

The Starting Point to Self-Realization...

न॒ए॒ति॒ न॒ए॒ति॒
त॒त॒ त॒व॒त्त॒म॒ व॒सि॒

**Not This, Not This,
Thou Art That!**

By

AiR
Atman in Ravi

Once you discover who you are not,
You will realize who you are.

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tat tvam asi

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Atman in Ravi
Ravi V. Melwani

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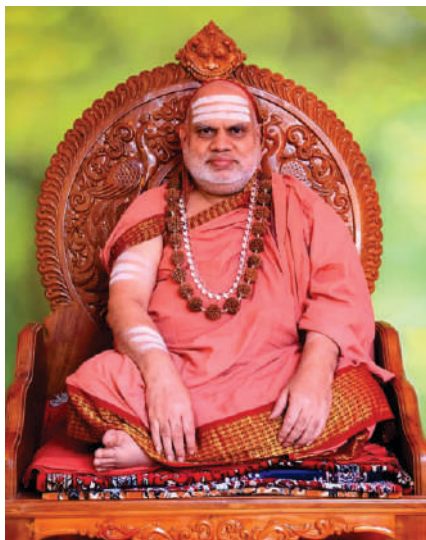
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GRATITUDE AND DEDICATION

I want to express my deepest gratitude to the Divine Master, His Holiness Sringeri Jagadguru Shankaracharya Sri Sri Bharati Tirtha Mahaswamiji, whom I was blessed to meet and from whom I gained the wisdom of *Viveka Chudamani*. I acknowledge with humility His profound spiritual guidance and feel immensely blessed to have spent time with His Holiness. He has inspired the Soul in me to awaken and move ahead on the path of Adi Shankara.



*His Holiness Sringeri Jagadguru Shankaracharya
Sri Sri Bharati Tirtha Mahaswamiji*

He consecrated the Shivoham Shiva temple in 1993 and ever since, it has become a spiritual destination. I humbly dedicate this book - *Neti Neti Tat Twam Asi* to His lotus feet and seek his blessings. His few words as a foreword will be a blessing to all readers. - **AiR**

FOREWORD

His Holiness Sringeri Jagadguru Shankaracharya
Sri Sri Bharati Tirtha Mahaswamiji



श्री श्री जगद्गुरु शङ्कराचार्य महासंस्थानम्, दक्षिणाम्नाथ श्रीशारदापीठम्, शृङ्गेरी
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I acknowledge the receipt of your Book "Neti Neti Tat Twam Asi" and it was placed at the Lotus Feet of Their Holinesses with your Sashtanga pranams.

Our religion is not merely a meta physical speculation, but has its foundation in the immediate data of experience. If guided by a realized Guru, the ultimate truth can be experienced not merely by a chosen few, but under divine direction by everyone. The experience of 'Self' backed up by Guru's instructions for 'Atma Vichara' rather than independent abstract reasoning is what is resorted to by all aspirants of Truth. The medley of views that prana/mind/body/intellect are 'Atman', entertained by the uninformed as also by those believed to be learned, are examined and repudiated by Sri Shankara Bhagavatpada and shown to be totally inappropriate. Not any of the elements (भूत) or the elementals (भौतिक) can be the 'Self' of any being insentient as they are. Sri Shankaracharya proclaims that 'Atman' is Truth, Consciousness, Bliss alone and is ever auspicious. He reiterates in His prakarana Granthas:

प्रतिषेद्धमशक्यत्वान्नेति नेतीति शेषितम्
इदं नाहमिदं नाहमित्यद्वा प्रतिपद्यते

...Impossible to be negated is the 'Self' that is left over after negating all else as 'नेति नेति' – 'Not this, Not this! That is, 'Self' becomes clearly known on the reflection 'I am not this, I am not This', generating in Trans-mental-state, during high frequency of meditation where all mentation stops. Sruti negating all that is capable of being negated retains 'THAT' which can never be negated. That is the 'Atman' – the 'Self' of all – That transcends all sublation and remains eternally.

नेति नेतीति श्रुतिर्बाध्ययोग्यं बाधित्वा बाधितुमशक्यमवशेषयति

To disentangle oneself from the mesh of body mind complex, i.e. psycho-physical organism, certain duties by way of instructions are given by the realized seers. By going on that way alone, one can in due course, attain Chitta Shuddhi, which is nothing but clarity of a virus free mind, to reflect one's own 'Self' for experience.

I am pleased to convey that Sri Ravi Melwani's effort in writing this book "Neti Neti Tat Twam Asi" is a very remarkable work for the guidance of all spiritual aspirants.

I convey the Gracious Blessings of Their Holinesses to Sri Ravi Melwani for his welfare, prosperity and continued work in bringing out such a thought provoking books for self-seeking people. May Goddess Sharada and Jagadgurus bless all those seeking spiritual solace to become more enlightened through reading and assimilating the contents of this book and may the purpose of the Author be served.



V.R. GOWRISHANKAR

PREFACE

The Ultimate Goal of life for a human being is Liberation, and then Unification with the Divine. Every individual desires happiness, but everybody who is born on earth must experience pain, misery, and suffering. *Moksha* or *Nirvana* liberates us from the constant cycle of death and rebirth. As we overcome ignorance and realize the truth, we become free from the suffering of the body, misery of the mind, and agony of the ego. This ultimate goal of Enlightenment not only promises us *Ananda* - everlasting happiness, it also shows us a way to eternal peace, as we live a life of *Satchitananda* – being in a state of ever Consciousness of the truth, in Bliss.

Over the last 4000 years, a few human beings have been blessed to reach this ultimate state of *Mukti*, freedom or liberation. They are the enlightened ones who have opened their 'real eyes' to realize the truth. The rest of humanity is spiritually blind. Yes, while only 1% of the world is visually blind, 99% live as though they have a spiritual cataract as they suffer in this world or *Samsaar*.

What is the cause of this suffering? Why is it that we do not achieve our ultimate goal? This is because we do not realize that we are the Divine Soul. This book, *Neti Neti, Tat Twam Asi*, delves deep into two of the most important phrases from the Upanishads, the most ancient of spiritual scriptures. It analyses the important question, 'Who am I?' The famous Tamil sage Ramana Maharshi, spent his life contemplating '*Naan Yaar?*' which when translated means 'Who am I?' Adi

Shankara in the eighth century wrote the lines, '*Chidananda Rupah Shivoham Shivoham*'. These statements have become the very foundation of a spiritual seeker's quest.

My realization of the truth started with the words, *Neti Neti* – Not this, not this - We are not this body, we are not this mind. When I realized that I have a body but I am not the body and I could observe the mind but when I tried to locate the mind, where it was, I could not find – then, I realized the Divine truth behind the words *Tat Twam Asi* – Thou Art That – We are the Divine Soul.

Is there any doubt that we exist? No! We are conscious of our existence, our life. But what happens at death? The body lies on the floor as the one who was alive inside, leaves the body just like a bird would fly away from its cage. We are That, the Divine Life Energy, the Soul and to realize this truth is our ultimate goal.

It is very difficult for a common man to realize the truth behind *Neti Neti*, *Tat Twam Asi*, but once someone does, they experience a transformation, in fact, a metamorphosis as they are liberated from all misery and suffering. But how can one reach that state of Enlightenment? The books that talk of all these concepts are so complicated that people give up even as they start their quest. In this book, an effort is being made to explain each concept in simple, understandable terms so that a seeker of spirituality evolves on the journey and realizes God. How can we overcome the ignorance that envelops us? How can we realize that this world is nothing more than a cosmic illusion? How can we go on a quest to realize the truth?

If a sincere seeker goes through each of the concepts that are explained, there is no doubt that they will see the light of truth. If Divine grace is upon them, they can be enlightened. However, there is an enemy within each one of us - the ME, Mind and Ego. We may possess all the knowledge of realization, but we shall not experience Enlightenment unless we transcend this enemy.

The fact is that the truth will stare at us in our face, but without the Divine grace and the guidance of a Spiritual Master, we shall not realize it. Self-realization is not for the ordinary. Barely 1% of humanity even thinks about it or goes in quest of it. And out of this small minority, those who live with devotion and activate their intellect to live with discrimination are blessed with realization. Is it easy to evolve from the state of mind to the state of consciousness? Is it simple to realize that God is present all around us in all of God's creation? It is the biggest challenge of life.

Most of us get caught in the myth trying to live a good life doing good Karma. We follow our religion, our scriptures, and we love our God. The true seekers of liberation and God go one step further. They evolve from the kindergarten of religion to the University of Spirituality as they graduate from Self-realization to God-realization. The others who live as the body, mind, and ego, are reborn again and again based on the Universal Law of Karma. To understand Karma itself is a challenge. But *Tat Twam Asi* is about transcending Karma, going beyond it.

What is the challenge that we face as we start our journey with *Neti Neti*? We don't realize that we are not this body. We don't realize that our name is only a name and not our reality. We are so muddled up in our understanding of the concepts that we grow up with the wrong interpretations. We believe that Yoga is all about *asanas*, physical exercises and *pranayama*, breathing techniques. But in reality, Yoga is *Yuj* or Union with the Divine. *Neti Neti* will slowly but steadily help us to bust the myth and realize the truth of *Tat Twam Asi*. Then we will realize that we are not this body, mind, and ego, but the Divine Soul. We are a particle of God. God lives in the temple of our heart. When God leaves, as the Soul departs at death, we become nothing. God is the cause, we are just effects. As we go forward on this journey of *Neti Neti*, if we are sincere, we will arrive at *Tat Twam Asi*. The reward will be bliss and peace, not just in this mortal world but also after death. At death, we will be blessed with liberation and experience unification with the Divine. *Neti Neti* will make us realize that we are not the waves that splash again and again in the ocean of this world or *Samsaar*. We are That, the Divine ocean. We come from the ocean and go back into the Divine ocean.

This realization will transform your life!

***Neti Neti, Not this, Not this,
You are not this body, you are not this mind.
Tat Twam Asi, Thou Art That,
You are the Divine Soul, you will find.***

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What is the way to self-realization and then, God-realization, our Ultimate Goal of life? The secrets are hidden in the principal statements of the Upanishads. The entire scripture of *Sanatana Dharma*, the original Hindu faith can be summarized in 4 principal statements of the Upanishads. How they are connected to the Vedas or the present-day Hinduism, is not a matter of importance. Our interest is in understanding these 4 statements correctly, interpreting them spiritually, and with their help, we must evolve from ignorance to the realization of the truth. We are seeking only one thing from the 4 Mahavakyas - Enlightenment. What are the 4 Mahavakyas?

1. *Tat Twam Asi*
2. *Ayam Atma Brahma*
3. *Prajnanam Brahma*
4. *Aham Brahmasmi*

What do these mean? Let's understand them one by one. As we start on our journey to realize who we truly are, we will not be able to understand everything about these 4 statements. But they are the basic foundation on which we will build our understanding as we go forward.

The first principal statement states, '*Tat Twam Asi*,' which means 'Thou Art That' – you are That, the Divine Soul. We are That, the Power that humanity cannot comprehend. We are not this body. We are not even the mind. Anybody reading this for the first time will

wonder what it means. Of course, we are this body and mind. What else are we? But those who take the correct path through *Neti Neti*, not this body, not this mind, will be blessed to understand this statement.

The human body is made up of 5 elements. We start our journey as a single cell, the zygote that comes alive at fertilization. That cell grows in our mother's womb into an embryo and then we are born as a baby. This is a scientific truth. Then, this baby will grow, become an adult, grow old, and finally one day, it will die returning to its 5 elements. We think we are this body, but this is sheer ignorance. After we are born, we are given a name and throughout life, we identify ourselves to be 'our name'. But what are we in reality? At death, people say, 'He passed away,' 'He departed,' or 'He moved on.' Who moved on? Where is the one who was alive? Are we not the dead body, the corpse that lies on the floor? Of course not! This is just the mortal remains of the one who was alive. If so, where is the one who was alive? Where did the person go?

Some people believe that we are not the gross physical body. We are the subtle body. They think we are the ME - the Mind and Ego, that departs at death. They also believe that the Mind and Ego will be reborn in a new body based on the Law of Karma. The Law states, 'As you sow, so shall you reap.' As per this Law of Action and Reaction, we have to redeem the actions of our existence in the body that died. How will this happen? The ME, the Mind and Ego, has to take rebirth in a new body to redeem both the sins and the good deeds that it

performed in the life that has just ended. This is justified by the fact that some children are born blind, in utter poverty, while others are born in the lap of luxury. Is this sheer luck? Absolutely not! Do you ever see apples growing on mango trees? Impossible! There is a Universal Law that governs the world - the fruit on the tree depends on the seeds that we plant. So also, the deeds that we plant, bear fruit in the next life. Most of the world today accepts the Law of Karma and lives with morals, ethics, and values. While this is far better than just living as a physical body enjoying the pleasures of this world till we reach 'The End', is this the ultimate truth?

Those who are sincere seekers, realize that even the ME - Mind and Ego, is a myth. It is an illusion. It does not exist. At death, the one that leaves the body is the Life Energy, the Spirit, the Soul, the *Atman*. We are that Life Energy, *Tat Twam Asi*.

The first principal statement *Tat Twam Asi* is the key to self-realization. However, it is the other 3 that complete the story and take us towards God-realization. If we are blessed to realize that we are not the body, we are not the mind and ego, we are the Divine Soul, then we are that rare minority that is less than 0.0001% of humanity who have discovered the Ultimate Truth of life. We can then understand the 3 other principal statements that will make us solve the spiritual jigsaw puzzle of life.

Ayam Atma Brahma, the second principal statement states that the Soul that we are in reality is nothing other than the Divine. Just like the wave is nothing but the

ocean, we also come from the Divine and ultimately go back to the Divine. Because of our ignorance, we don't realize the truth.

The third statement, *Prajnanam Brahma*, states that the Divine is everywhere, in everything. Everything alive on earth is nothing but a manifestation of the Divine. The fourth statement, *Aham Brahmasmi*, is the most difficult to understand. If we are not the body that is sure to perish, if we are not the mind and ego, if we are the Divine Soul and the Soul is nothing but a manifestation of the Divine, then the ultimate truth is this – we are the Divine! We are a particle of God that appears as you and me.

These principal statements are spiritual secrets that cannot be understood by a normal human being who is a slave to his mind and ego. The moment one realizes this truth, *Tat Twam Asi*, it decimates the existence of the ME, the Mind and Ego, and thus, the ME fights hard to keep us enslaved in the cosmic illusion of life. Unless we go in quest of the truth using the gift of the intellect, we will live and die only to be reborn again and again and suffer and we will never realize the truth.

***The truth of life is in these statements four,
The real truth that we can't ignore.
We will realize we are not the body or mind,
We are the Divine Soul, we will find.***

If we are not the body nor the mind but the Divine Soul, then what causes us to remain in dark ignorance and suffer, far away from the realization of the truth? We experience pain of the physical body, misery of the mind, and agony of the ego only because we think we are the body, mind, and ego. If we are not these but rather we are the Divine Soul, then why do we suffer? It is because of *Ghor Avidya* – gross ignorance.

We human beings are enveloped in a blanket of ignorance. To overcome this is our ultimate goal. When we eradicate the ignorance that surrounds us, we are enlightened with the truth. Then we can realize *Neti Neti* - not the body, not the mind, and *Tat Twam Asi*, we are the Divine Soul. Is it possible for everybody to overcome ignorance? Unfortunately, no. Most of humanity lives and dies in ignorance only to be reborn again and again. We do not discover the truth of who we are not, because of our own Mind and Ego, ME. It makes us attached to this illusory world and we sink into *Maya*, the cosmic illusion.

What causes this ignorance? Unfortunately, we seem to inherit it. When we are born, we know nothing. But we are taught all the myth. We believe all the stories, follow all the rituals and superstition. We think that God is somebody with an elephant head, living somewhere on a faraway planet. We live and die with this ignorance. We don't realize the truth. Somebody thinks, 'I am Rajesh. Rajesh Aggarwal. A chartered accountant from New Delhi. Married to Geeta. Father of Rohit and

Apeksha.' All this is fine. But we never learn that we are the Divine Soul. Nobody teaches us that. We think we have a Soul, but we consider ourselves to be the body, with a name and nationality and we live with this throughout our life.

How does one overcome this ignorance? One must go on a quest. One must try to find the ultimate purpose of life. If one gets attached to people and possessions, then, there is no time for this. A small minority goes in quest of the truth. This minority is either seeking happiness, fulfilment and purpose or seeking God. When we are in search of something beyond the ordinary, we often discover the truth.

Self-realization is not an easy task. To wipe out the ignorance, we often need the help of a Spiritual Master, a Guru. It is the Guru who will enlighten us with the truth. However, overcoming ignorance needs both our effort and the grace of the Divine. When I met my Guru over 25 years ago, he was having a seminar and the title on the board was – *Tat Twam Asi*. The truth stared at me, in my face for over 25 years, but I did not realize what it meant. Why?

This is because knowledge is not realization. If it were, then anybody could read a book and come to know that they are not the body or the mind, they are the Divine Soul. Millions around the world must have read this, but they have not realized the truth because they have not opened their 'real eyes'. They are blind to the spiritual truth that is in front of their eyes. 1% of this

world is visually blind. But 99% is spiritually blind. They are blinded by the ignorance and the darkness created by the ego. The ego blocks the truth by creating a veil and thus, we are unable to see the reality. Along with the mind, the ego makes us believe that we are ME – Mind and Ego. We think this is *my* house, *my* business, *my* family, when in reality, nothing belongs to us. When we come to this world, we come empty-handed and when we leave, we will leave everything behind. Aren't we absolutely sure that death is certain and at death, nothing will belong to us? Then why do we still continue to live with ignorance? Why do we spend our entire life trying to make money, name and fame by fair or foul means, when ultimately, nothing will belong to us? Why do we get so attached to people that we experience pain and our heart breaks as relationships crumble? When will we realize the truth that nobody is ours? As long as we live with *Ghor Avidya*, gross ignorance will envelop us and make us suffer in misery and sorrow.

How does one overcome this gross ignorance? How does one eliminate the darkness that envelops us? Some people call it Enlightenment. When we switch on the light of truth, the darkness disappears, and we can now see what was earlier invisible. The truth was present but because of the darkness, we did not realize it. How can one be enlightened? *Neti Neti* - not this body, not this mind, is the way to eliminate the gross ignorance that blinds us. If we contemplate the physical body, we will realize that it is just a habitat. It grows around us when we are in the womb of our mother and we exist in

it, till the moment of death. No doubt we have a body, but we are not the body. *Neti Neti* makes us realize that we are not the body that we wear, but rather, the ones who wear the body. When we contemplate what we are not, we further realize that we are not even the mind. Though it appears to exist, where is the mind, we cannot find. The mind is just a bundle of thoughts, which along with the ego, becomes the ME that causes and drives us to this gross ignorance and therefore, we suffer.

Is there a way to overcome this gross ignorance and to overcome all suffering? Yes, there is – *Neti Neti, Tat Twam Asi*. Not this, Not this, Thou Art That. If we catch hold of this truth, we can be enlightened. The journey is long and challenging, but it is well worth the effort. The reward is self-realization, where we experience eternal bliss and everlasting peace. Nothing in the world will matter to us as we live a life of *Ananda*, pure bliss as we become conscious of the truth. But as long as we live with *Ghor Avidya*, this gross ignorance will make us live, die, and be reborn, again and again, only to suffer.

***Gross Ignorance makes us blind,
It makes us believe that we are the body and mind.
Because of this blanket of ignorance, the truth we cannot see,
And the Divine Soul that we truly are, we cannot be.***

For those who read this for the first time, it must seem like some kind of a joke. Sure, they know that a dream is only a dream. But this world? This world is real. No doubt it is! But those who realize the truth discover that this world is also like a dream. It is not real.

What happens in a dream? Suppose you lend me your car. On waking up, will you come to me and ask me to return your car? Ridiculous! It was just a dream. While we understand this, we don't realize that everything in this world is temporary. It is not real. At death, we wake up from this dream called life. Everything that belonged to us suddenly doesn't belong to us anymore. The beautiful people, our relationships, all snap in a moment as our life ends. Can we escape from this moment of truth? Can anybody escape from death? Thus, said the wise ones, the sages of the East and the West that everything is like a dream, nothing is real.

