

The Ultimate Goal of Life

MEN

MOKSHA
ENLIGHTENMENT
NIRVANA

By
AiR
Atman in Ravi

The A to Z of Spirituality

The Ultimate Goal of Life

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***“ Are we meant to live just to die?
Are we going to stop and find out why?
What is the purpose of our birth?
Why are we here on planet earth? ”***



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Preface

What is the Ultimate Goal of life? The whole world believes it is to be happy, to have peace and bliss, just as it is to escape from misery and suffering. While this seems to be the goal of life, it is not the Ultimate Goal of life because although man enjoys pleasure that he gets from achievement, and peace that he gets from fulfillment, man is still miserable. This is because man has not found a purpose. He has not understood the meaning of life – who he is, where he comes from and where he will go. He has not realized the truth - who created this world and who created him. Man struggles to understand the truth and when he faces misery or difficulties, he just folds his hands, looks up at the sky and prays. But his problems are not solved. Unless man finds the meaning of life, the true purpose of life, he will continue to struggle and be miserable.

Are we meant to live just to die? What is our purpose here on earth? Most of us are so busy in life that we have no time to think about this. Religions all over the globe however, advocate that there is a goal for human life - some call it Moksha, some Enlightenment, and some Nirvana. Different religions give a different title or

name to our Ultimate Goal. What do these religious or spiritual concepts mean? Is Enlightenment the same as Moksha or Nirvana? Are all these concepts different religious dogmas, each unique to its own religion?

To get to the Ultimate Goal, we need to make an inquiry about life. We need to study certain facts. Are we sure to die? Will our human existence end? The world calls this Death. What is Death? What happens after Death? Is it just "Game Over"? If we use our intelligence and ponder over the mystery of Death, of life, we know there is something beyond human comprehension. There is some connection between our birth, our death, and our life in between. Why is it that some people are born fortunate and some in the most unfortunate circumstances? Some are born rich and some poor. Some are born healthy and some physically and mentally challenged. Who controls all this? Who controls this Universe and everything that happens in it? How did all this happen? Science says the entire Cosmos was caused by a humungous 'Big Bang'. But who created this 'Big Bang'?

The earth is a marvel with so many beautiful creatures, insects, plants, animals and we, human beings - each so amazing, so unique! How did all this come about? The mountains and the oceans, the trees, the seas, and the breeze, could all this 'just happen'? Each human being is made up of several trillion cells, each cell is sizzling

with life. Theology comes out with an answer. It is God!
The Creator!

But who is God? Where is God? What is God? Who is the Creator of this universe? Is God just a statue or a saint? No! God is not a picture that anyone can paint. God or the Creator is beyond human comprehension. We don't know who God is, where God is, and what God is, but God *is*.

When we try to study what the Ultimate Goal of Life is, then we will realize the Ultimate Truth. Our Ultimate Goal is Unification with the Divine, the Creator, the one who created us, who gave us breath, without which there would be death. The one who caused our birth on earth, the one who created the planet and the stars, the sun, and the moon and all life that exists.

We seem to be actors on this humongous stage called Earth. This magic show called 'Life' seems to be controlled by a Cosmic Magician through His own universal laws that make things happen in order. Nothing happens by chance. We know that, don't we?

What we don't understand is, who we are and why we are here. What is our purpose on earth? Are we just the physical body or are we the mind? Some think we are the Ego that says 'I'. A few believe that we are the Divine Soul. What is the Soul? It is the Life Energy that is inside us, the Power that gives us breath and when it

leaves, it causes our death. It is like air inside a balloon which gives life to an otherwise dead balloon. When the balloon is deflated, the air merges with the air that is everywhere. So does our Soul!

We are the body, mind, ego, and Soul. All these put together create a human being. We are born with nothing and we see that when people die, they take nothing with them. We all seek Happiness and Peace, but we suffer. The suffering is because of our ignorance. We live in darkness without realizing the Truth.

Different religions in different countries offer different solutions to the issue of Happiness, each advocating their concept to be the best. Some religions promise that their God will solve all our problems, will even suffer on our behalf. Others talk of our actions being important when we face the final day of judgement and go to heaven or hell. Each religion has its own concept of God and Happiness. There are some Eastern faiths that believe in Liberation from misery and sorrow, with some advocating a rebirth based on our past actions.

If we go through all the religions of the world, we will find that they all believe that their God will give their followers a life of peace and bliss. However, not all religions advocate concepts that are tenable. Some advocate beliefs that can no longer be considered relevant, practical or logical. Amongst the various concepts that promise us our Ultimate Goal, a life of

Bliss and Joy without suffering, are the three major religious concepts that are worth a study and review. They are - **Moksha, Enlightenment, and Nirvana.**

If we investigate and study '**MEN**', **Moksha, Enlightenment, and Nirvana**, it will help us understand the **A to Z of Spirituality** and lead us to discover the Ultimate Purpose of life.

**“ What is the Ultimate Goal of life?
Why this misery, why this strife?
Instead of living with Peace and Bliss,
The Joy of this beautiful world we miss. ”**

CHAPTER

01

**What is the Ultimate
Goal of Life?**

Most of humanity rightly believes that our Ultimate Goal is Happiness. Everybody wants to be happy, but unfortunately, not everybody is. We live with the sole purpose of doing things that can put a smile on our face. There are some who just exist, they drag through life. It seems like their life has no meaning, no purpose, and no goal. We all come into this world, live for about 5 to 10 decades and then depart. Very few really stop to find out what is our true purpose. There are some who feel that they have discovered the secret that the goal of life is not just to be happy, but to make others happy too! Is this true?

Can we be happy all the time? While we all experience pleasure and joy, each one of us suffers misery and pain. We live with stress, fear, worry, anger and anxiety and this seems to be part of the life fabric that we are woven into. While we seek pleasure and shun pain, it seems that there is no way to escape from misery. Very rarely do we find people who make this their Ultimate Goal, not just to enjoy bouts of happiness, but to achieve the state of Everlasting Peace and Eternal Joy without clouds of negativity spoiling their bright sky.

The most common way people try to achieve this Ultimate Goal of Happiness is through success and achievement. Most people think that success is Happiness because achievement gives them a feeling of exhilaration and excitement. There is no doubt that achievement and success create pleasure and

happiness, but the question is - can we be successful all the time? We desire and when the desire is achieved, we become happy. But when it is not, we become disappointed and feel discouraged. It feels like we are defeated. Some people, therefore, stop this mad chase to be an ace in the race of life. Instead of getting caught in the maze, they try to live with grace on the second peak of happiness.

While the first peak of happiness seems to be Achievement, some people are lucky to take an exit from this highway because they realize that such a peak doesn't exist. They transcend their greed and try to live with contentment, fulfilling their needs. These are the few lucky people who go beyond pleasure and live with peace on the second peak of happiness, Fulfillment. They stop this mad chase of success and achievement and live joyously and peacefully. But less than one-fifth of the world is lucky to do so.

While this minority who leaves the first peak of happiness, Achievement and scales the second peak, Fulfillment, lives peacefully and blissfully, is their life free from misery and suffering? Unfortunately, no! Everybody who lives on earth, who has been given this human birth, experiences both joy and sorrow. They are both glad and sad as they live through this journey called 'Life'. Less than one percent of humanity tries to make this their Ultimate Goal, not just to live with Contentment and Fulfillment, but to be Liberated from misery and sorrow.

Is there a way to escape misery and suffering? Yes, there is! In fact, this is the Ultimate Goal of every human being, not just to live with pleasure and peace but to be liberated from pain and suffering. The only way to get to this Ultimate Destination is by realizing the true purpose and meaning of life. Only a few are fortunate to go on a quest. They ask questions and investigate their doubts about life to ratify their beliefs. They are the ones who realize the Truth and achieve the Ultimate Goal of life.

Most of humanity suffers misery and pain. Not just the pain of the body which we all have to suffer, we also suffer the misery of the mind. As we age, our body tends to face all kinds of aches and pains. We also experience some diseases and ultimately the body dies. Nobody on earth can escape from this physical pain. Today, the world has advanced and we have medicines that can nullify physical pain. Not just ordinary painkillers, there are advanced opioids and drugs that can kill any kind of pain. If we can't reduce pain with medication, then we can use anesthesia to create an absence of physical pain. But what about mental distress? Who on earth is able to live without worry, stress, regret, anxiety, fear, revenge, guilt, and hate? We all experience such misery of the mind. While we are able to take painkillers to overcome physical suffering, how do we transcend mental pain? Then comes the agony of the ego. We are all subject to the ego making us miserable. We get angry, and upset over so many things

just because of the ego - the ego that demands and has expectations. All these together make us suffer the pain of the ego, the body, and the mind.

Seekers of Truth, seeking the Ultimate Goal of life ask questions and investigate how they can achieve this state of Everlasting Peace and Eternal Happiness, where there is no suffering, misery, and pain. Not only do they study all religions, but they also make every attempt to analyze every known philosophy and theology to achieve their Goal. Let us glance at the efforts of seekers who want to realize the Truth, on how they can achieve the Ultimate Goal of life.

**“ Most people don't live through life, they drift!
Alas, they lose the Happiness gift!
But there are a few who go on a quest,
For them, life is at its best! ”**

SUMMARY - CHAPTER 1

What is the Ultimate Goal of Life?

- We live with the sole purpose of doing things that can put a smile on our face. While we seek pleasure and shun pain, it seems that there is no way to escape from misery.
- Most people think that success is happiness because achievement gives them a feeling of exhilaration and excitement. This is the first peak- Achievement.
- But the question is - can we be successful all the time? We desire and when the desire is fulfilled, we become happy. But when it is not, we become disappointed and feel discouraged.
- There are a few lucky people who go beyond pleasure and live with peace as they scale the second peak of happiness, Fulfillment and live with Contentment.
- Those who aspire to achieve the Ultimate Goal of Life, go on a quest, ask questions and investigate the truth behind their beliefs.
- Less than one percent of humanity tries to move beyond the second peak of happiness - Fulfillment, realizes the Truth and attains Liberation from misery and sorrow.

CHAPTER

02

**How can we achieve
the Ultimate Goal of Life?**

While every human being seeks to be happy and hates to be unhappy and while it is a universal principle that humanity seeks pleasure and shuns pain, it is also a known fact that a life without sorrow and unhappiness doesn't exist. It's like a mirage in the desert, an illusion. Since all of humanity is seeking this Ultimate Goal of everlasting Bliss, the entire world is filled with options and possibilities and claims to have the solution to achieve this ultimate state of happiness.

Manufacturers of beauty creams and luxury soaps call out to women to use their product and become more beautiful so they can have happiness. The world has countless brands offering jewellery, clothes, and accessories for the same reason. Men are attracted by success, money and even erotic pleasure. Kids are offered toys to make them happy, just like senior citizens are given options that can ensure a secure and healthy life.

But man is intelligent. Man doesn't get carried away by these transitory solutions. Man knows that his ultimate happiness comes from God, the Creator of this universe. Therefore, most of humanity has a religion. A small minority is either atheist or agnostic. The others go to temples, mosques, churches, synagogues or monasteries. The names are endless. Man is constantly going to God for his happiness.

Why do we fold our hands in prayer? Most of humanity

prays because they seek happiness, peace of mind and a life free of problems. We pray because we believe that God is a solution to our pain and misery and the giver of peace and joy. Still, we are unhappy! Although the promise from our religions is broadcasted on loudspeakers, the common man has not found a solution to this problem of suffering and pain. If we study the history of religion, God, and prayer, what do we find? It is very ambiguous as the written records available are less than 5000 years old. And we cannot just presume anything to be true.

A peek into history reveals some strange beliefs of ancient man. An Egyptian script discovered recently by archaeologists and said to be over 4500 years old, reveals that the ancient Egyptians believed in over 700 Gods. They used to worship the God they needed help from. In the East, the Hindu Faith or *Sanatana Dharma* – the Eternal Religion without a beginning, started with the belief that God had no name and form. Later it transformed to Hinduism, a religion that believes in thousands of Gods. The Abrahamic religion which led to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, believed in one God and that their God was the *only* God. These advocated that we would go to heaven or hell after death.

The challenge with the monotheistic religions is not their belief in heaven and hell based on our actions, good or bad, but the question - who will go to heaven or

hell as we clearly see that a person who dies is cremated or buried here on earth. Who will suffer or be rewarded if the body lies below the earth and becomes one with it? If we try to go deeper into the Truth, we realize that even if there is a day of judgement and we will face our good deeds and sins, it has to be through some kind of rebirth or resurrection.

Ancient history is based on presumptions and assumptions. Some historians talk of people praying to Gods of nature - the Sun God, the Wind God, the Water God and so on. There were other ancient religions that were practised in the far East, but many of these were wiped out due to the cultural and political circumstances that existed then. In many cases people were forced not to believe in God.

History across the globe, by and large, reveals that people went to their God for happiness, just as they prayed when they suffered in misery and pain. It hardly matters which religion started first, but this gives us an idea of how man has been praying for the last 4000 to 5000 years and why. It hasn't changed till date with people continuing to flock to religious institutions for the sake of peace and happiness, just as we pray to be protected from sorrow and problems. Scriptures of all religions reveal the ultimate promise - that their God will shower happiness just as their God will protect His people from suffering and pain.

In the Eastern world, because Hinduism became full of rituals and superstitions, it led to Hinduism branching out into Buddhism and Jainism which gained popularity amongst followers. While we are not really concerned about how many people follow each religion, we are more interested in the concepts religions advocate.

All religions believe in God. But the fact is, God is not made of skin and bone. God is a power beyond human comprehension. God is a power that is Omnipresent, Omniscient and Omnipotent. This is accepted by most religions. But people do not go beyond religion to realize the Truth about God. Probably, it would be better to use the word 'Creator' rather than use the term 'God' which gets humanity even further confused about who, where, and what God is.

Today's Hindu concepts seem untenable with there being three primary Gods, the Creator, the Preserver, and the Destroyer. It becomes further untenable with the number of Gods that people believe in – a God of Wealth, a God of Wisdom and so on. Unfortunately, God has become some kind of a magician rather than being the Divine Creator, a Power unknown to man.

While the current Hindu beliefs do not offer a solution to the Ultimate Goal of life, the ancient Hindu Faith, the *Sanantana Dharma*, speaks of Liberation, often known as Moksha. It inspires followers to delve deep and realize the truth about life.

While the Hindu concept of Moksha continues to exist in all branches of Hinduism today, it has been diluted by idol worship, rituals, and superstitions. Of course, children need a God with name and form to understand the powerful Creator, but we must learn to grow up. Instead, Ancient Hinduism transformed over the centuries and made religious priests even more powerful than kings and these “god-men” manipulated the spiritual concept of Moksha that led to its decline. We shall get into the details of Moksha a little later in this book.

Due to such beliefs in Hinduism, one rich Hindu prince – Siddhartha Gautama, left his palace and wandered amongst genuine Hindu mystics who lived up in the mountains. He sat in deep meditation until he realized the Truth. He founded Buddhism and concept of Nirvana, our Ultimate Goal which will be described in detail later.

Since Buddhism offered people a simpler and practical way to attain peace and happiness, it gained popularity. If one studies world religions, one will realize how the entire world seemed to decline in religion as humanity got caught in living a life of myth and superstition. In Europe, this period was known as the 'Dark Ages'. But in reality, the Dark Ages was a global phenomenon with a gradual decline of religion as people started asking questions objecting to illogical rituals and meaningless superstitions and dogmas.

One may come across the term Enlightenment. A detailed study of Enlightenment follows, but this concept of Enlightenment as the name suggests is about being Enlightened. It seemed that the world was living in dark ignorance, and thus people were suffering. It was important to overcome ignorance and to be Enlightened with the truth.

Although Enlightenment is a very recent global concept, it offers a practical solution as it questions every ritual and every superstition, demanding an explanation before accepting anything. No doubt, followers of such a philosophy do not accept any theology, just because it is a family tradition. In the quest of happiness, the modern world is not willing to accept anything other than the truth. However, has such questioning led to the realization of the truth? The world and its pleasures, as well as our own mind and ego, create a barrier. One cannot reach the Ultimate Goal, without the Realization of the Truth.

While MEN, Moksha, Enlightenment, and Nirvana, are the 3 major roads leading to the Ultimate Goal, we may investigate other options, but we should not get carried away or be lost in them. Our life is short and before the journey is over, we must realize the Truth, no matter which religion we follow.

Religion is just the kindergarten to spirituality. If we study the scriptures of all religions, we will find evidence

How can we achieve the Ultimate Goal of Life?

of the Ultimate Truth. The Truth is one, though it may be spoken off in many ways, expressed through many languages or advocated by many religions.

As a seeker seeking the Ultimate Goal of life, let us study MEN, the 3 most popular solutions, Moksha, Enlightenment, Nirvana that can lead us to a life of Ultimate Bliss, Peace and Joy without any misery and sorrow.

“ ***Religion doesn't matter in the search for Truth,
Nor does it matter if one is aged or a youth.
What matters is the achievement of Joy and Peace,
And that life's misery and suffering cease!*** ”

SUMMARY - CHAPTER 2

How can we achieve the Ultimate Goal of Life?

- Man knows that his Ultimate Happiness comes from God, the Creator of this universe. Therefore, most of humanity follows a religion and only a small minority is either atheist or agnostic.
- If one studies world religion, one will realize how the entire world seemed to decline in religion as humanity got caught in living a life of myth and superstition.
- While the Hindu Faith or *Sanatana Dharma's* concept of Moksha continues to exist in all branches of Hinduism today, it has been diluted by idol worship, rituals, and superstitions.
- Due to this, a Hindu prince Siddhartha renounced his palace and was eventually enlightened as the Buddha. He brought about Buddhism and the concept of Nirvana.
- The decline of religion and belief in God was a global phenomenon and there was darkness everywhere. This resulted in the birth of a movement called Enlightenment, a movement that would help humanity eradicate the darkness of ignorance.
- As a seeker seeking the Ultimate Goal of life, let us study the 3 most popular solutions, Moksha, Enlightenment, Nirvana that can lead us to a life of Ultimate Bliss, Peace and Joy without any sorrow.

CHAPTER

03

Moksha

The Hindu Faith, a faith that seems to have no beginning was called *Sanatana Dharma*, the Eternal Religion. It advocates that Moksha is the Ultimate Goal of life. It is a state of eternal Bliss. Life is an endless cycle of birth, death, and rebirth into a physical universe. Hindu scriptures describe Moksha as the spiritual Liberation from this continuous cycle of death and rebirth and attainment of an eternal and blissful state that transcends all suffering of the body, mind, and ego. Before starting a thesis on the concept of Moksha, it must be clear that we are not reviewing Moksha as per the doctrine of Hinduism, which has drifted away from the original concept of Moksha. Rather, Moksha under review here is a highly spiritual concept revealed by the sages who lived centuries ago.

It is said that over 4000 years ago when the Hindu Faith, *Sanatana Dharma*, had still not transformed to become Hinduism, people accepted Moksha as the Ultimate Goal of life. Not only was it considered an escape from the cycle of death and rebirth, it was also Liberation from misery and sorrow when alive, with the realization of the Truth that we are the Divine *Atman* or the Soul. Today's Hinduism is very different from the original Hindu Faith, *Sanatana Dharma*. Hinduism of today seems to believe that there are thousands of Gods that the Hindus worship. Along with this, people perform rituals and follow superstitions that dilute the original teachings and beliefs. However, all sections of

Hindus still believe that the Goal of life for every Hindu is Moksha.

Moksha, also known as *Mukti*, literally means freedom. It implies freedom from all suffering. The suffering of body, mind, and ego. How does one escape all this suffering? The Realization that one is not the gross body that suffers physical pain and one is not the subtle body that is tormented by fear, worry, and anxiety, results in *Mukti* or freedom from suffering. This ultimately leads to Moksha.

