

**Are you going to
Live through**



**THE 4 QUARTERS
OF LIFE**

By
AiR
Atman in Ravi

**OR is your Life going to
Escape you?**

**Are you going to
Live through**



**THE 4 QUARTERS
OF LIFE**

By
AiR
Atman in Ravi

**OR is your Life going to
Escape you?**

THE 4 QUARTERS OF LIFE

By

AiR
Atman in Ravi
Ravi V. Melwani

Copyright © AiR Institute of Realization 2021

AiR asserts the moral right to be identified as the author of this book.

ISBN 978-93-5526-423-7

All rights reserved.

No part of the content of this publication (except images) may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Printed by: Vel Murugan Binding Works

Publisher: AiR - *Atman* in Ravi (Ravi V. Melwani)

Kemp Fort Mall, No-97, Old Airport Road, Bangalore-560017

PREFACE

What is life all about? Why are we alive on planet earth? Is there a purpose? Are we meant to live, just to die? The best way to understand life is to look back at how man originally lived. A peep into history reveals the origins of man's understanding of his purpose on earth.

Thousands of years ago, man called this *Purushartha*. Broken up, the two words – *Purusha* and *Artha* mean 'human being' and 'purpose'. According to *Sanatana Dharma*, the ancient Hindu faith, human life had 4 purposes. First, *Dharma*, the righteous way of living, which includes our duties, conduct, and behaviour. The second, *Artha*, which means that a human being must earn wealth to take care of his wellbeing. The third, *Kama*, fulfilment of the sensory desires, which is natural in a human being. The fourth is *Moksha*, our ultimate goal. It is Liberation from suffering while alive, and after we die, from the cycle of death and rebirth.

In the olden days, man was more focused on the purpose of his existence. He would ask himself the question, 'Why am I here on earth? Why have I been given this human birth?' To enable a human being to achieve the purpose of life, the ancient Hindu civilization divided life into 4 stages or *Ashramas*. The first stage was *Brahmacharya* or the life of a student. The second stage was *Grihastha* or the life of a householder. The third stage was *Vanaprastha*, which literally means to leave the world and go into the forest, and the fourth, *Sanyasa* which means to renounce the world and seek God.

Life may have evolved over the centuries, but the life of a human being, has not changed. Thousands of years ago, man

was born and ultimately died. Is there any change in our birth and death? We continue to have a body, mind and ego and our physical form has not changed. However, times have changed and with the modernization in our lifestyle and culture, it seems that our life purpose has been diluted.

This book introspects on the purpose of human life. How has it changed from the life of our ancestors? What is our ultimate goal? How are we supposed to live, grow up, age and ultimately depart from the planet? It demarcates life into 4 Quarters and inspires us, with the backdrop of our ancient civilization, to choose a life of meaning and purpose and achieve our ultimate goal before we depart.

The journey of life today passes through the phase of learning as we grow up and then, earning to satisfy our needs and desires. Thereafter, it is living with contentment and fulfilment. What next? Very few people ponder upon this. We just die and do not know what lies beyond. Man has forgotten to Realize the Truth. He is so lost in this roller coaster world that he has no time to be still and to realize his purpose.

This book will help us to stop, to ask questions, to investigate what life is all about, till we realize the 4 Quarters of human life. It will help us live our life Quarter by Quarter and will show us the way to the ultimate Realization - that we are not this body that we appear to be, we are not even this mind and ego. We are the Divine Soul. It will change the way we live and lead us to Enlightenment, to Liberation and to Unification with the Divine.

INTRODUCTION

Can man live forever? Everybody has to die. Life is a journey from birth to death. But what is the purpose of human existence? Is a human being supposed to grow up, educate himself, earn, only to ultimately die? What happens after death? Is death the end or is it just a bend? Is there life after death?

Unless man goes on a quest to understand what his life is all about, man will not truly live. He will just exist, till one day, he is removed from the planet.

Everybody wants to be happy, who doesn't? To achieve happiness, man spends his entire life learning and earning. Ultimately, in the end, what we earn, others will burn. We know it, but we don't Realize the Truth. Once man goes in quest of the Truth, to discover the meaning of life, he will ponder upon the purpose of life.

We pay scant attention to discovering who we truly are and why we are here. We are so busy trying to make our dreams come true that we don't achieve the ultimate goal of realizing that we are the Divine Soul. In the pursuit of Achievement, we forget to live a life of Contentment and Fulfilment. We are so busy beautifying our skin, that we do not discover the Power within. We do not even cross the path of Enlightenment. We live in darkness and because of our ignorance, we suffer the pain of the body, the misery of the mind, and the agony of the ego.

Man has conceded to his belief that this world is full of suffering. At best, he has learned the Law of Karma and tries to live with some ethics and values. But very few amongst us, go

beyond that. A rare minority digs deeper to discover the true treasure of life. This minority questions everything that we have been taught, and uses the gift of the intellect and willpower, to make the right choices.

There is a way to eternal happiness and everlasting peace. There is a way to escape from the triple suffering that every human being experiences. But for this, we must investigate life. We must not believe in the fairy tales we are taught. We even have to question the teachings of our religion, our parents, and our teachers. Not only do we have to go into the world outside to gain knowledge, but we must also delve deeper into our inside world to Realize the Truth.

This book is meant to transform our lives. It will challenge the way we think and live. It can bring about a metamorphosis in us, as it opens the door to the Truth. It can help us overcome our ignorance and discover the secret of life and our purpose on earth. It will reveal the true meaning of human birth.

Are you ready to discover the 4 Quarters of your life and live a life that will lead you to Liberation from all suffering and ultimately Unification with the Divine?

*What is the purpose of our life on earth?
Why are we given this human birth?
One day we'll die, we'll be no more,
But before that, let's Realize the Truth of the Quarters Four.*

CONTENTS

PREFACE

INTRODUCTION

01. What is Life all about?	01-06
02. A Journey from Birth to Death	07-11
03. Life Expectancy and Life Span	12-16
04. Life has 4 Quarters	17-22
05. The First Quarter – Learning	23-27
06. The Second Quarter – Earning	28-33
07. The Third Quarter – Living	34-39
08. The Fourth Quarter – Dying	40-43
09. What is our Life Purpose?	44-48
10. The 4 Ancient <i>Ashramas</i>	49-54
11. How has Life Evolved?	55-59
12. The Reality of Life	60-66
13. Every 'Body' must Die	67-70
14. Is Rebirth Real or a Fairy Tale?	71-76
15. Did you Control your Birth?	77-81
16. Our Ultimate Goal – Liberation	82-85
17. The Cycle of <i>Samsara</i> and <i>Dukkha</i>	86-90
18. Everybody Wants to be Happy	91-95
19. The Triple Suffering	96-100
20. Going on a Quest	101-105
21. Our Biggest Enemy is ME	106-110
22. Realization of the Truth	111-115
23. Enlightenment, Liberation and Unification	116-120
24. Blissfully Living as an Immortal Soul	121-126
25. Live Life Quarter by Quarter	127-131

AFTERWORD 132-136

POEM 137-141

ABOUT THE AUTHOR - AiR 142-156

CHAPTER

01



WHAT IS LIFE ALL ABOUT?

What is Life all about?
This Important Question we forgot!
We just live to have some fun.
Before we know it, Life is done!

What is the purpose of life? Every human being wants to be happy. We are chasing pleasures that come from achievement. We have been taught that success is happiness and so we zoom down the highway of achievement day after day, with dreams and goals, trying to fulfil our desires so that we can be happy.

Throughout our life, the focus is on being somebody. We may want to be a doctor or an engineer, but nobody wants to be a nobody. We want to be somebody because we want to enjoy name and fame. It is not just the money that matters. While on one side we are seeking pleasure, on the other side, we want to run away from pain. Life seems to be like a merry-go-round and we seem to be experiencing both pleasure and pain in cycles, as we go round and round, again and again.

But is this the purpose of life? Are we meant to live just to be happy and then to die? What is the purpose of human birth? Why did we come to planet earth? A very few people stop to ponder on this question. We live, and before we realize it, life is over!

In the beginning, we have no control over our life. We are innocent little children who laugh and play, scream and shout, till one day we wake up to realize who we are. In those early years, we don't decide anything, not even what we eat, we wear, and what we do. Our life is controlled by our parents, our teachers, and our guardians. Then we grow. When we become adults, we are licensed to do many things – to get married and to drive a car. As we age, and we mature, we take charge of our life.

The initial part of our life is all about going to school, and then going to college. But once we finish our education, most of us get married and build a family. To manage our family, we take up some form of work to earn a living. It becomes our profession, our occupation. As we become older, our desires

grow. Our needs become our greed. We want more and more. Enough is not enough and so we try to do everything possible to fulfil our dreams. We want to keep our family happy and therefore, we are busy acquiring things for *my* wife, *my* son or *my* daughter. As we are busy living life, we suddenly hear a knock on the door. 'Who is it?' we ask. The answer, 'Death! Your time is over. It is time to go.' How many of us ponder over death, what it is, why it happens and what happens after we die? We are so busy in this drama called 'life' that we have no time for death. Each breath of our life is spent doing our best in our life. But what is death all about? How many of us stop and ponder about life?

How are we different from the table and chair that are in front of us? 'Oh! We are alive, they are dead!' What is the difference? There is Life Energy inside us that keeps us alive. But there is no life in the table and chair.

Those who become Conscious about life, look around and understand the difference. They see nature as being different from the living organisms that are alive on earth. The mountains, the oceans, the rivers are all beautiful parts of nature, but they are not living organisms. They exist. But they don't experience birth and death. The sun, the moon, and the stars, are very different from the birds, the animals, and the flowers. While the sun glows, the wind blows, and the water flows, and they seem to have a Power in them, we don't consider them to be alive because they don't go through the process of birth and death, like we do.

It is not just we human beings who are born, who live and die. Many species fill the planet and they all experience birth and death. Haven't we seen our pet dog giving birth to a litter of baby pups? Have you paused to see life throbbing in a newborn? It is not just us human beings, life appears in dogs and cats, in birds and rats, each of these is a living organism.

We all live and we die. When we try to distinguish between types of living organisms, we can go round in circles. Not only are we aware of the animal kingdom, but there is also the plant kingdom that is alive. Then, there are tiny organisms, barely visible to the human eye. We don't even know how they live, and they die. But for sure, we know, they are alive. While it is not so important to worry about how bacteria come alive and die, how every insect is born and then it is gone, it is important to understand everything about our life. We cannot ignore this precious gift that lasts from our birth till our death.

Human life is very precious. We are the most advanced of all living organisms. We are the only creatures who have been given an intellect to discriminate between what is right and what is wrong. We are the only living species that can make a choice with the free will that we have been blessed with. Human beings are special. But when human beings do not use their special gift to discriminate and choose, then we lose the uniqueness of this gift called 'life'. We human beings have the ability to ask questions and investigate, till we Realize the Truth.

How many of us stop to ask the questions, 'How did we actually come alive? What will happen when we die? Where do we come from and where do we go? Who is controlling all that is happening on earth? Who has given us this human birth?' Do we pause to find out who created life? We just exist, we zoom from our womb to our tomb, and before we realize it, life is over. We are so busy trying to be an ace in this world that we chase success and get caught in the rat race. We do not even realize that we are lost in the maze. Then, suddenly it is game over!

What was the purpose of our life? What was the reason that we came here? Was a human being created with 30 trillion cells just to come and go? Were we given two powerful eyes, each supposedly more powerful than a 576 megapixel camera, just to see and finally not to be? Were we given ears to hear, a nose

to smell and a tongue that can taste millions of types of foods just for nothing? Why was this sophisticated human-computer created? There must have been a purpose. While we know that our parents were responsible for our conception, did they create the heart and the brain, the lungs and the kidneys, the blood, the bone, and the skin? Did our mother and father put a powerful battery within that would make our heart beat from birth to death? When we try to search for that Power within, we can't find it. One day the Power departs, and we are dead. There is no breath! People say that we passed away. Our near and dear ones burn our body or bury it below the earth. If we were that body, would they ever do it? We sleep every night and wake up, but do people cremate our body? Of course not! Because we are very much alive. Who is the one that is alive in the body? We are so busy consuming life, that we forget to ask this question and before we realize it, it is time to go.

What is life all about? Are we supposed to earn and earn, for others to burn what we earn? Although we know we will die, why don't we spend before our end? When we see somebody die, why do we look up at the sky and cry and ask 'Why?' It is because we are ignorant. We human beings know very little about life – where it comes from and where it goes. We have not discovered the purpose of our existence. We are very busy trying to find life on Mars, and we are trying to discover the stars, but we don't stop to ponder on the life that is in the flowers. We are searching for God in a temple and church, but we don't go within to search. Although we read that the kingdom of God is within, that God lives in the temple of our heart, we believe God to be an old man with a long white beard sitting somewhere high above in the clouds. It is most unfortunate that we human beings have been taught many fairy tales. Generation after generation, we continue to teach our children mythological stories that have no basis of Truth. Not only are we ignorant, but we are also ignorant about our own ignorance. We live and we die, and we do not discover the

true meaning of this precious gift called 'Life'.

Life has a greater meaning. Before our life escapes us, we must find answers to two important questions – 'Who am I?' and 'Why am I here?' If we do not find the answers to these questions, then our life has been wasted. Then, the most sophisticated machine that exists, will die without discovering its purpose. It's time to stop, to understand what this journey of life is all about.

IN A NUTSHELL - WHAT IS LIFE ALL ABOUT?

- Life has a purpose. We must discover this purpose before we go.
- Life is not just meant to be happy and successful.
- Before life escapes us, we must discover the true meaning of life.
- Who am I? Why am I here? We need to answer these two important questions.
- We are not going to be here forever. Before this gift called 'Life' is over at death, we must realize what life is all about.

CHAPTER 02



A JOURNEY FROM BIRTH TO DEATH

Life is a Journey from Birth to Death,
It lasts as long as we have breath.
It's all a Drama, we come, and we go,
But we must understand the Truth of the Show!

What is the Truth about life? When does this journey actually start? We all celebrate our birthday, but the fact is that our birthday is not our 'birth' day. No doubt it is the day we were delivered on earth. But were we born on our birthday? Just ask your mother and she will tell you that you were alive before you left her womb. She could feel you kicking weeks before. In fact, we were born many months before our birthday.

While we all value our birth certificate and talk of our date of birth, our actual 'birth' day is about 40 weeks before that. The day the two cells of our parents undergo a fusion and we become a zygote, a single fertilized cell, that is the day we actually start our journey, and this may be about 280 days before our real birthday. Therefore, while we think we are born on our birthday, we must realize that our journey actually starts over 9 months earlier. We experience the world when we are out of our mother's womb, but during those 40 weeks that we are in the womb, we are already aware of our surroundings. It is said that halfway down the pregnancy, a baby can hear the voice of the mother and even respond by some movements. Science has progressed to discover that as we grow in the womb, we develop our taste. Experiments continue to investigate life inside the womb as scientists use sonography - diagnostic ultrasound and other hi-tech tools to peek within to see how a tiny embryo develops.

Is there any doubt that we were conceived months before we were born? While we are quite familiar with the growing process outside the womb, not many of us are curious to study our pre-delivered life. It is a mystery, but the medical fraternity knows the life cycle inside the womb.

Isn't it truly mystical that this body that we seem to be, actually comes much later? Our arms, feet, brain and heart come into existence many days after our conception. One by one, the organs of the body develop in the womb and this process is truly Divine and magical! If there was no fertilization, then a

child would never be conceived. While we do believe that our parents gave us birth and we must respect the fact that they are responsible for our arrival to earth, can our parents create life at their will? Can they decide whether they will have a boy or a girl? If life was in the hands of man, then we would be in control, but the fact is, that we human beings can't control birth and death.

Therefore, our journey of life is decided by a Divine Universal Law, and it starts much before we are physically seen in the world. Why we arrive in the womb of our parents is not a matter of chance or luck. It is controlled by the Law of Karma. When ME, the Mind and Ego, leaves the body that dies, it carries its Karma and arrives in a new life, even before the body is created. We are ignorant about the Truth. We only believe that we are born on our birthday, and we die at death, and then it is 'game over!' Not many of us ponder on our life journey to Realize the Truth.

What do we know about our earthly journey? We all celebrate our birthday. 'It's a boy!' screams a poster outside the home of proud parents or pink balloons decorate a car when the father drives to the hospital to see his tiny little daughter. We know of our birth on earth very well. For months we talk to a gynaecologist on how we should take care of our baby in the womb, although we have not even seen the little one. Does a mother even for a moment doubt the existence of a child within her womb? She starts living with the pre-born baby weeks before it appears. Soon after we are born, our parents shift appointments to a pediatrician. They have no idea how to take care of a little baby when it is their first child. What and how to feed it, how to bathe it are the wellbeing questions that parents are concerned about. The care and concern continue for years as the child grows.

Just because a child is produced in a woman's womb, she

somehow believes she has created that life. She becomes attached to that baby because the baby grows inside of her and is delivered from her body. Little do we investigate to discover what that life truly is, or how the life in a single-celled zygote causes that one cell to multiply to trillions of cells inside the womb, without any human intervention, to become a marvel of a human being. How did the most sophisticated machine on earth develop - remains a mystery for the scientists of the world.

Aren't we fascinated with a little child as it grows up? When it is born, it cries. Then, all it does is sleep and eat, till slowly, it recognizes its surroundings and starts to play in the cradle. Gently and lovingly, a mother helps the child to grow from the cradle till it crawls, then walks, and finally begins to run. A young innocent child is always a joy to a family. Soon, the infant grows from a toddler and goes to school. The learning and growing process continues, till the child becomes an adult. Through this process, the child develops its faculty to think and discriminate. Parents, by and large, take decisions for their pre-teens. As the child gets older, it starts to choose its toys and favourite foods. Step by step, the child is given freedom as it grows into an adult. A teenager is permitted to drive a car, and a little later even drink alcohol and get married, after the faculty of thinking is developed and he becomes capable of making the right choices. Therefore, our life journey is an evolution and while we understand how the child evolves into an adult, we are yet to discover the Truth of its pre-birth evolution.

The mystery of a human being's journey on earth continues. An adult grows further and this body that we take pride in, slowly starts to grow feeble. There is decay, not just on the outside but also inside our bones, our skin, and the organs within. That is why every 'body' ultimately dies. The fact is, we can't control a human being from dying. Birth and death are Divine processes and are not in our hands.

Most of us live our full life span, but there are some who die earlier. Although life expectancy is different from country to country, death is certain though mysterious. Nobody knows when it will come, though we know that it will come one day and then the journey of life will be over. When a person dies, we say the person is, 'No more!' It is announced, 'John has departed. He has passed away and moved on.' Isn't it strange that John seems right here, lying on the floor? No, this is not John. This is John's dead body. These are the 'mortal remains' of John who was alive. The relatives and the near and dear ones of John will either bury or burn the dead body of John. They will do it only after they are absolutely sure that John is not inside the body.

While it is clear that the journey is not over at death, we human beings remain bewildered and are lost about what happens beyond life. Where did the one who was alive go? We believe in some fairy tales that we go to heaven or hell, but in reality, what is the Truth? We have undertaken so many voyages across the world, and we have discovered not just all the continents on earth, but we have also started discovering outer space. Alas! Man has not stopped to go within to discover the Truth of his birth and his death. Man has not given enough importance to his own life. Before he realizes it, his journey on earth is over. Then he comes back again and again. When will man stop to Realize the Truth?

IN A NUTSHELL - A JOURNEY FROM BIRTH TO DEATH

- What do we know about our life's journey?
- Is our 'birth' day, really our birthday or were we alive before we were born on earth?
- Who controls our birth? Who controls our death?
- Ultimately, everybody must die. What happens after death?
- Who is the one that passes away?

CHAPTER 03



LIFE EXPECTANCY AND LIFE SPAN

Can a man live forever,
Or is it a must that he will die?
There are some who live longer on earth,
Let us question and find out why.

Every human being wants to live. No matter what their social or physical conditions are, given a choice, most people want to continue living. We become attached to our possessions and our relationships, and we fear death because we will lose everything that is known, just as we fear the unknown that lies beyond death.

But death is certain! Everybody has to die. No human being can live forever. How long we human beings will live, is not in our hands. While there are some people who try to end their life by committing suicide, by and large, we realize that birth and death are in the hands of a Divine Power. There is a Power that comes alive inside us the moment we are conceived in our mother's womb, months before we are born. When this Power leaves us, we are dead. There is no breath.

Death is very different from sleeping. We sleep every night, but we wake up once it is over. Sleep is a process of restoration for the body and mind. We are rejuvenated to restart life in a new day. But death is the end of the present body as it is burnt or buried. Therefore, before pronouncing someone dead, all critical parameters are checked to be sure that the person is not alive. Once the declaration is made, people start crying. They mourn the loss of their dear one. Although it is an emotional stress to lose a family member or a friend to death, we must learn to accept the reality, because nobody can escape from death.

While birth and death continue to be a mystery, enough study has gone into how long a human being can live. Sometimes, a child who is born, dies within its first few cries. It is worse for a child to be stillborn. It is dead even before its birthday. The mystery of life and death baffles the scientists of this world.

Why is it that people in one country live longer than people in another? What causes some people to be blessed with a so-called long, happy, healthy life, while others struggle to reach

their teens and sometimes succumb to a disease even before they actually start to live? A careful study of our life span and our life expectancy will reveal the Truth about life. Life is not created by man nor is a life span designed by the human race. There seems to be a Divine Power that has created all the living organisms on earth. It is quite fascinating to realize that the life span of a butterfly may be just 2 weeks, while that of some trees may be up to 5000 years. What is quite clear is that everything alive must die. Such is the design of the Creator, that no living creature can live forever. If we want to truly understand life and its purpose, it will be interesting to study the life span of those alive on earth.

Don't we know how long a man will generally live? We celebrate the century of a human being's life as one of his greatest achievements and normally, we do not mourn for long, the death of an elderly person over the age of 70 or 80. However, if we see somebody die at 20 or 30, or even at 40 or 50, we are stunned. We look up at the sky, and we cry as we ask, 'Why?' We do not accept the reality of Death because we have not realized the Truth behind it.

While a man in the world today may live anywhere between 70 to 90 years, a cow is said to live for about 20 years. When our pet dog is about 10 years old, we know it is time for it to go, and we mentally prepare ourselves to lose our beloved pet. Some tortoises live for over 100 years. While studies of the life span of different creatures may vary, it is quite intriguing to study different life spans of different species and compare them to that of a human being. It is said that a mayfly has a life span of fewer than 24 hours. Imagine a human being born and dying on the same day. We are quite different from other birds and animals, just as we have a very unique purpose on earth. We are not like some sharks that swim in the ocean waters for over 250 years. We live for 6 to 8 decades and then, we depart, although our life span can be upto 100 years.

Scientists today maintain that the human life span is about 80 years. This does not mean that a human being cannot live beyond 80. There are some people who cross 100 years. There are known cases of people who have reached 110 or even 120 before they die. Studies reveal that Jeanne Calment, a Frenchman, lived for over 122 years, from 1875 to 1997. It is said that the Guinness World record of the world's oldest man alive in 2021 belonged to Emilio Marquez, a sugarcane farmer from Puerto Rico. He was born in 1908 and continued to live till August, 2021. While Marquez had been alive for 113 years, the average life of a man is much shorter. The truth is that after the age of 80 or 90, the physical conditions of a human being constrict him from many of his normal activities. As a man ages beyond his normal life span, he struggles to live. Every aspect of his life including his eyesight, his ability to hear, to walk and to exercise is affected.

Because of the progress in medical science today, it is very common for a human being to live over 75 and enjoy the Fourth Quarter of life. There are many people who live up to 75, 80 or 90, celebrating each day of life. The truth, however, is that man can live up to 100 years. This was stated by ancient civilizations as they divided the life of a human being into 4 quarters.

Why is it that some people live longer in some countries, whereas life is much shorter in others? This is because of several factors. While people in Switzerland, Japan, and Singapore have a life expectancy of over 80 years, there are countries in Africa where the life expectancy is barely about 50 years. Why is it that there is such a large gap in the life expectancy in different countries? Often, it is because of a person's lifestyle. What a person eats and drinks has a direct relationship with how long he will live. With proper healthcare, life expectancy increases. Would you expect people living without nutritious food and clean drinking water to survive longer than those who take utmost care of

everything they consume? It is natural for life expectancy to be different in different countries. Many economically backward countries have a much lower life expectancy than well-developed nations.

