MY GURU
MY MENTOR
MY GOD ON EARTH

by

AiR
Atman in Ravi

Dada J. P. Vaswani

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PREFACE

My journey with my Guru started over 25 years ago. On one fortunate day, Dada J.P.Vaswani was addressing a small crowd of people at the Sadhu Vaswani Bal Centre on Queens Road, Bangalore. My cousin had invited me to attend this spiritual discourse. Initially, I was least interested in attending it because I believed that my faith in Lord Shiva, my God, was more than enough to give me all the happiness, joy, and success. However, I decided to go for it eventually. That changed my life! As soon as the talk was over, I stepped forward to seek blessings from the spiritual man. Little did I know that my life would change after this meeting and he would become my Guru – my Master for life!

The first meeting was magical. His eyes gazed into mine, and our eyes were locked till the magic of his love enveloped me. He held my hand, and we both forgot that there were hundreds of people around. We were lost in a conversation that lasted several minutes as the crowd patiently waited for him to reconnect with them. The first meeting built a bond between Dada, as he is fondly called, and me. His love, humility, simplicity, philosophy and oratory skills floored me. I was sold! It was the beginning of a new journey - a new chapter of my life that would change and transform me completely. It was God's grace that I met the man who would be my Guru for life.

Today, as I look back at the two and a half decades that I

have spent with him, every moment with him is invaluable, and I am indebted to Dada for devoting so many years to help me become who I am. He is far beyond a Guru and a Mentor. He is the very God that I pray to - my Lord Shiva who has appeared on Earth as my Guru and my Master.

I consider myself to be the happiest man in the world and if this is so, the cause and reason is one – Dada, my Guru, my Mentor, and my Master. He has led me from darkness to light, from sorrow to joy, from doubt to faith, and from despair to hope.

In this book, I share all these experiences with you. I share the wonderful and insightful interactions I have had with him – the hours, days, and meetings we have had together. We have had several hundred discussions where he not only patiently listened to my not-so-intelligent questions, but also responded with utmost intelligence and gave me advice about which direction I should choose for my life. As my guide and my mentor, he transformed my life in so many ways. I was a rough rock. He brought out the diamond in me!

He polished me, cut me, and made me shine. All credit of my life success goes to my Guru – Dada.

Lord !

Make me,

Mould me,

Shape me so that

You are not ashamed of me.

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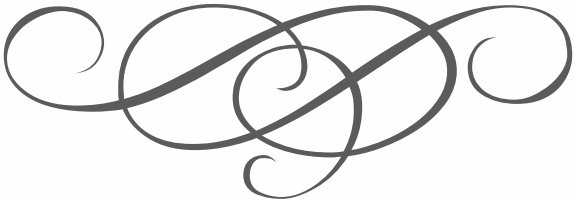
I



Dada's Life Story

Dada's Life Story

Sometimes words fail to express how beautiful the sunrise and sunset are, how ecstatic a piece of music is, and how amazing an experience of love is. I am at a loss for words when I try to talk about my Guru – Dada J.P. Vaswani (Dada Jashan Pahlajrai Vaswani). He is a unique personality, second to none. In all my 50 years of life, I haven't come across a person like him who is so humble, calm, peaceful, loving, caring, intelligent, compassionate, inspiring, generous, and kind. I am not saying this just because he is my Guru, but because he is what he is.

He was born on 2nd August 1918 in Hyderabad, Sindh province (presently in Pakistan) to Mrs. Krishnadevi and Mr. Pahlajrai Vaswani. He was one of the seven siblings. His was a simple family. Pahlajrai, his father, worked with the Hyderabad Training College for Teachers in Karachi. Krishnadevi, his mother, was a housewife, and one of the first few women to have benefited from English education, which was a rarity in those days.

He was a brilliant student. He passed the B.S. examination at a young age of 17. He was awarded a fellowship at the D.J. Sindh College for standing first in his class. His M.Sc. (1948) Thesis on "The Scattering of X-Rays by Solids" was examined by Nobel laureate Dr. C.V Raman. After completing his education, he worked as a fellow at D.J. Sindh College at Karachi.

Dada gave up a career in academics which could have been very lucrative, to follow the footsteps of his illustrious uncle and his future Guru, the great philosopher, educationist, and humanitarian Sadhu T.L. Vaswani.

Along with his Guru and his followers, Dada moved to Pune India in 1948. In order to propagate his Master's ideals, he edited three monthly journals – the Excelsior, the India Digest, and the East and West Series.

Dada's experiences with his Master are unique. He often gets teary-eyed when he recalls the moments spent with his Master. On 16th January 1966, after Sadhu T. L. Vaswani shed his physical body, the baton was passed on to Dada J. P. Vaswani to lead the Brotherhood Association, which was renamed as Sadhu Vaswani Mission in 1978.

As the leader of Sadhu Vaswani Mission, Dada has led the mission in all its efforts to reach out to the poorest of the poor through their humanitarian initiatives. He has inspired many people to live a happy and meaningful life through his numerous books and booklets. He has transformed people's life by inspiring them to live with meaning and purpose through his innumerable talks and discourses.

Dada has appeared in several television programmes on

various channels like Zee, Sony, and others. He talks about how this human life is a gift to us and we must treasure it and make the best of it before the journey is over. Dada promoted the very dear concept of compassion to one and all started by his Master T. L. Vaswani through the Meatless Day campaign, which is promoted every year on Sadhu T. L. Vaswani' s birthday on 25th November.

A new association called Stop All Killing (SAK) was started to encourage people to love and care for animals. Dada strongly believes that one must have compassion and reverence for life and should not kill. He believes that today, because man has no compassion towards animals and kills them, man is not hesitant to raise his sword against his own brothers and sisters. This is causing violence and terrorism around the world.

He is an embodiment of love and compassion and of saintliness and humility. Dada has authored many books on secrets of happiness and non-violent living. His participation in many world conferences on religion, compassion, and humanity has spiritually enriched the world.

Dada's style of talking is very simple. He is a great inspiration. He never leaves his talks open-ended. He always ends his talks with practical suggestions, helping people transform their life by inculcating values. His fiery, thought-provoking speeches have aroused interest in the Hindu religion around the world and he has been invited to several global platforms to share his views.

Although Dada encourages developing intellectual skills, he always believes that training of the heart with

love and compassion to serve humanity is more important. He says "Love and service are what the world needs the most right now. Don't look at serving others as doing them a favour, but look at service as an offering of love to God."

Dada expanded the Sadhu Vaswani Mission to several centers globally, and today there are centers all over the world, including North America, South America, Europe, Africa, Middle-East, and Asia.

A GIFTED WRITER

Dada is the author of over 80 books in English and many more in the Sindhi language. Many of his books have run into several editions, and several have been translated into Marathi, Hindi, Gujarati, Kannada, Arabic, Mandarin, Spanish, French, German, and Indonesian languages. Each of Dada's books is a treasure that can change one's life. His books inspire people not to just exist, but to live with meaning and purpose.

AN ORATOR

People from all over the world have benefitted from Dada's speeches. He has spoken at numerous venues. He spoke at the Dag Hammarskjöld Auditorium of the U.N.O. about "World Peace" on 18th April 1984. He addressed the 10th Hindu Conference in New York at Madison Square in 1984, and spoke on "World without War" at the British House of Commons, London, attended the Global Forum of Spiritual Leaders in Oxford on April 1988. He also addressed The World Parliament of Religions in Chicago. Dada gave an inspiring talk at the Global Forum of Spiritual Leaders and Parliamentarians on "Human Survival" at Kyoto, Japan in April 1993. He addressed World Vision 2000. He delivered

a keynote address at the conference on World Religions, New York, on the "Vision and Legacy of Swami Vivekananda" on 7th July 1994. He once again spoke at the House of Commons, U.K., about "The World's Greatest Need – Love in Action" on 8th June 1995. In December 1999, Parliament of the World's Religions also received Dada's love through a speech at Cape Town, South Africa. He spoke at the Millennium World Peace Summit at the launch of the World Council of Religious Leaders – Bangkok on 12th June 2002. Dada has given numerous speeches at several important gatherings across the globe and through them, has touched, triggered and transformed many lives.

A PHILANTHROPIST

As a philanthropist, Dada always says that, "If you want to be happy, make others happy." The Sadhu Vaswani Mission advocates that "Service to humanity is prayer to God."

Several service initiatives by Dada are noteworthy, such as handing over of "Shanti Daan," a home for the dying and sick to Mother Teresa. He also handed over 91 newly built houses to earthquake victims at Latur, Maharashtra, in April 1995. On 24th November 1995, Dada consecrated and commissioned the Morbai Naraindas Budhrani Cancer Institute in Pune. Dada also visited "Gandhi Dham" in Gujarat to initiate and personally supervise the Mission's quake-relief activities in January 2001 amongst several other humanitarian initiatives and endeavors.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

Dada has received several global recognitions and awards. In appreciation, the Mayor of Chicago, Mr. Harold Washington

proclaimed June 5 - 11, 1984, as "Dada J.P. Vaswani Week." Dada was awarded Paul Harris Fellowship (Rotary Club) on 3rd February 1989. On 18th May 1996, he was given an honorary citizenship of the state of Georgia, USA. He received the "U Thant" Peace Award in April 1998 for his dedicated service to the cause of world peace.

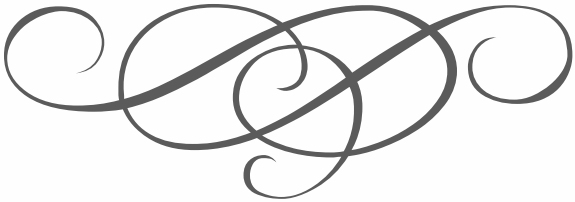
If one would like to talk more about Dada, then one would need to write a whole book about his awards, recognitions, books, talks, and achievements as an author, speaker, and philanthropist. But this is just a snapshot of my Guru, Dada J.P. Vaswani, as he starts his centenary year on 2nd August 2017.

Although he is 99, he behaves as if he is 19 years old because he believes that the soul never grows old. The physical body may age, but Dada believes that age is a state of mind. Dada always tells people that man never dies - we are immortal and we live forever, changing the bodies we wear.

While Dada may look very simple, he is the most evolved soul I have come across in my life. He doesn't believe in promoting himself or his mission. His low profile has actually hid the diamond he is, from the world.

Kudos to Dada! I know him for over 25 years, and in my 5 decades on Earth, I am yet to come across a person who is even remotely close to what he is.

II



How Often Do You See God Walking on Earth?

How Often Do You See God Walking on Earth?

Is it not rare to find a true saint – a saint who is actually a God-man, a representative of God, or an incarnation? Several may claim to be one, but how many of them are truly God personified? Dada J.P. Vaswani is one such saint who has been with us on this Earth for 99 years now. These 99 years are invaluable – not just to devotees like me and others, but also to the whole world because of his overwhelming contribution to this globe.

Dada's humility, simplicity, and practical ways of looking at life and thoughts on how one should live are attributes that speak volumes about the amazing person that he is. Through this book, I wish to share the several experiences I have had with Dada at different times, in different places and environments. It covers the conversations and the questions and answers between us - both general and personal ones that have had a big impact in my life. While Dada has spoken from his heart and soul, the thoughts shared by him have been captured by me as important concepts to live a life of meaning and purpose. These

amazing insights by Dada shouldn't remain a secret and must reach out to the whole world.

I believe that every human being should be exposed to Dada's thoughts on the following questions that relate to all of us: Who are we? Why are we here? What is the purpose of life? Where is God? What is God? Who is God? Where is heaven and hell? Is the law of Karma real? Does reincarnation actually happen? There are so many unanswered questions that people have! If one delves into the scriptures, the answers are so complicated that the common man may find it difficult to understand.

Dada is the answer! Dada explains the answers that we need in such a lucid manner that anybody can understand these concepts, however complicated they may seem. He not only explains such concepts but also lives what he speaks, and this adds credibility to his teachings.

I am fortunate to receive from Dada his priceless teachings and those learnings I have put in this book. This is what makes this book an amazing work of philosophy. It's a book that will open your mind to life and its true meaning. It will create a new life path for you to walk on. This book can be a bedside book that you would want to read every day, for it will guide you and mentor you to be happy and live with fulfillment. Not just that, it will also teach you to make others happy and achieve the true purpose of life.

Dada is the most precious gift that I have received. I have asked him many questions, and Dada always had the answers. His super conscious mind is so alert and connected to the Universal Power that he always gives me

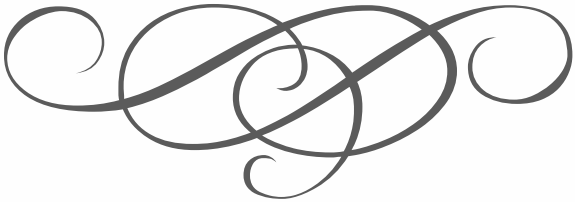
the right solutions. His wisdom, experience, exposure, and widely acquired knowledge are God-sent, and it is rare to find anyone like him these days. His answers to my strange questions have opened my eyes to the reality of life. Of course, these answers have changed and transformed my life; I will be sharing these answers with you later in this book.

I hope that through this book, people will get a chance to know more about Dada. His teachings are so profound that if imbibed, one's life can surely be transformed.

This book is worth its weight in gold. Every page of this book has something about Dada's life and teachings that will directly or indirectly help you live a better life. Of course, there may be things that don't relate to you and that you have not experienced, but this book will surely provoke you to think about your life. I have sincerely tried to capture Dada's thoughts that touched my heart and have presented them here. Read this book as if Dada is speaking to you from his heart, and hear his words for they will truly lead you to a path of joy, peace, and fulfillment.

After all, it is very rare to experience God in a human form. Those who have been blessed by Dada, know that he is truly a manifestation of God on Earth.

III



My Experiences with Dada

My Experiences with Dada

One of the greatest treasures of my life is my experience with my Guru, Dada. A Guru can be far more than a mentor and a teacher. A Guru can create so much love and joy that only one who has truly experienced the presence of a Guru can understand this.

My first meeting with Dada was about 25 years ago at the Sadhu Vaswani Bal Center, Bangalore, where he was giving a talk. To me, when I look back at my experiences, I can call what happened 25 years ago as the moment of falling in love with my Guru. He looked into my eyes and I was lost. I had sunk deep into his love, compassion, and care. He was giving a talk and I was there for the first time trying to understand what this man was preaching. It was a special moment between my Master and me – a moment where he would capture me and take me across from a world of illusion to a real world – a world of true Ananda, bliss, and joy!

My experiences between 1992 and 2017 – a relationship of

25 years, have been amazing, each experience surpassing the previous one. These experiences have built my life brick by brick and made me what I am today. Through these experiences, I have transformed my life of happiness and achievement to a life of contentment and fulfillment, and finally evolved to a life of realization of the truth.

In the beginning, it was just communicating with him either on the telephone, through letters, or meeting him personally. I didn't have the opportunity of meeting him often those days because I was busy with my work and he was often travelling. I would fix a time for a telephone conversation, and then I would look forward to the call with Dada. As soon as Dada used to pick my call, I used to be overjoyed. I enjoyed every moment of my conversation with him. And I would ask him several questions, clarify many thoughts, and talk about my business, life, and family. Whatever needed further discussion would be continued through a letter, and Dada would promptly reply to me. I was very sure that as soon as my letter reached him, it would be just a matter of hours before he would send a reply.

At that time, he was my Mentor. I wouldn't say that he had become my Guru. But he was a guide, a teacher, and a spiritual leader who was guiding me through life with a philosophy that would give me happiness and fulfillment.

He was the one who could answer my questions and take me through what I call the jungle of life and lead me forward, solving my problems, and helping me select the right path.

It took a few years for the relationship to mature. I would go to Pune on important days like his birthday, Guru Purnima or Meatless Day, which is on the 25th of November. I was drawn towards him and I would visit him as often as I could. Even more wondrous was my good fortune that he was visiting Bangalore often as part of his itinerary and staying at the Wadhwa House where I could meet him every day and night.

He would come to Bangalore and stay for a week or two. It would mean having breakfast, lunch, and dinner with him. Dada would use time in between meals for his own spiritual introspection and reading. He would meet us for breakfast, after which we would all sit around casually and he would be happy to answer questions. We would meet again for lunch. I was known for asking a lot of questions and people would let me lead the "Q&A" session as it was called.

But the most amazing sessions were the dinner sessions, where after having dinner, Dada would be very relaxed and I would ask him several questions and sometimes the sessions lasted up to 1–2 hours. There were questions that were intriguing – questions about life, God, problems, philosophy, and even religion. He found it interesting to speak on subjects that were relevant to him. Often it would look like the whole conversation was between Dada and me. Of course, everyone was entitled to ask questions and they did. My love affair with Dada grew over the several meetings at Wadhwa House. I must say that I am very grateful to the entire Wadhwa family for tolerating me and my questions and letting our beautiful relationship of a Guru and disciple grow.

The Q&A sessions continued even in Pune, where I was fortunate to be allowed to meet Dada in the afternoon as well as at night after lunch and dinner. This was quite rare because not everybody was allowed to access Dada. For some reason unknown to me, my Master had selected me and permitted me to be a part of his inner circle. I was able to go to him to chit-chat, ask questions, and be part of his life. This is probably the grace of the Almighty and my biggest gift from God that He permitted me to spend quality time with my Guru, my Master.

There were no restrictions on what questions I could ask Dada. In the earlier days, when I was a businessman, I would ask Dada questions on business, politics, current affairs, health and even relationships. Sometimes we would talk about God, religion, philosophy and spirituality. Dada was very loving and caring, and he would answer all my questions, whatever be the topic.

I found it quite unusual because from what I knew, in any Guru–disciple relationship, the disciple had to give the Guru whatever the Guru asks or needs. In our relationship, it was the Guru who was giving! In return, I was hardly doing anything, probably nothing for my Guru. And this troubled me. I wondered, "Why is Dada not asking me for anything or giving me an opportunity to do something for him or the Sadhu Vaswani Mission?" But well, that was Dada! He was compassionate, he had no desires, and he was always in a mood to give as much as he could in as many ways as he could, and I was the one who was fortunate to receive his love, blessings, and wisdom in the meetings with him.

In those formative years with my Guru, I met several learned men, masters, saints, God-men, and Gurus. Many of them made an attempt to win me over so that I could become their disciple. But somehow, none of the masters or spiritual leaders I met were able to get close to me. Without mentioning names, I was fortunate to meet many other spiritual leaders, probably because I was a seeker and somehow I was destined to meet them. There was no magic in my meeting with them; I didn't have any connection with them nor was I on the same wavelength as I was with Dada. I knew for sure that this is my Guru, my Master, and I continued my journey with him without any hesitation. My relationship was unconditional, with total faith, belief, and trust, and there was complete openness in my conversations with my Master.

