

**... AND PINE FOR WHAT IS NOT  
( BETAABIYON KA NAAM INSAAN HO GAYA )**

Mom,

I know that for the last two years you all have been looking for me... Perhaps, 'looking' is not the correct word because everyone was aware of the fact that we had left Delhi and settled in Bombay. Soman has a big flat here as well, and he has converted part of it into a studio. By the time you receive this letter, Soman and I will be flying to Chicago. The last two weeks have been hectic. I had no idea that getting a passport and visa could be so trying. Soman often lost his cool. I just don't know how he used to manage all this on his own. A journey of life spanning over fifty years... and a reputation to contend with... how did he handle important matters! After all, he did a lot of traveling... interacted with people... formed headlines of newspapers. Who was there to accompany him... look after him... take care of routine and mundane things? There may have been someone!

You must have heard about Soman being honoured with the most prestigious and coveted international award for art. He has to attend an international conference in Chicago, so we'll be there for a week before leaving for Paris. Mom, he is one of the ten delegates invited from India. This is indeed a rare honour, and I feel on top of the world. We'll stay in Paris for a couple of days where Soman has some work to do. I'm very happy, Mom, and Soman too is excited. I'm slightly indisposed these days. Yes, it's exactly what you are suspecting! But I have to go because I know he just can't stay or manage without me.

Mom, two years ago, I embarked with him on my first long journey from Delhi to Bombay and now America, France! I seem to have grown wings! Two years have just flown by. However, I think about you, miss dad, and remember Kareena every moment of the day. Soman has just one thing to say, "Have patience. Everything will work out." And now we are going so far away for such a long time... there'll be a constant sense of longing. There's no one to confide in except you!

You might be wondering what had happened then... without informing anyone... . No doubt, I let you all down. Do girls from respectable homes behave thus, and that too, in these times? What did I lack? Nothing! There was everything at home... love and care, peace and comfort. Mom, I'm indeed fortunate to have been blessed with so much at the early age of twenty-two to twenty-three. Of course, Dad didn't have much time for us; perhaps, he didn't even remember the class I was in or the subjects I was studying. It was such fun when at a party someone asked me what course I was pursuing, and Dad said that I was studying Science forgetting that I was not in Government College but in Maharani College where they didn't offer Science at the graduation level! He used to say that he worked so hard only to provide us with the best in life. That was his way of

showing that he loved us. He would give us large amounts as pocket money every month and buy us expensive gifts... No sooner had his business flourished, than he bought a huge house, and each of us almost had a suite to ourselves... big rooms with attached bathrooms, a balcony, and a small lobby. I used the lobby as a hobby room, installing an easel with a canvas, blank and vacant as my mind ... on which I could bring out my innermost turbulence and longings... often the inner void would emerge only to be lost in the random splash of colour. Perhaps my life found its way through this very lobby and these very paintings.

Mom, don't you think that as ease and comforts increase, one becomes more and more isolated. There was togetherness when we lived in two rooms... We actually saw everything... Daddy getting up early... going for a walk... shaving and getting ready... We were always talking and interacting with one another. Those days Daddy didn't return home so late, and we used to dine together. If he ever got delayed, he would come and tell us where he had been, and what had kept him. He was very garrulous, and the house was extremely lively ... Kareena's tantrums added to the hustle bustle.

At the time we asked for *Shanti-Shanti* ... now there is so much *Shanti* around the house that it becomes irksome ... it was as if Kareena couldn't stay in her own room ... I don't know whether you are aware that she spent most of her time with me... she would often barge into your room and create commotion .... I really miss my Chutki! She is much younger than me, and though I love her very much, she could never become my friend. At night, alone in her room, she would huddle up, and hug herself to sleep. I felt sorry for her. After completing my studies, I would tip toe in, and softly say, "Kanni, you can sleep with me" ... She would briskly jump out, get into my bed, and, putting her arms around me, would soon be fast asleep. We were strictly prohibited from entering your room because Daddy often returned late, in an inebriated state, and needed your attention. Sometimes he would organize get-togethers at home. People started arriving early in the evening, and there were bouts of eating and drinking. On such occasions poor Baldev kept running helter skelter between the drawing rooms, and kitchen. Often he would serve us food in our rooms, and console us saying, "What will you do in the dining room? All sorts of strange people are there. Daddy ji and Mummy ji will eat later". Kanni gave me a questioning look, and I excitedly said, "How wonderful! That's still better! But bring us two coca colas first". That was how we could be bribed because normally we were not allowed to have cold drinks for fear of sore throats or obesity.