While we have peeped into the life span and life expectancy of man, what is more important is to understand our purpose on earth, why we are here on the planet, and how we should live.

In a Nutshell - LIFE EXPECTANCY AND LIFE SPAN

- While a man can live until he is 100 years old, on an average man lives for about 70 years.
- A butterfly only lives for 2 weeks and some trees can live between 500 to 5000 years.
- Nobody can live forever. Everybody has to die.
- While we know the life span and life expectancy of man, what must we do before we die?
- We must realize the purpose of human birth on earth and live a meaningful life.

CHAPTER 04



LIFE HAS 4 QUARTERS

Life is a circle, it has Quarters Four.
The first is when we are born, the last is when we have to go!
In between these two, we earn and we give,
But more important is to find our Purpose - why do we live.

As we ponder on the purpose of life, we observe that a human being's life can easily be divided into 4 Quarters. While our life itself may last for a 100 years, the first 25 years or the First Quarter is consumed in just educating ourselves and learning how to live life. When we are born, we know nothing. We need to go through the process of learning, how to walk and talk. We fall before we grow tall. But this has to happen even before we go to kindergarten. Our basics fall into place in pre-school and once the foundation is set, we start on the learning curve. We move from school to university and then graduate, moving out of the First Quarter of life.

The Second Quarter of life is earning. We learn that to be happy, we must be successful. Therefore, the whole world is chasing success. In reality, we are seeking happiness. We try to buy a car, build a home, get married and even have children – all in the hope of becoming happy. Before we realize it, half our life is over. Our hair starts becoming grey, signalling that old age is on the way.

We slip into the Third Quarter of our life, where our greed takes over our need. We try to spend before our end, but most of us, don't burn what we earn. We get trapped in this world of illusions. Instead of living in the Third Quarter trying to understand the meaning and purpose of life, we either slip out of it into the final Quarter or we finish living as per our life expectancy.

This is the typical life cycle of a human being. Look around and you will find these 3 phases of learning, earning and living all around you. You too can identify yourself in one of these phases. If you are lucky, you will slip into the Fourth Quarter of life. Only a few people get a bonus of this extended life in the Fourth Quarter. A rare minority completes the Fourth Quarter. How many centenarians do you know? Probably less than 1% of the world population. Therefore, we must realize that this

beautiful life will not last forever. Further still, this forces us to contemplate, that we have very little time before we must go. We barely have a few thousand days to live, to discover the purpose of life and then, to gracefully exit from this mega show that unfolds every day on this theatre called 'Earth'.

Every human being goes through these phases of life. Although there are some unfortunate cases of infant mortality and we also hear of the unfortunate death of some teenagers, but these cases are rare and few. The majority pass through the first phase and then race into the Second Quarter. Are there people who die between the ages 25 and 50? Of course, there are. Aren't we shocked when we hear of the death of somebody who is 35 years old? 'Oh my God,' we say, 'what happened? He was so young!' We expect people to go beyond 50 into the third stage of life. We expect every child to grow into an adult and experience life. We see the curse of old age overcoming the actors on the stage before they finally leave at death. We see maximum suffering in this phase of life, where the body crumbles and we experience pain and misery.

When will we realize that life is just a journey? Nobody is going to live forever. We are travellers – we come, and we go. But what is this show all about? Why do we go through these phases of life and what must we do before the final phase of life arrives? Are we meant just to live, to exist and to die? How many of us even think about this? Most of us are so consumed by life that we go round and round in circles, day after day, as weeks, months and years pass by. How many of us realize the 4 Quarters of life, and stop to think what each Quarter is meant for? Many of us are zapped by the world in which we live. Before we realize it, it is time to go. We live like a fly trapped in a room, till we ultimately die. We forget to explore the world that we were born in. Then, ultimately, when we don't Realize the Truth of life, we look up at the sky and we cry. We question, 'Why?' when we see somebody die. The problem is we did not

stop to answer the questions - 'Who am I?' and 'Why am I here?'

A few amongst us are lucky to understand the life Quarters. These are the ones who are inspired to attain the state of Liberation after being Enlightened with the Truth. They don't just zoom on the highway of achievement, seeking money and pleasure. They take an exit as they try to live a life of contentment and fulfilment. Only a few blessed ones go beyond the plateau of fulfilment and reach the ultimate goal of Enlightenment before the Fourth Quarter of life is over. These are the ones who truly live.

Have you seen anything else other than the 4 Quarters of life unfold on earth? Have you experienced any magic where a child is born like an old man? It is crazy even to think so. Life evolves in the womb of our mother, but we do not pay attention to the journey of a zygote that starts as a single cell. Little do we realize that we are not the body that grows in the womb of our mother. Little do we ponder over the Truth.

The Laws of the Universe make this world run in cycles. The earth rotates exactly once in 24 hours. This causes day and night. Then it revolves around the sun in $365\frac{1}{4}$ days creating seasons that change. Our life too is a cycle. We are born as a tiny baby on earth. This is just our birth. But we complete the cycle before we exit. Nobody can escape death. We will all lose our breath. But before we do, we must discover this Law of Cycles that operates in human life. We too have a life cycle that has 4 Quarters. Before the final Quarter of life, we must Realize the Truth. If we don't, the cycle of life will continue, and we will experience death and rebirth, and this will happen again and again. We will experience pleasure and pain, loss and gain, sun and rain, as we go around the life cycle again and again. What then, is the purpose of life?

In the ancient days, man lived through the phases he called – *Brahmacharya*, *Grihastha*, *Vanaprastha*, and *Sannyasa*, which we will go through in detail later. Today, however, life is different. The 4 *Purusharthas* or the primary purposes of life, may remain somewhat the same – *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kama*, and *Moksha*. People no more start their life with God in a stage called *Brahmacharya*. Ancient man used to walk through the first phase studying scriptures and being fully focused on religion and spirituality. What are children doing in the world today? Studying of scriptures has been replaced by the playing of video games! The Quarters of life have changed, but not the purpose.

Let us go through the 4 Quarters of life, trying to understand the purpose of life. Let us look back at our ancestors and how they lived. We have to accept how life has evolved because it is we human beings who have caused the world to become what it is. While the world has changed, the reality of life hasn't. Everybody must die, and if we don't Realize the Truth before we die, we will return to earth. Before life escapes us, we can discover the secret of birth, who caused us to be born, where we are born. We can choose to understand our ultimate goal, to realize we are the Divine Soul and be liberated from this cycle of *Samsara* or *Dukkha*. While every human being wants to be happy, there is pain and suffering everywhere. What causes this pain, this suffering? In these Quarters of our life, the challenge is to go on a Quest, to transcend our Mind and Ego and to Realize the Truth. These four phases of our life are not just meant for us to live and die. We must go through the process of Realization, Liberation and Unification. Not only must we learn to live with bliss and peace when we are alive, we must also discover the way to be free from this earthly cycle as we become one with our Lord.

Who is God, where is God, what is God? Have we stopped to think about it? When we pray but we do not know to whom we pray and what we say when we pray, then we don't really

pray. We just pray! Some of us try to overcome our ignorance before we end our journey of life. We stop to question and Realize the Truth about God, religion and spirituality.

As we study about the Four Quarters of human life, as we try to understand the mystery of birth and death, as we try to understand the true meaning of God and prayer, we must not let our life escape us. Life is like a roller coaster. It just appears and disappears. Let us stop and discover life Quarter by Quarter.

In a Nutshell - LIFE HAS 4 QUARTERS

- How many of us realize that our life is made up of 4 Quarters?
- First, we learn, then we earn, and then what?
- What we don't realize is that there is something beyond learning and earning.
- Why do we go through these phases of life and what must we do before the final phase of life arrives.
- We must live through the 4 Quarters of life and discover our true purpose.

CHAPTER 05



THE FIRST QUARTER – LEARNING

What is the First Quarter of human life?
Let us dissect and study it, slice by slice.
After all, isn't it true that at first, we learn,
Before we sink into this world so that money we can earn?

As we read this book, chances are we have already completed the First Quarter of life. A few amongst us who are reading this book could be in our late teens or even in our twenties. If we look back at the first 25 years of life, the First Quarter, what does life seem to be about? Are we born with all the knowledge a human being needs to live? We are born with a clean slate. When we come to planet earth, when we take birth, there is nothing on our plate. We start with a blank, brand-new life. The First Quarter is meant for us to learn. It is meant for us to understand the world we live in.

Initially, a little child struggles, first to crawl, then to walk and then to talk. It fumbles and mumbles a few words before it is taught ABC. To us, the little child is like a toy. It is a bundle of happiness. But life doesn't stop at that. Soon, the kid wants toys and grows. The baby moves out of the cradle and starts to crawl. It learns to walk and talk and goes from kindergarten to school. We all go through this phase of life – our First Quarter. What is the objective of this First Quarter? It is learning. We all learn because without learning, we cannot step into the next Quarter of our life. A few unfortunate children who are mentally challenged or even physically challenged, are deprived of a normal life. Today, they are categorized as children with special needs. They don't really evolve through the 4 Quarters of life.

The rest of us learn. Of course, we understand the basics. We are taught languages, just as we are taught maths and science. Different countries have different syllabuses, but every child today grows up to face one global community called 'the world'. In the ancient world, life was different. Civilizations grew with their own cultures, their own languages and religions. The world was fragmented into hundreds of different learning domains. But with globalization, there is more and more need for our learning to become global and universal. If we don't relate to one another, then not only will we live as aliens, but we will also get into conflicts, caused by disagreements because of different beliefs and cultures.

While there is this varied learning around the world, the fact doesn't change that whether we are Indian or American, Chinese or Japanese, we all grow through the First Quarter of life, learning and assimilating knowledge. We develop skills that will prepare us for the Second Quarter of our life. This First Quarter of life has evolved and experienced a sea change from the ancient civilizations. Today, a student has hundreds of super specializations. He can choose to be a doctor or engineer, a businessman or politician, a teacher or a painter. He can become a scuba diving instructor in the Great Barrier Reef in Australia or a professor at Princeton University. He can start a Pizzeria in Venice or manufacture toys in China. If he chooses, he can go and live in Antarctica as a researcher of penguins and icebergs or even aspire to work at NASA and fly in a space shuttle out of the earth. Life today has no limitation, and a student of any nation can choose any occupation. He can decide his profession depending on what he has learned, his education, and the skills acquired.

This is quite different from the yesteryears. A student in ancient civilizations would have grown up with a Master who would have taught him about life. There were no computers and there was no internet back then. A few hundred years ago, there were no planes and jets that could take you from one continent to another. Life was slow. But students could grow in their Spiritual knowledge. They could Realize the Truth about life. They did not have modern universities that could give them a Master's degree or super-specializations, but they had the time and the conviction to understand scriptures and interpret life. The First Quarter of our life has completely changed.

In the earlier years, a student's life, that mostly occupied the First Quarter of a human being's existence, was more to do with understanding life and its purpose. A student from those times was not zapped with motorcycles and cars, attracted by cruises and the glitz and glamour of amusement parks. The focus of a student's life was learning, learning and more learning. A teenager who grew up a few centuries ago, lived a simple life. There was music and art, but happiness lay in simple pleasures.

The modern world has taken this apart. Options are growing by the day and a teenager is spoilt for choice, with the offerings of the modern world. While we look at this positively and call it progress and development, what has it done to the First Quarter of our life? It has completely changed the way we learn to live, and we educate ourselves. No doubt a young man has become far more proficient and efficient in his communication and his preparation to earn in his next phase of life, but what has it done to the basic foundation of a student? This fast-paced world of money and achievement, of growth and success, of material possessions and attractions, has shifted the focus of learning. Instead of studying his inner world, a young man is lost in the outer world. He swishes through the roller coaster of the First Quarter and even before he realizes it, he is ejected into the Second Quarter of life – prepared and pushed to start earning and living.

Let us stop for a moment and reflect on what life was and what life is. Nothing has changed in the process of a young child being born and growing through 25 years of life, learning as he grows. What has changed is what he is learning, how he is learning and the purpose of why he is learning. The First Quarter still remains a Quarter of learning, only the content has changed. We are learning different things, developing different objectives and growing up with different passions and obsessions. But what was this First Quarter supposed to be? What was the purpose of this Quarter? The first 25 years of our life were meant to build a strong foundation for one to understand life and its purpose. They were not meant for us to become machines but rather help human beings to develop, grow and evolve. They were supposed to give us learning and understanding of who we are and why we are here. Instead, these first 25 years have spun us into a different animal, and we are seeking the most exotic crabs and lobsters to fulfil our appetite. We want the latest mobiles and laptops to communicate with the world. We are searching for guns and ammunition that can control others. Alas! We have forgotten what life is all about.

Has the modern world, its growth and development changed

the life span of a human being? Man lived for 6 to 8 decades centuries ago. Even today, a man dies in his Third or Fourth Quarter. Ancient man knew more about life. Modern man is consumed by life. Instead of learning what we must learn, we are being filled with knowledge and developing skills that are actually taking us away from our purpose. We are not learning the right things. We are being programmed by computers just as we are being indoctrinated by fanatics. We are being taught things against our will because we are just following the herd. Isn't it sad that we just flow as we grow and get caught in what is popular and not what is right?

The first phase of life is the key for us to unlock the secret of life. The age from zero to 25 is the learning stage. In this phase, we build our foundation. It not only makes us understand life, but teaches us how to live, what to do and how to prepare ourselves for the next Quarter of life. Will the world continue to be zapped and miss this First Quarter of learning? Will children be filling themselves with knowledge that will only prepare them for success as it catapults them into an orbit of achievement? How many young children will learn to reverse this track of learning and rather choose fulfilment and Enlightenment? It is those who understand the Quarters of life who will change their paradigm about learning in the First Quarter of life. Though they have missed the Quarter themselves, they will at least inspire the coming generations to unlearn many things and to learn what life is truly all about.

In a Nutshell - THE FIRST QUARTER - LEARNING

- The First Quarter of a human being is spent in learning.
- After we are born, we grow through the first few years, go to school and college.
- The First Quarter of our life should prepare us to live. Instead it is taking us in the wrong direction.
- Isn't it time to revisit what we learn in the First Quarter of life?
- The First Quarter of life must be used to understand the purpose of life.

CHAPTER 06



THE SECOND QUARTER – EARNING

The Second Quarter starts after we are twenty-five,
For success and wealth, we yearn and strive.
But as on this highway, we continue to run,
We don't realize that half of our life is done.

The Second Quarter of man's life is to do with earning. It starts after 25 and ends at 50, the halfway point of a century till when man aspires to live. This Quarter seems to be the most important Quarter for man. It is in this phase of life that man finishes his learning, starts his earning, and gets ready to live his life.

It is unfortunate that man is always living in tomorrow. First, he is so busy learning that he has no option but to wait for the second phase where he can begin to live his life. But in the second phase, when he equips himself with knowledge and skills, he gets so immersed in his career that he does not realize that the pink of his life has escaped him. He reaches the golden jubilee of his life but is trapped in the world of possessions and pleasures. In the good old days, the stage or *Ashramas* would lead man into the forest, away from his business or occupation after his second stage. Today, however, at the end of his Second Quarter, man is galloping and neither does he have the time, nor the intention to stop and introspect on his Third Quarter of life. Such is man's life today that his Second Quarter of life is woven together into his Third Quarter, and he is zapped. Before he even realizes it, his life is nearly over as he reaches old age.

It's time for man to Realize the Truth about life and its Quarters. As man doesn't continue learning till the end of his life depending on somebody else to feed him, he starts earning along with his learning. But as man is busy earning, he puts off living to a later date. He thinks he will finish making enough money and then start to enjoy life. But man is greedy. For him, enough is not enough. His greed takes over his need and traps him in the Second Quarter of earning. What he doesn't realize as he continues to earn and earn, is that somebody else will burn what he has earned. He lives with the illusion that this wealth belongs to him and although he knows that he can take nothing when he dies, he doesn't stop to introspect on the reality of life.

The modern world has made the Second Quarter a prison in which man finds himself behind the bars of money and wealth, gold and properties, stocks and shares, which become a hurdle to his evolution on his journey of life. Man needs to earn so that he can provide food, shelter, and clothing for himself and his family but man has created so many desires that he is running behind the pleasures of this world which, he imagines, create happiness. He doesn't seek true happiness that comes from contentment and fulfilment, nor does he pause to even glance at the ultimate peak of Enlightenment where he can be liberated from all suffering.

If we stop and look at the life of man in the Second Quarter today, we see that instead of man consuming the pleasures of this world, he is unfortunately consumed by the world and its offerings. He is so busy with his gadgets and social media, that he has forgotten to live. Even before he realizes it, the Second Quarter is over. Very few people even realize that their Second Quarter is a key era of their life after which they must transform as they go on a Quest to discover answers to two questions -

1. Who am I?
2. Why am I here?

No doubt man has to spend his First Quarter in learning and most of his Second Quarter in earning, but the least man can do is to prepare to depart from the material world halfway down his life span, take an exit, and take the path that will take him to the spiritual world.

In today's world, man uses the first phase of his life to learn and acquire skills which become weapons for him to earn till the end of life. He doesn't realize that there are 4 Quarters of life. He doesn't even understand that he may never see the Fourth Quarter and that there are chances that his life may even end before his Third Quarter is over. Nobody can predict death. It comes all of a sudden, often without any sign of warning. Man

doesn't stop to understand the meaning of death. He is so enamoured with life that he forgets to find the true meaning of death. He doesn't pause to understand what the true purpose of life is.

Why is man running like a mad man? Why is man caught in this rat race? Why does not man realize the purpose of life? It is because man has been indoctrinated with the wrong beliefs in his First Quarter. He has been filled with knowledge that develops his material aspect but does not inculcate in him the desire to follow the spiritual path. Man is taught so many fairy tales which may not be true. All this stops man from what he must do. Instead of asking questions and investigating to Realize the Truth of life, man follows the herd. He just lives, and then he will die. He believes that he may go to a heaven or hell in the sky. He doesn't question how all this will happen.

Somehow, the foundation of the First Quarter of his life itself is wrong. Generations who lived before, not only believed in the myth but have also documented it to brainwash the present and future generations. We teach our children that we all came from apes, although it is just a theory. Man lives like a monkey in the Second Quarter, jumping from one desire to another desire, not realizing that he is the Divine Soul. He is so caught in the aura of success and achievement that he can see nothing beyond that. Isn't it true that as we grow up in the First Quarter of life, we are taught to come first in class? We are all encouraged to become the school captain. We are made to believe that success is not just the primary thing, it is the only thing. We are taught to compete with each other to become champions. We are not taught the real meaning of life. We are just chasing money and wealth, hoping that achievement will bring us happiness, although this is not true. The gift of human life has to be intelligently invested just as we invest money in the stock market. Unfortunately, we don't understand life because we are completely focused on success.

Everybody wants to be happy and there is nothing wrong in it. But losing our Second Quarter which is built on the foundation of our First Quarter just chasing success, is a complete waste of life. Instead of understanding what life is all about, we are trying to create name and fame. What a shame that we are trying to create something that will not belong to us! We don't understand the game of life. But everybody is doing this. The whole world is trying to buy a better house, travel to exotic destinations, creating more security for themselves and their family. We don't pause to realize that we are just travellers here. We come and we go. This world is just a show. If we realize this, we will not live like mad men chasing success. If only we understood the true meaning and purpose of life, we would change our paradigm in the Second Quarter of our life. Instead of just following the herd, we would fly like a bird to discover the Truth about life.

Is money happiness? If this were true, then the rich should be glad, but look around and you will find that many of them are sad. First, they try to earn wealth, and then they spend their wealth to regain their health. They don't even realize that this body is sure to die. They don't stop to answer the question – Who am I? Most of us are busy collecting gold and diamonds which will never belong to us. We are buying properties, houses, and villas, thinking that they will be ours. How does it matter if you own acres of property, because in the end, you will leave it behind! We are so consumed by success, money, and achievement, that we just zoom past the halfway mark of life. We don't stop at the end of the Second Quarter, and we lose our biggest gift – 'Life' itself.

Although many who are in the Second Quarter may read this book, most of us are so zapped that we will continue to be trapped in what we can term as 'modern life'. Many of us think it is old-fashioned to think and talk of God. We don't even stop to ponder on who created this universe, who governs all that is

happening on earth, who controls the sun, the moon, the stars, the birds, the animals and the flowers. We just believe in the story of the Big Bang. It's time to unlearn many things and to educate ourselves with the Truth. It is time to reverse the equation – Success is not Happiness. The Truth is - Happiness is Success! It is time to discover the secret of happiness. There is a way to overcome all our miseries and problems. It is time for us to stop existing and start living. Before we slip from the Second Quarter of life into the Third Quarter, we must understand the Truth about life. We must get out of the race which is just to chase success and to try to be an ace in this material world. We must learn that the real meaning of life is to get out of this maze and to live with grace.

In a Nutshell – THE SECOND QUARTER - EARNING

- After we learn, what do we do? We start to earn.
- We believe that life is all about success and achievement.
- Before we realize it, we are 50 and more than half of our life is over.
- Our challenge is not to lose our life in the Second Quarter.
- We must live life such that we evolve and grow and transform our life.
- The Second Quarter is a turning point. We must not get stuck in the material world and go from our Second Quarter to our grave.

CHAPTER 07



THE THIRD QUARTER - LIVING

Most of us are lucky to enter Quarter Three.
It is in this Quarter that from misery, we can be free...
By searching for and Realizing our true life-goal,
Realizing we are not the body and mind,
we are the Divine Soul.

What is the purpose of dividing our life into 4 Quarters? It is to understand life, not just jump into it. It is to realize that life is a limited resource. Soon this treasure will be gone. The method of dividing life into 4 Quarters helps us achieve life's ultimate goal. Nature makes us slip into life and we don't even understand the meaning of it, till we finish our First Quarter of learning. In today's world, all we know of, is learning and earning. The Third Quarter helps to wake us up and shake us up from this mundane life. If there were no Four Quarters of life, man may never discover his true purpose of Realizing the Truth. Man would not even ponder on Enlightenment, Liberation, and Unification with the Divine. It is through the method of the 4 Quarters that man is forced to stop at 50 and ask himself the question, 'What next?' Unfortunately, those who do not live life Quarter by Quarter, naturally move from the state of learning to earning. But doing this, they move on forward till they fall into their grave.

What is the Third Quarter of life all about? In the earlier days, man used to delegate and hand over his life's responsibility to the next generation after his Second quarter and go into the forest. He would leave the material world and contemplate the spiritual world. He would let go of his money, wealth, possessions and try to achieve the true wealth of life. Today, man is zapped by the pace of the world. Where is the question of introspection and contemplation? Man seems to be in a trance. All he wants is more money and more power. Although he knows that the Power within him will soon leave, he ignores this Truth and continues to live life like an ignoramus.

The Third Quarter is meant to make man stop. It is meant to make man question what the true wealth of life is. It is to push man on a Quest, away from just creating material wealth, which he has to ultimately leave behind.

The Third Quarter of life, the period between 50 and 75 years,

is often man's last Quarter. Either he will die before he is 75 or even if he is alive and lives in the bonus Fourth Quarter of life, it is only an extended opportunity to achieve life's goal. It is in the Third Quarter that the transformation must take place. If man wants to experience a metamorphosis, then the biggest paradigm shift needs to come in the Third Quarter.

Look around you. What do you find? People who are between 50 to 75 years old behave like they are teenagers. They don't seem to be concerned about death. It appears as if they are spiritually blindfolded and are in search of something – they know not what! Don't you see that most people in their Third Quarter, are only trying to create more excitement and happiness in their life? They are seeking more success and achievement, more money and wealth, more name and fame, more property and assets, more travel and excitement, more friends and fun. Seeking more and more, they row through life, before they are hit by the deafening silence of death. They are unprepared to face the final moment of life. Haven't you seen many of the millionaires and billionaires suddenly die? Did they spend before their end? Did they achieve the true purpose of life? Were they truly happy? The Truth is that people in the Third Quarter of life are struggling more than ever. They have more problems than anybody else. Their miseries are multiplied as the troubles of their body, mind and ego merge with family problems, business problems and health problems. Instead of having more and more happiness, their life is full of stress. Why this mess? It is because they did not live life Quarter by Quarter. They did not learn to stop earning material wealth when it was the right time. They did not start their journey to achieve their ultimate goal. They did not understand the true meaning of happiness. Believing the lie – success is happiness and chasing success, they slipped into their grave. What a sad way to die!

