

Siddhartha by Hermann Hesse

SIDDHARTHA

An Indian Tale

by Hermann Hesse

FIRST PART

To Romain Rolland, my dear friend

THE SON OF THE BRAHMAN

In the shade of the house, in the sunshine at the riverbank near the boats, in the shade of the ?SALWALD?, in the shade of the fig tree is where Siddhartha grew up, the handsome son of the Brahman, the young falcon, together with his friend Govinda, son of a Brahman. The sun tanned his light shoulders during bathing, the sacred ablutions, the sacred offerings at the banks of the river. In the mango grove, shade poured into his black eyes, when the boys played, when his mother sang,

when the sacred offerings were made, when his father, the Scholar, taught him, when the Wise Men talked. For a long time, Siddhartha had been partaking in the discussions of the Wise Men, practicing debate with Govinda, practicing the art of reflection with Govinda, the duty of contemplation. He already knew how to speak the Om silently, the word of words, to speak it silently into himself while inhaling, to speak it silently out of himself while exhaling, with his entire soul, the forehead surrounded by the glow of the clear-thinking spirit. He already knew to feel Atman in the depths of his being, indestructible, one with the universe.

Joy leapt in his father's heart for his son who was quick to learn, thirsty for knowledge; he saw the great wise man and priest in him grow, a prince among the Brahmins. Bliss leapt in his mother's breast when she saw him, when she saw him walking, when she saw him sit down and get up, Siddhartha, strong, beautiful, walking on slim legs, greeting her with perfect respect.

Love touched the hearts of the Brahmins' young daughters when Siddhartha walked through the lanes of the town with the luminous forehead, with the eye of a king, with his slender hips.

Govinda, his friend and a Brahmin's son, loved him more than all the others. He loved Siddhartha's eye and sweet voice, he loved his walk and the perfect decency of his movements, he loved everything Siddhartha did and said and what he loved best was his spirit, his

transcendent, fiery thoughts, his ardent will, his high calling.

Govinda knew: he would not become a common Brahman, not a lazy official making offerings by rote; not a greedy merchant with magic spells; not a vain, vacuous speaker; not a mean, deceitful priest; and also not a decent, dumb sheep in the herd of the many. No, and he, Govinda, as well did not want to become one of those, not one of those tens of thousands of Brahmans. He would follow Siddhartha, the beloved, the splendid. And in days to come, when Siddhartha would become a god, when he would join the Glorious, then Govinda wanted to follow him as his friend, his companion, his servant, his spear-carrier, his shadow.

Siddhartha was thus loved by everyone. He was a source of joy for everybody. He, however, was not a source of joy for himself.

Despite ?strolling/ambling? on the rosy paths of the fig tree garden, despite sitting in the ?blueish? shadow of the grove of contemplation, despite washing his limbs daily in the bath of repentance, despite sacrificing in the dim shade of the mango forest, his gestures of perfect decency, everyone's love and joy, he lacked any joy in his heart. Dreams and restless thoughts came into his mind, flowing from the water of the river, sparkling from the stars of the night, melting from the beams of the sun, dreams came to him, and a restlessness of his mind, fuming from the sacrifices, aspiring from the verses of the Rig-Veda, ?dripping/trickling? from the ?doctrine/teaching? of the old Brahmans.

Siddhartha had started to nurse discontent in himself, he had started

to feel that his father's and mother's love, and also the love of his friend, Govinda, would not please him for ever and ever, would not nurse him, feed him, satisfy him. He had started to anticipate that his venerable father and his other teachers, the wise Brahmans had already passed to him the most and best of their wisdom, that they had already filled his expecting vessel with their richness, and the vessel was not full, the spirit was not content, the mind was not calm, the heart was not satisfied. The ablutions were good, but they were of water, they did not wash off the sin, they did not heal the spirit's thirst, they did not untie an anxious heart. The sacrifices and the invocation of the gods were excellent--but was that all? Did the sacrifices give luck? And how were those received by the gods? Was it really ?Prajapati? who had ?erschaffen? the world? Was it not the Atman, Him, the One, the Alone? Goods not the Gods. Organizations, create as I and you, the time subject, passing? Was it thus good, was correct it, was it meaningful and highest doing to sacrifice the Gods? Whom differently was to be sacrificed, whom different was admiration to bring than it, the only one, the Atman? And where was Atman to find, where he lived, where its eternal heart struck, where differently than in the own Self, in the internal one, in the indestructible one, which everyone carried in itself? But where, where this was I, this internal, this the latter? It was not meat and leg, it was not thinking still consciousness, then the wisest ones taught. Where, where thus was it? There to penetrate, to I, TO me, to the Atman, gave it another way, which to look up was worthwhile oneself? Oh, and nobody did not show this way, anybody knew it, not the father, not the teachers and ways, not the holy victim singing!

