

Sometime in 1615, Katharina, a 68 year old lady was accused of witchcraft in a town in Germany. About three months after the accusation, one of her sons who lived in Austria received a letter from his sister that their mother was in trouble.

The son, Johannes Kepler, was then at the height of his life — engaged in work that would make him, along with Copernicus and Galileo, one of the seminal forces of modern astronomy, and science. As soon as he heard about his mother, Johannes moved (with his family) to Germany. He would spend the next six years mounting a defence for her.

This was a particularly devastating time. Ulinka Rublack, the historian and Professor at Cambridge, tells us (“**The Astronomer and the Witch**”) that

About 73,000 men and women were tried for witchcraft and 40,000-50,000 executed in Europe between 1500 and 1700....Seventy-five per cent of those accused were female.

Execution often meant being burnt in a stake. In August 1620, Katharina was imprisoned, and spent the next 14 month enchained in a cell.

Johannes was, by then, an unflinching voice conveying that the Universe was governed by natural laws, not by Divine dicate. Owing to this, he was already engaged in struggles with the Establishment.

Faced with formidable opposition, and his inner turmoils, Johannes responded with his best. Using all the “*intellectual habits*” he had cultivated, he indomitably put together “*a pioneering defence*”. In early October 1621, his mother was “*absolved*” and freed.

This piece of history has my heart not because it is an episode in the still-ongoing battle between those who seek Truth, and those who traffic in falsehood & deception, but because it is also the story of a son’s love for his mother. Johannes, Ulinka writes, “*put his existence*

on hold” as he marshalled everything he had to defend his mother, and free her. Indeed, he risked being accused himself.

It is not hard to figure out why he did this. *Love — mother’s Love.*

The effect of a mother’s Love is such that even a monk, Swami Vivekananda, was moved to write to Haridas Viharidas Desai, on 29th January 1894 (“**The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda**”) that “*If there is any being I love in the whole world, it is my mother.*”



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In the introduction to his translation of “**The Bhagavad Gita**”, Juan Mascaro writes:

Love is the power that moves the universe....The radiance of this universe sends us a message of love and says that all creation came from love, that love impels evolution and that at the end of their time love returns all things to Eternity. Even as the rational mind can see that all matter is energy, the spirit can see that all energy is love, and everything in creation can be a mathematical equation for the mind and a song of love for the soul.

We get a glimpse of the Love Juan speaks about, an aperture to the Divine, from our mothers — and from people who love with the love of a mother.

Johannes' mother passed on a few months after she was released from prison. Her Love gave us the person who was among the first few (in modern times) to fortify us from superstition, dogma, and much of the fraud that is hawked as religion.

Peace ☐

The Love that rocks the cradle is the Love that lights the stars

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