The Third Quarter of life has a purpose. No doubt the First Quarter of life is meant to learn, and the Second Quarter is

meant to earn, but the Third Quarter is not just meant to burn and return to dust. The Third Quarter is meant to discover the purpose of life. The Third Quarter must be invested in realizing the Truth of who we are, and why we are here. It is in the Third Quarter that man must be able to let go of his body, mind and ego. He must be liberated from the material world and be united with the Divine. Whether he completes the Third Quarter or not, it is this Quarter that is the Quarter of Enlightenment. Before 50, it may not be easy for a man to Realize the Truth. His first three decades escape just in understanding life. The next two decades are spent in providing for himself and his family. These first two Quarters are enough to make man realize that life is not just about learning, earning and dying. If we are caught in greed, and we fulfil our need, we will not stop to find out the true purpose of life. We will not seek meaning. Only those who are in search of true happiness, those who want peace of mind, those who are seeking life's purpose, and those who are seeking God, are the fortunate few who will pursue Enlightenment. The rest will just live and die. Not only will they suffer in this life, but they will be reborn in a new body to suffer again and again.

The Third Quarter is the most important Quarter of life. It is the Quarter to overcome our ignorance and Realize the Truth. It is the Quarter for Liberation and Unification with the Divine. It is realizing that life is not one big party. There is much more to do in life. We are not meant to suffer till we die. If only we find out the answer to the question, 'Who am I?' we can dance till we go to the sky. However, this is only possible if we stop running and start living with our true identity. If the Third Quarter is lived as body, mind and ego, then all we will get is old age, before we leave this stage. We will be trapped in the cage of life, only to move from one prison to another. When we depart from this jail, the body in which we are prisoners will die but we fail to understand that we will be born again in another jail. It is in the Third Quarter that we can attain freedom. It is when we are between 50 to 75 years old, that we can leave achievement

behind, live with contentment and fulfilment and aspire for Enlightenment.

Only a few blessed ones make the best use of their Third Quarter. The rest of us are caught in the world and its web. Without realizing it, we slowly tiptoe into our grave. Everything we thought belonged to us, will be snatched away in the moment of death. All our beautiful relationships will snap in a moment. We will cry as we die, without Realizing the Truth about life. Doesn't it make sense to stop in the Third Quarter and Realize the true purpose of life? Should we not stop running behind goals of success and wealth which will ultimately not be ours? Should we not realize that this world is a voyage, and we are just voyagers? We cannot cruise on the ship of life forever. We will soon be off-boarded and new voyagers will join the ship of life. Before we leave the ship of life, should we not stop and think where we will be dropped off, what we will do, with whom will we be. Instead of preparing ourselves for the Fourth Quarter and beyond, we are just voyaging through life, without realizing that this voyage is soon going to end.

The Third Quarter of life is the most important Quarter. What we learn is just a foundation of life. Therefore, the First Quarter is just a passage of time. What we earn hardly matters as we will leave everything behind. We just waste the Second Quarter in ignorance. There are a countable number, out of the billions alive, who are fortunate to be enlightened in the Second Quarter itself. The majority, however, sink in this material world and get zapped by people and possessions. Most of us eject out of the Second Quarter, but instead of being enlightened in the third, we just sink, as we blink, and in a wink, our life is over! It is in the Third Quarter that we have the final chance to achieve our life's ultimate goal, to Realize we are the Soul, to be liberated from all suffering when we are alive, and to be united with the Divine at death.

What if the Third Quarter slips by and we enter the Fourth? Can we achieve our ultimate purpose after we are 75?

Man must realize that God has made us in such a way that the average man dies at the end of the Third Quarter. Very few people live through the Fourth Quarter. Further, even if we live in the Fourth Quarter of life, we are unable to make the best of the human body which by the age of 75, deteriorates. Therefore, in reality, the Third Quarter of life, between the ages of 50 and 75, is the most important quarter of our life. It is the quarter in which there can be Enlightenment, there can be Realization of the Truth, Liberation and Unification with the Divine. In the First Quarter, we are too young. It is not really possible to be enlightened. In the Second Quarter, God has given us the passion, the desire to live a householder's life, to live in the material world and it is unfair to expect everybody to leave life which is so beautiful between the ages of 25 and 50 to seek Enlightenment. But after the first two quarters, is it not right for us to question the purpose of our existence? Should we not live in the Third Quarter with the passion to find out the purpose of our life? Very few people, however, are blessed to discover the real meaning of the Third Quarter of life. Why has God given us this Third Quarter? If He wished, He could have ended our life in the Second Quarter. The Third Quarter is meant for us to go on a quest and Realize the Truth.

In a Nutshell – THE THIRD QUARTER - LIVING

- How many of us reach 50, understanding the true meaning of life? Very few.
- The Third Quarter is the most important Quarter. It is to Realize the Truth.
- Do we spend the prime of our life in Realizing the Truth?
- It is in our Third Quarter that we must achieve our ultimate goal and realize we are the Divine Soul.
- If we pass the Third Quarter just existing and earning, our life is wasted.

CHAPTER 08



THE FOURTH QUARTER – DYING

Not everyone is lucky to live in Quarter Four!
Often life shuts the door, much before...
And though to live longer we do strive,
Most of us don't cross the age of seventy-five.

Man's life span maybe a 100 years, but the life expectancy today is not over 75 years. It means that the average man will die before he reaches Quarter Four. However, the truth of the matter is that many of us live past 80. We even go on to live till we are 90 or 100 years old. Therefore, we must not be fooled by life expectancy, and we must hope to live our entire life span. Death is not in our hands. Death is in the hands of the Divine. Nobody really knows whether they will complete Quarter Three and continue life in Quarter Four. There are many unfortunate cases where people die young. Haven't you heard of somebody dying of a heart attack at 40? Don't people lose their lives in car accidents, much before they come to Quarter Four? We are not to worry about those cases. Our focus is living life Quarter by Quarter as per the Will Divine.

What is Quarter Four of life all about? It is the bonus Quarter of life. In fact, it is a Quarter that we must enter after being enlightened with the Truth. But if we have missed the bus, and the reality of life has escaped us, then this is our final chance to Realize the Truth. This does not mean that we have to wait for this Quarter. We may never get here. But if we do, then we should not just exist through this Quarter. We must use the opportunity to be enlightened.

Isn't it true that after we are 75, the body becomes frail? Every aspect of our life seems to be less efficient. The way we walk and talk, how we think and blink, everything slows down as our age goes up. Therefore, it is not a great idea to wait and to achieve our life-goal in the Fourth Quarter.

What should the ideal situation be? We should Realize the Truth in the Third Quarter or before and then if it is our Karma, we should live through the Fourth Quarter as a Realized Soul. The Realized Soul does not wait to die. He lives through the Fourth Quarter as a Yogi. Yoga means living in Union with the Divine. The Yogis, in their Fourth Quarter, surrender their life

to the Divine and live as an instrument of God. They spend time in silence and meditation, in prayer and devotion, in acquiring more wisdom through education and with very little action. Whatever be their action, it is inspired by the Divine Vision. This is a perfect way to live in Quarter Four.

Look around you. You may see strange cases of the Fourth Quarter. Recently a 90-year-old man got married to a girl who was 20 years old. Unfortunately, ignorance overcomes us as is seen in our actions. There are people way past 80 who have one leg in the grave but still continue to crave. They cling onto their possessions and do not let go of power and wealth. Suddenly, they die and all the millions they had, become a cause of celebration to the beneficiaries. Isn't man aware that he is sure to die? Then, why does man continue to be blind as he enters the Fourth Quarter? Instead of having the desire for the Divine, there are men in their 80's who are still seeking women, wealth, and wine. The Fourth Quarter is given to us to turn to God. It is our final chance to unite with our source before it is time to go. If we do not attain that state of Realization and Liberation, then we will return to earth in a new body again, only to suffer!

Then there are those in the Fourth Quarter who live their life with regrets. *'If only I had my life to live over,'* they say, *'I would watch more sunsets, climb more mountains, learn to play the guitar and visit Antarctica.'* Can we relive our life? Life has no rewind button and many of us who get into Quarter Four, wish that we had lived our life before. But however much you say that you would have, could have and should have, you can't go back and relive your life. The time to live is NOW. Whatever be your age, and whatever be the stage in which you are, you can transform your life and resolve to live it Quarter by Quarter. If only we realize that there is nothing beyond the Fourth Quarter, we will wake up to the reality of life. Alas! Not many of us do. A large majority of us do not see the light of the Fourth Quarter and the few who do, continue to exist through life.

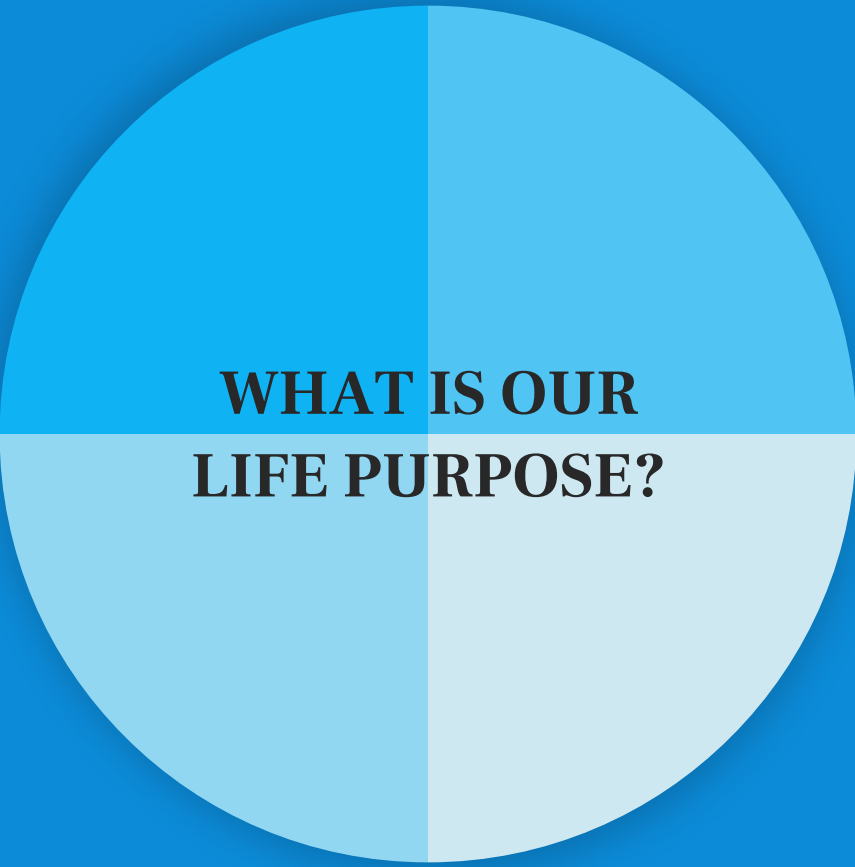
They drift like a dead fish that floats downstream, waiting to be flushed into the ocean.

Before our body starts to decay, and before we lose our breath at death, there is still hope for us. As long as we are alive, whatever be the Quarter we are currently in, we can still discover the true purpose of life. These 4 Quarters of life are meant to inspire us to live before we die. They are the milestones on the highway of life that remind us that we will be shortly arriving at our destination. Before we arrive at destination death, the Quarters act as triggers to awaken us. Whether it is grey hair on our head, or sickness as we lie in bed, these Quarters are a good way to signal us to live and discover the purpose of life.

In a Nutshell - THE FOURTH QUARTER - DYING

- Not many of us would be lucky to live through Quarter Four.
- On a global average, a human being will die before he is 75.
- If we are fortunate to live through Quarter Four, we must spend it to achieve the true purpose of life.
- Quarter Four is not meant to be wasted in enjoying our wealth. It is our final chance to be enlightened.
- What lies beyond Quarter Four? It is death. Some people don't realize this.

CHAPTER 09



WHAT IS OUR LIFE PURPOSE?

Is there a purpose of life on earth?
What is the reason for this human birth?
Let's go on a quest, before we die,
And find out the Truth of - Who am I?

While there are 4 Quarters of life, we are all born the same way. We spend 9 months in our mother's womb. Then we arrive on this planet. We are all composed of the same structure of body and mind. We all go through the phase of crawling before we start walking. We go to school and university. We all grow up into adults. There will be a few isolated cases where this does not happen, but a vast majority of us live the same way before we die.

Can anybody escape death? Death is certain. Whether it is a dog or a cat, a human being or a rat, we all must die. We have different life spans, and while it may be a decade for a dog and hundreds of years for a tree, the fact is that from death none of us is free. The challenge is to realize the purpose of life before we die.

What is life all about? If you ask somebody, 'What is the purpose of life?' the most common answer is 'I want to be happy!' Who doesn't want to be happy? It seems that every creature wants to be happy. While a human being shows it in a smile and laughter, a dog shows it by wagging its tail. Man is yet to discover signs of happiness in other creatures that crawl, run and fly. But for sure, the goal of humanity is happiness.

It seems like all of us are on the same voyage to bliss. If there is somebody who is not seeking happiness, then, they are seeking success. They want name and fame, money and wealth. But in the final analysis, whatever they are seeking, ultimately leads to happiness. But is happiness the real purpose of our existence?

We human beings seem to be fitted not just with the eyes to see, ears to hear, and a heart to pump blood across the body carrying oxygen, we all also seem to be fitted with a Pleasure-Pain Drive. Every normal human being seeks pleasure and runs away from pain. We do things that make us happy and

resist those activities that make us miserable. While there is no doubt that this is true, is this our life purpose? Were we baked like a cake in our mother's womb to ultimately be born on earth, just to be happy and to ultimately die? Were we designed with 30 trillion cells just to enjoy ice-creams and pizzas? Were we given eyes just to see the beauty of the world and become happy, a nose to smell and be fascinated by fragrances, ears to be raptured by the ecstasy of music and a tongue to taste delicious food? Was our skin, that can touch, sense, and feel, gifted to us just to enjoy sensual pleasures or is there a larger purpose for this human body? While our sense organs are a big gift to us, and our critical organs, the heart, the brain, the lungs, the kidneys, together constitute the most sophisticated machine on earth, what we don't realize is that all these are meant for us to discover purpose of our birth.

Man is not born just to die. Man doesn't go through the 4 Quarters of life to ultimately return to dust and then to be born, again and again. These 4 Quarters are meant to inspire us to go beyond seeking the mere pleasures of life. While we must be happy, we must go beyond happiness and discover our ultimate purpose. Otherwise, we will grow from Quarter to Quarter, and end up in the graveyard, without realizing our purpose.

Less than 1% of humanity is seeking the Truth. 99% of people are like walking corpses. We are alive in body and mind, but spiritually we are dead Souls. It is said that 1% of this world is visually blind. They cannot see the reality around them. But 99% of us are spiritually blind. We are unable to see what is within us.

While we know that a computer cannot work with just hardware and software, it needs a power supply, we don't stop to ponder what the Power of life is within us. What is the Power that gives us breath and without which there would be death? Unless we ask questions and investigate, we will never

Realize the Truth.

Our First Quarter of life goes in growing and learning and in the Second Quarter we are busy earning and taking care of our near and dear ones. We don't stop, either in the Second Quarter or in the Third Quarter, to Realize our life purpose. Somewhere, in between, we lose this treasure, the gift of life and the opportunity we had to realize our purpose slips away. Then, we are reborn, and the cycle goes on and on.

Life has a purpose. To discover this purpose of life, we have to answer two important questions – 'Who am I?' and 'Why am I here?' When we realize that we are not the body and we realize we are not the mind, only then can we realize we are the Divine Soul. Our purpose is Realization and then, ultimately Unification with the Divine.

Unfortunately, we don't realize that life has a purpose and that the purpose of life is to find its purpose. We continue to live through the Four Quarters, either seeking happiness and pleasure or running away from miseries and problems. If not pleasure and pain, we are yearning for peace of mind. A few of us are searching for God and we pray day and night. But going in search from temple to church, life escapes us. We must be amongst those few, who are seeking the true purpose of life.

Among the ones who are seeking a purpose in their life, some overcome ignorance and Realize the Truth. They are enlightened and through these Realizations, not only do they find life's purpose, but along with it, they attain a state of eternal happiness and everlasting peace. Enlightenment becomes the one solution to all their problems. Realization of the purpose of life not only frees them from the triple suffering of the body, mind and ego, it also liberates them from the cycle of death and rebirth and unites them with the Divine.

Isn't it time for us to stop everything else and go in Quest to find out our life purpose? Whatever be the Quarter we are in, whether we are learning, earning, or just living, should we not make a paradigm shift and change our gear to move in the direction of our ultimate goal?

In a Nutshell – WHAT IS OUR LIFE PURPOSE?

- Does life have a purpose, a meaning?
- Are we born just to be happy and then to die?
- The purpose of life is to discover the purpose of life. For this we must find answers to two important questions – 'Who am I?' and 'Why am I here?'
- Whatever be the Quarter we are in, it is time for us to stop everything else and go in Quest to find out our life purpose.
- Our purpose is Realization of the Truth and then, ultimately Unification with the Divine.

CHAPTER

10



THE 4 ANCIENT *ASHRAMAS*

History talks of *Ashramas* four,
Life in those days had meaning lot more.
Everybody who lived, not only prayed to God,
But their ultimate Goal was to Unite with the Lord.

If one peeks into our ancient civilization, it is fascinating to see how people lived in those days. They too had four *Ashramas* or stages of life, based on man's age. The texts of ancient and medieval India reveal that people started their life in the *Ashrama* of *Brahmacharya*, a stage of learning for a student. Then they moved into *Grihastha*, the life of a house holder. It is intriguing that after that they would go into *Vanaprastha*, renouncing the world and retreating into the forest, and then into *Sannyasa*, giving up the material world and living with God. These 4 *Ashramas* were based on *Dharma*. All this was part of the ancient Hindu faith, *Sanatana Dharma*.

Sanatana Dharma means the Eternal way of life. It was never a Religion. It was a set of morals, ethics, values and duties that would lead man to his ultimate goal of realizing that he is the Divine Soul and then be liberated from the earth and unite with God. Therefore, when a child was born, he was introduced to the *Brahmacharya Ashrama* of life. The intent was to help the student understand and learn the meaning of life and to prepare him for the next phase of life. However, the word *Brahmacharya* is misunderstood. The word *Brahmacharya* is commonly translated as celibacy while the real meaning of *Brahma* is 'God', and *Charya* is 'to walk with'. So, *Brahmacharya* means to walk with God. Thus, the original *Dharma* or doctrine of life was meant to build one's foundation in studying about God and based on this theology, learn the philosophy of spiritual life. Very often, life in the *Brahmacharya Ashrama* would mean living away from home in a Gurukul like a modern-day boarding school. The focus of their teacher or Spiritual Master, known as the Guru, was to inculcate in them knowledge that would finally lead to *Moksha* or Enlightenment.

People in those days followed the caste system or *Varna*, where society was divided into *Brahmins* or priests, *Kshatriyas* or warriors, *Vaishyas* or skilled traders and merchants, and

Shudras, the labouring class. Based on their caste, they would be given the required training. *Kshatriyas* were trained to be skilled warriors and able administrators of the kingdom, while the *Brahmins* studied the ancient scriptures of the *Vedas*. As time progressed, they created the somewhat complex Hindu religion with hundreds of Spiritual texts and Scriptures and an innumerable number of Gods. The *Vaishyas* were modern-day professionals and entrepreneurs. They were skilled in a specialized occupation and constituted the business community in those days. *Shudras* had constituted the hereditary labouring class serving others. Of course, much of all this is mixed with mythological stories and a lot of myth gets mixed with the truth. The *Brahmins* or the priests are said to have become the most powerful caste, even more powerful than the kingly class, as they were considered to be the messengers of God.

What we must pick from the ancient *Ashramas* and their *Dharma*, is how meticulously their life evolved from one *Ashrama* to the other, irrespective of their caste. While people in those days lived in the caste they were born in, the royalty continuing to live a royal life and the priests continuing to be priests, there were cases where some intelligent children would evolve in their stage of *Brahmacharya* and climb the ladder and transform in their life. People of all the castes moved from the first stage of *Brahmacharya* to the second stage known as *Grihastha*.

Grihastha means the life of a householder. Once one was taught all skills and matured in both body and mind, he would move from a life of learning to a life of earning and simultaneously, getting married and starting a family. It was in this *Ashrama*, that those devout students would enjoy sexual gratification. However, the ancient *Ashramas* were created in such a way that one had to move out of each *Ashrama* into the next stage of life. Once one moved from *Brahmacharya* and came into the *Grihastha Ashrama*, it practically indicated that eventually the

householder would handover his house, money and power to the next generation and move into the next *Ashrama* known as *Vanaprastha*. This translated to renouncing the world and proceeding into the forest to start their Spiritual journey. While this stage involved man and woman going together, renouncing the material world, it did not detach them from their family and their worldly attachments. It was this third *Ashrama* that prepared man for the fourth and the final *Ashrama*, known as *Sannyasa*.

The fourth *Ashrama* or *Sannyasa* meant to live a life as a renunciate, one who has renounced even his family and all attachments. To move into this stage, one would give up all their monetary wealth, even their clothes and wear a simple robe, and wander in search of God as a *Sanyasi*. The goal of a *Sanyasi* was to attain the ultimate goal of realizing God.

These 4 *Ashramas* of ancient life were in accordance with the 4 goals of ancient society known as *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kama*, and *Moksha*. The students in the first stage of *Brahmacharya*, were attaining the first goal of *Dharma*, inculcating moral values, ethics, and learning to live with righteous duties. The householders or *Grihastha*, were busy with *Artha*, earning and fulfilling their economic need. Along with *Artha*, the desire of lust or *Kama* was a privilege to the *Grihastha*. However, the ultimate goal of one and all was *Moksha* or Liberation from this world and Unification with God. The 4 stages of life corresponded to the 4 objects of human pursuit, known as *Purushartha*, in those days.

The 4 stages of life were sometimes circumvented. A devout *Brahmachari* could move directly into *Sannyasa* if he did not want to get into being a householder. Then he would not pass through the second and third stages. It also meant that he would directly evolve to the pursuit of *Moksha* from *Dharma*, without going through *Artha* and *Kama*. It was common for

young students in those days, to be enlightened in the first stage of life itself and pursue the path of God-Realization. However, like in the present-day world, only a rare small minority would be blessed to do this. The rest would follow the 4 *Ashramas* or stages of life.

While life has evolved and the world has progressed, man does not renounce his life to go into the forest. The 4 *Ashramas* can inspire us to live life in the 4 Quarters of the modern world. Today, there are not many *Ashrams* or *Gurukuls* where modern children are educated to attain knowledge. Instead, there are professional institutions that teach them the basics and help them into specializations or super-specializations. Never has the importance of education been so high as it is in today's world. However, it is unfortunate that children are not taught to walk with God, as it was, in the ancient stage of *Brahmacharya* in a student's life. Instead, students are taught to achieve money and wealth. Spirituality has taken a back seat, and because there is no focus on Self-Realization and God-Realization, the ultimate goal of *Moksha* is lost into insignificance. Man goes through the stage of learning, only to become a champion in earning, and as he enjoys fulfilling his desires, he dies without achieving the ultimate Goal of life. Did the ancient *Ashramas* stop a man from *Artha* or economic development or did it stop society from *Kama*, from enjoying the material world, including the lust for sexual gratification? The ancient *Ashramas* provided for all this but also led man to exit from the material world into a Spiritual world. The *Ashramas* were designed in such a way, that man's basic foundation was Spiritual, and his ultimate goal too was Spirituality. In between this start and end, man was permitted to build a family and enjoy the material world. But society did not permit him to continue in that stage till he died. He had to, as per society, renounce, retreat into the forest and contemplate God.

The world has changed. We have lost focus on our ultimate goal. We are so busy in the material world that we have lost sight of the Spiritual world. While we respect the First Quarter of learning and the Second Quarter of earning, we are so lost in the modern world, that we do not seek the Realization of the Truth and lose the gift of Enlightenment in the Third and Fourth Quarter.

In a Nutshell – THE 4 ANCIENT ASHRAMAS

- In the ancient days, everybody had to live life in 4 stages known as *Ashramas* - *Brahmacharya*, *Grihastha*, *Vanaprastha*, and *Sannyasa*.
- After learning and then living as a householder, man had to retreat into the forest in his Third Quarter.
- Those days man had 4 *Purusharthas* - *Dharma* - the righteous way of living, *Artha* - economic development, *Kama* - fulfilment of the sensory desires, *Moksha* - our ultimate goal.
- Man evolved through the 4 Quarters attaining his ultimate purpose of *Moksha* or Enlightenment.
- Those who lived in their Fourth Quarter, had to renounce the world and live with God.