We, human beings seek happiness but unfortunately, our life is a mix of Joy and sorrow. We pray to God to fulfill our desires and to solve our problems. But still, no human being can escape from misery. Life on earth is such that we experience both happiness and suffering. Suppose it was all pleasure and no pain, would anyone ask for freedom from this world? This constant suffering becomes the cause of seeking Liberation. Nobody really wants to suffer but because we live and die in ignorance, we continue to suffer. We suffer the pain of the physical body, the emotional pain of the mind and the agony of the ego. Don't we see people fighting to achieve material success and becoming miserable over petty issues? This is because we are so deeply embedded in ignorance that we don't realize that nothing belongs to us. Then, we become miserable because of fear, worry, anxiety, regret, anger, hate, jealousy, and revenge. And we continue to suffer

due to the non-realization of the Truth that everything is *Maya* - a Cosmic drama. We must surrender and accept, realizing that life is *Mithya*, an illusion just like a dream that will soon be over. But we don't realize this and continue to suffer.

Moksha or Liberation from the continuous cycle of death and rebirth from this world is based on the belief that just like a dream, life on earth is also *Mithya*, an illusion – untrue and transitory. We think that only a dream is a dream, but our life is real. It is *Satya*, the Truth. Moksha advocates that life on earth is not *Satya*. It is not real. It is a myth but we realize this only at death. As long as we are alive, we don't realize that we are the Divine Soul. Instead, we think that we are a body-mind complex and we become prisoners, imprisoned in a prison of ignorance. We live a life enveloped by darkness.

The doctrine of Moksha attributes this to *Maya* – a Cosmic illusion. We believe in whatever we see and we think it to be real but in reality, it is not. This is because of the two powers of *Maya* - the power of projection and the power to conceal. First, *Maya* projects a myth – the constant unfolding of events on earth. By doing so, *Maya's* second power conceals the Truth. This dual power of *Maya*, first to project an illusion and then, to conceal the Truth, stops us from realizing who we truly are. This leads us to getting caught in *Samsara*, the world and makes us constantly suffer.

This world is *Samsara*. In this *Samsara*, we are carried away by sensual pleasures and our desires make us miserable. This *Samsara* makes us attached both to people and to possessions and seeking pleasures, we live and die without realizing the Truth about the *Mithya* of *Maya* and *Samsara* – the truth that this world and its pleasures are an illusion. We don't realize that everything in this alluring world is not everlasting and eternal. It is like a momentary mirage in the desert and due to our ignorance, we think it to be real and we suffer. Moksha is Liberation from such ignorance. It is transcending such suffering, ultimately being liberated at death from this body-mind complex and being united with the Divine, rather than being born again and again, due to our Karma.

What is Karma? Literally, it means action. The Law of Karma states that whatever be our action, good or bad, the same will return to us. Karma is based on the universal law, '*As you sow, so shall you reap*'. The law states that our present circumstances are not a matter of luck or chance. These circumstances are our own Karma or past actions that are returning back to us. But what happens to those actions that we perform, good or bad, that we do not redeem before our death? These are redeemed when we are reborn in a new body. There seems to be no other option but to believe in this doctrine.

How does it work? Every action of ours is recorded whether it is good or bad and the Law of Karma makes

no mistake. It returns to us our good deeds as fortune or luck, just as it returns our bad deeds as our ill-fortune. In reality, there is no good luck or bad luck. Our destiny is the result of our Karma, our own actions. When something goes wrong in our lives and we can't explain it, Karma can. We must have committed some sin in the past. It may be in our distant past and we have forgotten about it or it could be in our previous life. But Karma doesn't forget. It records everything. Even after we die, our Karma remains in our account. The body dies but the ME - Mind and Ego don't die. As per the Law of Karma, we are reborn to redeem our sins or to enjoy the rewards of our good deeds. The sages of the Hindu land inferred that some people are born in fortunate and some in unfortunate circumstances due to their own past Karma. It wasn't luck. They believed that just like this whole universe runs on certain universal laws, so does our life which is controlled by the law of Karma. If there was no law of Karma that was unfolding, then why are some people born rich and some poor? Consider the universe - the earth rotates on its own axis, revolving around the sun. How does all this happen so perfectly? All this is controlled by certain universal laws. One such law is the law of Karma.

How does one achieve Moksha? How can one be free from both, suffering in this lifetime, as well as an escape from rebirth again and again that causes us to suffer? Moksha prescribes four doors that one should pass

through before one is ready to start their journey of freedom or *Mukti*. These four doors are *Vivek* or Discrimination, *Vairagya* or Dispassion, *Shat Sampat* or Discipline, and *Mumukshutva* or Desire for the Divine.

The first door is Discrimination. For one to attain Moksha, one has to live a life of Discrimination, referred to by the sages as *Vivek*. What does this mean? The mind is constantly producing thoughts, up to 50,000 thoughts a day. These thoughts make us sink in the *Bhoga* of *Samsara*, the sensual pleasures of this world. As such, it is impossible to get Moksha. What is the solution?

For one to discriminate, one has to activate one's intellect, the faculty that discriminates every thought and decides what is right and what is wrong. When our intellect takes charge of our mind, then no thought is executed into action without first being filtered by the intellect. To attain Moksha one should live with Discrimination. In normal human beings, the intellect is weak and does not discriminate every thought. Thus, it becomes difficult to be in Yoga or Union with the Divine, which is the only way to Moksha because otherwise, one is constantly sinking in the ocean of worldly thoughts.

Prakash had a dormant intellect. His mind was king. Whenever he saw wine or whiskey, his mind would be attracted and he would soon be intoxicated. Once

intoxicated, he would lose his power to make the right decisions in whatever he did. Instead of being the master, he became a slave. He could never achieve Moksha.

To achieve Moksha one must be a *Stithpragya*, one with a steady intellect. If one doesn't use this God-given gift that each one of us has, the Intellect, then we will fail to discriminate and sink in the miseries of this world. Though they appear to be pleasures on the outside, they are poison in reality.

The second door to Moksha is Dispassion or Detachment which is called by the sages as *Vairagya*. How is this possible? We are all connected to our family, friends, and society. How can we detach from the world?

A true seeker of Moksha doesn't try to run away from the world, but being in the world, he is internally detached. He is not attached to his possessions and people that he is connected with. On the outside, he appears to be a normal human being, but deep within he lives with detachment, disconnected from the world and connected with the Divine.

To be detached, one has to live with Dispassion. The moment we are passionate, and we desire and crave, we become a slave to our own passions. If one wants to attain Moksha, one has to live dispassionately, and detached from the attachments of this world so that one can be free to unite with the Divine.

Karan was very passionate about his success, but he also wanted to live a spiritual life and achieve Moksha. His Guru or spiritual master advised him not to start another business when he successfully wound up his old business in which he had made millions, far more than what he needed. It was an ideal time for Karan to transform his life. However, being passionate about being successful, Karan started another big business. His passion led him to become a slave of his desire. How could he achieve the Ultimate Goal of Moksha?

The third door is Discipline of body and mind. To achieve Moksha, one needs the perfect discipline of body and mind. The sages prescribed six wealths which were in reality, disciplines. To simplify the prescription and understand it, one needs the perfect discipline of body and mind. We human beings are said to be like a chariot with 5 horses. The 5 horses are the 5 senses that we are blessed with. The reigns of the horses is our mind. We, the Divine Soul, are the charioteer. To discipline our life, we must take charge of the 5 senses by controlling the mind. If we don't, then our 5 senses will behave like 5 wild horses and destroy our peace and bliss. We must discipline both our body and mind through Sadhana or Spiritual Discipline. This is not easy and it takes time to develop such discipline, but without discipline, one cannot achieve Moksha. Control of the body and control of the mind makes us live like a tortoise that has a protective shell. Whenever enemies attack, it withdraws within and protects itself.

Such is the way to live. Discipline creates Forbearance, Faith and Fortitude, key elements to attain Moksha.

The fourth door is Desire for the Divine and Liberation. The sages called this door *Mumukshutva*. We human beings are not able to be liberated because we desire and crave for worldly possessions. We fall in love with people, knowing very well that these relationships are temporary. Our ignorance makes us love an illusion and we fail to love the Divine. We fail to crave for Liberation.

There was once a prince. He was over 30 years old and the king and queen were very worried because he had not liked a single girl and thus, had remained unmarried. One day, as he was searching for some treasure in the attic of the palace, his eye fell upon the painting of a very beautiful maiden. It looked like she was in her early teens. He instantly fell in love with her. When he looked closely at the painting, it was dated over 15 years back. He decided that he would marry this girl and nobody else. He took the picture and asked the ministers of the kingdom to find this girl. A search was conducted but this girl was nowhere to be found. The news reached the Queen. Obviously, she was keen to get the Prince married and called for the picture. She was aghast when she saw the painting. "Oh my God, this is the Prince himself", she said.

Several years ago, a play was being performed in the palace and they could not find a pretty maid. So the queen had dressed up the Prince as a gorgeous little girl for the drama. This painting was painted at that time.

The Prince was getting very disappointed that they could not find the girl and the Queen did not want to break his heart by revealing the Truth. The advisor of the King was a wise man. He took the picture to the Prince and revealed the Truth. He said, "This painting is 'you', my dear Prince." The Prince had a hearty laugh. How could he marry himself? His despair disappeared when he realized the Truth. The Prince overcame his ignorance and smiled at his love for himself, the pretty Princess in the painting, who was none other than he himself.

We too need a wise man to help us overcome the illusion. We need a spiritual master who will lead us to Moksha, making us realize that love in this world is not eternal. If we are fortunate to become *Mumukshus*, then our Desire for the Divine and for Liberation will lead us to be liberated. If one wants to achieve the Ultimate Goal of life – Liberation or Moksha, one must pass through the four doors which are pre-requisites for attaining Moksha.

When one builds their life on these 4 pillars, one has created a firm foundation to be liberated. These 4, together help us realize the Truth about Life, about who we are and why we are here.

Who are we in reality? If one wants to achieve Moksha, one must realize the Truth that we are the *Atman*, the Divine Spirit or the Soul. Every individual being is a manifestation of God. Every Soul, every *Atman* is God itself, and therefore, when we talk to somebody, we

should realize that we are talking to a manifestation of God. Maybe the body and mind are not God, they are just illusions. But the soul inside every human is God. The truth is that we are all Divine beings going through a human experience. God exists in every animal, tree, and living being, and therefore, we should treat animals with care and love. When we touch a tree, we should realize that there is God within it. The fact is that we are the soul, the *Atman*! We continue to live as per our Karma - the Karma we brought to this world. When our Karma is over, this *Jivatman* or embodied soul will drop dead. Whether the *Atman* merges with the *Paramatman*, or the ME - the Mind and Ego continue their journey of being born again in some other form depends on our evolution as a realized soul. If our Self-realization is complete, we will be liberated and not be reborn. 'ME', our Mind and Ego, stops us from realizing that we are the Divine Soul, *Atman* or Energy. Due to ignorance, we are unable to overcome the mind, transcend the ego and control the senses.

What is our purpose on earth? The purpose of life is to realize God, for the *Atman* to unite with the *Paramatman*. For the Divine soul to be liberated and to be unified with the Divine Creator. Many of us think that the purpose of our life is to be happy, to raise children, to build empires, and to have name and fame. We don't realize that all this is transitory. Look at someone dying. Does that person take anything with him? Absolutely not! We should realize the truth that

nothing belongs to us - not the wealth, buildings, or assets. They are all just possessions that come into our life and go during this short journey. We cannot even take our near and dear ones with us at the end of our life journey! Therefore, the goal is to be liberated and to unite with the Divine. God is everywhere and God is in everything! For the *Atman* to be liberated from the body-mind complex, to achieve Moksha, we must live in constant union with the Divine. This is called Yoga.

Yoga is a very important step on the path towards attaining Moksha. Real Yoga is not just physical exercise or breathing techniques, but a union with the Divine. Like a SIM card is constantly connected to its network, we must live a life of constant Yoga or union. It may be through devotion or through meditation, spiritual study, and acts of service to others. We must remain connected with the Ultimate Power whom we call God. Yoga must be made a way of life. The cycle of Yoga gives us an opportunity to live with *Dhyaana* Yoga, Yoga of meditation, *Karma* Yoga, the Yoga of action, *Gyaana* Yoga, Yoga of wisdom and education, or *Bhakti* Yoga, Yoga of devotion. Whatever be the Yoga, as long as we live in union or in Yoga, we can achieve Moksha or Liberation. A person who wants to achieve Moksha, becomes a true Yogi, one who lives a yogic life.

Dhyaana Yoga is the Yoga of meditation. A true Yogi spends his life in *Dhyaana*, which literally means concentration, focus, attention, and contemplation. It

starts with silence. It calls for shutting off all our 5 body senses. It also calls for shutting off the mind. This is very difficult because the mind is like a monkey, it jumps from thought to thought. Even if we sit in a Yogic posture, with all our 5 senses switched off, it is practically impossible to switch off the mind. The moment we try to go into complete silence, there is one common possibility – we fall asleep. Yoga of meditation or *Dhyaana* is not about sleeping. It is about being awake while we seem asleep. It is about being conscious, awake and aware of our true reality. The Divine Soul in us, during spells of *Dhyaana* Yoga, gets connected with the Universal Cosmic Soul and there is a transfer of superconscious energy.

These moments of silence or *Dhyaana* help in many ways. First, it brings peace of mind by slowing down the production of thoughts. As it reduces thoughts, toxic energy that comes from fear, regret, worry, anxiety and other negative thoughts ceases to exist in that moment. At this point when one is in *Dhyaana* Yoga, silent and conscious, with their super consciousness united with the Cosmic consciousness, one receives Divine messages which become a command for the future actions of their life.

Once a Yogi finishes his spell of meditation, contemplation or *Dhyaan*, then what? If he has a clear direction from the Divine that appears as an intuition, Realization or telepathic thought, he gets into action. This is called *Karma*

Yoga. The Yogi acts as the instrument of the Divine and executes the Divine Will with total devotion and dedication. Not for a moment does the Yogi think that he is doing anything. He realizes that he is nothing. He is not the ego, mind or body. He is the Divine Life Energy, the Soul, the *Chi*, the *Prana* or the *Atman* that flows in each of the approximately 37 trillion cells that seem to form his physical body. As a human being embodied in this body-mind complex, the true Yogi remains in Union or Yoga through his actions. He is conscious of the fact that these are not his actions. He is just acting on behalf of the Divine. He is doing nothing; everything is being done by the Divine. So, in the end, whatever be the result of the action, he offers it back to the Divine as a humble offering from a Yogi who is performing *Karma* Yoga or the Yoga of action.

Normally, people who are not Yogis, act as the ego, mind, and body. Their actions invoke an equal reaction as per the Law of Karma. This universal law states that what you give is what you get or as you sow, so shall you reap. It is the law of the boomerang that works on the principle - what goes around comes around. Normal human beings are faced with their past Karma in every circumstance of Life, just as their present action causes the Karma for future circumstances. The cycle of Karma goes on and doesn't stop at death. The body dies, but the mind and ego are reborn to face the previous Karma that have not been redeemed. However, a Yogi is free from Karma. Because he is a

Karma Yogi, none of his Karma is his Karma. Karma means action, but the Yogi doesn't own any of his actions. Although he acts, he is acting on behalf of the Divine as the Divine instrument, and therefore, he is liberated from Karma. This Liberation from Karma not only liberates him from all suffering of the ego, mind, and body but also liberates him from a possible future rebirth. Thus, *Karma* Yoga has a profound meaning in the overall philosophy of Yoga.

The next Yoga is *Bhakti* Yoga. *Bhakti* Yoga is Union with the Divine through any form of prayer or devotion. When we are born, as kids, we normally have faith in a personal God. Whatever be our religion and whoever is our God, we love our God with heart and Soul. Our faith grows stronger into belief and trust and causes our enthusiasm. We visit temples because of *Bhakti* or love for God. Normally, the emotion of *Bhakti* is very strong, born out of Love for the Divine. It grows into a deep passion and obsession, seeking God above everything else.

Bhakti is common, but *Bhakti* Yoga is not common. Billions around the world have *Bhakti* or devotion, but not a fraction of them are in *Bhakti* Yoga. *Bhakti* Yoga calls for Realization that we are the Divine Soul, not the body that we seem to be. We are none other than the Divine Consciousness that is everywhere. Realization of this, when expressed in the form of *Bhakti*, creates a spiritual ecstasy unknown to man. No doubt all this is

Bhakti - performing prayers and rituals, reciting the name of God, singing *Bhajans* or hymns, but it is doing all this in Union with the Divine that makes us enjoy *Bhakti* Yoga, with the realization that we are a manifestation of the Divine. *Bhakti* Yoga or the Yoga of devotion is magical because it creates that deep longing in an embodied Soul to be liberated and be united with the Divine. It is *Bhakti* Yoga that craves for the wave to become part of the ocean. Unfortunately, unlike the wave that naturally comes from the ocean and goes back into it, we human beings are prisoners in a body-mind complex, facing Karma due to our past actions. To be liberated, one of the most effective Yogas taught by spiritual masters is *Bhakti* Yoga.

When we love the Divine so intensely and we pray, we even cry in entreaty. This passion for the Divine creates a union that helps us remain in Yoga and finally achieve our Ultimate Goal of Liberation. *Bhakti* Yoga is also a very Joyous experience of a true Yogi. In this Yoga of devotion, a Yogi is so lost in his Union with the Divine, that he transcends the world and its allurements, remaining in a state of Divine Yoga. Some people spend their entire life in *Bhakti* Yoga. Unfortunately, sometimes, there is a very strong *Bhakti*, but no Union or Yoga. What is needed is *Bhakti* Yoga, being united with the Divine, in devotion with the Realization of Truth that the Lord is none other than the Divine Soul, that the Lord is no different from us, that we are nothing but a manifestation of the Divine. Sometimes, we need *Bhakti* Yoga to lead us

into the final step of Yoga - *Gyaana* Yoga, the Yoga of Education which helps us realize the Truth as we gain intuitive wisdom when in our quest and we are united with the Divine.

Gyaana Yoga is the Yoga of wisdom or Education. Yoga is not just about being in Union with the Divine through meditation, action, and devotion. We need Education. How else will we realize the Truth? Every child that is born must learn to develop their faculty of intelligence. We learn to discriminate between right and wrong, just as we learn to contemplate and build our devotion. However, each human being is covered by a blanket of ignorance, dark ignorance that we must be liberated from. No doubt, we can overcome this darkness by the Yoga of meditation, if we are spiritually inspired by an intuitive experience. We can also overcome this darkness when we serve the suffering humanity as a blessing from the Divine due to our *Karma* Yoga. Another way to overcome this darkness is through our devotion. Our devotion to the Divine can open the doors and enlighten us with the Truth. Whatever be the Yoga that triggers our Realization of the Truth, it takes the form of *Gyaana*, or wisdom.

The Yoga of education, wisdom or knowledge, *Gyaana* Yoga, is a Yoga that uses the intellect to discriminate and realize the Truth. A true Yogi who wants to be ever-united with the Divine, often spends hours, even

days engrossed in the study of scripture. He reads theology and philosophy and tries to discriminate between reality and illusion to realize the Truth about our existence, the creation of this universe and the Creator. A true Yogi spends time in *Gyaana* Yoga till he has the spiritual 'Aha!' moment.

Some people divide Yoga into four distinct types as enumerated above but some believe Yoga is one seamless state of living life. It is only through Yoga that we can be liberated from the world and united with the Divine. It is Yoga that leads us to the realization of the truth.

What is this Realization all about? Normally it starts with the simple Realization that we are not the body. For this, *Gyaana* Yoga is needed. Education to understand what the body is, how it is formed, how it deteriorates and dies. *Gyaana* Yoga is also needed to find the mind. Where is the mind? We can find our toes and our nose, we can find our heart and our brain, but where is the mind we cannot find.

