a clearer view, she walked down the steps. The closer she got to the woman, the louder the knock of her soul became. Unable to resist the urge to know more, Ruhi asked softly, careful not to disturb the serene silence that enveloped the mysterious stranger.

'Hey, who are you?'

The woman, unalarmed by Ruhi's presence stood silently, still gazing at the endless waterbody.

Standing behind her, Ruhi's curiosity to see the woman's face from a proximity grew stronger.

'Maybe she doesn't understand my language.' Ruhi hesitated for a moment and then tapped the woman's shoulder.

The woman turned and smiled. Ruhi stumbled back in aghast

and shrieked, 'What! That's me!' At that very moment, just as her hand touched the celestial form, an unseen force enveloped Ruhi, pulling her soul out of her body.

'What happened? Am I dead?' Ruhi panicked seeing her lifeless body on the steps. The scene around her was the same but the reality of the world as she knew completely transformed.

The woman standing before her looked like an empowered, divine version of Ruhi. Her translucent form emitted a warm, white light that illuminated all beings in its proximity and beyond. Her aura radiated a pulsating vibration that enlivened everything with life: the leaves, insects, animals, people, flora, and fauna. Nothing she had ever seen could surpass the beauty of the sight before her. Everything around her, once inanimate, animated, and throbbed with a bright white energy that flowed effortlessly through plants, animals, and people.

Ruhi was particularly taken aback when she saw the reality of timeless Banyan trees. Every speck of the trees illuminated with myriad colours of an energy that vibrated love not just to the city but the whole ecosystem. The roots of the majestic trees delved deep into the core of earth, connecting with countless life forms, all soaked in the magnificent luminous light that flowed through the trees. It reminded Ruhi of the lungs and breathing mechanism of human body. She realised that all that was within her was just a mere minuscule reflection of all the surrounded

her. The harmony and silent rhythm with which the nature operated was beyond any synchronisation she could ever imagine. Everything was connected and interlinked.

A deep sense of gratitude surrounded Ruhi as she saw in awe the splendour that she was always a part of. How ignorant she was to believe that she was stuck in a helpless chaos when all that enveloped her was unimaginable clarity. How foolish she had been to succumb to lower emotions like guilt and anger when pure, perfect love permeated everything. Separation was an illusion and sadness a redundant emotion. Ruhi felt whole in every sense. She didn't need to give birth to be a mother. Ruhi experienced deep compassion and love for every being that existed around her and beyond; especially for Brijesh, sitting on the ghat with guilt-stricken face staring at her lifeless body, for Dr Nina who sensing some uneasiness cancelled her dinner and rushed to the hotel to pick Brijesh and bring him here, for the young driver whose silence could not fathom any words to describe what he felt when he saw Ruhi talking to herself and then collapsing as she reached out for something in thin air.

Each was looking at the situation from their own truth and no one was wrong. There was no more conflict in her mind, no thought, no desire, no questions. Like Ganga, she embraced the all-knowing in her vastness. All the noises faded within Ruhi. All she could hear was the rhythmic sound of her breath...in and out...in and out...gasp and Ruhi

was back in her body. The divine words I am you and you are me. All is connected, lingered in her mind as she opened her eyes.

The bright sunlight felt surreal as Ruhi tried to open her eyes. Brijesh ran towards her, while Dr. Nina cried with relief, and unfamiliar faces stared at her in disbelief. She was in the hospital. The familiar beeping of the machine sharply contrasted with the celestial music she had just experienced.

'Thank god you are ok.' Brijesh said holding her hands firmly.

'What happened? Where is...?' she asked, looking around, still bewildered by the dichotomy between the vivid scene in her mind and the reality before her eyes.

'I was at the ghat a moment ago,' she said quietly.

'It's been two days Ruhi. We thought we lost you,' Brijesh fought back his tears. 'I was so scared.'

'Two days!'

'Why did you go to the ghat at night? You've never done that before. We've had arguments, but you never leave. What happened, Ruhi?'

'I need to do some tests,' Dr Nina intervened.

Ruhi looked at the plant outside the window and the ant crawling on the windowsill, each following a divine harmony of life in silence. She glanced at her hands,

reminiscing about the moment they had touched the universal mother, and wondered if she would ever see the world as she had before. Something had shifted within her, something she could not explain.