Very often, I would ask Dada to give me some personal time to ask him questions that were very private. I would discuss my personal problems and difficulties in my private life. Dada would give me confidential time and listen to me patiently. He probably knew more about my life than I knew about it myself. And I wondered how he remembered everything. When I would meet him several months later, and start talking about my life, he would recall everything I had told him. Dada's memory is truly amazing! Even today, at the age of 99, I think he is more alert and his memory is sharper than that of any intelligent man between the age of 30 and 50. And that is the gift of God to Dada.

My experiences with Dada as Ravi V. Melwani between 1992 and 2007 – 15 years of my life – were experiences that built the magic with my Master. My Guru won me over,

and to me, Dada became one of the most important aspects of my life. I treasured Dada and the relationship I had with him just as I used his advice to traverse problems and climb the peaks of life.

If I look back at those 15 years, they were filled with success and good fortune, and I attribute my success to Dada, his advice, his love, and his blessings. It seems like my Guru was with me all the time, holding my hand, leading and guiding me, and taking me from darkness to light. I never felt a moment of loneliness and while I yearned to talk to him or meet him, I could find the connection between our minds. Even though we were physically apart, we still enjoyed moments of being together through telepathy and the sixth sense. In those years of achievement, I would go to Dada with the biggest problems that I faced in management, leadership, and finance. I would also talk to him about problems in my family and personal life. Dada had an answer to every question. He was like an encyclopedia, an ocean of wisdom, and he could effortlessly give answers without a second thought – this was the magic that probably floored me and made me respect and love my Guru beyond words.

I do remember some of the experiences that I had with him and would like to share a few. Once when somebody hurt me very badly, and I went to Dada in a very negative mood, he said, "You should be happy. You should rejoice that you have been hurt because when somebody hurts us, it negates our Karmic score. We have probably done something, and our Karma that is negative, needs to be wiped off. So when somebody does something wrong to

us, we must accept it joyously. The Law of Karma is just wiping out our negative Karma."

I would speak to Dada about vegetarianism in the initial days because I was a non-vegetarian. Dada knew it, but he never treated me with any kind of disrespect because of the fact that I was eating meat although he strongly advocated pure vegetarianism. It is because of his love, care, and guidance that in a matter of weeks and months, I gave up eating meat completely and became a humanitarian who never caused any kind of pain to animals.

There was a time when I had a difference of opinion with my father who I truly loved and respected and who was also my business partner. Just like any two partners would have differences in opinion, we had disagreements on a particular policy. I went to Dada and shared this with him. Very diplomatically and lovingly, Dada said, "Of course, you must love your father and follow your father. But if you think you have a difference in opinion, and then you have an option. The option is to refer the matter to your Heavenly Father. Go deep within, be silent, introspect, contemplate, build a connection with your Heavenly Father, God, and put your question to Him and you will get your answers from within your heart." And it truly worked! Dada showed me a way out when it seemed that there were no options.

Then there were those times when the problems were beyond human comprehension. They were not just "large" problems. I would call them XL or XXL problems. My problems were huge! And then Dada shared a secret

of life. He asked me a strange question, “Have you made God your partner?” I didn't understand what he was saying. Then he explained to me that I must learn to make God my partner. He taught me to keep a desk in my office, which was the desk of my senior partner, God. Adjoining my desk, I kept a tall chair and a desk, and I called it “God's Desk.” Those who were close to me knew about it, but I felt embarrassed to share this with anybody else because they would think that I had lost some part of my mind. But I believed Dada and trusted him. I started this practice of keeping a table for my senior partner, God, in my private office. Dada further said, “You can treat God just like you treat your partner in every possible way. You should give your partner a share of your profit, that is, give God His share of profit. Just like your partners take care of problems, let God handle the problems that you would like Him to handle.”

I started following this advice – probably the best advice I got in those first 15 years of my life – “Golden words” from Dada, as I would call them. I would set aside 10% of the profit for God. Dada explained to me that just because God doesn't demand His share, it doesn't mean that we don't give it to Him. We pay our bills, don't we? Electricity bills, payments to those who supply milk and vegetables, and even fees to schools and colleges. Then, why don't we pay our fee to God? And then I wondered what would one do with that fee? Dada explained that we should spend that money in any of God's work. It can be spent to serve suffering humanity or for religious and spiritual purposes. Anything that we do for God would be counted in the budget of God's profits. I started practising this magical formula, and it truly worked.

While I spent 10% of the profit doing God's work, I kept putting unsolvable problems on God's desk. And as if by magic, those unsolvable problems got solved one by one. Several private notes to God still lie in the drawer of God's desk, which have become a memory now. As I kept sharing my profit with God, I kept sharing my problems too. And the equation worked. It was *quid pro quo*, and God was giving me far more than I was offering to God.

I must appreciate all those who are around Dada – his close team, including Krishna Kumari – Krishna as she is fondly called and Gulshan amongst others. They were very supportive in connecting me to Dada. Without their support and kindness, it would have been impossible for me to build this special relationship that I have with my Guru. I am indebted to them for being blessed by Dada and creating that connection between me and my Master.

Some of our most interesting conversations were in what I call a "Walk and Talk" session. Dada was very fond of walking, and I would try not to miss a single walk with him, whether it was at Cubbon Park or the Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore. Dada would choose very silent and tranquil walking paths where there was only the breeze and the trees and nothing else. Dada would give me time, and we would walk and talk. These walks gave me an opportunity to have long conversations with Dada.

It was probably these meetings with Dada that changed me and my life. When I met Dada, I was just an ordinary businessman but I found my life changing and transforming to a life wherein I was not just making money, but also starting to make a difference. I accelerated

my humanitarian work by setting up a charitable home in just a few years after meeting Dada. I also evolved spiritually, and after receiving a vision from God, built a Shiva Temple in 1995. Directly or indirectly, I was influenced by two major forces – God and Guru. Both were responsible for the flashes of inspiration that came to my super conscious mind and for converting those aspirations and flashes into reality. I would talk to Dada about everything and share every thought that came to my mind, whether it was a thought to build a Shiva Temple or a thought to start an ashram for the sick and destitute people. I would talk to Dada and take his advice and inputs and then go ahead. I wouldn't do anything important in my life without his blessings and advice. Whatever I am today and whatever I have, I owe to my Guru – my beloved Dada.

My life evolved between 1992 and 1995 and we made profits and income beyond our wildest dreams. We had so much money that I didn't know what to do with it. Our business grew, and therefore, we took up another store 10 times larger, which became one of India's largest stores. Both the Shiva Temple and the store were built between 1995 and 1997, and I must say that it was the blessings of my Master that made me tide over insurmountable problems. We even had a situation where I was told by the authorities that my project was not legally viable and that I would have to shut down my entire project. This would mean that my investment of approximately 5 million dollars would be wasted. I went to Dada and shared the problems, and Dada gave me faith and hope and told me to trust God. My faith in Lord Shiva and my Guru together made me believe and achieve. I was able to

get a government order to legalize things because they were only technical issues and there was no real problem. I met the right people and I believe that I met them because of the grace of the Guru and the blessings of God.

Dada visited the Shiva Temple and was in awe, amazed by the 65-feet-tall statue of Lord Shiva. He somehow made me connect with God in a very special way. He became the instrument that connected me to my God, and in course of time, he went on to be not just my Guru and my Master, but also my God on Earth. He became a manifestation of Lord Shiva, a reflection of my God on Earth.

I had requested Dada to inaugurate the biggest project of my life – Kemp Fort, one of India's largest retail projects. It was the kindness of my Guru that he came for the inauguration of Kemp Fort on 15 October, 1997. As he cut the ribbon, a helicopter was showering petals from above and Sridevi and Anil Kapoor – stars of the Hindi film industry were the other guests of honour. There was magic in the air as the biggest business dream of my life had come true with the blessings of God and my Guru.

By then my relationship with my Master was 5 years old, but in those 5 years, I had already transformed my life. I had lost interest in making money because Dada had taught me that the goal of life is not just to make money. Money doesn't truly belong to us. It comes and goes, and our journey of life is to be content and to live a life of fulfillment. He taught me spiritual concepts like “We are not this body and mind” and discussed about the principal statements of the Upanishads like “Tat Twam

Asi." At that time in my life in 1995 when I was barely 30 years old, I couldn't really understand what Dada was trying to say, but my life had started changing. Right from 1997 onwards, I started paying more attention to H .I .S. work (Humanitarian, Inspirational, and Spiritual work), and Dada encouraged and advised me on how I should proceed in doing God's work.

The next phase of my life between 1997 and 2007 was a time when my life was evolving from a life of achievement to a life of contentment and fulfillment. It was the grace of my Guru Dada that helped me move towards a better life.

Only Dada knew what I was meant to be and what I was supposed to do. Probably, nobody else knew it. My family who supported me and my relationship with my Guru took it very positively when Dada advised me to take up the opportunity of moving on in life. I ended my commercial life in 2007, just as I turned 40 to pursue a life doing H.I.S. work. It was magical because I got an offer to shut down the store and convert and lease out India's largest store into a mall. I would earn far more than what we earned by doing business ourselves. More importantly, as observed by Dada, I would be free from the shackles of this world and would be able to pursue things that were dear to my heart. I took this advice, and in 2007, I shut down my business. With the grace of God, the blessings of my Guru, and the support of my family, I was able to make this transformational decision to move from Ravi V. Melwani to RVM – to transform my life from a life of earning to a life of spending and giving. This is one of the biggest decisions of my life. At 40, it is very rare for someone to shut down and to move to a more evolved

life. Such a decision would have been impossible without the guidance and blessings of my Guru and Mentor, Dada. Through my Guru, God led me to a path where I was meant to be, away from the noise of the world, which was taking me nowhere.

By then, 15 years had passed since my first meeting with Dada. I must have met him hundreds of time, had several discussions with him, and asked him innumerable questions. Only Dada wasn't tired with my questions. Everyone else around was quite fed up with the number of questions that I would ask Dada, relentlessly and passionately. In all the 25 years I have known him, he never refused to answer a single question, nor was he unable to clarify any doubt that I put forward to him.

Once, after the inauguration of Kemp Fort, when Dada was in Bangalore, he developed some medical complication and he was in the ICU. I was feeling so bad that he was suffering in pain. Fortunately, I was allowed to see him and I was surprised because although he was in the ICU, he was smiling, calm, and undisturbed. The medical condition of his body did not affect him at all. He was a true Master who knew that he was not the body and while he occupied the body, he was above it. So he never let the physical problems or difficulties affect him as he was aware that he was the soul. He had already transcended the ego, the mind, and the body.

In one such visit, at the ICU in the hospital where he was admitted, he wrote on a little piece of paper “Man lives not by the beats of his heart, but by the grace of God.” Each of Dada's quotes became a milestone in the highway

of my life. I used his quotes to live my life as I absorbed them. He never got disturbed or intimidated by what life gave to him. He accepted everything in life with the magical words, "Thy will, not my will, O Lord be done!" He taught me things that were the blueprint for my spiritual evolution. I am so indebted and grateful to Dada, my Guru, to have held my hand and led me across the ocean of samsara, or this illusion of the projecting world to a life of Self–realization – a life filled with joy, bliss, and Ananda!

Dada always treated me in a very special way. He permitted me to meet him wherever he went – whether it was at his private retreat in Lonavla, at the Wadhwa House in Bangalore, and later on, at the farm house of the Bangalore host just as he invited me to meet him as he was travelling to Jakarta, Singapore, Hong Kong, and even Dubai and London.

I was with Dada when he was under treatment at a hospital in Chicago. Medical issues that are quite complicated and upsetting to a normal man weren't able to affect Dada although he faced very serious medical challenges in the course of his life. He overcame them and used his spiritual strength to let God cure all his health problems and give him joy, peace, and good health.

Dada always knew that whenever I met him, I loved to talk to him, ask him questions, and share some of my thoughts. I was too talkative and disruptive, and I posed too many questions to him. Today in retrospect, I wonder how he tolerated me for 25 years and how he accepted my nonsense at times so patiently, calmly, lovingly, and compassionately.

I would like to share one of my rare experiences I had with Dada. I told Dada that we have a hospital on a land of 2 acres. We had started serving the poor and I showed him pictures of those who were suffering, I shared with him that I was not making money from my business, and therefore, we were not able to invest in this new hospital project. I have heard of disciples giving donations to their Gurus in the form of cash, cheques, and contributions. But for the first time, I saw the reverse happening! My Guru, my Master wrote out a cheque and gave me money to kick-start the hospital along with his blessings. He told me "Start! Put the first brick", and he wrote out a cheque and sent me his contribution towards the humanitarian hospital of RVM Foundation in Bangalore. I was dumbfounded and flabbergasted! I couldn't believe that instead of accepting a contribution from me, my Guru was making a contribution to me – this was unheard in the history of relationships between a Guru and a disciple. His first cheque truly turned into a blessing, and we started the humanitarian hospital, which now has over 250 beds. It has no cash counter and with Dada's blessings; we try to treat every patient as a picture of God. Like Dada's Guru Sadhu T.L. Vaswani said, "Service to suffering humanity is prayer to God. To serve the poor is to worship God." Swami Vivekananda also advocated a similar message, "Shiva Jnane Jiva Seva," which means those who serve the poor are truly worshipping Shiva or God!

Dada never refused any request of mine – whether it was asking him to come and inaugurate the 32-feet-tall Ganapati statue, which was built besides the statue of Lord Shiva, or anything else, he never said no. He would always oblige, and he was very loving and caring to me

all through the years that I spent with him.

I never hid anything from Dada. I shared every feeling of mine with him - thoughts that came to my mind, emotions that were born in my heart, and aspirations that came to my soul. Even if I was guilty of doing something wrong, I would share it with Dada. And so in the years after 2000, I kept telling Dada that I felt that life had a larger meaning and purpose and I wanted to do something more meaningful. When I got an offer to shut down my business in 2006, I asked Dada, "Is it a good idea for me to shut down my business fully or partly? I have two options: either to shut down 80% of the business and maintain a large toy shop or to shut down 100% of the business." Dada thought for a moment and then told me that my life was meant for a larger purpose. So he advised that I should shut down the business fully and dedicate my life to do God's work.

I couldn't believe the advice I got from Dada. I never believed that at the age of 40, I would be able to shut down my business and be liberated from the problems and tribulations of life. But such is the grace of the Guru that he poured his love on me and transported me from a life of problems to a life of joy and bliss.

I took the advice of my Master and shut down my business in 2007. At 40, I was free from all the loans taken to build this project, which were paid back to the banks overnight with a magical deal that I had struck. Soon I was completely free and I had an amazing combination of time on my hands and money in the bank. Only the grace of my Guru and the blessing of God could give me this

and I thank God and my Guru for letting me transform my life from Ravi V. Melwani to RVM – from a life of making money to a life of making a difference, from a life of earning to a life of spending.

From 2007, when I had shut down my business, my relationship and my topics of discussion with Dada changed. I now had the time to explore the world God has made and I started travelling around the world. Every time I showed photographs to Dada, whether of Alaska, Iceland, or the penguins in Antarctica, we would discuss God and this fascinating universe. Apart from travelling, I also spent time writing inspirational and motivational books as an author and penning down bhajans as a lyricist and singer of Shiv bhajans. I was leading and guiding a team to run the RVM Foundation to reach out to more people and do more humanitarian and compassionate work. I kept taking inspiration from Dada and all these works were rapidly growing.

Our meetings continued only to become more passionate and intense as our subjects of discussion evolved from achievement to contentment and fulfillment. I asked him if I could meet him every month and he graciously agreed.

Once I asked Dada, "Tell me, what I can do for you? All these years, you have not given me an opportunity to serve you." At that time, Dada was preparing for the birthday celebrations of his Master Sadhu T .L. Vaswani. He had never asked me for anything all the 20 years that I had known him, right from 1992 till then. However, once Dada had mentioned that he had plans to take Sadhu

T.L. Vaswani' s portrait on a yatra across Pune city for his birthday celebrations every year. The rath or the chariot was supposed to be a simple cart with four wheels on which the picture of Sadhu T.L. Vaswani would be placed and the chariot would navigate across Pune city. Dada asked me if there were a possibility of thinking of an idea where we could make the rath more special for the yatra as he loved and respected his Guru the most.

With the blessings of God and the inspiration from my Guru, I got the designer Dilip Chhabria to design a special rath in the shape of a spacecraft for my Master's Guru. Dada was so full of joy when the day came and he inaugurated and started the first rath yatra. Little did I know that my Master already knew that he would go through several health hazards that would restrict his mobility and he would need such a rath to be able to perform the yatra in the times to come. Dada made the best use of the rath made in the commemoration of Sadhu T.L. Vaswani, and till today, I am happy that he uses the rath – the amazing space craft – every year not just in Pune but also in Pimpri to create awareness of the goodness and the godliness of his Guru and Master Sadhu T.L. Vaswani.

It gave me great joy to see my Guru happy, and I only pray and wish that I continue to get such opportunities. God has blessed me with everything.

I considered myself to be the happiest man in the world, as I shared my life of bliss, joy, and service with Dada. Dada felt that it was God's blessing to have such an amazing life where I was financially stable and I had no

pressure in terms of time. I was blessed to do humanitarian, inspirational, and spiritual work and in leisure, travel around the world.

This didn't stop Dada from always asking me to focus on the purpose and meaning of life that was beyond just travelling around the world and doing humanitarian, inspirational, and spiritual work. Dada always mentioned to me that I was like Raja Janak. I was meant to be like a king in my business empire, but like Raja Janak who renounced desires of the world and took up a spiritual path. He felt that there was a calling in my life to be able to renounce the material possessions I had although they were large and to take up a path of Self-realization and God-realization. I didn't completely understand what Dada was saying at that point, but today I have realized what Dada meant when he said that I should try to live like Raja Janak. I realize now how much love and respect he had for me to suggest something like that.

Time flew and before I knew it, it was 20 years of knowing Dada – from 1992 to 2012. He was instrumental in my joy, happiness, and life transformation. But was it the end? I didn't know. I thought I had reached the plateau of success. I had made enough money, and I moved from a life of achievement to a life of fulfillment. I thought I could continue to live happily forever until one day, at one of Dada's birthday celebrations, while talking to a large audience, he looked into my eyes and said, “Those who truly love God and themselves should go on a Talaash – a search or a quest to find answers to these questions: Who is God? Where is God? What is God? Who am I? Where did I come from? Where would I go?

What is Moksh, Nirvana, and realization? What is the law of Karma? Is rebirth true?" He put forward several questions for me to introspect on, and he inspired me to go on a Talaash. The thought impacted me so much that I started my search for the true meaning of life.

My Master led me on a Talaash in 2012, but for one year, I didn't progress much. In August 2013, when he met me again, he asked the same question, "What is the progress of your Talaash, your search, or your quest? And I was actually embarrassed because I had not progressed much in that one year in terms of Talaash or Spiritual Enlightenment. But Dada's blessings were such that God wanted me to go forward. In 2013 August, I delegated all my work, the humanitarian, inspirational and spiritual work, and tried to go into the mountains to retreat and introspect with a bag full of books in my hand and nothing else.

