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CHALLENGES

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Personal disaster uncovers hidden gift

Lawrence Paul is a third-generation Pakistani Hindu whose family originally hailed from Gujarat, but elected to stay in Karachi after Partition. One fateful night in 1989 while taking a shortcut home across a trainyard he was attacked and robbed by twelve men, beaten severely and left for dead. He regained consciousness just as a train was bearing down upon him. Pulling himself off the tracks, he lost both legs as the train passed over him. Unable to work any longer, his family finances deteriorated until his mother was forced to take a job. Lawrence then turned to artwork, which had been his hobby, as a way to help the family. "I never studied with anyone, no one ever taught me. God gave me a gift of art. It is a power to help my struggle in life," he said. An excellent artist, he doesn't make as much as he might, since most of his pieces are devotional works. He has done life-size statues of Lord Siva, Goddess Durga and Shirdi Sai Baba, plus a variety of oil and watercolor paintings. His commissioned portraits are noted for their sensitive depiction of the subject's personality. "People are forever knocking on his door, even coming from far away places," his sister-in-law Yvonne, reports. "But since he does mainly devotional work, a lot is for free or materials cost only."

"My dream is to stand and walk before my mother again," Lawrence says--something possible with minor surgery, artificial legs and rehabilitation. Beyond a used, US\$14 wheelchair, little has been done for him in Pakistan where his treatment options are inadequate. Yvonne is raising money to bring him to the USA. Here the surgery and his rehabilitation would be a relatively routine, if costly and extended, process. To assist in his effort to walk again, contact: Yvonne Paul, 11100 Highway 99 South, Ashland Oregon, 97520, USA.