Mom ... how can I ever forget that though Daddy didn't have time for the house, you tried your best to make up for it. After all, you were the one responsible for my meeting Soman. Your club had organized an exhibition of female artists in collaboration with the State Fine Arts Academy. You were Vice President of the club, but because the President was out of the country, you had to manage everything. You had met Soman on many occasions, and he was one of your favourite artists. I remember you once saying, "He's a useless fellow, but a

remarkable artist". When I asked what you implied, you said, "He simply ignores people, and doesn't even talk to anyone".

I saw him at the exhibition, and you introduced us, "Soman Da, this is my daughter Angelina. I had spoken to you about her ..."

He was in a good mood, and looking at me said, "Angelina! Are you really an angel?"

I blushed and was speechless. Besides, I remembered his reputation as a snob. However, I was elated at his comment.

That night the discussion at home centred round him. After all, an artist of his repute had participated in the exhibition. He had spent time with you, and you figured with him in the newspaper reports. He had also noticed your daughter.

You had told him that I was interested in painting and devoted quite a lot of time to it. In reality, I was a Commerce student, and had chosen the subject because of its scope in today's world. Besides, I was the only one who could assist Daddy in his business. He too had said, "Forget about art! It's all right as a hobby but will not give you career options".

I liked what you told him. Perhaps that was what I felt deep within me. But I was afraid lest Soman should ever ask me to show him my work. I had just been sketching random lines and using colours that struck my fancy. That elicited undeserved praise either to encourage me or to please you and Daddy. However, in my heart of hearts I always wished that an artist could evaluate my work and tell me whether I should continue painting ... was it okay ... worthwhile ... or just ... I was impatient to meet Soman. !

And that day! I was in my room studying for a sessional test when Baldev knocked and said, "Annie Bibi, Mummy ji wants you in the drawing room". I was so involved that I didn't question him, and took time in rushing down only to tell you, "Mom, what is it ... tell me quickly ... I'm extremely busy ..."

I froze on entering the drawing room. Soman was sitting right in front. Indu Aunty was with him. It was not possible to rush back. I had come as I was, wearing childish clothes.

In a strange fit of fancy, you had once bought sets of Bermudas for Kanni and me... very modern looking. I had never worn it because Daddy didn't approve of such dresses. Once when Kanni donned it ... *Tai ji* who had come from Mathura, commented, "Are Chori, why are you roaming around in shorts, all naked" .... Kanni got so upset that she threw off the dress and began weeping.

I thought that as you had spent so much money on it, I might as well wear it at home. Moreover, Daddy had gone out and there was no one in the house. Besides, in films, our heroines wear all sorts of things ... these days at parties too, girls are scantily clad... these are at least Bermudas with a top, what if it is sleeveless.

The way Soman looked at me! There was no acceptance or appreciation in his smile, rather an expression of curiosity. I felt totally exposed before his penetrating gaze. I faltered and yearned to wrap myself up. I muttered a greeting,

and sat close beside you.

We were familiar with Indu Aunty, and she was a senior member of the club. After the death of her husband, she was managing his business, and didn't have time for any thing else. She was Soman's cousin. He must have mentioned your club and exhibition. She promptly rang you up saying she was coming with a surprise for you. And the 'surprise' was this gentleman, your favourite artist! I was annoyed that you had taken me unawares ... I was embarrassed.

Perhaps Soman gauged my emotions. He got up and said, "So Miss Angelina, let's go and have a look at your work".

That was another blow. I muttered, "Yes Sir", and bounded upstairs to fix my room... Kareena had gone for dancing lessons otherwise she could have helped me. I thought of changing but gave up the idea for fear of drawing attention. I quickly returned because there was no saying that undue delay would land him in my room. Panting and panting, trying to get hold of myself, I took him to the enclosed balcony where my heart and mind expressed themselves on paper, I tried losing myself in the riot of colours, giving my imagination wings to surge into the free open skies.

Anyway, as he had come to see my work, I showed him all my paintings. I was anxious and fixed my gaze on him, trying to read his expressions ... sometimes he shook his head, sometimes he tried to concentrate, sometimes he passed a few comments, "Colours can be used differently ... why have you used so much blue to depict dusk ... don't you like shades of gray". After a brief pause, he suddenly said, "It's important to know the basics ... do you read things about art or ... are you your own teacher".