Without *Gyaana* Yoga or Yoga of education, we will never realize that the mind is an illusion. Ultimately, *Gyaana* Yoga makes us realize that we are the Divine Soul. In fact, it is this Yoga that makes us realize that we are nothing, just energy, a manifestation of the Divine. *Gyaana* is one of the 4 Yogas that keeps us constantly united with the Divine.

What stops us from Yoga? The doctrine of Moksha says that it is *Avidya* or ignorance. We live life thinking we are the ego, mind, and body. Our own mind stops us from realizing the Truth of who we *truly* are and why we are here. Together, the Ego and the Mind gets caught in a web of desires. We should let go of our desires and our ego. One of the most important components of achieving Moksha is letting go of the things that tie us to our life in the physical world. This is part of the reason that most people renounce society and live a simple, ascetic lifestyle once they are ready to achieve Moksha. Practising selfless acts of service, such as helping the sick or the needy, helps us let go of our desires and attachments. When we start seeing beyond body-mind-ego, we start seeing Divinity in all the things around us. We realize that every living being is the manifestation of God and we start loving one and all as God.

Ignorance is a big obstacle on the path to achieving Moksha. In order to overcome it, one should spend time contemplating physical, mental, and emotional self-control. One should also understand the Truth that this world is an illusion and the goal of our life is Moksha. We should try to overcome ignorance using our intellect. We can overcome ignorance if we realize that we are not the ego, mind, and body. Although we live in a body-mind complex and though we are the Soul and we refer to ourselves as 'I', we must live with the realization that '*we are not this, we are that*'. We are not the ego, the mind, the body but rather that Divine

Energy, the power that gives life for our existence. Overcoming this ignorance helps us attain Enlightenment.

To overcome this ignorance, the Hindu Faith advocated the starting point to be 'Neti Neti – not this, not this'. '*Tat Twam Asi, thou art that*' - What does this mean? “Not this, Not this” – you are not this body. These are important words from the Upanishads, and only those who are keen to seek the truth will understand it. Isn't it true that when we die, we leave the body behind?

This is a simple truth that we are not the physical body. We are the *Atman*, the Soul. How many of us truly understand the truth? Those who understand the truth realize the self and move on towards God-realization and the path of enlightenment. This path is tough and long but it starts with these three simple words: “*Tat Twam Asi*” meaning Thou Art That! We should think and meditate on the following questions – Who am I? What am I? And we can realize the truth, “I am not this, I am that”.

All these are very complicated concepts and it needs the help of a learned sage, a spiritual master to overcome ignorance and realize the Truth. Working with a Guru, or spiritual teacher is considered a vital part of achieving Moksha. To discover the secret of life and to evolve on the journey of Self-Realization, one needs a spiritual master or a Guru. Without a Guru

who takes us from 'Gu', darkness, to 'Ru', light, who helps us overcome our ignorance, we will never acquire the wisdom to realize the Truth of Life. The Guru is the one who helps us go on a quest and realize the Truth. Otherwise, we will suffer birth after birth. It is the Guru who leads us to acquire wisdom, to develop our devotion and to tread the spiritual path that will lead us to Moksha. Without a Guru, self-realization and God-realization are impossible.

The spiritual masters who lived 40 centuries ago, seemed to have some spiritual intuition. This intuition is now known as self-Realization and God-Realization. Essentially, this was the Realization by the true seekers of God of their real identity. Those who were true Bhaktas or devotees of God went on a quest and realized that we are the Divine *Atman* or Soul. We are not the ego or mind, nor are we the body that dies. Those rare few who realize this Truth attain *Mukti* or Moksha and are liberated.

What is this Realization? The physical body dies. We are not this body that is constantly changing. It starts as a tiny zygote and is born as a baby. Then it grows and ultimately, dies. We are not this outer covering of flesh, blood, bone, and skin. We are the *Atman* that lives within. The moment we realize this that we are not the ego, mind or body, what happens? All our Karma of the past gets wiped off immediately. Why? Because the Karma belongs to ME (Mind+Ego) that drives the body

into action. When we realize that we are neither the body, ego, or mind, we are liberated from all Karma. The sages used to spend hours, days and weeks in silence, meditating on these spiritual mysteries and were blessed with these right answers.

What else did the Hindu sages believe that together constituted the Hindu Faith, which considered Moksha to be the Ultimate Goal? In those days it was said that spiritual messages were intuitively received by certain blessed believers or saints from the Creator, who then passed on these messages by word of mouth, *Shruti*, often as hymns and songs to the next generations. The generations that followed finally, recorded these spiritual Truths as the Vedas. This probably happened from 2000 BC to 1000 BC. Finally, by about 200 BC, they appeared in India. These spiritual revelations said to be received by scholars directly from God, culminated as the Upanishads. They carried the essential message of the Vedas and summarized it in four principal statements or *Mahavakyas*.

1. *Tat Tvam Asi* - "Thou art That," – you are not this body or this mind. You are that- the Divine Soul.

2. *Ayam Atma Brahma* - This soul is God. Since we are not the body, nor are we the mind, what are we? We are the Soul. The Soul is nothing but a manifestation of the Divine.

3.*Prajnanam Brahma* – Everything on earth is a manifestation of God. My Soul is Divine, your Soul is Divine, there is Divinity everywhere, in everything.

4.*Aham Brahma Asmi* - "I am the Divine." Since I am not the ego, the mind, the body, then I am nothing other than the Soul, I am Divinity itself. I am nothing but a manifestation of the Divine.

These four principal statements of the Upanishads are the essence of the Vedas, the crux of the 5000-year-old Hindu Faith or *Sanatana Dharma*. They summarise the entire belief of our life purpose. We are not this mortal body, nor are we the mind, we are the Soul which is the manifestation of the Divine. Some people misunderstand the statement to be full of arrogance and ego when they literally translate it to "I am God," The humble ones realize that the teachings here infer, "I am nothing. I am a manifestation of the Divine. God is everything. God is everywhere."

It is these four statements that can make one ultimately realize that at death of the body, the Soul must be liberated to unite with the Divine. If one realizes the truth what these four principal statements of the Upanishads are explaining, one will realize that at death of the body, the Soul will be liberated and it will unite with the Divine. How can one understand this truth? How can one imagine that the Soul will unite with the Divine? To understand the Soul and its

unification, one may compare it with two balloons, two pieces of dead rubber which suddenly become full of life when we inflate them with air. Now they are two lively balloons. The moment we deflate the balloons, the air inside the balloons unites and merges to become one. Is it possible to separate the air of the deflated balloons? Impossible! It has already unified, so does our Soul. At death, when the Soul leaves the body, it unifies with the Soul that is everywhere, the Omnipresent Divine Soul.

Fortunately, we human beings see the death of a body and we presume that the person has passed away, but we do not realize that the Soul that was giving life to the body, has left. Thus there is death and there is no breath. The Upanishads tell us that this is the ultimate truth that we are not the body that dies, we are not even the 'ME', Mind and the Ego, that takes birth again and again, but we are the Divine Soul, that Energy that departed at death.

When the spiritual sages started their contemplation, they essentially started with the realization 'Neti Neti,' - We are not this body, not the mind. When they realized this profound Truth, they inferred that we are the *Atman* or the Divine Life Energy that arrives at birth and departs at death.

What is the *Atman*, the Spirit or the Soul? In today's context, it is like electricity in our homes. Just like a bulb

cannot function on its own and it needs electric power to light it up, similarly, our body and mind cannot come alive without the *Atman* in it. The Life Energy in each cell of our body that keeps it alive is nothing but Spiritual Energy that powers every cell of our body. Without that Power, our body will be lifeless and will return to dust. This is the power known as the Soul, the *Atman*. Just like the electric source that supplies power to our house is the same source that supplies to other houses, the source of our Life Energy is one, the Cosmic Divine Power. It gives life to all living things on earth. It is this Power that keeps all of us alive just as it keeps the universe moving.

The sages also contemplated death. Every human being dies but what happens at death? Only the physical body dies. The life inside that body departs at death, as is clearly seen. What happened to that mind and ego, that was the software of the human-computer? The real 'ME' – Mind and Ego, has left the body along with the *Atman*, the Soul. It is not an easy concept for us to understand because we, human beings are caught in Maya, the cosmic illusion. We, human beings don't see beyond. If anybody removes an ornament, say a gold bangle from their hand and asks us what that is, we immediately say that it's a bangle. In reality, this is Maya. It is not a bangle, it is only gold. If we remove the gold from the bangle, there is no bangle. Then why do we call it a bangle? This is because it appears to be the bangle. Similarly, we don't

realize that in reality, this body is only what we wear, but we are not the body though we appear to be the body. We are the *Atman*, the Soul. The *Atman* is the *Paramatman*. The Soul or Life Energy inside us is the same power we call God. If there is no God inside our body, there will be no life in us, like gold is the cause and the bangle is the effect. It is just the form that gold appears as. Similarly, God is the cause and we are mere effects. Today, the world very well accepts the Law of Cause and Effect and if we contemplate deeply, we will realize that we are just the Divine effects. The Universal Divine is the cause. Just like Gold is the cause, the bracelet, the bangle, the ring, and the chain are just the effects. If we remove the gold, nothing remains. Similarly, when the Divinity leaves us, nothing remains, there is no life, no breath and we experience death. This is part of the belief of Moksha.

We must realize that our biggest enemy on the path of Moksha is ME – our own Mind + Ego. This ME causes the greatest harm in our life. Why is ME the greatest enemy? It is because the mind bombards us with thoughts, it creates stress, and it causes us to worry. But more important than all this - the mind blocks the realization of the Truth. It does not permit us to realize that we are not the body, not the mind. It does not allow us to transcend suffering. It constantly produces thoughts that make us prisoners in this body-mind complex and causes suffering. Thus, it is one of our two

greatest enemies and creates obstacles on the path to Moksha or Liberation.

The second greatest enemy is our ego. Together, ME – the Mind + Ego - destroy our peace, happiness, and stop us from realizing the truth. The ego constantly makes us live with a fake identity. We all say, “I am John. I am Mary. I am Smith.” But this is a lie! This is only our name but our ego makes us believe the lie as reality. The ego makes us so entrenched in the personality that we are, that it seems impossible to change our identity, realize the Truth, and live as the one who we truly are. Yes, this is what life is actually about, but unfortunately, most of humanity doesn't realize this Truth.

We live in ignorance, blinded by *Maya*, the cosmic illusion and we go through life. We live and die probably to be reborn for one more life cycle. While there is no proof of this, there is enough inference. We infer that the Law of Karma exists. That is the reason why some people are born in fortunate circumstances and others in unfortunate circumstances. Why else would this happen? Thus, we infer the Law of Karma exists. The Mind and Ego 'ME' is the real cause of all Karma, our actions that ultimately lead us to taking birth again and again. And thus we repeatedly suffer.

Then, when does this story end? The sages realized and believed that the end was Moksha. Moksha means

Mukti or Liberation which happens if we are free from rebirth. One can be free from rebirth only when one has redeemed all Karma. This seems impossible because there will always be some leftover Karma to settle. It is only the body, mind, ego that create Karma. When we are not the body-mind-ego, then there is no question of any Karma being created. Although we act, we act in Karma Yoga, as an instrument of the Divine. Thus, we are not creating Karma for ourself, and therefore, there is no need to be reborn to redeem our own actions.

The sages concluded that we are embodied Souls imprisoned in body-mind complex based on our Karma and thus we suffer. But there is a way to escape rebirth, to escape our own Karma. It starts with the realization of the Truth that we are not the body, we are not the mind. This realization leads to Liberation from the cycle of death and rebirth. Most of the religions follow similar beliefs but call them by different names. Unless one goes on a quest, one will never realize the Truth about death and rebirth. Religions preached that our goal was Liberation or Moksha - the unification of our *Atman* or the Soul with the *Paramatman* or the Creator. Hindu Faith had very profound principles on which the concept of Moksha stood. However, over centuries the Hindu Faith became Hinduism and got diluted with so many Gods, a lot of mythology, rituals, and superstitions that confused not only Hindus but all of humanity.

Due to our ignorance or *Avidya*, we suffer, not just in this life, but we take rebirth again and again to redeem our past Karma. Moksha is an escape from such rebirth. It is a Liberation from suffering. How does one attain Moksha? At death, one of the two things happens. As the body dies and becomes dust, the Mind and Ego-ME, takes birth once again as per our accumulated Karma. However, if we realize we are the Divine Soul, not the body, mind, and ego that we appear to be, then we are liberated from the cycle of rebirth and we are unified with the Divine. That is Moksha. Is Moksha achieved only after death? Yes. The ultimate Moksha, the total Liberation and Unification happens after our journey on earth. However, a *Jivatman*, a human being who is an embodied Soul, becomes a *Jivanmukta* or liberated Soul once he realizes the Truth. Realization is the absolute knowledge of who we are. It is a state of self-Realization. *Jivanmukta* is one who is liberated when alive, one who has achieved a state of *Mukti* or Liberation while alive, subject to living a life of *Jivanmukta*. It calls for one to transcend ego, mind, and body, although alive in it.

A *Jivanmukta* lives as an instrument of the Divine. He does not believe that the action is his. Thus, a *Jivanmukta* is not creating any future Karma and doesn't have to come back to live another life on earth. A *Jivanmukta* has to be a *Stithpragya*, one who has a steady intellect. It is one who doesn't waver in thought

because he is intellectually stable. A *Jivanmukta* or *Stithpragya* doesn't fall prey to the senses or the mind. In such a state, he renounces all kinds of intoxications and he lives as a master of the ego, mind, and body. Eventually, at death, he is not reborn, he attains Moksha and is liberated.

Moksha has no author. No saint or God with name and form is given credit to its origin. This state of God-Realization is what the Rishis or the sages who lived 4000-5000 years ago, received as a direct intuition or *Aparokshanubhuti* when they sat in meditation to contemplate the Truth. They were the true sages of the original Hindu Faith, *Sanatana Dharma*.

While the priests and the sages originally were very committed, with time they became very powerful and greedy which made them lose focus on the core philosophy and the belief system of the Upanishads. Somewhere around 6th century BC, a Hindu prince Siddharth Gautama went on a quest and contemplated the beliefs of the era. He questioned rituals, superstitions as well as the corrupt power of the priests who were controlling religion in the kingdom. He refused to believe in all the dogmas, the caste system prescribed by the priests and found that these would not lead to Moksha or Liberation. How could sacrificing innocent animals please God, he thought amongst many other questions and objections that came to his mind. He

awakened to the Truth as Buddha and became known as the 'Awakened One'. He reframed the concept of Moksha and titled it as Nirvana with his own practical beliefs and logical principles. Let us study what Nirvana is all about.

“ *Moksha is a concept 5000 years old,
To renounce and discriminate one must be bold.
Then there will be Liberation from misery on earth,
And we will escape the cycle of death and rebirth.* ”

SUMMARY - CHAPTER 3

Moksha

- Hindu scriptures describe Moksha as Spiritual Liberation from the continuous cycle of death and rebirth, and attainment of an eternal and blissful state that transcends all of the sufferings of the physical body.
- About 4000 years ago when the Hindu Faith was known as *Sanatana Dharma*, people accepted Moksha as the Ultimate Goal of life.
- It is said that in ancient times, spiritual messages were intuitively received by certain blessed believers or saints from the Creator, who then passed on these messages by word of mouth, to the next generations.
- These spiritual revelations were received by the sages of original Hindu Faith directly from God. Of these messages - four principal statements, form the essence of the Vedas and are known as the *Mahavakyas*. They are:
 1. *Tat Tvam Asi* - "Thou art That," - you are not this body or this mind. You are that- the Divine Soul.
 2. *Ayam Atma Brahma* - This soul is God. Since we are not the body, nor are we the mind, what are we? We are the soul. The Soul is nothing but a manifestation of the Divine.
 3. *Prajnanam Brahma* - Everything on earth is a manifestation of God. My soul is Divine, your soul is Divine, there is Divinity everywhere, in everything.

4. *Aham Brahma Asmi* - "I am the Divine." Since I am not the ego, the mind, the body, then I am nothing other than the Soul, I am Divinity itself. I am nothing but a manifestation of the Divine.

- These four principal statements of the Upanishads are the essence of the Vedas, the crux of the 5000-year-old Hindu Faith. They summarise the entire belief of our life purpose. We are not this mortal body, nor are we the mind, we are the Soul which is the manifestation of the Divine.

- Yoga is a very important step on the path towards attaining Moksha. Real Yoga is not just physical exercise or breathing techniques, but a Union with the Divine. There are 4 ways to live a Yogic Life, through meditation *Dhyaana* Yoga, action *Karma* Yoga, devotion *Bhakti* Yoga, and education *Gyaana* Yoga.

- Moksha prescribes four doors that one should pass through before one is ready to start their journey of freedom. These four doors are: Discrimination, Dispassion or Detachment, Discipline of body and mind, Desire for the Divine and Liberation.

- The sages who lived 4000-5000 years ago were the true sages of the original Hindu Faith, *Sanatana Dharma*. With time, Hindu Faith diluted to the current form of rituals and superstitions and this made Hinduism lose focus on the core philosophy and the belief system of the Upanishads.

CHAPTER

04

Nirvana

What is Nirvana? It is a state of *Ananda*, eternal bliss, and joy. It is overcoming the ignorance that we live in and being enlightened with the Truth. It is a state of self-realization, a state that liberates us from misery and sorrow while we are alive. Not only that, it also liberates us from the cycle of death and rebirth.

Unlike Moksha which has no author, Nirvana is the brainchild of Prince Siddhartha Gautama who went on to be known as the Buddha or the awakened one. Tired of the inhumane practices during his time, he renounced his kingdom, all the wealth and luxury and went in pursuit of the truth. He saw so much suffering, so much cruelty that his heart was torn into pieces. Being full of compassion, he went from sage to sage, monk to monk, from one ashram to another monastery searching for the truth. To him, nothing else mattered. Being a Hindu Kshatriya, the royal class, he was tired of the influence of the Brahmins, the priestly class who had manipulated theology to suppress the lower castes. He questioned every ritual and superstition until he finally awakened to the truth.

Let us try to understand how Nirvana came about. Around 1000 BC, the Hindu Faith also known as *Sanatana Dharma*, that prescribed Moksha to be the Ultimate Goal of life started getting diluted into Hinduism. Earlier, God was considered to be a power that was omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient but by now, Hinduism had

become a religion of rituals and superstitions. It became a religion of innumerable Gods with name and form.

The priestly caste or the Brahmins became very powerful, even more powerful than the kings themselves. To keep their power supreme, they created several rituals and superstitions that started making Hinduism unpopular. These included the caste system, which made life for the poor people miserable.

Nirvana became a solution to all the ills that developed in the Hindu belief system. When the Hindu Prince of Kapilvastu, Siddhartha Gautama who later became the Buddha, grew up to be a young man, he questioned the supremacy of the Brahmins just as he wondered why so many illogical rituals and superstitions were being followed. While he grew up in a palace and was protected from all the signs of suffering, it is said when he was born, he was destined to become a world conqueror, either he would be king of kings or he would be the most realized spiritual leader who would win over humanity with his love and compassion. This was a matter of great concern to the king and queen.

Since a noble sage prophesied that the prince Siddhartha Gautama could become the biggest saint humanity has ever seen, his father, the king was disturbed and made all-out efforts for the prince to live in the lap of luxury so that his mind never entered into the realm of spirituality, but as destiny would have it, what the sages had proclaimed became true.

The king did everything he could to keep his son away from the thoughts of suffering. He even made a new city where the sick and the old were shifted so his son would never see the dawn of suffering in life. But eventually, the prince came face to face with suffering and death.

What were the various realizations of the prince before he was enlightened to be the Buddha? The Prince had a very kind and compassionate heart. Although he was a very happy person, he felt saddened by the suffering that he saw. He is said to have observed 'four signs' which led him to his quest. First, he saw an old man, which made him realize that life on earth is not permanent. We will not remain young and healthy forever. None of us can escape old age. He realized that the body will become weak and this will ultimately lead to suffering.