I would go away for days and weeks together, cut off from the world, trying to introspect and learn about God and His creation. Between 2013 and 2014, my life was the life of a Jigyasu – a seeker seeking for answers to the questions about life that Dada had put forward. I had several discussions and question sessions with Dada where I asked him weird questions. He calmly and patiently explained to me until one day I asked Dada, "You talk about an Astral world – a world where there are no physical bodies and a world of minds and spiritual entities. How can you talk of something like this when there is no proof and how can you promote something that seems to be an illusion?"

In fact, my ignorance had made me ask this question to

Dada, and for the first time, he told me "You are a Jyat – an ignoramus who doesn't understand this." He questioned me, "You have a photograph of Antarctica in which there are penguins and if I tell you that the penguins do not exist, will you agree? You will say that you saw them and you experienced it. In the same way, there are people who have experienced the Astral world – the world beyond skin and bones." He continued, "You have to introspect further to realize the truth."

After that meeting, I sent an e-mail to Dada and his reply to my e-mail transformed my life. I share these e-mails later in the book as to how Dada taught me the secret of life and God. It was only because of my Guru that I gave up everything and made God my ONLY priority. I studied the Upanishads as well as the life story of several saints, including Adi Shankaracharya, Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, Vivekananda, and Ramana Maharshi amongst others. Dada had started my Talaash, and he was steadily pushing me to realize the truth.

Dada sent me an equation in his e-mail:

Man − Self = God;
God + Self = Man.

Along with this, some Upanishads and selective books, I retreated again into the mountains in solitude to introspect. By the grace of God and blessings of Dada on the 31st of August 2014, when I was on a flight from Paris to Bangalore, I suddenly got answers to all the questions that I was probing.

One day, in September 2014, I visited Dada with

gratitude in my heart and tears in my eyes and told Dada that I realize that I am not this body–mind complex. I am the *Atman* in RVM.

I was so happy that I had completed my *Talaash* and I got answers to all the 9 questions that Dada had put before me. Dada was very happy about this, but he was equally concerned whether I had actually realized the truth or I had only acquired the knowledge of realization. He explained to me that unless we realize that we are the soul or the *Atman,* and not the bodies that we have, our efforts must continue.

My Guru helped me internalize the realization and warned me that the battle will continue till the last day of our life. It was a war between the *Atman* and the ego–mind–body. If we fail, then we will not realize God and we will be born again and again to suffer.

Post the realization of the truth, I went through a second transformation. First it was from Ravi V. Melwani to RVM, and now it was from RVM to AiR – *Atman* in Ravi. I realized that I am the soul and not the body. One by one, I gave up all my responsibilities to be able to seek God and Liberation.

To share my search, I wrote a book – "Talaash" by AiR. This book has everything that Dada taught me and shares my experiences as I realized the truth that I am not the ego–mind–body. Dada was kind enough to write the foreword of the book. My relationship with Dada continues to grow stronger each day. If it were not for Dada, I would have lived and died as an ordinary mortal. My Guru blessed me with the gift of realization, of

immortality, of becoming one with God.

There are many messages, e-mails, and voice notes that Dada has sent me; it is a treasure I possess. Each time I reflect upon them, my eyes are filled with tears of joy. I am so happy that I met Dada and that he became my Mentor, my Master, and my Guru. He is my God on Earth.

Little did I know that my transformed life from Ravi V. Melwani to RVM would undergo a second transformation – a metamorphosis – and I would change my life from RVM to AiR *(Atman* in Ravi)!

Another unique experience that I would like to share are the poems that Dada wrote for me. First, when I was RVM, he wrote a poem in Sindhi, which literally translates as follows:

Poem by Dada for RVM

Ravi, your heart, your soul, your mind ask so many questions.
The questions are many, but the answer is one.
There is no end to questioning.
When we realize God, all questions will disappear.
The question of all questions is this one question -
How can I forget everything and hold Thy Divine feet?
The one who builds a nest at the feet of the Lord,
that dear devotee renounces everything in the world.
He seeks nothing, no wealth, no possessions.
He seeks and desires for just one thing.
I seek you O Lord, I seek nothing else.
My heart, my soul remembers you, recite you, seek you.

This poem became a part of my life! Maybe, it was what transformed me completely.

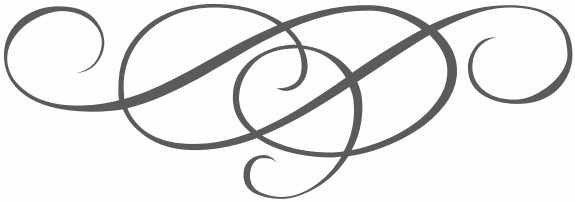
A few years later, Dada joyously recited another poem – this time to AiR.

Poem by Dada for AiR

Ravi, your heart just sings one song.
You have one desire, one craving, one prayer.
O Lord, I know none else but Thee.
I seek you and only you. Nothing and nobody else.
If he likes anything in this world, it is because he sees in everything and everybody, You, You, and You..
For him there is no difference between a saint and a sinner.
You stay up all night singing the name of God.
O Master, I call out to you
Come… take me ashore.

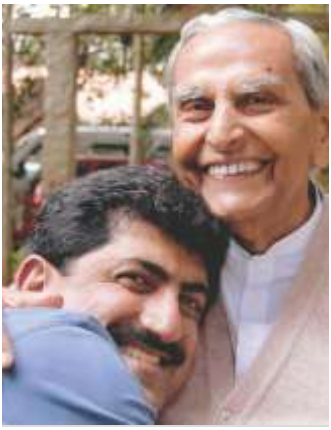
What makes me wonder is how Dada wrote both these poems without any reference, but with the same tune! These two poems exactly captured my internal state of mind and evolution, which was truly magical and beyond my comprehension.

IV



Several Things Dada Taught Me as Ravi V. Melwani

Several Things Dada Taught Me as Ravi V. Melwani



Over the last 25 years, Dada has taught me so many things - things that I learnt when I was Ravi V. Melwani (between 1992 and 2007), then what he inspired me as RVM (between 2007 and 2014), and finally how he continues to guide me as AiR till date. There is so much that I continue to learn as AiR – *Atman* in RVM.

DIFFERENT STROKES FOR DIFFERENT FOLKS

Dada always believes in the concept of different strokes for different folks. He says that different people are at different stages of life. We evolve just like a student evolves from the time he starts his kindergarten and continues to attend high school and finally goes to college until post-graduation. It is not possible to talk to a postgraduate and a school child in the same manner. Therefore, Dada would talk differently to different groups of people depending on how evolved they were. If somebody were seeking a normal life - of success,

achievement, and happiness, Dada would guide them on how to live happily. If somebody had evolved to a stage of contentment and fulfillment, then he would guide the person on how to live with bliss, joy, and peace. Dada, himself a completely evolved and realized soul, speaks to me today in a language that he never spoke to me when I was seeking achievement and fulfillment. In this chapter, I share the different teachings that I received from Dada in the first phase of my earthly life.

When I was living as Ravi V. Melwani, an enterprising, creative businessman whose dreams and goals were making money and being happy with all the pleasures of the world, Dada taught me how to live a life of ethics and values.

HUMILITY

I was quite a proud and arrogant man. When I met Dada, his simplicity and humility were the key attributes that I wished to imbibe. He always considered himself to be nothing; he regarded himself as an ordinary person although he had such wisdom. He was such an extraordinary human being but he never considered himself to be special. Today when I look back, I realize that one of the most important lessons of my life from my Guru was how to live a life of humility. Like water always flows to the lowest point, Dada has taught that if we are humble, we will attract wealth, love and success. We should not be arrogant and live with ego because it is arrogance and ego that leads to our destruction. If we want to live a life of joy, peace, bliss and happiness, we must learn to be humble as a little blade of grass. Dada

often quoted Jesus, “Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the Earth.”

Through his own personal example, Dada has shown me the magic of humility. Humility is not thinking low of yourself, but thinking high of others. Dada never loses an opportunity to praise or appreciate someone - to talk about people in a way that makes them feel special.

I learned to be humble from Dada. I was far from being humble in my earlier days because ego and arrogance go hand in hand with success and achievement, and it was natural to lose humility along the way. But with Dada, my humility was kept in check. Every time I met him, I felt so humbled seeing his humility. He was so powerful, famous, spiritual, and enlightened, but still he would behave like a very ordinary person. He never hesitated to apologize or to even bow down to anyone he met. Numerous times, Dada himself has tried to bow down to me as I bowed down to seek his blessings - as if he was seeking blessings from me! This experience truly made me feel ashamed of myself. I realized how proud I was in comparison to Dada's humility.

Dada made me realize that our ego is our biggest enemy. It makes us arrogant. It distances us from God and if we want to realize God, we must first eliminate or annihilate the ego. The least we can do is to transcend it. We can't totally kill the ego. The moment we completely kill the ego, we are dead. Therefore, as long as we are alive, there will be an ego; but we should learn to overcome it and try to go beyond the ego. We should realize: we do nothing and we are nothing, and God is everything, God does

everything. God is the Power. Because we don't realize it, we start thinking that I am doing something. What are we capable of doing? Absolutely nothing! While we think we did this and that, in reality we do nothing. We have to realize that whatever is happening is happening through us, not by us. God does everything. We should realize that we know nothing and we are nothing. Dada says, "I am not Alone. Thou Art!"

FORGIVENESS

I once asked Dada about how many times one should forgive. Dada instantly replied that when someone had asked Jesus the same question, he had answered, "I say to you, not seven times, not seventy times, but seventy-seven times." What Dada meant to tell me was that we must keep on forgiving and keep on forgiving! We should never stop forgiving because when we make a mistake, God forgives us several thousand times in our lifetime. In the same way, we should forgive others. Forgiveness creates peace in our heart. When we don't forgive, we carry a poison inside us and that ruins our joy and tranquility. I have learnt to forgive from Dada. Even in situations when someone has hurt me badly, I remember Dada and try to forgive. I should admit that it is impossible to forgive like Dada because he always forgives, never keeping anything in his heart. I would have done a hundred things wrong in front of him. I may have hurt him in so many ways, but he was so forthcoming in forgiving and forgetting whatever happened. The very next moment, he would not even remember that something like that happened. He would not let me feel that I had made a mistake or a blunder.

This way, Dada taught me two important lessons in life – first, to forgive and second, to forget.

PATIENCE

I remember an incident that happened at one of Dada's birthday celebrations. The video that was supposed to be played at the occasion didn't start as expected, and when it did play, the mike had stopped working. When this issue was resolved, suddenly there was some glitch in the lighting – it did not fade off as expected. That day, many things did not happen the way they were supposed to happen. I was looking at Dada, and he had a radiant glow and a smile on his face, and things on the outside were not affecting him at all. He was calm, peaceful, and patient. Dada's patience is unbelievable! He taught me that there is a perfect time for everything, and we should not hurry and rush. Of course we should do our best, but thereafter we must trust God. When things don't happen, we should believe that the timing is not right, and when God makes it right, it will happen! Dada taught me never to be impatient. He says that everything has its perfect time, and if it comes too soon, then it may not be good for us. God has got a plan and only God knows His plan best. Therefore, we should always learn to be patient and live in acceptance.

SUCCESS

When I first met Dada, I was like anybody else, seeking money, success, wealth, fame and happiness. Dada understands that the whole world is seeking happiness. It is believed that 80% of the world is seeking happiness through achievement and success. He taught me that

success should be achieved using ethics, values, and principles without forgetting God. It should not be the only goal of our life. He never criticized or condemned success and in fact, he taught me many principles like time management, people management and the art of good leadership. Dada talked about so many things that are important for success like the importance of leading people with humor, laughter, and cheer. Respecting and valuing people was a priority, he said because people are the most important resource for success. Many of the success principles that I use in my life stemmed from Dada's teachings. Although he is a spiritual leader, he doesn't ignore the need of people who are on the first journey of life seeking achievement and success. He believes, unless someone seeks something, they live a life of tamas or laziness and cannot succeed.

MAKE GOD YOUR PARTNER

One of the best secrets of success Dada taught me was as Ravi V. Melwani "Make God your Partner."

Once someone asked Dada, "What do you mean by making God a partner?" Dada replied, "How do we treat our partner at our work? We share the profit and loss and everything related to the business with our partner. The partner does his part and we do our part. God is our life partner. God gives us this beautiful life, opportunities, and success, but we forget to pay God back because God doesn't ask." Therefore, Dada says that if one truly wants success and happiness in life, the most important relationship the person would need is the relationship with the senior partner, God.

We should give God His share. God doesn't demand from us. God is happy even with 10% of what we earn. How can we give this 10% to God? We can give it in the form of help to God's representatives - the poor, diseased, and those suffering on the streets. We can decide on how we would like to contribute that share to God. We may give it to a temple or church or to a cause of our choice, but surely it should not be a selfish cause. It's not our share of profit, but God's share of profit. The more we give, the more we shall receive. It will also help us let go of the greediness that makes us hold on to money and other material possessions of the world.

This is one of the most amazing things that I have learnt from Dada in my early interaction with him - Make God your Partner! There was a drawer in God's table, and whenever I had a problem I would write down my problem and tell my senior partner, “This is beyond me and you can take care of it.” Today, when I look at all the impossible problems I left in the drawer of God's table, every single problem has been solved. I realized that it was God, my senior partner who did it. This is a magical formula Dada taught me. If only we make God our partner, we can succeed in anything.

BRAHMACHARYA AND SUCCSEX

About 17 years back, on the day of Buddha Purnima of the year 2000, I was listening to Dada's talk in Pune. He spoke about how powerful Ojas, the human sex energy, is and how Buddha advocated celibacy or Brahmacharya. While Brahmacharya means “to walk with God,” it is more commonly referred to as being celibate. Dada's

view on Brahmacharya is quite different. He is more concerned about the wasting of the power that exists in our sex energy. He once explained to me that the sex energy called Ojas, which is capable of creating life, is wasted by us and dissipated without being saved and transmuted into creative power. He explained how successful people in this world have achieved success through the power of Ojas by transmutation of sex energy. When people retain their sex energy, they are able to use it to become Ojaswi – highly creative and imaginative. This quality along with Tejaswi – being highly brilliant and sharp, form two very powerful attributes of a person's achievement and spiritual progress. Dada inspired me to study this further, and this led me to write a book called "Succsex – Success Through Sex Transmutation," which is about how one can convert and save the sex power and transmute this energy into success.

While studying the subject, I read "Think And Grow Rich" written by Napoleon Hill wherein, I came to know that people like Mahatma Gandhi, Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Shakespeare practiced sex transmutation or Brahmacharya. Today, the world doesn't believe in these concepts because the world is immersed in the pleasure of sex. Because of Dada and his creative teaching, I could write a book on celibacy and Brahmacharya and present it in such a manner that it showed people how they could conserve their sex energy and enjoy the power of sex. Thanks to Dada, this book has been a huge success all over the world. I myself have practiced this principle for many years. I can truly vouch that the power of sex, when

retained within and transmuted, can create a genius, give inspiration and intuition, and create telepathy, and sixth sense. It can create imagination that will lead to success.

Dada's discussions with me on this subject were candid. He knew how to deal with the subject without feeling shy or holding back. It gave me confidence to talk to him on any topic. When Dada was provoked by some of the devotees on how such a book can be written, he did not bend to the pressure and stood firm with his conviction of how important it is to educate people on sex transmutation. In fact, in one of his talks when he was addressing the youth in Bangalore, he urged them to read the book – "Succsex." He told the youth not to waste their sex energy, but conserve and transmute it as advocated in the book.

Dada was a highly learned master. He knew many secrets unknown to common man. It was truly a blessing to have met him and learn from him secrets like the power of Ojas that would ultimately lead to liberation.

REVERENCE FOR LIFE

Dada values life even if it is of an ant or a cockroach. No matter how small it may seem to the eye, it does not deserve to be killed. I learned this invaluable lesson from Dada two decades ago. At one of the meetings, there was a cockroach flying in a room full of people. Someone impulsively removed his shoe and smashed the cockroach. Dada was so upset and he asked that person: "Can you give back life to this cockroach?" The person said, "How can I?" To which Dada replied, "I'll give you as much money as you want. Bring back this insect to

life." That person felt so bad. He realized that he has done something irreversible. He could not give back life to something that was killed and therefore, one must have reverence for life, and never kill.

Dada is very specific and particular about having reverence for every living creature, be it a man, an animal or an insect. Even when he is walking, he is extra cautious that he doesn't stamp on any ant or insect that may be below his feet. Of course, there will be situations in life where unknowingly and unintentionally, we may have hurt or even killed another living creature, but that is a different situation. Knowingly and without compassion, when we are the cause of any living creature's death, it is inexcusable. Dada has so firmly taught me this, and I am humbled to have reverence for all forms of life.

Today, one man is killing another man, nations are fighting with each other and there is bloodshed because there is no reverence for life. If people respected life, there would not be so many wars and fights between one another for material possessions. Since we don't understand the spiritual truth of life, that we come without anything and we go without anything, we fight for material possessions, power, and pleasure - finally to leave all these behind. In the bargain, we kill so many and disrespect life. As Dada says, "Remember, we must have reverence for life because life comes from God and we are actually disturbing the plan of God on Earth when we kill a living creature."

VEGETARIANISM

When I first met Dada, I was a non-vegetarian. I used to

love eating meat and meat products. In fact, I would eat meat for breakfast, lunch and dinner for six days a week, except Mondays. I observed a fast on Mondays because I believed in Lord Shiva, and as a child, I was taught that one should not eat meat on Mondays. I was truly fond of food and I used to frequent the best restaurants, where I would enjoy all types of exotic non-vegetarian cuisine. Now I feel embarrassed to list some of the animals that I might have eaten in the past!

Dada always taught us that eating animals is inhuman; every animal loves to live, and by eating an animal, we are the cause that deprives the animal of life. He also explained that the meat that goes inside the body is not satvik or pure, and how it creates thoughts, habits, and behavior in us that in turn lead us to negativity. I learned from Dada about the importance of being vegetarian, and one day, impulsively, I gave up meat eating. Since then, I have not eaten meat. Dada has taught me compassion and love for animals, which makes me discourage people from eating meat.

I am a promoter of vegetarianism. I work with other vegetarians and animal welfare organizations trying to promote this good habit in the world. Dada and his Guruji both have been very strong about "going meatless," and I feel privileged to be a part of Dada's efforts in the observance of the International Meatless Day, which is celebrated on 25th November every year. That day, we request as many people as possible to stop all the killing and go meatless for a day!

When we cannot give life, we should not take life. Every animal seeks to live and we must respect their desire to

live. Have you ever seen a fish that is taken out of water and how it struggles to live? Dada says that life is a unique gift from God and his love for God made him respect man and beast alike. Dada's love for animals changed my life.