This world or *Samsaar* is a *Leela*, a drama of the Lord. For a moment, visualize this analogy. The earth is a huge stage. Just like in any drama, actors come, perform their part and get off the stage. We too enter the 'earth stage' as actors. Each of us has a predestined role to play. We don't decide our role - the place of our birth, our family, and our religion. We are male or female, not out of our choice. Suddenly, we are thrown on the 'earth stage' and told to do our part.

We are just actors. We think that this is *my* mother, *my* father. But in reality, it is just a show. We come and we

go. If an actor gets married in the theatre, will he take his spouse home? Of course not! It was just a drama in the theatre. But we human beings think that the 'earth stage' is not a theatre, it's real. Thus, we live with this myth. We suffer and we die without realizing the truth. Then, we come back again, in a new role.

Just as actors change their role in every movie, we change our body in every act that happens on the 'earth stage', life after life. Most of us don't realize this. But it is the truth. Can we deny death? Nobody can. Death is certain. But do we contemplate what happens after death? The body dies, but what happens to the one who was alive in the body. We just say that they passed away, departed, or moved on. We don't get to the bottom of the root. Who moved on? Where did they go?

We see new actors coming on the 'earth stage' every day. Where did they come from? Why are some children born in the lap of luxury, in rich, wealthy families? Why are some of them born in unfortunate circumstances - blind, deaf or dumb, physically or mentally challenged, in poor families in slums? Is this some kind of a cruel joke? No, it is not! It is the unfolding of the Lord's *Leela*, a drama. Everything unfolds as per the Universal Law of Karma.

We see all this happening on the 'earth stage', but still, we don't realize the truth. We see a body die and then it is cremated or buried. It returns to dust. Although we see this happening every day on the earth stage, we think we are this body. This is because of gross ignorance. It is because we have not realized the truth.

As long as we don't realize that this earth is nothing but a humongous theatre, and the 8 billion people are no better than puppets in a puppet show, we will never realize the truth of *Neti Neti, Tat Twam Asi*.

Stop for a moment and ask yourself the question: are you going to remain on this 'earth stage' forever? Are you certain that you are going to die? Do you have any doubt that you cannot take anything with you? Do you realize that your possessions will all be left behind? Even the people whom you consider as special and your own, will no more be yours at death. Do you understand all this to be true or do you think you can escape from this truth? Don't you know beyond doubt that you have to leave this 'earth stage' one day? One day, like in every movie, you will see the board, 'The End' in the drama called life. But have you stopped to ponder where will you go after that? Will you be able to take your body with you or will your body be cremated or buried? What will happen to the one who was alive? The 'you' who passed away – where did it go?

Because we don't realize that *Samsaar* is *Leela*, that the world is nothing but a drama of the Divine, we don't realize the truth of who we are. We are not Steve Jobs who invented Apple Computers. That was just a role played by an actor on the stage called the 'earth'. He came, he did his part, got the accolade that he deserved, but eventually he left the 'earth stage'. Nothing belonged to him, and nothing remained his. He came with nothing, and when he left, he took nothing. Can't we see that the champion of champions cannot even take a pin with them when they get off the earth stage?

Then why do we continue to live in this illusion that this world is real? Why don't we realize that we are just actors, who come onto the earth stage at birth and depart at death? Nothing belongs to anybody on earth. Nobody can take anything and go from this drama. At least this should make us realize the truth that we are just actors. Even the name on our passport is not permanent. Our birth certificate will be put together with our death certificate when our act is over. Soon most of us will be forgotten. Before this happens, does it not make sense to stop and to discover that we are not that ego which keeps on saying 'I'? That 'I' will die, but the one who was alive will leave the dead body and fly in the sky? Before the drama of life is over, should we not stop and realize the truth?

***The world is just a Drama, the earth is just a stage,
We are actors who come and go, no matter our age.
Because we don't realize that life is just a show,
We suffer and we cry when the time comes for us to go.***

In a quest to realize the truth of who we are, it is important to investigate, to see if we are this body that throughout life says, 'This is me!' Don't we all say, 'I am Radhika or Ram'? Who is Radhika or Ram? Aren't they referring to their gross physical body? When we look at an old group photograph of our school, don't we point out and say, 'That's me!' Who is this 'me' that we believe ourselves to be - the gross physical body? But are we, in reality, this gross body? *Tattva Bodha* inspires us to make an enquiry and investigate.

What is the body made of? We all have 5 sense organs, organs by which we can see, smell, hear, taste, and touch. We also have 5 organs of action - hands to grasp, feet to walk, a mouth to talk, an organ of excretion, and an organ of procreation. Then we have certain critical organs that control several vital functions of the body. We have a heart that pumps blood to every cell of the body; we have a brain that is connected to billions of neurons that send and receive messages to and from every nerve-ending; we have lungs that help us breathe, two kidneys that are responsible to clean all that we take in as food. We have several other organs like the liver, the intestines, all of which when put together make this human body function as the most sophisticated machine created on earth. Nobody can deny that we have all this in our body. But are we the body?

Our body is constructed on a skeleton of bones. If you break open the bone, you find bone marrow. Around the bone, there is flesh, blood, tissues, muscles, nerves

that are all interconnected and covered seamlessly by our skin. *Tattva Bodha* is a detailed enquiry of the knowledge of the body. It is an investigation to find out who we truly are. Suppose we perform a virtual experiment where we amputate our feet. Wouldn't we still exist? Of course, we would. Maybe we would be in a wheelchair, but it would still be us. Imagine, if I lose my eyes, what would happen to me? I would be blind, but I would still be alive. If we take the virtual experiment to a point that we lock ourselves up in an airtight room, and expert surgeons peel every part of our body, what will they find? The virtual experiment calls for them to first remove our hands, our legs, then our eyes, ears, nose, and teeth. But we would still be alive. Then they remove one kidney and the second and connect us to a machine, we would still be breathing. For the sake of an argument, if they put us on a ventilator, we would still survive without the lungs. But if they continue the virtual experiment and put every cell of our body on the table, the 'me' that was alive inside, at some point, would disappear. There would be blood in beakers and all our critical organs will be in the careful custody of biological experts. But the one who was alive would be missing. The room is sealed. Nobody has left the room. But where did 'I' go? Just before this experiment, I was walking and talking, breathing, and eating, but now?

Now let the virtual experiment be reversed, and let the experts try to reconstruct the body with the sophisticated equipment that they have. They take the skeleton and fit back the organs, the nerves, the

muscles, the flesh, the skin, the blood. We presume that they have successfully stitched back the entire body. Would they be able to find 'me', the one that was alive? Impossible! Somewhere during the virtual experiment, I died. I stopped existing. Although each of the over 30 trillion cells of my body are carefully preserved on the table, the one that says, 'It is me,' has disappeared somewhere. Where did I go?

This enquiry makes us question, 'Are we this gross physical body that we claim to be throughout our life?' One day this body will die, and our near and dear ones will cremate the body or bury it. It will be 'the end' for this gross physical body, just as it will be for the one who has a name and relationships. At death, the story of the one who was alive is over. That individual who had a name and a physical body cannot come back alive. Death is very different from sleep where every night, the gross physical body shuts off. Sleep is a process of restoration. After the body energy is restored, we wake up as the same person who slept. But at death, we never wake up. Our life is over, and people say, 'We passed away, expired, departed or moved on.' While our dead body is right here on the floor, why does the world say we are no more? Why do they dispose off our dead body? Because this is not the person who was alive! The person alive has gone. He is dead. This is just the mortal remains. While we understand at death that this is just a dead body and not us, we are not able to realize this truth when alive. We are unable to realize we are not this body that will eventually die. We are the ones who are alive in it.

The body starts its journey on our birthday, the day we come alive on earth. But weren't we alive even before that in our mother's womb? Our journey actually starts when the two cells from our parents fertilized to become a zygote. Then the body is created around it. Then we are delivered on our birthday, and we come alive. We grow up from a child to an adult, learning to walk, to talk and to live. Today, we are alive and enquiring what this body actually is. One day, this body that we call 'me' will grow old and die and while we are absolutely clear about the journey from start to end, we have no clue of who we truly are. The above facts about the body are scientifically true. There is no doubt. But we don't know who we truly are, where we came from and where we will go. It seems absolutely clear that we are not the gross physical body that disintegrates into its 5 elements of earth, air, water, fire and space, which it is constituted of. It seems like we are not the body we wear, but rather the ones that wear the body. If we are not this body, then who are we?

Are we the body with feet that walk?

Are we the ones who sing and talk?

***The body starts its journey when two cells become one,
Till one day, we die and the one alive is gone.***

In the journey of self-realization, if one wants to realize that we are the Divine Soul, the first step is *Neti Neti* – Not this Not this. If we want to reach the realization of *Tat Twam Asi* – Thou Art That, that we are the Divine Soul, we must first realize what we are not. The moment we realize we are not this body and we are not this mind, but we know that we are, we exist, then we get that spiritual realization of who we truly are, the *Atman*, the Soul, the Spirit.

As we have already done a detailed analysis of *Tattva Bodha*, and we have discovered beyond doubt that we are not the gross physical body, many wonder if we can be the mind.

What is the mind? Don't we all believe and know that we have a mind? Our mind worries, it wanders and it thinks. In fact, it thinks one thought practically every second. This is upto 50 thoughts a minute and can be up to a whopping 50,000 thoughts a day. The mind hardly sleeps. Even when the body goes to sleep, it continues to think as it dreams. It takes us on a journey of misapprehension.

It is said that long ago, Raja Janak woke up from a dream. The king experienced torture in his dream as he was begging for food. He told the queen, 'I am suffering like a beggar.' She tried to make him understand that it was just a dream. It was a trick of the mind. But the king, who was a spiritual seeker, did not agree. He questioned, 'Am I a king who dreamt that I was a

beggar or am I a beggar dreaming that I am a king?' This famous analogy makes us ponder on the power of the mind.

While the mind seems to be such an aggressive force in our life, have you ever seen the mind? When you go in quest of the mind, you can find your eyes, your nose, your ears. You can even be sure of your heart, your kidneys, and your brain as you see pictures, X-rays or even an MRI of the inner organs. But has anyone found the mind? You can't find the mind because it does not exist. It is *Mithya* – an illusion. It is only a bundle of thoughts that seems to exist as the mind. As we go further on the journey of self-discovery, the pieces of the spiritual puzzle will fall in place. But for now, we must realize that we are not the mind. How can we be something that has no physical existence?

Those who have gone in quest of the mind realize that we are not just the physical body that we appear to be. Our body can be compared to a computer. Just like the computer has hardware and software, our body too has the gross physical body, described in *Tattva Bodha*. It also has a subtle invisible body that is primarily made up of the Mind and Ego, ME. The Mind and Ego, along with the Intellect and Memory, is considered by spiritual scholars to be the *Antahkarana* or inner instrument that functions as the software of our life. Our software is MIME – Mind, Intellect, Memory, and Ego. The driver of this inner instrument is the Mind and Ego, ME which along with the help of the Intellect and the Memory drives our body to act. There is no doubt

that we have a gross physical body and a subtle invisible body, the inner instrument. However, we are neither of these. Just like the computer, apart from hardware and software, has a power supply, a battery or a source of power input, we too have a power that keeps us alive.

What is this Power? Some people call it our Life Energy, our Spirit, our Soul or the *Atman*. It is this Life Energy that we truly are, not this body that we appear to be nor the mind that we cannot find. Our biggest challenge is to realize this.

At this point, what do we know? We know that we exist. We are conscious of it. One day, when the power inside us leaves, there is no breath, there is death. The life of this individual human being that died, is over. It cannot come back to life again. It is different from sleep, where the body restores its energy as the mind dreams, and we wake up to a new morning. At death, we never wake up because the one who was alive, the Power within us, leaves. This is the key to make us realize we are not this body that dies, nor are we the mind that dreams, we are the Life Energy, the Spirit, the Soul or the *Atman* that leaves.

It is very difficult for any human being to realize this truth, the truth that we are that Divine Power, the Soul. The best-known way to realize this truth is through *Neti Neti*. Once we are absolutely sure that we are not this physical body nor are we the subtle mind, but we are sure that we exist till the time we die, then who are we?

Through inference, it becomes obvious that we are the Power that departs at death. For us to realize this, we must be sure beyond doubt about *Neti Neti*.

Remember, death of the body is certain, nobody can deny this. But the ME, the Mind and Ego, constantly fights to keep us in ignorance because the moment we realize *Neti Neti*, the ME is dead. We realize we are the Power beyond body and mind. It is this realization that starts our journey to *Tat Twam Asi* – Self-realization. As long as we don't realize *Neti Neti*, we live as the body, mind, and ego and we create Karma. When the body dies, the ME, the Mind and Ego, is reborn as per its Karma in a new body and this cycle goes on and on.

The only way to escape from this cycle of transmigration, this repeated rebirth is *Neti Neti*, to realize neither are we the body that dies, nor are we the mind and ego, that says, 'It's me!' We are a Power, that Life Energy, the *Atman* that departs at death. To realize that we are the Soul, is our ultimate goal.

Neti Neti, Not this, Not this
Neither are we the body nor are we the mind.
When we realize for sure that we are none of these,
Then who we truly are, we will find.

How does one realize the truth? How does one start the journey of self-realization? If Enlightenment was as easy as *Neti Neti, Tat Twam Asi*, then why couldn't the whole world be enlightened? This would liberate all of humanity from the triple suffering of the body, mind, and ego. But is it so simple?

No, it is not. Because we human beings live in *Ghor Avidya*, gross ignorance, we do not realize that this world is nothing but a cosmic drama. Even though we may know about it, knowledge is not realization. Anybody can read this book and understand the concepts presented in such simple words but still, be far away from self-realization. One may understand what the body is made of. Nobody can doubt that we are made of 5 elements - earth, water, air, fire, and space. At death, the elements return to their original form as the Life Energy in us departs.

The knowledge seems so simple. Reading *Tattva Bodha* and *Atma Bodha* should make us realize *Neti Neti* - we are not the body, we are not the mind. However, although we may read the *Mahavakyas* or the Upanishads, only a genuine seeker who goes in quest of the truth, will realize the meaning of *Neti Neti*. We may read all about the body, mind, ego, and Soul, but we will 'realize' the truth only when we open our 'real eyes'. The truth is within, but we are searching for it outside.

It was Guru Nanak who said, '*Dasamay dvar kholo.*' Open the tenth door to realize the truth. What does this

mean? We human beings have 9 openings in the body, but all the openings are like doors looking outside. Two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, a mouth, an organ of excretion, and an organ of procreation. But none of these are looking at what is inside. If we want to realize the truth that lies within, we must go on a quest, a search for the truth, a *Talaash*.

When my Guru, my Spiritual Master, told me to go on a *Talaash*, I laughed as I wondered what he meant. It took many months for me to seriously start the enquiry about the self. My investigation had 9 questions. Inspired by my mentor and in search of ultimate happiness, I went in search of the true meaning of Enlightenment to find out what it meant. I wanted to discover the true purpose of life. I wanted to find out the truth about God. In reality, who is God, where is God and what is God, and where are heaven and hell that everybody talks of? What is the Soul? Does something like rebirth actually happen? Does rebirth depend upon the Law of Karma?

To find the answers, I started with the basic questions, 'Who am I?' 'Where did I come from?' 'Where will I go?' My body was created in the womb of my mother, but this body will die one day. Then people will just say, 'He passed away'. I wanted to know what happens after death. My body will be cremated and will return to dust. But what about me, the one who was alive? Where will I go? What is the connection between that life which will go and the life that started even before I was conceived in my mother's womb?

I realized, I did not know the answers to any of these questions. Different religions had different scriptures that advocated different beliefs. I must have scanned thousands of books to get to the bottom of the root. I wanted the truth.

Talaash cannot happen when we are caught in this *Samsaar*. If you want to discover the ocean, you must have the courage to lose sight of the shore. You must learn to let go. Thus I left everything and went into a retreat, in solitude, up in the mountains. I would be alone for days and question everything that I read. I found this magical method - we have to Ask, Investigate, till we Realize the truth. My *Talaash* made me realize many things, and these realizations were all a part of the pieces of my spiritual jigsaw puzzle that I was finally able to put together. One day, on the 31st of August 2014, when I was on a non-stop flight from Paris to Bangalore, the pieces of my spiritual puzzle fell into place. My *Talaash* was over. My quest came to an end. My search for the truth was graced by the Divine. But what if I had not gone on a quest? What if I had not investigated all my beliefs? Despite having some knowledge, I would have lived and died without realizing the truth.

True seekers must therefore go in quest of the truth. To me, the best way of realizing who we truly are is to first realize who we are not. I would have never got to the realization of *Tat Twam Asi*, without *Neti Neti*. If a seeker is sincere and lives with *Bhakti* or devotion, if he becomes a *Mumukshu*, one who yearns for God, he will

realize the truth. My master told me one thing, 'If you want to succeed in your *Talaash*, then develop the triple yearning for realization and God. The yearning that a miser has for gold, the yearning a lover has for his beloved, the yearning a child has for its mother who it has just lost.' A *Mumukshu* is one who yearns for God and liberation and leaves the *Samsaar*, the world, and goes in quest of the truth. It is only such a person who realizes that we are not the body, we are not even the mind, we are the Divine Soul.

The *Talaash*, the spiritual journey is not easy. Often, when we are in quest for the truth, our own mind will discourage us and try to make us give up the journey. One must be patient and persistent, just as one is passionate in their quest for the truth. Otherwise, one will be defeated by their own mind.

The process of realization has 3 steps. If we want to discover the truth of who we are, we must go through the 3-step method that will take us from knowledge to realization.

Are you in Quest of the Divine truth?

Then go in search, get to the bottom of the root.

Ask every possible question and investigate the myth,

Then slowly, but steadily, you will realize the truth.

How does one realize the truth? The truth cannot be known. It has to be realized and this needs 3 steps. The first step of realization is *Sravana*. *Sravana* includes reading and listening. It is the assimilation of knowledge. In today's world, it is not just a book that we read or a master whom we listen to, but the subject has expanded to knowledge on the web. We may read an e-book or even a blog. We may listen to discourses by different people on concepts of spirituality. Often, this can confuse us beyond limits, but this is the first step of realization. A seeker doesn't reject anything. He reads all the scriptures of all the religions to understand all possible concepts of the reality but doesn't believe in anything. *Sravana*, the first step, is about collecting information and rejecting what the seeker thinks at the very instant makes no sense. The effort on the first stage of *Sravana* is thus to collect all relevant information to realize the truth.

This takes the seeker to the second step known as *Manana*. *Manana* by itself may mislead us to believe that it is to do with the *Mann* or mind. *Manana* means to intellectually discriminate the knowledge one collects in *Sravana*. In the first step, we may listen to people who advocate their religion, their beliefs and their theological concepts. But in the second step of *Manana*, we question each of these. We contemplate the proposition and use our ability to logically separate the truth from the myth. From the time we are born, we have been taught so many mythological tales. When we start the 3-step journey, we begin to pick up everything

worth investigating. We read the various religious scriptures, the Bhagavad Gita, the Upanishads and scriptures of other faiths and religions. We even read the theology of religious saints, just as we read the philosophy of creative thinkers. When we are in the second stage or *Manana*, we start contemplating - Can there be many Gods? Is it possible for God to be made of bone and skin? If God is born and God dies like us human beings, then there must be a greater God who is controlling all this. *Manana* doesn't accept just everything. If the eyes read about heaven and hell in a scripture, *Manana* questions where they are located. Who has been to heaven or hell? If the body is cremated here on earth and returns to dust, then who will go to heaven or hell? It is about having a non-negotiable attitude towards the truth. It rejects all myth, superstitions and dogmas and picks up only that information that our intellect considers worth considering.

Very often the ME, the Mind and Ego, interferes with *Manana*, the process of intellectual contemplation. If the emotion gets the better of us, then, we can never realize the truth. Therefore, the intellect behaves like a sharp sword, cutting through all that it reads, removing all that is irrelevant from the concepts worth considering as truth.