CHAPTER

11



HOW HAS LIFE EVOLVED?

Life is no more the same,
The World today is a different game!
While the Life Span of man hasn't changed,
Materialism with Spirituality he has exchanged!

Over the centuries, life has evolved. Man does not follow the four *Ashramas* of *Sanatana Dharma*. There are no more caste systems that separate society. The goals of humanity have changed, but the essence of human behaviour remains the same.

A student of today is different from a student of ancient civilizations. While the goal of learning and preparing to enter the stage of earning remains the same, it is very rare for a student today to renounce worldly life and directly seek Self-Realization and God-Realization.

No doubt that even in the past, people wanted success, money, wealth, name and fame. But the world today is a rat race. Very few people believe that the goal of life is Enlightenment. Everybody is trying to climb the peak of achievement. At best, some people take an exit from achievement to live a life of Contentment and Fulfilment.

One major difference between the modern world and the ancient civilizations is in the purpose and the goal of human life. People today seem to be running a race and they chase money to become an ace. They get caught in the maze and their life is over! Unlike our ancestors who renounced the material world and followed Spirituality, today people continue to run after material things. The progress in science, medicine and technology has made man arrogant and egoistic. He has started to question the existence of God. Just because he has become educated and informed, man has foolishly reduced his reverence for the Divine. What man has not understood is that his life span has not changed. He has not been able to conquer death, just as he is clueless about how his life was created.

Man has created X-rays and MRIs and knows that the embryo evolves, stage by stage, over the nine months it lives in its mother's womb. Man knows very well that he was conceived

as a zygote. When two cells from his parents fertilized to become one, his life was conceived. Man knows that he has little control over this and cannot intervene in the process of the creation of life. Still, modern man does not bow down to accept the importance of God. However, there are a few amongst humanity who overcome this ignorance and Realize the Truth. They are the ones who realize that after the first two Quarters of life, man must withdraw and introspect. He should not keep on running till he falls into his grave.

While the world has evolved and there are many positive changes, man has literally regressed when it comes to his Spiritual evolution. No doubt that man has used his brain to create the train and the plane, but he has not realized who created the brain. He can zoom across the world in jet planes and it is remarkable that man has created spacecrafts that can take him into outer space, from where he can see the earth as a tiny ball. All this development and progress has happened in the last two centuries, but in these very two centuries, man has lost his connection with the Divine. Every stride forward in development has increased the gap between man and God.

Science today wants proof of everything. There are scientists who ask for a proof of God's existence. They talk of the Big Bang and believe that the whole universe is the result of a chemical explosion. But who caused this explosion? Their answer is nature. Who created nature? They have no answer! Some scientists believe in Darwin's theory of evolution which leads man to believe that his ancestors were apes. If only man had retained his humility and bowed down to the power of the Creator, he would use his intellect to realize that every effect has a cause; every product has a manufacturer. So also, this amazing creation of the sun, the moon, the stars, the birds, the animals, the flowers and above all, we human beings also have a Creator. Has man been able to decode the mystery of death? Does man understand what happens when he loses his breath? All we do

when we see somebody die, is cry. Man has not understood the importance and the purpose of human life. He has drifted away from the ancient wisdom that led human beings to the ultimate goal of *Moksha*. While man has progressed in many ways, it is unfortunate that man has regressed spiritually.

Has modern science and technology been able to overcome death? Has modern medicine decoded the mystery of life? Man has filled supermarkets and malls with exotic merchandise, but has man been able to produce even one strawberry? Man has done well in education, but man has failed in meditation. Ancient man lived a simple life without supersonic jets and bullet trains, but still, the ancient man knew about the reality of God. After living half his life learning and earning, the ancient man moved out of that kind of life to pursue the path of Spirituality. But modern man is lost in the material world.

Today, we are all enamoured by products of the material world. We want to be millionaires and billionaires so that we can buy fancy cars and even purchase a private jet. Today man has forgotten what the purpose of life is. He spends his First Quarter learning and his Second Quarter earning but does nothing beyond that. He dies without Realizing the Truth of who he actually is and why he is here on planet earth.

Society has done well to create a very advanced First Quarter of learning and the world has followed the four *Ashramas* till it comes to the Second Quarter of earning. However, after following these two Quarters, man has gotten carried away by the material world of pleasures and possessions. He has forgotten that he has to attain the purpose of human life. He is so lost in modern consumerism that he pays scant attention to spirituality.

If only man decided to use the progress of science and technology to move forward not just in the material world, but

also on the Spiritual path, then the 4 Quarters of life would be far more fulfilling. Man must realize that he will ultimately die and if he does not understand 'who am I?' then his life is a waste! Therefore, man must focus his Third Quarter to understand the Truth about life. Once man passes his halfway mark, he must not continue in the race. He must learn to live with grace and try to Realize the Truth about life.

In a Nutshell – HOW HAS LIFE EVOLVED?

- The modern world has imprisoned man in pleasures and possessions.
- While man's inventions are great, he has forgotten to discover his purpose.
- Man has progressed in science and technology but regressed in Spirituality.
- Man has lost sight of who he truly is.
- Man has evolved in many ways but he has not Realized the Truth about life and death.

CHAPTER

12



THE REALITY OF LIFE

What is Life? It is a Journey on Earth.
It all starts when a human being takes Birth.
But the Life that we live doesn't go on and on,
Suddenly there is Death, in a moment we are gone!

What is the reality of life? What is the Truth? Many such realities exist all around us. The sun rises and the sun sets, but the reality is that this phenomenon is caused by the rotation of the earth. Birds fly, fishes swim and everybody who lives must die. This is a fact of life that we must accept. The grass is green, and however much we wish it were red, it will not change the reality that it is green. So also, the Truth of life does not change.

What is the Truth about life? It is a fact that we are born as a baby, and we grow old. Have you ever seen man being born old and then, becoming younger, year by year? This reverse process is not possible. So also, the Quarters of life are designed in a manner that man is born as a little child. He has to grow through the process of growing and learning. We can choose what we want to learn. We can choose a language, or we can choose a subject of our preference. But can we choose our parents? Did you decide when you will be born, where you will be born, and to whom you will be born? The Truth about our life is that we have no direct control over our birth. One day we are born, and we have to accept it. But somebody who is born as a Chinese cannot decide that he has to be born as an American. Birth seems to be controlled by a Universal Law - the Law of Action and Reaction. When a child is born deaf, blind or dumb, it is not a matter of luck, chance or fate. It is the result of Universal Laws - the Law of Cycles and the Law of Action and Reaction, Karma!

Everybody has to die. Nobody can escape death. This is another fact, which we cannot change. Man cannot decide to remain a teenager all his life. When it is time to go, man will be pushed out of the door. Do we control our death? When we will die, where we will die and how we will die, is also controlled by the Divine Law of Karma. All these are realities of life that we must accept. Because we do not Realize the Truth, we fear that we will die in a plane crash or further still, we will succumb to a pandemic caused by a virus. Of course, we have an intellect and free will and we must take basic precautions. If we know that there is

poisonous food on the plate, and we choose to eat it, we may die. This is not a natural death. Any intentional death is a suicide, and it is against the laws of nature. Knowing that birth and death belong to the Divine, we must learn to surrender and not try to control what is unfolding in our lives. The fact is that the seeds that we planted by the deeds we did, will bear fruit sooner or later. We have no choice but to accept it.

People go through the process of more and more learning and earning and continuing to earn till they die, but they do not Realize the Truth that nothing belongs to us. We come without anything and when we go, we will take nothing with us. Have you ever seen a child being born with a Mercedes Benz? Ridiculous! A Child does not even come into this world wearing an underwear. The fact is that we can bring nothing, and we can take nothing when we arrive and depart. But because we do not Realize this Truth about life, we passionately crave for wealth that will not belong to us. We earn money through fair and foul means. We cheat our customers, our suppliers, the government, our partners, and even our family, to earn money which will finally not belong to us and which we will have to leave behind. It is unfortunate that man does not Realize the Truth. This is the cause of man's suffering. He doesn't realize the purpose of life, and drifts through life Quarter by Quarter, losing the Divine opportunity of Realizing the Truth. Instead of being enlightened about who he is and why he is here, man faces the ultimate moment of death, without Realizing the purpose of life.

There are many realities of life that we must not only know and accept but also learn to live with. We believe this is *my* mother, *my* father, these are *my* children. Are these relationships permanent? All relationships are temporary. The fact of life is that we come alone, and we go alone. Because we don't Realize this Truth, we get attached to people. Then, when there is a separation, there are tears as people's hearts break. They question

why this happened, without accepting the reality of life. The way life is designed is that most parents will die before their children, just as it is a fact that sometimes a child may die all of a sudden at an early age. Nobody can control this. But the fact is that all relationships will ultimately end. We have no choice but to accept this Truth.

If we open our eyes and look around us, the reality of life stares at us in our face. There is one aspect of existence that doesn't live and die. The mountains, the rivers, the clouds, the seas and the earth form a part of what we call nature. Nature is eternal and while there are changes in nature, it seems to be birthless and deathless. It was always there, and even as we die, it will continue to exist. But all living organisms come and go. They are born and they will die. Whether we are Indians or French, there is no difference in our birth and death. Animals differ from human beings, but they too are born, and they must die. Cats and dogs, elephants and horses, tigers and giraffes, they are all born, and they all will die. This is a fact of life. Not just animals, even the birds that fly in the sky, are mortal creatures. They too come into the world, live on this earth plane, and then depart.

Each living creature has a different life span and while most birds seem to live for 2 to 5 years, there are some birds who are said to live for over 20 years and even till they are 50 or more. But can the birds escape from death? Even the fish in this world live and die! It is said that some fish can live up to 100 years, but can any fish live forever?

While different species on earth enjoy different life spans and the Quarters of each may be different, the beginning and the end is the same. We don't find dogs and cats, birds and fish, going to school to learn, nor do they evolve to the next Quarter to earn. The Truth is that they are born, they exist and then they die. It seems like all living creatures in this world, have only 3

stages of life. It is only man who is blessed to live through life with 4 Quarters. Between the moment of birth and the moment of death, man doesn't live to survive like birds and animals. But if man forgets the fact that between his time of arrival and his time of departure, he has to not only find out the purpose of life, but also live it, then man is no better than a lizard or a cockroach.

The Life Force in man is the same force as in all living creatures. But man is the most evolved of all the species. Man is blessed with an intellect. Not only does he have a mind to think, but he also has a faculty that can discriminate right from wrong. Only man has been given the power to choose and he can use his willpower to Realize the Truth and be enlightened. Man forgets his special privileges and he has taken life for granted. He doesn't appreciate that not only can he study what he wants, he can choose everything he likes. Not only can he decide that he wants to eat a burger, but he can choose whether he wants mustard and mayonnaise in it. Have you ever seen a dog ordering pizza or a fish complaining about the water in which it swims? Unlike the many insects, birds and fish, man is a special animal who has been blessed with the power to choose. Instead of using this gift, man just lives and dies. Going through the Quarters of life, he forgets to introspect and contemplate the Truth, and therefore, he suffers.

The goal of man is Self-Realization and then God-Realization. But less than 1% of humanity goes in search of this. Very few amongst us Ask, Investigate and Realize the Truth. Who created this planet and everything that is on it? The earth is just a tiny grain on the beach of Creation. Who created the sun, the moon and the stars that shine in the skies? Who caused life in the birds, the animals and the flowers? Man is busy trying to study life on the moon and on Mars, but man has forgotten to discover himself.

What is the reality of life? Did an intelligent being like man, just

come into existence by magic? Each one of us has over 30 trillion cells, along with sophisticated organs like the heart, the kidneys and the brain. The human body continues to baffle intelligent scientists. Who created everything on planet earth? Man has to prove and Realize the Truth about what each human cell is made of. We are all created by the 5 elements of nature – earth, water, air, fire and space. What is in each of these elements? It is nothing but Energy, Divine Energy. Today even science has discovered that a particle of matter can become an energy wave. As per the principle of Wave-Particle Duality, everything in this world is nothing but Energy. This is the basic tenet of spirituality.

Unfortunately, man does not Realize this Truth because he is stuck in the Second Quarter of life. He continues to dance, from the First Quarter to the Second Quarter and goes up and down, swinging, swaying and twisting, turning from learning to earning. Dancing through life, man dies! Then he is born again, without realizing the cycle of death and rebirth. Man doesn't go on a quest to Realize who the Creator of this universe is. He is not enlightened with the fact that everything in this Universe is Energy, part of one Divine Energy. Unless man gets off the dance floor and stops this constant twist of learning and earning, man will not Realize the Truth. Our ancestors were made to leave the life of a householder and go into the forest to introspect and contemplate. But modern man is caught in his own jungle and is entangled in his own possessions. Without Realizing it, he suffers, and he dies. What is the Truth that man must Realize?

In a Nutshell – THE REALITY OF LIFE

- The Truth is that man cannot live forever. He will grow old and die.
- Nobody can escape death. Death is certain and an average life span of a human being on earth is 75 years.
- Man is living in ignorance and before he Realizes the Truth, his life will be over!
- The goal of man is Self-Realization and God-Realization.
- Man doesn't use this unique gift of his intellect to use these Quarters effectively to realize the truth about life.
- Man is living the life of illusions. He does not Realize the Truth. He learns, he earns and then he dies.
- Man must stop to realize that life has a purpose. He must realize this purpose before his life is over Quarter by Quarter.

CHAPTER 13



**EVERY 'BODY'
MUST DIE**

What is Death? What is Birth?
What is this Journey that unfolds on Earth?
Who is the one who will actually Die?
When the Body lies here, who will depart, into the sky?

What is the Truth about death? Can anybody escape death? Every 'body' that is born must die. Not only man, but all living creatures are mortal. The moment we are born, we have to accept the fact that one day we will be gone. We cannot remain here forever. But before we go, we must discover that this is just a show. We must realize the true purpose of our life.

Instead of decoding the mystery of death, man is busy living his life not realizing that suddenly one day, it will be over. Although man knows very well that he will die, he doesn't want to accept the Truth of death. He doesn't realize that only the body will die, that death is not the end, it is just a bend. Because he does not invest the Third Quarter of life in going on a Quest to Realize the Truth, man remains in ignorance and suffers.

What is birth? We celebrate our birthday, but we don't realize that we were alive, even 9 months before. Our real birthday was the day of conception when two cells fertilized to become one. It was around the zygote that the embryo was formed. Man pays little attention to this fact, that he is not this body that he appears to be. The body developed in his mother's womb, but he was alive much before that. The child was delivered that day of his arrival onto earth, which he calls 'Birthday' instead of 'Delivery Day'. If there was no fertilization of the zygote, 40 weeks before our birthday, there would be no birth. This is a fact that man knows but does not realize.

What is the Power that gives us breath? Man thinks he is like a machine made of body and mind and that he has a Soul that gives him life. Man has not gone through the phase of enlightening himself to realize that he does not *have* a Soul. The Truth is that he *is* the Soul. But because he is zooming through life, he continues in that trajectory, till he suddenly faces death.

What is death? It is the end of life. When there is no breath, then we are pronounced, 'Dead.' Death is different from sleeping.

Every night we sleep, but then we wake up after restoration of the body and mind. But at death, there is no waking up. When will man awaken to this reality that his body will die? When will man listen to what people say at the moment of death? 'He passed away, he expired, he departed!' Then his own near and dear ones will burn his body or bury it. Why is man deaf and blind to this Truth that he is not the body that is cremated or buried? Why doesn't he accept the reality that he will not live forever? His life span is a maximum of 100 years. He is not some tree that can live between 500 and 5000 years. Man has little time to live and to Realize the Truth before he dies.

Who dies? If John Rodriquez was pronounced dead and his body lay on the bed, then why do people say that John passed away? It is because John is not this dead body that lies here. The one who was alive as John has left the body and gone, he has moved on. Therefore, John died. But the one who was alive as John did not die. He departed at death.

The reality of birth, life and death is quite simple, but because of our ignorance and our conditioning, we believe in mythological stories, and we remain ignorant about the Truth. We believe we will go to a Heaven or Hell, somewhere far away in the skies when the body dies. Who will go to heaven or hell? How will we go there? If the body returns to dust after being cremated or buried, where is the question of going to heaven or hell?

We human beings have no time to Realize the Truth. We are so busy counting currency notes, building homes, going for holidays, dancing, partying, that we have forgotten to find out the answers to the questions – Who am I and why am I here? Unless we spend a chunk of our life contemplating the reality and asking these existential questions, unless we exit from this passion of earning, we cannot truly start living.

The body dies, but the one who was alive in the body carries its

Karma and is reborn in a new body. This cycle will go on and on. Unless man realizes that he is not the body that dies, he will continue to live in ignorance and suffer. Those who realize that death is not the end, that they will be reborn in a new body as per their actions, they live ethical and moral lives. However, even they suffer as they are born, again and again. The goal of man is to realize that he is the Divine Soul. Not only must he realize that he is not the body, but man must also be enlightened with the Truth that he is not the Mind and Ego, ME. Unless he realizes this, man will experience the cycle of death and rebirth again and again.

Our ancestors paid a lot of attention to the Realization of the Truth. While they gave importance to learning and earning, they devoted half their life to going on a Quest and contemplating the Truth about life. They renounced the world of illusions because they Realized the Truth that they were not the body that will die – they are the immortal Soul. This not only liberated them from the cycle of death and rebirth but also freed them from the triple suffering of the body, mind, and ego while on earth. It is time for man to realize that he must live his life, Quarter by Quarter. Otherwise, his life will be incomplete. Learning and earning are not the only things in this world. Man must contemplate the reality of death and rebirth, otherwise, man will come back to earth, only to suffer. The ones who live life, Quarter by Quarter and are enlightened by the Truth, attain the ultimate goal of life.

In a Nutshell – THE REALITY OF LIFE

- No 'body' can escape death. Death is certain.
- Death is controlled by the Divine. It is not in our hands.
- The body dies, but the one who was alive carries their Karma, and is reborn in a new body.
- Unless man realizes this, he will experience the cycle of death and rebirth again and again.

CHAPTER

14



IS REBIRTH REAL OR A FAIRY TALE?

When we die, will we be gone?
Or does the cycle of Life go on and on?
After one Life, will there be Rebirth?
Who will we be, when we come back to earth?

What is the Truth about life and death? What do we know for sure? What do we see? We cannot deny life as we see birth happening, just as we cannot run away from the reality of death. Every 'body' must die. But what do we say when somebody dies? We say that they passed away, departed or moved on.

Who passed away? Who moved on? The person is right here, lying on the bed. Oh no! He is dead! This is just his body, it is said. We are so sure that our loved one has left the body, that we burn the body or bury it. Would we ever light a fire to our father or mother when they are alive?

Therefore, there is no doubt that the one who was alive, has left the body and gone somewhere. Two important questions must be answered –

- 1) Who left the body?
- 2) Where did they go?

As we try to justify the Truth about rebirth or reincarnation, let us capture this one Truth, and add the other facts to see the real picture.

The second tenet that needs introspection is the existence of the Universal Law of Karma – the Law of Action and Reaction. Does such a law exist? If it did not, we would see apples growing on mango trees. There is no doubt – as you sow, so shall you reap. What you do, will come back to you. What we give is what we will get. This is the Law of Action and Reaction. In this world, we perform so many actions, and whatever happens in our life, is a reaction of our own action. It is not luck, fate or destiny. Such is the Universal Law of Karma.

Are all our actions settled during our lifetime? Whatever we do, good or bad, either they are settled during this life, or if not settled, they will be settled after death of this body that we wear. We cannot escape from our deeds. Just like the seeds we

plant decide the fruits on the tree, the deeds we plant decide our destiny. Whatever is happening in our life today, is not serendipity, something happening by chance. It is a result of our actions, either of the past or even carried forward from our previous life. This is endorsed by the fact that many of our actions remain unsettled because of the sudden nature of death. It is impossible for somebody to settle and redeem all their actions, just before dying. Death happens all of a sudden and man who is constantly performing actions, obviously has actions that are unsettled. How will he settle these actions?

Some of us believe in the fairy tale that we will go to a heaven or hell, somewhere far away in the stars. We believe in the day of judgement, where we will come face to face with God and then, based on our actions, we will be rewarded for our good deeds or punished for our sins. Some believe that the final day of judgement is after everybody on earth dies. Because we continue to believe in these fairy tales and imagine ghosts and angels to be real, we are unable to overcome our ignorance and Realize the Truth. Once the body is returned to dust, who will go to heaven or hell. How will the person travel, can anybody tell? And where are these so-called heaven and hell? When we introspect deeply, we Realize the Truth. Yes, there is a heaven and there is a hell, but they are right here on earth. They are experienced when we take rebirth. How can we be sure of this?

While we are sure of two tenets - one, that death is certain and the one alive departs, and two, we have to redeem our unsettled actions, it brings us to the third tenet - that our birth is a result of our past actions, not a matter of random luck. Why is a child born blind? Why is somebody born in the lap of luxury while another in utter poverty? This is not Luck. This is Pluck! We pluck our destiny based on the deeds we have planted in the past. When we join the 3 dots, a clear picture emerges.

Death is not the end. It is only a bend. We transcend from one life to another. The body that we leave behind is just like a garment we wear. While we change our clothes every day, we don't realize that we change our body after death. Each life is like a chapter in the book of existence. Therefore, we must realize that while the body is sure to die, the ME, Mind and Ego, carries its unsettled Karma and is reborn somewhere on the planet.

Can anybody deny these Truths? Can anybody deny the Law of Karma? Don't we see this Universal Law operate everywhere on earth? Nobody can escape from this Law. Can we say that a child is born without his fingers, just because of luck? Can we blame God and attribute such deformities to God's cruelty? Or like some philosophers believe – Bad things happen to good people because God is not Powerful enough to stop this injustice!

This Universe is governed by the Universal Laws. The earth rotates on its own axis precisely once in 24 hours. It revolves around the sun in 365 $\frac{1}{4}$ days. Who is executing all this in precision? Who is in charge of the magic show that unfolds on earth? Who controls the Law of Cycles that creates clouds? The clouds then bear rain. The rain then flows into rivers. Whenever the temperature is below zero, the water freezes into ice. Then once again it melts, and the cycle continues as the sun shines. We clearly understand the Law of Cycles as it unfolds all around us, everywhere on earth. But we are unable to understand the secret of death and rebirth.

Although the 3 tenets stare us in our face, we are unable to Realize the Truth because of our biggest enemy, the Mind and Ego, the ME. The mind refuses to believe that we will be reborn because we have been brainwashed into believing that God has a name and form. This leads us into imagining that He lives in a palace called Heaven. The fairy tale continues to become

even more exciting as we believe that we will be transported to heaven by angels who fly in the sky! As long as we believe in the myth of Santa Claus and Gods that look like different animals, we will not come out of the trance of our ignorance to Realize the Truth. Unless we unlearn the many lies that we have been taught, we will never Realize the Truth about life, death and rebirth.

The cycle of reincarnation continues as per the 3 tenets that we have reviewed. There is no direct proof, but there is an obvious inference just like we infer the existence of the Law of Gravity. Can anybody prove that the Law of Gravity exists? The only way to believe that it does is through inference - every time we throw a ball up, it doesn't fly away into the skies. It is pulled back towards the earth - why? We infer that this is because of gravity. Scientists have accepted this Law, not by direct proof but by obvious inference. It is a matter of time before science will also accept death and rebirth as the absolute truth.

Scientists have not been able to decode the mystery of birth. We have progressed so much in the fields of science and technology, but we have not been able to discover life. Scientists are baffled by the concept of Consciousness, but slowly, science is moving towards accepting that everything in this world is nothing but energy. The recent discovery of the Wave-Particle Duality principle, based on the Law of Thermodynamics, reveals that it is energy that transforms to matter and matter that becomes Energy. At death, the body returns to its form of energy and once again, the energy creates a new body. While we know of all these facts, unless we go on a Quest, we will never Realize the Truth. The Truth will be revealed when there is Enlightenment. This will only be possible when we snap out of the two Quarters of life and spend the third in seeking the Realization of the Truth.