He then saw a sick person and was distraught to see the suffering in this world due to disease. As a prince, he had been sheltered from seeing such pain. He realized that most of us will suffer as our bodies will face disease and decay.

He went on to see a corpse that made him realize that life is not a continuous process. We all have to die one day and with death, we will lose all our pleasures and possessions that we believe belong to us.

While he saw these three signs of suffering, he also saw a monk sitting in meditation peacefully beneath a tree. The peace and bliss on the face of the monk inspired him to realize that it was possible to live with joy and tranquillity. Unfortunately, he had not been exposed to these realities of life.

The prince did not become the Buddha overnight. His quest led him from being a seeker to a master. The prince Siddharth did unusual things, quite unlike a king. He refused to go to war as it would lead to a loss of so many lives. He was compassionate and for him winning a kingdom was not as important as saving lives was. The turning point in his life was when he saw a war, in which hundreds of people lay dead on the battlefield. He was shocked to see the suffering and bloodshed and wondered why. He realized the futility of war and the need for peace. Seeing the horror, the prince said, "I don't want this wealth, this kingdom, I don't want war, I don't want power. I want peace, I want Liberation from this misery, this pain."

Once, the prince was asked by saints to kill an animal as a sacrifice as per the scriptures but he refused to do it. Not just this, he refused to do anything that was inhuman and lacked compassion. He was against rituals, superstitions and gave utmost importance to kindness and fairness as he looked at each issue practically and with human eyes.

In his quest for the Truth, Siddhartha went on to become a *Sanyasi*, a renunciate and went deep into meditation. As the future king of Kapilvastu, Prince Siddhartha Gautama was not attracted by the kingdom and the wealth that he possessed. Even though he had a beautiful wife and a lovely son, he left his family, mother and father included, one night to go into the forest in search of the truth. The prince realized that to be peaceful, one must live with *Ahimsa* or non-violence, a philosophy that believed that we must not cause any injury to anybody in thought, word or deed. He advocated that we must forgive unconditionally. Every human being makes mistakes in life but the moment we realize our wrongdoings, we are forgiven by the Divine.

After that, Siddhartha Gautama became a *Tapasvi*, living a life of sacrifice and deprivation. He even gave up eating fruits and drinking water to deprive the senses of the body, he gave up all desires, for the purpose of achieving Liberation. In his quest for the Truth, Siddhartha Gautama happened to meet some of the followers of Mahavira, a sect that followed the Jain Tirthankaras. To them, life was all about *Tapasya*, letting the body suffer physical pain and living with deep austerities. He himself went into such a practice till it is said that he nearly died as he deprived his body of food and water. A young maiden exclaimed, "You have become like a stick where your front and your

back have become one. What is the use of such a life?" She asked the prince who was in search of the truth, "How would such deep *Tapasya* and austerity help in realization and Liberation? If you make the string of the sitar very loose, you cannot extract music from it, just as tightening too much will snap it." The Buddha realized that such extreme austerities would not help us to achieve the goal of life. He realized that one cannot realize the Truth by making the body suffer. It is through the body that one achieves Liberation. He then coined a new way known as the 'Middle Path' philosophy for people to live a balanced life.

The way to realization is through self-effort. Realization is intuitive. A Guru can guide but cannot give *Mukti*. Siddharth was called the Buddha because he realized the Truth by his own experience, going within. He told his fellow monks, " There is no need of doing sacrifices and *Tapasya*. We must not torture the body. This is *Avidya* or ignorance. We must live with the realization of the truth. We need to realize ourselves." "Our biggest problem is our ego. Due to our ignorance, our ego creates worry, fear, and misery by believing in illusions following rituals and superstitions which make no sense. Ignorance creates arrogance, it makes us angry, we worry, live with fear and anxiety all due to our ignorance."

The Buddha called his realizations the Four Noble Truths of Life. What were the four noble truths?

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.

Let us understand what the four noble truths are. The first was the existence of suffering or *Dukkha*. The sights that the Buddha saw as a prince shocked him, just as they made him realize that one cannot escape from suffering. As long as the universe exists, misery will follow us like our shadow.

When he went on a quest to understand why we humans suffer, he realized the second Truth of the origin of suffering *Samudāya*. He advocated that suffering was mostly caused by desire or craving or *Trishna*. The cause of this misery is attachment or craving and desire for somebody or something. It is important to activate our intellect and realize the truth, not to react to any joy or sorrow with too much passion. If we follow the right path, we will be peaceful, blissful and we will be liberated from this world of misery and from suffering.

The Buddha taught that the way to extinguish desire,

which causes suffering, is to liberate oneself from attachment. This is the third Noble Truth - the possibility of liberation, the cessation of suffering or *Nirodha*.

Was there a way to overcome this suffering? Yes. One could live a life of bliss or Nirvana. The final Noble Truth is the Buddha's prescription for the end of suffering, the path to the cessation of suffering or *Magga*. However, he taught us that we cannot achieve Nirvana unless we follow a particular path, which he later called the Eight-fold Path. What was this Eight-fold Path?

1.Right Understanding: The Buddha taught us that we must not accept anything without proper discrimination.

2.Right Intention: The Buddha advocated that our intentions should be pure, not cunning or manipulative.

3.Right Speech: Whatever we speak must be the truth and must bring about positive consequences. We must not hurt anybody with our words.

4.Right Action: We must not do anything that harms others. Our actions must only be for the good of humanity.

5.Right Livelihood: We should make a living through ethical means, living with values.

6.Right Effort: We must control thoughts and feelings

from leading us to evil actions.

7.Right Mindfulness: Living with awareness and consciousness of the truth and nothing else.

8.Right Concentration: Training the mind to think, introspect and contemplate the right and pure thoughts.

The Buddha described the Eight-fold Path as a means to Nirvana, like a raft that is needed for crossing a river. It was by following this path, said the Buddha, that we can cross the river of Samsara. After becoming the Buddha and being blessed to realize the Truth, being the 'Awakened One,' the Buddha dedicated his life to helping people live a life of peace because all around him, he saw people suffering and living a life of ignorance with stress, worry, and anxiety.

He created 'the Sangha' and welcomed people to join it by shaving off their hair, wearing orange robes and following the rules of the Sangha. While he made certain rules to join 'the Sangha', he did not expect everybody who followed his teachings to do so. He went from city to city, kingdom to kingdom, teaching people to live a life of peace and nonviolence. Whether it was the richest king, a religious priest, a rich businessman or a low caste scavenger, to him all were equal. In those days, women were not allowed to evolve spiritually or take important positions, but the Buddha changed even this belief because he believed in the concept of equality. He

welcomed everybody to join his 'Sangha' including women.

In the times when the Buddha lived, there was so much disparity in the society because of the caste system. Society was divided into four castes – the *Brahmins* or priestly people, the *Kshatriyas* also called *Rajanyas* who were the rulers, administrators, and warriors, the *Vaishyas* or artisans, merchants, tradesmen, and farmers, and *Shudras* or labouring classes, the poorest of the castes. The poor and the weak in society were tormented and tortured. He questioned why this should be so because all humans are equal. He opposed the concept of 'untouchables' that existed in the Hindu society then, just as he questioned the supremacy of the kings and the Brahmins. According to the Buddha, to look down upon another human being based on caste and creed is a shame. Although the scriptures and the society in those days strongly followed the caste system, the Buddha openly opposed it and gave importance to the equality of all humanity.

Buddha's teachings and thoughts destroyed this caste system with the logic that all human beings are the same, our tears are the same just as our blood is. The skies and the clouds, the mountains and the streams, do not differentiate in the way they treat humanity. If nature doesn't differentiate, then why should a man do so? Buddha said all humanity is equal. We must not divide people into high caste and low caste. The

Buddha, thus, accepted untouchables as a part of his following. Although he knew there would be great opposition from the priests and the kings, he boldly renounced all divisions of society as per caste. This was one major change in society at that time.

As the prince, the Buddha was very friendly with king Bimbisar, king of Magadha, and the king continued to be his friend even after Sidharth Gautama became Buddha. King Bimbisar changed his entire style of ruling the kingdom and implemented the teachings of the Buddha setting aside the advocacies of the priests, even at the cost of antagonizing them.

One can follow the Buddha's path by living with the five virtues that the Buddha advocated. All the religions of the world are based on the fundamental principles of good conduct and prohibit their followers to indulge in the misconduct and misbehaviour that may harm society at large. So, the *Panchshila* of Buddha comprises the basic teachings of conduct which are as under:

1. We should never kill anybody, not even an animal.
2. We should never steal.
3. We should not live with adultery.
4. We should not lie in any way.

5. We should not consume any kind of intoxicants.

When the Buddha was asked how one should live, he said that we should follow the five rules of life. Buddha also said that not everyone needs to become a *Bhikshu* or monk to realize the Truth. Somebody asked Buddha, "Why do you beg. Why can't you farm your own food? He replied, " I'm also farming my soul and with the grains, I will feed Souls." It's not that *Bhikshus* do nothing. They do far more important work than just farming or other work. They save people from misery. Helping people to be liberated is more important.

The Buddha was very practical and prescribed a lifestyle that would make one blissful and peaceful. The Buddha lived a life that set an example for his followers. He chose humility and non-violence over victory and power. He transcended the body, mind, and ego with his compassion and love. Through his sacrifice and renunciation, he inspired people to embark on a journey of ultimate peace and joy. He showed sympathy even to his biggest enemy because he realized the true meaning of life.

The Buddha explained how anger burns our peace and happiness. We spend time in unnecessary arguments and then, create poison within our own hearts and become miserable. When we get angry, we throw burning coal at others to destroy them, but before that, the burning coal burns our own hands. The Buddha

said: *Hatred can not be defeated by hatred, it can only be overcome by means of compassion. It is the firm and unchangeable Law of Nature.*

He gave a lot of importance to contemplation and realization of the Truth. In his life, there were several instances where he transformed people, sinners, and criminals by his spiritual wisdom.

The Buddha was very clear that all our suffering was due to ignorance. We experience suffering from birth to death. To be happy, we desire, we crave, we have expectations from others, and ultimately, we are disappointed. This distances us from the bliss that is within. He advocated that we must find peace and happiness by going within. Why do we chase money and pleasure in the journey of life that is so short? Instead, we can live with love, compassion, kindness and create a blissful heaven wherever we are. We create our own fears, worries, and miseries by our own mind. One who transcends their mind, said the Buddha, has conquered the whole world. It is most unfortunate, he said, that we do not understand what the true and Ultimate Goal of life is. He termed that state as 'Nirvana'. The only way to achieve Nirvana is through the realization of the Truth, contemplating spiritual wisdom that will liberate us, and living with soulful love for one and all.

We think we are everything when in reality, we are

nothing. This is nothing but ignorance. What does ignorance do? It makes us live a life of illusion. It creates worry, stress, and anxiety which is the cause of all our misery. What is ego? The ego gives birth to wild sensual desires of the body, just as it permits the mind to create miserable thoughts. When we realize the Truth of the cosmic illusion, we experience a state of everlasting peace. We live with compassion and love, despite all circumstances and evil-doing of those around us. Nothing affects a realized soul, explained the Buddha. We must activate our intellect to overcome miseries - that is the way to escape from fear and worry. We must live in the present moment. The way to freedom from misery is to live a life of Divine acceptance and surrender. We all want to be happy, just as we want to be liberated from misery. But we choose actions that take us in the opposite direction. How can we achieve our goal? We become slaves, prisoners to our own desires and expectations. Although we may look peaceful on the outside, we experience violent turbulence in the inside, with our own thoughts destroying our peace.

What did the Buddha have to say about death? He accepted it as a reality of life. It should be accepted without expression of sorrow. All those who are born are certain to die. Nobody can escape death. Then why should we become unhappy when somebody dies? This is the law of nature. Our life is like the moon – it appears as a new moon and then becomes a full moon,

after which there is complete darkness. Then the moon reappears, so is our life. Death is not the end. Only the body dies. We will be reborn as per our Karma until we are liberated. Buddha made people realize that death is certain. Let us learn to accept the reality of death.

Because we become attached to people and things not realizing that nothing is permanent, we live in misery. How does one escape from this misery and achieve Liberation? The only way is to live by our intellect and not by our mind. We must learn to discriminate the illusion from the Truth, and thus live a life of Realization. As long as we don't accumulate the wisdom that makes us realize the Truth, we will continue to suffer. Suffering is a reality, we cannot escape from it. But the truth is that suffering is caused by desire and craving. If we eliminate the cause of suffering, then how can suffering continue?

The Buddha taught that prayer by itself can achieve nothing. Of course, prayers are magical, but they must be accompanied by Divine action, meditation, and education that leads to realization. Just following certain rituals and superstitions can get us nowhere. It is possible to achieve *Ananda* or bliss and be liberated or achieve *Nirvana*. However, this needs our effort. It needs discrimination and a quest for Realization. We must light our own lamp to illuminate the darkness within, just as the lamp will create a path to move forward. We must be conscious of the power that is

within us. We don't have to search outside. Everything is within. We must be steady in our discipline and thought, and this must be our persistent effort until we achieve Nirvana.

Buddha advocated that the world is a Cosmic Illusion or *Maya*. It robs us of the present. We don't live in the past, nor in the future. We should be conscious of the present moment following the 'middle path.' We should not torture the body, nor give it scope to crave and desire. The moment we realize the illusion of *Maya*, we end our worry, fear, and anxiety. We live peacefully and blissfully. As we realize the Truth, we don't feel hatred against anybody. Even a person who is cruel to us is responded with compassion and kindness. That is true realization.

Realization makes us live with love and Divine Acceptance. We get calm and peaceful with a steady intellect. It is our ignorance that has separated us from each other and has created a division. Thus, we desire, we crave and we are lost in the ignorance, in the illusion. When we realize the Truth, ignorance is overcome. The Buddha said: *The biggest enemy of a man is his own mind which makes him do inappropriate tasks. What we think, we become. A good thought brings in good results while a bad thought brings in bad results. This is the Law of Nature.*

The Buddha said, "We are living in utter ignorance. We perform rituals and follow superstitions, we sacrifice

the lives of innocent animals but ourselves continue to live with sin, how can we achieve Liberation?" He said that we are the cause of our own Liberation or our own misery. It's for us to realize the truth by living a life that leads to Nirvana. The Buddha stated: *Ignorance is the root cause of all suffering. Ignorance cannot be overcome by worshipping, fasting or offering. It can only be eradicated through meditation, which will result in wisdom and realization of the Truth.*

The Buddha said, "We are spoiling the present moment with what happened in the past and worrying about the future losing the present moment." To be liberated one must not overreact to misery or to joy. Accept both equally.

People think the Buddha said, "There is no God." But he never said that there is no God nor did he say there is God. Buddha said that prayer without efforts will not work. If you want to cross a river and you sit down on the bank of the river and pray, would you be able to cross the river? Of course not. If the water is shallow, you can walk. If the water is deep, you can take a boat or even swim. The Buddha said that if one doesn't want to walk across, doesn't want to swim, or doesn't want to use the boat, will the other side of the riverbank come to him? Similarly, if we don't use our intellect to overcome ignorance, how will we achieve a life of peace and bliss? How much ever we pray, do rituals, follow superstitions, we cannot achieve the objective that we

seek without using our intellect. This is not difficult to understand but we don't understand it because of our ignorance. Prayer is good but without knowledge, one cannot realize the truth and be liberated. He said that we don't have to have blind faith. We should use our intellect to discriminate.

Somebody asked Buddha, "What did you get out of Meditation?" He said, "Nothing! Just that I lost worry, fear, anger, sorrow, insecurity, the anxiety of old age, and death." Human beings get attached to their possessions. They are never satisfied. They crave for more and are fearful of losing what they have. But if we cut away all attachments then we are free.

The Buddha always said that one should become one's own lamp and light one's own light. Which means, one should try to seek the reality oneself and realize the truth by making self-efforts. Instead of accepting anything blindly, one should try to question everything and then accept what is right. The Buddha was a very practical person. He told people not to believe anything, not even him. He said that we should question everything with our intellect and use our logic to realize the Truth. While he refused to follow any ritual or superstition, he encouraged people to question their religion and idol worship. His objective was simple, to be liberated from misery and to live a life of eternal peace and joy, attain a state he called Nirvana, our Ultimate Goal. According to him, we must live a life that ultimately

liberates us, a life of salvation and enlightenment.

What was the key difference between Moksha and Nirvana? The Buddha might have called it Nirvana but it was no different from Moksha. The destination was the same, the means to reach it was different. During the Buddha's time, Hindu Faith had lost its original principles and declined to a religion of Gods and Goddesses, of rituals and superstitions, of caste systems and division of society. The Buddha opposed all this and prescribed a simple path to the same goal of Liberation which he called Nirvana, the Ultimate Goal of life. It was all about living in bliss, peace, and joy, liberated from misery and sorrow. This was no different from Moksha.

The Buddha's logic was very simple: Why should we worry about things which are beyond our comprehension? Why don't we focus on our Ultimate Goal of life, peace, joy, and bliss? We want to create Gods and Goddesses to pray and instead of understanding the Creator who created us, we spend our life in rituals and superstitions. Instead of overcoming our ignorance, we are creating more reasons to become more ignorant by complicating our life. What do we human beings seek? Our Ultimate Goal is happiness and peace. Why not achieve that? Why are we submitting to the world of illusions and becoming miserable? Why are we complicating our life with desires and expectations and becoming miserable? The Buddha was against all this. He had a simple solution. He called it Nirvana - ultimate joy and

peace, a life that is liberated from misery and sorrow.

While the Buddha found a solution to the ills of the Hindu society and delivered the doctrine of Nirvana which after his life became Buddhism, this doctrine too slowly got diluted over time. The Buddha gave us a solution on how to overcome suffering. He taught us the importance of meditation, introspection, and contemplation. However, Buddhism, just like Hinduism, slowly drifted away from the Truth. While Buddhism became very popular and spread all over the world, not just in India and Asia where it originated, the diluted Buddhism drifted away from the teachings of the Buddha, which laid focus on liberation from suffering, the realization of the Truth about life and death. People continued chanting and following other rituals, but the essence of Nirvana got lost. Just like there were Brahmins who led to the downfall of the Hindu Faith as it got concocted into Hinduism, many Buddhist monks and masters, who considered themselves to be the Buddha led to the downfall of Nirvana, a practical concept initiated by the Buddha. Buddhism got divided into Hinayana and Mahayana and further branched into Zen Buddhism as it spread its influence over several countries.

People all over the world got disillusioned with religion and faith. In the East, not only were Hinduism and Buddhism propagating the power of their religion, but Jainism, Sikhism, and many other religions emerged,

each presenting their God or Guru to be the true God. In the western civilizations, Judaism branched into Christianity and Islam, but it did not stop there. Each of these got divided and subdivided. The result was innumerable scriptures and countless Gods that confused all of humanity.

There was darkness that spread all over the world, and ignorance about the Truth only increased. The Ultimate Goal of humanity – happiness, bliss, and peace, remained a distant dream. This continued for several centuries, with a few fortunate people continuing to believe in the original teachings of self-Realization and God-Realization. Some called it Moksha, some called it Nirvana. In the western world too, people were seeking Liberation from misery and sorrow. The world evolved, and so did communication that led to a revolution in education. There was growth and change in lifestyle, just as the entire world was discovered and colonies and countries established.

While people started living life with healthier bodies, better food to eat, clothes to wear and gadgets to live with, their relationship with God found no progress. Material pleasures may have increased over the centuries, but there was no progress in spirituality.

After many centuries of spiritual turmoil, one major movement that appeared in the world was the movement to eradicate ignorance and the darkness

that was born due to rituals and superstitions. The movement was beyond religion. It was a spiritual revolution that started over 700 to 1000 years ago and continues till date. What was the movement?