*Srava*na may involve anything, accepting every concept but *Manana* rejects all illusory beliefs. It puts forth the logical concepts. The body dies, we cannot be the body as we depart at death. Where is the mind? We cannot

find. But it seems to exist as a bundle of thoughts. Of course, the Creator of this universe exists, but who is God, where is God, what is God? Why is a child born blind? It is not because the Creator is cruel. There is a law called Karma that exists. The Universal Law ensures that apples don't grow on mango trees. *Manana* is about clear introspection and contemplation, but still, it is not the realization of the truth. In *Manana*, we have all the knowledge that has crystalized as truth. But still, our mind doesn't accept it. We may read and accept that we are not the body and the mind, but we are unable to realize who we are. We may contemplate that this world is a *Leela*, but we don't realize the truth beyond. *Manana* eliminates a great part of our ignorance and accepts several spiritual concepts but stops there. We need to go to the third and ultimate step to realize the truth.

What happens when we throw a ball up in the sky? Why does it not fly away into the clouds? Something pulls it back. Is there any proof? No! There is no proof! But through inference, we realize that there is a force that we call gravity, that pulls everything back. This inference was ratified when people went into outer space, where the gravity was not the same as on earth. What is such inference all about?

When a seeker of truth passes *Sravaana* and *Manana*, he reaches the stage of *Nididhyasana*, a stage where he is able to realize the Divine truth, that we are not the body that we seem to be, the truth that we are not the mind which we cannot find. We are the Divine Soul. There is

no proof as such, but through inference, the seeker becomes conscious of this truth. The seeker becomes the observer and the witness of not just this cosmic drama that is being enacted in front of his eyes, but he even observes every breath and every thought in himself. He no more needs *Sravana*, he has enough information, though he is ready to listen. The intellectual process of *Manana* continues. But these two steps do not interfere in the conscious state of a realized Soul. When a seeker goes in quest of the truth, he is sure to experience *Sravana* and *Manana*, but unless he has the grace of the Divine and the guidance of a Guru, there is a faint chance for him to reach that level of *Nididhyasana*. Some people even call this a state of *Samadhi*, or a state of *Satchitananda*. In the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna refers to it as *Sthitpragya*. In *Advaita Vendanta*, it is referred to as a state of *Jivanmukti*. Different people may interpret these terms differently, but in a macro sense, they are all the same. When we pass the stage of assimilation of knowledge, and intellectual discrimination, the only way forward to discovering the truth is self-realization.

In the journey for the realization of the truth,

A genuine seeker must pass steps three.

First, he reads, listens and then, contemplates, introspects,

Till finally, as the Soul, he is liberated and free.

Although we go through the process of learning and contemplation, what stops us from realization? It is the *Ahamkara*, the Ego. We all know of the ego, but we don't realize that it is a roadblock on the journey of self-discovery. It is the cause of all our ignorance. Right from the time we grow up, we start saying 'I'. We don't realize that this 'I' is the ego that along with the mind, becomes the ME, and gets caught in this world of objects and illusions. We are identified by our name, but we think we are the name itself. Therefore, we say, 'I am George' or 'I am Latha' when the reality is that it is only our name. One of the biggest reasons why we don't realize the truth of who we are is the ME, the Mind and Ego. It is the ego that acts as a veil between the truth and us. If we don't let go of the ego, we will never realize the truth of *Tat Twam Asi*.

What is *Neti Neti* all about? It is about dropping the ego. It is letting go of the ignorance that we are the body, and we are the mind. There is no doubt that we have a body, and we seem to have a mind. But it is the ego that converts the illusion into a reality. Till our last breath, it doesn't let go and continues to live as a false identity. Because we keep saying, 'This is *me*,' 'This house is *mine*,' 'This car is *mine*,' 'This is *my* wife, *my* father, and *my* son,' we lose sight of the reality. In fact, if we had to identify the single cause of our ignorance, it is the ego. It is our biggest enemy when it comes to the discovery of the self. It doesn't let us contemplate the truth, just as it creates attachment to people and possessions and makes us sink in this illusory world.

What does the ego do? It makes us distinctly different from others. It identifies, 'This is me and that is you', and creates an island of its own. It even prays to a God in a temple, church, monastery or synagogue, submitting to the belief that God lives somewhere on a distant planet. Although, the ego sees the wave in the ocean, as coming from the ocean and going back into the ocean, it believes that the wave is distinctly different from the ocean. Along with the mind, the ego performs actions - Karma, that become the seeds of our future, our destiny.

When the ego contemplates *Neti Neti*, I am not this ego, I am not this mind, it scoffs at the idea and brushes it away. Of course, I am this - the body, mind, ego, and the Soul. It has programmed itself such that its beliefs are deeply engraved, and we live and die governed by the ego.

Stop for a moment and look back at what the ego does. All day long, it talks about 'I'. 'I have to go to work, I want a pizza, I want to buy a new car.' It is so enveloped in ignorance that it cannot see anything beyond itself. It fools itself by saying that this is self-esteem and self-respect and while these are good values in an ordinary world, they ensure that we remain ordinary without realizing the truth. Then, the ego wants to excel. It wants to be an achiever and to be the best. We compete with others and try to become wealthier, more successful and famous. The ego makes us believe that success is happiness, and it makes us climb the peak of achievement till one day, we fall and die without

realizing there was no peak. It was an illusion created by the ego. Very few are lucky. They transcend the ego to realize the truth about themselves.

In fact, if we do not annihilate the ego, we will never be able to transcend it. While the fact is that we cannot kill the ego, the only way to go beyond it is to destroy it. We have to break the very concept that this is 'ME'. There is no 'ME'. We are just one of the many manifestations that appear and disappear in the projection of this world. It is only when we go in quest to find an answer to the question, 'Who am I?' that we realize that the ego is just an illusion.

In our study, we will come across the 3 facets of our body, the gross body – the physical elements we are made of, the subtle body – the mind and the ego, and the causal body – the cause of our ignorance and our existence. The causal body comes alive because of the ego. It is this causal body or *Karana Sharir*, that gives birth to the gross, *Sthula Sharir* and subtle – *Sukshma Sharir*. When the ego reads about these 3 constituents of the body, it laughs. It refuses to believe as it refuses even to listen to and accept these concepts. It blocks us from seeing the truth and this temporary life that is limited to not more than 10 decades, comes to an end as we remain prisoners of the ego.

When we realize the truth that I am nothing, but the Divine Power that causes my existence, we move forward on the path of self-realization. My Guru used to repeat this again and again, 'If you want to realize the

truth, remember, I am nothing! I am not! Alone Thou art! I do nothing. You do everything. I am just an instrument of thy Divine Will.' He was an epitome of humility as he had transcended all arrogance and overcome the dominance of his ego. No doubt the ego will not leave us till our last breath, but living as the ego and believing that we are the ME, the Mind and Ego, is a sure way to go round and round in circles in this world of attractions and distractions. Unless we realize 'I am not I', we will never realize the truth of *Tat Twam Asi*, the truth of who we truly are.

The ego will just make us live, act, and die, only to be reborn again as ME - Mind and Ego, in a new body, based on its Karma, its past actions. Then the cycle will continue again and again, and we will never realize the truth of who we are. Unless we let go of the ego, we will never realize the truth.

***It is the Ahamkara, the Ego that says, 'I'.
It lives as the body and mind, till we die.
Deep in Ignorance, we live as the one we are not,
All because of the Ego, the truth we forgot.***

What is Karma? The word 'Karma' means action. But it has become so popular as a Universal Law that today, Karma is used to denote the presence of a Divine Universal law that governs the earth. It is the law of action and reaction that works on the principle – *As you sow, so shall you reap*. One cannot deny that such a law exists, prevails, and controls the universe, for otherwise, we would find apples growing on mango trees. This is not possible because the root, shoot, and the fruit depend on the seeds that we plant. So also, our fate, luck, or our destiny depends on the deeds we plant. There can be no mistake with this law.

Whatever is happening in our life, doesn't happen just by chance. This universe is testimony to the precise perfection of Divine universal laws. The humongous earth rotates on its own axis precisely once in 24 hours and doesn't make a mistake, day after day. This is another one of the amazing laws of nature that govern our planet. Just like the Law of Gravity, the Law of Karma cannot be proved, but through inference, we know that it exists. How does this law work?

We human beings live and as we live, we act. There can be no escape from action. We perform both good and bad deeds, but the law states that all our actions must have equal reactions. Our good deeds must be rewarded, just as our sins must be redeemed. Therefore, whatever happens to us, day after day, is our own action that is returning, unfolding as circumstances. We don't know what action is causing the reaction that gives us pleasure

and which sin we committed and when, that is causing us pain. The law is complex and beyond human comprehension. But none can deny its existence. That is why it seems that bad things happen to good people. It is not possible for good people to suffer. It is their own Karma, their own past actions, that is returning to them. They may be good people today, but their past actions which may be very distant, actions even of the previous birth or several births before that, govern the destiny that is unfolding in their life today.

That is why we see a young child born blind or with a defect in its brain or heart. Is this because of the Creator's imperfection or his cruelty? It is neither. It is the Law of Karma unfolding. It is not by chance that we are born in a slum or a palace. Karma records all our actions and returns it to us in the form of our destiny. Then, one day the body dies. But the one who was alive in the body, the one who drives the body to act, the ME, the Mind and the Ego, doesn't die. Along with its Karma of the life that just ended in this body, and the unsettled Karma of previous lives, the ME is reborn in another body, to settle its unsettled Karma. This cycle of death and rebirth goes on and on, and whatever unfolds in our life happens as per this universal Law of Karma.

As long as we live as the ME, the Mind and Ego, in a gross physical body, we will continue to create Karma and we will also continue to be rewarded and reprimanded by this law which is beyond definition. Its existence is inferred without doubt by those who realize the truth about life and creation. Therefore,

there is no way to escape from this cycle of past Karma, then birth, then present Karma, thereafter, joy and sorrow as we live and finally, death and rebirth.

Death is not the end, it is just a bend. The body dies, but the ME, Mind and Ego, is reborn, based on the cumulative balance of Karma that remains unsettled. Is there no end to this? As long as we live and die as a body, driven by the mind and ego, we will create Karma and we will be reborn after death in a new body. But the moment we realize the truth of *Neti Neti*, we are not the body that dies, we are not even the mind and ego that is reborn, then there is no Karma. If there is no Karma, there is no rebirth. The illusory ME, the Mind and Ego, dissolves like mist in the morning sun. As the darkness in a room disappears when the light is switched on, Enlightenment eradicates our ignorance. And as we realize the truth, we are liberated from all Karma, past and present and united with the Divine.

Most of humanity, over 99% of people, do not realize the truth that the ME, the Mind and Ego, is just an illusion caused by our own ignorance. Less than 1% of humanity realizes the truth about *Neti Neti*, that they are not the mind and ego that is reborn. They are the rare few, the blessed ones, who transcend their ego, that is the doer of all action, and the mind that binds us in this cosmic drama, imprisoned in *Maya*, to perform actions or Karma. They are the ones who are liberated not just from Karma, but from all future rebirths and the corresponding suffering experienced by anybody who is born on earth. The ones who transcend Karma, are

those who realize the truth that they are not this body that is made up of the 5 elements. They are the ones who realize that they are the Divine Power, the Life Energy or the *Atman*, that departs at death. It is after a long quest when they Ask and Investigate, they Realize the truth and they become free from all accumulated Karma. The rest of humanity just lives, creates Karma, enjoys the fruit of their past Karma and then dies. And the circle goes on and on as the cosmic drama unfolds on this earth-stage.

Everything that happens on earth is governed by Karma. Then, what role do we have to play? We are blessed with an intellect and while we cannot control our past actions, our previous Karma, that cause things to unfold as they do, we can use our intellect to choose our present actions. We can discriminate, contemplate and choose actions and cause our destiny. We can also realize the truth of who we are. *Neti Neti*, the realization that we are not this body nor the ME, the Mind and Ego, is what will liberate us. This is possible if we discover the truth. Then we will be freed from all our accumulated Karma and be liberated from this continuous cycle of death and rebirth.

***Karma is the Universal Law of Action,
Whatever be our deeds, so will be the reaction.
Just like the fruits depend on the planting of the seeds,
Our Destiny is controlled by the doing of our deeds.***

As one progresses on the path, on the journey of self-realization, and one realizes, 'I am not the body,' 'I am not the mind,' then the question that remains unanswered is, 'Who am I?' There is no doubt that I exist. My existence comes to an end when the body experiences death. Till then, I am alive. Who is the one that is alive?

The quest for 'Who am I?' has eliminated the chance of me being the body. *Tattva Bodha* confirms that we start our journey as a single cell, a zygote, and we end it as ashes that fill an urn. We are not those 5 elements that the body is made of. When we go in quest of the mind, we can find everything else, but we can't find the mind. How can we be something that is intangible, invisible? But still, we exist.

A true seeker of self-realization doesn't give up. He continues his quest and comes to the conclusion that 'I am the *Atman*,' the very life that makes me walk, talk, move, act, eat and live. I come into existence even before the day I was born on earth. My mother tells me that I was kicking inside her womb. Around me, this physical body evolved and grew, as if by magic. How it all happens is a mystery. But it happens because of the *Atman*, the Spirit, the Soul, or the Life Energy that starts our story called 'Life'. If the power in a zygote, the first cell that was created, was not alive, there would be no embryo and no baby. Thus, some babies are stillborn. Somewhere in the Divine journey, the *Atman* left, and the baby did not get to see the light of day.

Isn't it the *Atman* that we truly are? Some people call it 'the Spirit', and others, 'the Soul'. Whatever we may call it, we are that Life Energy that starts its journey when two cells from our parents fertilize with Divine grace to become one. If it were not for the Divine will, a life story may never start. It is not biologically possible for a man and a woman to produce a child without Divine intervention. Whether we are male or female, is beyond human control because the whole Divine mystery of birth is to do with the *Atman*. The *Atman* is that Power that gives the ME, the Mind and the Ego, Life Energy to settle its Karma, its past actions performed in the previous body that it adorned. 99% of humanity thinks that we are the body or the ME, the Mind and Ego that is reborn. We don't realize the truth that we are the *Atman*, the Divine Life Energy, and thus we continue going round and round in circles experiencing death and rebirth over and over again.

What is the cause of this ignorance? Why is it that we do not realize we are the *Atman*, the Divine Soul? Because we are so deeply enveloped in the darkness of *Maya*, the cosmic illusion, we continue to live in ignorance. We do not realize the truth of the *Atma Bodha*, we continue to live without attaining the wisdom of the Soul.

We can understand that a computer is made of hardware and software. Without the hardware, the software cannot function, just as without the software, the hardware has no meaning. But if there is no power supply, then the computer despite hardware and software is dead. We need the power supply to boot the

computer, be it a battery or an electrical source. What is the source of power to our body and mind to live? Do we have a battery, a power supply, a UPS or some kind of a mysterious power bank within us? The source of power in a man-machine is the *Atman*, the Soul. It has sufficient power to keep us alive from birth to death. It cannot be recharged. There is no way to replace the power in the same human entity. It is the uniqueness of creation that a human being has been created by the Divine like a 'use and throw toy', where the batteries cannot be replaced. When it is over, you dispose of the body. But while we can break open a 'use and throw toy' and examine the dead batteries, the *Atman* is invisible. It is a mysterious Divine Power that comes from the Divine and goes back to the Divine.

When one goes deeper into the subject, then one realizes *Neti Neti*, I am not the body, I am not the mind – I am the *Atman*, the Divine Soul. However, because the Soul is beyond human definition and comprehension, most of us cannot realize this truth. We can see a body die and observe that the Life Energy is absent. Where did that Life Energy go? At death, we realize that the body is just a mass of 5 elements. What caused death? It was the departure of the *Atman*, the Soul that left. Now, there is no breath – this is death!

Very little is known about the *Atman*, the Spirit or the Soul. As children, we hear mysterious stories about the Soul. There are 'good Souls' and 'bad Souls', that some Souls will go to heaven and some to hell, and that Souls are reborn as per the Karma of the Soul. All these are

just myth and fairy tales, far from the truth!

But *Atma Bodha* busts all these myths. The wisdom of the *Atman* makes us realize that the *Atman* is a God particle. It is the Divine energy that exists in each of our 30 trillion cells and it gives us life to live. Because we do not attain the wisdom of the Soul, we believe the myth and do not realize the truth that in fact, we don't have a Soul, we are the Soul. *Atma Bodha* is a quest that will help us in the journey of self-realization. It will first make us realize the truth about the *Atman* and its existence and finally, if it be the Divine Will, we will realize that we are none other than the *Atman*, the Soul. But as long as we live as the body and mind, consumed by *Maya* in this material world, we will never realize the truth of who we are. It is only when we attain *Atma Bodha*, the entire wisdom about the Soul, that we will realize the truth of who we actually are.

***Atma Bodha is the wisdom of the Soul,
It is our life's Ultimate Goal.
Because we live as the body and mind,
We are the Soul or Spirit – to this truth, we are blind.***

When we realize the truth that the body is made of just 5 elements and we realize the truth of the Divine Soul, the *Atman*, the Spirit within, then we realize beyond doubt, *Neti Neti*, we are not this body, we are not this mind. But despite gaining the wisdom about the Soul, we are still not able to realize *Tat Twam Asi*, we are that, the Divine Soul. What stops us from the realization of the truth? It is *Maya*, the cosmic illusion.

What is *Maya*? Many people talk of something known as *Maya*, but not everybody understands it. *Maya* is an illusory Power that prevails in the universe that causes our ignorance. In fact, *Maya* has two powers – the first is its power to conceal the truth and the second is its power to project the myth. Because of this dual power, everything in this world that is actually an illusion, appears to be real. This is *Maya* or the cosmic illusion.

To understand *Maya*, recall the time when you went to a movie in a theatre. What did you see? There was a ship that was tossing on the deep blue waters. Suddenly, there was a storm and the ship sunk. People were running helter-skelter screaming, trying to get into the boats. You were so engrossed with the movie, the photography, the sound, and the special effects that it made you feel that you too were a part of that disaster. But when the projection stopped during the intermission, you realized what was in front of you was just a screen. The projector was concealing the white screen with a movie that was not real. It was just an illusion! Some people think of a movie to be real. Don't

some people scream as they are gripped with fear seeing a horror movie? But don't you know that the movie is not real? It is just a projection.

While we clearly understand the projection of a movie in a theatre, we are unable to understand how *Maya* projects the cosmic illusion on the theatre called 'the earth'. It hides the reality of who we are and projects an illusion that is *Mithya*, an illusion.

What is *Mithya*? In the quest for the truth, a seeker comes across concepts of *Satya* and *Mithya*. *Satya* is the truth. The truth is something that is eternal. It has no beginning and no end. But *Mithya* is an illusion. It appears to be, but it is not. Although we may think it is real, we come to realize that it is only an illusion. Have you ever seen a rainbow? Doesn't it appear real? When you go to catch it, you can't! It is just an illusion created by the white light of the sun when it shines through the droplets of rain. The rainbow is *Mithya*; it is a projection that appears real but is not. So also, everything that is happening in this world appears to be real. Very few people realize that it is just *Maya*, a cosmic illusion.

What do we do when we wake up from a dream? Suppose your neighbour appeared in a dream and took your pet dog away, and made you very upset. But as soon as you woke up, would you run to his house to bring back your pet? Of course not! You would sheepishly realize that it was just a dream. But if the neighbour had taken away the dog while you were awake and you saw it with your own eyes, you would

run behind him! We human beings think what happens in a dream is just a dream. It is *Mithya*. But what happens in the waking world is reality. It is *Satya*. Unfortunately, *Maya* fools us into believing this. When we wake up after death, then we will realize that this life on earth too was nothing but *Mithya*. It was all *Maya*, a cosmic illusion. Everything is a projection of the Divine.

As long as we live, we think that this is '*my* house, *my* car, *my* business, and *my* money'. We know for sure that these are '*my* parents, *my* family, and *my* children'. But in reality, nothing is ours. These relationships are temporary. They last from birth to death. We are like actors who are born in this world of *Maya*, to play a particular role. When the role is over, it is time to go. But we become possessive and become attached to this world because of *Maya*. The cosmic illusion fools us to believe that all this belongs to me, although we see in reality that we come with nothing and we go with nothing. Life on earth is all *Maya*, a cosmic illusion. As long as we don't realize the truth that everything is a projection, we will continue to live under the spell of *Maya* and believe *Mithya* to be *Satya*. We will believe this illusory world to be real, as we continue to suffer as the body, mind, and ego that we are not. Until we realize the truth about *Maya*, we will not only suffer on earth, but we will be reborn again and again, as the Mind and Ego, ME because we did not overcome *Maya*.

