MOTHER GIRAFFES AND THEIR TEACHING METHODS
Yogacharini Meenakshi Devi Bhavanani

Nature chooses so many ways to inspire us. If we look carefully we will see, “evolutionary lessons” all around us as we wend our way through the treacherous jungle of Samskaras. One of my favourites is actually an old saying from Zen Buddhism lore. “The mother lion teaches her cubs roughly. With one swat of her paw, she shows them how to live!” That was Swamiji’s teaching method. It was hard, but it was effective. Recently I ran across another bit of interesting information on the mother giraffe’s teaching methods. It lifted my spirits and gave me courage as this year I felt life herself has employed this method to bring me to realizations I needed to reach in my upward climb!

To begin with the baby giraffe drops from a considerable height, hitting the ground with its whole body weight. The mother with her long neck moves slightly to one side and sees that baby is struggling to get to its feet. She immediately reaches out one long leg and gives the baby giraffe a not particularly gentle kick that sends it sprawling. She kicks it several more times until it is worn out. The new-born giraffe finally manages to struggle to its feet in order to escape such aggression. At that moment, far from feeling proud, the mother has an odd reaction: She kicks the young giraffe again and again falls over and again gets up, only this time more quickly. Why? She wants the baby giraffe to learn as rapidly as possible that the world it is going to live in is full of lions, hyenas, leopards and hunters. If it does not immediately learn to get up when it falls, it will never be able to enjoy the life that lies ahead.

We can also take courage from the fact that the life of great souls has never been bed of roses! Swamiji said all persons who move ahead of the herd in the long procession of beings moving from darkness to light will always be “foreigners,” He said, “Don’t be afraid to fell like a foreigner” wherever you go. Foreigner is simply another spelling of “fore runner”. You are ahead of your time and thus “feel out of place.” Get used to it! Spiritual life is the flight of the alone to the Alone!”

Great men such as Michelangelo, Van Gogh and Charles Darwin were often attacked and abused. Most of them were attacked, defeated, insulted, and for many years got nowhere. However, every time they fell to earth, they had the ability to pick themselves up and try again. The great geniuses are the ones who never gave their enemies the power to destroy them.

Let us make these truths, living realities! Fly high and cheerfully!