“ *Siddhartha Gautama was a Hindu Prince,
Whom the King and the priest could not convince!
Renouncing all the pleasures of the world and fun,
He became Buddha, the Awakened One.* ”

SUMMARY - CHAPTER 4

Nirvana

- Nirvana is a state of *Ananda*, eternal bliss, and joy.
- Unlike Moksha which has no author, Nirvana is the brainchild of Prince Siddhartha Gautama who went on to be known as the Buddha or the awakened one.
- Tired of the inhumane practices during his time, he renounced his kingdom, all the wealth and luxury and went in pursuit of the truth.
- Nirvana became a solution to all the ills that developed in the Hindu Faith that became Hinduism.
- Prince Siddhartha is said to have observed 'four signs'. He saw an old man, a sick person, a corpse and a monk. This led him to his quest.
- After that, Siddhartha Gautama became a *Tapasvi*, living a life of sacrifice and deprivation but he realized that one cannot achieve Liberation by making the body suffer. He then coined a new way that is known as the 'Middle Path' philosophy for people to live a balanced life.
- The Buddha called his realizations the Four Noble Truths of Life. They are:

Dukkha – the world is full of suffering.

Samudaya- the origin of suffering is desire.

Nirodha- if we give up desire, we can escape suffering.

Magga- there is a path to follow to renounce desires. Which ultimately came to be known as the Eight-fold path. which includes Right Understanding, Right Intention, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration.

- The Buddha was very clear that our entire suffering was due to ignorance which we experience from birth to death.
- The Buddha said that it is most unfortunate that we fail to realize the true and Ultimate Goal of life. He termed that state as 'Nirvana'.
- When we realize the Truth of the cosmic illusion, we experience a state of everlasting peace. We live with compassion and love, despite all circumstances and evil-doing of those around us.
- Nothing affects a realized soul, explained the Buddha. We must activate our intellect to overcome miseries - that is the way to escape from fear and worry.
- The Buddha always said that instead of accepting anything blindly, one should try to question everything and then accept what is right.
- The Buddha might have called it Nirvana but it was no different from Moksha. The destination was the same, the means to reach it was different.

CHAPTER

05

Enlightenment

While Moksha and Nirvana are the concepts that existed centuries ago in ancient civilizations, the most recent term which helps us to understand the Ultimate Goal of life - Peace and Happiness by attaining Liberation from misery and sorrow, is 'Enlightenment'. Formerly, it was known as *inlighten* meaning 'to illuminate'. Originating from the translation of a German word *Aufklärung*, the term 'Enlightenment' denotes 'the full comprehension of a situation'. Enlightenment as a global movement triggered mankind to make a move in the direction of eradicating the darkness of ignorance and be enlightened with the Truth. While this effort started many centuries ago, the term 'Enlightenment' was formally made into a movement by philosophers only after the advent of 15th century. The thinkers and philosophers consolidated all rationalistic thoughts and created a philosophy that encouraged freedom and independence of all kinds, primarily to put an end to suffering.

While Moksha originated about 5000 years ago, and Nirvana about 2500 years ago, Enlightenment is an infant that came into existence around 500 years ago. People across the world, belonging to various religions spanning through the continents, were still miserable and religion told them to pray to God to be liberated from misery and sorrow. As they tried to do so, education evolved and people started contemplating about so many religions and scriptures. People wondered how there can be so many Gods and where could heaven and

hell possibly be. Thus, came about the belief that Liberation from misery and sorrow will come from Enlightenment by getting awakened to the Truth. It will only be possible if we overcome the darkness of ignorance and we get illuminated. Today, many people around the world believe that the goal of life is Enlightenment, a state that would liberate them from the misery that is born out of ignorance.

In the western world, the concept of 'Spiritual Enlightenment' had become synonymous with 'Self-Realization' and overcoming the ignorance that humanity lived in over the centuries. Enlightenment destroyed all the myths like going to heaven or hell. A glance into history shows that all the ancient religions of the world experienced a downfall at this point in time, either due to the deterioration of the original message propagated by the faith or overcoming of the religion itself, by a different religion.

To understand how 'Spiritual Enlightenment' came about, one needs to have a fair idea about what exactly was taking place around the globe that resulted in the dilution of original faiths and the emergence of the ambiguous and questionable forms of various religious practices. These religious practices brought about a lot of confusion to mankind instead of guiding it towards the Ultimate Goal of life – Peace and Happiness. The effect of Enlightenment was such that the suffering humanity started enquiring about the

truth behind so many religions. It wanted to know the reality as to who can help end its misery. Enlightenment, at the spiritual front, emerged as an outcome of the religious struggle across the world. The objective of achieving freedom from misery and sorrow got overshadowed.

Hindu Faith, also known as *Sanatana Dharma*, was established 4000 to 5000 years ago. It is so ancient that its origins are lost in the midst of prehistory. Many sages who were associated with the original Hindu Faith, lived around 4000 BC. Hinduism has no historical founder and its authority rests upon sacred texts, known as the Vedas. It is believed that these texts which form the very basis of Hinduism, were received by the saints directly from God through meditation and realization and these were passed on to the future generations by word of mouth. These are the most ancient religious texts which define the truth of the Hindu Faith.

But while Hindu Faith advocated Moksha, the Liberation from the cycle of death and rebirth as the Ultimate Goal of life, it got transformed to Hinduism that started a belief system of worshipping innumerable Gods and following endless rituals and superstitions. The caste system which undermined the poor as untouchables led to the downfall of the otherwise primary religion of the masses. Hinduism continued to believe in some principle concepts like Karma and Moksha, but due to the large mythological influence of

Gods and Deities, the original Hindu Faith disappeared into insignificance.

The reason why the original Hindu Faith transformed to Hinduism might have had a positive intention behind it. It was very difficult for the masses to believe in a nameless and formless God. Thus, the sages around the post-Vedic period introduced several Gods that one could pray to. Each would fulfill the respective objectives. There was a God of Wealth, just as there was a God of Knowledge. It started with one God, went on to the trinity – the Creator, the Preserver, and the Destroyer; and then ended up with countless Gods with each village having their God, and each family believing in their own personal God. Over time Hinduism lost its popularity and there was the birth of Buddhism, and other religions.

A Hindu prince, Siddhartha Gautama, fed up with the rituals and superstitions and the power of the priests, renounced his kingdom and family and went in search of the Truth. It is ironic that what he realized was the original Hindu Faith itself which had now become diluted over the many centuries. He cleaned up the myth from the truth and called the Ultimate Goal - Nirvana, instead of Moksha. He presented the Hindu Faith with a different perspective and coined the term Nirvana for Liberation.

Buddhism that arose in the Eastern part of ancient India

evolved as it spread from the Northeastern region of the Indian subcontinent through Central, East, and Southeast Asia. Today, Buddhism exists, just like Hinduism, in various parts of the world. Buddhists believe in chanting and achieving Nirvana, a state of bliss, just like the Hindus believe it to be Moksha. Unfortunately, Buddhism like Hinduism also lost its authenticity by its dilution. Many monks who considered themselves to be Buddha and Bodhisattvas, lost sight of the original message of the Buddha. The decline of religion was not just limited to Hinduism and Buddhism. Religions all over the world were becoming more powerful and because of Enlightenment, people in all these civilizations started questioning the authority of religion.

While Hinduism and Buddhism were centered in the East, what was happening in the other parts of the world in the ancient civilizations? In India itself, Jainism emerged as a dominant religion in the Indian subcontinent. Its followers believe in the Tirthankaras, whose defining characteristics are marked by asceticism and self-discipline. The most known Tirthankara Mahavira, around 6th century BC, is said to have advocated his followers to live a life of *Tapasya*, deep austerities of the body that were very difficult for a common man to follow.

Looking beyond the Indian subcontinent and the Middle East, religions around the globe were as complicated if not more. An ambiguous system of polytheistic beliefs

and rituals formed an integral part of ancient Egyptian society. Ancient Egyptian religion was centered on the Egyptians' interaction with many deities believed to be present in, and in control of, the world. Rituals such as prayer and offerings were provided to the Gods to gain their favour. The Pharaohs, the rulers of Egypt, were believed to possess a Divine power by virtue of their position. This resulted in the decline of the original religious practices in ancient Egypt and made way to the spread of Christianity in the region.

In the area around Mesopotamia, modern-day Israel, Palestine and Jordan, Judaism was the foundation for all other Abrahamic religions. It was born as the oldest form of monotheism which later branched out into Christianity (1st century AD) and Islam (7th century AD), the two major religions of the world today. The founder of Judaism was said to be Abraham, although it was made famous by Moses in the Ten Commandments. Judaism received criticism because its theology and religious texts describe a personal God who has conversations with important figures from ancient Israel like Moses and Abraham.

Ancient Persia or modern-day Iran, around 1500 BC, saw the birth of Zoroastrianism. The ancient Indo-Iranian religion, known to natives as Mazdayasna, served as the state religion of the pre-Islamic Iranian empires for more than a millennium. Extremely influential over the development of the Abrahamic

tradition, it was the state religion of various Persian empires until the Muslim conquest of the 7th century AD and it survives in parts of Iran, India, and Iraq to this day. This was not very different from Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

In China, Confucianism was created by one man, Chinese politician, teacher, and philosopher Confucius in the 5th century BC. Though the most humanistic and least spiritual in essence, Confucianism does provide for a supernatural worldview as it incorporates Heaven and the Lord on High. Also, in and around China, Taoism was practised along with Confucianism. Taoism can be traced to a work attributed to the mythical Lao Tze, said to have been a contemporary of Confucius. This religion evolved from a strand of traditional Chinese folk religion, and makes mention of masters and teachings from long before it was codified, including the god-like Yellow Emperor, said to have reigned about 2500 years before Christ, and the 'I Ching,' a divination system dating back to 1150 BC. Confucianism rose to the position of an official orthodoxy during the Han dynasty. It absorbed the metaphysical doctrines of Yin and Yang. With the fall of the Han, the dynastic model, Confucianism fell into severe decline.

In Japan, Shintoism was the only religion until the arrival of Buddhism in the 6th century CE. From then on Shinto faiths and traditions took on Buddhist elements,

and later, Confucian ones. Some Shinto shrines became Buddhist temples, existed within Buddhist temples, or had Buddhist priests in charge. Today, the faith is a unified account of ancient Japanese mythology, marked strongly by Buddhist influences, and is followed by the vast majority of the country's population.

What do all the ancient world religions tell us? People were tired of religions that promoted myth, followed rituals and superstitions. As the world evolved with the 'Spiritual Enlightenment', people started asking questions to know the truth because not just the Hindu Faith but the whole world found itself in darkness. Centuries passed but there was no glimmer of light.

There was a time period in European history that started around the 5th century AD until around the time Christopher Columbus arrived in the New World in 1492. This time period is known as the 'Middle Ages' or the 'Dark Ages'. This was the time when the world witnessed the fall of Imperial Rome and due to the severe loss of cultural, technological and historical wealth of the Roman empire, this time period resulted in ignorance. Simultaneously, this time period is also called as the 'Age of Faith' because of the rise of Christianity and Islam.

In the Dark Ages, the Catholic Church became very rich and powerful. People gave the church 1/10th of their earnings in tithes. Eventually, the church-owned about

one-third of the land in Western Europe. Because the church was considered independent, they did not have to pay the king any tax for their land. Kings in France, England, and Spain consolidated their power and set up lasting governing institutions. The French monarchy slowly began to expand its authority to have control over more of the country in the 11th and 12th centuries.

Haven't we all heard the sad incident when the poor were hungry and had nothing to eat and the queen supposedly said, "If they have no bread, let them eat cake." Because of the misery experienced by people in the Dark Ages, a new movement was born. It questioned the authority of the king and the church. While the priest and royalty lived a life of luxury, the poor were led to suffering and misery. This movement became known as Enlightenment. Not only did it cover the Enlightenment of the 17th and 18th centuries but it also became a global movement linking all the continents although having different names.

The Enlightenment Era, also known as the 'Age of Reason', was a philosophical movement that took place primarily in Europe and, later, in North America, during the late 17th and early 18th centuries. Its participants thought they were illuminating human intellect and culture after the "dark" Middle Ages. The term 'Enlightenment' was popularised in the Western

world and has been understood as having a sudden insight into a transcendental truth or reality.

Due to this awakening, the world witnessed the emancipation of women and the abolishment of slavery. People started questioning the authority of the religious institutions and asking for scientific evidence behind every ritual, every practice unlike in the Dark Ages. Enlightenment is the Age of Reason. People started questioning monarchy and in 1789 the French revolution took place due to widespread discontent with the French monarchy and the poor economic policies of King Louis XVI. The theory of 'natural law' was a vital part of the Enlightenment as what constitutes "right" and "wrong," is the same for everyone, and this concept is expressed as "morality." It also talked about freedom of speech, religion, and trade. Skepticism of religious dogma - where monarchs were placed in positions of power by the Will of God and were not subject to earthly powers. Even the king was above law - but enlightenment refused it. It questioned the logic of this practice.

In the Age of Reason or Enlightenment started the tradition of early eighteenth-century British Deism. They believed that God exists but the universe proceeds according to natural law. These deists, while maintaining individual positions, shared several sets of assumptions and arguments. The most important position that united the early deists was their call for

"free rational inquiry" into all subjects, especially religion. Saying that early Christianity was founded on freedom of conscience, they demanded religious toleration and an end to religious persecution. They also demanded that debate rest on reason and rationality. Deists embraced a Newtonian worldview, and they believed that all things in the universe, must obey the laws of nature. Without a concept of natural law, the deists argued, explanations of the workings of nature would descend into irrationality. This belief in natural law drove their skepticism of miracles. Because miracles had to be observed to be validated, deists rejected the accounts laid out in the Bible of God's miracles and argued that such evidence was neither sufficient nor necessary to prove the existence of God. Along these lines, deistic writings insisted that God, as the first cause or prime mover, had created and designed the universe with natural laws as part of his plan.

With a background of all this confusion, coupled with the Enlightenment movement that was born in the world, where was the world heading to? Due to the fact that written history was barely a few thousand years old and religious scriptures of all religions did not have any concrete explanation to what they preached, modern man found it preferable to chose Reason over Blind Faith. Man did not change his aspirations over the centuries. He still wanted peace and happiness but he was not willing to follow a scripture that did not

agree to his logic. He wanted to overcome ignorance by finding answers. He wanted Enlightenment.

Therefore, what exactly is Enlightenment all about? It is awakening. It is overcoming the ignorance that we live in. It is questioning every ritual and superstition. It is eradicating darkness from our life. Just as the Buddha was enlightened, we all have an intellect, and we can all attain liberation and enlightenment by transcending our mind.

Whether it was called Moksha by the Hindus or called Nirvana by Buddha or it became known as the Enlightenment Era, all the three movements had one goal - the goal was to be liberated from misery and sorrow and live a life of peace, joy, and bliss.

Enlightenment is all about using our power of reasoning and distinguishing the truth from the myth. From time immemorial man has been gifted with a Mind and Ego 'ME,' which is his biggest enemy. The goal of human life is to transcend 'ME' and overcome the illusion that we live with.

The cosmic illusion makes us believe that this world is real and therefore we suffer. We swing from regrets of the past to fear of the future because of our ignorance. We live in darkness not realizing that nothing is ours. At death, we see nothing goes with us just as when we are born, we bring nothing with us. When will we overcome this ignorance that makes us suffer?

Enlightenment, therefore, can be summarized as a modern-day movement that was born several centuries ago as a result of man's belief in blind faith and dogmatic religion. Unlike Nirvana which was the product of the Buddha and Moksha that was a message from God to the ancient sages, Enlightenment was a realization by humanity that suffered the ills of the various religions that people followed in different parts of the world.

Enlightenment was the answer. It is a path that would lead us to our Ultimate Goal. It will make us realize the truth, but how is this path different when compared to Moksha and Nirvana? Let us compare the three.

“*Centuries passed, but the darkness did not end,
Ignorance remained to only extend.
There was no Peace, there was disillusionment,
Till the world found Enlightenment.*”

SUMMARY - CHAPTER 5

Enlightenment

- While Moksha and Nirvana are the concepts that existed centuries ago in ancient civilizations, the most recent term which helps us to understand the Ultimate Goal of life - Peace and Happiness by attaining Liberation from misery and sorrow, is 'Enlightenment'.
- People across the world, belonging to various religions spanning through the continents, were still miserable and religion told them to pray to God to be liberated from misery and sorrow.
- While they tried to do so, education evolved and people started wondering as to how there can be so many Gods and where could heaven and hell possibly be.
- Thus, came about the belief that Liberation from misery and sorrow will come from Enlightenment by getting awakened to the Truth.
- In the western world, the concept of 'Spiritual Enlightenment' came about. To understand that, one needs to have a fair idea about what exactly was taking place around the globe that resulted in the dilution of original faiths and the emergence of the ambiguous and questionable forms of various religious practices.
- All the ancient world religions tell us that people were tired of religions that promoted myth, followed

rituals and superstitions. As the world evolved, people started asking questions to know the truth.

- There was a time period in European history that spanned through 5th to 15th century AD, known as the 'Middle Ages' or the 'Dark Ages'. The Middle Ages are often said to be 'dark' because of the lack of scientific and cultural advancement.
- Because of the misery experienced by people in the 'Dark Ages', a new movement 'Enlightenment' was born which questioned the authority of the king and the church.
- Therefore, Enlightenment is all about awakening. It is overcoming the ignorance that we live in by questioning every ritual and superstition to eradicate darkness from our life.
- Enlightenment is all about using our power of reasoning and distinguishing the truth from the myth.
- Whether it was called Moksha by the Hindus or called Nirvana by Buddha or it became known as the Enlightenment Era, all the three movements had one goal – to be liberated from misery and sorrow and live a life of peace, joy, and bliss.

CHAPTER

06

**Which path
will lead us to
our Ultimate Goal?**

Which path will lead us to our Ultimate Goal?

If we compare Moksha, Nirvana, and Enlightenment, what do we see? All three are different names, but they essentially mean one and the same thing. Some people even call this *Mukti* or Freedom, some Salvation or Unification with the Divine. Whatever we may call this state of being, it is about living a life of Peace and Joy, which was at the outset our primary goal of life and is the goal of every human being alive on earth.

In India, water is known as *Pani* in the northern parts, just as it is called *Tanni* or *Niru* in the south. In France, it is called *Eau* and in China, it is called *Shui*. Though the names are different, all the names refer to the same product – water. Moksha, Enlightenment, and Nirvana maybe different concepts from the outside, but they refer to the same thing. There is no difference. The principles involved in all the three are the same.

All three concepts talk about spiritual enlightenment through acquiring the wisdom of the Spirit, the Soul or the Life Energy within. Enlightenment focuses on eradicating the darkness of ignorance that we all live in. This is agreed to by the doctrine of Moksha and Nirvana.

The Buddha, the awakened one, who is the founder of Nirvana was himself a Hindu prince. His belief of Nirvana is no different from Moksha. The only difference is that it removed all the unnecessary myths from the macro principles involved.

These 3 concepts are quite different from the concepts of 'heaven and hell' known to the modern world, disseminated by monotheistic Abrahmic religions and also, they do not fall in line with the present day Hinduisim that talks about Heaven - *Swarga* and Hell - *Narkha* because of the dilution of the pure Hindu Faith, *Sanatana Dharma*. Do we really go to heaven or hell after we die? These 3 concepts Moksha, Enlightenment, and Nirvana – MEN, question the reality of death and try to help us realize: who dies? Are we the body that dies, or the mind that we can't find or are we the Divine Soul? All three concepts help us to be enlightened with the Truth, compared to other concepts that continue to let us live in ignorance, believing in the myth, in rituals and superstition. All this makes us live with fear and anxiety as we continue to be ignorant of the Truth.