If we want to realize the truth, we must realize that a gold ring appears to be a gold ring, but in reality, it is not. If we remove the gold from the gold ring, there will

be no ring. The appearance of the ring is *Maya*. *Maya* projects the ring as it hides the gold. That's why everybody says that it is a ring. To realize the truth about *Tat Twam Asi*, we have to overcome the cosmic illusion. We have to realize that everything around us is *Maya*. It is not real. It is *Mithya*. The one that appears to be me, this body with a name, nationality, family, in reality, is not the person that I actually am. I am not this. I am That, the Divine Energy that is alive in me. The moment that energy leaves and I am dead, my own family will burn my body. Would they ever do it if I were alive? Then why do we cremate the body? Because it is not the one who was alive. Although we see this plain truth at death and we even say the person passed away, the next moment, we are under the spell of *Maya* as we accept people to be the physical body that they seem to be. We don't realize that we are not the body that we wear, we are the ones that wear the body.

***Maya is a power that causes our ignorance,
It makes us believe the myth as the truth.***

***With one power it conceals what is real, from us,
And with the other, it projects the myth as the truth.***

While a seeker starts on the journey of self-realization and realizes he is not the body or the mind, and he also realizes the truth of the Soul, then what stops him from the realization of the truth? The quest reveals that he is enveloped by ignorance. He knows that this world is nothing but a drama and that everything is *Maya*, a projection, an illusion. How does a seeker realize the truth?

Realization is not like graduation. You can go to a college or a university and graduate in technology, medicine or finance. Some people even attain a master's in theology and religion. But getting a Ph.D. or doctorate in any stream of knowledge cannot guarantee realization. How does then one attain this state?

The wise sages who lived thousands of years ago called it *Sat Darshana*, vision of the truth. How does one get such a vision? Is there some magical way for us to realize the truth of who we are and why we are here? Only a genuine seeker who loves the Divine and whose vision of life is to be liberated from this material world, may go on a quest and attain *Sat Darshana*. Two aspects are critically important in this realization journey. The first is the grace of the Divine and the second is the guidance of a Guru. If there is no Divine grace, one may try to realize the truth for years, even lifetimes, but one may not be blessed to attain the state of *Sat Darshana*. I was fortunate that my Guru, my Spiritual Master, taught me how we must develop a triple yearning for the Divine – the yearning that a miser has for gold, the

yearning that a lover has for his beloved, and the yearning that a child has for its mother that it has just lost. When we develop such a triple yearning for the Divine, then we may be the chosen one to get a vision of the truth.

In today's world, *Sat Darshana* is known as Enlightenment. What is it to be Enlightened? The word Enlightenment itself means 'to bring in the light of truth'. There is a dire need for such light because we are enveloped in the stark darkness of ignorance. It is because we grow up believing the myth, we never realize the truth. Therefore, the whole world seeks Enlightenment. The world believes that Enlightenment will give liberation and salvation. It will lead us to *Moksha* and *Nirvana*. While there are thousands of books that talk about Enlightenment, all these complicated terms of spirituality, these pages of texts, will remain as book knowledge until we experience the vision of the truth.

What is the truth? The truth is *Neti Neti, Tat Twam Asi*. The truth was announced thousands of years ago – Not this, Not this, Thou Art That. Still we remain in ignorance and because of this ignorance, we experience the triple suffering – we experience pain of the body, misery of the mind and agony of the ego. What is the reason we continue to suffer this triple suffering? It is only because we have not realized that we are not the body, the mind or the ego. Not only do we suffer the triple suffering throughout life, the body experiences death and the ME, the Mind and the Ego that we

consider ourselves to be, is reborn as per its Karma, again and again due to our ignorance, to suffer on earth.

Because we believe that this world is real, and we are the ego, we create Karma. Once we create Karma, we have to be born again to settle our account. But if we realize, if only we get the vision of the truth that we are not the ego that is creating Karma, if only we kill the monkey mind that is making us sink in *Maya*, then we realize we are not the body. We get the flash that we are the *Atman*, the Spirit, the Soul, not the body or mind. Then there is no Karma. Then there is no rebirth. At death, when we shed the physical body and we realize that the ME, the Mind and Ego, is an illusion created by *Maya*, we are liberated and united with the Divine.

However, unless we experience the Enlightenment that we are not the body, and not the mind, the ego will continue its cycle of death and rebirth. Enlightenment frees us from rebirth. The realization that we are the Soul, not only liberates us from the body at death, it also unites us with the Divine. Then, there is no suffering. We then experience a state of *Ananda*, bliss. This bliss is experienced by a realized Soul who is alive. The moment one experiences *Sat Darshana* or Enlightenment, one does not suffer the triple suffering. The body may experience pain, but the realized one, the *Jivanmukta*, does not suffer. Because of *Sat Darshana*, such a liberated one is free from the misery of the mind and from the clutches of the agony of the ego. On realization, one becomes conscious of one's reality, 'I am not this, I am That', and one starts living in a blissful state of Consciousness of

the truth, *SatChitAnanda*.

This is our ultimate goal, to realize we are the Divine Soul. However, without Enlightenment, without the vision of the truth, unless we experience *Sat Darshana*, we will continue to live as mortal beings and suffer as we are attached to people and possessions. Realization enlightens us that nothing is ours, and nobody belongs to us. We are the Divine Soul that appears at birth because of our Karma, caused by our ignorance. Now that we have been blessed with the vision of the truth, we must not live as the ego creating new Karma. We must live as an instrument of the Divine. We must live as the *Atman*, a God particle, whose only aspiration is to be liberated and to become one with the Divine. The realized one knows that we are like waves that appear from the ocean and go back into the ocean. We are not the wave; we are the ocean. We are not this body that we appear to be, we are the Divine Soul. Despite having all the knowledge of realization, a very few are blessed to get this intuitive flash of Divine inspiration, that is magic beyond all the logic of this world.

***Sat Darshana is the Realization of the Truth.
It sweeps away the Ignorance and with it, the Myth.
We may have all the knowledge, but not have Realization,
Without Divine Grace, there can be no Liberation.***

After reading this far about *Neti Neti* – we are not the body, we are not the mind, we are the Divine Soul, have we attained the state of self-realization? Not yet! We have acquired the knowledge that this world is a cosmic illusion, a drama, a dream. During our quest, we have analyzed *Tattva Bodha* and *Atma Bodha* and investigated the overcoming of ignorance caused by *Maya*, the cosmic illusion. We have even understood *Sat Darshana*, which means to get a vision of the truth. But have we had the experience, that direct experience of who we truly are? *Aparoksh Anubhuti*, is a Divine realization of this self, the one who is alive in this body, the *Atman*, the Power, the Spirit or the Soul. It is not knowledge, it is realization. It needs no convincing of who we are. This *Anubhuti* or experience is Consciousness that is *Aparoksh* – which cannot be logically defined. It is intuitively experienced by inference. *Neti Neti*, *Tat Twam Asi*, if I am not this body, and I am not this mind, but I am, then I must be That – the *Atman*, the Life Energy within. What else can I be? *Aparoksh Anubhuti* is a direct experience, the self-realization that happens to one who realizes the real truth. The realized one experiences the Divinity within, just as he can see the illusion all around him.

There are some things in this world that cannot be proved, but they can be known through inference. If we throw anything up in the air, does it fly away in the sky? No! It falls back on the earth. Why? Why does it not float into the clouds above? Thousands of people just said, 'Ouch!' when some fruit from a tree fell on their head.

But Newton experienced *Aparoksh Anubhuti*. He discovered the Law of Gravity through inference. His intellect realized when an apple fell on his head, that there must be a Power that is pulling everything towards the earth. Otherwise, chairs and tables should be flying around. Why was it that for thousands of years nobody realized the Law of Gravity? Today, it is scientifically accepted.

Scientists in their quest to prove things have examined the smallest possible particle of the human cell, smaller than an electron, a proton, and a neutron – the quark. In one such experiment, they found that the tiniest particle of matter, while being examined under a sophisticated microscope, suddenly disappeared. They realized the particle transformed into an energy wave. As they were discussing, that tiny particle reappeared and they called this theory the 'Wave-Particle Duality'. This theory was based on the famous equation $E=MC^2$ and the principle that energy can neither be created nor destroyed but can be transformed from one form to another. Thus, recently, when I met a scientist, he said to me, 'You seem to appear seated in front of me.' When I questioned him, he explained, 'While you seem to be a body made up of over 30 trillion cells, in reality, you are nothing but energy. Energy, that when compacted together, appears as the cells of your human body.' The world thinks that science and spirituality have no synergy, but there is one thing they do accept - we are energy.

While we may read this logical explanation, we are still

unable to realize *Aparoksh Anubhuti* easily. Only a very few blessed people, a rare minority who experience the grace of the Divine and the guidance of a Guru, a Spiritual Master, can get this direct experience, this self-realization called *Aparoksh Anubhuti*.

Most of us are lost in this world of objects and pleasures. We are slaves to our 5 senses and our mind. Thus we live as the Mind and Ego, ME, and are unable to contemplate the truth of who we truly are. We live, we die and then, we are born again. The same ME is born in a new body as per our Karma. Because we are ignorant of who we truly are, this cycle continues again and again. But those who are blessed with self-realization, those who get this direct experience, *Aparoksh Anubhuti*, become conscious of the truth that we are not this body or mind, we are the Divine Soul.

At first, it is an intellectual process of getting information, analyzing and asking questions. But, until that moment of 'Aha!' comes, until there is that realization, until we directly experience who we are, we will continue to go around in circles, and be like puppets, controlled by the strings of our mind, living as the ego in a body, mind complex. The goal of human life is to overcome ignorance, to realize the truth, to experience this direct realization intuitively, which the sages of the ancient civilization called *Aparoksh Anubhuti*. It involves knowledge, but knowledge cannot give realization. Knowledge can open the doors, but the direct experience of the truth, cannot be acquired through knowledge. It must be experienced by the Divine Soul within.

Aparoksh Anubhuti is the Consciousness of who we are. It is that trigger that sparks a spiritual ecstasy within. All along it was there in front of us, but we did not realize it. Now suddenly, we experience it. We realize that we are not this, we are that. We become conscious of our Consciousness, just as we observe our body, our mind, our ego, and transcend their very existence.

While *Aparoksh Anubhuti* is a Divine experience, we all have been given the gift of the intellect when we were born as human beings. Trees, plants, animals, and birds cannot get direct realization. It is only a human being who goes beyond the senses of the body that crave, and the desires of the mind that wanders, who realizes we are neither this body nor mind, we are the Divine Soul. But despite having the treasure of the intellect, one may be a slave of their mind and continue to be reborn on earth again and again without the realization of the truth of who they actually are.

***Aparoksh Anubhuti is self-realization,
A direct experience that leads to Liberation.
It is not about the knowledge that we read in many a page,
Nor does it depend on religion, caste, gender or age.***

One of our biggest ignorance is that we believe that the mind is king. It is everything! Some people even get offended when they are told that they must kill the mind if they want to realize the truth. What is this all about?

We human beings are made of the gross physical body and the invisible subtle body, known as the inner instrument or *Antahakarna*. Somehow, we grow up to believe, that the mind is the inner instrument. Very few realize that the inner instrument has 4 domains - the mind, the intellect, the memory, and the ego. The mind is just a thought factory that is constantly producing thoughts, good and bad, positive and negative. The mind is wired with the 5 senses and is part of the process of a human being, desiring and craving, depending on what they see, smell, hear, taste or touch. The mind, along with the senses, imprisons us in ignorance and stops us from realizing the truth that we are the Divine Soul, not this body or mind that constantly desires and craves.

It is the intellect that discriminates and disciplines us on the path of self-realization. Only we human beings are given the gift of intellect and with it, the power to choose, to discriminate and to decide. Trees and plants are alive, just as birds, the aquatic world, and animals. All these live, breathe, and die like human beings, but they have not been given an intellect that can discriminate the myth from the truth. Although some animals may have an instinct or some limited ability to

respond that may seem like intelligence, it is only the human being who is blessed with a fully developed intellect known as the *Viveka*.

It is said that Adi Shankara wrote *Viveka Chudamani* somewhere in the 8th Century when he realized that our biggest treasure is our intellect. Thus, *Chudamani* means treasure and *Viveka* is the intellect or the *buddhi*. Why is this our biggest treasure?

In this journey of life, most of us just exist. We seem to live, but we don't go in quest to find out the answer to the most important question – who am I? The famous sage Ramana Maharishi wrote a book, '*Naan Yaar?*' It is all about going in quest of self-realization, using the path of *Gyana* – wisdom that comes from educating oneself through intellectual analysis of the reality of our existence. A true seeker of the ultimate goal of life, doesn't just accept everything that he is taught or that his religion advocates. He uses his intellect to discriminate - Where is heaven and hell? If there is a God, is he made of bone and skin? What is the power that exists within? These are the questions that need deep contemplation and the use of a sharp intellect that investigates and distinguishes the truth from the myth. Without the weapon of the intellect, one would be carried away. Just like a paper boat is washed away by a powerful current in a river, so does the mind try to wash away our intellect by bombarding us with constant thoughts. It produces a thought practically every second and makes us jump into a past that is gone and a future not yet born. These thoughts, about 50,000 each

day, make the intellect incapable of functioning, but if one makes the intellect the master of the mind, the intellect cuts through the mind, first to slow it down, silence it and then to discriminate every thought before it can become a feeling and action. Without the intellect, desires and thoughts translate into actions and we become helpless robots controlled by the mind.

The intellect helps us live a disciplined life. As it questions every thought, it builds strong willpower. It not only discriminates and chooses but also leads us on the path of the truth. The intellect acts like a sharp sword that cuts through all the false illusions, through simple logical reasoning. How can I be this body that started as nothing and will end as a pot of ashes? It discriminates *Neti Neti*, I am not the body nor the mind and leads us to the edge of that direct experience of *Tat Twam Asi*, I am the Divine Soul.

Although one may use the power of silence and meditation, the path of *Bhakti* or devotion, or even the path of action, to build a Divine union, the ultimate door to liberation and self-realization cannot open without the key of knowledge that comes through discrimination by the intellect. Therefore, we human beings, must not underestimate the power of the intellect. Not only must we treasure it as our biggest gift, but we must also make the intellect the master of the mind. Otherwise, like Lord Krishna tells Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita, our life will also go astray. He compares the body to a chariot driven by the 5 wild horses i.e., our senses. The 5 senses are controlled by the

mind which acts as the reins, but unless there is a charioteer who controls the reins to control the horses, the horses or senses will make our life go in all directions. The charioteer is the intellect. We must put the intellect to be in charge of our life, our mind, and our senses.

This is *Viveka Chudamani*, a true treasure of knowledge that reveals the greatest jewel – *Chudamani*, of the *Viveka*, the intellect. If we fall prey to our mind, we will lose the jewel of the intellect and will drown along with the mind and the ego, into the illusory world of pleasures and possessions, only to suffer repeatedly as we live and die in ignorance, without realizing that we are the Divine Soul, a realization that will liberate us from all suffering. Unless we use *Viveka Chudamani*, the jewel that is the treasure of the intellect, we will never reach the realization of *Tat Twam Asi* and be liberated.

***Viveka Chudamani is the Jewel of the Intellect,
It is a treasure that puts every belief to test.
When the intellect becomes the Master,
not a slave to the mind
We are the Divine Soul, this truth we find.***

Who are we in reality? If we are not this body that we appear to be, and a mind that we cannot find, we just cannot be. Then who are we? *Tat Twam Asi* – Thou Art That. We are That, the Divine Soul, the Spirit, the *Atman*, the very Life Power that gives us breath. We are that consciousness without which we would be dead. This is something we cannot understand. It can only be realized.

Over 4000 years ago, when the spiritual sages were in search of the ultimate goal of life, they elaborately explained the process in the Upanishads. The Upanishads are definitely over 108 in number, though some accept that there are over 200. Of these 108 Upanishads, about 52 are common, but only 13 are *mukhya*, primary or principal. Isn't it so complicated that ultimately people only study about 10 Upanishads? Realized Souls don't worry about this data. While the wisdom contained in the Upanishads is ultimately needed as the raw material to realize the truth, the essence of this knowledge is cumulatively stated in the 4 *Mahavakyas*, or the principal statements. Out of the 4 *Mahavakyas*, the one that causes the spark of self-realization is *Tat Twam Asi*, and the key that opens the door to this ultimate destination is *Neti Neti*.

Neti Neti, Tat Twam Asi – You are not this body, you are not this mind. You are the Divine *Atman*, the Soul, the Spirit. Even if we repeat this a thousand times or a million times, we may not realize this truth. Self-realization is a gift to those rare seekers who sincerely

desire the Divine and yearn for liberation. I believed in God for over 40 years and when I met my Spiritual Master over 25 years ago, the theme of my first spiritual retreat with him was *Tat Twam Asi*. I remember the fliers, the boards, the banners, all announced - *Tat Twam Asi*, Thou Art That. His talk over the 3-day Sadhana Camp in Lonavala was all about this. The 3 golden words got etched in my mind and memory. Though I understood the literal translation, it made no sense to me. After spending 25 years with my Spiritual Master, one day I experienced the spiritual ecstasy called self-realization. There were mixed emotions, that exhilaration of spiritual achievement, that 'aha' realizing who I was. Then, there was that feeling of sheepish foolishness that I had a curtain over my eyes for over 25 years, that I lived in a blanket of ignorance, that I was under the spell of *Maya*, and that finally, I had realized the truth.

The truth of *Tat Twam Asi* cannot be understood or discovered. It can only be realized. For a human being with the limited comprehension that we have, the Upanishads remind us again and again to use the 'key' of *Neti Neti*. We must constantly remind ourselves that 'I am not this body and I am not the mind'. Unless there is this auto-suggestion, this self-talk - the spark of *Tat Twam Asi* can remain hidden for decades or even for a lifetime or for that matter, several lives.

When I met the Shankaracharya in Sringeri on my quest for the truth and asked for his Divine benediction, he said, 'Read Viveka Chudamani.' I asked him, 'What

after that?' He replied, 'Read it again and again'. In my *Talaash*, I had thousands of books that got shortlisted to less than a hundred, but finally the books that became my best friends and helped me realize the truth were not even 20. Self-realization is not in books, although the knowledge that leads to it, is.

Therefore, today after being blessed with years of being in quest and the grace that led to my Divine realization, I have tried to put the entire essence of *Neti Neti*, *Tat Twam Asi*, in one book that can help lead to the realization - *Tat Twam Asi*, Thou Art That. You are That, a manifestation of the Divine, a God particle, the very Life Energy that causes breath. You are not what you appear to be, you are not your name, you are the immortal Soul. You are not the wave that appears to splash, you are the Divine ocean. You are not the one made of bone and skin, you are the Power that lives within. *Tat Twam Asi* - you are That, not this. You are not this body, this is just an effect. You are That, the very cause.

Realization of *Tat Twam Asi* is Enlightenment. It is not just a glimpse of the truth. It is overcoming the ignorance, eliminating the spiritual cataract, becoming the witness, the observer. It is becoming conscious of the Consciousness that we are. It is the end of the *Talaash*, the quest, and the beginning of a new journey.

When I went to my Spiritual Master while still in search of the truth, I told him that I had experienced God. He replied, 'Experiencing is not enough. You must realize

God.' I couldn't understand the meaning of what he was saying. As I further progressed in my *Talaash* and told him that I had acquired all the knowledge, he said, 'Knowledge is not realization.' My Spiritual Master was a true Master, a truly realized Soul. He not only started my quest but patiently and painstakingly, held my hand, till I arrived at *Tat Twam Asi*. He told me several times that it is practically impossible to realize this truth without a Guru. He wouldn't have ever, without his Spiritual Mentor, just like Vivekananda needed Ramakrishna Paramahansa. He also told me that a Guru can take us from *Gu to Ru*, from darkness to light, but we must walk the talk. We must yearn for the 'spiritual' just as we renounce the 'material'.