Everything knew they, the Brahman and its holy books, everything knew them, over everything them had worried and about more than everything, they knew the ?erschaffung? of the world, developing the speech, the meal, the inhalation, breathing out, the orders of the senses, the acts of the Gods infinitely much--however was it valuable to know all of this if one did not know and only ones, the most important, the alone important?

Certainly, many verses of the holy books, particularly in the ?Upanishaden? of the ?Samaveda?, spoke of this internal one and the latter, wonderful verses. " your soul is the whole world ", was there written, and written that humans sleep in, in the deep sleep, to its internal one be received and in the Atman live. Marvelous wisdom was in these verses, all knowledge of the wisest ones was here in magic words collected, purely as from bees collected honey. No to live small not to note was the tremendous at realization, which retains here from innumerable ?geschlechterfolgen? of wise Brahman collected and was situated--however where was the Brahman, where the priests, where the ways or ?Buesser?, which had succeeded to not only know this deepest knowledge but? Where was the ?Kundige?, that the home its in the Atman from sleeps ?herueberzauberte? in ?Wachsein?, into the life, in step and footstep, in word and act? Siddhartha, his father before everything, the pure one, the scholar, the most venerable one knew many venerable Brahman. To admire his father was, quietly and nobly was pure its ?Gehaben?, its life, points his word, purifies and noble thoughts lived in its forehead--in addition, he, the so much knowing,

lived he in blessedness, had he peace, was he not also only a look-up,
a ?Duerstender? Did it have not always and again and again at holy
sources, ?Durstender?, does drink, at the victim, at the books, at the
change speech of the Brahman? Why did it, which irreproachable ones,
each day sin to wash off, each day around cleaning strive themselves,
each day of new, have? Wasn't Atman in it, flowed not in its own
heart of the ?Urquell? It one had to find, to the ?Urquell? in the own
Self, him must one to own have! All others were searches, were
detours, were erring

Like that Siddharthas thoughts were, this were its thirst, this its
suffering. Often he pronounced himself from a ?Chandogya Upanishad?
the words: "?Fuerwahr?, which is name of the Brahman ?satyam?--indeed,
who knows such, goes daily into the heavenly world." Often it seemed
close, which heavenly world, but never had he her completely achieved,
never the last thirst deleted. And of all ways and wisest ones.
Which it could do and whose instruction it enjoyed, from them all was
none, which had achieved her completely, the heavenly world, which had
deleted him completely, that eternal thirst.

"Govinda," Siddhartha said to his friends, "Govinda, dear one, come
with me under the Banyan tree, we will recite our Verses."

They went to the Banyan tree, they sat beneath the tree, Govinda
twenty steps away. After putting himself down, ready, to speak the Om
Siddhartha repeated murmuring the verse:

Om is elbow, the arrow is soul,
The Brahman is the arrow's target,
That one should incessantly hit.

When the allotted time of the Verse recitation exercise was finished,
Govinda rose. The evening had come, it was time to take the evening
hour bath. He called Siddhartha's name. Siddhartha did not give
response. Siddhartha sat sunken, his eyes was rigidly focused toward
a very far target, the tip of his tongue was protruding a little
between the teeth, he seemed not to breathe. Thus sat he, wrapped up
in his thoughts of Om, his soul sent after the Brahman straight as an
arrow.

Once Samanas had been pulled through Siddhartha's city, Ascetics
pilgrimed there three dry, "lost" men, neither old nor still young,
with dusty and bloody shoulders, almost naked from the sun "versengt",
surrounded by isolation, "fremd" and enemy of the world, "Fremdlinge"
and "hagere" jackal in the realm of humans. Behind them a smell of
quiet passion blew hotly, of destructive service, of
compassionless "Entselbstung".