That irked me, and I simply shook my head.

"Say something instead of just nodding ... answer me in yes or no". And he held my head and gently shook it as if he were cajoling a child.

He stood gazing at the canvas on the easel and said, "Be it a portrait or scenery... every picture reflects a mind set... a specific mind set at a specific time. An artist doesn't merely observe his object, he perceives it from within. Only when he reads the mind and understands the psychology, does the image come alive. Apart from man, try to study the environment ... this sky, flowers, leaves, trees ... make an effort to penetrate them... And then come the artist's feelings... the turbulence within him... his frenzy... his isolation... these are also reflected in the background. Every piece of art is pulsating with life . ... Have I made myself clear Angelina, angel?"

After a moment's silence, he again returned to the explicating mood, "And listen, an artist must be beautiful from within and without.... Dress up like a young lady, you Angel". He ran down the steps, laughing.

Mom, I was annoyed, even angry with myself ... you and Soman .... He may be a big artist ... so what! I didn't want to learn anything from him. Painting is not my existence; it's a mere hobby, and hobbies are not for life; they change with time. I jerked my head, trying to forget every thing. After all, it was my life, and I

could do what pleased me ... wear what I fancied. I didn't go downstairs ... as it is I had work to do ... there was a sessional test.... But I couldn't concentrate on studies ... or anything .... .

Mom, at dinner you said he was all praises for me. He had said that I was "a budding artist" provided I pursued my work seriously. I was confused ... what to believe ... upstairs he had behaved as though I were a novice and had no idea what I was doing ... downstairs he had suggested that I could go to him on Tuesdays and Saturdays from 4:00 to 5:00 p m.... Which of his acts was real ....? Indu Aunty told me that he lived alone, his wife having walked out on him with their son. She had also been an artist, teaching at the University; she was also a well-known art critic. He was a sort of dilettante. The problem with our society is that if an artist is devoted to his wife and family, he is looked upon with suspicion. To be in the news depends more on his extra marital relations and ability to break homes than on his achievements as an artist; perhaps that becomes the gauge of his aesthetics. How long could a wife put up with infidelities and stories of his machoism? After she left, a few love affairs did the rounds, but nothing materialized.

Mom, it was as if Indu Aunty had totally unravelled Soman's personality before you, stitch by stitch, knots and all; the way she dissected him before an ardent admirer made me wonder whether she was his friend or foe. By revealing the dark side of his life, was she trying to intimidate or caution us? I was in a dilemma and didn't know what to do. She had also warned that I should never visit him after seven in the evening because, being drunk, he would not be in his senses. I didn't care less as I didn't intend to call on him anyway; but, you were gravely concerned. As for his visit, it was as good as forgotten; you didn't talk about it, and I was too involved with my studies.

Indu Aunty rang up after about a month. She was about to embark on a long journey, and had arrived in Delhi, and was putting up with Soman. She was offended on hearing that I wasn't interested in taking any sort of help from him. She insisted that I should visit her; I relented lest she think I was putting on airs. I had told you that I couldn't go there on my own as I was afraid of Soman. Anyway, both of us went the next day. The house was located in some distant, up-coming colony along Karnal Road; a palace in the wilderness. Indu Aunty was expecting us, and while the two of you got busy chatting, I wandered around, exploring the house. I entered the studio, a treasure trove of his paintings. I was wonder struck, and kept looking at them, taking them in. The pictures exhibited a rare combination of colours, prominent among them being blues, greens and yellows; the rest being there merely as strokes; red peeped out from the core of some; bandicoot grey seemed to be his favourite shade. I was overwhelmed by all that I saw, but I don't know why my heart suddenly became heavy. The overall impact of the paintings subdued feelings of dread that had been gripping me ... the entire sky suddenly seemed to become overcast ... black, brown, grey ... dusky ... no sign of light anywhere ... except momentary brightness that came with lightning but made one jitter. Soman had tried to interpret the environment and

penetrate the human psyche. I was lost in his paintings, and began studying the interior landscape of the artist through his works.