The reward of realization is everlasting joy and eternal peace. Not only are we liberated from the triple suffering on earth, we are also free from all Karma, and ultimately, united with the Divine. While *Tat Twam Asi* is the end of our journey to self-realization, it is the beginning of our journey to God-realization.

***Tat Twam Asi, Thou Art That,
You are That, the Divine Soul.
Neti Neti, Not this Not this,
Let go of your earthly role.***

Most of us go through life and before we realize it, it is over! We start this journey as a child, we grow up, get educated, married, pursue a career, a profession, an occupation, we earn, we live, and we die. Very few stop to ask the question, 'Why?' Why am I here on planet earth? Why this birth? Who am I in reality?

Am I the one who is awake, who is a conscious body, mind, Soul or am I the one whom I experience in my dreams? How many of us even stop to question whether we are the waker, or the dreamer, or something else? We clearly understand these two states, the state of apprehension and the state of misapprehension. We apprehend the waking world just as we misapprehend the dream world. And then we wake up to realize our misapprehension. We also experience a third state, a state of non-apprehension, a state where we are neither awake nor are we in a dream. We wake up from that state of sound sleep, and say, 'Wow! I slept like a log. What a peaceful sleep I had!'

When I read about these states of Consciousness, it was not very easy to comprehend. The waking state or *Jagrat*, the dream state or *Swapna*, and the deep sleep state of *Sushupti*. Then I was blessed to read the story of Raja Janak, the ancient Indian king and the father of Sita, wife of Lord Rama. One day it is said that king Janak woke up from a dream, disturbed and agonized in misery. 'I am going to die!' he screamed aloud. The queen immediately asked him what happened and he narrated, 'After I lost the war, they chained me, took

away all my royal clothing and possessions, dressed me like a beggar, and left me far away in the middle of a forest. After a long walk, I came to a little village, tired and hungry, barely able to walk. I saw some kind and compassionate people distributing food to the poor who were standing in a line. Helpless, I joined the line to get some food. Finally, when my turn came, I was told, 'Sorry, the food is over!' I begged them to give me something to eat as I was so hungry that I was barely able to stand. One person was kind enough to give me a small pot with some left-over soup with which I could at least survive. As I was about to drink this life-saving nectar, a huge bird swooped and knocked it off my hands. I fell down and lost all hope to live. 'I am going to die, I am going to die!' The queen immediately realized that the king had a nightmare and she gently told him, 'Your majesty, you are the king! You are not the beggar that you saw in your dream.' King Janak went into a trance of deep contemplation and he asked her, 'Am I the king who dreamt he was a beggar or am I the beggar, who is dreaming that he is the king?' What is the truth?

The queen repeatedly tried to explain the same thing, but the king was in no mood to accept her answer. The ministers were brought in and while the king had regained all consciousness, he didn't let go of that question, 'What is the truth – this or that? Am I the king or am I the beggar?' All work in the kingdom came to a standstill. Anybody who came to the king for any work would be questioned, 'Am I the king who had a dream that he was a beggar or am I the beggar dreaming that

he is king?' It seemed like the king had got locked in a trance and he could not get out of it. One day, a sage named Ashtavakra, came to meet the king. And the king asked him the same question, 'What is the truth – am I this, or that? The king or the beggar?' Ashtavakra replied, 'You are neither the king nor the beggar. You are the witness, the observer, who is observing your waking experiences, just as you are narrating your dreams.' The king came out of his trance.

This story made me realize that we human beings are not the waker, nor the dreamer. We are not even the ones who experience sound sleep. That is why we even know that we had a sound sleep. Who is the one that knows that we had a peaceful, dreamless sleep? We are *Chaturyam*, the fourth state of consciousness, not the waker, the dreamer, the sleeper. *Chaturyam* or *Turiyam* - for sake of preciseness, is the real Consciousness that we are, but we don't realize this. Because we don't realize *Neti Neti*, *Tat Twam Asi*, we live as the body that is awake, and the mind that dreams or sleeps. When we realize that we are the Divine *Atman*, the Soul, the Spirit, then we become conscious that we are the witness, the observer, the very Consciousness that is alive in us.

Contemplate a simple analogy. Suppose you are sound asleep, in deep sleep on the tenth floor of a building and I try to wake you up on the ground floor, will you wake up? Of course not! You are not physically present on the ground floor, but you are sound asleep on the tenth floor. But if I come to the tenth floor and wake you up, you will get up. Although you are in deep sleep, your

Consciousness, the *Turiyam* is awake. It wakes you from that state of deep sleep or *Sushupti*.

If one wants to progress on the journey of *Tat Twam Asi*, one must become conscious of their true reality that they are the witness, the observer of this drama called 'Life'. One must evolve to that state of *Turiyam* consciousness, where one realizes I am not this body, mind complex that has an ego and a name, I am the power, the energy, that gives force to this body to move. I am the *Atman*, the Spirit or the Soul. Once a person realizes their fourth state of consciousness, their true state of existence, they transcend the state of the waker, the dreamer, and the sleeper.

A spiritual saint explained it nicely to a confused station master who asked the question, 'Who am I?' He used to flag off 3 trains - the morning express, the afternoon super fast train, and the night cargo train, 'You are not these trains that come and go every day at the station. You are the station master, the observer, the witness of the 3 trains.' Thus the station master realized the truth that we are the observer of the 3 states of consciousness that come and go.

We are not the waker, the dreamer, or the one who sleeps.

Neither are we the one who is happy or who weeps.

***We are That, Turiyam, the fourth state of Consciousness,
When we live as this witness or observer, we experience bliss.***

What is the reward for the one who realizes the truth about *Neti Neti, Tat Twam Asi* – I am a manifestation of the Divine? Such a Divine Soul lives in a state of eternal bliss and everlasting joy. Realization of the truth makes them discover the Divinity all around them. Whatever they see, they experience the presence of the Divine because of their realization. It may be a butterfly or a bee, or just some fruit on the tree, a realized Soul lives in the ecstasy of self-realization, experiencing Divinity in all the beauty around them.

What have they realized? *Tattva Bodha* makes them realize that all human beings are actually not what they appear to be on the outside. They are the *Atman*, the Soul, that gives them life. They see beyond *Maya*, the projection and realize the truth concealed. They may look at a bunch of gas balloons tied to a gas tank, swaying in the sky – red, blue, green, orange, but they can see through and through that what is making the balloons fly, is not the colour of the balloon, but the gas inside it. So does a realized one live, knowing that the outside appearance of people, of plants and trees, of insects, birds, and animals, is nothing but an eternal appearance. Each of these amazing and unique living creatures is a manifestation of the Divine.

Every cell in our human body is alive because it is empowered by Divine Energy. When the energy leaves, we experience death, there is no breath. Then, the beauty inside us disappears, as it departs from the body that we adorn. Realizing this Divine truth that everything beautiful in this world is nothing but the

Divine, one who has experienced self-realization, lives a joyous life, surrounded by the magnificent beauty that is all around us.

Those who don't realize the truth, also see beautiful flowers, just as they enjoy delicious fruits. They listen to the singing of the birds, just as they enjoy the swaying of the trees with the blowing of the breeze. They too love other human beings, but they do all this thinking that all these are 'creations' of the Divine. Therefore, they continue to search for their God, they close their eyes, and fold their hands to pray. But a realized one lives in the ever-presence of God.

Satyam Shivam Sundaram literally means 'the Truth is God is Beautiful'. It can be further understood as 'everything beautiful in this world is Divine' or can be interpreted as 'Divinity appears in everything beautiful on earth'. As long as we don't realize *Neti Neti*, we are not the body, we are not the mind, we will not realize *Tat Twam Asi*, we are the Divine Soul. We will never realize the truth of *Satyam Shivam Sundaram* because the *Satya* or the truth remains hidden because of the *Ghor Avidya*, the gross ignorance that we are enveloped in. We think, 'This is me and that is you,' because we think of ourselves as this body, just as we think of others as the body and thus, our ego continues to live as a separate distinct entity and continues to suffer. However, the moment there is the realization of who we truly are, the moment we start living as *Chaturyam*, the witness and the observer, we experience an ecstasy of joy, unknown to common man, the ecstasy of *Satyam Shivam Sundaram*.

What is this Divine ecstasy all about? It is this – the realization of the truth that everything beautiful around us is not just a creation of the Divine, it is a manifestation of the Divine. God has not created all the beauty around us, but rather, all the beauty around us is God itself. It is God's Divine presence in you and me that makes us the Divine beings we are. It is God in a bird that makes it fly. It is God in a child that laughs and cries. The moment the God Energy leaves, there is no beauty because there is no Divinity or Divine Consciousness. It is Divinity in all that appears beautiful, that causes beauty. This is the truth and nothing but the truth. This is the realization of *Satyam Shivam Sundaram*.

What does a realized Soul discover? He discovers that God is not far away, on a distant planet. He doesn't have to go in search of God to a temple or a church. He experiences God in all the beauty that surrounds him. He looks at the stars in the sky and the clouds that pass by, and sees Divinity in everything beautiful. He feels the Divine presence in a little rabbit that hops, in a dog that wags its tail, in a colorful bird that sings and dances, in a squirrel that goes up and down the tree, in every colorful flower that blooms. A realized Soul not only sees the beauty but experiences the Divinity in all the beauty and then enjoys the ecstasy of the presence of the Divine all around him. He sees the beauty of God in you and me, as he sees beyond bone and skin to realize the God that is within.

But all this happens after the realization of the truth. The ecstasy of *Satyam Shivam Sundaram* is experienced

after realizing *Neti Neti*, I am not this and *Tat Twam Asi* – I am that. I am that, you are that and everything beautiful that surrounds us is that. We are all that – *Tat Twam Asi*, the Divine energy that creates life. We are all nothing but the *Atman*, the Soul, the Spirit that is the cause of all the beauty.

A realized one doesn't need any proof. He realizes it, he knows it and he experiences it, just as he gracefully accepts death as the departure of the Divine from something beautiful, such as when a rose withers or somebody dear to us, dies. We dispose of the body that was so beautiful because the Divinity has departed. The truth is this, that everything beautiful appears beautiful because of the Divine. The beauty is because of the Divinity and when the Divinity departs, the beauty disappears. This is a fact, but most of us do not realize this truth because we live in ignorance and we search for the Divine, when in reality, the Divine is all around us.

***Satyam Shivam Sundaram, beauty is Divinity,
Only the one who is realized, sees God in all.
You, me, a lovely rose or a bird in the sky...
When the Divine departs, all this beauty does fall.***

What is the goal of self-realization? Why should we go in quest of the truth? Why break our head to understand *Neti Neti*, *Tat Twam Asi*? Why study *Tattva Bodha* and *Atma Bodha*? What is the relevance of this entire book?

We human beings exist. None of us can deny that we are alive. We also cannot deny that one day the body will die. We live, we sleep, we work, we eat, and it seems our goal is happiness. To achieve happiness, we are taught that we must achieve success. Right from the time we are born, we are told to come first in class, to be a topper in school, to become a champion. Why? Because we are taught that success is happiness. We all chase happiness without realizing the true meaning of happiness. So also, we chase our other ambitions and aspirations. We go around in circles and before we can realize it, our life is over. The goal of life is liberation, *Mukti*, *Moksha*, *Nirvana*. How can we attain this state of being? It is through the realization of *Neti Neti* – Not this, Not this; *Tat Twam Asi* – Thou Art That.

What happens to the seeker of self-realization when he realizes the truth? What happens to one who attains freedom from the body, from the mind, and from the ego? This freedom is called *Mukti* and we must understand *Mukti* that is experienced while we are alive and *Moksha* or freedom at death. One who is a liberated Soul but is very much alive in a body-mind complex, experiences the state of *Jivanmukti*. What is it to be a *Jivanmukta* – one who experiences the state of *Jivanmukti*?

In the quest for the truth, it all starts with *Neti Neti*. It seems like it is an easy task, but it is the most difficult voyage in the world. To be able to realize – I am not this body is a rare feat. Millions will have the knowledge, but a rare few will realize it. These blessed few will then continue the quest to find the mind. Not only do they realize that this body will die, but they also realize that they are not the mind. They transcend the ego and become conscious that they are the Divine Soul, the *Atman*, the Spirit.

The challenge is to live as a *Jivanmukta*. There will be a constant war within, as we wake up into this physical world of pleasures and possessions. The 5 senses will desire and crave, and the mind will wander. A normal human being will be lost in thought. Their feelings become action, their actions become Karma and they become prisoners in this world of objects. They live, they die, and they are reborn again and again.

A *Jivanmukta* is very different. He doesn't sink in this world of objects, possessions, and people. Although he lives in a body-mind complex, he is liberated. There is no difference between a *Jivanmukta* and the others on the outside. But on the inside, a *Jivanmukta* lives a life of eternal joy and peace. A *Jivanmukta*, like anybody else, eats, sleeps, works, prays, but deep within, he is liberated from the senses of the body, from the wandering mind and the draconian ego. The *Jivanmukta* lives as the observer, as the witness. He watches the waker become the dreamer, and experiences sound sleep, but is conscious of all this as one who is not this.

He is That, the Divine Soul and he lives with this awareness. Not for a moment, he forgets who he truly is. There are times when a *Jivanmukta* is kidnapped by the mind and drifts into thoughts. But in moments, a truly liberated one returns to his state of Consciousness. This is the goal of self-realization.

Some people will talk of self-realization, but they are still prisoners of their senses, their mind, and ego. They may have all the knowledge, but until they attain the state of *Jivanmukti*, they will not live in a state of Enlightenment, enjoying the true bliss of *Ananda*. A *Jivanmukta*, transcends the mind, having put the intellect in command. He lives dispassionately, without any attachments. He doesn't have to run away from the world, but internally, he has renounced all cravings. He has learnt to discipline his body and mind and desires and yearns for just one thing – liberation and then unification with the Divine. *Jivanmukti* is that state of freedom from this world and from the triple suffering of the body, mind, and ego. It is only the liberated one, the *Jivanmukta*, who attains the ultimate state of happiness, of bliss that sees no end. He lives in ever-consciousness of the truth, in a state of seamless bliss and peace.

What is the goal of the *Jivanmukta*? What happens after you achieve the state of *Jivanmukti*? Does one still continue to live in this body? Yes, the *Jivanmukta* is liberated, but can achieve the ultimate goal of *Moksha* or *Nirvana*, only when the body dies. He continues to live his enlightened life as a human being, till that Divine

moment of death, where his *Mukti*, or freedom while alive, liberates him and he is united with the Divine.

At death, a *Jivanmukta* escapes from rebirth. A true *Jivanmukta* who realizes, I am not this body, mind, and ego, lives as an instrument of the Divine. None of his actions are his and so, he doesn't accumulate any Karma. His realization has already dropped all Karma. He has realized that he is that, the Divine Soul and he lives as the *Atman*, the Spirit, till the moment of *Mahasamadhi*, the ultimate unification with the Divine, when he drops his existence as a physical body. For this, a *Jivanmukta* has to be truly and fully realized, controlling his life by the intellect, and living as a Yogi, united with the Divine. Only then, he can attain his ultimate goal. If a *Jivanmukta* loses the battle with ME, his Mind and Ego, he will have to return in a new life.

***Jivanmukti is Freedom, Liberation from all sorrow.
It is living in the now, not in yesterday and tomorrow.
It is transcending the body, the ego, and the mind,
Experiencing Ananda - Divine Peace of a different kind.***

What is the meaning of *Sthitpragya*? Those who read the Bhagavad Gita, find the term *Sthitpragya* used by Lord Krishna in his discourse with Arjuna. 'You must live as a *Sthitpragya*, a steady intellect'. Why does Lord Krishna emphasize this?

Our mind is a rascal. Even if we have realized *Neti Neti, Tat Twam Asi*, the mind doesn't stop its monkey business. It will make us desire and crave, right till the time we reach our grave. A *Jivanmukta* must live as a *Sthitpragya*, one whose intellect is in command of his life. Krishna explained this very well when he said that our body is like a chariot with 5 horses, the 5 senses that constantly desire. These 5 horses are controlled by the mind. The mind is like the reins. The reins must be controlled by a charioteer. The charioteer is the intellect. A *Sthitpragya* uses his steady intellect and doesn't let go of the reins of the mind. He controls his life chariot and the 5 horses of his senses and is in command of his life. If he lets go of the reins or the mind, the 5 horses of the senses, will gallop in different directions, and we will lose control of our life.

It's not easy to reach that state of *Jivanmukti*. After attaining that rare feat, if one loses the battle that continues within, with the ME – Mind and Ego, then one's realization will not evolve to the goal of Liberation and Unification. One must transcend the body, the mind, and the ego, and for this, it is important to live as the *Sthitpragya*.

What does it mean to live as a *Sthitpragya*? The mind is constantly thinking thoughts. It bombards us with thoughts and it doesn't seem to stop. Even though we have realized that we are not the body, not the mind, we are the Divine Soul, the mind continues to interrupt our realization, to defeat us in the attainment of our ultimate goal of life - unification with the Divine. Till the moment of death, it continues to wander from thought to thought, jumping into the past, and then into the future, stealing the present moment, the 'now'. Through its constant thinking, the mind steals our Consciousness of the truth and transports us into a world of fantasy. It uses all possible methods to defeat a *Jivanmukta* from living like a *Sthitpragya*. It is this war, the war between the mind and the intellect, that is in reality, the greatest battle of life.

The mind lives in fear. It creates stress, worry and anxiety. It provokes the ego to get angry, to hate, and to take revenge. It also encourages the senses to sink in this world of pleasures. What is the mind doing? It is trying to steal our realization of *Neti Neti, Tat Twam Asi*.

One has already realized that I am not this body. One has already contemplated that I am not the mind or the ego, but the mind and the ego remain alive until the final moment of death, fighting the realization and dampening the intellect. *Sat Darshana* or the vision of the truth and *Aparoksh Anubhuti*, make the *Jivanmukta* absolutely conscious of the reality. However, if the liberated one does not live as a *Sthitpragya*, maintaining the sword of the intellect to remain always sharp and

prepared, one will not be able to cut through the assault and the war against the mind and the ego. Therefore, the importance of being a *Sthitpragya*. For a liberated being, one who experiences *Mukti*, it is important to live with a steady intellect, till one is finally liberated at death. Then, one is united with the Divine. The battle continues day after day and the liberated one with a steady intellect, moves forward towards the ultimate goal.

Two things may happen to a *Jivanmukta*. If he lives as a *Sthitpragya*, he will defeat his mind and ego, and remain conscious of *Neti Neti*. However, the one with a weak discipline and one who has no craving for liberation and the Divine, may lose the battle and the mind may make him sink, back into the world of pleasures and possessions. Who controls whether a *Jivanmukta* is liberated or sinks in the *Samsaar*? It is the intellect. That is why we are taught about Viveka Chudamani, about how the intellect is our biggest treasure and if we fail to use it, the mind will trample us on our journey towards the Divine.

There is a constant war within us. Those who don't realize the truth, are like slaves who are like prisoners to the mind and ego. But those who realize *Neti Neti, Tat Twam Asi*, they are brave warriors who use the weapon of the intellect, to shoot down the mind and ego. The mind and ego fight very hard because they know that if they lose the battle with the intellect, they will not only be defeated, but they will cease to exist as the *Jivanmukta* is liberated. Therefore, the mind and ego try very hard

to destroy the intellect from making one live as a *Sthitpragya*. The realized one is very strong. He doesn't waver or wander. He doesn't just know who he is, he has realized it. Thus, he is stronger than his body and his mind. He controls his mind with the sharp sword of his intellect, every moment that he is alive. He destroys every attempt of the mind and the ego to distract him from his path of realization.

How does a *Jivanmukta*, a realized being continue to live as a *Sthitpragya*? What gives him the power to use the intellect over the mind? It is his own efforts and the guidance of a Guru. But without the grace of the Divine, even a *Jivanmukta*, even a *Sthitpragya*, often loses the battle. Thus, he lives in Yoga, ever united with the Divine, enjoying the bliss of the Consciousness of the Truth, as he lives each moment of life, sailing towards *Nirvana*, his ultimate destination.