As long as man just learns what he is taught in modern-day schools and colleges and gets busy as he earns money to enjoy

material possessions, man will never discover the fact that he is not the body and mind that he appears to be, and that he is the Divine Soul. This is man's goal. But man is lost in this world of pleasures and possessions. Instead of living life in the 4 Quarters, man's focus is only on learning and earning. He doesn't escape from the clutches of his desires and his cravings. He doesn't get an opportunity to Realize the Truth. Therefore, man continues to fear death, not realizing that death should be a celebration because death is a doorway to eternal happiness. Man doesn't Realize the Truth of who he truly is. Instead of being united with the Divine, man continues to come back to earth as he takes rebirth.

Should we not, like our ancestors, stop living materialistic lives and evolve to the ultimate stage of renouncing the material world and seek the Spiritual Truth? Should we not introspect on the Truth about God and heaven? Should we not stop earning money and start Realizing the Truth? It's time for man to clearly define the 4 Quarters of his life so that he moves away from the addiction of achievement, enjoys the phase of contentment and fulfilment, and finally climbs to the third and ultimate peak – Enlightenment.

In a Nutshell – IS REBIRTH REAL OR A FAIRY TALE?

- The body dies, but the one who was alive leaves the body.
- Where does the one who died go, to heaven or hell?
- Heaven and hell are not real locations. They exist here on earth.
- Death is not the end, it is just a bend. We return in a new life.
- Our birth is caused by our past actions, our Karma. We must Realize this Truth.

CHAPTER

15



DID YOU CONTROL YOUR BIRTH?

Did you decide your name,
Or did you choose the country from where you came?
Did you choose your mom and dad,
Or the Religion that you have always had?

If we look back at life, we will realize that many things that have happened in our life were not because we chose them. We did not choose our nationality, nor did we choose our gender. We did not choose the religion in which we were born. Even our parents were decided by the Universal Law called Karma. How we take birth and come to earth is not a matter of chance. It is all governed by a Universal Law, the Law of Karma.

The Law of Karma is the Law of Action and Reaction. It is a Law that works on the principle – *As you sow, so shall you reap*. That is why we don't find mangoes growing on apple trees. The fruit on the tree does not depend on luck. It depends on what seed we plant. So does our life. The deeds that we plant decide our destiny. The Law of Karma is a continuous cycle and works life after life. How does it work?

Every human being performs actions. The action begets the same reaction. Our good deeds are rewarded and for our sins, we are punished. But all actions of our life are not settled before we die. When the body dies, the director of action, the Mind and Ego, ME, carries forward all unsettled actions into a new birth, in a new body. Therefore, our birth itself is controlled by this Law. Our birth is a reaction of our past actions. This cycle goes on and on.

While we have no control on our birth, we human beings are gifted with an intellect to discriminate our thoughts. Thoughts lead to feelings and then to action. We have a free will and we can choose what we do. But once we do, once the action happens, our deeds are recorded, and they will fructify as our destiny. Nothing can stop the Law of Karma from unfolding. Therefore, what we think and thereafter what we do are critically important for the destiny of our life, life after life. It is because of our Karma that our life circumstances are unfolding. Obviously, we grow up in the First Quarter of our life and our learning is based on our parents and family at

home, our country and society where we live, our school and teachers and none of this is under our control. Somewhere through the middle of the First Quarter of life, we wake up as a teenager, mature enough to make our decisions and we start making choices. These choices are driven by our mind but executed by our body. They become actions or Karma, which become seeds that will determine our destiny.

From the First Quarter of life, unfolds our Second Quarter. Our Second Quarter is by and large in our hands. Unlike the popular belief that everything is Karma, it is not! The Divine has created his *Leela*, the drama that unfolds on earth in a manner, where he has given us the free will to choose. But once we make a choice and we act, then, we have to accept the fact that whatever is unfolding, is unfolding as per our Karma, our past actions. We must realize that life is like driving a car on a highway. The road is already paved. We cannot change the road, but the car is in our hands. We can drive fast or slow, turn left or right, or even stop. The road is the past Karma unfolding before us. The car is our free will that is driven by our intellect. While we can't change the road, we can change the destination by using our discrimination. Those who believe that they are doomed because of their Karma, their past deeds, make a big mistake. They do not make the right choices to control the 4 Quarters of their life.

Even the First Quarter is in our control. While we do not control our birth and it is Karma that decides how we come to earth, every human being then goes on to decide their destiny. Whether or not we continue to acquire the same education initiated by our parents, is our choice. We can even choose to change our religion. We can move from one nationality to another. These days, we can even go to the extreme of changing our gender. But we can't change the past. What is over is over. We can only control the present and take charge of the future. Right from the First Quarter of life, we are in command of our destiny. It all depends on our actions.

It is unfortunate that most of us just continue to flow, and we don't take charge of our deeds. We don't realize that our actions become the seeds that will unfold as our Destiny, not just in this life, but also in the next life or the many lives that will follow.

Our Karma doesn't get deleted. It is a carried-forward account and although we change our bodies, our Mind and Ego, ME, carries the Karma forward into our next birth. Therefore, if we do not take charge of our 4 Quarters of life, we will just learn and earn, and then burn. It won't be the end, but a bend. We will return into a new life every time we finish living in a body, along with our cumulative carried-forward Karma. What is the way out of this cycle of death and rebirth again and again? It is how we live the 4 Quarters of our life. If we just live in these two Quarters of learning and earning, then our death will make us return to go through this merry-go-round again and again. We will return to earth, and experience pleasure and pain, sun and rain, loss and gain, and this will happen again and again. But this is not the goal of human life.

Man doesn't realize that his ultimate goal is to realize that he is the Divine Soul. His ultimate goal is Liberation from suffering while alive, followed by freedom from the cycle of death and rebirth. This Liberation will lead to Unification with the Divine. Then, there is no returning to earth. There will be no rebirth. How can man be liberated? Unless man moves out of the material world and goes on a quest into the spiritual world, man will continue to remain in ignorance and not be enlightened with the Truth. In the past, society led man into the third stage of life, *Vanaprastha*, where man renounced the material world and retreated into the forests in quest of the Truth. He spent his Third Quarter seeking Liberation. This quest was a part of the social design and man did not just live to die. He even evolved from the Third Quarter of leaving the material world, into *Sannyasa*, a Divine Stage where he was

Spiritually evolved, and liberated from all desires and cravings of the material World. The enlightened ones, a rare blessed few, were liberated from the illusory world and at death, united with the Divine. They did not have to return back to earth to cycle through the 4 stages again and again.

We have a choice. We can continue to live in this modern world and focus our energy on learning that will lead to earning. We can spend our time developing skills that will give us success in the material world. But we will continue to suffer pain of the body, misery of the mind and agony of the ego. If we want to escape from this triple suffering, we must get out of this vicious cycle of just learning and earning. We must start by questioning and investigating life and ultimately, Realizing the Truth of who we truly are and why we are here. We have to take an exit from the highway of success and walk on that road less travelled, where there is no herd of humanity, people who are just chasing success, money and wealth. They will suffer and die and be born again, to suffer again and die again. Do we want to follow their path? Do we want to experience the triple suffering, life after life? If we don't, we must escape from this cycle of *Samsara* and *Dukkha*, suffering in this material world and be liberated with *Mukti*, *Moksha* or *Nirvana*, a life of eternal bliss and peace.

In a Nutshell – DID YOU CONTROL YOUR BIRTH?

- Did you control to whom, when and where you were born?
- Our birth is not a matter of luck. It depends on Karma, our past actions.
- Birth and death are governed by the Universal Laws, instituted by the Creator.
- However, we control our actions, our Karma.
- These Karma or actions become the seeds that will lead to our destiny.

CHAPTER

16



OUR ULTIMATE GOAL – LIBERATION

What is man's Ultimate Goal?

To realize I am not Body and Mind, I am the Soul!

To overcome Ignorance and attain Realization,

And finally, Freedom from all suffering, Liberation.

Man is not born on earth just to die. Neither is man on a happiness journey on this planet. Man has a purpose. Unfortunately, man doesn't realize the purpose of life. He arrives, grows up, gets absorbed in this world of illusions, grows old and dies. Then he comes back again and again. Man doesn't go in quest of his purpose and therefore, while he exists for an entire life span, he doesn't discover the Quarters of life that will lead him to his destination.

Most people think that the goal of life is to be happy. Who doesn't want to be happy? While everybody is seeking pleasure and shunning pain, they do not learn the art of being happy. Somehow, we have been taught that success is happiness. Therefore, we pursue money and fame, name and wealth and forget the real purpose of life. It seems like we are caught in the cycle of life that just has two aspects of learning and earning. We find happiness in this seesaw and before we realize it, our life is over. Very few amongst us, go on a quest to find the true purpose of our existence. We don't try to probe – why did we come here? What brought us here? What must we do as we live? We do not pay attention to the ancient wisdom of *Mukti* or freedom, *Moksha* or Liberation, *Nirvana* or eternal bliss. We are satisfied with material pleasures that give us momentary happiness.

Therefore, we just focus on achievement and think that success is our ultimate goal. From the time we are children, we are motivated to win the race. We grow up with the belief that we must build a name for ourselves and that we must succeed. We don't stop to ask the question – what lies beyond success. We don't ponder on the reality of death, that soon our life will be over. Then, where will we go? We see dead bodies being cremated and buried, but we don't face the reality that one day, not far away, we too will reach our end. Can we escape death? Is there any way that this body will not die? We understand very well that every living being has a limited life span. We

also realize the fact that we come with nothing, and we will go with nothing. Aren't we convinced that this world is nothing more than a show? The earth seems to be a big stage, and we are just actors who come and go. The reality, the Truth about life is in black and white in front of our eyes. There is absolutely no ambiguity. Still, we are caught in the Cosmic illusion. We are enamoured by the material world, and we do not peek into the spiritual world.

The whole world is focused on dreams and goals. When a child is playing football, he is taught to shoot a goal. He is taught to direct all his efforts towards that end which will give him success and achievement. As we grow, our goals only become bigger and bigger. There is no end to man's aspirations. In fact, man dreams such big dreams that his need becomes his greed. Then he gets caught in a trap. His worldly goals become desires and a passion and he becomes a puppet to his own obsession. He becomes blind to the fact that he will soon die. His body becomes old, but he continues to earn gold, and before he realizes it, it is game over! While it seems to be the end, in reality, it is just a bend. Just like an actor changes his role after one performance is over and comes back to the stage in a new costume, in a new role, man too will return in a new body, based on his past actions or Karma. It is time for us to Realize the Truth, and be liberated from the triple suffering of the body, mind and ego. It is time for us to go beyond the petty goals of life, and attain our ultimate goal of Liberation.

What is Liberation? It is being free from the cycle of death and rebirth. At first, it begins with being free from all misery when we are alive. But ultimately, at death, it is freedom from returning to the planet to start another life cycle. While it is good to be happy, we must attain the ultimate happiness that also lies in the state of Liberation. Unless we understand the meaning of life and realize that it is a limited journey, we will chase success till our grave. The purpose of learning and

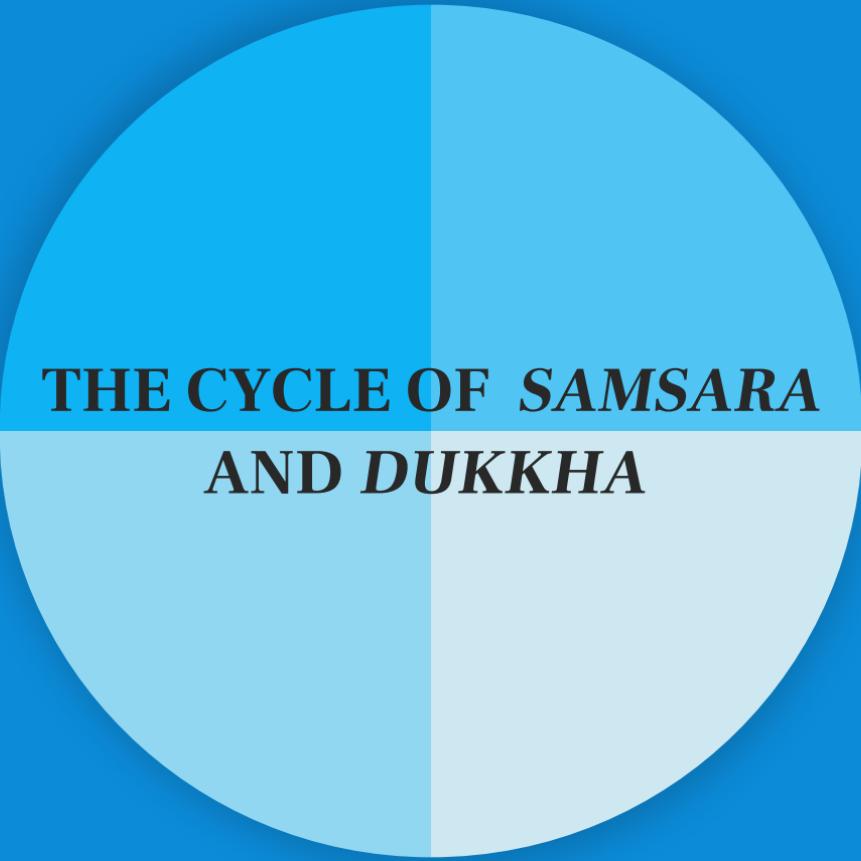
earning, is not just ultimately dying. There is a meaning and a purpose that is hidden and which we must discover. A glimpse into ancient wisdom will reveal our ultimate Goal, just as facts of life can inspire us to Realize the Truth. A very few amongst us will move on the path that will lead us to finding the true purpose of life. Those who do, will attain the ultimate goal of Liberation.

In a Nutshell – OUR ULTIMATE GOAL – LIBERATION

- Before we die, we must find out 'Who am I?' and 'Why am I here?'
- The purpose of our life is not achievement, but Enlightenment or Realization of the Truth.
- Once we overcome our ignorance and Realize the Truth, we can be liberated from the cycle of death and rebirth.
- Our ultimate goal is Liberation from the triple suffering while alive and from the cycle of death and rebirth.

CHAPTER

17



**THE CYCLE OF *SAMSARA*
AND *DUKKHA***

Life is a cycle that goes on and on,
We see people come, but soon they are gone!
Whoever is born, must suffer on earth,
Therefore, the Goal - to escape rebirth.

Centuries ago, there was an Indian prince, Siddhartha Gautama, who later became famous as the Buddha, the Enlightened One. He realized what he called the Four Noble Truths of Life. What did he see? He saw that there was *Dukkha* – the world is full of suffering. This was the first Truth that nobody alive was free from death, disease and decay. Although he was protected as a young prince from seeing any misery, eventually, he saw this Truth of life. The Four Noble Truths of Life were -

1. *Dukkha* – the world is full of suffering.
2. *Samudaya*- the origin of suffering is desire.
3. *Nirodha*- if we give up desire, we can escape suffering.
4. *Magga*- there is a path to follow to renounce desires, which ultimately came to be known as the Eight-fold Path.

When Buddha was born, it was prophesied that he would become the world's biggest conqueror, but there was a small addition to the prophecy. Either he would be a conqueror of kingdoms, or he would become a conqueror of hearts and Souls. His father, Suddodana, was an ambitious king. He is said to have done many things that would not permit a shadow of suffering to cross the young prince's path. For many years, the prince lived in the lap of luxury and did not know the meaning of suffering and pain. The king had gone to the extent of moving all aged inhabitants away from the kingdom into a new city, where the sick and the old would be taken care of. This was done to protect the prince from the prophecy of becoming a Spiritual Master. But eventually, the Truth of life was revealed to him.

It all started when the Prince saw an arrow piercing a flying bird. The sight of blood and the mystery of death disturbed the prince. Then, he happened to meet an old man. As chance would have it, Siddhartha Gautama, met people who were crying because their near ones had died. He was just trying to

comprehend the suffering that was unfolding when he saw death and destruction caused by war. This was enough to devastate the young prince. One day, he silently left the palace, leaving behind his beautiful wife and newborn child, along with all the princely wealth and pleasures. He wanted to Realize the Truth of life.

While the first Truth was that nobody alive could escape from suffering, he realized the second Truth, that the cause of suffering is desire. Most people, as per his third Truth, just suffered and died, only to be born again. Only a few who renounced their greed and their passion, went on to the fourth Truth of Realizing the true purpose of life.

Going on a quest for Realizing the Ultimate Truth, the Prince awakened to the reality and became known as 'The Buddha' – the Enlightened One. He clearly defined a new and ultimate Goal of life called *Nirvana*. While he grew up as a Hindu Prince, he was fed up, tired and frustrated with the superstitions, rituals and meaningless dogmas that had crept into the Hindu religion. He retreated into the forest, where he met many wise men, the real *Sanyasis*. They were the ones who had renounced the material world and were spending the rest of their life in a quest for Self-Realization and God-Realization. His journey led him to Realizing the Truth about life.

What is this world all about as per the Buddha? This world or *Samsara* is a cycle of birth and death. Death of the body is not the end. We create Karma based on our actions and we are reborn. The cycle goes on and on. Everybody who is born on earth must suffer. Every human being grows old and experiences disease and decay of the body. It is natural for a human being to desire and be disappointed when desires are not fulfilled. Beyond this, the prince noticed that people are slaves of their own ego. He observed the agony caused by anger, hate, revenge and jealousy. The prince was fortunate to be enlightened. But he saw the rest of

the world suffer, and it made his heart cry. He made it his life mission to spread his doctrine and help people attain the ultimate goal of life, *Nirvana*!

What the Buddha had Realized was not different from the original teachings of the *Sanatana Dharma*. This ancient Hindu faith defined the ultimate goal as *Moksha*, but over the years, the Divine faith was corroded by mythological beliefs. The Brahmins or priests became very powerful, and they advocated unnecessary rituals and superstitions to control society. Not only were there religious dogmas, but there were also social evils like the caste system that added insult to injury. The Buddha filtered the current beliefs of Hinduism that existed in his time. After his death, his followers started a religion based on his beliefs - Buddhism. While modern-day Buddhism itself has been diluted and fragmented, and become polluted like Hinduism, the teachings of the Buddha are pure and can still inspire a seeker of Enlightenment to follow the path that will lead to the Realization of the Truth.

Can anybody deny what the Buddha said, that this world or *Samsara* is a continuous cycle of death and rebirth and that there is *Dukkha* or suffering everywhere on earth? This is the Truth about life, but because we do not go on a Quest, we continue to live in ignorance. The Buddha did not advocate that we should deny ourselves all pleasures and suffer. In fact, he spoke of a middle path, where one could live in this world, and enjoy it, without becoming a slave to passions. However, the right way of life, after we learn and earn is to achieve our ultimate goal of Self-Realization and God-Realization through following the 4 Quarters of life.

Today, the world has drifted away from the reality of life. We are so busy running this worldly race, and we are so caught up in a chase for success and achievement, that we live and die, in a maze. Everybody wants to be an ace and therefore, we miss

the Divine Grace that will liberate us and unite us with God. For us to turn to a new chapter of life, we must understand the True meaning of happiness. We must discover the root of suffering. We must go in quest of the Truth, only then, will we attain the ultimate Goal of our life.

In a Nutshell – THE CYCLE OF SAMSAARA AND DUKKHA

- Whoever is born in this world, must inevitably suffer.
- This world or *Samsara*, has pleasures, but nobody can escape from pain.
- Buddha, the Enlightened One, left his palace to attain Nirvana, the ultimate purpose of life.
- The Four Noble Truths of Life were -
 01. *Dukkha* – the world is full of suffering.
 02. *Samudaya*- the origin of suffering is desire.
 03. *Nirodha*- if we give up desire, we can escape suffering.
 04. *Magga*- there is a path to follow to renounce desires, which ultimately came to be known as the Eight-fold Path.
- He advocated the Four Noble Truths and how one must give up desires.
- He also suggest that we follow the middle path where one could live in this world, and enjoy it, without becoming a slave to passions.

CHAPTER

18



EVERYBODY WANTS TO BE HAPPY

Everybody wants to be happy, nobody wants to be sad,
It seems that the purpose of life is to be glad!
We are all seeking pleasure from the time we are born,
And we all want happiness till the moment we are gone.

Everybody in this world wants to be happy. Different things make different people happy. But whatever we do, our ultimate goal is happiness. From the time we are born, till our final moments of life, we are trying to do things all the time that we hope will make us happy.

What is happiness? It is a state of *being* happy. It is smiling, laughing, and enjoying the moment of life. To be in this state of happiness, many of us believe that we must have success, achievement and wealth. Therefore, we create a foundation of desires and passions, which we believe when fulfilled, will make us happy. But this is a paradox. Although people are successful, they are still not happy. If happiness depended on wealth, then the wealthy should have been glad, but turn around and you will find that many of them are sad. Are all the achievers in this world happy? Yes, of course, but only for sometime because soon, they become unhappy. These moments of temporary happiness may give us pleasure, but this is not true happiness.

Weren't we taught in school that we must be winners? We must come first in class. We must be toppers in the subjects we choose. We have all grown up believing that achievement gives happiness. Only a careful introspection and investigation will reveal the real Truth. While achievement creates wealth and money can help us to acquire products, attract people and take us to places that will give us pleasure, it is not the way to eternal happiness.

First, we want to be happy. That desire creates stress and anxiety. If it is not fulfilled, we become unhappy. If it is fulfilled, we become happy, but only for that moment. Then, we become greedy, and we want more. Therefore, ultimately, we become miserable. This cycle of being happy and unhappy continues as we try to climb the peak of success and achievement, from one peak to the next. Those who realize that happiness does not

come from achievement, but rather from contentment and fulfilment, take an exit from the highway of achievement and try to live being fully satisfied. They escape from the fire of their passions and live with bliss and peace. But even they are unhappy, every now and then. They experience physical pain, just as their mind makes them miserable and their ego creates agony. Is there a way to escape from this triple suffering or does every man alive have to go through the cycle of pleasure and pain, again and again?

What is the secret of happiness? Happiness is a state of being, not a state of *becoming*. We have to learn to be happy. The art of happiness lies in living life moment by moment, being happy in the 'now'. Because we do not realize this, we are shuttling from the past that is gone, to the future not yet born. In the process, we lose the treasure of the present moment, and with it, our happiness. For it is in the present moment that happiness exists. If we do not learn to be happy now, and in every moment that is unfolding, we can never be happy. Everybody wants to be happy, but most people live and die without learning the art of happiness. Most people are so enamoured by this material world that their life is like a merry-go-round. They are constantly experiencing cycles of pleasure and pain. They go round and round, again and again, and finally, life is over.

Why is this so? Initially, we believe that happiness comes from pleasure, and we are chasing success and achievement to be happy. But happiness is like a shadow. The more you chase it, the further it goes away. A small section of humanity is lucky, and they exchange the happiness that comes from pleasure with bliss that comes from peace. They move from achievement to fulfilment. They live with contentment, being fully satisfied, with tranquility and with peace. But only a very small, rare minority, climbs the ultimate peak of happiness. Not only do they evolve from achievement to fulfilment, from

pleasure to peace, but they also go on a Quest to seek the ultimate meaning and purpose of life. They are the ones who are truly happy, for they are liberated from the triple suffering of the body, the mind and the ego. How do they do this?

The truly happy ones discover the 4 Quarters of life. As they live their life, Quarter by Quarter, they naturally experience the pleasures of life that come from achievement. But soon, after living the cycle of learning and earning, they move to the Third Quarter of life. This is the Quarter of seeking meaning and purpose. Instead of going on a quest to Realize the Truth about life, most people waste this Quarter, letting their greed become their need. For most of humanity that believes that enough is not enough, the Third Quarter is an extension of their first two Quarters and a connection to their grave. This is not what the Third Quarter is meant to be. Of course, the Third Quarter is a bridge that will lead us from one phase of life to another. In fact, it will lead us to our destination. But what is this destination going to be?

We have two options. Either we can continue to be zapped by this modern world and live, just to die and to be born again and again or we can switch from the Second Quarter of earning and make our Third Quarter, a Quarter of seeking purpose and attaining the state of Realization, of Enlightenment that will take us to our ultimate goal of Liberation. It is a choice. Those who make the Third Quarter, a Quarter of seeking, rather than a Quarter of just living, are the fortunate ones who will go on to climb the third and ultimate peak of happiness. They are the ones who will be free from all misery, as they live a life of eternal happiness and everlasting peace.