It was an artist's house without the excesses of opulence and decor... there were innumerable plants and immense greenery ... various species of flowering creepers ...all exhibiting life and exuberance .... The outside walls were adorned with garlands of flowers. The interesting thing was that his paintings could be seen nowhere else in the house except the hall which had been converted into a studio. In the drawing room there was a huge charcoal sketch of Gandhiji. A strange thought struck me. Should a light beard and long hair be added at random to Gandhiji's sketch, would it not become a portrait of Soman? No, it wouldn't because Gandhi never wore embroidered coloured kurtas like Soman. Ashamed at my fantasy, I turned my attention to the picture of a woman carrying a pitcher on her head; while she held it with one hand, the other rested on the shoulder of a lad of four or five. I noticed that Soman's women were tall with elongated faces. This is his style... I was deeply concentrating, when suddenly I felt a light touch on my shoulder followed by pressure.

I turned... it was Soman. A shiver ran down my spine... a current of fear... I was stunned and about to collapse.

Soman laughed.

"Are you afraid? But why?? come, sit down ....", and he guided me to a chair. He looked cool. It struck me that today I was properly dressed but perhaps he had not even noticed ... at least that's how I felt.

He began talking about his paintings. Perhaps the dread visible on my face had nonplussed him, and he was trying to calm to down. I don't know what I was hearing ... how much I was hearing ... or comprehending. Sometimes I shook my head ...sometimes I looked at his face ... when he smiled I tried to grin as though I were taking in and comprehending everything that he said.

He read my expression.

"Let's listen to music"..., and he switched on the music system. Mallika pukhraj's fascinating voice was softly singing Hafiz Jalandhari's *Abhi to main jawan hoon*.

Soman guessed that my throat was parched, and asked, „would you like to have water?" He brought a glass of water from the lobby, and I literally snatched it from him and gulped it down.

Taking the glass from me, he said, "And so my angel, you've seen my work. Now tell me how much of it is art, and how much just rubbish?"

I blurted out, "why do you say such a thing? This is a treasure house of art."

"Thank God, at least you said something. I was beginning to feel as if I were a wolf and you a lamb. Do you know that a lamb is struck dumb on seeing a wolf ... such is the terror of a wolf ... fatal! All right, now that you have seen the paintings, tell me what do you think of them. Friends and acquaintances are all praises for-them. They bring in a lot of money also. But let's see what the angel thinks ... what the fairy says ....." He was looking at my face curiously, the way

you would put a child on your shoulder encouraging him to touch the sky.

"It's wonderful, Sir. Superb . . . and ...."

"And what?" He laughed.

'And .. Sir, may I ask a question? you are known for your special use of colours, isn't it?"

"How would I know!" He was still laughing.

"Your colours are very somber. They depress a person ...." I couldn't dare to say more, but had to express what I felt so strongly lest I come under the insufferable stress of reticence. After all, art cannot put up with lies and hypocrisy. A person interprets art in terms of his personal feelings and emotions. Mom, I remember you had once said that art turns one into a votary of truth, and it should be experienced and felt. So Mom, I said what I felt. I thought he would mind and become rash. I began moving towards the door.

It was astonishing that he remained silent and didn't say a thing. He followed me to the drawing room. When we were leaving, then too he didn't speak. Mom, you were already in the car and were saying something to Aunty.

Soman held my hand and said, "You don't need anybody's help. You are a sensitive artist. You can penetrate a person's mind and reach his soul. Continue with your work. I can only wish you all the best ...."

I was free because Soman had approved my work and accepted my comments. I didn't know how to react ... there could be no better certificate.... But I was somber like Soman's pictures which had a proliferation of bandicoot grey, where dusk dominated colours of the sunset, pushing back the scarlet clouds. This trip had initiated future visits, and introduced me to Soman's art, moreover, I had been liberated, bringing to an end the bond of a teacher-student relationship.

I realized that that was what I had wanted all along. I could never behave normally in front of him; there always lurked an inexplicable fear. His erratic temperament created a dilemma for me. In his studio, he had tried hard to unravel this knot as one would try to distract an obstinate child by making different sounds and by giving him a variety of toys.

Under the circumstances I don't know how I had dared to express my impressions regarding his work; perhaps I had been pressurized into doing so.

Anyway, what Soman said, thought, felt, was his problem. As far as I was concerned, I should pursue whatever I was involved in because it was good.