***Who is a Sthitpragya? It is one with a steady Intellect.
One who is living as the Master of the Mind.
He always lives with Discrimination,
Transcending the Ego and leaving the myth behind.***

Why should one go in quest of *Neti Neti, Tat Twam Asi*? The purpose is self-realization, our ultimate goal. However, unless we pass the 4 doors, we will not reach our destination. What are these 4 doors?

The first door is *Vivek* – it means discrimination. We human beings are slaves of our own mind. The mind thinks and our thoughts become feelings and actions. Along with the ego, these create Karma, and we are caught in this world. To control the mind and to correct it, we have the faculty of the intellect. It is that domain of the subtle body that appears to be a part of the mind, but in reality, it is a distinct separate entity. Some call *Vivek*, *Buddhi*, but it refers to our ability to discriminate wrong from right, to separate the truth from the myth.

The whole concept of *Neti Neti* is about discriminating that we are not this body and we are not the mind and realizing that we are the Divine Soul. If we don't open the first door of discrimination, we will stand outside the truth, blocked by the mind and will never be able to pass through towards the destination - liberation. Only those seekers who question every thought and investigate if it is true or false, move forward in the journey of self-realization.

The second door is *Vairagya*. This term may be understood in various ways, either as renunciation, or dispassion or even detachment. Why must we pass the second door? As long as we human beings are attached to our possessions and people, we will never accept the

reality that we are not this, we are that. The body will constantly crave, and the mind will stop us from the realization of the truth. Therefore, for discrimination to work, we must have dispassion. We can enjoy the good things of life, but we must renounce all cravings. One may enjoy eating a pizza for instance, but one who is craving for it, is dreaming about it becomes a slave to his desire. The *Vairagi*, one who lives dispassionately and detached, knowing that nothing belongs to him, renounces all cravings and lives in *Ananda*. How does he do it?

He passes the third door to liberation, the door of discipline. The scriptures call it *Shatsampat* or the 6 virtues. These disciplines are considered to be a wealth because without this, there can be no liberation. They are *Sama*, *Dama*, *Uparati*, *Titiksha*, *Shraddha*, and *Samadhana*. *Sama* is the ability to discipline the mind. *Dama* is the ability to control our senses. *Uparati* is the cessation or the transcending of all cravings. *Titiksha* is forbearance, returning good for evil and not reacting to every petty thing. *Shraddha* is faith and *Samadhana* is equipoise, focus, contentment. These spiritual terms can be interpreted differently, but together, *Shatsampat*, is the third door that helps us pass through to liberation. Together, this virtue is about the 6 disciplines that we must develop if we want to realize our true self.

The fourth door to liberation is *Mumukshutva*, the deep yearning and love for the Divine and the desire for liberation. A *Mumukshu* is one who develops the triple yearning for God - the yearning that a miser has for

gold, the yearning that a lover has for his beloved, and the yearning that a little child has for its mother who it has just lost. If one develops this triple yearning for the Divine, then one opens the ultimate door to liberation. In today's world, most people are passionate about and love material things. Our attention is on the beauty of the skin and we are prisoners of our senses as we crave to satisfy our sensual pleasures, rather than seek spiritual bliss.

Self-realization is not an easy task. If one does not pass these 4 doors of discrimination, dispassion, discipline, and desire for the Divine, one will never live with the realization of *Tat Twam Asi*. Despite having all the knowledge of the body, the mind and the Soul, despite even having an inner inspiration that gives a glimpse of the reality, the picture gets wiped out if the mind overtakes the intellect; if our passions make us attached to people and possessions. If we lose the war with our senses, our mind, and ego and sink into the web of this world – Women, Wealth, and Wine, we create a prison or bars around us and remain self-imprisoned because of our own choice. Instead of marching through the 4 doors that will lead us to liberation, we lock ourselves up within these doors and remain imprisoned in ignorance, slaves to our own weaknesses. It needs true character for a person to march towards the ultimate destination of liberation. It is not common to find such valor. Are you ready to embark upon that journey, to the ultimate truth? Then, renounce. It does not mean we have to give up everything, but we must give up the 'craving' for everything and accept those things that

come to us through our discrimination. There may be things that come to us which are enemies to liberation. We must discriminate. We cannot discriminate if we do not have discipline, therefore we are prescribed *Shatsampat*, the 6 virtues. We will never develop these 6 virtues if we desire the material world.

We must desire the Divine and seek liberation. Thus the true seeker realizes the importance of these 4 doors that together, open the way to liberation. Most of us in the world, are imprisoned behind the bars of ignorance of the mind, our passions and cravings, stressed in this fast-paced world, zapped by desires of our senses. We live, we die, and the cycle goes on and on. It is rare to find a true Yogi who lives passing these doors as a *Jivanmukta*. How can we be a true Yogi?

***Vivek is discriminating black from white,
Living with Vairagya is choosing what is right.
Shatsampat are the six virtues that lead to Realization,
And Mumukshutva, desire for the Divine and Liberation.***

The journey of self-realization starts with *Neti Neti*, the realization that I am not this body, mind, or ego. But when this realization dawns upon us that I am the Divine Soul, I am nothing but a manifestation of the Divine, it leads us to God-realization. We become united with the Divine. This is called Yoga. It is translated as union, the Divine union between the Divinity that is inside us and the Divinity that is all around. When we realize that we are nothing but God Energy, then we become one with the energy that prevails in everything that we see and touch. When a *Jivanmukta* lives in a state of Consciousness that 'I am That, the Divine Soul, not this body, not this mind,' he becomes a Yogi, one who is constantly in union with the Divine. He doesn't see himself as the wave that is distinctly different from the ocean. He realizes that he comes from the Divine ocean and goes back into it. This makes him live like a Yogi.

The world thinks of a Yogi as the one who has a long beard, flowing locks, who wears a colourful robe and who lives in the forest. This is a myth. Anybody can do this, just as anybody can do physical exercises or *Asana*, or breathing techniques or *Pranayama* which we call as 'Yoga' of the body and mind. What kind of Yoga is this? This is not real Yoga.

Yoga is about being disconnected from the sensual attractions of this world and from the wandering of the mind. Yoga is transcending the ego. It is living with the realization of *Tat Twam Asi*, we are all manifestations of

God. The moment we realize this Divine truth, we are enlightened, we are awakened. But that is the beginning. The ultimate goal is liberation and unification with the Divine. Even the ones who believe in *Asana* and *Pranayama*, know that this comes from the 8 Limb Yoga of Saint Patanjali. It starts with *Yama* and *Niyama*, goes on to *Asana* and *Pranayama*, and then continues to *Pratyahara*, *Dharana*, *Dhyana*, and *Samadhi*. A state of *Samadhi* comes after contemplation and meditation, disconnecting from the material world. Unfortunately, we have not captured the true meaning of Yoga.

A true Yogi lives a life of complete surrender. He is constantly in Yoga. He has realized the truth that he is nothing, God is everything! Without God, he wouldn't exist. Therefore, his life is a cycle of Yoga. It starts with Yoga of meditation, goes on to the Yoga of devotion, then, Yoga of action, then finally Yoga of education in which he continues to gain wisdom. These are popularly known as *Dhyana* Yoga, *Bhakti* Yoga, *Karma* Yoga, and *Gyana* Yoga. The realization of the truth liberates one from *Bhoga*, being united with the material world, which makes a normal human being suffer the misery of the body, mind, and ego. The Yogi transcends this triple suffering and lives a life of *Ananda*, eternal bliss.

The Yogi starts his day in *Dhyana* Yoga. Unlike most human beings who wake up and jump into this world, grabbing their mobile phones, watching the news, or reading the newspaper. The Yogi starts his day with

silent meditation. He contemplates the truth that in reality, the energy that is flowing in every cell of this body is the energy of the Divine. When he opens his eyes, he sees God in the skies, in the clouds, in the trees, in the flowers and the leaves. He hears God's voice in the chirping of the birds and gets into a Yogic trance of bliss. This is true meditation – not sitting in a fancy posture and letting the mind wander into the world of objects and pleasures. Does the Yogi continue to live in *Dhyana* Yoga or meditation all day long? No! The Yogi knows that there can be no freedom *from* action. However, he lives with freedom in action.

From *Dhyana* Yoga, he moves into *Karma* Yoga, surrendering his life to be an instrument of the Divine. On his lips are the words, 'Thy Will be done, O Lord!' He gets into the world of action as a Karma Yogi. He does nothing for himself, but follows the Divine Will, doing everything that he does, as a vision from the Divine. He works for God and surrenders all his work at the lotus feet of the Divine Master as his offering in Yoga. Thus, he does not create any Karma and continues to live as a liberated Soul.

The next step in the life of a Yogi is *Bhakti* Yoga, the Yoga of Devotion. He lives his life in the love of God, yearning for the Divine. His love for the Divine manifests as his love for one and all. He sings the name of God, and goes to a temple or church, although he has completed his search and found that God lives everywhere. He meets and greets everybody with devotion, as he sees the Divine presence in one and all.

The yoga of *Bhakti* starts with traditional prayer but eventually grows into compassionate service and universal love. A Yogi will never forget his *Bhakti* Yoga, just as he will not ignore the ultimate Yoga of gaining wisdom through the Yoga of education. This is called *Gyana* Yoga.

A true Yogi is constantly reading scriptures and spiritual books of Spiritual Masters. This keeps him constantly in Yoga, in a Divine Union with the Creator. While the journey starts with *Neti Neti* and goes on to *Tat Twam Asi*, the realization that I am not what I appear to be, but rather the Divine Soul, this leads the seeker to grow from a *Jigyasu*, one who is sincerely searching for the true purpose of life, to becoming a Yogi, one who is ever united with God.

The journey of self-realization not only gives a Yogi eternal bliss and everlasting joy, but it also leads the Yogi to the ultimate goal of *Moksha*. Yoga is the way to live a Divine life in this ultimate journey that a seeker embarks on. It is only a Yogi, who realizes the truth and lives in the consciousness of this realization and enjoys a state of eternal bliss and everlasting peace known as *Satchitananda*.

***Yoga is not gymnastics,
It is living in Union with God.
It is realizing we are the Divine Soul,
And becoming one with our Lord.***

When one starts on the journey of *Neti Neti*, little does one realize that this journey will take them to the ultimate goal of life. Not only will it lead one to liberation and unification with the Divine, it will also make one discover the ultimate purpose of life. The realization of 'Who am I?' leads one from self-realization to God-realization. But above all, it carries with it the gift of ultimate happiness, eternal bliss and joy and everlasting peace, without a sign of misery or sorrow. This seems to be like a dream. But *Neti Neti* leads one to *SatChitAnanda*, a state of eternal joy and everlasting peace. What is *SatChitAnanda*? If we break up the word, it means *Sat* or Truth, *Chit* or Consciousness, *Ananda* or Bliss. Putting it together, it is a state of bliss that arises out of the Consciousness of Truth. What is this all about and how can one be transported into this world of *Ananda* or *Nirvana*?

It starts with the realization of the truth - the realization that I am not this body that dies, I am not the mind, I am the Divine Soul. The realization that this world is like a dream, it is like a drama, in which we are just actors that come and go. We are the Divine Soul or the *Atman*. Everything we see in the world is *Maya*, an illusion that appears to be real. The only reality is that we are nothing but a manifestation of the Divine. We are not even the mind and ego that says, 'It is me.' All this is *Sat Darshana*, the vision of the truth that appears to a *Jigyasu*.

Realization of the *Sat* or Truth is not enough. We must

be ever conscious of it. This is known as *Chit* or Consciousness. What is therefore a state of '*Sat Chit*'? It is a state of 'Truth Consciousness', where one not only realizes the truth but is also constantly living as a Yogi, in Divine union. It is a phase of life where one is living as a *Sthitpragya*, with his intellect in command of his mind. It is living as a *Jivanmukta*, free from the cravings of the body, wandering of the mind, and the constant dominance of the ego. A key quality of one in *Sat Chit* is enlightenment, overcoming of *Ghor Avidya*, the dark ignorance that most of us live in. When one becomes ever conscious of the truth, that I am not this, I am That, then one enters a state of *SatChitAnanda*, a state of bliss, unknown to the common man and one becomes conscious of the Divine truth.

SatChitAnanda is the reward for the journey of *Neti Neti*. A person living in *SatChitAnanda*, overcomes the triple suffering of the body, the mind, and the ego. Although the body may be suffering physical pain, one who is conscious of the truth realizes that he is not the body that he wears, he is the one who wears the body. Therefore, he doesn't suffer the physical pain of the body. A realized Soul like Ramakrishna Paramahansa used to experience excruciating pain due to cancer, but he never suffered the pain. He used to laugh and joke when the spasms and the pangs of the cancer pain attacked his body. This was because he was living in *SatChitAnanda*.

SatChitAnanda is a state of bliss that can be attained when one also transcends the mind. One who is

conscious of the Divine truth is no more a slave of their mind. The mind may continue to create thoughts of fear, worry, and anxiety, but *SatChitAnanda* doesn't let us sink into the misery of the mind. It is living life moment by moment, conscious of the Divine truth, unaffected by any thought. It is also a state of transcending the ego. Normally, one is agonized by the anguish created by the ego, as we become angry, we live with hate, revenge, and jealousy. But the moment there is realization of the truth, all these negative emotions disappear. One lives in *Ananda*, pure joyous bliss and peace, conscious of the rascal mind that is trying to jump like a monkey and to steal our *Ananda*.

Having transcended the triple suffering of the body, mind and ego, a realized Soul, lives his life blissfully, moment by moment, in complete surrender and acceptance. *SatChitAnanda*, is living in Consciousness, as the witness, as the observer of this *Leela*, the Divine drama that unfolds on planet earth, a humongous stage where there is both comedy and tragedy. But to the one who has discovered the truth, it is nothing but an amazing drama, a movie unfolding scene by scene, produced and directed by the Divine. A Yogi who is living in *Ananda* is not distracted by the petty nuisances that unfold all around in the drama of life. A realized one knows – whatever will be, will be. Their focus is not on the drama, but rather on the Divine.

As a Yogi lives in *SatChitAnanda*, his goal is one – not to sink in this world of pleasure, not to be pulled back by duty, lust or shame. The true seeker wants to march

forward, living blissfully conscious of the truth towards liberation and ultimately, unification with the Divine at death. One who is in *SatChitAnanda* does not create any Karma. None of their actions are their actions. They lead their body to be in *Karma Yoga*, doing everything as an instrument of the Divine and they live with joy and peace, accepting both pleasure and pain.

What is the cause of this tranquility that causes magical bliss? It is *Chit*, the consciousness of *Sat*, the truth. Without *SatChitAnanda*, there can be no *Ananda*. With *Sat Chit*, one will automatically experience *Ananda*. Therefore, our goal is to be ever conscious of the truth. For this, one needs a Spiritual Master, a Guru, who will lead them to the ultimate destination. It is very rare for one who attains a state of *SatChitAnanda* to return to a material world that makes one experience the ordinary pleasure and pain of this mortal world.

***SatChitAnanda is a state of Eternal Bliss,
Divine Everlasting Peace that we must not miss.
If only we can live in Consciousness of the truth Divine,
We will experience uninterrupted bliss all the time.***

If the world of spirituality is so blissful, so peaceful and so fulfilling, what stops us from this world of self-realization and God-realization? We have realized that it is our own mind that is a rascal. Along with the ego, it becomes the ME, and jumps like a monkey from thought to thought. We get caught in the cosmic illusion and lose our *Ananda*, just as we lose Consciousness of who we truly are. But how can one get to this point of realization? If enlightenment is not just knowledge, then what is that magical way to get the intuitive experience – I am That, not this? Further still, what is the way to live as a *Jivanmukta*, to develop a steady intellect, to live as a Yogi, transcending cravings of the body and the wandering of the mind? This journey is impossible without the help of a Spiritual Master, a life mentor, known in spiritual terms as the Guru.

The word Guru itself comes from the two words, 'Gu' meaning darkness and 'Ru' meaning light. The Guru is the one who takes us from the dark ignorance that we sink in, into the light of the truth that can liberate us from all the illusions and transport us to a world of joy while we are alive and to the ultimate goal of *Moksha* or *Nirvana* at death. Without a Guru, it is practically impossible for one to achieve the ultimate goal of realization. Why is this so?

This world is full of pleasures and every human being who has the 5 senses is so enamored by the beautiful world that we get lost in it. The attractions of the body and the distractions of the mind make us go around in

circles and we forget to realize the truth about life. Most importantly, we believe in the myth that we are taught by our family and our religion and we live and die with it. Each one of us is taught exactly what we should not have been taught. We are told that success is the most important aspect of life, that we must be achievers and that we must be wealthy to be happy. We are also taught to pray and to believe in the scripture of our religion. We are taught that God lives on a distant planet far away and that one day we will go to heaven or hell. We are so zapped by all this, that we don't realize the truth. Because we do not discover the reality of life, we imprison ourselves behind prison bars of desire, craving, hate, revenge, anger and we suffer.

The journey of life is so short that even before we realize it, it is over! Some of us are lucky to read and accumulate some knowledge about Karma, living with morals, ethics, and values and we think it is a great achievement. Who will explain to us the real truth? Who will liberate us from our ignorance? Who will switch on the light so that we can open our 'real eyes' to realize that we are not this body, we are not this mind that we always think ourselves to be? It is the Guru, it is the Spiritual Master, who himself is a realized Soul, who can help us discover the truth. Without a Guru, it is practically impossible to achieve our ultimate goal and to realize that we are the Divine Soul.

Who is a true Guru? A real Guru is the one who doesn't proclaim himself to be one and flaunts his spiritual powers or even knowledge. He is a man of humility and

wisdom. He is the one who commits his life to help people on the spiritual path. He is the beacon of Enlightenment. He is not only knowledgeable about religion and scripture, but he has himself realized the truth and lives like a true yogi, united with the Divine.

In today's world, a real Guru is one who is mentored, initiated, and Enlightened with the help of another genuine Spiritual Master. Otherwise, it is difficult in today's fast-paced world to become a Guru on our own. The wealth and other glittering trinkets of this world, blind us to the reality that lies beyond. It is the Guru who raises the curtain of ignorance so that the truth is visible to us.

Many of us get caught in a trance under the spell of somebody who appears to be a Guru on the outside, but who is not a true Guru. This can be a disaster. Instead of taking us on the right path, the fake Master will instead take us in the opposite direction, and we will be distant from the ultimate goal. Therefore, we must be very careful in finding our Guru.

I was fortunate to find a Guru, who held my hand for over 25 years as he led me to a life of realization. He cut the rough stone that I was and polished me so that I could realize the truth. His name was Dada J.P. Vaswani, but we fondly called him Dada. He has since been liberated and united with the Divine, but as a true Guru, he continues to live in my heart every moment that I live. What would I be without my Guru? Whatever spiritual wisdom I have gained, I attribute it

to my Spiritual Master. He was the one who initiated my *Talaash*, just as he answered every question that I had on my quest.

Thereafter, I was blessed to meet His Holiness Sringeri Jagadguru Shankaracharya Sri Sri Bharati Tirtha Mahaswamiji who inaugurated our temple and blessed me with the wisdom of *Viveka Chudamani* and the works of Adi Shankara. It is a real blessing to have the Shankaracharya as your Guru in life.

People often wonder, 'How can we find a Guru and when will a Guru come into our life?' The Spiritual Masters of the past have stated – when the disciple is ready, the Guru will appear. We must be true seekers for the Divine to appear as a Guru in our life. The Guru is a manifestation of the Divine, highly evolved and realized. He is the one who will show us the path that we must walk on, that will lead us to our destination. But we have to do the walking. If there is the grace of the Divine, and the guidance of a Guru, chances are that the true seeker, will move towards the ultimate destination of realization. Without a Guru, it is practically impossible for one to attain Enlightenment, *Nirvana*, or *Moksha*. The Guru is not just a Spiritual Master, he is our real God on earth, for he is the one who unites us with God.

Who is a 'real' Guru, why do we need a Master?

He is the one who makes us evolve faster.

He is the one who takes us from darkness to light.

And switches on the light within, making it bright.