Unfortunately, we have lost the ancient wisdom of the 4 Quarters of life and in fact, have converted life into two halves and not 4 Quarters. It just seems that one half of life is about growing, learning, developing skills and earning, and then it is

about entering the second half of life. In the second half, we spend what we earn, we seek happiness, pleasure, success and achievement. Seeking these passions and enjoying the pleasure that comes from money and wealth, name and fame, we grow old and we die.

What happens in this version of life that is made of two halves? We live with pleasure, but we have no peace. Therefore, we live with stress, worry, fear and anxiety. We never attain the true meaning and purpose of life. As our body ages and we suffer from decay and disease, we become unhappy, and we die. Those who are successful, regardless of whether they are movie stars, sports champions, political leaders or business tycoons, life is such that one day, they too have to descend from their peak of achievement and enter a valley of gloom. Yes, they enjoy pleasure when they are world champions, but nobody can be a champion forever. They reach their peak of life with pleasure, but then go on to live with suffering and pain. Those who move from that peak of achievement, to seek Enlightenment, do not descend into a valley of gloom. They ascend from achievement to fulfilment and then, ultimately to Enlightenment, where they enjoy a state of eternal bliss, and they are liberated from all misery and suffering of this world.

In a Nutshell - EVERYBODY WANTS TO BE HAPPY

- There is no harm in having aspirations to be happy, but we don't know how to be happy.
- Happiness is a state of being. We have to *be* happy now, moment by moment.
- It is unfortunate that as we grow old, we may collect gold, but we ultimately suffer and we die.
- We don't realize that real happiness comes from Enlightenment, not from momentary pleasures.

CHAPTER 19



THE TRIPLE SUFFERING

Each of us experiences miseries three,
Nobody can from these sufferings be free!
The physical pain of the body and misery of the mind,
And with the anguish of the ego, we continue to grind.

As we traverse the journey called 'Life', seeking happiness, we are sure to find intermittent suffering. We experience pain in the body, the mind becomes miserable, and we are anguished by the agony of the ego. No human being can escape from this triple suffering. When we are born, we may not be troubled by the Mind and Ego, ME, but even the young child experiences physical pain and cries. This pain doesn't stop till a person dies. There is constant friction in bone and skin, just as there are different aches and pains within. Growing kids may fall and break their bones. We burn our fingers just as we prick our skin. Then the body ages, and we find pain in the decaying of the body. Who hasn't experienced the pain after a root canal treatment? This is a natural process and even as we are seeking pleasure in this world, we experience pain. Whoever is alive, must go through this pain. Is there a way to escape from suffering physical pain?

While suffering from physical ailments is visible to the human eye, there is deep suffering due to the misery of the mind, which is not even visible. The mind bombards us with thoughts that create fear. Fear is not a real danger, but the mind makes us imagine a catastrophe. It causes us to shudder, either with the fear of death or disease. It is the mind that creates several phobias and steals our peace. People become paranoid and this misery can be far greater than pain in the body. A thought can pierce us more deeply than the deadliest of bullets. Although they are subtle in their existence, thoughts can bombard us with suffering. The mind's constant thinking makes us worry about the future. We are peaceful in the moment, but our thoughts steal our peace of mind, as they push us into a gloomy future.

Haven't you seen people stressed out and getting anxiety attacks? What are these miseries that take us into depression, even into contemplating suicide? It is the barrage of thoughts created by our mind that steals our happiness and leaves us unhappy.

Therefore, the mind can make us miserable beyond our imagination. It is a factory that is constantly producing thoughts and if it starts producing toxic thoughts, then a person is paralyzed by negative emotions like worry, fear and pessimism. The Mind and Ego together become the ME that makes us suffer the agony of the ego. There are thoughts of anger, hate, revenge, and jealousy that create anguish that burns us with a fire within. This is the third suffering experienced by a human being. Together, the triple suffering of body, mind and ego, makes us cry till we die. Although we want to be happy, it seems that we human beings are gifted with this triple suffering from birth to death.

Haven't you seen a person getting angry? They were celebrating life, cheerfully and joyously, enjoying their moments, when suddenly the ego burst in anger. All their happiness disappeared and the devil within, made them scream and shout. Why is it that a person gets angry, that a person hates another? Why do we lose our temper at the sight of an enemy? The perceived enemy has done nothing, but even their appearance makes us upset. While we want to enjoy our life, why do we exchange our happiness with the agitation caused by jealousy? We compare ourselves with others and needlessly become unhappy. Do we even realize that it is our ego that is causing this misery? It is the same ego that vows to take revenge and with this terrorized vow, loses the treasure of the 'now' in which joy resides.

Life is a treasure of moments, that unfolds moment after moment. Happiness is all about filling each moment with joy. If we miss the opportunity of living life peacefully and blissfully, moment by moment, we will be filled with the triple suffering and cry. Is there a way to escape from this triple suffering? Is there a way to eternal happiness and everlasting peace? The good news is there is.

As we move from one Quarter of life to another, as we finish

one cycle of learning and then, earning, we reach that phase of life where we are faced with suffering. If we continue living in the seesaw of learning and earning, then we will keep on cycling with pleasure and pain and this will happen, again and again. But if we want to escape from the anguish and the pain, it calls for us to take an exit from the Second Quarter of life, and start the Third Quarter, seeking Liberation from all suffering. It calls for us to overcome our ignorance that accepts pain as an inevitable evil of life that makes us suffer as we exist till we die. If our Third Quarter becomes the Quarter of seeking the Truth, then we can be liberated from suffering of physical pain, misery of the mind and agony of the ego. But as long as we are engulfed in ignorance, we will continue to suffer this triple suffering.

There is no way for the body not to experience pain. It is natural for the body to experience decay of the bone and skin. As we age, there will be complications in the organs within, but do we have to suffer this pain? Is there a way to escape from this suffering? The modern world has medications that can make us suffer no more! Not only are there pain killers, but there are also options of taking opioids, and tranquilizers that can deal with the deadliest of physical pain and ease us from suffering the pain of the body. Modern science has discovered anesthesia that makes us peacefully go through procedures and surgeries that would otherwise make the pain impossible to bear.

While there is a known solution to overcome physical pain, how does one overcome the misery of the mind and agony of the ego? As long as the cause of our physical pain is diagnosed, we can acquire medicines and solutions to be free from this suffering. Of course, we must be economically self-sufficient to take care of our health issues. But today, some people and organizations support the poor and the needy, with medicine and money, to help them overcome physical pain. But can somebody take away our mental misery and the anguish

caused by the ego? This is something that we have to deal with ourselves. A psychiatrist may guide us to deal with our obsessive-compulsive disorder, but it is for us to deal with the ailments of the mind and ego. There is no solution to anger, hate, revenge, and jealousy. For this, we need Enlightenment. We need the Realization of the Truth. Not only will Enlightenment solve the issues of the Mind and Ego, but it will also make us overcome the suffering of physical pain with a smile. What is this magical way of overcoming the triple suffering of life? How will Enlightenment wipe out the pain of the body, the misery of the mind, and the anguish of the ego?

When we are enlightened with the Truth, that while we may have a body, we are not the body that suffers, we become free from this suffering. When we realize that the mind is a rascal, just a bundle of thoughts and in reality, does not even exist, then we can overcome all the miseries of the mind – fear, worry, and anxiety. Finally, when we realize that the ego that says 'I', 'me', 'my' 'mine' is a false identity of our existence, we can be instantly freed from anger, hate, revenge, and jealousy. The solution lies in living our Third Quarter of life going on a Quest, Overcoming our Ignorance, Realizing the Truth and in being Enlightened.

In a Nutshell – THE TRIPLE SUFFERING

- We human beings experience triple suffering of the body, mind, and ego.
- Who hasn't experienced aches and pains and suffering caused due to diseases?
- We all experience the misery of the mind. The mind causes fear, worry, stress and anxiety.
- Haven't we experienced the agony of the ego — anger, hate, revenge and jealousy?
- There is a way to escape, not just this physical pain, but also the misery of the mind and agony of the ego.

CHAPTER 20



GOING ON A QUEST

If we want to find the true meaning of life,
If we want to be happy, escape from misery and strife,
We must go in search, we must go on a Quest,
Overcome our ignorance, putting all our beliefs to test.

Life has 4 Quarters and to make our life complete, we must not just learn and earn. When we live life only with the Quarters of learning and earning, our life remains incomplete and to complete it, we have to come back again and again. Our body will die, but the one who was 'I', will have to cry as it takes a new body in a new life. This cycle of birth, death and rebirth, will go on and on. Whether we sin, or live a life of good deeds, we will return if we don't go through the process of Realization and Liberation. We will have to settle our Karma and for this, come back to earth and ride the merry-go-round of pleasure and pain.

But there is a way to escape from this cycle of *Samsara*. There is a method of overcoming the triple suffering of the body, mind and ego. There is a way to eternal happiness and everlasting peace. It is all about going on a Quest, overcoming our ignorance and Realizing the Truth.

Somehow, we human beings have lost the vision of the Truth. We have been taught just to learn and earn and so, we just live and die, acquiring knowledge and skills, and then money, wealth and success, which never ever belong to us. Because we are trapped in the myth of the modern world, enveloped in our ignorance, covered by dark layers of superstitions and false beliefs, we are, in a way, hypnotised and we live in this trance, forgetting our true purpose.

Life is to be lived in 4 Quarters if we want to make it complete. Of course, we must spend the First Quarter in learning and the Second Quarter in earning, but there is something beyond these two Quarters. When we don't switch to the Third Quarter, we suffer. Not only do we suffer on earth in this life, but we also continue to suffer in many lives thereafter. Death is not the end. We don't realize that it is only a bend. We don't understand that our goal is to transcend Karma. Unless we go on a Quest and Realize the Truth that we are not the body that

dies, nor are we the Mind and Ego that says, ME, we will continue to return to earth repeatedly, living the two Quarters. Then we will die, and once again return to suffer. Isn't it time to overcome our ignorance and Realize the Truth?

To Realize the Truth, we must go on a Quest. We have to ask questions and investigate life till we Realize the Truth. As long as we are living in this material world of pleasures and possessions, surrounded by money and wealth, power and fame, we are trapped in a self-made prison, from which we cannot escape. Therefore, the key is to renounce our greed, and to be satisfied, fulfilling our need. The way to live a complete life is to leave the material world and discover the Spiritual world. After enjoying the pleasures of the body, mind and ego, we must taste the bliss of the Soul and this is only possible, if we stop aspiring to earn more and more. When we have the courage to get out of the door and climb the new peak of Enlightenment, we will be blessed with the vision of the Truth.

What is this Quest all about? A Quest is a journey of asking questions. It is the Third Quarter of life in which our goal is seeking the Truth. This needs complete attention, and it cannot be mixed with the distractions of the material world. Therefore, in ancient days, man was permitted to finish his first 25 years learning and then, spend his 25 years enjoying his worldly life. As a householder, he would not only earn, but get married, have children, and reach a point in life where he would handover all his responsibilities to the next generation who would have now completed their First Quarter. Having done so, man was free to pursue the true purpose of life. He would go into the forest in search of the Truth.

Ancient man was not lost in pleasures and possessions. In those days, there were no jet planes or bullet trains and luxury cruise ships that forced man to continue earning so that he could spend on the luxuries of life. Today, man is living on a

roller coaster, which has no breaks, and so he zooms to his tomb without Realizing the Truth about life.

How can man go on a Quest in today's world? First, man must realize that life is not only about acquiring wealth till he loses his health and dies. Man must realize that money and possessions do not belong to us. Everything is a trust that is given to us, only to pass on to others when our journey is over. Living in ignorance, man gets attached to his possessions and forgets the need of going on a Quest to Realize the Truth. Unless man learns to live a life of detachment, he will never be free from a life of name and fame, power and money, to achieve the ultimate Goal of life. This switchover is very important because it will start man's Quest for the Realization of the Truth. Most of us don't even start the Quest. Therefore, the challenge is to begin in the Third Quarter, a Quest for the true purpose of life.

What is the Quest all about? It is letting go of the material world and seeking the Spiritual Truth. It is understanding the secret of birth and decoding the mystery of death. How did we actually come alive? How was this body formed? Where did the life come from? Are we the body, mind or Soul? Man must contemplate these questions to find answers. Death is certain. Every 'body' will die. But where will we go after death? Who actually leaves the body? Why do our loved ones burn us after death? If we have left the body and we are not the body, then who are we in reality? If we are the Soul, then what is the Soul? Where does the Soul come from? Where does the Soul go? Does it go to a distant heaven or hell after we die?

There are many unanswered questions about life. Because man lives in ignorance, he does not Realize the Truth. When he goes on a Quest, he asks the questions – How many Gods are there in this world? Who is God, where is God, what is God? Is God sitting in a distant heaven controlling everything, or does

God live within, in the temple of our heart? How can we go within to search for God? These questions are all very profound, and they cannot be answered in the setting of our living room, where we are eating pizzas and singing songs. We cannot watch an entertainment serial on television and contemplate the Truth at the same time. We need silence and peace to go deep into the subject of Spirituality, to discover the true meaning of life.

It is a pity that man lives and dies in ignorance. It is a shame that man is ignorant about his ignorance. Therefore, he doesn't really live life. He barely lives half a life before he is knocked out of the planet.

Therefore, the Third Quarter of life is the most important Quarter. It is evolving from pleasure to peace and finally purpose. It is a new journey of Overcoming Ignorance and Realizing the Truth. Because we do not discover this Third Quarter, we just exist till we die. Why? It is because of our biggest enemy – our own mind and ego. Unless we go on a Quest, overcome our ignorance and Realize the Truth, we will continue to suffer as the body, mind and ego, till we lose our breath and reach that moment of death. Is this the way to live?

In a Nutshell – GOING ON A QUEST

- To discover the purpose of life, we must go on a Quest.
- We must ask questions about life, investigate and Realize the Truth.
- To go on a Quest, we must let go of the material world and retreat into the spiritual world for a while.
- The Third Quarter of life is the most important Quarter because in this Quarter we evolve from pleasure to peace and finally to purpose.

CHAPTER 21



OUR BIGGEST ENEMY IS ME

The way to happiness, the way to bliss,
Starts by discovering what life truly is.
But who steals our joy and peace when you find,
It is ME - the Ego and the Mind.

If there is a simple philosophy of life that will take us to eternal bliss and everlasting peace, then why do we struggle to be happy? If there is a way to discover the Divine and to be free from the petty annoyances on earth, then what stops us from being liberated from all suffering? It is our own Mind and Ego, ME that is our biggest enemy. It makes us sink in ignorance just as it stops us from the Realization of the Truth.

When somebody hears this for the first time, that we should kill the Mind before the Mind kills us, they will be shocked! We always think that the mind is king, it is everything. That it is through the mind that we are able to achieve happiness, success and everything in life. But now suddenly, to believe that the mind is an enemy, is difficult to digest!

Let us analyze. What does the mind do? The mind is a thought factory. It is constantly producing thoughts. It is a thought that creates desire, that leads to suffering. While there are good thoughts and bad thoughts, both positive and negative, but if left unchecked, the mind can become a tsunami of poisonous thoughts that can sweep through our life. Have you not experienced stress when the mind is repeatedly thinking worrisome thoughts? Have you not experienced fear that is caused by the mind when it makes the wolf look bigger than it is? The mind is very powerful and unless it is controlled, it can sweep us into misery.

Along with the Ego, the Mind creates ME which is a false identity. It is the ME, a combination of Mind and Ego that makes us live a life of learning and earning and stops us from going into the 4 Quarters that will lead us to the Realization of the Truth. When a man is enjoying his life in the material world, the mind starts seeking and wanting more and more material pleasure. It stops us from understanding that pleasure is not happiness. It creates a bottleneck that stops us from moving forward and evolving in our life. It is because of

the mind that man seems to be imprisoned in passions, as he becomes obsessed with this material world.

The ego adds fuel to the fire. When I believe that this is '*my* house, *my* car, *my* money', and I am led by the mind to becoming attached to people whom I love, I inadvertently dig my own grave. Although I know that I came into this world alone and I will go alone and that this earth is nothing but a theatre, a humongous stage, on which 8 billion people are performing a show, the Mind and Ego does not let the Truth that I know crystalize into a Realization.

Instead of evolving from earning to seeking the Truth, we want more and more, and our needs grow into greed that paralyzes us from transforming our life. There is a way prescribed by our ancestors that will lead us to Enlightenment. It starts with going on a Quest and seeking the Truth and ends with Realization and Liberation. But the Mind and Ego, the ME, stops us from making this change. It continues to make us sink in the quicks and of life, until we reach the point where we are unable to get up and walk towards a new way of life.

If we look around us, there are thousands of people who have crossed their sixties and seventies and are just waiting to die. It does not appear on the outside that they are awaiting their turn to depart, but the Truth is that they are hiding their wrinkled skin with cosmetics that make them look young. They are dyeing their hair to fool themselves into believing that death is not round the corner. They seem to be enjoying their life with their friends and family. Alas! They are fooling themselves as they tiptoe to their grave, only to be a slave to their passion and ignorance. Soon they will die, and because they do not discover the Truth of 'Who am I?', their biggest enemy, the ME - Mind and Ego, will carry its Karma and be reborn.

How does one destroy ME, our biggest enemy? Is there a way

to eliminate the Mind and Ego? As long as we are alive, we cannot annihilate the Mind and Ego. The only way is to transcend the ME, to go beyond the Mind and Ego and realize the Truth. The Truth is that we are not the body that will die. The Truth is that we are not the mind that we cannot find! The Truth is that we are not the ego that keeps on saying 'I'. If we are not the body, mind and ego, then who are we? This is the Truth that we must realize. To Realize this Truth that we are the Soul, is our ultimate Goal. But our own Mind and Ego stop us from this Realization. The ME stops us from moving into the Third Quarter of life seeking the Truth, just as it stops us from being liberated from this world of suffering and being united with the Divine.

What is the way to kill our enemy? Is there a method to transcend the Mind and Ego, ME? Yes, there is. We must activate our Intellect. It is a powerful tool to discriminate thought. It is the source of our willpower. It is a faculty that makes us choose the right philosophy of life. It is the most precious gift of a human being. It is what differentiates a man from a beast. If the faculty of discrimination is missing in man, he is reduced to an animal-like state that is unable to distinguish good from bad. Man has been gifted with the unique ability to choose right over wrong. He can overcome the myth and Realize the Truth. But for this, he must trigger his intellect and strengthen it to become a master of the mind.

Most of us feed the mind and make it grow. The big, fat mind bullies the intellect that is delicate and fragile. When we start feeding the intellect and make it grow strong, we help it overtake the mind and control it. Every thought produced by the mind then passes through an automatic filter of the intellect before it is processed to become a feeling and is then executed as an action. When the filter of the intellect is missing, thoughts freely flow and become actions and we get caught in our own deeds. But the intellect protects us by stopping the thoughts from being executed into deeds.

The moment man discovers the power of his intellect, he

becomes a master of the Mind and Ego, ME. He questions every thought and evolves to a state of contemplation and introspection. He stops following the herd and starts flying like a bird, exploring the Truth about life. It is the intellect that can take man into the Third Quarter of seeking the true meaning of life. While the Mind and Ego will make a man sink in the material world, it is the intellect that can liberate man by taking him into the Spiritual world. Therefore, if one wants to escape from the prison of this modern world and its desires, one must discover the intellect and activate it. Then, we will be able to go beyond our enemy, the Mind and Ego, ME and start seeking the true purpose of life. *Knock and it shall open. Seek and you shall find. Ask and you shall receive.* Haven't we read this in the scriptures? When will we start asking questions? When will we question the authenticity of the Mind and Ego? When we realize that the ME, the Mind and Ego, is our biggest enemy, we will start our journey towards the Truth.

While we may have the knowledge that the Mind and Ego is our biggest enemy, and we must use our intellect to Realize the Truth, we must understand that knowledge is not Realization, it is just the raw material and unless it is processed, we will continue to suffer the onslaught of the Mind and Ego. We will not be free to start our journey of the Third Quarter.

In a Nutshell – OUR BIGGEST ENEMY IS ME

- We don't realize that our biggest enemy is our Mind and Ego, ME.
- It is the ME that stops us from the Realization of the Truth and Liberation.
- We must use the gift of our Intellect, to overcome the Mind and Ego and achieve our ultimate goal.
- We must understand that knowledge is not Realization.
- When we realize that the ME, the Mind and Ego, is our biggest enemy, we will start our journey towards the Truth.

CHAPTER 22



REALIZATION OF THE TRUTH

If we want to live with joy and peace,
And find a way for all miseries to cease,
We must overcome our ignorance,
get to the bottom of the root,
We must Ask, Investigate and Realize the Truth.

While life is a precious gift to each one of us, we must learn to live it. Imagine having the most sophisticated mobile phone but not realizing its features. Just putting a SIM card in the instrument and making calls is not really making the best use of this advanced communication device. We must switch on the data, wi-fi, use the camera and the hundreds of other apps. If not, how have we used the phone! So it is with life. If we just breathe, exist and live till we die, then we have not explored and discovered life. To truly live, we must Realize the Truth of who we are and why we are here.

What is the Truth? The Truth is that we are not this body that we appear to be. Of course, we have a body and we live in the body, but because of our ignorance, we think we are the body. We suffer the physical pain of the body and do everything to protect our bones and decorate our skin. We don't go on a journey to find the real one that is within. We spend up to 25,000 days of life that are gifted to us, just eating and partying and then, dying.

Some of us think that we are the mind. We give control of our life to a scoundrel that makes us worry and fear. We don't realize that the mind is just a bundle of thoughts. In fact, it doesn't even exist! We can find our nose, ears, hands, feet. We can even see an image of our heart or the MRI of our brain, but if we try to find the mind, where is it, we cannot find! Then finally comes the ego that says, 'It is ME'. The 'I' projects itself and says this is 'Mine'. But that is the biggest lie! Even when we say, 'I am John', it is not true. Think about it! My name may be John, but I am the one who was born before John and when John dies, I will fly in the sky. Who is this 'I'?

This is Realization of the Truth. It is about discovering our true identity. Then, we must go a step beyond to discover the purpose of life. Less than 1% of the human race explores this path of life that takes us to our ultimate destination. They are the ones who go beyond the Quarters of learning and earning.

They Realize the Truth and are liberated from all suffering.

What is the Truth that we will Realize when we go on a Quest? We will Realize that life has a purpose. The acronym LIFE reveals the true meaning of life i.e., Liberation from Ignorance and Finding Enlightenment. This is the real purpose of life – to be liberated from the ignorance that we live and die with. The moment we are liberated, we are free from returning to the planet in another cycle of rebirth after death.

The Truth is profound. It is the Truth and nothing but the Truth and nobody can deny it. Our ignorance can stop us from realizing it, but that does not change what the Truth is. Once we open our 'Real Eyes' and Realize the Truth, that can never be reversed. What is this Truth? The Truth is that death is certain, that nobody can escape death. The Truth is that every living creature must die. But only the body will die. The one who was alive, will leave the body. That is why we burn the body. Where does that person go? This Truth has to be Realized. It cannot be proved. Just like the Law of Gravity, we have to infer the Truth. If somebody shares with us the knowledge, it is not Realization. But once there is Realization, we don't need to hang onto it for life. If we realize it, we don't have to memorize it. We know it. Do you have to memorize that you have a nose on your face? No, of course not. You Realize it, because you know it.

When we live in ignorance, we live in darkness and just like a blind man cannot see, we too are unable to decipher the Truth. We must switch on the light within, to Realize the Truth. The Truth is that we are the Power that gives us breath and without which, there would be death. When we go on a Quest, we Realize that our journey starts as a single-celled zygote, around which this body develops in the mother's womb. We know it beyond doubt, but we don't Realize it. Because we think we are this body, mind and the ego, we continue living the Second Quarter of life and we earn and earn, as we crave

until we reach our grave. But those who Realize the Truth, they don't live their life amassing wealth which they will finally have to leave behind. The Truth is that nothing belongs to us. Is there any doubt that when we depart, we will leave everything behind? We cannot even take a pin with us. Just as we brought nothing when we arrived on earth, we can take nothing when we depart. But why is it that we do not Realize this? We know very well that this is the reality of life. But just like an old gramophone record player would get its needle stuck in the groove and repeat the same line of the song again and again, we get caught in ignorance and remain in that pothole, repeating the same action, till we die. What a pity!