SERVICE TO THE POOR IS PRAYER TO GOD

Dada taught me that being compassionate and humanitarian is very important. Our whole life depends on our Karma – a law that believes that one's present actions will decide one's future state of existence just as one's present existence is due to one's past actions. Thus, we should have love and compassion in whatever we do. Dada taught me the importance of humanitarian work two decades ago and with this inspiration from Dada, I used to go to the streets and give food to those who had not eaten. On winter nights, I would take blankets and reach out to those who were suffering in the cold.

Dada used to say, "Service to the poor is prayer to God. One must serve the poor, realizing that they are a manifestation of God."

I could not bear the suffering, pain, and agony of the poor and destitute people. There were times when I took some poor people to ashrams or to charitable homes and they were refused admission because they did not fit their so-called criteria. There were so many criteria like age, cast, creed, gender, and classification that stopped charitable homes from admitting people who were dying on the streets. With the grace of Dada, I opened an ashram to take care of the poor and destitute ones who were abandoned and thrown on the streets.

The ashram has grown to accommodate over 120 people today. We also built a charitable hospital that has no cash counter. It's a 250-bed charitable hospital, and we are soon going to expand it into a 1000-bed hospital. We now have a third destitute home that provides love and care for over 200 people. Dada's blessings have helped me reach out to the poor, who are none other than God, by building more charitable homes.

Today, in all, we have about 700 destitute people who live with us as members of our own family, God's family, because Dada taught me that "Service to the poor is prayer to God." I tell my people that every time they pick somebody from the street, it should not be with arrogance or pride as if we were doing them a favor. On the contrary, it should be with gratitude - let us thank God for giving us the opportunity to serve Him through them. Therefore, we reach out to the poor and destitute ones with folded hands, compassion, and love, and we take care of them just like they are our family members. We try to cleanse them, heal them, and rehabilitate them to a life of joy and bliss. If it was not for Dada, I would not have learned that "Service to the Poor is Prayer to God," and all those thousands of people who have come to our ashrams and hospital may still have been on the streets. Thank you Dada!

DUTY TOWARDS GOD

Dada always reminded me that we must never forget our duty towards God. Just because God doesn't ask us, it doesn't mean we shouldn't fulfill our duties. Usually people expect returns for the favor they do. God gave us life, but He

never gave us a bill and asked us to pay for it. Dada always taught me to serve our fellow human beings and to fulfill whatever God wants us to do in life.

"What would God like me to do? God has done so much for me; I have to be grateful to God! How can I return God's kindness back to Him? What can I do to make God happy? What is my duty towards God?" These questions will not just make us do something good for God, but also motivate us to do something important in our lives. It will make each one of us a person with good habits. It will give us a good character. It will help us live a more meaningful and purposeful life.

Most of us forget our duty to God because we are so caught up in the world - all its attractions and distractions that we forget God. Often we are so caught up and involved with our duty towards our Earthly Father that we forget our duty to our Father in Heaven. Of course, Dada always encouraged me to do my duty towards my parents, my family and to be obedient and follow my father. My father was one of my best friends and he advised me on how to live, to work, and to succeed and to be happy. But there were times when I had questions that were more than earthly questions - questions that were challenges for my soul, spiritual questions to which I could not get answers. I went to Dada to seek his advice, and Dada taught me something very beautiful. He said, "Your father will guide you on earthly matters, but your Heavenly Father will give you spiritual advice."

From that day onwards, I started talking to my Father in Heaven believing He was there for me always. Even

now, I always look up and ask questions: "Oh Father! I have this situation; what would you like me to do? Oh Father! Help me, guide me! I want to know whether this is right or wrong." You will be surprised to know that my Heavenly Father never withheld giving me the right advice and guidance, whether it was through an inner voice or some incident or through somebody, who would come and tell me the answer I was seeking. My Father in Heaven has always answered my questions. If Dada had not taught me to connect with my Father in Heaven, I would have been deprived of this amazing gift.

DISCIPLINE

Dada always gave a lot of importance to discipline. He taught me discipline through his personal example. He is extremely disciplined in the way he talks, walks, dresses, and speaks. He is also a restrained, controlled and an organized person.

I remember an incident that happened recently. Somebody was supposed to drink only one glass of juice. Dada observed that the person was tempted to take a second serving. He asked, "Why are you taking a second glass of juice when one is enough?" The point I learned from Dada is that we have to learn to discipline ourselves by choosing to take only what we need. We need to have control over our mind and our desires.

If we would like to achieve success in life, we need to practice self-control. Dada always spoke of how it is important to be a master, not a slave. The moment we are not in the driver's seat, somebody else is commanding us,

and we become a slave. We need to have discipline in whatever we do; the moment we lose discipline, we lose control of our life. Instead of being the master of our life, we become the slave.

I learned how to be disciplined from Dada. I use discipline a lot in my life, and I know that discipline is the foundation of what I am today.

SLEEP

Dada always believed that life was a gift to us and we should not waste this life sleeping. Sleep is a restorative process. It restores the body and mind. Just like we need food, water and air, man cannot live without sleep. But there are some people who sleep for 8, 9 or even 10 hours. He felt that it is a complete waste of time. He used to advocate that sleep must be only to restore the body and we must not waste our life sleeping. Therefore, if one trains oneself, one can sleep lesser than their present sleeping habit. Suppose one is sleeping for 8 hours, one can try to sleep for 7 or 6 hours and try to cut down on the hours they sleep to as less as possible.

There are people who sleep for 4-5 hours and are able to manage. They are successful too because they use their waking hours effectively. Dada endorsed that we should not sleep more than what is required for the body to rest and restore.

THE POWER OF SILENCE

Whenever I met Dada, he would always emphasize on the importance of silence. For the first few years, I used to wonder why Dada always talked about silence. How can

silence be so important for spiritual evolution? Whenever I was in silence, I found that it didn't really make sense because while my body was still, my mind was agitated. It was wandering all the time. But Dada would say, “its ok for the mind to wander, we need to practice, practice, and practice. Discipline your body and then discipline your mind. Without silence, the mind will never stop. It will keep wandering”.

Dada never underestimated the power of silence. Over the first 15 years of my life, I must have had numerous discussions with Dada and every talk that he gave, he would talk about spending personal quality time, having a daily appointment with God, meditating in silence, introspecting, contemplating and going within. Through all these methods, Dada was trying to talk of one thing – Silence. To Dada, silence had power and it could do many things. From his own experience and realization, it was the key to taking a seeker forward on the spiritual path. As one amongst those who are imprisoned by this world, we do not realize the importance of silence. But Dada taught me very clearly that if I want to progress on the path, I must spend time in silence. He advised that I should not just spend time in silence in random, but try to make it a system, a routine, being silent every day at the same time and in the same place. Dada said, “Make it a habit. Make it a ritual, and silence will transform your life.”

Dada would explain that silence is needed to listen to God's silent voice. Sometimes we talk to God and pray and then we want God to answer our prayers. How can we hear God with all the noise and the banter around us? How will we be able to listen to God's soft and silent

voice if we do not have silence? If we don't wait for God in silence, then how can we connect and be one with God? To get to the frequency of God's channel, silence is needed.

In the several chats I had with Dada, he would give instances of important meetings that world famous people had where there was no talking, there was just silence nothing but silence. People would sit for hours in silence and communicate soul to soul. He knew the power of silent communication and how silence could change our life.

Dada would often mention about Ralph Waldo Emerson's meeting with Thomas Carlyle. Both of them were contemporaries. Carlyle was in England, whereas Emerson was in America. Emerson felt a magnetic pull toward Carlyle and said that he would love to meet Carlyle. So he came all the way from America to England. It is said that both of them were together for three hours, but not one of them spoke a single word. After three hours, when they took leave of each other, someone asked, “Emerson, you met him but you didn't speak anything.” He said, “We have spoken volumes!”

MAN LIVES NOT BY THE BEATS OF HIS HEART, BUT BY THE GRACE OF GOD

When Dada had a heart attack and hardly anyone was allowed inside the ICU, I had the privilege to be there with him. I went with tears in my eyes, wishing that he was recovering, and to pray that his physical body would be able to bear the pain of the heart attack.

I was surprised to see Dada sitting on the bed, with a smile on his face although he had several tubes from the machines connected to his body. He was in a very cheerful mood, and I told him, "I hope that you are doing well. I pray to God that you recover soon and come home." He asked for a pen and paper and scribbled a few words for me. The words read – "Man lives not by the beats of his heart, but by the grace of God". These words have never left me, and they have been inscribed on my heart by Dada!

We should be grateful to God for every breath and heart beat because this life is a gift from God and as long as God wants us to live, nothing can go wrong with us. Whether we have to live for 10 years or 100 years, it is all by the grace of God. We should learn to surrender and accept the Divine Will, and we should not forget that God is the one who gives us life, not the doctor.

Many people go to the doctor and say, "Oh Doctor! You are my God! Save me!" It's so ridiculous that we look at a human's physical body, talents, and skills and call the person "God." We overlook the soul of the doctor, which is actually God, the real power. We forget that God exists and takes care of us, giving us the gift of life!

MAKE GOD A PRIORITY OF YOUR LIFE

When I first met Dada, I believed in God, but God was never a priority of my life. Yes, I would pray, I would go to the temple on Mondays and I would think of God sometimes but if somebody asked me what was my priority – it was my success, my business, my wealth, my pleasure, my family and then somewhere deep down God.

As my relationship with Dada grew, I found God becoming a priority in my life because Dada always said, "Make God a priority. God is important. God is the goal. Always be connected with God." He would never ever miss telling me that our goal is God. That is, everything else doesn't matter; what matters is God. In the initial days when I met him, this was not an important part of our discussion, but it did figure somewhere. But as my relationship grew and as the years rolled by, God became a key agenda in our discussions. We would often talk of God - Who is God? What is God? Where is God? We would talk about the power of God, how everything happens just because of the grace of God. How nothing is possible without God. God is present everywhere. He is Omnipresent, Omnipotent, and Omniscient. In our discussions, the topic of "God" would surface, and slowly but steadily, Dada made God a priority in my life. I was already a believer; I already had faith. I started fasting when I was 8 years old. To me, Lord Shiva was a very important part of my life story, but it was more theoretical. Dada practically brought God into my life. Dada made God real in my life by teaching me to make God a priority.

SAY "THANK YOU, GOD" BEFORE EVERY MEAL

One very simple thing I learned from Dada, which I never used to do, was to say "Thank You" to God before a meal. I realized that Dada would never start having food until he thanked God, and I found this to be such a profound exercise when I did it myself. I learned from Dada that we should close our eyes, fold our hands and spend a few moments thanking God for the food he has

given us and for the health and energy we receive from it.

When I do this, I find that the entire act of having a meal becomes a spiritual experience. These days, I cannot have a meal without thanking God and that makes the meal so much more valuable. I enjoy my meals more than before! My meal gives me energy, which takes me forward, and I feel so grateful that I am fortunate to have the meal and the ability to eat this meal!

There are so many people in this world who are deprived of a meal or have no health to enjoy a meal. Don't you think we all should learn these little things from Dada? They may be simple actions, but they have a very big impact; they actually make our life fulfilling. Therefore, before every meal - breakfast, lunch, and dinner - I take time to close my eyes, fold my hands and say a prayer in gratitude. My friends and family feel shy to do this because they worry about what others may think. People may call us old fashioned or religious, but we need to realize that showing our gratitude to God is more important than what others think!

Dada's simple prayer before a meal:

Thank you God for the food I eat.
Thank you God for the friends I meet.
Thank you God for the songs I sing.
Thank you God for everything.

IMPORTANCE OF MANTRAS

Dada taught me the importance of a mantra. When I started my journey with Dada, I never knew any mantra

except “Om” and “Om Namah Shivaya.” He taught me the Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra and Gayatri Mantra, and he made me understand how mantras are very important in one's spiritual evolution.

I learned from Dada that the word mantra came from the words – 'man' mind, and 'tra' instrument. Therefore, a mantra is an instrument to control the mind. The mind is like a monkey, it keeps wandering. Dada said it's nearly impossible to control the mind. A mantra becomes an instrument that calms and controls the mind, and makes it stop wandering. What does the mantra do? We take a few words and frame it as a mantra and repeat it over and over. This stops the mind from wandering and focuses our thought on the mantra – what it says and what it means - thus programming our mind with it.

At one point, I had to face threats on my life. The police commissioner disclosed that I was in danger of being kidnapped and there could be an attack on my life. They provided me with a gunman, 24-hour security, and even gave me a personal revolver to carry with me along with an arms license. I went to Dada fearfully and asked Dada how I could overcome this fear. Dada smiled, he said, “You can carry the revolver, but fear not because life and death are a gift of God. Nothing can happen to you if you believe in God.” He then gave me another mantra - a mantra that would overcome fear. Today, I realize the power of the mantra. The mantra programs our mind like software controls equipment. The mantra makes us think positively, eliminates negative energy, and reinforces our faith and hope in God. I lived fearlessly, and more than the revolver, it was the mantra that protected me.

TO BE HAPPY, MAKE OTHERS HAPPY

Dada gives a simple mantra for happiness. He says if you want to be happy, make others happy whenever and wherever possible. He shares this mantra with everybody. He says that if we learn to makes others happy, we can easily remain in a state of happiness because the hand that gives the rose cannot but retain some of the fragrance. Dada says, "Go out and make as many people happy as you can in as many ways as you can and as often as you can because happiness that is shared is doubled and it spreads to everybody."

Many people don't smile. They don't give others the gift of their smile. There is no humor in their lives. Their lives are filled with negative emotions because there is no cheer, laughter and joy in their life. Therefore, I made it a rule in my life to try to make as many people happy as I can. I spread happiness by sometimes giving a chocolate, sometimes helping people, or with just a smile. Not just to strangers, we can also make our near and dear ones, colleagues, and family members happy and stop taking them for granted. Dada says, "We must never lose the opportunity of making others happy because it, in turn, makes us happy".

Whenever Dada gives a talk he never ends the talk without some humor and laughter. His talks are full of fun and entertainment. There is enthusiasm and excitement in the crowds because he believes that we should be happy even during a lecture. So Dada encourages us to be happy and make others happy.

VALUE YOUR HUMAN BIRTH

Many a time, Dada has said that we take the human birth for granted. How many of us truly value the seven wonders that God has given us – the eyes, nose, ears, mouth, hands, head, and heart? These are more wondrous than what the world calls as the "Seven Wonders."

Dada says the human birth is very important because it is only then, one can realize God. Only the human being has been gifted with an intellect without which one cannot realize the truth. Plants and animals cannot realize God. It is said that based on our Karmas, we may be reborn as something other than a human being. In this case, we will not be able to realize God. Therefore, being born as a human is a precious treasure. But how many human beings truly value the human birth?

Dada said the first thing that we must be grateful for is being a human. We can fold our hands in prayer. Have you seen animals and plants praying? Dada made me understand that the trees, animals, insects, and other living beings are not as fortunate as human beings. The one major difference between human beings and other beings is that we have the ability to decide and choose. We can choose to believe in God, to understand that there is a Creator and that He has given us this life. We can express our gratitude by trying to connect with God and praying and valuing this human birth. Therefore, this human birth is our biggest gift. We must make use of this gift by living meaningfully and realizing our true self before our journey as a human being is over.

ACCEPT EVERYTHING AS PRASADAM FROM GOD

Another amazing thing that Dada taught me is that we should not crave for anything but we can accept everything that comes to us as Prasadam – a gift from God. God will give us many things and we can accept them, but it is not as simple as that. Sometimes, something comes to us and looks to be a Prasadam, a gift from God, but it is not! It is a test. Therefore, while things come to us, we must still use our intellect to discriminate whether this is a gift of God or is it a test to make us sink in this world? Therefore, Dada taught (a) We should not crave for anything. The moment we crave for something, we become the body-mind complex. If we crave, we shall go to our grave. (b) If we don't crave and things come to us as a Prasadam from God, we should still discriminate and see whether this would be good for our life and whether it is actually God-sent.

Once we have used our intellect to confirm what has come to us is definitely a Prasadam from God, and then we should accept it joyously with open hands. Dada and I discussed that some people advocate such stringent discipline, for instance, they practically eat nothing, they hardly drink anything, they don't encourage one to be happy, and they don't even enjoy God's creations like a sunrise or sunset. Why should we deprive ourselves of God's creations? Everything that God has created is the manifestation of God and we should enjoy it because it is God itself. As long as it comes as a Prasadam and we don't crave for it, we can enjoy it.

THEY WILL SAY. LET THEM SAY!

Once, Dada and I discussed the way people talk, judge, and criticize. Dada would always tell me, "They will say. Let them say!" He continued, "Do not worry about what people talk. Our job is to walk and keep going ahead in the direction we want to go." Dada said, "How does it matter what people talk? Whatever we do, people will have something to say about it. You know what you are doing and why you are doing, and you are passionate about it. You have the Divine grace and blessings from God. Just go ahead and do it!"

Many a time in life, I just did what I thought was right although it was exactly the opposite of what the world thought. Things that I did were sometimes unbelievable. Just because of the faith I had in myself and in God, and because of my Guru's encouragement, I could do things that seemed right to me. He guided me but never, ever made me feel that I was going wrong. He always encouraged and supported me. When others criticize, it is good to review their criticism and see whether there is anything meaningful in what they are saying. But, once we know that their criticism is baseless, we need to stop worrying. Like Dada said, "They will talk. Let them talk. You walk!"

SURRENDER IS THE WAY

Whenever I have faced problems or difficult situations, Dada used to tell me, "Surrender! Surrender completely and give the problem to God and completely forget about it. God will solve your problem." Dada told me

that we usually don't truly surrender. Even when we surrender, we keep worrying to see whether God will take care of our issue or not. How would things happen if we doubt God? The way of surrender is complete submission and absolute trust, not 99.99%, as Dada says. When it is 99.99%, it is not trust at all. It has to be 100%! It has to be total. When we surrender ourselves to God, He takes charge. He takes over the issue, and of course, once He takes over the issue, we know that the problem will be resolved. Therefore, I learnt to surrender many things in life that were difficult for me to deal with. When there is no way, I use the formula of surrender and the impossible became possible. Thank you Dada for teaching me to surrender!

DAILY APPOINTMENT WITH GOD

Dada spoke about our daily appointment with God. He always asked, “Do you have a fixed time, a fixed place where you talk to God and listen to God every day?” We should spend some quality time in communication with God. Dada called this, “Your daily appointment with God.” Even if you forget anything and everything else, don't forget this one thing. Don't forget your daily appointment with God. When you have a daily appointment with God, God keeps that time for you and God is always there to listen to you and to answer your prayers.