What other option do we have if our common sense makes us realize that after we are dead, we cannot go to heaven because the body is right here on earth, to be buried or cremated? Further, there is no doubt that as a human being, the body will die and the Law of Karma, of action and reaction tells us that we cannot escape from our sins, just as our good deeds will definitely come back to us. Putting all this together, what are the available options we have to believe in? We know our life is not just meant to live and die, there is a purpose for us human beings here on earth. It makes no sense to believe that this world has no Creator. It seems beyond

Which path will lead us to our Ultimate Goal?

doubt that an intelligent Power controls everything that happens here on earth. The 3 concepts of Moksha, Enlightenment, and Nirvana, seem to be practical concepts which help us live meaningfully and take us towards our Ultimate Goal. They show us a way to live with peace and bliss, every moment, every day of our life. They eliminate fear, worry, anxiety and stress, as they make us realize the Truth.

It seems quite obvious that there is no doubt that a Divine Power, the Creator, is in control of this universe. How else would the earth rotate on its own axis precisely once in 24 hours? How would it be possible for the earth to revolve around the sun once in $365 \frac{1}{4}^{\text{th}}$ days? There are many universal laws like the Law of Gravity and the Law of Karma which we know to be true through inference. All this should make us accept that our Ultimate Goal is to realize the Divine. Once we do, we will be liberated from misery and sorrow, just as we would be blessed with Everlasting Peace and Eternal Happiness.

Even today, many people around the world continue to live in ignorance due to their blind faith. There is nothing wrong with having faith in a Divine Power or God. However, if we truly love our God, we must go beyond traditional belief and use our intellect to realize the Truth. Just blindly believing in something because it is written in the scriptures or is taught to us by our parents, will not help us achieve our Ultimate Goal of

life. We must learn to ask questions and investigate until we realize the Truth.

After all, the Truth is the Truth and there can be nothing other than the Truth. Unfortunately, we human beings have limited comprehension and we have not been given that comprehension to define or decipher God. If I tell you to close your ears and listen to me through your eyes, can you? Just like the eyes cannot comprehend sound, we human beings cannot comprehend the power that we call God. We don't know who God is, where God is or what God is, but God *is*.

Since there is no doubt that a Power - we call God, exists, our goal is to realize God. God-Realization is a state where we realize the Truth about God and become one with the Divine. God-Realization is not possible without Self-Realization. Both of the above happen when we investigate and realize the Truth. We know that death is certain and whatever be our religion, we all experience death of the body. If we contemplate death, we will get many of our answers. Who dies? The body lies in front of us, but we know that this is only the dead body, not the one who was alive. Where did the one who passed away go? We say he departed or expired, but where? Up to a point, we are able to verify the Truth with what we see, but beyond that, we can only realize the Truth by inference. Not realizing the Truth, and blindly believing in superstitions is not the answer that will lead us to our

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Ultimate Goal. Unless we delete all untenable concepts and investigate what is tenable, we will never realize the Truth.

Even today, there are people around the world who believe that we will go to heaven or hell, although they are absolutely sure that the dead body disintegrates here below the soil. Then who is it that goes to heaven or hell? When we go on a quest to realize the Truth, we find answers that will lead us to our Ultimate Goal of Peace, Joy, and Bliss.

Of course, we have a choice of believing that God rides on a tiger or a cow, or sits on a lotus somewhere in outer space on a planet unknown to man. We can continue to believe in these fantasies born out of mythological tales, but these will not help us realize the Truth. Even the scriptures of all the concerned religions have subtle statements embedded in them that reveal the Truth that God who lives within our heart is present in every Soul. Because less than 1% of humanity goes on a quest to realize the Truth, very few of us are blessed to realize our Ultimate Goal. Most of us are spiritually blind because we blindly follow religion, rather than evolving spiritually. Of course, we all need religion to begin our belief in God, but as we grow up, we must go beyond our belief-system to achieve our goal.

The concepts of MEN, Moksha, Enlightenment and Nirvana, take us closer to the Truth. The Divine Truth in

all the 3 seems to be the only practical thing to believe in. However, this is not for everybody. Only a few seekers of the Truth are fortunate to realize the Truth, that all the 3, Moksha, Enlightenment, and Nirvana advocate.

The Truth is one, not different, but the myths are many. We must ignore the blind beliefs of this world if we want to achieve our Ultimate Goal of happiness and live without any suffering. The Ultimate Goal will be achieved when we realize the Truth as we overcome the ignorance and the myth that the world believes in.

What is this realization of the Truth? Unfortunately, we human beings don't even realize that we don't know the Truth. We don't know who we truly are and why we are here. In fact, it is because of this we suffer misery and pain. In our pursuit of happiness, we zoom through life seeking success, achievement, and pleasure, but we reach our tomb with regret, anxiety, misery, and pain. A rare fortunate minority that goes on a quest, is graced with the gift of realization, a gift that liberates them from all misery and transports them to a life of Joy, Bliss, and Peace. Isn't it time to realize the Truth?

“ ***What is the path that will take us home?
All our life, will we drift and roam?
When we realize there is no difference
in these concepts three,
Then we will realize the Truth and be free.*** ”

SUMMARY - CHAPTER 6

Which path will lead us to our Ultimate Goal?

- If we compare Moksha, Nirvana, and Enlightenment, we see that all three are different names, but they essentially mean one and the same thing. Some people even call this *Mukti* or Freedom, some Salvation or Unification with the Divine.
- All three concepts talk about spiritual enlightenment through acquiring the wisdom of the Spirit, the Soul or the Life Energy within.
- These concepts question the reality of death and try to help us realize: who dies? Are we the body that dies, or the mind that we can't find or are we the Divine Soul?
- All three concepts help us to be enlightened with the Truth, compared to other concepts which continue to let us live in ignorance, believing in the myth, in rituals and superstition.
- Since there is no doubt that a power, we call God exists, our goal is to realize God and become one with the Divine.
- When we go on a quest to realize the Truth, we find answers that will lead us to our Ultimate Goal of Peace, Joy, and Bliss.
- The concepts of MEN, Moksha, Enlightenment and Nirvana, take us closer to the Truth.

CHAPTER

07

Realization of the Truth

A common man would wonder what it means when he reads that our Ultimate Goal is the realization of the Truth. To him, he knows the Truth. He knows who he is, he has goals and he is so busy living and achieving his objectives that there is no time for any further realization. In fact, he scoffs at the thought and ridicules religion and spirituality as something meant for those who have lost their mind. "Be practical," he says, "there is no time for all this." Unfortunately, when he suffers, and he has nowhere to go, he cries and ultimately dies. He may have achieved millions, just as he might have the rewards, trophies, and accolades. Then why did he not have peace of mind, the basic foundation of happiness, his Ultimate Goal? It is because he did not realize the Truth.

Unfortunately, most people suffer and are miserable because they are ignorant of the Truth. They rush through life without finding out who they truly are, and what is their real purpose and meaning to be alive on planet earth. They don't pause to think about what happens after death. A human being is alive, and then suddenly, the life inside that person disappears in a flash and the person is considered dead. It is not like sleeping and waking up. This person is gone, never to return. But where has he gone? What about all his money, his property and his wealth? What about his son's marriage that was planned in the coming few days? Suddenly all the celebrations have turned to

mourning. Who controls all this drama that happens on earth? And why do bad things happen to good people?

There are hundreds of questions that have no answer, not because there are no answers, but because we have not bothered to find the answers and to realize the Truth. We just believe in the myth that we are taught, and we do not investigate and ask questions. Thus, we live with ignorance. It is this blanket of dark ignorance that covers us with misery and sorrow.

What is the Truth about Life? Of course, our mother and father are the cause of our birth, but when are we actually born: When two cells fuse to become a zygote or when the embryo is finally delivered on earth? What is this life inside us that gives us breath, without which there would be death? The fact is that we human beings are uniquely blessed with a body that has about 37 trillion cells, eyes that each have what equates to a 576 megapixel camera, a brain that has a memory of a mega-computer beyond man's comprehension. And there are 8 billion such people on earth, each with a unique fingerprint. Is this a myth? No, these are facts! But what is the Truth? Did all this happen because of one big bang or did monkeys become apes that grew into human beings by magic? It is really tragic that we don't understand the Truth of life. Instead of realizing the facts of life, and being amazed by creation, we continue to live with ignorance and we suffer.

Have you ever wondered who suffers? Is it your body? If it was only our body that suffered, then we could take pain killers, opioids or even anesthesia to suffer no more. But what about the mind? The greatest suffering is experienced by ME – the mind and ego. The ME is the director of all action and the ME suffers because of ignorance. Although each one of us wants to be happy and that seems to be our Ultimate Goal, we live in misery because we don't realize the Truth.

If suffering is the main problem, then the question is – is there a way to overcome suffering? The good news is that there is a way to end all pain, suffering, and misery. Our suffering is due to the ignorance that we live with. The moment we realize the Truth about life, about who we truly are, and why we are here, we can transcend all misery. Our challenge is to realize the Truth.

How can we realize the Truth? Realization is not something that you can put in your shopping cart through online shopping. It is not a product available in malls and supermarkets. It is not even a secret that is written in books. Realization is a gift from the Divine. All this magic that happens on planet earth, is created and preserved by a power that is beyond human comprehension. Because humanity doesn't know the Truth about this power, we term this power as the Creator or God. Then we confuse the creative power and give our God names, shapes and forms as we once again sink into the myth of ignorance. Unless we

overcome the myth, we will never realize the Truth. Unless we realize 'who we are not', we will never realize 'who we truly are' and unless we realize the Truth, we will continue to suffer due to our ignorance.

There are 10 established methods that one can contemplate and introspect on if one is truly passionate about realizing the Truth. Several methods help us discover answers to these questions. Any of these methods can help us in the Realizations of the Truth.

1. The Law of Causation: This is made up of three principles:

1. Every effect has a cause
2. The effect is nothing else but the cause in another form
3. If you remove the cause, there is no effect

Based on the Law of Causation, one realizes that a gold ring is actually not a ring. Why? Because if you remove the gold from the ring, nothing remains. There is no ring without the gold. It appears to be a ring but actually, it is gold. Gold is the cause – the ring is the effect. Similarly, mud is the cause. The pot, the plate, and the statue may appear to be so, but in reality, they are not. They are only effects of the cause - mud. If you remove the mud, there would be nothing. Without the mud there would be no pot, no plate, and no statue.

We human beings appear to be the body – the gross

physical body and the subtle mind. But in reality, we are the Divine Life Energy that gives life to the body-mind complex. At death, when the Life Energy departs, there is no breath. The body immediately disintegrates into dust and becomes nothing. It is only an effect of the cause, the Life Energy that departed. Life Energy is the cause. Without the Life Energy, we return to dust. We become nothing. This Law of Causation makes people realize the truth. The truth that we are not the body or mind. We are the Divine Life Energy, the Soul.

2. The Peeling Method: Another method of realizing who we are is called the virtual peeling method. If we virtually peel a live human body like an onion, layer by layer, and keep every cell with blood in beakers on the table, organs in trays, and flesh and bones along with the rest of the body, we will find everything except the one who was alive. The room in this virtual experiment is completely sealed and airtight. Where did the person who was alive go? Now, if we try to stitch back the body with the help of expert surgeons and medical equipment, we may probably recreate the body but we cannot put back life into it. The one who was alive in the body escapes into Consciousness. This virtual peeling method makes us realize we are not the blood, nor the bone or the skin but the Life Energy within.

3. The Consciousness Method: Another way to realize who we truly are is to reflect upon what is popularly known as the consciousness method. We human

beings experience different states of consciousness. When we are awake, the body and mind are conscious. When we sleep, the body is not conscious, but if the mind dreams, it is conscious. When the mind also sleeps, neither body nor the mind is conscious and we experience a feeling of peace, which makes us say, “I slept like a log” when we wake up. If we notice we experience the waking state, the dream state, and the deep sleep state. We are neither the waker nor the dreamer nor the sleeper, but the one who experiences these three states. Who are we? We are the Consciousness, the *Atman*, the Spirit or the Soul.

4. Meditation: To realize the truth, some people meditate. What is meditation? It is slowing down the mind. It produces up to fifty thoughts per minute. Meditation is about focusing on one thought. In such a state, one realizes the truth. Normally, the mind jumps like a monkey and does not let us contemplate the truth, that neither are we the body nor the mind. Although we know it, we are not able to realize this truth because of the rascal mind. Meditation helps reveal the truth. It stops the mind from the constant jumping from thought to thought and makes it focus on one thought with concentration. It is at this point that we realize we are not the body, nor the mind, but the Soul.

5. Questioning: Most seekers on their quest progress on the journey by asking questions - existential questions like what came first: the chicken or the egg?

The chicken screams, "I came first. If there was no chicken how could the egg ever come?" "Hello, Mr. Chicken", retorts the egg, "If there was no egg how would you be born?" The questioning method ultimately leads us to the answer to - Who are we? We should not give up and believe that some questions have no answers. We must persist to find answers. The tree came from a seed but the seed came from the tree. What came first? We were born from our parents and our parents from their parents. Could our forefathers be apes? Questions like these make us investigate and ultimately help us realize the answer to who we truly are. We are a manifestation of the Divine, a fraction of the pure Divine Energy.

6. The Negation Method: Ancient scriptures suggest that we use the method called 'negation' to find out who we are. This calls for us first to know who we are not. We are not the body, there is no doubt about that. We also know we are not the mind. Then who are we? There is no doubt that we exist. From birth to death, our existence is referred to as our life journey. The only element that may be 'us', is that life that arrives at birth and departs at death. We are That!

7. Understanding what makes us beautiful: We human beings are very proud of our beauty, but stop and think – the most beautiful human being decays and disintegrates at death. Why? What happens? The real beauty is that Life Energy that departs at death. We

become still, stone-like, we stink and become incapable of being maintained unless we are embalmed or preserved under special conditions. The Egyptians preserved the 'Mummy', the bodies of their dead but these were not those that were truly alive. This should make us realize that we are actually the beauty that departs at death, not the bodies that decay after we depart. We are the Life Energy that causes the beauty in us just as it causes the beauty in a beautiful bird or an exotic butterfly. The moment this Life Energy leaves, all the beauty starts to disappear.

8. The Seer and Seen Method: Another method of realizing who we are is spiritually coined as 'The Seer and Seen' method. We see a ball with our eyes. The ball is the object. The eyes are the subject. The eyes seem to see the ball. But if we remove the eyes and keep them on the table, can we see the ball? Of course not! The eyes are connected to the mind and it is the mind that observes the eyes seeing the ball. The eyes become the object and the mind the subject. Next, we find that the mind is wandering and although we are staring at the ball, we don't see somebody grabbing it because our mind is wandering. Who is conscious that the mind is wandering? The mind itself becomes the object and we, the observers, become the subject. We realize that we are not the eyes or the body. We are not even the mind. We are the observers, the ones who are conscious, and the ones who actually see. This 'Seer and Seen' method takes us further into realizing the truth of who we are.

We are the Living Consciousness that is alive within.

9. Our 'given' names: Our names are just our names - our identity. Our names are not us. *"Who are you?" the Saint asked the American who came to be blessed. He said, "I am John." "That's your name," said the Saint. "I asked who you are." "Oh! I am an American." "I didn't ask for your nationality. Tell me who you are." "Oh! I am a lawyer." "That's your profession, Mr. John. Who are you?" "I am the son of Tom and Mary and the father of Sarah and Rachel." "Did I ask you for your relationships? Please tell me, who are you?" "I am a millionaire from New York." "That is your financial status - I am not asking that. Tell me, who are you?" The American was embarrassed. After a lot of introspection, he realized the truth. He thought he was his name but that was only his name, he had no idea of who he truly was. Now he was inspired to search for the truth that he was not what he appeared to be on the outside but rather the one who was alive inside.*

10. Scientific Reasoning: Those who want to find out who they are through a scientific method may also do so. Science, too, endorses that we are not matter, but rather trillions of energy particles that appear to be the body. For so many centuries, science and spirituality were at loggerheads. But recent experiments in science have tabled several theories that are in sync with spirituality. One such theory is the belief that energy can transform to matter and matter to energy. This formula is popularly known as $E=MC^2$. Is the scientific

belief enough to make us realize who we are? Scientists who study quantum physics and quantum mechanics go deep into studying the smallest particle of matter at subatomic levels. Recently in one such experiment, the smallest particle known as Quark, suddenly disappeared. The scientists were intrigued. As they were wondering whether matter had transformed into energy, the particle reappeared. They coined a new theory called 'Wave-Particle Duality'. No more were matter and energy to be considered separate from each other as one could transform to the other. This scientific truth should lay to rest our doubt of who we are. There is no doubt we are not the matter that we seem to be but the energy that creates life in us.

Those who are sincere and want to realize the truth of who they are can use any of these methods to realize the truth. It is so obvious that we are not the body. Science declares it, death endorses it, beauty proclaims it, and virtually peeling the body will confirm it. Several methods endorse that we are not the mind. We observe the mind watching the world. We meditate to calm the mind. And we reflect that we are not the dreamer.

Whatever be the method of realization, where does the realization of the Truth lead us to? It makes us realize beyond doubt that we are not the body that we seem to be. It also makes us realize that we are not the mind. It leads us to the ultimate realization that we are the life

energy within, often referred to as the Soul, the spirit, the *Atman*, *Chi* or *Prana*.

Seekers of the Ultimate Goal of life, the realization of the Truth, are sometimes shocked to know that the realization of the Truth is not achieving the Ultimate Goal. It is just the beginning of the journey. Once we realize the Truth of who we are and why we are here, then we start our journey of Liberation, the Ultimate Goal of life.

“*The quest for the Truth starts with what we are not,
We are the Soul that in a body-mind is caught.
Until we transcend our ego and mind,
This Realization we will never find.*”

SUMMARY - CHAPTER 7

Realization of the Truth

There are 10 established methods that we can contemplate to realize the Truth that we are not the body, nor the mind but the Soul.

1 The Law of Causation: The body and mind are just effects. We are the cause.

2 The Peeling Method: If we virtually peel the body, we will realize that we are not the body.

3 The Consciousness Method: If we are not the waker, the dreamer, the sleeper, but we are, then who are we?

4 Meditation: It stops the mind from the constant production of thoughts and makes it focus on one thought.

5 Questioning: We can realize the truth by asking questions like 'What came first: chicken or egg?'

6 The Negation Method: We must realize who we are not, and then we will realize who we truly are.

7 Understanding what makes us beautiful: We are not the beautiful body that we appear to be. It decays. We are the Life Energy within that causes the beauty.

8 The Seer and Seen Method: If we realize that we are observers, we can realize the truth of who we really are.

9 Our 'given' names: Our names are just our names - our mistaken identity. Truly, our names are not us in reality.

10 Scientific Reasoning: Even science now endorses that we are not matter. We are energy.

We can use any of these methods to Realize the Truth. But this is just the beginning of the journey to Liberation, our Ultimate Goal!

CHAPTER

08

**Liberation from
Misery and Sorrow**

As the word suggests, Liberation is Freedom. What is this Freedom all about? Most people don't even realize that we human beings are prisoners – prisoners who suffer, caged in misery and sorrow. Every human being on earth suffers and there is no one who can escape from it. However, those who realize the Truth are the ones who can be liberated from misery and sorrow.

How can one be liberated from misery and sorrow? As long as we live in this body-mind-ego complex, the body suffers physical pain. The mind experiences all kinds of emotional pain and the ego experiences the agony when it is hurt. Realization is magical! It makes us realize that we are not the body-mind-ego that suffers. Thus, realization instantly liberates us from all misery, pain, and suffering.

For one to be liberated, one has to realize the Truth. But realization is not Liberation. Realization makes us aware of who we are not, just as it makes us conscious of who we truly are. While there are many methods of realization, realization actually happens in a flash. We human beings experience so many other realizations that happen instantly, in the moment, but we don't realize the Truth because we are covered by a dark blanket of ignorance. The moment we realize the Truth and we eradicate the ignorance, we start the journey of Liberation, our Ultimate Goal.