Dr. Nina had numerous questions running in her mind as she prepared the apparatus for tests. Ruhi noticed that the light of aura surrounding Dr Nina fluctuated and changed colours. With each fluctuation, Ruhi could decipher her shifting thoughts. It seemed strange, but she could literally read Nina's mind like an open book. Bewildered by this newfound gift, Ruhi shifted her focus to the nurse accompanying Dr. Nina. Her energetic aura was calmer than Nina's, with fewer black holes and blockages, allowing her individual energy to merge more easily with the universal energy. Every energy pattern reflected an emotional shift. Dr. Nina had a massive blockage around her heart chakra, emitting the deep pain of losing her son to suicide.

Ruhi closed her tear-filled eyes. She felt Nina's pain, suffocation, and the constant chatter of her mind. 'All is connected,' the celestial words echoed in her head as she recalled the scene she saw in her vision where life flowed in continuation from one form to another. What could she say to Nina that could relieve her pain? What could she do to tell her that her pain is causing emotional instability in her sons next birth whose new parents are distressed at being unable to find the reason behind their little ones looming sadness.

'I need to give you this injection. Are you ready?' Dr Nina asked Ruhi gently.

'Dr Nina, are you ready?'

'Ready for what?'

Dr. Nina looked confused and clenched her fists as if struck by sudden pain. Ruhi watched as the black cloud gradually dissolved, releasing the blocked pain of losing a child to suicide from Dr. Nina's heart. Her energy flowed freely in the patterns that created her unique mandala that glowed brightly in her aura.

'Ruhi!'

'Be free Dr Nina. Let him go now. Your pain is restricting his journey.'

Dr Nina cried as she held her heart.

'Can you help me here!' Brijesh looked at Ruhi in despair.

Dr Brijesh, this is a simple task which can be accomplished only if logic is kept aside. Ruhi teased him.

'Hey, it's good to see you Ruhi.' Brijesh held her hand gently.

'Good to see you too. Now back to folding those clothes,' she laughed.

They were meeting nearly after two months. Brijesh had just landed from Bangalore. After that incident in Kolkata, Ruhi had gone into a deep silence. Initially it was concerning but Brijesh realised that though Ruhi was silent,

she was not sad. There was strange aura of peace and bliss that radiated from her. Her words had more impact, her presence had power and her heart was in a constant state of love. In that silence, she rediscovered the meaning of life and readjusted to her newfound perception. Her empathy had expounded and so had her courage.

After returning from Kolkata, Ruhi immediately immersed herself in work and fulfilled all her social obligations. Outwardly, they continued their usual roles, but Brijesh sensed a shift in their relationship. It had become stronger, deeper, and more comfortable. Brijesh had always loved Ruhi, but the change in her strength after that trip instilled in him a respect he had never felt so intensely before. He had genuinely fallen in love with this new version of Ruhi—one who was more confident and happier.

When Ruhi told him about her plan to open a support house in Kolkata for children who had been abandoned by their family, Brijesh felt that nothing could have been a more natural extension of Ruhi's current state of bliss. She radiated love and her soul would only be complete once she could extend it to others.

'I hope you understand. This is who I am now. My healing gift, my knowledge as a doctor—everything must find a larger purpose. We can make this work if we accept that this, too, is a natural family structure. These children need a mother, and I am ready to be one now. Why should I limit my love to

only a child born from me when there are so many beautiful ways to express my motherhood? You can join me when you are ready. Until then, our spirits will remain connected through love, no matter where we are.'

'Our path may not align yet Ruhi but eventually they will meet, perhaps soon, perhaps later. But I want you to remember that I will always be there for you and that there will be no one in my life except you.'

'My dear spiritual soul partner, Brijesh. Thank you for playing the role of the catalyst of transformation in my life.'

'A world exists that I can't see,' Brijesh said as they laughed.

And the compound of the white bungalow near the Hooghly ghat echoed with laughter and giggles of children.

Meanwhile, the golden light from the nearby Banyan tree illuminated brighter and wider.

The End

Ekta Bajaj

Let the Fish Fly (To be released in October 2024)

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