The solution lies in the Realization of the Truth and there can be no Realization unless there is an investigation. Just like we need a diagnosis of a physical problem or a mental issue, we need contemplation of the Spiritual Truth, and this needs our time and attention. We cannot be living in the material world realizing the Spiritual Truth. We have to shut off from this world of pleasures and possessions for sometime and go in search of the Truth.

In the ancient days, it was an automatic process to leave the house, and to go in search of the Truth. It was a part of the culture and philosophy which we have left behind. Man thinks he knows everything, and he doesn't have to listen to the cock and bull stories of the Soul and God. Alas! It is this ignorance of man that makes him suffer. He is so zapped by the fast-paced world that he lives and dies without Realizing who he truly is and why he is actually here.

It is time to stop, to Ask, to Investigate, and to Realize the Truth. It is time to understand that life is not a meaningless journey from birth till death. Those who think that life is just a game for us to have fun, they are shutting their eyes to the reality that will soon confront them. What happens if you are

in a jungle, and you see a tiger in front of you and you close your eyes with your palms? Will the tiger disappear? No! The chances are – You will! It is time to wake up and Realize the Truth. It is time to understand what life is all about. It is this understanding that will liberate us from all misery while we are all alive, just as it will free us from the constant cycle of death and rebirth. But for this, we need the Realization of the Truth.

We need to invest our life after we learn and we earn, to discover the Truth about life. We need to spend all our resources before we end this journey. There is nothing we can do after death, for when we lose our breath, that chapter of life is over. Life is given to us to understand what it is, to live and to Realize the Truth. But if we don't, we will come back again with a new body, just as an actor will come back in a new costume in this theatre of life.

Whatever be our actions, this will be the Karma that the mind and ego will carry into the next birth. Then we will experience some pleasure but suffer the pain of the body, misery of the mind and agony of the ego. The moment we Realize the Truth that we are none of these, not the body nor the ME, that we are the Divine Soul, we will be transported to a life of eternal bliss and peace. What makes man continue to suffer? It is his own ignorance. It is time to stop everything else, and to go in Quest of the Truth, for if we don't, then we have lost this gift called 'Life'.

In a Nutshell – REALIZATION OF THE TRUTH

- Before life escapes us, we must Realize the Truth about life.
- LIFE is all about Liberation from Ignorance and Finding Enlightenment.
- The Truth is that we are not the body, mind and ego that suffers; we are the Divine Soul.
- Life is not a meaningless journey from birth till death. We must Ask, Investigate and Realize the Truth.

CHAPTER

23



ENLIGHTENMENT, LIBERATION AND UNIFICATION

What is the purpose for which we must take an exit?
Why escape from this amazing world and all that is in it?
Because far beyond the World's material pleasures and bliss,
Is Divine peace and eternal happiness.

Those who keep cycling through life learning and earning, and continue their life journey preoccupied with their material desires and pleasures, miss the very essence of life. They miss the purpose of their existence as they are lost in *Maya*, the cosmic illusion. They do not discover *Leela*, the show that is unfolding on earth, day after day. Because they sink in the theatre of life and think this drama is real, they continue to live in ignorance, and they suffer. They cry because of pain in the body, just as they struggle to deal with the miseries of the mind. A typical man in the material world is so attached to his possessions and his relationships, that he becomes blind and cannot see the obvious Truth. He has forgotten that life has a purpose. The ultimate goal is to realize we are the Soul and to attain that state of Enlightenment, *Moksha* or *Nirvana*. People give it different names like Salvation or even Consciousness. But the goal is the same. It is being free from the clutches of this material world and evolving into the Spiritual world. What is the way to do this?

It starts with a Quest that breaks the cycle of living day and night in a mundane existence of ignorance. It begins with asking questions – Who am I? Why am I here? Why did I come to earth? Is there a unique purpose for this human birth? When one investigates to find out the answers to Realize the Truth, then the picture begins to emerge. Just like I have clothes to wear, I also have this human body which I will change, life after life. Then comes the Realization that I am not the body that I wear, I am the one who wears the body. I am that Power that gives breath and when it departs, it causes death. Is that Power the Mind and Ego that says, 'me'? The Quest for the Truth reveals that the mind is just a bundle of thoughts that traps us in a toxic world of fear and worry. At death, the body returns to dust and we, the Divine Soul, become one with the Supreme Soul. However, because we do not move from the Second Quarter of earning to the Third Quarter of seeking the Truth, we continue to sink in our ignorance and think we are the Mind and Ego, ME. The ego continues to experience the

anguish of anger, hate, revenge and jealousy and creates Karma that causes us to be reborn in a new body.

When we give up the world of material wealth, and seek to improve our Spiritual health, in our Third Quarter of life, we will Realize the Truth as we overcome our ignorance. But this is just the beginning. Unless we let go of the ego, we will never be able to find God. As long as the ego separates me from you, we will continue to cycle in this world of objects without seeing the subject that is in one and all. We will be lost in the effects of this world and never realize the ultimate cause. For us to realize the Divine cause that appears as the beautiful creations on earth, we need Realization. Knowledge is not enough. We have to renounce, let go of ignorance that causes the cosmic illusion around us. We have to stop yearning for gold and develop a passion for God. We have to see beyond the necklace, the chain and the ring. They may appear as pieces of jewellery, but there is gold in everything. You and I, may appear as different humans on earth, but Realization will reveal that there is God in everybody. When we let go of the outer appearances and seek the inner world, we can be enlightened with the Truth.

The process of Enlightenment starts with overcoming ignorance and then crystalizing knowledge into Realization. Just like water crystalizes into ice, the same molecules freeze, so also, the same knowledge shines as Enlightenment, as we Realize the Truth. It is this Realization that will lead us to Liberation from this world. It will free us from another birth on earth. Once we realize that we are not the ego and the mind, then there is no Karma for the ME, and it does not need a new body to settle its past deeds. It becomes free! An enlightened Soul is liberated and then, united with the Divine. This is the ultimate goal of human life.

At death, one of the two things happens. If we do not Realize the Truth and continue to live with ignorance as the body,

mind and ego, at death of the body to settle its past Karma, the Mind and Ego, ME will appear in a new body. This cycle goes on and on, as we accumulate Karma life after life, both good and bad. But when we realize that we are not this body that will die and when we realize that the mind and ego is an illusion caused by our ignorance, we are free from Karma and we are liberated. Realization that we are the Soul leads us from Liberation at death to Unification with the Divine. One who has not Realized the Truth, may read this a 100 times and recite it by heart as it is memorized, but will still not attain that state of Liberation and Unification. Therefore, the dire need to move beyond the Second Quarter of life is absolutely essential. Liberation and Unification cannot come from a mere Transformation. It needs a Metamorphosis. Just like the caterpillar sheds its skin to fly as a beautiful butterfly, we human beings will never be liberated from this ignorance of the ego till we let go of it. Until we Realize – ‘I am not ‘I’,’ we will never discover the truth that we are the Divine Soul.

Realization thus becomes the starting point that triggers us into our Third Quarter of life – seeking the Truth and being free from this illusory world. The way to Liberation, freedom from the cycle of death and rebirth, is to evolve from the Second Quarter of earning, to seeking Liberation and God in our Third Quarter. It is said that a true seeker of Liberation gives up all yearning and develops the triple yearning that is needed for Unification with the Divine. That triple yearning is the yearning that a miser has for gold, a lover has for his beloved, and a young child has for its mother who it has just lost. When we develop this triple yearning for the Divine and for Liberation, then at death, there will be no coming back to earth. Realization will lead to Liberation and Unification. This is to achieve the ultimate goal of life.

Life is a journey from birth to death. But the purpose is to escape from the cycle. As long as we return to earth to redeem our actions, be they good or bad, we have to suffer. Such is life.

But, when we move from the Second Quarter of life into the third, from just earning to seeking the true wealth of life, then we will Realize the Truth and are free from the temptations of the pleasures and possessions of this world. When we move out from the highway of achievement and we take an exit to Fulfilment and then, finally to Enlightenment, we will become free from the triple suffering experienced by the mortals of this world. When the Third Quarter of our life is spent in seeking the Truth, we will Realize that we are the Divine Soul, and though the body will experience pain, we will not suffer. The mind may wander here and there, but we will not become miserable. The ego may scream 'I' and 'me', but we the liberated Soul will not be agonized by anger, hate, revenge and jealousy. Such a realized being will be free from all suffering when alive, and at death, will be liberated from rebirth and be united with the Divine. This is the goal of human life. To live through the Third Quarter and enter the Fourth Quarter gracefully exiting as a Yogi – one who is in Yoga, in Divine Union, living as a manifestation of God, free from all trivialities of life. Our ultimate goal is to reach this state of eternal bliss and everlasting happiness and it all begins when we evolve from the cycle of learning and earning and move on to seeking the Truth and Realizing God.

In a Nutshell – ENLIGHTENMENT, LIBERATION AND UNIFICATION

- We must evolve from the Second Quarter of earning to the Third Quarter of seeking Liberation.
- Before life escapes us, we must overcome the Cosmic illusion and be enlightened with the Truth.
- If we do not give up the material world, we will be caught in this prison and die.
- The Realization of the Truth is the starting point of being free from this illusory world.
- Enlightenment will help us attain Liberation from rebirth and then, Unification with the Divine.

CHAPTER 24

BLISSFULLY LIVING AS AN IMMORTAL SOUL

What is the purpose of life, what is our goal?
To Realize we are not the body, mind, ego – we are the Soul,
To overcome our ignorance and to reach that state of bliss,
Where there is everlasting peace and eternal happiness.

Man is an intelligent animal. He is the only creature who has a full-fledged intelligence. Unfortunately, man does not use his intellect. He lives and dies, only to be born again and again.

There is a purpose for our life on this planet. We were not created with two eyes, each more powerful than a 576 mega pixel camera, or given a nose to smell millions of fragrances, or given powerful ears and a sensitive tongue just for fun. The human body was designed to be a highly sophisticated living machine that could sense from the skin and then pass on messages within, through billions of neurons connected to the brain. All these special features are a Divine grace on a human being because man is meant to go on a Quest and Realize the Truth about life and realize God. He is not supposed to just exist like a tree or just buzz like a bee, before he can be free from this birth on earth. Man is supposed to be liberated and united with God.

Man is created and given a purpose. Man is meant to live, to Realize who he truly is, and why he came to earth. What is the cause of man's birth? Is it Karma? How is everything being governed by this Universal Law of Action and Reaction? Is God sitting in a heaven, somewhere far away in the stars, controlling our destiny? Man is supposed to find answers to these questions, just as he is supposed to be free from the triple suffering of the body, mind and ego. Alas, man does none of this! Man, just lives and he has fun till life is done. All he does is to run from one success to another, thinking that success is happiness. He is caught in this race, trying to be an ace, and running this race, he desires and he craves till he reaches his grave. Then, based on his actions, he is born again.

Man is not supposed to be born just to cry and question 'why' looking up at the sky. Man is supposed to go beneath the skin and discover the power within as he Realizes the Truth. Instead of realizing God in the temple of his heart, man

continues to search for his God, in a temple or a church. He never finds God, because he is not sincere in his Quest. He uses God as a solution to his problems and doesn't Realize the Truth about God. What is the cause of man's suffering and his constant wandering as he reappears on the planet, again and again, wearing the costume of a new body? It is man's ignorance that envelops him in layers of darkness.

Today, one out of every 100 people steps out of this mad race and lives with grace. Such a person goes in quest of the Truth, after the first two Quarters of learning and earning. He spends his Third Quarter in seeking God and Liberation. These sincere seekers who yearn for God, ultimately go beyond, thinking that they are made of bone and skin, and they Realize God within. They leave the material world, and start their journey on the Spiritual path, to achieve life's ultimate goal – to Realize we are the Divine Soul. It is these, the 1% of people who remove their spiritual cataract and replace it with a new lens, a new paradigm of life. The rest of the 99% of humanity continues to see through the lens of ignorance and suffers. Our goal is to Realize the Truth before our hair, our skin and our teeth return to dust. This is our purpose. How can we achieve this goal of realizing we are the Divine Soul? We must start our Quest today, a Quest that renounces pleasures and passions and escapes from the addiction of the material world and explores the Spiritual world. We must Realize that it is no use just to earn because in the end, we will burn and before it is our turn to go, we must learn to move onward, forward, upward and Godward.

How will man ever start his Third Quarter of seeking? When will man overcome his ignorance and seek the Truth? As long as man is taught all the fairy tales and man believes in the myth following superstitions and performing rituals, he will be lost in the mythological stories that will take him round and round. Most people believe in a God and follow a religion, but

unfortunately, get stuck in that kindergarten of religion till they die. When it comes to their earthly education, they go from kindergarten to school and then to university. But they do not gain Spiritual wisdom. They never go to the University of Spirituality and they remain illiterate when it comes to the wisdom of the Soul. Unless man snaps out of his Second Quarter of earning, and starts his Third Quarter of seeking, man will be caught in the merry-go-around of life. Before man realizes it, it will be game over.

It is time for us to Realize that life has 4 Quarters. We must live life Quarter by Quarter and achieve our ultimate goal. We must realize that life is not just to learn, to earn and to burn. We must turn the pages and seek till we reach the ultimate peak. We must start the Third Quarter and put our beliefs to test, as we go in Quest, and we must invest the third part of our life in Realizing who we are and why we are here.

Death is not in our hands. It is certain. But before we die we can make a choice in life. We can shuttle between the first two Quarters and die, or we can evolve to the Third Quarter and unite with our Lord in the sky. If we spend our life on a Spiritual Quest before we end it, we will reach that state of becoming a liberated Soul. We will be free from all suffering of the body, misery of the mind and agony of the ego, as we live as a Divine Soul, Conscious of the Truth in bliss.

It is sad that man does not enjoy true happiness. He thinks pleasure is bliss and being lost in this, he chases the shadows of pleasures and possessions. Only the realized Souls who spend their Third Quarter seeking, and then uniting with the Divine, reach the ultimate state of *SatChitAnanda*. It is a state of *Sat* – Truth, as we experience *Chit*, Consciousness, and live a life of *Ananda*, seamless happiness that has no sight of any misery or sorrow. How can man attain this state when he is ignorant that such a state exists? How can man reach that ultimate state of

peace and bliss, when he has no clue what it is? Man must wake up before it is too late. Then, he will live his final two Quarters seeking the Truth and Realizing God before his body dies. If the grace of the Divine is upon him, and he is guided by a Spiritual Master, a Guru, then man will be liberated from the cycle of death and rebirth, and he will not return to earth. At death, when his body loses breath, the body will die, but he will be liberated as he flies in the sky and is united with God. If he does not live life Quarter by Quarter and does not spend his Third Quarter seeking, then, when he dies, he will carry his unsettled actions, his Karma, and his Mind and Ego will find a new body and return to earth to suffer the ordeal of another life again and again.

Most of us are ignorant about the 4 Quarters of life. Although our ancestors have given us a clue about how they lived, and many of them evolved to become immortal Souls that merged with the Supreme Soul, most of us in the world today continue to live with ignorance as the wave, not realizing we are the ocean. We splash again and again on the beach of life, and because of the noise of this material World, we do not hear the voice of the Divine Spirit within. If we realize that life has 4 Quarters and we spend our Third Quarter in going on a Quest, then we may Realize the Truth and attain eternal happiness.

Haven't you experienced the noise of the waves as you swim in an ocean or zip through the waters on a boat? You must have surely experienced the pandemonium. But have you ever gone below the surface of the noisy waters? As if by magic, in a moment, all the noise of the ocean disappears, as you go within the waters. Those who spend their Third Quarter going away from the noise of the cash registers that ring in supermarkets and malls, shopping for merchandise to decorate their walls, live in silence. As they overcome the noise, they discover the Divine voice. They go deep within, below the illusory skin and find God who lives within the temple of our heart. They realize

we are nothing, we are just manifestations of the Divine. In their Third Quarter of seeking, their quest will reveal that even science has discovered that every particle of matter is ultimately nothing but energy. When they seek the ultimate peak, they will find that there is no ego and mind. The energy that is in every cell of their existence is nothing but Divine Energy. Everything in this world, every particle of matter is Energy, God Energy. In our First Quarter we learn that energy cannot be created or destroyed. It can only be transformed from one form to another. But it is in our Third Quarter of seeking that we will realize that we are that energy, Divine energy and this Realization will lead to our transformation.

When we go further in the Third Quarter of seeking Self-Realization and God-Realization, we will Realize we are not the body, the mind and ego. The Power that gives us breath, till our death, is the Divine Spirit, the Soul, the *Atman*. This is the secret of our true identity, which will be revealed to us in our Third Quarter of seeking. Then, we will experience a metamorphosis, and live as the Divine Soul till we achieve our ultimate goal of being liberated at death and being united with the Divine.

In a Nutshell –

BLISSFULLY LIVING AS AN IMMORTAL SOUL

- Those who are enlightened, attain a state of eternal happiness and peace.
- They live life Quarter by Quarter, overcoming ignorance and Realizing the Truth about life.
- They move from Self-Realization to God-Realization and become one with the Divine.
- They realize they are the Divine Soul and at death they are liberated and united with God.

CHAPTER 25



LIVE LIFE QUARTER BY QUARTER

Life has a purpose, find it before Quarter Four,
Discover the true meaning of life before you go.
The purpose of life is not just to celebrate and be glad,
Those who waste this treasure called 'Life', will always be sad.

Your life is your biggest treasure. It contains moments that are passing by. It has no stop or pause button. If you do not choose to live, then you will lose this treasure. How we live life is a choice. Only we human beings are blessed to choose what we eat, what we do and how we live. A tree cannot even move. A butterfly only flies, till it dies. Animals cannot choose what clothes they will wear. All this is a unique gift given to the human being. He is blessed with an intellect. But one thing is common between the human race and the animal kingdom. Everybody has to die. What is the key difference then?

It is only human beings who are capable of Realizing the Truth about life and decoding the mystery of this cosmos. Flowers and fish will exist. Only man can go on a Quest, Ask questions and Investigate to Realize the Truth about life. If man does not use his unique treasure of being human, then man is no better than an animal. Only man is gifted with the privilege of being liberated and united with God. But if man does not use this privilege, then he too will just live and die, and then return as a fish or a fly. Unfortunately, man does not realize this profound Truth.

Man believes that the purpose of life is to be happy. At most, he evolves to the next level to gain the understanding that not only must he be glad, but he must also do things to share his happiness and stop others from being sad. So, man reaches out to do the best he can, and believes that doing good Karma is the ultimate goal of life.

Today, people more than ever, have become compassionate and kind. What is the reason behind this? It is either the motivation to do good actions so that there is a positive reaction as per the Universal Law of Karma, or it may be because of guilt - man may feel guilty for not helping others. There are some people who serve the poor just to impress people around them. Very few amongst us bow down to serve

others, realizing that in each one of them, is the Divine Soul.

While it is natural for a human being to seek pleasure and run away from pain, it is sad that he doesn't realize that this cycle will repeat again and again. Man cannot be happy in this world, without experiencing gladness and sadness in cycles. The only way to eternal happiness and everlasting peace is Enlightenment. It is overcoming of our ignorance and Realizing the Truth about life. Unfortunately, although man is offered this opportunity, he lets go of it, and before he realizes, his life is over!

The reason why a human being is made so very special and created with unique abilities to walk and talk, to think, then, ink his thoughts, to communicate and discriminate, is because it is only the human being who has a purpose to fulfil, before he dies. The other creatures on our planet, also contribute to the show that unfolds on earth, but they do not have to achieve a purpose before they die. Plants are alive to create oxygen that we human beings need to breathe. And so are several animals, insects, birds and fish created by the Creator, to balance the entire ecosystem of our existence. But none of them are expected to attain Liberation and Unification with the Divine. Only man is! When man does not use his gift of intelligence, when he does not activate the Power of his intellect, then man has wasted his most precious gift of life.

In the First Quarter of life, man is not expected to be liberated and united with the Divine. He has to learn what life is all about and understand his purpose. It is natural for man to then live a life with a profession, an occupation, building a family and earning money. But as man proceeds through the journey of life, man does not introspect enough. He does not Realize that the purpose of his life, is not just to exist. There is something beyond just breathing, living, earning, procreating and dying. Everybody does this. We don't need any special

skills or blessings. We breathe automatically, and even when we sleep, we are designed such that we don't forget to breathe. Our subconscious mechanism continues to keep us alive. When we are thirsty, we drink water. When we are hungry, we eat. And then to be happy, we do many things. We try to acquire the pleasures of life and because of this, we start to earn. We even procreate because the pleasure of sexuality leads us into the act of copulation. It is not because of man's brilliance that he creates another life. It is his lust and greed, that leads him to seeking fulfilment of his passions in life that causes birth of a new life.

While it is natural for man to live with desires, and there is nothing wrong in that, it is a pity that man doesn't stop to think – what is the ultimate purpose of my life? Man doesn't reflect to understand – what is the way to eternal happiness? Man doesn't pause to wonder – who has created this beautiful world and who governs it? Man is the only creature capable of finding answers to such questions. But if man does not Ask, Investigate and Realize the Truth, then how is man using his privilege of being human to achieve his ultimate purpose?

Everything else is automatic. The only thing that depends on man's intellect and his willpower, which comes from his ability to choose, is how he must live his Third and Fourth Quarter of life. The majority of us do not pass through Quarter Three and thus may not ever come to Quarter Four of life. There is really nothing after Quarter Four, except death. Death is certain. Nobody can escape it. When we human beings see every living creature die, and know that when this body will burn, we will fly in the sky, still, we continue to exist through life, living like the other ignorant animals on the planet.

Man has to use his First and Second Quarter, not only to learn and earn, but to observe and choose. Man has to understand that life is a journey that will end. He has to accept the

Universal Laws all around him. He has to live with the Law of Karma, as he realizes that apples won't grow on mango trees. When he sees that this world is full of suffering, he should understand it is Karma that is returning. He should be inspired to go on a Quest, to understand life, to realize who he truly is, and realize God in the temple of his heart. But does man do so?

A few of us, evolve after the first two Quarters of learning and earning, to seek the Truth in the Third Quarter. Somewhere in the Third or Fourth Quarter, most of us face death, and we lose our breath, and then it is game over. Then, based on our past actions, we will be born in a form that may or may not be human. We will again live and die, and the cycle will go on and on. Man knows this beyond doubt but is a slave to his own mind. His ego makes him a fool and along with the mind, he becomes the ME, who suffers not only in this lifetime, but is reborn again and again to suffer as per his Karma.

It is time to Realize the Truth. It is time to understand the 4 Quarters of life and before we reach Quarter Four, somewhere in Quarter Two or Three, we must take a turn and use our life in our Second or Third Quarter to seek the ultimate Peak of Liberation. Our goal is the Unification of the Soul with the Supreme Soul. This is our ultimate purpose of life.

In a Nutshell – LIVE LIFE QUARTER BY QUARTER

- Everybody learns and earns, but we must not let the final Quarters of life escape us.
- Our Third Quarter is our final chance to be enlightened and liberated.
- Somewhere in the third or Fourth Quarter, most of us face death and it is game over.
- If we do not live life Quarter by Quarter, we will die, only to be reborn and we will suffer again and again.

AFTERWORD

The 4 Quarters of Life

Like any human being living in this modern world, I too finished my First Quarter of learning, and was zooming through the Second Quarter of earning and enjoying my life. I don't know whether it was by choice or by design that I shut down my business when I was 40 and I started exploring this beautiful world that has been created by God. I used to share with my Guru, Dada J.P. Vaswani, my Spiritual Master, photographs of all distant lands that I had explored. I had travelled to Switzerland and Finland, Iceland and New Zealand. There were very few countries I had not visited. After visiting Antarctica, I was excited to show my Guru photographs of the penguins. He smiled in wonder but said something very profound. 'Are you going to just live like this till you die or are you going to find out the true purpose of life and discover the Truth of - Who am I?' My Master knew I was seeking happiness, just as he knew that I was deeply connected with God. Of course, I was ignorant and while my devotion for Lord Shiva, my God, spanned over four decades, I knew nothing about the reality of life.

When we are zooming through the highway of life, we are so busy that we do not realize where we are actually going. The destination is death. There is no doubt about it. But neither do we realize it nor do we want to accept it. We just climb the peak of achievement and go from one peak to another, thinking that we will keep on scaling the peaks of life. I had achieved a lot of success and monetary wealth, enough to fuel all my voyages around the world. But it was my Guru, my Master who provoked me to embark on a *Talaash*, my Quest. Little did I know that when he pushed me to pursue the purpose of existence and the ultimate peak of happiness, that he was

sending me on a journey of Self-Realization and God-Realization.