Most religions in the world advocate that there is a law

existing in the universe that returns good for good and evil for evil. The Eastern cultures call this law the Law of Karma. The law states - what you give is what you get. Karma today, is a universally accepted law and even people in the Western world believe that *as you sow so shall you reap*. There are some differences in the finer points of this belief, with some advocating that we would go to heaven or hell, others believing that we will be reborn and still others believing in the final day of judgement when we would be appropriately rewarded or punished by a God and his angels.

It hardly matters what religion we believe in because we all believe in the law of the boomerang – what goes around comes around. Thus, by inference, we believe that we cannot escape from this law. Unfortunately, there is no proof of this, but it is through inference that most of humanity accepts that our actions, good or bad, will invoke a similar reaction. If we plant mangoes, the universal law ensures that we don't get apples. What does this prove? Several universal laws exist but there is no way to prove them. Do we believe in the Law of Gravity? There is no proof but because of the fact that anything thrown up in the sky is pulled back to earth, we believe through inference that there is a law called the Law of Gravity that is prevalent on earth. So also, by inference, we believe that the universe is governed by the law of action and reaction.

Most theologies advocate that the Ultimate Goal of life

is Liberation from misery and sorrow, going to heaven after we die or being enlightened with the Divine Truth. Each religion talks of being liberated from misery and sorrow or being blessed with eternal joy and peace. However, religions and their scriptures over the centuries, like the game Chinese whisper, have been misunderstood and misinterpreted. What has not changed globally is both the desire to be glad and not sad, just as we human beings seek to escape from all kinds of pain, misery, and sorrow. Not just momentarily, how can we escape from all our sinful actions and be liberated?

Those who believe in the concept of rebirth, Hindus, Jains, and Buddhists amongst others, believe that we human beings will be reborn in a new body based on our Karma, our actions. Other religions believe that our actions, good or bad, are recorded and these decide our destiny. The seeker of the Truth, the one who wants to achieve the Ultimate Goal of life, tries to find out the reality by going on a quest. It doesn't matter which religion one believes in. What matters is to discover the Truth. If we really go to heaven or hell after our death, then where is this heaven or hell located? Further, we have no doubt that the body is cremated or buried right here on earth and becomes one with it. Then who is the one who goes to heaven or hell? Finally, while we may be promised all kinds of pleasures and rewards in heaven, but without a body, how can we enjoy these pleasures?

Liberation is, therefore, something that has to be

achieved during our life on earth. We cannot be liberated after we die, although, the final reward of Liberation will come after death. A true seeker who realizes the Truth transcends body, mind, and ego and realizes that he is the Soul that must escape and transcend the Law of Karma. This Liberation is only possible through realization. But our own mind and ego are our biggest enemies. Those who realize the Truth continue to experience a war within. The mind is a rascal, and along with the ego, the ME (Mind+Ego) – stops us from both Realization and Liberation.

The secret of the Ultimate Goal is persistence. First, the seeker eliminates all untenable concepts. Then the seeker realizes tenable concepts like Moksha, Enlightenment, and Nirvana – MEN, and that they are no different from each other. Using methods of realization, the seeker overcomes ignorance, realizes the Truth and is liberated from misery and sorrow.

Realization opens the door towards the Ultimate Goal of Life – Liberation. However, realization doesn't guarantee Liberation. For a seeker to be liberated from misery and sorrow, not just in this life, but to escape from possible rebirth where we will suffer again and again, the seeker must transcend being the ego, mind, and body, not just through realization, but thereafter living a spiritual life from A to Z.

***“Liberation stops us from being worried and stressed,
It gives Peace and Joy and we are not depressed.
If only we realize we are the Divine Soul,
We have achieved Life's Ultimate Goal.”***

SUMMARY - CHAPTER 8

Liberation from Misery and Sorrow

- Most people don't even realize that we human beings, are prisoners who suffer caged in misery and sorrow.
- As long as we live in this body-mind-ego complex, the body suffers physical pain, the mind experiences all kinds of emotional pain and the ego experiences the agony when it is hurt.
- For one to be liberated, one has to realize the truth that Liberation has to be achieved during one's life on earth. We cannot be liberated after we die although, the final reward of life will come after death.
- A true seeker who realizes the Truth transcends ego, mind and body and realizes that he is the Soul that must escape and transcend the Law of Karma.
- The secret of the Ultimate Goal is persistence. First, the seeker eliminates all untenable concepts. Then the seeker realizes that tenable concepts like Moksha, Enlightenment and Nirvana are no different from each other.
- Realization opens the door towards the Ultimate Goal of Life – Liberation. However, realization doesn't guarantee Liberation. For this we need to live a spiritual life from A to Z.

CHAPTER

09

**The A to Z of
Spirituality**

Those who want to achieve the Ultimate Goal of life, who want to live a life of eternal bliss and everlasting happiness, go beyond religion. To them, Moksha, Enlightenment, and Nirvana are no different from each other. They respect all the concepts as different roads that lead to the same goal. They realize that religion is a kindergarten to spirituality. Just as we need to go to kindergarten to achieve masters in anything, we cannot reach our spiritual destination without the help of some religion. However, those who get stuck in religious dogma keep going round in circles. Only those who evolve spiritually will achieve the Ultimate Goal.

As spiritual aspirants, what must we do? We must adopt a philosophy of spirituality in our everyday life. To make it convenient, we can use the method of listing the philosophy as the A to Z of spirituality.

A. Ask questions: As a spiritual aspirant, we must use our intellect and question everything. Just accepting myth or certain beliefs will not take us forward on the path. We must ask questions – who am I? Why am I here? Who is God? Where is God? What is God? Why should we follow these rituals? What happens after death? Our spiritual journey starts with asking questions and we must continue asking questions till we live as an embodied Soul in this body-mind complex. Those who don't ask questions and just

accept whatever they are told, may get caught in a maze of false beliefs.

B. Beauty is Divinity: A person who is spiritually evolved sees Divinity in beauty. We must realize the Truth that everything beautiful is a manifestation of the Divine. The Divine appears in a beautiful butterfly, a bird, a rose, even in us human beings. The moment the Divine, the life energy departs, there is no beauty left. Therefore, we must live with this realization that beauty is Divinity.

C. Consciousness leads to Peace and Bliss: If we want to be peaceful and blissful, we must be conscious of our Divine self. The consciousness that we are not the body, not the mind leads us to being conscious that we are the Soul, the spirit, the *Atman*. One who lives a life conscious of the Truth will experience peace and bliss all the time.

D. Discriminate thoughts: As a human being, we think up to 50 thoughts a minute. This can be about 50,000 thoughts per day. To achieve the Ultimate Goal, we must use our intellect to act as a filter that discriminates every thought. We should not let our thoughts become feelings and actions, without first discriminating whether the thought is right or wrong.

E. Enlightenment is the goal: The Ultimate Goal of Life is to overcome the darkness of ignorance that covers us

in a blanket of misery and pain. The only way to overcome this darkness is with Enlightenment. When we are Enlightened with the Truth, the darkness of misery disappears.

F. False beliefs are dangerous: Those who want to evolve spiritually must overcome the myth by realization of the Truth. If we continue to accept false beliefs that have been passed down, we will be trapped in the myth and we will never realize the Truth.

G. God exists: We may not know who God is, where God is or what God is, but God is. This is a principal belief of a spiritual aspirant. We are nothing, God is everything. The spiritual aspirant realizes that God is a power beyond human comprehension and beyond any religion. It is with the grace of God that we can achieve ultimate peace and bliss.

H. Happiness will follow: If we want to be happy, we must realize that happiness is like a shadow. We cannot go behind it. But if we live as the Divine Spirit, we can be happy all the time. A realized being lives in a state of everlasting joy being conscious of the truth that he is the Divine Soul.

I. "I" stops us from Bliss: It is the "I", the ego that stops us from achieving the Ultimate Goal of being peaceful and blissful. As long as we don't realize who the "I" is, we will never reach our destination. "I am nothing", must be on the lips of every spiritual aspirant.

J. Journey of life has no destination : A spiritual aspirant realizes that life is not a chase for us to become an ace. We must realize and get out of this maze and live with grace. If we want peace and bliss, it is available every moment in this journey called Life. It is not a destination that we must reach.

K. Karma is a universal law: As spiritual aspirants, we must accept the Law of Karma, but we must also transcend it. We must go beyond Karma, realizing that Karma is for the mind and ego, ME, but we are not this, we are that, the Divine Soul. This will liberate us from all misery and sorrow.

L. Love is the source of joy: As spiritual aspirants, we must learn to Love, understanding that Love is Divine. Love manifests as the 7 colors of the rainbow, from the time we are born till the time we die. We must love one and all, seeing the Divine, manifesting in everybody. Without *True* Divine Soulful Love, one cannot experience Bliss.

M. Manifestations of the Divine: As spiritual seekers, we must realize that everything we see is a manifestation of the Divine. The mountains and the trees, the rivers and the seas, the butterflies and the bees, you and me, we are all manifestation of the Divine. This realization fills our life with peace and bliss.

N. Now! Only Now exists: To be happy, we must

realize that there is no past and future. We cannot be happy in a yesterday that is gone, nor can we be happy in a tomorrow not yet born. If we want to be happy, we must be happy in the NOW. If we are conscious of the NOW and we are happy in this moment, and we live moment by moment joyously, we can be happy forever.

O. Omnipresent - The Power that we call God is everywhere. Can we not see the Divine power everywhere? In the wind that blows, in the water that flows and the sun that glows? Divine power exists in every human being. It is the life that gives us breath, without which there would be death. Spiritual seekers experience the omnipresence of the Divine.

P. Purpose of life is Unification: If we do not realize that the ultimate purpose of life is unification with the Divine, we can never achieve that state of eternal peace and joy. Every moment of Life must be lived with this focussed purpose to enjoy Soulful ecstasy all the time.

Q. Quest will take us to freedom: We must realize that Liberation from misery and sorrow starts with a search, a quest for the Divine Truth. Unless we go on a quest, to realize the Truth, we will continue to be prisoners in this world of pleasures and possessions and never achieve the freedom called Liberation.

R. Realize the Truth: This is the first door that a spiritual aspirant must unlock before reaching the

ultimate destination. Most of us live believing in the myth. We think that we are this ego, mind, and body. The moment we realize the Truth of who we are, we are liberated from misery and we enjoy a life without fear, worry, and anxiety. Realization gives us the gift of peace, joy, and love.

S. Soul is our true identity: When we realize we are not the ego, mind, and body, then we realize that we are the Divine Life energy, the Soul that flows in each of the trillions of cells in the body. As an embodied Soul, it is our goal not just to realize this, but to be liberated and to unify with the Divine cosmic universal Soul.

T. Tranquillity and peace is the foundation: As Spiritual seekers, we must fly far above the low and ordinary waters of pleasure. We must realize that pleasures are momentary and transitory. We must live with contentment and fulfillment, tranquil and peaceful, in Divine surrender and acceptance.

U. Unhappiness can be overcome: While most of the world thinks that there is no way to escape from misery, realized Souls transcend all suffering from the realization of the Truth. They watch the drama of life which is both a tragedy and comedy, realizing that is a part of the cosmic show called life. They don't let anything that happens, to cause them suffering.

V. Victory will not give happiness: Victory, success,

achievement mean nothing for the spiritual seeker. We must realize that monetary success, name, and fame are the illusions that bind us to this world and ultimately make us suffer. Spiritual seekers do not chase success. They realize success is not happiness, happiness is success.

W. Wealth is a roadblock to Nirvana: Those who consider wealth and money as their possessions can never evolve spiritually. We must realize the Truth that we come with nothing and go with nothing. Nothing belongs to us. We must not imprison ourselves in a cage made of gold and diamonds.

X. "X-it" we all have to exit one day: Can we escape death? The body will die, but we, the ones who are embodied, alive within, never die. If we are spiritually evolved, then at death we will be liberated and we will unite with the Divine. If not, we will return, in another life as the ME, Mind, and Ego, to face our Karma.

Y. Yoga is being in Union with the Divine: Yoga is not what the world thinks it is. It is not physical exercise, nor is it just breath control. While these two may be part of Yoga, the true meaning of yoga is union. Real Yoga means being in constant union with the Divine, never losing the connection. It is like a good SIM card that is always connected to the network. Yoga is a connection with the Divine. It may be through action, devotion, education or meditation.

Z. Zen is Meditation that slows down the mind: The “Z” of spirituality, last but not the least, is the power to meditate. What is meditation? It is about slowing down the mind and contemplating a single thought. Unless we stop the production of unnecessary thoughts, we will continue to be the victim of the enemy, our own mind! We must kill the mind before it kills us and this is possible only with meditation.

The A to Z of spirituality is a spiritual philosophy created so that it reminds us to constantly live within this domain. The A to Z acts as a guideline and a constant reminder of the spiritual Truth. It helps us live a life of realization and achieve the goal of Liberation. Those who live a life with the A to Z of spirituality are liberated from all misery and sorrow and they experience eternal peace, everlasting joy, and Divine love, unknown to the common man.

“ *If we live as the Divine Soul,
If this becomes our Life Goal,
If A to Z of Spirituality, we are able to learn,
We will unite with the Divine and never return.* ”

SUMMARY - CHAPTER 9

A to Z of Spirituality

To achieve the Ultimate Goal of life, we should live with the A to Z of spirituality.

- A. Ask questions
- B. Beauty is Divinity
- C. Consciousness leads to Peace and Bliss
- D. Discriminate thoughts
- E. Enlightenment is the goal
- F. False beliefs are dangerous
- G. God exists
- H. Happiness will follow
- I. "I" stops us from Bliss
- J. Journey of life has no destination
- K. Karma is a universal law
- L. Love is the source of joy
- M. Manifestations of the Divine
- N. Now! Only Now exists
- O. Omnipresent- The Power is everywhere
- P. Purpose of life is Unification
- Q. Quest will take us to freedom
- R. Realize the Truth
- S. Soul is our true identity
- T. Tranquillity and peace is the foundation
- U. Unhappiness can be overcome
- V. Victory will not give happiness
- W. Wealth is a roadblock to Nirvana
- X. "X-it" we all have to exit one day
- Y. Yoga is being in Union with the Divine
- Z. Zen is Meditation that slows down the mind

CHAPTER

10

**Discover the secret
of Ultimate Peace,
Bliss, and Joy**

Coming this far on the journey of life, studying all the religious concepts, and understanding 3 primary tenable concepts, MEN - Moksha, Enlightenment, and Nirvana, what is our ultimate realization? Can we live a life of everlasting peace and eternal joy without any misery and suffering? The good news is that we can. Till now, this might have been a secret of peace, joy, bliss, and love, but if we realize the Truth, then it is no more a secret. It is just a set of principles that lead to Liberation.

Of course, we have to ask questions as we go on a quest, we have to separate tenable concepts from untenable concepts, we have to go beyond religion to realize the Truth and be liberated. Whatever be our religion, it hardly matters because religion is the foundation on which our philosophy of life must be built. Once the foundation is built, whether we follow the Hindu concept of Moksha, the Western concept of Enlightenment or the Buddhist concept of Nirvana, they all root from realization of the Truth that creates the shoot of Liberation from misery and sorrow and the fruit of joy, peace, and love. If we continue to live with ignorance, that we are the Ego, Mind, and Body, then there is no way for us to transcend suffering. But if we realize we are the Divine Soul, we can experience *Ananda*, eternal joy and peace.

Love is a source of happiness, but we feel guilty to love. Why? It is due to the ignorance of loving the physical body. Once we realize we are the Divine Soul and we

love from Soul to Soul, we will experience an ecstasy of Soulful Love that is blissful and peaceful.

The moment we realize that we are the Soul, not the body and mind, we are liberated from fear. We live a life of surrender and acceptance, living in the moment, conscious of the now. Regret, anger, and anxiety become a thing of the past as we are liberated from all kinds of misery and sorrow, with the realization of the Truth.

Who doesn't want to live a life that is filled with happiness and knows no unhappiness? Any of these concepts, Moksha, Enlightenment or Nirvana can lead us to our Ultimate Goal. But we must realize the principles behind liberation and live a life of spirituality. After all, it is not so difficult to know that we are the life energy that is alive in the body. We are not the bodies that we wear, but rather the ones that wear the body.

Realization is not knowledge. One may read this book, and know of everything written, but one may not realize the Truth. Realization is absolute wisdom. It is a metamorphosis in our life.

Long ago, a king suddenly died leaving no legal heir. The ministers of the kingdom were in mourning when the old grandmother of the King told them that the grandfather of the king had a cousin who had a son, but unfortunately, he was

useless and thus had become a beggar. However, he had the royal blood of the king.

After much searching, this far relative of the king who had royal blood was found begging near the market area. The ministers picked him up, cleaned, bathed and shaved him till he was presentable. They explained to him that he had royal blood and they wanted to crown him king. The coronation took place ending the mourning in the kingdom, without revealing that the king was the beggar.

Many years later when the king opened a cupboard, the beggar's dress, hat, stick, and begging bowl fell out and he thought of the market where he used to beg. He told his personal minister in confidence that he wanted to visit the market early the next morning. As he left for the market in his royal silk attire, he quickly wore the beggar's clothes on top and covered himself with the hat to look like the beggar. He reached the market place and surprised the people who saw the beggar after many years. They teased him and asked him, "We thought you were dead. Where did you go?"

The king in the beggar's clothes took the same route that he used to take as a beggar, begging with his bowl, trying to understand what was happening in the market. In the evening, when it was dark, he returned to the corner where the minister picked him up in a carriage to take him back to the palace.

All day long, as the king was begging in the market with his beggar's clothes, not for a moment did the king think he was

the beggar. The king knew very well that he was the king. Even though on the outside he was wearing the beggar's clothes, the silk shirt within rubbed against his skin making him constantly aware that he was the King.

What does this story of the King tell us? Those who realize the Truth that they are the Divine Soul, not the ego, mind, and body, can never forget their true identity even for a moment. Just because they are alive in an ego, mind and body complex, they don't become the body. If they do, then they have not realized the Truth and they cannot be liberated from misery and sorrow. Like the king had realized he was king, we need to have the absolute realization that we are the Divine Soul, which is the Truth. Just because we are embodied in a body-mind complex, we don't become that. Just because the king was wearing the beggar's clothes, he never thought for a moment that he was not the king but a beggar. We too must be ever conscious to transcend ego, mind, and body, to be liberated from all kinds of suffering and enjoy peace and bliss that comes with Realization and Liberation.

To enjoy Eternal Peace and Everlasting Joy, we must live in constant union with the Divine, being conscious of our true reality. This is the key to experiencing Bliss. If we do, we will be liberated, provided we don't sink into worldly pleasures and possessions. Building a strong connection with the Divine keeps us away from the cosmic illusion.

A liberated Soul lives life being conscious and enjoying the bliss of Divinity. One who is liberated doesn't get pulled back and imprisoned in ignorance again. A truly liberated Soul lives ever conscious of the Truth, blissful, peaceful, and joyous, loving one and all, each a Divine manifestation as he is. Such a person enjoys MEN, Moksha, Enlightenment or Nirvana, lives a life of Bliss, Joy, and Peace, liberated from all misery and suffering attaining the Ultimate Goal of life.

“ *Discover the secret of Ultimate Peace,
A secret that will make Misery Cease.
Unifying us with the Divine, our Ultimate Goal,
Once we are liberated as the Divine Soul.* ”

SUMMARY - CHAPTER 10

Discover the secret of Ultimate Peace, Bliss, and Joy

- After understanding the 3 primary tenable concepts, MEN - Moksha, Enlightenment, and Nirvana, what is our ultimate realization? Can we live a life of everlasting peace and eternal joy without any misery and suffering? Yes! We can.
- But for this, we have to ask questions as we go on a quest and we have to separate tenable concepts from untenable concepts.
- Whatever be our religion, it is the foundation on which our philosophy of life must be built. But we need to go beyond religion to realize the Truth and to be liberated.
- Whether we follow the Hindu concept of Moksha, the western concept of Enlightenment or the Buddhist concept of Nirvana, they all start from realization of the Truth. They take us towards Liberation from misery and sorrow, and we live with Joy, Peace, and Love.
- If we continue to live with ignorance, that we are the Ego, Mind, and Body, then there is no way for us to transcend suffering.
- A liberated Soul lives life being conscious and enjoying the bliss, of Divinity. One who is liberated doesn't get pulled back to be imprisoned in ignorance again but lives every moment in Divine ecstasy, in joy, bliss, and peace.