What I learnt from Dada is that when we have a daily appointment with God, we make God real in our life. It's not like we should meet God at our convenience, whenever it's possible and whenever we have time. When

we make God a priority in our life, we make sure to keep up with our appointment. If we had an appointment with an officer, a doctor, or anybody important in our life, would we miss it? We would never miss it. So Dada taught me to never miss our daily appointment with God because that is far more important than any other appointment.

HOW TO OVERCOME ANGER?

Several years ago, I asked Dada a very simple question. "How does one overcome anger, Dada?" Dada explained that we all get angry because we don't understand the true meaning of life. Dada said that anger is a very powerful and a very strong negative emotion. Some people think that once we express our anger, it is over. Dada said, "No, when you express anger, it only comes back again - stronger. So, you must not express anger." I asked, "How else then should we deal with anger?" Dada said, "Some people try to overcome anger through suppression. They get angry inside and they suppress it, they hold it within. Anger is such a powerful negative emotion that how much ever you try to hold it within you, it will burst. The only way to overcome anger is forgiveness. If you are angry with somebody, the only way to get over the anger is forgive that person and forget about the matter."

We asked, "Dada, how many times can we go on forgiving people?" Dada said, "You must go on forgiving, go on forgiving and go on forgiving." Then Dada explained, "If we don't forgive, this anger will burn us. It's like a piece of burning charcoal in our hand. We

are holding this burning charcoal of anger to throw on somebody else, but we don't realize that we would have already burnt our hand even before we threw it on others. Therefore, we must deal with anger through immediate forgiveness."

LOVE GOD

One of the most unique gifts of my life is my love for God. It started when my grandfather, who was afflicted with polio, took me to a temple and taught me that God is the most powerful energy in the world. God is the Creator, Universal Power. My grandfather taught me to fast on Mondays. He was the one to plant the seeds of devotion of Lord Shiva in me. This was supported further by my father who encouraged me, between the age of 8 and 18 years, to continue my religious pursuits, my faith, my trust, my hope, and my enthusiasm.

When Dada came into my life, a very beautiful thing happened. He actually turned my religious devotion into a spiritual love for God. This Bhakti, this deep longing and seeking and love for my God was inspired by my Guru. His love for God and stories of Meera and Krishna and various other spiritual leaders and their love for God made a tremendous impact on my life.

What would my life be without my love for God? It would be like a garden without roses; it would be barren. My love for God has given me joy, bliss, confidence, courage, and enthusiasm. It has given me success. It has given me a direction in life. It has transformed me!

Today, if I take away Bhakti from my life, I would be

nothing, absolutely a zero. Whatever I am today, I believe, it is because of my Bhakti, my deep love and longing, and my devotion for God. If it was not for my Guru, today I can frankly say that I would never have been able to love my God the way I do now.

GRATITUDE

Dada used to always say, *"Na kar fikar… Kar shukar!"* which means "Don't worry. Be grateful!" Dada must have spoken to me hundreds of times on gratitude and how our life will be as barren as a desert without gratitude.

We should be grateful to God every moment because every breath that we get from the Creator is worth gratitude. How can we be ungrateful and how can we forget this beautiful gift of life that God, our Creator, has given us?

If we look around us, God has created everything - the sun, the moon, the stars, the birds, the animals, and the flowers. God made you and me. God made this beautiful world. How can we forget to show our gratitude to God?

Are we grateful to God for each day? Each day brings to us 1440 minutes. Do we value each minute with gratitude, or do we forget that God is the giver of every moment we live? Dada taught me to be grateful. He taught me the art of gratitude. He taught me that I should never forget to express my gratitude to God, and I believe that this has changed my life!

SHUT DOWN AND GO TO GOD!

Before I end what Dada taught me, I cannot but share my last lesson as Ravi V. Melwani.

Dada knew me now for over 15 years - from 1992 to 2007. He knew me in and out. He knew every aspect of my life - what my aspirations, dreams, philosophy, weaknesses, and strengths were. He was my closest friend. He was a mirror and I could see myself when I looked at him. He knew me in every posible way. Probably, nobody knew me better than Dada.

Once I said, "Dada, I enjoy doing Humanitarian, Inspirational, and Spiritual work (H.I.S. work), but I am struggling because the business is not growing the way I want it to grow. I am working 18 hours a day, 7 days a week and something tells me that God has a different plan for my life. If I am feeling that God wants me to do H.I.S. work rather than THIS retail business, what should I do, Dada?"

Dada thought for a while and then replied, "Ravi, shut down and go to God!" I was shocked. I was flabbergasted. I did not know that my Guru would give me permission to shut down my business and go to God. But he did.

I had a 3, 00,000-sq.ft. store and I had two options: Option (a) Shut down 80% of the store and continue running one toy store on 40,000 sq.ft. Option (b) A company willing to take the entire store, and I would be 100% free.

Dada analyzed both options and said, "If you run a toy shop, you will still be in this world. You will be doing

THIS work (the retail business) and not H.I.S. work - Humanitarian, Inspirational, and Spiritual work. If you really want to do H.I.S. work, I think the time has come. Although you are just 40, you can move on because you are ready to go on a path that will lead you to God."

This was the most dynamic discussion I have had with Dada as Ravi Melwani. In fact, today I feel ashamed to share that after Dada told me that I could shut down my business completely, I was so shocked that I asked Dada in disbelief, "Are you sure?" Dada smiled. In fact, he laughed and he said, "If you have any doubt, then ask Lord Shiva."

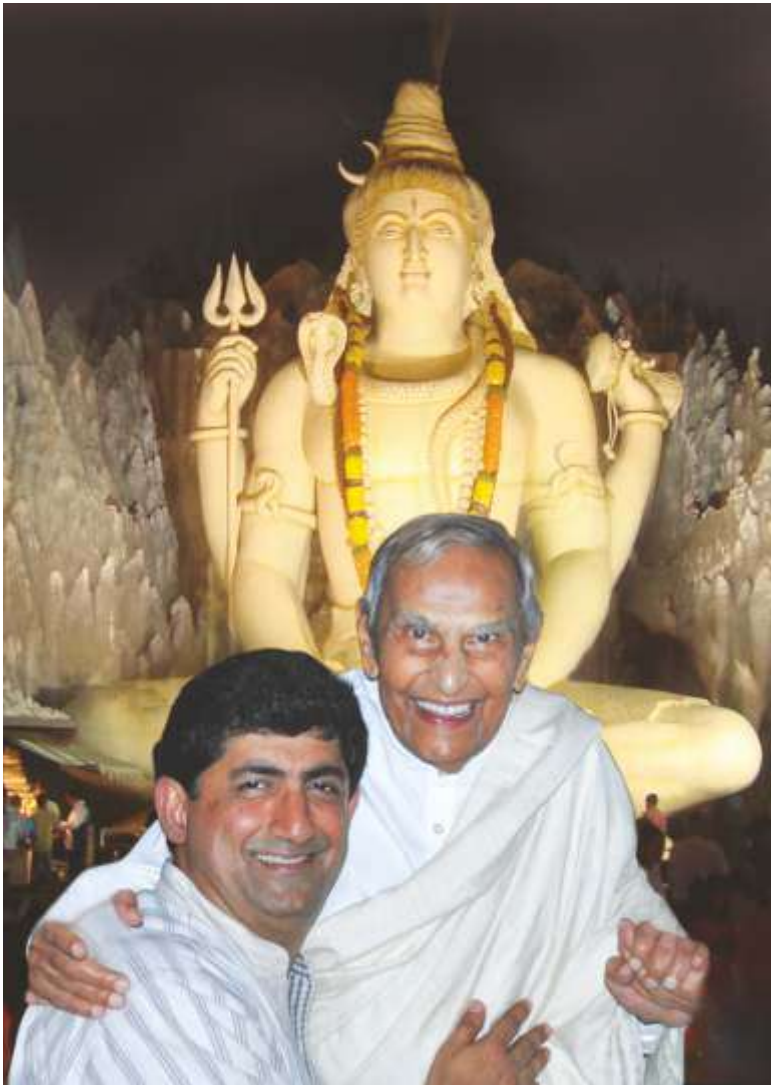
With faith in my Guru and taking his advice, I did something I never tried in my life. Over the many years that I had spent with Dada, there was a private ritual I observed. Dada would pray and write out two slips of paper with two options to make a decision and offer it to his Guru and God. Then he would pick one. This, I believe, let his Guru and God make the decision.

It was a Monday night and I was performing aarti at the temple. I took two slips of paper and on one I wrote "Shut down completely," and on the second, I wrote "Shut down, but run a toy shop." I put these two slips on the aarti plate and started performing the Shiv aarti.

On that Monday night, when I was performing the Shiv aarti, I thought that I would pick up one of the papers to read God's decision although my Guru had already given me the decision to shut down and go to God. During the aarti, something magical happened. One of the papers fell into the flames and caught fire, and after

the aarti, there was only one paper left. I did not have to choose and when I opened the paper, it said "Shut down completely." My Guru was right. He wanted me to feel that Lord Shiva endorsed the decision that I was taking.

It was the biggest decision of my life. I spoke to my parents, and I told them that I wanted to shut down the shop completely. Instead, I wanted to be free and do Humanitarian, Inspirational, and Spiritual work. because it was H.I.S. work. They agreed, and thereafter, my life was transformed. I shut down the entire business and became RVM from Ravi V. Melwani!



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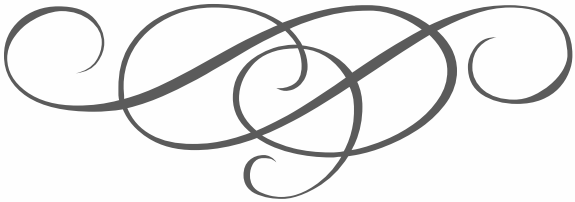


What Dada Taught Me as RVM

What Dada Taught Me as RVM

Dada taught me different things between 2007 and 2014 because I had transformed my life. I was no more Ravi V. Melwani making money. I was RVM who was making a difference after shutting down my business.

There were no more questions about happiness, achievement, and success. I no more wanted to make money as my objective was to reduce pain and suffering, vibrate positive energy, and make people believers through our institutions, charitable home, free hospital, the RVM School of Inspiration, and the Shivoham Shiva Temple.

FORBEARANCE

I asked Dada "What is forbearance?" Dada graciously explained to me that forbearance is "Returning evil with good." Often, I have seen Dada responding with so much love to people who have caused him harm in some way or

the other. In fact, he not only showers them with love, but also gives them a special gift or Prasadam to make them feel even better. According to Dada, if we want to progress on the spiritual path, forbearance is very important. There will be many people who will be rude to us, seeming like they are attacking us, but this is not real. These are tests on this journey of life. When these tests attack us physically, emotionally, spiritually, and mentally - we must not react with an attacking attitude. We should use forbearance by always responding positively with a smile and a sense of understanding. This is very difficult, but it is a must to progress on the spiritual path. Therefore, I am trying to bring forbearance into my life. But to do it the way Dada does is difficult because Dada has reached a peak, and I have just started to climb the mountain.

As we spoke further, Dada made me realize that forbearance is the art of accepting little nuisances and annoyances. Every now and then, when we move on the spiritual path, we will be tested by small disappointments and irritations. A man with forbearance will not get disturbed by little things. He will not react with agitation. Instead he will respond with love and forgiveness. This is forbearance, the art of remaining calm without an agitated reaction as one tries to return evil with good.

WAIT FOR GOD

On becoming RVM, Dada told me to slow down my pace. He said that I need to learn to be patient, I should learn to wait for God, and I should not expect God to act like a fast food restaurant that delivers burgers and pizzas at the snap of a finger.

God knows what is best for us. He has his own plans, and we should learn to accept and surrender unconditionally to the will of God. We should not be impatient and decide what God should give us. We should realize that God's will is best for us and have patience for God to enact His will.

Dada once laughingly made me understand, “You pay a security guard the whole month's salary. What does he do? He does nothing. He waits for the whole month trying to catch one thief. At the end, maybe he doesn't. But it doesn't mean he did nothing. Even if he is doing nothing, he is doing his job by waiting and watching and he is being paid the salary just to do that.” Similarly, we should be patient. Maybe it takes days, weeks, or months. It is God who will make us do what we need to do. If we learn to wait for God and not be impatient, demanding our will rather than accepting His will, our life will be so much more peaceful.

UNIVERSAL LOVE

Another important thing I learned from Dada is universal love. We all love, but our love is possessive, specific, singular, and worldly. Dada teaches us universal love through his love for one and all. He pours his love out to everybody and doesn't make anyone feel deprived of his love. He treats the poorest of the poor with as much love as he treats the richest of the rich. His love overflows, melting their hearts with his kindness. Dada's love vibrates to the world even through an e-mail, voice message, or telephone. He believes that God is in each individual and that we should love everybody just as we

would love God. This is true love. Otherwise it is not love at all! I have learned about universal love from Dada, and I try to implement it in my life. But still, I must admit that while I can love everybody, it is so difficult to love everybody universally like Dada does.

Dada once explained to me that when we tell somebody "I love you," we actually imply that "I love you because I need you." But this is not real love. The right kind of love is when we imply "I need you because I love you." You love people genuinely when you realize that people are not different from you. You and they are essentially one; there is only a difference of the body that is external. Dada tried to explain to me that universal love will give us true happiness and not personal love, which is selfish and has expectations. We human beings do not understand the difference between the two kinds of love, and we get confused. We think it is love, when in reality, it is trading. We are expecting something in return for the love. The moment you trade in love, it is not love.

GOD IS WITHIN

For many years, Dada has been speaking about the truth that God is within, but I have only been able to understand a little of what it truly means in the last one or two years. I never understood when Dada used to say, "All of you sitting in front of me are Krishna!" He used to say that God is within. It is only after several personal discussions and question-answer sessions with Dada that I realized the truth - we are not this body; we are actually the *Atman* – the soul. The *Atman* is an energy that can be equated to the electricity that gives power to a bulb to give

light. The bulb by itself is incapable of giving light. It is the electricity that creates the light. Likewise, energy exists in each one of us, giving light to our life and power to our heart and soul. It is this power inside us which is God, says Dada.

Dada strongly advocates to all his devotees that one should not look outside for God. Most of us search for God in temples, churches, and mosques, but God is not found in those places. Dada always says that it is good to go to a temple because its spiritual vibrations help one pray and develop the deep longing and seeking for God. It helps the person to experience spiritual vibrations and receive God's blessings. But Dada always emphasizes, "God is inside your heart. Instead of searching outside, stop and search inside. You will find God within!"

Dada himself goes within very often, trying to feel peace and silence and to meditate and build a communication with the power called God. To me, this was a revelation that God is within. We have the power of God inside. Just like God is inside us, God is inside everybody, and so we should have respect for everyone. In simple words, I should love and respect you because you have got God within you!

All this was difficult to digest, but because I trusted my Guru, and therefore I tried my best to absorb it.

YOGA

Yoga is commonly understood to be physical gymnastics, but, Dada taught me the true meaning of Yoga. Yoga is "Yuj" or Union. It is building a connection with God. Just

like a SIM card, which is pinging for the satellite, discovers its own network, and then follows the network wherever it goes, being in Yoga means being in constant union with God and never disconnecting from God.

One who is connected to God grows closer to God and finally achieves God. A seeker of God tries to remain in Yoga at all times. Dada said that while it is said that there are four types of Yoga – Karma Yoga or Yoga of Action, Bhakti Yoga or Yoga of Devotion, Jnana Yoga or Yoga of Education and Raja Yoga or Yoga of Meditation, there should not be any differentiation between these four types of Yogas. One overlaps the other - you can be doing Bhakti as you are doing Karma, and you can be in Raja, meditation, but until you have Bhakti, love in your heart, even while you are in the Jnana, education mode, you remain with the Raja mode, which means that each kind of Yoga somehow or the other is connected with the other kind of Yoga. Dada believes that we should not try to differentiate. As long as we are in Yoga, connected or in Union with God, it doesn't matter what type of Yoga we are in.

I lightheartedly questioned Dada once, “Why do you get disconnected with God by accepting to watch television with the Sangath, members of the Sadhu Vaswani Mission?” Dada smiled and said, “Maybe, I am sitting in front of the TV and there are scenes I am seeing with sound and music, but I am not disconnected from God. I remain connected and remain in Yoga. It is this deep connection with God that doesn't get disconnected even for a moment that leads us to liberation.” Dada, a realized Master, is one rare person who could be eternally in Yoga.

Dada taught me that if I really want to progress on the spiritual path, then I should spend time in silence and introspection and never forget God even for a moment. Of course, he said, "Your mind will wander. It will go away. Bring it back without getting upset. Gently bring the mind back and come back into Yoga!"

TAT TWAM ASI

Two decades ago, I saw a poster with the words "Tat Twam Asi" at one of Dada's retreats in Lonavla. I couldn't understand the meaning. "Thou Art That". Today, I laugh at myself that it has taken me 20 years to understand what Dada taught me then. Dada tried to make me understand this many times; probably I was not yet ready to imbibe the true meaning.

It was with the grace of God and the Guru that I learnt slowly but steadily that we are not this body. "Neti Neti" – Dada always says "Not this, Not this" – you are not this body. These are important words of the Upanishads, which Dada tried to explain to those devotees who are seekers –Jigyasus, as we call them. But Dada couldn't explain this to everybody because we need to be on a spiritual journey, 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? Dada constantly reminds us of this 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. Dada

warns that this path is a tough path, and this path has a long way to go, but it starts with these three simple words: "Tat Twam Asi" (Thou Art That). Dada's simple teaching on "Thou Art That" has inspired so many people to think and meditate on the following questions – Who am I? What am I? And they have realized the truth, "I am not this, I am that".

RENUNCIATION

"Renounce, renounce, renounce!" Dada always says that one very important challenge in our life is to renounce. What should we renounce and why? At times, when we get what we want, we are happy; otherwise we become disappointed and miserable. Many people in this world are unhappy. Why? Because they are unable to renounce their desires and be masters of themselves! Unless we renounce all desires, we will be disappointed and feel caged and helpless when our desires are not fulfilled.

Dada taught me that to progress on the spiritual journey, one has to be a Master, not a slave and thus, we have to renounce. Why? Because if we don't renounce, then we let something else become our master and hence we become a slave. Consider drinking alcohol as an example. What happens if one becomes addicted to drinking? One becomes a slave of the bottle. The bottle becomes the master, and the person who drinks alcohol from it becomes the slave. And therefore, he or she will be unable to progress on the spiritual path. Such a person can't realize God nor be truly happy. In fact, that person's happiness is at the mercy of the bottle.

I built my willpower, telling myself, "I renounce this."

The moment I am able to renounce, I am the master and I feel strong; it gives me tremendous joy, peace, and fulfillment. If it were not for Dada, I would not understand the importance of renunciation. I would never realize how Vairagya or renunciation is so important on the spiritual path.

GOD IS EVERYWHERE

Dada has spoken about this truth several times and in several different ways - God is everywhere and God is in everything! He is also absolutely clear that 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 representative of God.