But Mom, after that day I wasn't able to pick up a brush and paint. Whenever I stood before the canvas, it struck me that he had said that my work was perfect ... and that too after I had given my opinion regarding his work. He must have expressed his annoyance.... I began to feel that that day, while parting, he had abused me. Trying to reassure an inexperienced, amateur person that she was perfect in the eyes of God ... absolute ... was tantamount ridiculing her. I packed all my painting material and dumped it into a corner.... Nothing.... Nothing doing .... I have to concentrate on studies, pass, do an MBA and go abroad for

further studies. I have to help Daddy with his business because I'm the eldest.

As expected, I passed B. Com with a first division, and began preparing for Management. I had to do a crash course at some institute in Delhi. Daddy said that I should join it immediately. That's when we got the good news that Soman had been awarded a National Fellowship by the Lalit Kala Academy. It seemed as if ages had passed since I last heard Soman's name, and that too in such a glorious way.

I rang him up in the evening without telling you. He seemed surprised to hear my voice... "Hey.... Angel! What are you up to? Come over ... we'll celebrate ...." He spoke as one would to an equal.

"Yes Sir. I'll come tomorrow ...."

Mom, I thought we'd go together and congratulate him, but his immediate response was, "But Little Angel, I'm in Delhi... Why not come here?" He guffawed, and I got the feeling that he was heavily drunk. These people just needed an opportunity... celebration meant drinking with a couple of friends. I put down the receiver hastily as if he would pounce upon me wires notwithstanding. A drunkard could never be trusted....

After two months I was surprised to get a call from him. You and Daddy had gone to attend the annual dinner hosted by the Rotary Club, so I picked up the phone.

Soman was lying ill in Delhi. He was running a temperature, and was very concerned about his forthcoming exhibition which was to be in ten days with the likes of Satish ji and Bava ji. Everything was in disarray, and there was no one to attend to him or his work.

"Please come at once and take charge. There is no one beside you. Don't think Angel .... I desperately need you... Just come."

I suddenly turned cold and began shivering... He had said, "Come at once ... I need you." More easily said, than done. Did he actually feel that he had such a right over me? Did I really mean something to him? Was I that important for him? A famous artist like Soman needed me.... I didn't know how to react. These artists and writers inhabit a strange world and cannot be relied upon; seducing women ... rather girls ... is a pastime and sustenance for them... They are all carnivorous creatures! But Soman... he sounded really ill. He must be burning with fever. Helplessness compels a person to talk like this.

You both returned late at night, and when I told you everything in the morning, you retaliated saying, "So, has he gone crazy? Shall I send you all alone? A young girl! Doesn't she have a home and family? How can she just go there?"

"But Mom, he's very sick. His exhibition is round the corner, and a lot of preparations have to be made. I think there is no one with him."

"So what? Are you the only person left? These artists are all rogues! Scoundrels! Not one of them can be trusted. How will your Daddy react?"

'Mom, try to understand. He needs help. The very fact that he himself asked shows his seriousness. We cannot be so selfish, after all. When we needed his



help, we invited him over, and now that he requires our assistance, we turn our backs on him..."

Mom, you kept silent for a while before saying, " Look, try to understand. He's an artist. .. and a great artist ... but he's also a man. Don't be so gullible ..."

It seemed as though you had guessed my feelings towards Soman, and were concerned; that's why you were trying to explain the pros and cons. Talking about the man-woman relationship, you tried explicating the general attitude of men and their womanizing. Though I followed everything, the sticking point was the fact that Soman was ill and, all alone, needing help.

After great effort, you tried to come up with a solution. "If he is in such a desperate position, what we can do is that you stay back, and I'll go to Delhi. I'll tell your Daddy that I'm going to visit my sister, Lata. She had fractured her leg last month, and I can just as well visit her."

I started laughing. I wanted to remind you that he wanted me by his side. Mom, I didn't intend to hurt you, but you were extremely annoyed. I felt that if things continued to get complicated, and there was no other alternative, I would have to take a decision on my own. He must have had some kind of confidence in me that is why he had requested me to come. And this dependence emerges from the innermost core of a person's being; ignoring this call would imply negating the life force. Such tumultuous moments are rare but they lay thread bare the entire meaning of one's existence. A couplet of yours came rushing back: "There was nothing but order and restraint before passionate longing came to represent man..." and in that moment its significance dawned on me.

You were facing a dilemma, and didn't say anything. Perhaps you were hurt. It often happens that conflicts arise with those closest to you. Maybe such moments prove to be decisive in the sense that they show you the path to be taken.

