

CHAPTER - 10

SELF EXPERIENCE

“गुरुं नमस्कृत्य गच्छति”

A line from the composition written by my dada guru turns to be true experience in my artistic carrier of Kathak dance. A Guru connects you with the supreme power God and guides you at every step to make you confident and strong enough to project yourself to the society.

For me this artistic journey from childhood till today is a golden experience in my life. I was 12 years old when I started my formal training in Kathak dance by taking admission in 1st year Diploma in Faculty of Performing Arts, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda. I was fortunate to have Dr. Pandit Jagdish Gangani as a Guru right from first year till the fifth year of Diploma. Under his guidance and training I got to learn the finest nuances and intricacies of Kathak dance. I finished my schooling and Diploma in Kathak hand in hand. Now was the time to take a major decision of selecting between two “KATHAK DANCE OR ACADEMICS”. Till now dance was taken up only as hobby, it was never thought of making a profession.

Hailing from a Koknasta family of Engineers where academics is always given a upper hand. I had to go for B.Sc. (Home Science) with Foods and Nutrition Vocational as a major subject. Further I desired to pursue M.Sc. I lacked by one percentage to get admission in M.Sc, the destiny was something else. God must had some other plans for me which brought a turning point in my life. I took admission in BPA i.e. Bachelors in Performing Arts, Dance (Kathak) and was again blessed to have Dr. Pandit Jagdish Gangani as my Guruji till the completion of my MPA i.e. Masters in Dance (Kathak). Apart from the formal education my training was exclusively under the traditional Guru Shishya Parampara which is continued till date. It helped me to understand the intricacies of dance in detail and also developed my perception towards its presentation on stage.

In Guru Shishya Parampara system, Shishya is trained not only in dance but, is also nurtured with sanskar, discipline and artistic mannerisms of dance. Shishya is the one who carries forward the style, identity and legacy of a Guru. In the same way the training that I got was not only in dance, but in every other aspect that nurtured and groomed my total artistic personality. I was fortunate enough to see and experience

the traditional legacy of Kathak dance which was and still carried forward by my Guruji.

Since my student life I was always a part of his choreographic productions. This experience played a vital role in creating my identity as a performer. It was my Guruji's confidence in me and his continuous support that gave me a vision and goal to come up professionally in this artistic area. His taalim always presented and projected me strongly in the prestigious dance and music festivals. Appreciation by great Gurus and spectators enhanced my confidence to continue in this area.

After my formal education initially I started my carrier by serving in a school as a dance teacher. Later on I passed the NET Exam (National Eligibility Test) and got appointed as a lecturer in Department of Dance, Faculty of Performing Arts, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda. After getting associated with the faculty I realized that there was much more to develop as a teacher which is still continued under the guidance of my Guru. As it is truly said that knowledge is like a flowing river that never ends.

My guruji use to tell me that “y[krtb h] (kE (bni nh) (ml ti ”. I followed his words with true faith in him. His words proved to be true when I was awarded the “Kal Ke Kalakar” title by Gujarat Sangeet Natak Akademi, ICCR empanelment, Production Grant from Ministry of Culture (New Delhi), and “Gaurav Puraskar” awarded by Sports Youth and Cultural Activity Department and Gujarat State Sangeet Natak Akademi. All this was not possible to achieve without the blessings, guidance and hard work of my guruji.

It is said that the artiste is responsible to educate and serve the society. The flame of Kathak which was lit by my Dada Guru Pandit Sundarlal Gangani is carried forward by his son and disciple Dr. Pandit Jagdish Gangani. He initiated to celebrate and organize several programs to promote Kathak art form. My Guruji expressed his wish to start two days Kathak Mahotsav in Vadodara. In 2003 he began with the celebration of Kathak Mahotsav under his institution Kathak Darshan Charitable Trust. I actively participated as a helping hand to my revered Guruji in organizing the first ever two days Kathak Nritya Mahostav in Vadodara. Organizing as well as performing is not everybody's cup of tea. It was a tough journey, year after year organizing and performing was not easy. But with the grace and kind support of my Guruji it became possible. This festival has successfully completed 15 years of

celebration in the propagation of Kathak dance art form. Performing continuously for 14 years on this platform before the eminent Gurus and renowned artistes established my identity as a performer. It will not be exaggerate to say that I learnt every minute detail of organizing area also that became possible just because of my Guruji's support, guidance and encouragement. These 14 years of association with Kathak Darshan has shaped my carrier.. I pray to God to give me strength to continue and support my Guruji in organizing many such Kathak Mahotsavs in the coming years.

Whatever I have talked about of my artistic journey, would not have been possible without the support of my parents. The unconditional support of them helped me to keep going in this field. I am really blessed to have such wonderful parents, who were patient, understanding and equally supportive at every step of my artistic journey. Further I was even fortunate to get marry in a family where the support for art is continued. I am gratefull to my husband, Anand and offcourse my mother in law who are equally supportive and kind to me, due to which I am able to continue working with more energy and enthusiasm in the artistic area. My journey would be incomplete without the mention of my Guruma Smt. Priyamvada Gangani, who always showered her unconditional love and affection and made me feel as a member of her family.

Guru is like a gemstone known as "PARAS", which has a quality of turning iron into gold. A true guru brings a complete transformation in the Shishya for the betterment. I would like to express that my guruji had transformed me into fine artistic persona. I am fortunate to have him as my Guru, who nurtured me with all sanskars that will always give me strength to keep going ahead.

Further I look forward to work, practice and contribute towards this legacy of Kathak dance.