Maybe the body and mind is not God, they are just an illusion. But the soul inside every human is God. Dada never doubted the truth that we are all Divine beings going through a human experience. Dada says that 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.

Dada even says that God is present in inanimate things. We have learned and even science has proved that there are molecules in inanimate things, which have energy. Each molecule has electrons, neutrons, protons, photons, and quarks, which are alive with energy. Science has proved that energy exists in every atom. As per the Upanishads, God has manifested himself through every atom on Earth in every creation as energy. Therefore, all

that we see and feel are nothing but God manifested in Divine form.

Both science and spirituality now agree that there is energy in everything…energy we call God.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF LIFE?

During one of my discussions with Dada, I asked him about the purpose of life. Dada instantly replied that the purpose of life is to realize God. 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. He made me understand 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 life journey! Therefore, Dada says that the one and only important thing is our relationship with God.

What happens when we finish our earthly journey and go to the other side of the shore? Who will be there to receive us, take care of us and love us? It is our Divine Heavenly Father! We don't know where he is, who he is, or what he is, but he is there. We may come face to face with our Creator after our earthly journey is over, and at that time, what matters is whether we have built a beautiful relationship with that Creator or not. Have we created deep love and longing for the God who gave us life? Did

we respect God with deep gratitude for all that we received on Earth? We should shift our focus to make a connection and build a relationship with God, rather than just making money and building assets. Dada, therefore, lays emphasis on spending time every day with God and not forgetting that God is our Master.

HOW SHOULD WE WORK AND WHAT WORK SHOULD WE DO?

Dada says the moment we think that "we" are doing something, that work becomes useless because it is work done by the ego. As Lord Krishna says in the Bhagavad Gita, "Whatever you do, do it as an offering to me." If we work realizing that we do nothing, then the Lord does everything. If we work realizing that we are only an instrument and that God is working through us, and if we work without ego and without the feeling that "I" am doing, then all such work is blessed work. It is work for God. It is Karma Yoga. But the moment we do work as if WE are doing it, then we are creating our own Karmas. And therefore, we are getting entangled in this samsaar, this maya of death and rebirth. That is, by creating our own actions, we are creating a situation where we will have to face the consequences of those actions in the future. Whatever we do, even if we are doing Bhakti Yoga, we should do it in such a manner that it is true love and true devotion and longing for God. Dada explained to me that more important than what we do, regardless of what it is, it is the attitude that matters.

When one does any work with one's ego that leads their mind and their body to act, then one creates one's own

Karmas and does not progress on the spiritual path. But if one is doing it as if we are embodied souls and the soul energizes the action while we live in surrender accepting God's will, then one is not actually doing something himself. One realizes that one is acting as per the will of God. We should work with an attitude of being God's instrument, and then, work doesn't become an end, but just a means to reach the end.

DON'T LET THE MIND DISTRACT YOU!

Time and again, Dada has advised me that the mind is here to distract us, confuse us, and disturb our thought process. In fact, we should realize that sometimes the mind behaves like our enemy. According to Dada, Raja Janak - Sita's father, started shouting: "I found the thief! I found the thief!" Others around him were curious and asked who the thief is. He said, "The mind!"

The mind steals our connection with God and thus steals God itself. Dada says that we should not let the mind distract us by asking several unnecessary questions. The mind confuses us, complicates our path, and disturbs our focus, and it is our challenge to not be disturbed by the mind.

The mind has been gifted with the skill of producing thoughts every second. Does it mean that every thought that the mind produces should take us on a "thought-provoking" journey? Not necessarily! We need to realize that our goal is one - to realize God. The mind has to be subdued - Dada even said "sublimate it." He says, "Sublimate the mind, calm the mind, and transcend the mind so that you can move closer to God." The mind sometimes comes between us and God. We have to go

beyond the influences of the mind, either by ignoring it or making it our own friend, where it doesn't distract us and take our focus away. If we are able to calm the mind, control it, and overcome its distractions, then we can transcend the mind and realize the truth.

FREE WILL AND DESTINY

Somebody asked Dada a question, "What is the difference between free will and destiny? Is everything pre-destined?" Dada explained that we all have an intellect and we can make a choice. We have free will. But everything is not free will. Many things are Karmic or pre-destined. Many things are based on our past actions. So our past actions and the corresponding Karma created are like a road that is already laid. Our free will and choice is like a car that drives on that road. We can go right or left, fast or slow, or move or stop. That is our choice. Our life journey is a combination of the road and the vehicle in which we are driving. Therefore, Dada explained that while our Karmas have some pre-destined things that are already set, our choice and our free will create our actions that can change our destiny. Therefore, we should understand that we have a choice to change things, a free will, which is born out of our intellect, and we should make sure that we use this free will to evolve in the journey of life.

Thus, I clearly understood that because of my Karmas and Samskaras (the personality that I have developed) and past actions, I am living a life that seems to be pre-destined. But while my life is pre-destined in many ways, it is not locked. Every moment, I still have a choice - to use

my intellect and to decide. There is no doubt that even those choices and actions are in God's command. But God's Maya or His drama gives us an opportunity to not just have everything pre-destined. He has given us a free will to play our part in a way we like and build new Karmas based on our choices, thus creating our own destiny.

ROLE OF RELIGION

I often sat with Dada for hours asking him complicated questions. I asked for forgiveness if my questions were irrelevant, ignorant, or inappropriate. "Why is it that all religions confuse humanity?" once I asked Dada. "We portray Gods to appear in such strange ways as if we have seen them in that form - Why? Why are there so many rituals in religions that confuse us? Why is it that we make saints into God and thereafter forget God?" I asked Dada. "Explain to me who you think God is and where Heaven is?" I wanted clarity, and I wanted to know who God is and where God is. I wanted to understand the relationship between God-men and God. I wanted to understand the difference between earthly God and Heavenly God. Dada calmly explained to me. He did not lose his peace or tranquility. Very quietly, knowledgeably, and patiently, he answered step by step what he saw as the reality.

Dada said that all the religions are just like kindergartens, and we have to go through kindergarten if we want to be graduates. Graduation is Nirvana, Moksh, or Liberation. But it cannot happen without passing through kindergarten. All the religions of the world are

kindergartens of God-realization. They plant the seeds of spiritual evolution. Religions start man's relationship with God. Maybe they use mythology or some other ways, but at least, they make a child become aware about the existence of God. Every religion plays its part in trying to teach a person to grow in the love for God. Religions teach us to believe in a personal God.

But that is the first step to moving towards realizing God. Without belief in a personal God, we may never be able to have that deep Bhakti or devotion for God. So, there is nothing wrong in Bhakti or a love for a personal God.

Yes, unfortunately religions have gone astray and they start promoting their personal agendas. But that should not worry us. Maybe religious preachers create fear of God in people or they create certain rituals that must be performed. These may not be the best thing to do, but eventually the one who wants to move ahead on the spiritual path may find a way through this beginning.

Sooner or later the realization must come that this bhakti for a personal God is an illusion that hides the real God that is everywhere – Omnipresent, Omnipotent, and Omniscient. Dada taught that we should look for God as the ultimate reality. God is everywhere and in everything.

WHY DID GOD CREATE THE UNIVERSE?

"Why did God create the universe?" I asked Dada once. Dada chanted a sloka – words from the scriptures: "Ekoham Bahu Syam," which means God once said, "I am one; may I become many." There was nothing; there was no world or samsaar, and there were no human

beings, plants, or animals. What did God do? Being all powerful – Omnipotent, Omniscient, Omnipresent – God created the mountains, and the trees, rivers and seas out of nothing. You, me, the plants, and the animals were created out of nothing. All these are manifestations of God - God is appearing as all these. That is the secret of Creation. God did not just create this world, but he manifested himself in the beautiful world through all his creation.

Dada went on to explain to me that God created the Universe just like the spider creates its own web. A spider, from its own secretions creates a web, a world of its own and just like the spider that has created its own amazing world, God has created this world. Everything is not a creation of God; it is a manifestation of God. This whole world that appears is God appearing as the world.

That's why Dada believes that God exists in every creature – human beings, plants, animals, insects, birds, and fish along with the inanimate things. The mountains, rivers, clouds, sky, earth, sun, moon, and stars are all manifestations of God. It is so amazing to look at the sunrise and sunset! It is unbelievable to see the birds that fly in the sky or the beautiful and unique roses in the garden! Each of these goes on to convince us that all these are nothing but the manifestation of God! Look at the beautiful human beings that God has created. Such beauty can only be the art of a great beholder of beauty – God!

GOD IS ONE

Once I was discussing with Dada about Lord Shiva, and how mythology says that he cut off the head of his son

and placed an elephant head to bring him back to life as Ganesha. Dada amusingly listened to my questions related to the stories of Krishna and Rama and the stories of Vishnu and Brahma, various Gods of the Hindu religion. He said, “God is one! Heaven does not have many Gods. Christians do not have a different God and Muslims do not have a different God! There is only one God.” It doesn't mean that the Christian God might have made the sun and the moon or the Hindu God might have made the stars or the oceans. It is we human beings who have confused the meaning of God! Instead of understanding the simple truth that God is the one Power that created everything, we have given names and forms to God and have started fighting with each other. Today, many wars in the world are due to the belief that one's God is superior to the others. Dada explained that this is ridiculous! Therefore, he goes to several peace forums globally to share his view about. Let us not fight about “our” God being more superior to “your” God. Let us realize that we see God differently because our paradigms and our perspectives are different. If we look at white light through green glasses, does it mean that the light becomes green? No. Some of us see God with green glasses, some of us see God with red glasses, and some of us see God with blue glasses; but that does not mean that God has changed. Just because we are looking at God with Hindu eyes, Muslim eyes, or Christian eyes – the meaning of God will not change. God is a Power: ONE POWER that is Omnipresent - present everywhere; Omnipotent – all - powerful; and Omniscient - knows everything. Dada strongly believes that the only way for the world to progress harmoniously is through the belief that God is one.

THE SAINTS AND SAGES OF THE WORLD

Dada taught me some amazing things about the Saints and Sages of the world. To Dada, it did not matter whether it was a Christian saint or a Hindu swami. To Dada, all religions have one objective – God. Whether it is Buddhism, Jainism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, Judaism, Bahá'í Faith, Confucianism, Shintoism or Hinduism – they all believe that God exists. Each of these religions has produced their saints and sages, who help us, grow closer to God. Dada spoke to me several times and taught me that most saints and sages have a message for us to evolve spiritually. We must learn to pick the positives from each saint. We should not argue about things that we do not believe in, but to complete our spiritual puzzle, it is sometimes necessary for us to pick some messages that some saints and sages have left in this world before they have departed. Many of the saints and sages are the voice of God. As manifestations of God, they can teach us something, which we will not realize at that moment, but later that would be necessary for our spiritual evolution. Dada taught me to respect the saints of every religion of the world, listen to them with reverence, and try to absorb all the goodness from their teachings.

"RUSH! DO NOT DELAY!" DADA SAID

Initially, I was not serious in my approach towards the search for the truth and Dada corrected this. He said, "One must absolutely rush when one is on the spiritual path. One should realize that life is a short journey and we can't postpone things to tomorrow. We should do it today because we don't know what's going to happen tomorrow. Our own mind, our own senses, samsara or the world, maya or the illusion, trishna or passion, iccha

or desire – there are so many enemies that may attack us."

Do we want to fail? Do we want our boat to drown in the ocean of life? Or do we want to go to the other shore? If we want to go to the other side, we should row our boat with all our energy, without wasting a minute. "The time is now!" Dada said, "Rush, and please don't think you will do it tomorrow; there may not be a tomorrow. Also, the chance of us going across the shore is only when we are alive. We can't do this after death." Dada said, "If we have that commitment, dedication, and devotion and if we finish off things now, then there is a chance of us going ahead on the path of realization. But we should not have complacency, laziness, or lethargy. We should not have a lazy behavior or be tamasik. We should be active and keep moving ahead to achieve our goal."

EXPERIENCE GOD

Once I spoke to Dada about how I experience God. I told him that I experience God in the sun, the moon, the stars, the birds, the animals and the flowers. When I see the river Ganga flowing, I can feel God's presence. He said, "It's good that you experience God, but that is not the end of the spiritual path. Experiencing God is the act of the mind. The mind makes us experience the power of God; the mind and the intellect together make us realize that the sun is created by God and the sunrise is a beauty that is God's beauty, and therefore, we experience the power of God."

He made me understand that there is something beyond experiencing God. It is great to enjoy the snowfall and experience God. It is great to see the fog flowing from the

rain-laden clouds onto the valley and experience God. It is great to be in a garden and see the amazing flowers and experience God, but Dada taught me that the next step is to move towards realizing God. I asked him, "What does it mean to realize God?" Though I didn't know what it meant to realize God, Dada asked me to believe and keep walking on the path of God-realization. He said, "Keep seeking and keep wanting God and loving God. Be dedicated and devoted to God. Keep your passion and obsession for God alive and you will realize God." Thank you for the guidance, Dada!

POWER OF FOCUS

I used to talk to Dada on topics such as religion, spirituality, the world, and peace, oneness of God, humanity, and service to humanity. Dada said, "Have you seen a convex lens? What does it do? All the rays of light that are focused on the lens get converged onto one point and it creates fire." He said that it is the power of focus. "Focus all your energy. You and God matter! Nothing else. Go forward and focus on your priority. Don't lose your energy. Don't distract yourself and wander in different directions. Don't waste time. Don't lose focus. Ignore the world. Ignore everything. Don't worry about what people say! Don't worry about what books talk about! Don't worry about what Gurus speak. Don't worry about what many religions may tell you. It is an inner search. Realize God! God is within; so don't try to dissipate your energy. Focus all your energy on God. Create a tremendous fire of faith, a fire of passion for God, and a deep seeking and deep longing for God. That is all that matters and you will realize God."

I didn't realize what Dada was truly saying then, but today, I realize that Dada already knew the path that I was going to take. Dada already knew where I was going!

DEATH - GOING FROM ONE ROOM TO ANOTHER

What is Death?

Dada explained. Our body dies. The physical body experiences death. But the soul within is immortal, it never dies. That energy or spirit lives on forever.

If we create Karma, then our inner instrument – mind, intellect, memory and ego - will take another birth and be reborn in another form. Therefore, death is not the end. It is just a bend to transcend. It is going from one room to another.

He once talked about Sri Ramakrishna and Sarada Devi. When Ramakrishna passed away, Sarada was going to break her bangles in deep agony and sorrow.

But Ramakrishna appeared and said, “I have but moved from one room to another.” We don't truly die. We give up the body, but the true self, the spirit, the soul, or the *Atman* lives on. It is immortal!

DOORS OF THE HUMAN BODY

One day, in a very interesting conversation, Dada explained to me that we human beings are given nine doors: the two eyes, two ears, the two nostrils, the mouth, and two organs - one of excretion and one for procreation. All these nine doors or openings are looking outside. Dada mentioned how Guru Nanak said that if you want

to achieve Liberation or Enlightenment, then we must open the tenth door. He called it the "Dasmay Dwar." I asked Dada, "What is the Dasmay Dwar or the tenth door?" Dada explained to me that we need to open the door that looks inside because the Creator is inside us. But because of the distractions due to the mind and the attractions due to the senses, we are always looking outside and we do not open the door to look inside. Many people, he said, talk of the door being at the centre of the forehead. A spiritual aspirant knows that he is beyond the gross body. He knows the truth and he tries to open the tenth door that would not look outside but look inside and realize God within.

PILGRIMAGES AND RITUALS

There is no meaning in going to meet God in places of pilgrimage because God does not live in Mecca, Jerusalem or Kashi. God is everywhere! No doubt that these religious places have spiritual vibrations because of the prayers of millions of devotees. It is good to go therein that perspective, but hoping to be blessed by God in a pilgrimage is an illusion because God lives within. God is not physically present in any religious destination. Don't blindly believe in religious dogmas and rituals.

There is the Creator and we should not let superstition or rituals make us do things blindly without meaning. We should question everything told to us and we should do it only when we are convinced about it. Dada strongly advocated not following the herd and doing things just because others are doing it. If there is a benefit, then we should do it; otherwise we should listen to our intellect

and do what we intellectually choose to do.

WHERE IS HEAVEN AND HELL?

According to Dada, heaven and hell are states of the mind and not physical locations where we can find God or where we go after death. This whole concept of heaven and hell was probably popularized to instill the fear of God in people so that they would lead a spiritual life. If people were not afraid, then they would not lead a virtuous life. Therefore, don't expect to go to a physical location called heaven or hell. Everything is on this Earth – hell and heaven! We can make this Earth a heaven of hell or a hell of heaven – that depends on our Karma, our actions. When our actions are good and we are sincere in our life, we will create a heaven for ourselves. But if our actions are bad, we are sure to create a hell.

When I further questioned Dada, our discussion took me to understand the fact of life that every physical human being dies. Therefore, the physical human being doesn't go out of this Earth, but becomes dust. So supposedly there is a heaven or hell, where are these located and who goes to heaven or hell? If heaven or hell is a virtual destination, and the subtle mind or the non-gross identity of us goes there, then it is beyond human comprehension. Dada made me understand that getting into all these thoughts and discussions will lead us nowhere. The mind is making us think of these things because the mind wants to confuse us. It wants to trap and imprison us. We should go beyond the mind. We should not let the mind create thoughts that would make us get lost in this journey and forget our true and ultimate goal of realizing God.

GRACE OF GOD

What makes things happen is the grace of God! Many discussions with Dada end with this simple truth – it all depends on the grace of God. Dada strongly advocates that it is not our skill, luck, or even Karma that makes things happen. Ultimately, it is the grace of God!

If the grace of God is upon us, nothing is impossible. We should therefore have a very strong Bhakti or love for God. Dada always says that the strongest Yoga or union with God is through Bhakti – deep love and longing for God. He describes three attributes of Bhakti. He says one's Bhakti should be very strong. It needs to be stronger than a miser's desire for gold, a lover's desire for his beloved, and a child's desire for its mother who it has just lost. Dada says that Bhakti is very important to invoke the grace of God. So, in our quest for spiritual evolution, we must invoke the grace of God through our sincere prayers, our deep seeking and longing for God. We should spend a lot of time in devotion and dedication to God because it is this deep, genuine love for God that will bestow upon us a grace that will make anything possible.

WHAT IS ENLIGHTENMENT?

When I was on the RVM journey, one of the common discussions with Dada was on Enlightenment. One late evening Dada explained to me that people give different names to it. Some call it Moksh or Nirvana; some call it Mukti. It is also called Salvation, Liberation or Enlightenment. All these terms refer to the one and same thing! When one becomes aware of one's ignorance and

realizes the truth that I am not this ego, mind and body, but I am that – the Divine Spirit or the soul, then one starts the journey of Enlightenment.