In the evening, after the hour of the view, Siddhartha spoke to
Govinda: "in the early morning, my friend, Siddhartha will go to the
Samanas. He will become a Samana."

Govinda paled, there he heard the words and in the motionless face of his friend the resolution loosely, ?unablenkbar? like the arrow loose-snapped by the elbow. Immediately and with the first glance Govinda knew: Now, now Siddhartha is starting on his way, now his fate begins to sprout, and with his, my own. And he would bleach like a dry banana bowl.

"O Siddhartha," he called, "will your father permit you to do that?"

Siddhartha looked over like an awakening. Arrow-fast he read in Govindas soul, read the fear, read the ?Ergebung?.

"O Govinda," he spoke quietly, "we will not waste words. Tomorrow with daybreak I will begin the life of the Samanas. Speak no more of it."

Siddhartha entered the chamber, where his father was sitting on a velvet mat, stood behind his father and remained standing until his father felt that someone was standing behind him. Spoke the Brahmane: "Is that you, Siddhartha? Then say what you came to say."

Spoke Siddhartha: "With your permission, my father. I came to tell you that it is my longing to leave your house tomorrow and go to the ascetic. My desire is to become a Samana. May my father not oppose

this." The Brahmane fell silent, and remained silent so long that the stars in the small window wandered and changed their shape, 'ere the silence was broken. Dumb and motionless stood the son with his arms folded, dumb and motionless sat the father on the mat, and the stars traced their paths in the sky. Then spoke the father: "Not proper it is for a Brahmane to speak hefty and thorny words. But indignation my heart. I wish not to hear this request for a second time from your mouth."

Slowly, the Brahmane arose; Siddhartha stood dumb, his arms folded.

"What are you waiting for?" - asked the father.

Spoke Siddhartha: "You know what."

Indignant, the father left the chamber; indignant, went he to his bed and lay down.

After an hour, when sleep still had not come to him, the Brahmane stood up, paced to and fro, and left the house. Through the small window he looked back inside, and saw Siddhartha standing, motionless, his arms folded. Pale shimmered his robe. With anxiety in his heart returned the father to his bed.

After another hour, when sleep had still not come to him, the Brahmane stood up again, paced to and fro, walked out of the house and saw that the moon had risen. Through the window looked he inside the chamber; there stood Siddhartha, motionless, his arms folded, moonlight reflecting from his bare shins. With concern in his heart the father went back to bed.

He came again after an hour, he came again after two hours and looked through the small window, saw Siddhartha, in the moon light, in the half-darkness. And again his heart filled with anger, his heart filled with unrest, filled his heart with Zagen, filled it with sadness. And in the night's last hour, before the day began, he returned, stepped into the room, saw the young man, who appeared tall and alien.

"Siddhartha," he said, "on what await you?"

"You know what."

"You will be always stand that way and wait, till it becomes morning, noon, and evening?"

"I will stand and wait.

"You will become tired and sleepy."

"I will become tired."

"You will fall asleep, Siddhartha."

"I will not fall asleep."

"You will die, Siddhartha."

"I will die."

"And would you rather die, than obey your father?"

"Siddhartha has always obeyed his father."

"So will you abandon your plan?"

"Siddhartha will do what his father tells him to do."

The first light of day shown into the room. The Brahman saw that Siddhartha was trembled softly on his knees. In Siddhartha's face he saw no trembling, absently blinking his eyes. Then his father realized that Siddhartha no longer dwelt with him in his home, that he

had already lost him.

Father touched Siddhartha's shoulder.

"You will go into the forest" he said, "and become a Samana. When you find salvation in the forest, then come back and teach me. If you find disappointment, then return to me and let us worship again to the common Gods. Go now and kiss your mother, tell her where you are going. For me it is time to go to the river and take the first washing.

He took his hand from the shoulder of his son and left. Siddhartha wavered to the side, as he sought to go. He restrained his limbs, bowed to his father, then went to his mother to do as his father had said.

As he slowly left on numb legs in the first light of day in the quiet city, a shutter tentatively opened at the last hut, and closed itself on the pilgrim--Govinda.

"You have come," said Siddhartha and laughed.

"I am here," replied Govinda.