It was a very strange situation where a loving mother and her beloved daughter were at loggerheads. There could be nothing more tragic. But Mom, what could I do? Staying back had become simply impossible. I myself was not aware when and how Soman had found a place in depths of my being.

I tried to find away out. I had to go to Delhi for a month's coaching, so could go a week in advance and stay with Lata Aunty. You understood that I was not seeking your permission, rather making known my intention.

Mom, today I will not hide anything. I went straight to the guest house where Soman had a suite. He really had high temperature. His paintings were in another room, some scattered around, and others in a box, rolled up in paper. He himself opened the door and was stunned to see me. He couldn't believe that I had actually come. He guided me to the bed where we sat down. He kept holding onto my hand as if he feared I'd vanish.

"Angel, are you really here!"

"Why, were you not serious when you called me? All right, then I'm leaving.... Mom was right ...." I pretended to get up.

"But, who'll let you go .... How can you leave, my Angel ...." He put his

arms round my neck, and hugged me so tight that I could hardly breathe. "What are you doing?" Anger was beginning to take the place of fear, and I literally screamed, "You had better lie down. You have high temperature." Mom, he immediately lay down like a naughty boy who tries to be obedient in order to extract a promise from his mother. I began laughing, and patted his cheek lightly. He was reassured, and taking his medicine dropped off to sleep.

It took five or six days for the fever to come down. Some of his students and friends would come in the evening, chalk out plans for the forthcoming exhibition, select his paintings, get them framed and mounted, discuss arrangements regarding the art gallery, and so on. There was so much to be done.

That evening we were relaxed because everything was in hand. Soman had gone to a press conference which I was watching live on T.V. It was 8:00 O'clock. Thinking that he would be celebrating with his friends, and wouldn't be back before ten, I decided to take a nap.

I woke up with a start to find Soman clasping my feet and crying. I checked the time; it was just 9:00 p m.

"You are early. Didn't you stay back for dinner?"

"How could I go without You, Angel?"

"But ... let go of my feet ... so, what were you saying..."

"First, promise me that you're not leaving tomorrow . . . . You have to promise first"

"But you are all right now. The exhibition begins tomorrow. I must leave. How long can I stay here ...."

"No, I'll die .... I'll kill myself here and now..."

"Don't be crazy .... All right, I'm not going yet..."

And that was enough to make him happy like a child.

Mom, is there an innocent child hidden in the innermost core of every human being? We get so involved in the mundane activities of daily life, and let this child get lost and forgotten in the mazes of materialistic existence. But the child within Soman remains alive and kicking, and its enthusiasm often poses a challenge to his manhood. However, he wears so much protective armour that its guileless laughter gets buried somewhere in it.

I can't understand why people want to prove that a woman needs the support of a man because she is weak. I feel that a woman is strong and lends her strength to her counterpart. Man has an inflated ego, and imbibes emotional strength and security from a woman, but to overcome this complex and prove his bravado he fences in the air and tries to terrorise her.

Doesn't she become the target of weakness?

I'm often amused' at myself and Soman. Where is that horrifying persona? Soman, safe within his invincible citadel of defenses, becomes a child when he sleeps, hiding in the protective embrace of his mother. Yes Mom, that day too he was almost helpless. He was swaying between indecision and resolution, flagging confidence and conviction, groping for a bastion of strength, hence one moment he

tried to lose himself in me, and the next he pulled himself away. I felt that I would have to take over and restore his self-confidence else he would lose his mental stability. He was one of those people who could just give himself up to others when he felt safe. It was then that his talent blossomed forth at its best. Mom, this art of providing security seems to be an innate and instinctive part of womanhood. Perhaps it is the secret of a man-woman relationship.

I discovered the reason behind Soman's antagonistic behaviour. I would have to restore his self-confidence. I had to stay with him.

Mom, it has nothing to do with age. There are thousands of people who spend lives together, but are not touched by a single line of emotion on each other's faces.

Mom today I feel a sense of self-satisfaction. My empowerment has found new dimensions now that my companionship has proved a *sanjeevni*, a panacea for someone. I have come to realize that one receives much more than he gives. That is the cornerstone of relationships. Then why stint generosity?

Mom, I hope you'll forgive me. I don't care about the world as long as you understand me. In our relationship I had the opportunity to take an initiative, and come to the aid of somebody who desperately needed me. Now, for the rest of my life, I will be at the receiving end of his munificence.

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