Of course, Dada explained to me that knowledge about realization of the truth is not Enlightenment. The first step is the knowledge and we learn what Enlightenment is. But we don't actually get enlightened; then we contemplate on the truth of Enlightenment and about who we are and what we are not. If the grace of God and the Guru is upon us, then we actually realize the truth. We can feel, "We are not this. We are that." This feeling that I am not this ego, mind and body, but that I am that Divine spirit, or the soul, starts the journey towards Enlightenment.

Dada warned me that it is very difficult to say who is enlightened and who is not. There may be many seekers on the path of Liberation and Enlightenment. The difference between a realized soul and the enlightened one is this – the enlightened one is no more a prisoner of the ego, mind and body. Enlightenment happens when we truly overcome the ego, mind and body, which is practically impossible. Thus it takes lot of effort for a realized soul to be truly enlightened. This mostly happens when we are heading towards the end of our earthly journey.

YOU ARE NOT THIS BODY!

I find it surprising that I never understood what Dada taught me decades ago, that I am not the body, the mind, and the ego. I am the Divine Spirit! The Guru had not failed, but as a disciple, I was not prepared, I was not

ready at that time.

But Dada has led me step by step on the spiritual path and he has made me understand that we are not what we think we are. The fact is that we are the soul, the *Atman!* It is with the blessing of God and the grace of the Guru, who are not different from each other, that we can succeed in realizing the self, the true self. Our body is made of five elements - earth, water, air, space, and fire. When we die, these will merge with the universe and our Divine Spirit will move on.

Dada clearly explained that we continue to live as per our Prarabdha Karma, the karma we brought to this world. When my Prarabdha Karma is over, this *Jeevatman* or embodied soul will drop dead. Whether the *Atman* merges with the *Paramatman* or the ego continues its 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. If we can see the Divine spirit in all as God; if we can understand the principal statements of the Upanishads that reveal the consolidated truth about life and if the grace of the Guru and God are upon us, then we will not just understand this, but will live with this realization! And the moment we live with realization, we are liberated.

KOHAM SOHAM

Dada explained that when we go into meditation and ask the question, "Koham?" or Who am I?" and if we are truly meditating, then the answer comes as "Soham" –"I am that."

According to Dada, it means that I am not this physical body, but I am the Divine soul. How could this be possible was my thought when Dada told me that we are not this body, which I all along thought myself to be? How can we be nothing? How can we be just a soul – energy? Then I realized that only when we go into deep contemplation with the mantra – "Koham?", then only we will realize "Soham." Unless we transcend the ego and mind, we will never realize, "We are not this. We are that."

Dada said that the fact is we are a God particle – a part of divinity, but we live and die in deep ignorance – Ghor Avidhya. We are something far beyond and more powerful. We are God itself appearing as humans. When Dada said that just like a dream, all these are unreal, how could I believe it? How could I believe that this is an illusion? How could it be possible?

Once Dada asked me, "Have you seen a kaleidoscope?" With one eye, we look at the magic crystals forming different shapes and colors. All are actually manifestations of little pieces inside, nothing else. And so Dada said that this world is a drama. It is not real. Things come together as an act. We are all actors in this stage. God is the producer and director. He knows what the plot is. He knows the beginning and the end, but we don't. We play our part or role moment by moment - the way it unfolds to us as His Divine Will. But we must realize that this whole world is a huge stage – a theatre that has been created, produced and directed by God.

TALAASH

In August 2012, during Dada's birthday celebrations,

Dada was giving a talk. He gazed at me and spoke on a subject called "Talaash." Later, at dinner, he explained it further to me. In his talk, Dada had said, "We human beings live and die, but we do not discover the purpose of life - Why are we here? What is the purpose of our life on Earth?" He said that we should go on a quest, a search, or a Talaash. It struck me during the talk itself, but I needed my Master to explain to me. And so I asked Dada what is this search about. He then explained that we live in gross ignorance, and we don't know the truth or the reality. We live in darkness and we should go within to find the true answers. We think that we are this ego, mind and body. But in reality, we are not this, we are that. We are a Divine soul, *Atman* or energy. Due to ignorance, we are unable to overcome the mind, transcend the ego and control the senses. We live and die without going on a Talaash- a search for the truth.

Our life actually starts when we search for the truth, we go on a Talaash, and we realize who we are and we realize God.

TURIYAM

At another occasion, Dada explained to me about "Turiyam". Turiyam comes from the word "Chaturiyam," "the fourth" which means we are the fourth entity. He said that we human beings go through three states of Consciousness – the waking state, the dream state and the deep sleep state. We are not these three – the waker, the dreamer, the sleeper. We are the fourth: the one who experiences these three.

The waking state is a state where our body and mind are

both awake and active. We all know the waking state. We are also familiar with the dream state where the body is asleep but the mind is active, and we are familiar with the state of deep sleep where both the body and mind are asleep; there is no dream and we experience sound sleep.

Dada explained to me, "We know that we had sound sleep, but who knows? Obviously, there is somebody who is beyond the Waker, the Dreamer and the Sleeper – that is Turiyam – the fourth." Dada tried to explain to me that we are all actually Turiyam, which is symbolized in the Upanishads as "Om" or the power of God, but we do not realize it. We think we are the Waker, the Dreamer and the Sleeper, but in reality, we are not these three. We are experiencing these three states of consciousness, but we are the fourth – we are Turiyam.

IS THERE AN ASTRAL WORLD?

Dada tried to explain to me that like this physical world, there is another world – it's called the astral world or the subtle world, the world of the mind. This was beyond my understanding and I started arguing with Dada. "How can there be an astral world, Dada? How is it possible for our mind to go to a world where just minds live after our death?" I questioned him persistently till he finally said, "You are talking like a "jyat." For the first time in life, Dada told me something that was a little unpleasant. This word meant that I was an ignoramus; I was ignorant of the reality.

But Dada didn't stop at that. He said, "Just because you don't know that there is an astral world, it doesn't mean that it doesn't exist. Of course it does." But I continued to

argue. I asked him, "How is it possible? We die, our body is burnt, and then what's the proof that the mind goes to another world, which is the world of the minds and subtle bodies. What's the proof, Dada?"

He said, "Ravi, you tell me you went to Antarctica and you saw penguins. Give me proof." I replied, "There are photographs. I can prove it to you, Dada. How can you prove to me that there is an Astral world?" Dada said, "Many people have experienced the Astral world and when you realize the truth, you acknowledge the Astral world." But I refused to believe that there was a world called Astral world. And the discussion ended abruptly.

It was not as simple as that. I went back, contemplated, introspected and wrote a long email to Dada. I am sharing the e-mail I wrote below:

MY E-MAIL TO DADA

Dearest Dada,

How are You? I hope you are well as always :)

Before I write further, let me apologize for the long and probably ignorant e-mail that follows. But being my Guru, my Guide for the last 25 years I got the courage and confidence to write knowing that you Love me and acknowledge my Love for God. And so I write.

Further to our discussions when I was in Pune regarding the TALAASH journey you have led me onto..... And for which I am grateful beyond words, I seek your guidance to take me from Darkness to Light, my dear and most respected and loved Guru.

Dada. I had asked you several questions.

Who is God?????
You answered.
The Creator.
Does heaven/hell exist??
You said. Only In the mind
What about life and death?
You said. Life is a gift from God. A journey of experiences. To perfect oneself.

I felt that all this is so perfect and I could relate to it all..... And then you said, We go from this world to the Astral world!!!

When I tried to question, you just said you are talking like a "JYAT"

Like you don't know anything. :)

Dear Dada, My Talaash journey has taken me forward questioning everything, as a believer of God would question.

You have always taught me to be practical.

Not follow superstitions and rituals. You know my faith in God is unshakable. Complete. Unconditional. But when you said that we go to the Astral world I suddenly felt: How is this possible?

Anybody can say so. I even tried to search about the Astral world, saw a movie called Astral city. But all this is imagination. The spirit world as it's called.

A world where the spirit goes after the body is shed on so called Death.

Dada, just because some people imagine the existence of the Astral world does it become real? My feeling is that there may be a world beyond this but only GOD knows. Man has no clue. And this is action of man's imagination. One cannot say I have been to the astral world and come back. To me this is untrue.

Dada Please guide me.

How do I believe in the Astral world? It looks like another false belief like another My theological Tale. But in sophistication I have tried to dedicate and devote my life to Talaash. It includes my Deep aspiring Longing for God, Prayers, Poojas, Bhajans, a lot of Meditation, silence, spending Time with God, Searching for answers, service to humanity, remembrance of God, reciting the Divine mantra, being always connected, living in total surrender, in acceptance of God 's will, living with faith hope trust enthusiasm. Everything that you have taught me.

My Talaash journey is making me read new books on God. Experience all that I have touched over the last four decades. I feel so strange. I always believed God was just Shiva and now I know God is beyond. Much beyond. With your teachings I know that God is beyond any statue. Any religion. And now suddenly to believe that there is something called Astral world and that the physical beings talk to astral beings seems like a fairy tale.

Sure God exists. You and me know that. Our belief is beyond doubt. But Dada that we now know the mystery of death!!! Somehow I don't agree. We don't know where we came from. And we don't know what happens after death.

Maybe there is a spiritual world. But we can't prove it, maybe, there is life after death. It seems logical to believe the law of karma. But it's still a belief. But the Astral world and all that the world says about it is so difficult to believe.

I would be so grateful if you can make me understand this confusion that I am in. First, by some basic answers to this email and then if you say I can come whenever wherever to understand from you more on this Talaash journey.

Dada you are everything to me. My Master, my Guru, my Guide. Whatever I am today, I Thank God and you. I always considered you to be like my God on Earth.

Today while I continue to respect you as my only Guru, your own teachings have made me question so many things. Like idol worship. Like worship of living masters. All this makes me feel that we are taking our focus away from God.

I may be totally wrong but I would like to share my honest feelings with you. I am sure you will understand and will take me from my current darkness to light.

With deep Gratitude and Love
Your disciple
Ravi

Within 2 hours of sending this e-mail to Dada, he replied. I am sharing his e-mail below:

DADA's REPLY TO MY E-MAIL

My very Dear Ravi,

Your e-mail has been read out to me. Believe me, as I have repeatedly said, I am not a Guru. You are a disciple: I too seek to be one. We both are fellow-pilgrims on the Path that is Endless. On this Path we have to transcend the mind. We have to detach ourselves from the mind. If we listen to the mind, there will be no end of questions – one question leading to another and there

will be no end to the process. Therefore, the emphasis is on realization. Whether the astral world exists or not – is a question which should not bother me. As I move on the pilgrim-Path, several diversions will occur. I should not waste my time and intelligence on trying to understand them. My goal is God. What is God? Is a question which cannot be answered in words? God is to be realized. For this I have to live a life of Sadhna and entreaty. I have to cry, shed tears – even come to a point where I feel like killing myself if I do not have a realization of God. Out of the very depths of the heart comes the aspiration: "Life without Thee, O Lord, is futile." It is this intense yearning which when it wakes in the heart within, makes us forget ourselves completely, that is essential. When we forget ourselves, we get God. The equation is: man minus self is equal to God. God plus self is equal to man.

But these are all words and there is no end to them. Let us pray to God to give us this intense yearning. A Holy man said that a seeker must have these 3 types of yearning before he can realize God: 1) The longing which a miser has for gold; 2) The yearning that the lover has for his beloved; 3) The yearning which a child has for its mother whom it has lost somewhere.

Come, Ravi, let us forget all else and together let us cry for this triple yearning which alone will help us to draw closer and, when it be His Will, to realize God.

Dada

This e-mail changed my life. It completely transformed the way I looked at things. I knew that my Guru, my Master who loved me so much was trying to make me understand something that was beyond my comprehension. But I didn't give up. I took the e-mails with me, went to the

mountains and spent days contemplating and introspecting on what Dada said. I thought, "Surely, Dada knows that I am ignorant of the facts, surely there is something I don't understand, and surely I am a "jyat " (an ignorant fool) who doesn't realize the truth. I am living in ignorance and my Guru wants to teach me something. I must understand it! For sure, something like the astral world exists, which is beyond my sight. It's like I am climbing mountains and there is a mountain far beyond my sight. Just because I can't see it, it doesn't mean it doesn't exist! Therefore, it does exist. What is it?"

I started contemplating on Dada's answer and tried to spend time on the equation the he sent to me. I had not spoken on that equation to him. So then I asked him, "Dada, what is this equation?"

Man– Self = God;

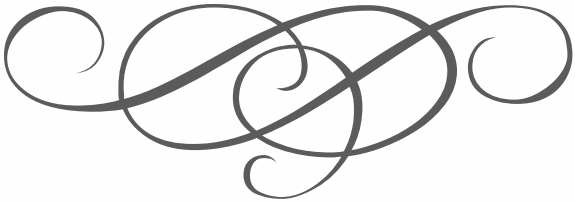
God + Self = Man

Dada tried to explain it to me. He said, "We human beings are a combination of ego, mind, body, and soul. So when we remove the ego, mind, and body - which is the self – from the man, what's left is the soul or God. When God is added to the ego, mind, and body (self), it becomes the man."

This simple equation was mind blowing. But my mind went into a quandary; it was lost, it went flat, and it collapsed. I spent hours contemplating about this equation. But finally one day, when I understood it, I realized the truth that we are not the ego, mind, or body. We are the Divine Soul or the *Atman* that is a part of the *Paramatman.* We are the microcosm of the macrocosm.

God is the sun, and we are the rays of the sun. We are just a God particle. We are a small, tiny speck of God's energy. This helped me make my decision and transform my life for a second time after I realized the truth that I am not RVM, but the soul - the *Atman* in RVM, and this was probably the biggest realization of my life.

VI



Dada is an Amazing Storyteller

Dada is an Amazing Storyteller

Over the last 25 years, Dada has narrated hundreds of stories to me. These stories have made a tremendous impact in my life. I am not able to recall all the stories from my memory, but there are a few I will never ever forget.

STORY OF THE ENGINEER

Once, Dada narrated the story of the most brilliant engineer in a kingdom. The king had conquered an island nearby, and he found it very difficult to navigate from one island to another using boats. So, he asked the engineer to design something that would facilitate the navigation. The engineer designed an underwater tunnel that did the trick. Once the tunnel was inaugurated, the king was extremely pleased.

The king called the wise man in the kingdom to suggest an ideal reward for the engineer for completing the amazing task. The wise man procrastinated. Several

times, the king kept asking him for his suggestion. Finally, the king was annoyed; he asked the wise man, "Why are you not suggesting a reward for the engineer?" Then the wise man told him, "Let me give a final thought and get back to you tomorrow."

The next day in the court, the king was waiting for the wise man's answer. Very hesitantly, the wise man told the king, "If you really want to give an award to the engineer, then he should be whipped one hundred times by the soldiers." The king was completely aghast! How could an engineer who achieved such a remarkable feat be given one hundred whips? He told the wise man that he wanted to give a prize to the engineer not a punishment. "Why are you suggesting this?" asked the king. The wise man then explained to the king, "When I asked God what should be the prize, this is the message I got. My conscience says that this engineer was given an amazing intellect to use it for God-realization and to promote God's work, not to create tunnels and do scientific discoveries and inventions. So, he was misusing his intellect as per the message I got from God. Therefore, he should not be given a reward. Instead, he should be given a hundred whips for not using his God-given intelligence and skills for the sake of promoting God's work in this world."

Dada's story made me realize that we all have skills and intelligence, but are we using them to do God's work? Instead, most of us misuse our skills and intelligence.

Therefore, we are losing the opportunity to live a life of meaning and purpose, to realize God, and to find the true goal of life – Self-realization and God-realization.

STORY OF MANSUR AL-HALLAJ

Dada very interestingly narrated the story of the very famous Sufi Saint, Mansur al-Hallaj, who used to scream in ecstasy "Anal Haq, Anal Haq!" which essentially means, "I am God, I am God" (I am the Truth). When he calmed down, people asked him why he was screaming so, he replied in embarrassment, "I never say that. How can I say "Anal Haq, Anal Haq"? His followers told him that in reality, he was shouting, "Anal Haq, Anal Haq!"

This happened several times, but he refused to believe it. His followers then decided to bring his close inner circle to the scene the next time he shouted, "Anal Haq, Anal Haq!" His close group was called to prove to him that he was actually shouting "Anal Haq, Anal Haq!" When he came back from his ecstasy, his very own and close people told him that he was shouting, "Anal Haq, Anal Haq!" He exclaimed in disbelief, "How can I say that?" He then told his people to take a sword and cut off his head the next time he says "Anal Haq, Anal Haq!" They reluctantly agreed to do it.

The next time, when Mansur was in his spiritual ecstasy, he started shouting, "Anal Haq, Anal Haq!" As per his earlier instruction, some courageous followers took the sword and tried to cut off his head. They were shocked! The sword was going through his body, but they were not able to behead him as he continued shouting. They could not understand what was happening.

When he returned to his senses and came to know what happened, he seemed to realize the reason, and he

explained to them, “It was not me who was saying, 'Anal Haq, Anal Haq!' When I was in that deep state of meditation, and I knew I was the soul and not the body; it was my soul that was responsible for saying 'Anal Haq, Anal Haq!' Therefore, although you tried to behead me, you couldn't.”

A STORY ABOUT LIFE

Life is a treasure – just like precious stones!

A farmer was busy digging his field and he found a huge bag of red stones. Although they were very pretty stones, he thought of them as just ordinary stones and took them to his lunch table. As he was eating his lunch, some vultures hovered around him, disturbing him. He took one of the red stones and threw it at the birds to chase them away. Some time passed and several of these stones were thrown at the vultures and the stones landed in a stream below, which washed them away.

Eventually, only two stones were left. His wife asked him if she could keep those two stones for their children to play with as the stones were very attractive. He agreed and gave her the two stones. One day when the children were playing with the stones, a rich businessman of the village passed by. He was a jeweller and as soon as he saw the two stones, he asked the children if he could take the stones and in return, promised to give them lots of toys. The children were very happy to exchange the two stones for toys, and they came back and told their father what had happened.

One day the jeweller came back to the farmer and asked

the farmer, "Do you have more of those stones?" He came with a lot of sweets and gifts for the farmer and his family, and the farmer was surprised at his gesture. He told the farmer that the two stones were actually two huge rubies and that he had sold the rubies and earned a huge amount of money. "Do you have any more left?" he asked the farmer. "These stones are a very precious treasure."

The farmer had unknowingly thrown away all these huge rubies thinking of them as just stones. And now he held his head in despair. He could have become the richest man if he had not thrown away the treasure which God had given him. Dada then explained that life too is a treasure. This treasure is made up of days, weeks, months, and years, which are given to us. And what do we do? We do nothing with this treasure. We throw away this treasure. We throw away our moments, our days, our weeks, and our months, till such time when we reach the end. We realize that we have wasted our life. The human birth is a treasure that must be used to realize God. We must not waste our human life in pursuit of pleasures and sense attractions. Most of us waste this treasure, and we throw away the real rubies that are given to us.