What is the ultimate goal of man? We live, we seek happiness, we believe that success and achievement is our goal. But this is a myth. Why? Because ultimately man must die, and success or achievement is not the ultimate goal because everything we achieve is left behind. Man has not stopped to understand that his ultimate goal is liberation, freedom from the continuous cycle of death and rebirth.

Hindus called it *Moksha* 4000 years ago. The Buddha called it *Nirvana*. The Western World has struggled with the ultimate purpose of life, calling it 'Salvation', but ultimately realizing that it is 'Enlightenment' or 'Realization of the Truth'. Whatever we may call it, the ultimate goal as per all the religions of the world is becoming one with God.

How does one achieve this goal? How does one reach that state of God-realization, the ultimate goal of humanity? As long as we do not contemplate the truth about life, we will just live and die. Those who ask the question, 'Why?' while they are here on earth, discover the Universal Laws like Karma. They realize that heaven and hell are not physical locations that we will go to, but rather, we are reborn in heaven or hell, right here on earth, depending on our past actions. A very few amongst us go on the quest of '*Koham?*' or 'Who am I?' Only a rare minority realizes the answer – '*Soham,*' or 'I am That.' How do the true seekers of God come to this conclusion? It is through a quest.

The journey to God-realization cannot happen without self-realization. Unless we first realize who we are, we will never realize God. And to realize who we are, we must realize who we are not. The reward for self-realization is that it opens the door to realizing God. Most people are searching for God. But we can't find God. We have to realize the Divine. As long as we live and die in ignorance, without realizing the truth of who we are, we will never realize who God is. There is an equation that reveals the ultimate truth and liberates man.

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Man} - \text{Ego} &= \text{God} \\ \text{God} + \text{Ego} &= \text{Man}\end{aligned}$$

What does this mean? As long as man lives with the ego, and believes 'I am ME', the Mind and Ego that lives in this body, man will continue to live and die as a human being and return again and again to planet earth as he takes rebirth. When we let go of our ego, then we realize God. Thus, the above equation reveals the truth. However, we can read this equation a thousand times, but still not realize what it means. The ego itself fights hard to survive because the moment we realize the truth in this equation, we are liberated from the ego and from returning in a mortal form again. This is called *Moksha* or *Nirvana*. Some people refer to it as the transmigration of the Soul. Whatever we may call it, it is freedom from both misery and suffering on earth while we are alive and liberation from rebirth.

Who doesn't want to be free from suffering of the body,

misery of the mind, and agony of the ego? Unfortunately, even the richest men in the world, the champions and achievers, the noble laureates, the kings and the presidents, cannot escape from misery as long as they are alive. It seems like every human being is gifted sorrow as they come to earth. Is that the very reason when a child is born, it cries and screams, rather than arrive smiling and laughing at birth? But there is a way to escape all this suffering. It is *Moksha* or liberation. Once we realize *Neti Neti*, we are not this body, this mind or ego, and we realize *Tat Twam Asi*, we are That, the Divine Soul, we are immediately freed from the triple suffering experienced by humanity. A *Jigyasu* or seeker, becomes a *Jivanmukta*, or a liberated Soul. No pain of the body can make him suffer. The realization of the truth liberates him from all the misery of the mind and the agony of the ego. He lives in a state of *SatChitAnanda*, a state of bliss, of joy, of peace, realizing he is not this that he appears to be, he is that, a manifestation of the Divine. He lives without fear, stress, worry, anxiety, just as he is liberated from anger, hate, jealousy, and revenge.

Not only does *Moksha* or liberation free a *Jivanmukta* from all misery when alive, but it also liberates him from being reborn after the death of the mortal body. The moment the realized one experiences death, he attains *Moksha*. Liberation leads him to unification with the Divine as he is free from all Karma. Thus, the ME, the Mind and Ego, enveloped in its ignorance, carry its Karma, dissolves as the truth is revealed – I am not this, I am That. The moment we realize we are not the body,

mind, and ego, we do not take birth again and we become one with God. This is our ultimate goal. If we do not realize that we are the Soul, we will continue to live, to create Karma and to be reborn again and again. We will return to earth, and while we may have good Karma, and enjoy a life of wealth and happiness, we cannot escape from sorrow. *Moksha* is the only way to liberation. The only way to escape rebirth is unification with the Divine and the way to this God-realization is through self-realization.

Unless we realize the true self, 'who I am', we will never be freed from this mortal cycle. The moment we realize *Neti Neti, Tat Twam Asi*, we start our journey towards *Moksha*. Unfortunately, this is a rare gift and very few are blessed to use their intellect to realize the truth. A rare minority of humanity lives in this world experiencing peace, joy, and bliss, without a sign of sorrow. These blessed people have attained *Mukti* while they are still alive in the body. They have reached the state of freedom from suffering and live in this state till that moment of death when they attain *Moksha* and are ultimately united with God.

***Moksha is Liberation, escape from rebirth,
God-realization frees us from coming back to earth.
Not only does it liberate us from all suffering and pain,
Moksha frees us from being born again and again.***

This book can transform your life. It can lead you from realization of the truth to liberation. It can take you from self-realization to God-realization. What is God-realization?

To a seeker of God, there is deep emotion and love in the heart. He prays to God and loves God. Unfortunately, he is enveloped in *Maya* and *Avidya*, ignorance caused by the cosmic illusion. The moment he realizes the truth of *Neti Neti*, he discovers who he is not and realizes who he truly is. He then climbs to the next step of *Tat Twam Asi*, realizing he is the Divine Soul. Where does this lead him to? This leads him to *Aham Brahmasmi*, or God-realization. It leads him to the realization of *Shivoham* – I am the very God I pray to. I am not this body that I wear, I am the one who wears the body. I am not the mind that seems to be constantly thinking. Although I experience thoughts, 'I am not I, the one I thought I was for so many years. I am none of these. But I exist, I am. I am That, the Divine Soul, a God particle, a manifestation of the Divine.'

Little does the one who embarks on a journey know that he will find God in the temple of his heart, that he will realize God everywhere, that he will become conscious of the Divine presence all the time. He just starts with the simple quest of 'Who am I?' The famous Tamil saint, Ramana Maharishi, called it '*Naan Yaar?*' in Tamil, and different realized saints, have given it different terminologies. The Buddha, awakened to this truth, and called his Enlightenment, *Nirvana*, a state of

ultimate bliss, joy, and peace. Adi Shankaracharya, in the 8th century, on realizing God said, '*Chidananda Rupah, Shivoham Shivoham*'. These realized saints also realized the simple truth of *Neti Neti* and it led them to the realization of *Tat Twam Asi* – we are not this ego, mind or body.

The truth is that we are the Divine Soul. Thus, when the Divine Soul departs at death, and there is no breath, the body disintegrates and returns to its original 5 elements of earth, water, fire, air, and space. Where is the mind, we cannot find! The ego disappears into nothingness because it is an imposter, an illusion – it doesn't exist. This creates that intuitive experience, the realization that I am a manifestation of God. God is the cause, I am just an effect. I appear to be ME, the Mind and Ego in a body that is alive, but in reality, I am HE, the holistic energy that exists in every cell of my body.

The true seeker realizes the truth of *Shivoham*, 'I am God.' What he actually realizes is, 'I am not, alone God is.' He realizes the truth that I am nothing. God is everything. He realizes the truth of *Aham Brahmasmi*. This *Atman* is *Paramatma*, this Soul is nothing but God. He then realizes, *Prajnanam Brahma*, that God dwells in every living thing that exists on earth and attains the ultimate state of God-realization. *Aham Brahmasmi*, I am the Divine, *Shivoham*, I am Shiva – I am God.

The ordinary man thinks of this as something strange and scoffs at the thought of it. Because he is imprisoned in ignorance, he questions, 'How can I be God?' He

continues to pray to a God that he knows nothing about, a God that emerges from his religion, his scripture, and from what he is taught. But he never realizes that this is not the truth. Thus, he lives, suffers, and dies, only to be born again and again.

Although scriptures scream that God lives in the temple of your heart, that the kingdom of God is within you, man, enveloped in ignorance, prays but does not know to whom he prays and what he says. Thus in reality, he brays, not prays. But the true seeker of God who loves God and yearns for God asks questions and investigates the truth. He is the one who realizes God in the temple of his heart. He realizes that God embodies each of the over 30 trillion cells of his body. He experiences the Divine, not just in everything alive, but in all of God's creation. The mountains and the seas, the clouds, the rivers and the trees, he feels the power of the Divine in every moment of his existence. He becomes conscious that everything is God. Other than God, there is nothing. He comes to realize that all these creations of God seem to be created, but in reality, they are not created by God. They are all manifestations of God. They are the Divine, appearing as a beautiful bird, as a gorgeous flower. He realizes the Divine in the butterfly and the bee, in the fruit and the tree. He knows for sure that it is none other than God, who is in you and me. This is God-realization.

He doesn't argue with anybody to prove this because he knows that it is very rare to be blessed with God-realization. He observes how science is trying to coin

the theory of Wave-Particle Duality while he studies quantum physics and quantum mechanics, understanding what the spiritual saints said thousands of years back. Everything that appears to be is nothing but energy.

Today, though science does not agree with spirituality on many counts, at one point it has synergy - it believes that everything is energy. But the one who has realized God, not only realizes the truth but surrenders to it. He doesn't question anything after he realizes the truth. He lives in Divine surrender, accepting the Divine will as it unfolds. He lives as an instrument of the Divine, realizing that he is nothing, but a manifestation of God. And so, he lives in Yoga, in Divine union, conscious of God, and doing God's will as he enjoys the bliss of realization, conscious of the truth in every moment that he breathes. This is our ultimate goal – to realize we are the Soul, to realize that we are God that appears as you and me. And it all starts with *Neti Neti*.

Aham Brahmasmi or Shivoham, what does this mean?

We are not this, the ego, mind or body that we seem.

When we realize the truth of who we are not,

We will realize God in the temple of our heart.

AFTERWORD

Ravi Melwani to AiR
My Journey from *Neti Neti* to *Tat Twam Asi*

For 25 years, I too wandered like anybody else. My success journey started when I was 16 and went on until I was 40. Then, from being successful, I became super-successful. Subsequently, my life transformed and I shut down my business and followed my passion of serving the poor, motivating people and started evolving on my spiritual journey. Little did I know that this was just an intermediary phase in my life, that there would be a second transformation, a metamorphosis.

In May 2012, my Spiritual Master, my Guru, Dada J. P. Vaswani, inspired me to embark on a new journey to realize the purpose of life. I had evolved from the illusory peak of pleasure to the tranquil plateau of peace, but I was drifting, till one day I would just die. My Guru made me go on a spiritual quest, to answer the most important question, 'Who am I and why am I here?'

While I took 9 questions with me on my quest, to realize my true self and God, little did I know that the key that would open the door would be two words – *Neti Neti*. In 48 years of my life, I had never come across these words and when I first heard *Neti Neti*, I wondered what it meant. I realized that it was made of two words, *Na* and *Iti* = *Neti*, when translated, it means 'Not this'. My wonder only grew when the translation was 'Not this, Not this'. I contemplated, how could I not be this body and mind that I thought I was from 1966 to 2012? Somehow, I was very committed to finding the purpose

of life. I had achieved all the pleasures I could dream of, and was living in Divine peace, traveling from country to country, New Zealand, Iceland, Greenland, and even Antarctica. I covered all 7 continents and visited over 120 countries. But the fact was that one day I would die. My Master questioned me why I was alive. Was I meant to live just to die? All this made me hang on to that question, 'If I am not this body, if I am not this mind, *Neti Neti*, then who was this 'I' that was alive?'

I heard the words *Tat Twam Asi* many times. My first spiritual camp with my master 25 years ago in Lonavala, was based on the theme – *Tat Twam Asi*. Its translation on the banner as I remember, read 'Thou Art That'. But how could anybody understand the meaning of this without realizing the truth about *Neti Neti*?

As I went on a retreat into the mountains with a box full of books, I realized some profound truths. First of all, I was not this body that would die. The body is made of five elements that go back to their original state and we become dust. I had attended several death ceremonies and I had realized beyond doubt that one day the body would die and I would leave the body. Where would I go?

I also realized that the Law of Karma was real, that we would have to pay for our actions, as per our Karma. The body would die, but the ME, the Mind and the Ego, would be reborn in a new body. And this would happen again and again. I studied further and investigated, till I realized that the ultimate goal was *Moksha* or liberation. I realized that it was my ignorance that

caused me to believe I was ME, the Mind and Ego. The same ignorance was making me do Karma and would cause my rebirth. Then came the spiritual 'aha!'. One day, on the 31st of August, 2014, on a flight from Paris to Bangalore, I realized the entire truth of *Neti Neti* and *Tat Twam Asi*. I was not the body that would die. I was not even the Mind and Ego, ME that would be reborn. I was the Divine Soul. *Tat Twam Asi*, I was that Power that arrived at birth and departed at death!

I was shaken out of my skin as I realized I was not the one that I could see in the mirror, but rather the Power within. I was not Ravi Melwani, who I thought I was for 48 years. I realized that it was just my name. Then, who was I? I was the Soul, the *Atman*, the Spirit. I was the Power, that energy, that exists in each of the 30 trillion cells of my body. To understand this, or to even imagine it, seemed impossible and beyond my comprehension, but I realized the truth. It seemed like I was blind all these years and suddenly, with my realization, my real eyes had opened. Not this, not this, Thou Art That. Not Ravi Melwani, not the body or the mind, Thou art the Soul in Ravi. Thou Art That, the *Atman* in Ravi – AiR.

This was the realization! For months thereafter, I struggled to explain it to myself because while I had realized who I was, I could not define it in words. By the grace of the Divine, over the years, I not only defined it by solving the spiritual jigsaw puzzle for myself, but also made it my life mission, to help people realize the truth. We human beings are slaves of our mind and so we live, enveloped in ignorance, believing in the cosmic

illusion, *Maya*, and thinking that this *Leela*, this humongous drama on earth is true.

After writing 33 spiritual books, I thought that the next should be *Neti Neti, Tat Twam Asi*, the turning point of my life, the two words that unlocked the door to *Tat Twam Asi*. My *Aparoksh anubhuti* was no magic, it was the result of Divine grace, of the guidance of the Guru, and of living in Yoga. It is not easy to transcend the craving of the body and the desires of the mind and ego. But a true Yogi who desires God and liberation, is eventually freed and lives a life of *SatChitAnanda* – eternal bliss and everlasting Peace, conscious of the truth.

I shed the skin of the caterpillar and became the butterfly, *AiR*, flying blissfully, experiencing the Divine at all times. My realization that we are all nothing but the Divine Soul, makes me live blissfully, as the happiest man in the world, without fear, worry or stress. Today, I have shared with you, my greatest treasure, more precious than anything else – *Neti Neti, Tat Twam Asi*.

***How did I realize I was not Ravi Melwani,
What created my metamorphosis to become AiR?
The realization of Neti Neti, I am not this body or mind,
Led me to Tat Twam Asi, I was the Soul, I became aware.***

POEM

नेति नेति, tat twam asi

*Neti Neti, I am not the Body
Neti Neti, I am not the Mind
If I am not the Body and Mind
Who am I? This must be defined
Tat Twam Asi, I am the Divine Soul, I find*

*If the Truth you want to know
Then on a Journey, you must go
You must Realize 'You are That, not this'
Until you realize the truth, there will be no bliss
Then only will Heaven open its door*

*Ghor Avidya is Gross Ignorance
I lived with the Myth, in a trance
Because I didn't know this was just my name
I got caught in my wealth and my fame
And the Truth just missed my glance*

*This world is a Leela, a drama I see
We are just Actors, just transitory
The earth is a Stage, we come and we go
Nothing is real, it is all just a show
We must transcend the Mind and Ego, ME*

*Tattva Bodha is the Knowledge of the Body
We are made of elements five
From dust we come and to dust we will go
This Body is not real, this Truth we must know
To Realize this Truth, we must strive*

*Atma Bodha is the Wisdom of the Soul
It is the Power that makes us roll
When we realize we are the Atman, the Soul, the Spirit
Not the skin that is outside, but the Power that is in it
Then we achieve our Life's ultimate goal*

*We must start a Talaash, a Quest
And put all our beliefs to test
We must Ask, Investigate and Realize
Only then will we open our 'real' eyes
And our Ignorance will come to rest*

*Sravana, Manana, Nididhyasana
The steps to the Truth are three
We must first read and then listen
And contemplate to realize what is within
Then from Rebirth we will be free*

*Sat Darshana is the Vision of the Truth
It helps us catch the evil brute
It makes us realize we are not the Body and Mind
We are the Soul, we Realize and we find
As we get to the bottom of the root*

*Maya is a Cosmic Illusion
It makes us live in delusion
It has the power to project the Myth
As it does, it conceals the Truth
And thus, it corrupts our vision*

*Aparoksh Anubhuti is Intuitive Realization
We experience the Truth and get Liberation
It is not knowledge that we can get from a book
It is beyond what the ordinary eyes can look
But the reward is Divine Unification*

*Why are we talking of all this?
We don't realize that this is Bliss
When we go on a quest, our beliefs to test
We search and search with all our zest
We must not stop or the reward we will miss*

*There are many who are caught in this world of pleasure
They think that money and wealth is the real treasure
They are prisoners of their Body and Mind
They are the Soul, this Truth they don't find
True Peace and Bliss of life they fail to measure*

*There are some who use their Intellect
What is the Truth, they detect
Viveka Chudamani is a treasure, they find
It kills the rascal, the Monkey Mind
And then in Ananda they rest*

*Tat Twam Asi, Thou Art That
Not this, not this, we are That
We are not the Body that we seem to be
Not the Mind and Ego that says, 'It's ME'
We are the Divine Soul, in fact*

*We are the Waker, the Dreamer, the Sleeper - states three
 From this Ignorance we must be free
 We are Chaturyam, or Turiyam, the state that's fourth
 To this Truth we must all march forth
 Then the Witness, the Observer we will be*

*Satyam Shivam Sundaram, do you know...
 It is a mantra, the Truth it will show
 Translated, it means, 'The Truth is God is Beautiful'
 Without God, there will be nothing wonderful
 With Realization, into this we grow*

*What stops us is Ahamkara, the Ego
 Which hides the Truth for the Myth to show
 All along we say 'I', 'me' and 'mine'
 And so, in agony we live, and we whine
 It's time to let go of the Ego*

*And then we must know about the Law of Action
 Karma is the Law of Reaction
 It states, 'As you sow, so shall you reap'
 If you sin, you will take Rebirth and weep
 From this cycle, we need Liberation*

*What is the reward if all this we do?
 We will be Free from suffering, that is true
 Jivanmukti is a state of Bliss
 It overcomes all misery, this we must not miss
 Otherwise, we will live as if in a zoo*

*A Steady Intellect can transcend the Mind
When the Intellect is Steady, we are Sthitpragya we find
It is about living with Realization
And not letting go of Liberation
Until we unite with the Divine*

*To Realize the Truth, we must live in Yoga
Not sink in this world and suffer in Bhoga
Yoga is about transcending the Mind
What the world believes is a myth of a kind
Then we are Enlightened, not blind*

*To Realize the Truth, all this we must know
If we have to cross this worldly show
Neti Neti, Not this, Not this
Tat Twam Asi will give us Bliss
But to this Truth we must row*

*What is our Life's Ultimate Goal
To Realize we are the Divine Soul
Moksha, Nirvana, Enlightenment, it is called
Because of Ignorance, this Truth is stalled
Until our Death, we just roll*

*To Realize this Truth, we need a Master
Then to the Goal, we will go faster
It is the Guru that takes us from Darkness to Light
A Spiritual Master tells us what is right
Reward is Joy, Bliss, and Laughter*

*And then, our Journey to God we will start
 We Realize God lives in the Temple of our Heart
 God is the Power that lives Within
 It is a myth that he is made of bone and skin
 And from all old beliefs, we will depart*

*I too lived in Ignorance for years
 Until I Realized the Truth with tears
 I finally realized that this was just my name
 And I was glad and ended all my shame
 And I got rid of all my Fears*

*If we want God-Realization
 Then we must start with Self-Realization
 Are we the body and mind? We are not this
 Then, we realize we are That and live in Bliss
 And then, we experience Unification*

*But there cannot be Unification
 Unless first, there is Liberation
 We must be Liberated from the Ego and the Mind
 We are the Soul, this Truth we must find
 And all this starts from Realization*

*Not this Not this, start your Quest
 Thou Art That, only then you rest
 Till you discover who you are not
 You will never Realize, in myth, you will be caught
 Don't lose your Spiritual zest*

By
AiR
 Atman in Ravi

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

AiR - *Atman* in Ravi, is an Embodied Soul whose only mission in life is to 'Help People Realize the Truth'. He was born in Bangalore on October 15, 1966. At a very young age, Ravi V. Melwani mastered the craft of business and became a very successful businessman who revolutionized retailing in India with the stores KidsKemp, Big KidsKemp, and Kemp Fort. After making millions, he realized that life is not just about making money. He shut down his business at the age of 40 and started making a difference doing H.I.S. work - Humanitarian, Inspirational and Spiritual work.