Poem

*What is the Ultimate Goal of Life?
Why this misery, why this strife?
We want happiness, but don't achieve our Goal
Because we don't realize we are the Soul*

*The world believes that we were apes
Jumping on trees and eating grapes
And then from apes, we became MEN
A magic show from one to ten!*

*In ignorance, we live and we die
We look at the sky, we pray, we cry
But why we are born, we don't find out why
Who are we, who is this "I"?*

*We don't go for a search and quest
And we don't put our beliefs to test
Whatever we are told, we believe the myth
We suffer because we don't know the Truth*

*But there were wise men, the Truth who knew
They were not many, they were just a few
They went on a quest to find the Truth
They didn't just accept, went to the bottom of the root*

*Who is the Creator of this wonderful earth?
Who causes death, who gave us birth?
Yes, our mother and father were part of the plan
But this Divine work is not that of man*

*There is a power unknown to us
 There is no doubt, let us not fuss
 We don't know who, where and, what is God
 But there is a Creator who is our Lord*

*There are some who believe 'to heaven we will go'
 When we die at the end of the show
 But where is heaven? Does anybody know?
 And if the body stays here, then who will go?*

*There are others who believe that God is a man
 Living in the skies doing what he can
 Once in a while, he comes to earth
 To fulfill our prayers, our joy, our mirth*

*And though we know Santa is a lie
 We believe in the myth and don't ask why
 We just exist, we live and die
 Without asking the question of who and why*

*We have a body but that's not 'ME'
 We are in fact, just energy
 To find this Truth is our Ultimate Goal,
 That we are, in fact, the Divine Soul*

*Moksha it was called many centuries ago
 It was Liberation after death, this Truth we know
 And then there would be no future birth
 And we would not have to return to earth*

*Those who don't know are born again
The law of Karma is for all men
The law says what you sow, you reap
Good or bad, both we get to keep*

*And then came about the concept 'Enlightenment'
Realizing the Truth, getting fulfillment
It is about not being ignorant
And knowing the Truth for our betterment*

*For like blind men, we live in the dark
We think there is nothing, except the dogs that bark
But because we are blind and cannot see
We believe there is nothing, how can this be?*

*From darkness to light we must go
What is the Truth, this we must know
For if we don't, as we live and die
We will suffer in misery and cry*

*Siddhartha was a Hindu king
Who refused to believe just everything
He went on a quest the truth to find
And awakened his consciousness, transcended his mind*

*The Buddha said Nirvana was a state of bliss
It was achieved by realization not making a miss
Living with Four Noble truths and Eight-fold path
He said we can escape from misery and wrath*

*For what is a human being's life meant?
Must we really take a spiritual bend?
Why must we know we are not body and mind?
What is the necessity of the Truth to find?*

*It is important for us not to live like fools
We are blessed as humans, we are given tools
Discriminating with an intellect what is right and wrong
Questioning every thought, becoming spiritually strong*

*But it is really sad, we just live and die
What is our purpose, we don't find out why
We are given this birth, who is this 'I'?
We just believe, living with the lie*

*And because of this ignorance, we are miserable and sad
We want to be happy, but we can't be glad
If the A to Z of spirituality we get to know
Then we will truly enjoy the show*

*This life is a special gift for us
It is not just a moving bus
Which starts at birth and death is the end
Each moment is precious, to be wisely spent*

*If we realize the Truth, that we are the Soul
Then we have achieved our Ultimate Goal
There will be Joy, Bliss, Love, and Peace
Misery and sorrow will completely cease*

By
AIR
Atman in Ravi

About the Author – AiR

AiR – *Atman* or the Soul 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, transformed his life to RVM, living by the RVM philosophy – Rejoice, Value Life, and Make a Difference. He started doing H.I.S. work – Humanitarian, Inspirational and Spiritual work. His mission was to 'Make a Difference' in this world before his journey was over.

As a part of the humanitarian initiative, a charitable hospital and charitable homes were set up with an aim to provide free medical treatment and care to the poor, destitute, and needy. Today, over 600 homeless and suffering people are served and cared for in destitute homes and provided with free shelter, food, clothing, and medical care.

A School of Inspiration was set up that inspired the lives of many people through motivating talks,

inspirational books and videos, and thought-provoking quotes.

A Shiva Temple was built 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 we all have to go beyond religion to truly realize God.

One day, his Guru provoked him to introspect: What is the purpose of life? Is life just meant to seek pleasures and to live and die without any purpose? What happens after death? Will we be reborn? Where is God? 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 RVM 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 we live in. Truth is Truth but our Mind does not realize

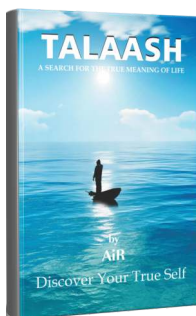
that. With AiR's own Realization, he has published several books, written *bhajans*, blogs, quotes, poems and taken up several other initiatives that can direct people towards the Truth. His vision, now, is to help people to Ask, Investigate, and Realize. He believes that unless people ask questions, they will never start a quest and even if they start the quest unless they really investigate, they will not realize the Truth. This Truth cannot be learned in a school, college or university, it must be realized. AiR has dedicated his life to helping people realize the Truth.

“ *We are Not the Body,
We are Not the Mind,
We are the Soul,
This TRUTH we must FIND!* ”

BOOKS BY THE AUTHOR

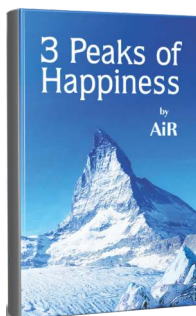
1. Talaash

'Talaash' means Search or Quest. This book by AiR is his personal journey to realize the Truth where he shares his Realization that we are not the Body and the Mind that we seem to be. We are Power. The Divine life force is known as Soul, Spirit or *Atman*. This search and quest by AiR made him transform his life. It is a quest that made him realize the Truth. It might be just that book that inspires you to Liberation.



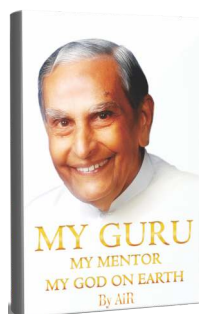
2. 3 Peaks of Happiness

3 Peaks of Happiness by AiR is a simple book that talks about the quest of all humanity. Everybody wants to be happy. But is everybody happy? No. The reason is we are stuck on the first peak of Happiness – Achievement. 20% of the people are lucky to climb the second peak of Happiness – Fulfilment, which comes from contentment. But there is a third peak beyond. The third peak of happiness will liberate you from the prisons of misery and sorrow and give you eternal Joy and Bliss.



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

My Guru, My Mentor, My God on Earth is a book by AiR in which he shares his experiences with his Guru who was not just his Guru and Mentor, but also his God on Earth. We all need a coach, a teacher to help us understand, guide us to live life and this book "My Guru" will inspire you to find your Guru or to make your relationship with your Guru more fulfilling and meaningful.



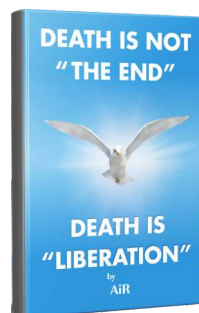
4. I will Never Die. Death is not "The End"

In the journey of his life, AiR realized many Truths. One of the Truths was that he would never die. The Body will die, but the one who lives in the Body never dies. We are not the bodies that we wear; we are the ones who wear the Body. Death is not the end. It is a bend to transcend. This book reveals the Truth about Death.



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

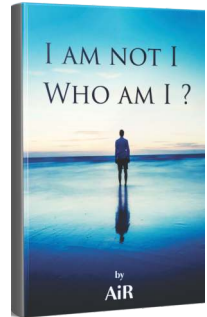
Death is Not "The End". Death is "Liberation" – the second book in the series of books on death by AiR – touches upon the secret of the Kathopanishad, which talks about what happens at death. One of two things happens



– if we think we are the Body and Mind as a doer, we are reborn. But if we think we are not the Body and Mind, but the Energy, we are liberated to eternal Joy and Peace.

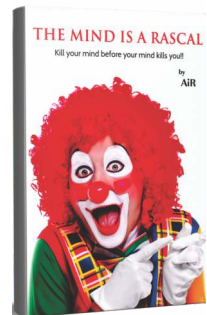
6. I am not I. Who am I?

I am not I. Who am I? – is a very interesting book by AiR, which talks of his quest and Realization that we are not who we think we are. We have a house, but we are not the house. We have a car, but we are not the car. We have a Body, but we are not the Body. We may have a Mind, but we are not the Mind. Who are we? Realize the Truth.



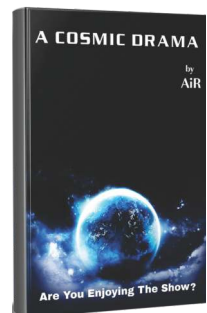
7. The Mind is a Rascal

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



8. A Cosmic Drama

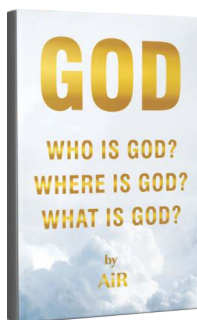
This book authored by AiR challenges us to think that whatever is happening in life is not



real. It is nothing but a drama. The earth is a big stage, and we are all actors who come and go. There is no need to worry and cry till we die. If we understand the Truth, we can enjoy the show called life.

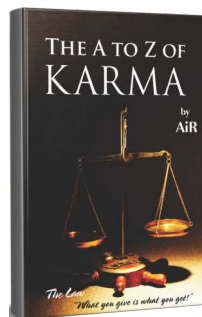
9. Who is God? Where is God? What is God?

Well, this might seem to be a simple set of questions, but nobody really knows the answers. We all know that God exists. We pray to a God as per our religion but what is the Truth about God? Has anybody seen God? Where is God? This simple book will change your perception and belief about God and bring you closer to this Power called God. It will help you realize God.



10. The A to Z of Karma

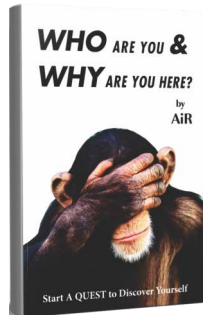
Most people are aware of the concept of *Karma* – the Law. What you give is what you get. But not everybody knows the A to Z of *Karma*, that we can actually transcend *Karma*, escape from it and achieve Moksha, Nirvana, Liberation or Enlightenment. This book reveals the secret – of eternal Joy and Peace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



11. Who Are You & Why Are You Here?

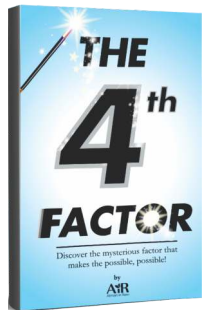
'Who are you and why are you' here is a simple book

which challenges us to discover the secret of our life. Most of us think we are the Body-Mind complex, but in reality, we are not. The Body will die and return to dust. Where is the Mind, we cannot find. Who are we in reality? And beyond that what is the purpose of life on earth. This book will give you all the answers.



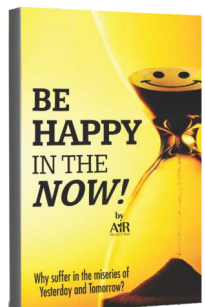
12. The 4th Factor

Man thinks that he can achieve anything. He believes that there is nothing in this world he can't do. But, he doesn't realize that his efforts and equipment are not enough to decide the results of his actions. Sometimes, he does his best but things don't work out the way he wants. He then realizes the importance of the 4th Factor, a factor that makes the possible, possible and without its consent even the possible becomes impossible.



13. Be Happy in the NOW!

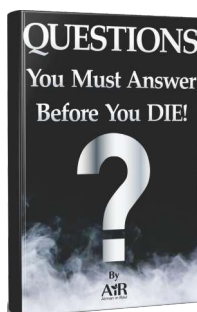
Every human being on earth wants to be Happy. There is nobody who enjoys pain. People want to achieve Happiness but they fail to realize that Happiness is the journey itself, not the destination. Then, what is the secret of eternal Joy, Bliss, and Peace? It is being Happy in the NOW. Every time we let



the suffering of yesterday take charge of our life, we destroy the Joy of today. When our thoughts anxiously jump into what may happen in the future, we lose the tranquillity of the present moment. We seem to be like helpless monkeys jumping from one branch to another, from yesterday to tomorrow. And in the bargain, we lose the gift of being Happy in the present. 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

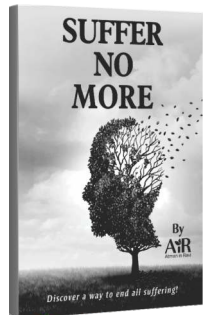
Most of us live and die but we don't ask the question – Why? We just exist! We don't want to invest time in asking essential questions which are actually needed to lead a fulfilling and Blissful life. There are so many critical questions that we must answer before our journey of life is over. What will happen to us after we die? Who created this universe? How can we be Happy all the time? Who is God, where is God, what is God? Like this, there are so many questions which we are ignorant about and somehow, we believe that ignorance is Bliss. We Blissfully live in ignorance till we die. Isn't it time to stop and ask questions?



15. Suffer No More

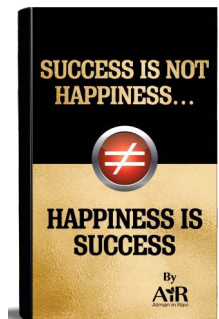
Suffer No More is a personal experience of overcoming

anguish, anxiety, distress, and grief. We all suffer physical pain. Who on earth can escape from it? But while there is pain, can we do away with the suffering? What is suffering? While we all experience it, have we gone on a quest to understand what the primary cause of misery is? We live in this ignorance, this myth, that suffering is an unavoidable part of life. We can be free from suffering if only we realize that we are the prisoners of negative emotions that continue to make us miserable. Suffer No More is an analysis of suffering, what causes it and how we can overcome it. If one wants to truly live with eternal Joy and everlasting Peace, it's possible! This book will help you Realize the Truth and Suffer No More!



16. Success is not Happiness... Happiness is Success

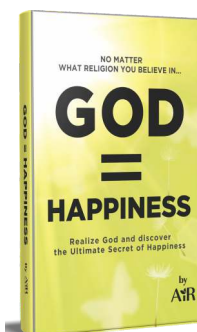
Everybody wants to succeed. If one goes deep into the psychology of winning, one will realize that people want to win because this makes them Happy, just as failure makes them miserable. People want to succeed and they do everything possible to win because they want to be Happy. In fact, humanity, by and large, believes that Success is like a cause, of which Happiness is the effect. In the present book the readers will discover the reality that Success equals Happiness is an illusion. No doubt Success creates a sense of gratification that makes us Happy but



Real Happiness is beyond achievement. It is contentment and fulfilment. It's time for us to realize the Truth. Instead of chasing Success to be Happy, we should try to be Happy. That is true Success. We must realize that Success is not Happiness, Happiness is Success.

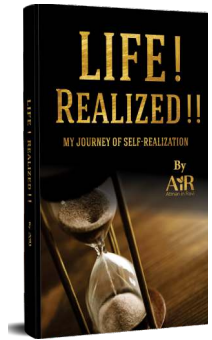
17. God = Happiness

We understand what it means to be happy, especially when we compare it to those times when we are miserable and unhappy. But how exactly is our state of Joy or sorrow connected to God, remains a mystery. Yes, we pray thinking of God as somebody in heaven who has a magic wand with which he controls our Happiness. But is this true or is there something else that we are ignorant about? In his quest to discover Truth and the purpose of life, the author found answers that liberated him from misery and sorrow. He also realized that people didn't know where exactly to search for Happiness. All pray to God but do we know the Real Truth about God? We may believe in any religion but that hardly matters, because God is beyond religion. While we evolve in life, we don't spiritually evolve to realize that God is far more powerful than what we imagine. This book is not about religion. It takes us far beyond religion to Realize the Truth about God and how God is Happiness.



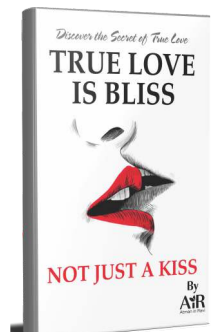
18. Life! Realized!!

The present book is a personal reflection of the author who has written several books on life, happiness, and almost everything that matters in the life journey. Like anybody else, he too spent many years of his life chasing success and money but then, he took an exit from this first peak of happiness - Achievement, transformed his life and started living with Contentment and Fulfillment. He realized that what mattered the most was his Life Realization. There were many questions in his mind and after a profound investigation, he discovered the Truth. He decided to pen down all his realizations together to share them with the world. Those who wish to start a quest of self-realization and God-realization must read this book as it will direct them towards the path which will help them realize the Truth.



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

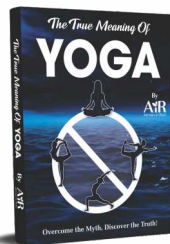
True Love is bliss, not just a kiss. It is sad that Love which is the source of joy and happiness, is not understood by the world. The world thinks of Love to be just hugs and kisses, romance and sex. Is this True Love? No. True Love is Love from the Soul. It is Divine Love that manifests as Love from the



day we are born to the day we die. Stop! Discover True Love and live your life with eternal bliss and joy.

20. True Meaning of Yoga

Yoga, today, is primarily taught as a set of body postures or *Asanas*. Some take it a step further and include breathing exercises referred to as *Pranayama*. But this is not true Yoga! This may be good for our physical well-being but true Yoga is something completely different. Those who think that Yoga is just about stretching the body will be in for a big surprise when they read this book. It will trigger their mind and help them overcome the misconceptions about Yoga. Yoga, in reality, is a Union with the Divine. There is no doubt that as part of the entire Yogic experience, some saints advocated certain body postures and breathing exercises to be a part of the overall Yoga practice, but most definitely, these by themselves are not Yoga. This book attempts to explain everything about Yoga, its actual meaning and significance, how it must be practised and how through Yoga, one can be liberated and experience Ultimate Bliss and Divine Peace.



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

Coming Soon

22. Religion! A Kindergarten to Spirituality

If you have any questions on life, rebirth, liberation or anything related to spirituality, you can visit Ask AiR, and AiR will answer your questions.

Please visit the following link
www.air.ind.in/ask_air/

| | Om Namah Shivaya | | | Shivoam | |



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A.i.R.
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The Ultimate Goal of Life **MEN**

MOKSHA ENLIGHTENMENT NIRVANA

What is the Ultimate Goal of Life?

Most people think that our goal is to be Happy. However, while this is the goal of humanity, life is a bouquet of roses and thorns, and we experience both joy and sorrow. Is there a way to escape from misery and suffering?

Yes, there is a way to escape from all misery and to live a life of Eternal Peace and Everlasting Joy.

What is this magical way to be Happy all the time? The answer is MEN. Some people call it Moksha, some Enlightenment and some Nirvana. The words may be different, but this is the one secret to everlasting Happiness.

For thousands of years, man has folded his hands in prayer to a power that he calls God. The world has so many religions, each having its own God and each advocating its own concept that will eradicate our sins, promising us happiness but unfortunately, man still struggles to be happy.

If we go through all the religions and all the concepts, there seems to be one path that is beyond religion, a path of spirituality that will lead us to the Divinity within. This path will make us Realize the Truth and will liberate us from misery and sorrow.

Let us discover how to live a life that teaches us the A to Z of spirituality and helps us achieve the Ultimate Goal of Bliss and Peace.

A.i.R.

AiR Institute of Realization
Ask Investigate Realize

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