WITH THE SAMANAS

In the evening of this day they brought him to the Ascetic, the (parched/dry?) barren Samanas, and offered them his companionship and--obedience. They accepted him.

Siddhartha gave his garments to one of the poor Brahmins in the street. He carried only the badge of shame and the earth colored, unclaimed discards. He ate only once a day, and never cooked. He fasted fifteen days. He fasted twenty-eight days. The flesh shrank from his thighs and cheeks. Troubling dreams floated before his enlarged eyes, long nails grew on his parched fingers and a shaggy beard grew on his chin. His glance was icy when he encountered women; his mouth bred contempt from the nicely dressed people when he went through the city. He saw dealers trading, princes going on hunting trips, bereaved wailing for their dead, whores offering themselves, doctors trying to help the sick, priests tending the lepers, lovers loving, mothers calming their children--and none of this was the vision in his eyes, everything registered, everything smelled, everything stank of lies, everything deceived the senses and joy and beauty, and everything was unconfessed decay. The world tasted bitter. Life was a struggle.

A goal stood before Siddhartha, a single-mindedness: become empty, empty of thirst, empty of wishing, empty of dreams, empty of joy and sorrow. Divorced from himself, no more be an "I", to find an emptied heart's tranquility, to stand open to the self-absorbed thoughts of

wonder, that was his goal. If I were to overcome everything, if every desire and every urge of the heart was silent, then the latter had to awake, the internal in the nature, which is no more I, the large secret.

Being silent, Siddhartha positioned himself perpendicular to the sun's rays, glowing with pain, glowing with thirst, until he did not feel pain or thirst any more. Being silent it was in the rain time, from his hair dripped the water over freezing shoulders, over freezing hips and legs, and the "Buesser?", until shoulders and legs did not freeze any longer, until they were silent, until they were quiet. Being silent he cowered in the thorny bushes, blood dripped from the burning skin, from "Schwaeren" of pus, and Siddhartha stayed rigidly, stayed rainless, until no more blood flowed, until nothing more stung, until nothing more burned.

Siddhartha sat upright and learned to breathe sparingly, learned to get along with only few breathes, learned to store the breath. He learned, with the beginning breath, to calm the beat of his heart, his heart's beat to slow down, until few and almost none was present.

Siddhartha practiced "Entselbstung" with the oldest of the Samanas, practiced sublimation, according to a new Samana regimen. A heron flew over the bamboo forest--and Siddhartha assumed the heron soul, flew over forest and mountain, was heron, ate fish, felt the pangs of heron hunger, cawed the heron call, died a heron death. A dead jackal

was lying on the sandy bank, and Siddhartha's soul slipped inside the body and became the dead jackal, was because of the beach, blew themselves, stank, decayed, was dismembered by hyeana's, was skinned by vultures, was ?stripped to the bone?, was dust, and blew in the ?Gefild?. And Siddharthas soul returned, had died, had decayed, was sputtered, had tasted the gloomy intoxication of the cycle, awaited in new thirst like a hunter in the gap, where would be to be escaped from the cycle, where the end of the causes, where sadless eternity began. It killed its senses, it killed its memory, it slipped out of its Self into thousands other organizations, was animal, was carrion, was stone, was wood, was water, and appeared each time, sun seemed awaking or moon, was again Self, vogue in the cycle, felt thirst, overcame the thirst, felt new thirst.

Much learned Siddhartha with the Samanas, many ways of I away learned it to go. It went the way of the ?Entselbstung? through the pain, through freely suffering and overcoming the pain, hunger, the thirst, to the tiredness. It went the way of the ?Entselbstung? through Meditation, through the empty thinking of the sense of all conceptions. He learned these and other ways to go, a thousand times left he his Self, grants long and several-day-long remained he into not None-Self. But whether also the ways of Self led away, its end nevertheless always led back to Self.

Whether Siddhartha a thousand times which I escaped, in nothing stayed, in the animal, in the stone stayed, inevitably was the return, ?unentrinn? without the hour, since he appeared, in the sunshine or in

the moonlight, in the shadow or in the rain, and again I and Siddhartha were, and again the agony on hunted cycle felt.

Beside him lived Govinda, his shadow, went the same ways, undertook the same efforts. They rarely spoke to one another, than the service and the exercises required. Occasionally they went to...

{The remainder of this text is under construction and will be released as it is completed.}