As a part of the Humanitarian initiative 3 charitable homes were set up to provide free medical treatment and care to the poor, destitute, and needy. Today, over 600 suffering homeless people who are picked up from the streets are served and cared for in 3 destitute homes and provided with free shelter, food, clothing, and medical care. AiR built a Shiva Temple in the year 1995 in Bangalore, which is now known as the Shivoham Shiva Temple. AiR now believes that religion is just a kindergarten of Spirituality, and people should go beyond religion to truly realize God.

One day, his Guru inspired him to introspect and find answers to the following questions: Who am I? What is the purpose of my life? Is life just meant to seek

pleasures and to live and die without any purpose? What happens after death? Will I be reborn? Who is God? Where is God? What is God? What is the Soul? Where are heaven and hell? What is Enlightenment? Several questions like these took him on a quest, a search for the Truth. He gave up his life of Achievement and Fulfilment in search of the final peak of life: Enlightenment.

After a few years of intense search in retreat, deep in the mountains, he realized that we are not this body. We are the Soul, the *Atman*. He changed his name to AiR – *Atman* in Ravi. He metamorphosed to AiR and gave up his entire life as Ravi V. Melwani and started living as an instrument of God doing His Divine Will. This led to several Realizations that formed his new mission of life – to Help People Realize the Truth.

Since then, AiR's life has been dedicated to reaching out and helping people to eradicate the ignorance that they live in. Based on his realizations, AiR has published over 33 books, composed and sung about 1150 *bhajans*, written several blogs, quotes, and poems. He has taken up various other initiatives that can lead people towards the Truth like conducting AiR Spiritual Retreats and giving talks that help people evolve on their spiritual journey. He is a TEDx speaker and is also invited to speak at several organizations like YPO (Young Presidents' Organization), Rotary Club, Lions Club, and at many corporates, schools, and colleges. He conducts webinars every week on Zoom and Facebook Live to help people realize the ultimate purpose of their life.

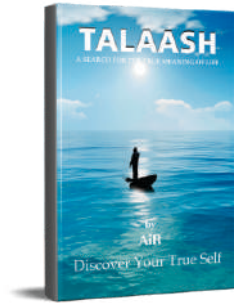
AiR has realized the Truth that we are not the body, the mind, or the ego; we are the Divine Soul. And to realize this is our ultimate goal. He lives his life with just one mission – to help people Ask, Investigate, and Realize the Truth. Being blessed with everything, he seeks nothing except to fulfil this mission of life.

***Started with nothing
Became something...
Achieved everything
Only to realize we are nothing!***

BOOKS BY THE AUTHOR

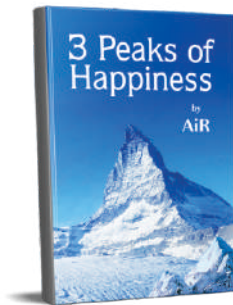
1. Talaash

Talaash means ‘search’ or a ‘quest’. This book by AiR recounts his own spiritual quest for the Ultimate Truth that led him to the realization that we are neither the body nor the mind, but the Divine Soul.



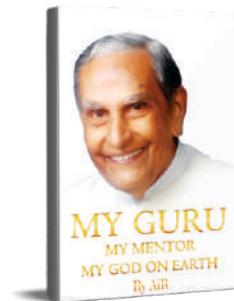
2. 3 Peaks of Happiness

This book talks about the universal quest of humanity – Happiness. It explains the ways through which people can reach the third peak of happiness – Enlightenment which lies beyond the two peaks of happiness – Achievement and Fulfilment. The third peak liberates us from the prisons of misery and sorrow and gives us eternal Joy and Bliss.



3. My Guru, My Mentor, My God on Earth

This book is AiR's tribute to his Guru, Dada J.P. Vaswani. AiR shares his experiences with Dada and how Dada's philosophy and teachings were instrumental in guiding him to begin his spiritual quest and bringing about the transformation in him.



4. I will Never Die, Death is Not “The End”

In the journey of his life, AiR realized many truths. One of the truths is a revelation – we never die; Death is not the end but a bend to transcend. The body will die, but the one who lives in the body never dies.



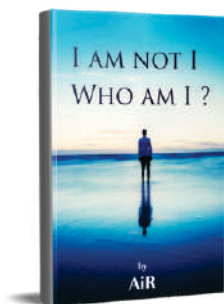
5. Death is Not “The End.” Death is “Liberation”

The second book by AiR in the series of books on ‘Death’ touches upon the secret of *Kathopanishad* which talks about what happens after death. One of the two things can happen: if we think we are the Body and Mind as a doer, we are reborn, but if we realize that we are the Soul and not the body and mind, we are liberated to eternal joy and peace.



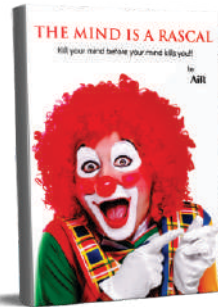
6. I Am Not I. Who am I?

This is an insightful book by AiR which talks of his quest and realization that we are not who we think we are. We have a house but we are not the house. We have a car but we are not the car. Similarly, we have a body but we are not the body. Then, who are we?



7. The Mind is a Rascal

Can you believe that the mind is a rascal? You always thought that the mind is king—it is everything. But just try this. Sit quietly for an hour, and try to find the mind. Where is it? You will realize that the mind doesn't exist. This amazing book by AiR will teach us that the mind is our enemy. It is the one that makes us suffer. It is time to find the rascal and kill it. How do we do this—is revealed in the book.



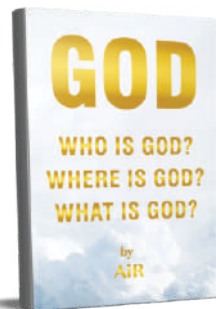
8. A Cosmic Drama

This book challenges the reader to explore the illusory nature of this world—whatever is happening in life is not real; it is nothing but a Cosmic Drama. If we understand this simple truth, we can enjoy the show called life.



9. Who is God? Where is God? What is God?

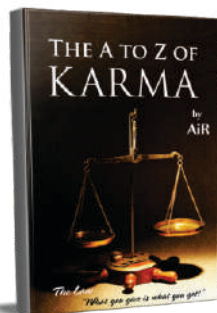
Well, this might seem to be a simple set of questions but nobody really knows the answers. We all know that God exists. We pray to a God as per our Religion but what is the Truth about God? Has anybody seen God? Where is God? This



simple book will change your perception and belief about God and bring you closer to the Power called God. It will help you realize God.

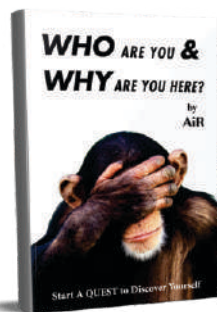
10. The A to Z of Karma

Most people are aware of the concept of Karma – the Universal Law that states, “What you give is what you get.” But not everybody knows the A to Z of Karma that we can actually transcend Karma, escape from it and achieve Liberation or Moksha. This book reveals the secret of eternal Joy and Peace – a life without any misery or suffering.



11. Who Are You and Why Are You Here?

This is a simple book that prompts us to ask the right questions to discover the secret of our life – who we are in reality and what the purpose of our life is. The answers to these questions hold the key to a purposeful, meaningful and blissful life.



12. The 4th Factor

Man thinks that his Karma controls everything and he can achieve anything through his efforts, equipment,

and the method of his actions. But he is ignorant about something which is more powerful than Karma—the 4th factor. This is an informative book that makes the readers understand why things happen the way they happen and even if ten people use the same equipment and perform the same action, still, they never produce the same results, because apart from their own action, each person seems to be graced with another factor—the 4th factor that is beyond human comprehension and without its consent even the possible becomes impossible.



13. Be Happy in the NOW!

Every human being on earth wants to be happy. There is nobody who enjoys pain. People want to achieve Happiness but they fail to realize that Happiness is the journey itself, not the destination. Then, what is the secret of eternal Joy, Bliss, and Peace? It is being Happy in the NOW. With this book, AiR hopes to inspire people to live life moment by moment, if they really want to be Happy.



14. Questions You Must Answer before you Die!

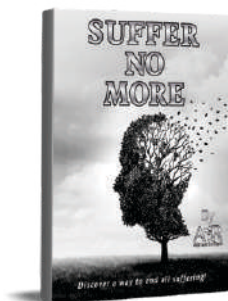
Most of us live and die but we don't



ask the question—Why? We just exist! This book presents a series of important questions with answers that can guide us to the realization of the Truth and help us live with meaning, purpose, and joy.

15. Suffer No More

‘Suffer No More’ is a personal experience of overcoming anguish, anxiety, distress, and grief. It is an analysis of suffering, what causes it and how we can overcome it. While there is pain, we can do away with suffering. This book will tell us how!



16. Success is not Happiness, Happiness is Success

People want to win because this makes them Happy, just as failure makes them miserable. This book explains how success does not bring happiness and how this belief is only an illusion. In fact, instead of chasing success, we should try to be happy! That is true success.



17. God = Happiness

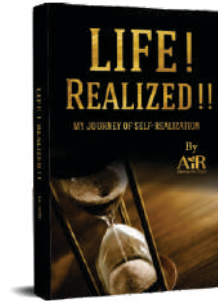
In his quest to discover Truth and the purpose of life, the author realized that people didn't know where exactly to search for Happiness. This is a book that takes



us far beyond religion to Realize the Truth about God and how God is Happiness.

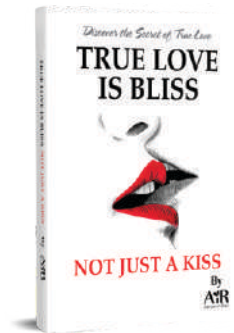
18. Life! Realized!!

This book is a personal reflection of the author on his several realizations about everything that matters in the journey of life – the realizations that he attained while on his quest for the Truth.



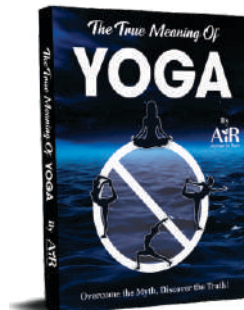
19. True Love is Bliss...Not Just a Kiss

It is sad that love which is the source of joy and happiness is not understood by the world. This book is an attempt to explore True Love that is beyond passion, romance, and kisses. True Love is White Divine Love from the Soul that manifests as the 7 colours of human love from the day we are born till the day we die.



20. True Meaning of Yoga

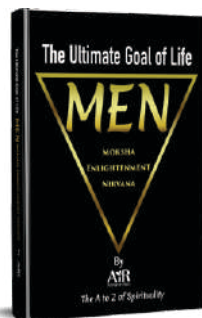
Yoga, today, is primarily taught as a set of body postures and breathing exercises. But this is not true Yoga! Yoga, in reality, is a Union with the Divine. This book attempts to explain everything about Yoga, its meaning



and significance, how it must be practised and how through Yoga, one can be liberated and experience Ultimate Divine Peace and Bliss.

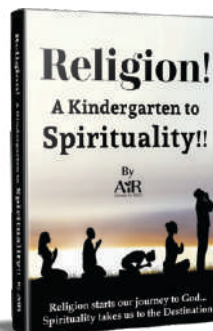
21. The Ultimate Goal of Life, MEN – Moksha, Enlightenment, Nirvana

The three most tenable concepts – Moksha, Enlightenment, Nirvana are discussed in this book that can help us reach our Ultimate Goal of Liberation and then Unification with the Divine.



22. Religion! A Kindergarten to Spirituality!!

This book discusses how Religion is only the first step towards God-Realization. We do not realize that Religion is only a Kindergarten, of which Spirituality is the University, and together they can lead us to God-realization.



23. Why Bad Things Can't Happen to Good People!

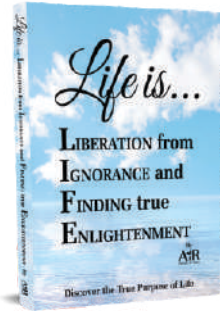
This book helps us understand that this world has been created by the Divine and it operates through certain Universal Laws that need no intervention by the Creator. Bad things can never happen to good



people, just as apples can't grow on mango trees!

24. LIFE is...Liberation from Ignorance and Finding true Enlightenment

What is Life all about? Most people exist but they don't truly live. They just zoom from womb to tomb, and then life is over. They don't stop to think about their life's true purpose. In the pursuit of happiness, success, and achievement, people don't realize that though they may gain a lot of these, they lose their most precious gift – life itself.



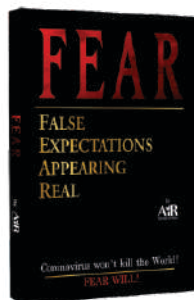
25. The Ladder to Heaven

While we pray to God calling God by different names, the vast majority of humanity believes in God and aspires to go to their God in heaven one day. It doesn't matter what our religion is, there is a way to reach God. There is a Ladder that can take us to heaven but we need to ascend the rungs of belief, prayer, faith, hope, trust and so on. This book is an effort to help genuine seekers of God to climb the Ladder to Heaven. It shows a step by step way to God-realization as we pass through self-realization, overcoming the ignorance that we live in.



26. FEAR- False Expectations Appearing Real

Through this book, the author wishes to help people change their paradigm and live with courage—that they should take appropriate precautions and not panic. The world has changed because of Coronavirus! But it's up to us to live with FEAR or to live with FAITH. There is a difference between Fear and Danger but most of humanity lives with the constant fear of disease and death. For the first time ever, all the countries of the world have closed their borders and shut down their economies. Facts confirm that when compared to the Spanish flu, it is not as fatal a pandemic as the world thinks it to be. This book F E A R, will help readers overcome these tough times of the global pandemic.



27. Soul – We don't have a Soul... we are the Soul!

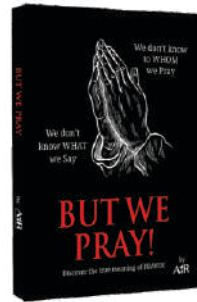
The Soul is mysterious. We are alive because of our Soul. But what exactly is the Soul? Where does it come from and where does it go? We cannot see the Soul, but we all believe that we have one. People talk about 'good' or 'bad' Souls, ghosts—spirits of the dead, heaven—hell, and the reincarnation of the 'Souls'. This book will help the genuine seekers of the truth to do some Soul searching



and discover the ultimate truth about our most important aspect—our very own Soul. We will realize that we don't have a Soul...we are the Soul!

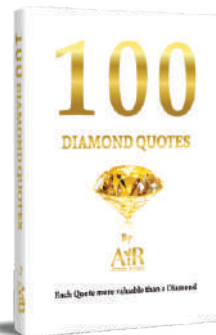
28. But We Pray!

The whole world prays to God. Every religion claims that their God is the real God and their prayer is the most effective form of prayer. Unfortunately, we don't even know the God we pray to, nor do we understand what we say in prayer. This book will make us conscious of what we say when we pray. It will help us know the God we pray to and build a Divine connection through prayer.



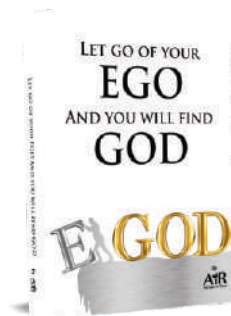
29. 100 Diamond Quotes

Our life needs a spark and a simple quote can make this difference. This book, *100 Diamond Quotes* does just that. It is a selection of AiR's quotes on Happiness, Realization, Liberation, Spirituality, and Enlightenment. These inspiring, thought-provoking quotes can trigger a metamorphosis and can transform our life as they lead us forward in our quest for the true meaning of life, giving us more Peace and Happiness than all the Diamonds of this world.



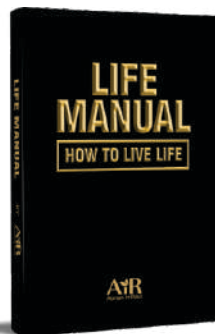
30. Let go of your Ego and you will find God

Are you seeking God? There is a way to find God. All you have to do is to let go of your Ego. Our biggest enemy, ME, the Mind and Ego, envelops us in ignorance and we go round and round in circles without discovering God within. This book will transform your life. It will show you the way to God just as it will guide you on how to let go of your Ego. It will open the door to eternal peace and everlasting joy. If only you let go of your Ego, you will move from Self-realization to God-realization and will realize God within.



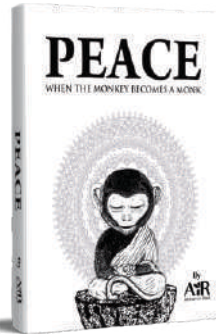
31. Life Manual - How to live life?

Whenever we get a new gadget, we read the operating manual before we actually start using it. We learn how to operate our mobile phones and our laptops. But have we ever read a manual on life? Is there such a manual? There is no simple document that tells us what life is and how we should live. The 'Life Manual' is just the book we have all been waiting for. We continue to get baffled by problems and sometimes give up. From this moment onwards, as you read the Life Manual, you can discover the true meaning of life and live a life of bliss and peace!



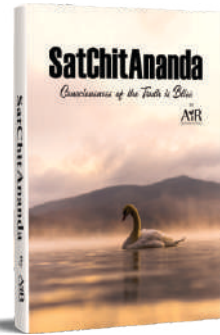
32. PEACE... When the Monkey becomes a Monk!

We human beings are enveloped in deep darkness of ignorance. We seek Peace of mind but we don't realize that Peace is not an external thing. It is our original state. It is our own mind that steals our Peace by constantly jumping from thought to thought. It craves and desires and we lose our Peace. Unless we tame the Monkey Mind and make it into a Monk, we will never be able to experience true Bliss. This book will show us the way.



33. SatChitAnanda - Consciousness of the Truth is Bliss

Very few people in this world discover the secret of eternal Peace and everlasting Joy. They go in search for the true meaning of life. They overcome the myth and realize the Truth and they enjoy *Ananda*, a Bliss unknown to the common man. They experience Peace and Joy as they overcome all misery and suffering. This book reveals the secret of *SatChitAnanda*. It will help us realize the Truth just as it will make us conscious of it and show us the way to *Ananda*, to live every moment of life with seamless Joy and Peace.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

And Now..

34. 'Neti Neti, Tat Twam Asi' Not This, Not This, Thou Art That

Coming Soon...

**35. Discover the SECRET within
The LAW of AttraCTION**

neti neti tat twam asi

Not This, Not This, Thou Art That!

Are you in search of the Truth? Do you want to realize who you truly are? Then stop! First, discover who you are not. *Neti Neti*, Not this, Not this – you are not this body, you are not this mind. *Tat Twam Asi*, Thou Art That – you are That, the Divine Soul, the Spirit, the *Atman*.

Over 4000 years ago, the Vedas and the Upanishads revealed the Truth in the *Mahavakyas* – principal statements. But because we are covered by a blanket of ignorance, we continue to suffer in this world of pleasures and possessions.

This book will lead you to the Truth. As it simplifies the complicated terms, you will discover what you are not. You are not the body that dies. You are not even the mind, where it is, you cannot find! You are That, the Life Energy within, the Divine Soul, the Spirit, the *Atman*, which is beyond human comprehension. You are none other than a manifestation of the Divine.

Start your journey of *Neti Neti*. These golden keys will open the door to *Tat Twam Asi* and you will realize the Ultimate Goal of life. You will experience Eternal Happiness and Everlasting Peace!

A.i.R.

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