Soon enough, I started my *Talaash*, my search for answers. I set out on my journey with 9 pertinent questions that my seeking mind was preoccupied with. What is the secret of birth? What is the mystery of death? Where is that heaven where God lives? In reality, Who is God, Where is God, What is God? What is the Truth of the Soul? Does the Law of Karma really exist? Is reincarnation and rebirth just a fairy tale? What is the true meaning of Enlightenment? What is the actual purpose of life? I took these 9 questions and started my Quest for the Truth. I was fortunate that I was not bound by a 9 to 5 job. I was blessed with a kind of freedom, both from my business and my family. So, I was able to renounce the material world for a short while and retreat into the mountains to discover the Truth about life.

I took with me all the possible scriptures of the world. I had picked hundreds of books written by the saints and sages of every possible religion. I was determined to discover answers to my 9 questions. Earlier my travels were meant for fun, but now, my retreats had a different purpose. They were meant to discover the meaning of life.

One by one, I started realizing the truths of life. All my Realizations have been shared in the pages before, but my biggest Realization was this – we have forgotten to live. We want happiness, but we do not discover the secret of eternal happiness and everlasting peace. We are ignorant and we don't spend our Third Quarter of life seeking, discovering and Realizing the Truth about ourselves and God. This was my biggest 'Aha!' – my Spiritual Ecstasy.

As I read through the ancient philosophies of civilizations that were many centuries old, I realized that man had created a prison for himself. He had himself created prison bars of

pleasures and possessions and he was imprisoned by his own possessions and his people, to whom he was attached. It was this attachment that did not permit him to retreat and Realize the Truth. Man did not realize, but the Truth was that he was silently tiptoeing into his grave. Before he realized it, he was sick in bed, and soon he was dead! I read and read, till all my Realizations made it crystal clear that man needed freedom from the material world, just as he needed an urge to discover the Spiritual world.

I realized that man needed a Spiritual Master, a Guru, without whom, he would just be dancing and drifting through life, thinking that it was a lot of fun, not realizing that soon, life would be done! I realized that man had forgotten the most important truth about the 4 Quarters of life that was prescribed by his ancestors and pursued by previous generations. While they used to renounce their life as householders and retreat into the forest, modern man is busy chopping forests and creating villas, hotels, casinos, amusement parks, theatres and shopping malls, to satisfy his senses to attain pleasures. While his ancestors lived life seeking freedom from misery, and from the continuous cycle of death and rebirth, modern man is trapped by his super-fast motorcycles and cars, trains and planes, even rockets that shot him into outer space. Man today, has become so busy discovering the outer world, that he has no time to discover the inner world. He is so enamoured by the stars and who lives on Mars, that he ignores the life in the flowers. He has not gone deep within, to Realize the Power that throbs within. Man just lives and dies. It is sad that he doesn't realize that this is not the ultimate end. He does not discover that death is just a bend and if he does not transcend his ego, the body will die, but the Mind and Ego, ME, will carry its Karma, all unsettled actions, and be reborn in another body.

I was fortunate to receive the guidance of a Guru and the grace of God. I realized several truths about life and was enlightened

with the truth of our existence. What is our ultimate goal? To realize that we are all the Divine Soul, the one supreme Power that is everywhere, in everything. I realized that the ultimate peak of happiness was not Achievement and Fulfilment. It was Enlightenment. I realized that the God for whom we were searching for actually lived within, in the temple of our heart. I realized that our ultimate goal was overcoming ignorance, realizing the truth, being liberated and united with the Divine. Having been blessed with these Realizations, I made this the one and only mission of my life, to help people Realize the Truth and be enlightened. Like anybody else, in my Second Quarter of life I was busy doing good Karma, good actions that would lead me to the destiny of my dreams. After Realization of the Truth, I stopped all that. I stopped crawling like a Caterpillar and Metamorphosed into a Butterfly, to fly in the sky with bliss and peace, free from the misery that I had found on the ground.

Now, I live as a Karma Yogi, surrendering all actions to the Divine. I live as the Divine Instrument, realizing that I am nothing and I do nothing. Whatever seems to be done by me, in reality is done by the Divine, throbbing in every cell of my body. The fact is that I do nothing. Living in Divine acceptance and surrender, I live as a Yogi, in constant Yoga. The real meaning of Yoga is Union, being ever-united with God. But to be a Yogi one who is in Divine union, we have to break our bond with the material world, and have to be connected with the Spiritual world.

Living in the cycle of Yoga, *Gyana* Yoga, *Bhakti* Yoga, *Karma* Yoga and *Dhyana* Yoga, I live every moment of life in silent meditation, in devotion, in surrendered action and gaining Spiritual education as the Divine Spirit, not the body, mind and ego that I seem to be. I spend my days and all my moments, in a state of *SatChitAnanda*, living with the Consciousness of the Truth, in Eternal Bliss, unknown to common man. I enjoy a

state of everlasting seamless peace and tranquillity. I use every breath to fulfilling the only mission of my life -- to help people to Realize the Truth and be enlightened.

May this book – *The 4 Quarters of Life*, inspire you to stop and to contemplate! To take an exit and pursue the path that will take you to the ultimate destination that we must reach! To Realize the Truth, Self-Realization, God-Realization and ultimately be enlightened and experience unification with the Divine.

POEM

THE 4 QUARTERS OF LIFE

*One, two, three, four
Life has Quarters Four
Our journey is made of four parts
Not just smiles and hearts
Life is not just to learn and earn
Then leave behind wealth for others to burn
Let us learn to live and die
In a manner that others will cry*

*Everybody in this world must die
When the body dies, we depart to the sky
But who is that one, who is that 'I'
That moves on after we die?
The journey of life starts at birth
There is a purpose for us on earth
If we don't Realize this, we suffer pain
And we will come back again and again*

*For every living creature, there's a plan
How long they live, what's their life span
A human being lives for seventy years
But our dog dies at ten, filling our eyes with tears
But why cry, why question, 'Why?'
Why can't we accept the will from the sky?
Whoever is alive on earth must go
Such is God's Divine show*

*But many of us, we just sleep
 Finally, we wake up, and we weep
 We think life will go on and on
 But in a flash, the treasure is gone
 Every moment is a gift to spend
 Realize this before your end
 Wake up to life's Quarters Four
 Before death pushes you out of the door*

*The First Quarter of life is to learn
 Every small child must pages' turn
 And then the Second Quarter is to earn
 Earn money that others will burn
 Most of us just live these Quarters two
 Those who go beyond are very few
 The Quarter Three, the few who seek
 They reach life's ultimate peak*

*But most of us just live and die
 Don't discover the Truth of 'Who am I?'
 Why did we come to planet earth
 Why were we blessed with a human birth
 Only those who take an exit from achievement
 Move onward and find Enlightenment
 They escape from the cycle of death and rebirth
 Become one with God, don't return to earth*

*What is this Quarter Three all about
 Nobody showed us this Divine route
 Quarter Three must be in silence spent
 It is to Enlightenment an advent
 To leave behind our passion for wealth
 And try to improve our Spiritual health
 To know we are not the ego, body, and mind
 In Quarter Three, this truth we must find*

Don't you know, it will be time to go
 After Quarter Three, it will soon be end of the show
 The earth is a stage, we are actors that dance
 Everything has a purpose, nothing happens by chance
 And now, the Law of Karma we must learn
 And then, for the Divine, we must start to yearn
 Very few are blessed to take this path
 When will we, this Divine journey, start?

How many of us will live to see Quarter Four
 Very few, you can check the score
 Thus, in fact, we have only Quarters Three
 Before they are over, we must be free
 From all attachments, we must depart
 To heaven our journey we must start
 God is not in a temple or church
 When are we going to start our search?

Is it difficult to understand...
 Nothing is ours, this is not my land
 With empty hands, we come and go
 This world is a drama, it's just a show
 There is a purpose for us to find
 Do it now, time we can't rewind
 Moment by moment the life we spend
 Before we realize, will come to an end

In the ancient centuries that have gone by
 Man's Third Quarter was to question, 'Why?'
 The first two Quarters were not different
 But the third in a forest, it was meant to be spent
 So, after his children had taken over
 Man would leave home and forests cover
 Wandering in the woods, he would seek God
 And try to become one with the Lord

*Everybody in those ancient days
Had to follow these prescribed ways
They were not just meant to live and die
But to find life's purpose, discover 'Who am I?'
After learning and earning, they would start a search
And not in greed they would just lurch
In a Quest, their life they would spend
And do nothing else, till their end*

*In those days, the purpose was God
People lived with the fear of their Lord
In sunshine they would work, in darkness, they would pray
Their last days were meant to find a way
They did not want to return to earth
They did not want to take rebirth
And thus, they were seeking the ultimate goal
To Realize the Truth, that they were the Soul*

*The sages that lived in those ancient years
Lived with bliss, without any tears
They found a way to eternal peace
A way where all suffering would cease
They found a way to peace and bliss
How to get everlasting happiness
It was this reward, that man strived to find
Spent his old age, transcending his mind*

*But today's man doesn't know of Quarters Four
He just wants to sing and dance on the floor
He doesn't realize that soon he will die
He wants to laugh, but then he will cry
For everything that he thought he did own
Soon would be gone, this truth is known
And so, he lives with the fear of death
And the unknown, that lies beyond his last breath*

*Man is busy in a rat race
Trying to be successful, to be an ace
Before he realizes, he is caught in a maze
He does not discover God's grace
He does not discover his purpose on earth
He loses this treasure of human birth
And then, to settle his Karma he is born again
To return to earth for another journey of pain*

*It's time for man to leave the myth behind
To find out that he is not the body, the ego, the mind
To Realize the Truth, he is the Soul
And to unite with God, is his ultimate goal
Then man will be free from misery and stress
And he will have eternal happiness
Overcoming the myth that success is happiness
He will discover true peace and bliss*

*So let us all discover the Quarters Four
Before it is time to go out of the door
Before this precious life does end
Let's start a Quest, it's time well-spent
The ancient wisdom that our forefathers told
Let us pursue that, let us be bold
And leave behind this life that we waste
Eternal bliss and peace, let us taste*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

AiR - *Atman* in Ravi

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.

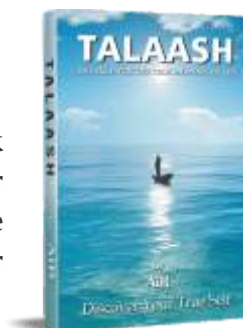
Since then, AiR's life has been dedicated to reaching out and helping people to eradicate the ignorance that they live in. Based on his Realizations, AiR has published over 40 books, composed and sung about 1200 bhajans written several blogs, quotes, and poems. He has taken up various other initiatives 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

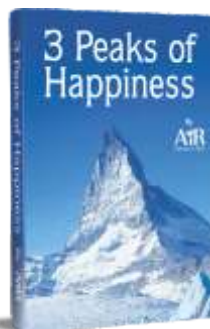
1. Talaash

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.



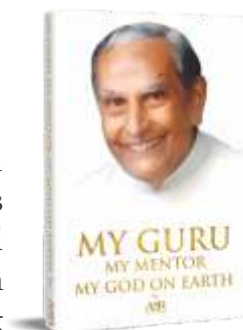
2. 3 Peaks of Happiness

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. This book



explains this truth in detail.

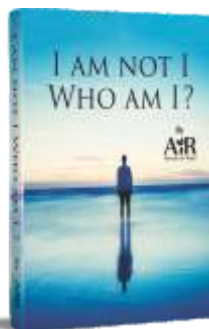
5. Death is Not "The End." Death is "Liberation"

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.



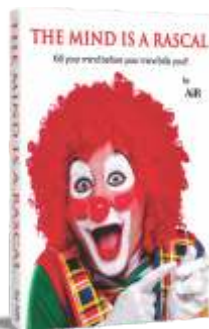
6. I Am Not I. Who Am I?

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 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

You always thought that the mind is king – it is everything. But it's a rascal! 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 book by AiR will show us how the mind makes us suffer. It is time to find the rascal and kill it before it kills us.



8. A Cosmic Drama

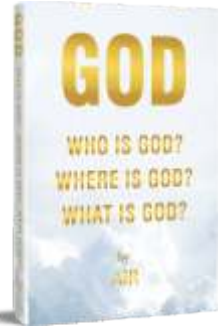
This book challenges the reader to explore the illusory nature of this world – whatever is happening in life is not real; it is nothing but a



Cosmic Drama. If we understand this simple truth, we can enjoy the show called life.

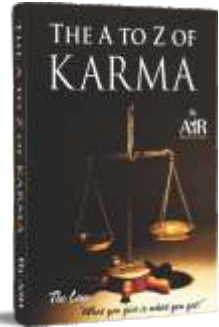
9. Who is God? Where is God? What is God?

These questions might seem simple enough 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 book will change your perception and belief about God and help you Realize God.



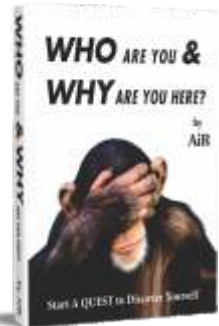
10. The A to Z Karma

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 all misery and sorrow, and ultimately attain 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?

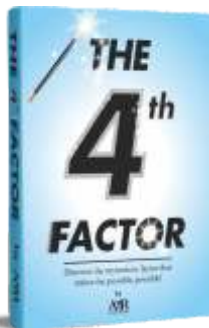
This is a simple book that prompts us to ask the right questions to discover the secret of our life – who we are in reality and what the purpose of our life is. The answers to these questions hold the key to a meaningful and blissful life.



12. The 4th Factor

Man gets upset when his efforts don't bear fruit. This is because man

is ignorant about the 4th Factor that is beyond human comprehension. Without its consent, even the possible becomes impossible. This is an informative book that makes the readers understand why things happen the way they happen!



13. Be Happy in the NOW!

Every human being on earth wants to be happy. There is nobody who enjoys pain. But 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.



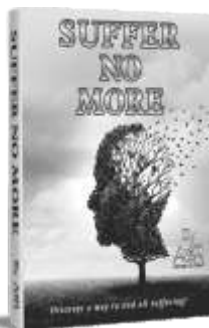
14. Questions You Must Answer before you Die!

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.



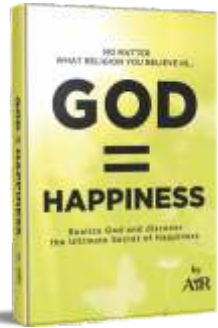
16. Success is not Happiness, Happiness is Success

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.



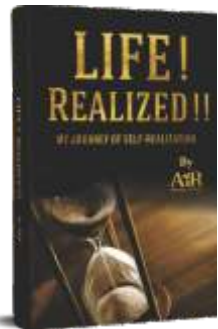
17. God = Happiness

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.



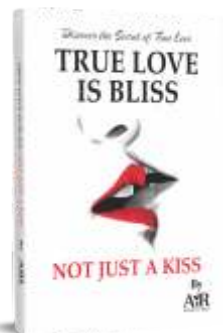
18. Life! Realized!!

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



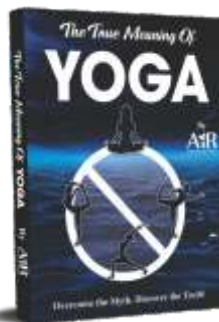
19. True Love is Bliss...Not Just a Kiss

Love, which is a source of joy and happiness, is not really understood by the world. This book is an attempt to explore True Love. 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.



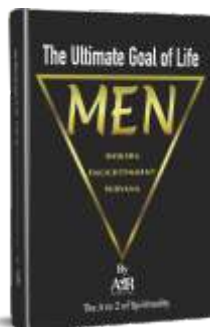
20. True Meaning of Yoga

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 constant union with the Divine. This book attempts to explain how through Yoga one can be liberated from the cycle of death and rebirth.



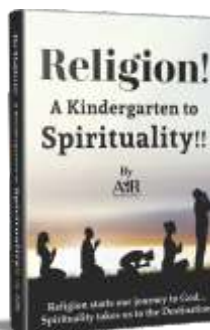
21. The Ultimate Goal of Life, MEN – Moksha, Enlightenment, Nirvana

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.



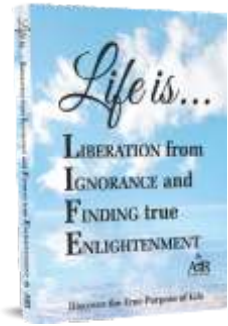
23. Why Bad Things Can't Happen to Good People!

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

Most people just 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 they lose their most precious gift—life itself. This book reveals what life is all about.



25. The Ladder to Heaven

Most people believe in God and aspire 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 the Ladder to Heaven. This book shows a step-by-step way to God-realization.



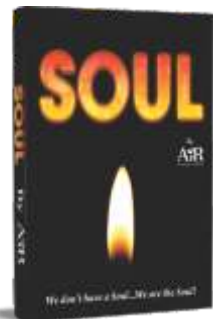
26. FEAR- False Expectations Appearing Real

The world has changed today because of Coronavirus. But it's up to us to live with FEAR or FAITH. There is a difference between Fear and Danger but most of humanity lives with the constant fear of disease and death. Through this book, the author inspires people to live with courage and not panic.



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? We cannot see the Soul, but we all believe that we have one. This book will help genuine



seekers of the truth to do some Soul searching and realize - we don't have a Soul...we are the Soul!

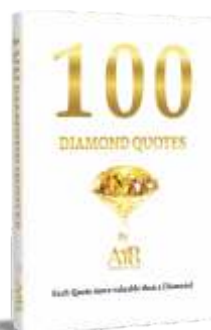
28. But We Pray!

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 help us build a Divine connection through prayer.



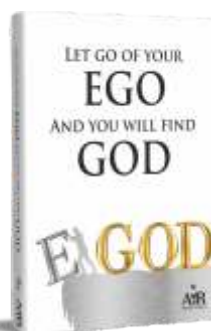
29. 100 Diamond Quotes

Our life needs a spark and a simple quote can make this difference. This book is a selection of AiR's inspiring quotes on happiness, liberation, realization, spirituality, and enlightenment that can trigger a metamorphosis in us in the quest for the true meaning of life, giving us more happiness than all the diamonds of this world.



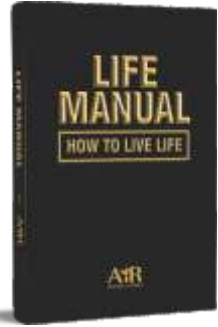
30. Let go of your Ego and you will find God

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 - Mind and the Ego, envelops us in ignorance and we go round and round in circles without discovering God within. If only we let go of our Ego, we will move from Self-realization to God-realization. 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.



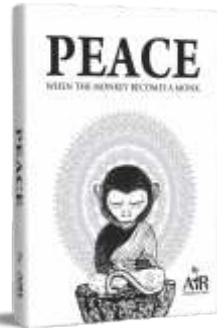
31. Life Manual - How to live life?

Whenever we get a new gadget, we read the operating manual before we start using it. 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, how we should live it and how we should make the most of it. The 'Life Manual' is just the book we have been waiting for.



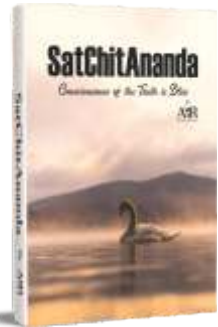
32. PEACE... When the Monkey becomes a Monk!

We human beings are enveloped in 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. 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 go in search of the true meaning of life. If they become conscious of the truth, they experience *Ananda*, a bliss unknown to the common man. This book reveals the secret of SatChitAnanda and shows us the way to live every moment of life with seamless joy and peace.



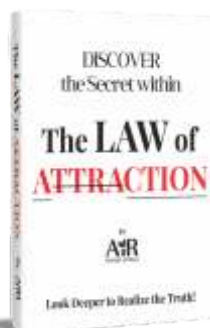
34. Neti Neti, Tat Twam Asi - Not This, Not This, Thou Art That

What is the way for a common man to be enlightened and

realize the truth? This book reveals the key to opening the door to this profound realization. It is *Neti Neti, Tat Twam Asi*, Not This, Not This, Thou Art That. To Realize the Truth of 'Who am I?' the first thing we must discover is 'Who I am not'.

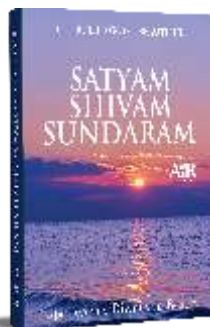
35. Discover the SECRET within The LAW of AttraCTION

Many of us believe in the Law of Attraction, that we can realize our dreams through this magical, mystical law. But then, why aren't some people able to translate their dreams into reality despite believing in this law? This book reveals the 'real secret' within the Law of Attraction that actually works. It is the Law of Action.



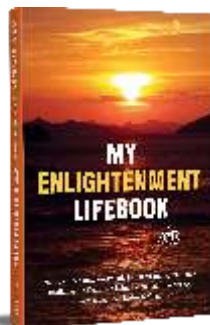
36. Satyam Shivam Sundaram - Experiencing Divinity in Beauty

This book, based on the ancient chant Satyam Shivam Sundaram - the Truth is God is Beautiful, will help us realize a profound truth, that Beauty is Divinity. It will make us experience God in everything beautiful. This book will change the way we pray and build a closer connection with God, as we realize the Divine in the temple of our heart.



37. My Enlightenment Lifebook

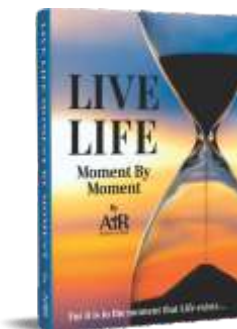
This book is unlike any other book. It is a treasure of crystalized wisdom that is put together in a simplified manner to help one Realize the Truth. It is a book of life. It is a



anxiety, depression, even with the thought of suicide. The list is endless! Is there a way out of this suffering? This book has the secret!

41. LIVE LIFE... Moment by Moment

What is life? Neither is life a journey from birth to death, nor is it the number of years we live on earth. Life is about 'now'. This moment is life. If we lose this moment, we lose life. Unfortunately, most of us let life escape us. We don't live. We just exist! This book will inspire you to Live life in the now, moment by moment!



42. The Spiritual Jigsaw Puzzle

Are you seeking eternal happiness and everlasting peace? Are you in search of the ultimate purpose of life? Then this is the perfect book for you. The 100 Realizations in this book are the 100 pieces of the Spiritual Jigsaw Puzzle, that, once put together, will lead you to be enlightened with the Truth, the ultimate purpose of life. The enlightened picture liberates us from the body, mind and ego, and we become free from all misery and suffering. Our search for God ends. We Realize the Divine in the temple of our heart, experiencing a spiritual ecstasy unknown to common man. This book will help you put the pieces of the Spiritual Jigsaw Puzzle together and create a metamorphosis in your life.



And Now...

43. The 4 Quarters of Life

Coming Soon

44. REBIRTH ... The Mystery Solved!

Ask AiR any question on life, its challenges, struggles and
how we can overcome them!

Today and every day on Zoom at 8 p.m.!

Zoom Meeting ID: 85021104431

Subscribe & follow for Spiritual Videos & Quotes



AiR-Atman in Ravi

THE 4 QUARTERS OF LIFE

Don't let your Life escape you!

Are we truly living life or are we just zooming from womb to tomb? Life has a Purpose. To discover this Purpose, we must divide our life into Four Quarters. As per today's life expectancy most of us will only live to see Three Quarters. Why are these Quarters so important in this journey of life? We all spend our First Quarter in learning and by and large, the Second Quarter in earning. Thereafter, we do not use our Third Quarter in seeking Enlightenment, the Ultimate Goal of human life. We end up suffering and dying, only to be born again. This cycle will go on and on. Before we are gone, we must, like our ancestors did, use the Third Quarter of our life in going on a Quest and Realizing the Truth. Our goal is to realize that we are the Divine Soul, to be liberated from rebirth and be united with God.

Today the world is so fast-paced that we have no time. We just spend our First Quarter to learn and Second Quarter to earn and before we realize it, life is over. It's time to STOP and to discover the right way to live and achieve the Ultimate Goal of life!

By
AiR
Atman in Ravi

Ai.R.

AiR Institute of Realization
Ask Investigate Realize

Kemp Fort Mall, #97, Old Airport Road, Bangalore - 560017

+91 9845155555 | www.air.ind.in | air@air.ind.in



9 789355 264237