STORY OF RAJA JANAK

One day, a courtier came to King Janak and informed him that there was an attack on the kingdom. King Janak prepared himself and declared war. It was one of the toughest wars, and unfortunately, he lost it and was wounded. The enemy king captured the kingdom and ordered King Janak to leave the kingdom immediately. Wounded, hungry, and thirsty, King Janak started his

journey out of the kingdom. He asked for water and food from the people, but they refused in fear of their new king.

King Janak, left with no options, tirelessly walked for days and night with no food and water. However, at the entry of the new kingdom, he saw that food was being served to the poor people. Immediately, he walked towards the queue of poor people, hoping to eat something. But the moment he reached the counter, the food was over. The server saw him and said, “I can give you starch. I am sorry, but this is the only thing that I can offer.” King Janak, being helpless, agreed for the starch. The cook gave him the starch, but the moment King Janak took the bowl of starch to help himself, an eagle jumped on it, and he dropped the bowl on the ground. King Janak lost his last hope and fell down seeing the starch getting mixed with the dirt. In utter despair, he screamed, “Oh Lord!!!!” That moment, his bodyguard entered the king's bedroom and saw King Janak on his bed, sweating heavily and with pain in his chest. The bodyguard asked if he was alright. King Janak took a deep breath and asked, “Is THIS True or THAT True?” He questioned, “What is the Truth? Am I a king who dreamt I was a beggar, or am I a beggar dreaming that I am a king? Is This True or That True?”

King Janak remained in that condition of a trance for a while, leaving the people in his kingdom to worry about their king's state of mind. One day, a learned saint Asthavakra Muni came to his capital. He heard about the king's condition and decided to visit the court. Seeing the king confused, he asked what the matter was. The king again murmured, “Is THIS True or THAT True?”

Saint Asthavakra replied, “Dear King Janak!! Neither 'this' nor 'that' is truth. YOU ARE THE TRUTH!!!”

For the first time, king Janak got an answer to his question. In the past, people had told him, “Of course, you are the king. Why do you doubt that? You know you are the king. That was a dream.” That's what people had said. To which, king Janak had always said, “No, but what is true? Am I a king dreaming that I was a beggar, or am I a beggar dreaming I am the king?” King Janak could not believe their answer that he was indeed a king. Saint Asthavakra told king Janak, “Neither this is true – that you are a king dreaming you are a beggar, nor that is true – that you are a beggar dreaming to be a king.

STORY OF JAMUN KHAYEGA

Dada spoke of how often we become slaves to our own desires through a story, which he used to call “Jamun khayega toh entha uthayega” − which means if you really want to eat jamuns (an Indian fruit), then you have to carry stones.

There was a young lad who had a deep craving for jamuns. He worked at a construction site so that he could earn money and eat jamuns. Once, his hands started bleeding due to the bruises caused by the bricks and stones. He took his money from his wages and went to the shop to buy jamuns. He got 16 jamuns from the money he earned. He then realized how much he had to suffer to fulfill his craving to eat the jamuns. What did he do? The young lad went to the nearby river and thought, “How stupid of me to have bruised my hands so badly for the

sake of the jamuns. To overcome his craving, he started throwing the 16 jamuns one by one into the river repeating the words – *"Jamun khayega toh entha uthayega"* – "If you crave for jamuns, then you have to carry stones."

This story makes us realize that our desire for satisfying our senses has a heavy price to pay. Let us remind ourselves that if we want to give into the sense pleasures and cravings of the body, we will have to suffer.

STORY OF AMAR PHAL

One of the stories that Dada always used to narrate was the story of "Amar Phal" – the immortal fruit. Once some saints from the mountains visited a king and told him that they wanted to give him a precious gift. It was a fruit and the one who ate it would become immortal. It was one of its kind and there was no other fruit like this on Earth.

The king was very pleased and carefully preserved the gift of immortality. He was just about to eat it when he realized that it would be futile to live forever without his beloved queen. So instead of eating the immortal fruit, he went to his queen and asked her to eat the fruit. He wanted his queen to be alive till his last breath.

The queen was excited to receive the Amar Phal. She was in love with the king's charioteer, and she thought that her beloved should live forever. She gave the fruit to the charioteer in secrecy. The charioteer was happy to become immortal, but he was in love with a dancer and thought it was pointless to live without the dancer. He gifted the immortal fruit to the dancer so she could

become immortal. The dancer knew that her life was a life of sin. Her trade made her expose herself to so many men and she was quite frustrated with her life. She started thinking about who would be the best person to live forever. She knew that the noblest in the kingdom was the king. She went to the king and offered him the fruit of immortality.

The king was shocked! How could the immortal fruit reach this dancer? He called the queen and after much questioning, he came to know the entire story. He was heartbroken. He wanted to give the gift of immortality to the one he loved, but he was cheated.

The king realized that this world is maya or illusion. There is dukha or suffering. The only true happiness comes from God and liberation. He gave up his kingdom and renounced everything. He wanted Self-realization and God-realization, which is true immortality and eternal bliss.

STORY OF JAIMANI

During Ved Vyas's time, there was a king named Jaimani. He wanted to renounce the world so Vyas told him, “Don't stop your devotion and love for God. Renounce your desires here itself.” But Jaimani insisted on going to the forest and left. One day, in a storm, a group of girls lost their way. One girl strayed away from the group and reached Jaimani's hermitage in the forest. She was completely drenched and looked sensual. Jaimani told her to go away, but she said that it was raining and animals would attack her in the forest. She requested

Jaimani to give her a place to stay for the night.

After much persuasion, Jaimani gave her a room, provided that she would agree to go in immediately, lock the room and not open it at night for anybody, including him.

As it would be, the sensual image of the girl disturbed Jaimani, and he went to her room later at night and knocked at the door. She refused to open it. Even when he said, "It's me – Jaimani." She refused.

Finally, Jaimani climbed to the window at the top of the door, pulled it open and jumped inside. He saw Ved Vyas sitting inside. It was a test to show Jaimani that going to the forest does not mean that a person has renounced everything. Renunciation is about having will power and the power of discrimination to control cravings.

Unless we control our mind and the senses, we cannot live a life of renunciation and liberation. And this need not happen in the middle of the forest. Man is a social being. He has to act. Man cannot abstain from action. We can have freedom in action, not freedom from action. The mind would always think, and the senses would always perceive. We cannot stop the mind from thinking and the senses from perceiving. But we have to get the mind and senses under the control of the intellect and the intellect under the control of the soul. That is the challenge!

What I learned is that by running away from this world, we cannot get liberation. We have to face this world. We have to realize the truth of who we are. And we have to live, renouncing the cravings of the senses. We have to

live despite the wandering of the mind. In this world, as a seeker and as a renunciate, we have to renounce by knowledge of the truth that we are not this body and mind. By suppressing our feelings, we will not reach anywhere. And there cannot be a better story to teach me this truth.

STORY OF "CARRYING IT IN THE MIND"

Dada often spoke about how the mind is the problem, and how it carries so many negative thoughts, which makes our life negative. Dada narrated a story to explain this.

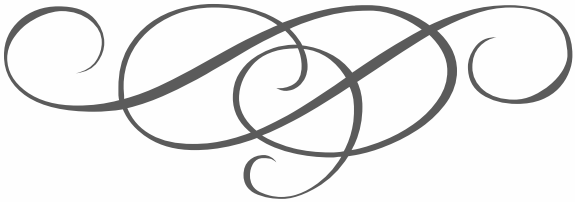
"Two Sanyasis were taking a walk near a river and they heard a girl crying for help. She had fallen into the river and was unable to get to the shore. Immediately, the Guru jumped into the river and saved the girl. The Guru asked the girl to be careful while crossing the river in future. The Guru and the disciple walked back and reached the ashram late at night. While having dinner at the Ashram, the disciple told the Guru that he was completely shocked seeing the Guru's act of saving a girl. He asked, "How can you hold a girl close to your body? We are Sanyasis. How can we touch women?" The Guru told the disciple, "I left that girl there in the river, but you are still carrying the girl and brought her here in your mind!"

Dada explained how sometimes the mind carries something for days and weeks together. We should not let the mind be a sponge to take in and keep negative things in our mind. We should learn to forgive and forget.

My relationship with Dada is incomplete without Dada's stories. How I wish I could narrate the hundreds of stories

he has told me. I have not seen another storyteller like Dada thus far. Each of his stories has a moral and a purpose. His stories shall live in my heart forever.

VII



The Goal of Life

The Goal of Life

Dada spent several sessions with me trying to explain the true goal of life. I was a very goal-oriented person and did not touch the topic for the first 15 years.

What is the Goal of life? The whole world thinks it is Happiness.

Who doesn't want to be happy? Is there anybody in this world who doesn't want to be happy? The whole world is seeking happiness. Different people are seeking different things. But if one researches as to why people seek what they are seeking, the ultimate objective of what everybody seeks is "happiness."

While everybody wants to be happy, different things make different people happy. Since we human beings seek happiness, we are always pursuing pleasures. In fact, the whole world seems to be living by the "pleasure-pain" principle. This principle states that we all are

attracted towards pleasure and we all shun pain. We will always do things that give us pleasure and make us happy just as we will distance ourselves from anything that gives us pain and makes us unhappy. We all want to be happy!

It seems that our life purpose is happiness. When Dada discussed this with me, it was clear that people wanted to be happy, but not everybody was. Dada used to mention about many rich people being unhappy. They would share their problems with Dada. He made me realize that most of humanity is chasing happiness through pleasures that come from material possessions. Dada knew very well that happiness is not external. You cannot go to a supermarket and buy happiness. Therefore, it is true that most people think that the goal of life is happiness, they search for it and THEY NEVER FIND IT!

AREN'T WE LIKE THE MUSK DEER?

An extremely fragrant and valuable musk is found in the navel of the Himalayan deer, giving it the title of "Musk Deer" in the Northern Hills of India. When the aromatic musk comes out of the navel of the musk deer, the deer becomes attracted to the aroma of its own perfume. It leaps and roams around searching for the fragrance. The confused deer jumps from the high cliffs out of restlessness into the valley below in an attempt to track the source of the fragrance, and thus meets its fate. The hunters catch it and tear out the pouch of musk, also known as Kasturi.

A poet mentioned: *"O you foolish musk deer, you sought for*

the fragrance everywhere, but in your own body. That is why you did not find it. If you only had touched your nostrils to your own navel, you would have found the cherished musk and would have saved yourself from suicide on the rocks below."

I introspected a lot. What did Dada mean when he said that just like the musk deer has its source of fragrance inside, do we have happiness within? I couldn't understand! How could happiness be within? Only things that were outside of me made me happy. I never found anything inside me that could give me happiness. I couldn't truly understand what Dada was saying. But he smiled as if he was telling me that I will understand one day. He never lost hope. But he was very clear that happiness was like a shadow. We may chase it as much as we want to, but we will not get it. We were like the musk deer − chasing something that is within, which we will never find outside.

Then, one-night Dada shared the funny story of this lady who lost a pin. She was trying to find the pin, but she couldn't find the pin and she kept looking. A lot of her neighbours came and saw her searching for the pin outside her door. All of them, out of respect for the old lady, also started looking for the pin. They all kept searching until one intelligent neighbour asked her a question, "Madam, where did you drop the pin?" She thought for a moment and said, "I dropped the pin inside the house." He looked at her in wonder and asked, "If you dropped the pin inside the house, why are you searching for it outside the house?" She replied, "Because there is no light inside the house, it's dark. Because there's light outside, I am searching for it outside."

This made me realize that just because there is darkness in our life, why are we seeking for answers in a wrong place that has light? We have to find a way to eliminate the darkness. Dada kept on emphasizing, "The goal of life is within, not outside." Dada always called this the "Dasmay Dwar", which Guru Nanak spoke about as the tenth door.

Then Dada explained to me the goal of life in the words of Guru Nanak. He said Guru Nanak always said that human beings have nine doors. But the problem with these nine doors is that they look outside. None of these are looking inwards. Guru Nanak said that unless we open the tenth door, the "Dasmay Dwar" which looks inwards, we will not realize the true goal of life. And then I went into several discussions with Dada, wherein I was trying to understand how the true goal of life was to look inwards, not outwards. Dada explained to me how realization is the true goal of life.

Dada said that man is chasing happiness; but the more he goes towards it, the further it goes away. While chasing the shadow, he does not realize that the shadow is his own and he will never be able to catch it. This chase continues unless the seeker realizes that whatever he is seeking is inside him, not outside.

I never understood what Dada was trying to say! I kept seeking happiness and I moved from happiness through achievement to happiness through contentment and fulfillment. But I reached a plateau and I was looking for the next peak of happiness. I kept asking Dada again and again, "What is the next peak of happiness?" That is when

Dada told me the story of the musk deer.

For the first two decades, for me, the goal of life was happiness. I knew beyond doubt. I had no apprehension. There was no discussion and I would just talk to Dada about how we human beings want to be happy, and we would rest the discussion on what happiness is and how can one be happy.

Little did I know that happiness was not the real goal of life. Twenty years after meeting Dada, I realized that the real goal of life was Self-realization and with it came eternal joy and peace.

THE REAL GOAL OF HUMAN LIFE IS SELF-REALIZATION

The real goal of human life is the realization of the truth by the removal of ignorance that exists in humanity. It is attaining contentment and fulfillment, joy and bliss, and peace and tranquility that are not interrupted by any kind of misery, pain, and sorrow.

Realization is finding answers to the following questions about life – Who am I? What am I? Where did I come from? Where will I go? What's my life's purpose? On realization, one will be liberated, but realization is not a simple achievement. This is because our ego, mind, and body oppose realization. They fear that on realization, they would become extinct. What is this realization about? It is becoming aware that we have a body, a mind, and an ego, but we are not the body, mind, and ego. For instance, you have a car, and you drive the car. This

makes you the driver of the car, not the car. Similarly, you have a body and you have a mind, but you are not the body and mind.

You are the energy that gives life to the body and mind. But because of our ego, our intellect is not able to discriminate, and the ego makes us believe that we are the body and mind. Because we are not able to differentiate between what we are and what we seem to be, we get imprisoned in the body–mind complex.

Realization is about knowing that we are not this body and mind. What are we? We are some energy or power that gives life to the body and mind. We may refer to this power as soul, shakti, prana, or spirit. It doesn't matter what we call it, but the complete understanding, belief, and realization that we are the "ENERGY" is the essence of realization and liberation from all the prisons of misery and sorrow.

Dada made me realize that the goal of life is not happiness. Man cannot be happy the way he seeks happiness because when he tries to seek happiness through achievement, there will be a peak and valley of joy and sorrow. Life will be like a yo-yo. Then, when he reaches the next level of contentment and fulfillment, he undoubtedly becomes happy, but he faces pain with disease, old age, and death. Dada always recalls what Buddha had said, "This world is full of dukkha or suffering, and man cannot find true happiness in this world. The only way for man to find true happiness or Ananda is through liberation from this world of unhappiness."

Dada then explained to me how one must go on a Talaash − a search or a quest − to find the true goal of life. Some people call it Enlightenment. Some call it Moksh or Nirvana. It is liberation from the cycle of birth and death. I asked Dada "Is it possible?" He smiled and said, "Of course! That is the goal of life." Less than 1 % of humanity know about it, and out of this 1%, 1% may search for it, and further out of this 1%, 1% may go close to it and just like that, a very, very small fraction of humanity may actually realize the truth and be liberated. Dada made me understand that the goal of life was not happiness but liberation that came from realization.

VIII

Dada's Teachings can Change Your Life!

Dada's Teachings can Change Your Life!

Till now, you have read about how Dada changed my life, what he taught me as Ravi V. Melwani, and then as RVM. I also shared the stories Dada told me. This is an honest sharing of what I understand my Guru taught me. There may be things that he said or meant otherwise. If I have made any mistakes, I beg for forgiveness from my Guru, but I have only shared whatever has happened in the last 25 years. All I can say in conclusion is that Dada's teachings have changed my life! His humility, his simplicity, his expressions of truth are so clear, Divine, blessed, special, spiritual and so honest that they can change your life too!

One has to be committed and dedicated to his message, to the philosophy and to the teachings. You cannot just follow 99% of the path. If one follows the path 100%, one is sure to arrive at the destination. You don't take only some of the directions to reach the final destination because you need to follow all the directions. Of course,

even if you don't follow all the directions, and follow just bits, it will still lead you to happiness and fulfillment.

Dada's message to the world is a very simple message – a message of non-violence, love, humility, compassion, simplicity, forgiveness, positivity, and love for God, Bhakti. It is a call for us to realize the truth of who we are, of realizing that life is very short and that we must realize God before this journey of life is over. It is a message of being happy and cheerful, laughing and not letting small things make us worry and lose the beauty of this gift called life. He inspires us to be kind not just to human beings, but to animals too. Dada's message of how to live life and how not to be caught in a tornado of desires and cravings are messages that help us avoid being miserable. They are messages that give us shortcuts to happiness and success. They are messages of good living, messages that can actually transform our life.

Dada has written several books and each of these books can change your life. Pick up a book and scan through it, and you are sure to find pages that will instantly have an impact and change your life. Dada's talks can truly be an inspiration and help one find the right direction that will lead to the destination. Dada's videos, talks, television shows, Bhajans, songs and each of his writings have completely transformed my life. I am sure if anybody were to follow Dada's philosophy, their life will be transformed too. They are sure to live a life of bliss, joy and peace.

Dada has been a role model. He doesn't just preach, he practices everything that he says. He is very fond of

giving practical suggestions, which if implemented, can change one's life. He is a symbol of truth. Being the fortunate one to be selected by his Guru Sadhu T.L.Vaswani, Dada has created a benchmark for the world in respecting his Guru and proving to be a good disciple. He has left footprints for us to reach that destination of Bhakti with bliss and joy.

You can pick any book written by Dada. It may be a book on anger or his personal life or you can select any title that interests you. Some of my favorite books of Dada are as follows:

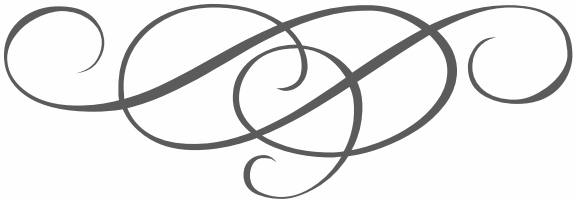
- Daily Appointment With God
- Life After Death
- Sadhu Vaswani – His Life And Teachings
- The Good You Do Returns
- Begin The Day With God
- Dada Answers
- Snacks For The Soul
- Daily Inspiration
- How To Overcome Tension?
- Stories For You And Me
- Joy Peace Pills

- You Are Not Alone
- Conversations with Dadaji
- Glimpses into Great Lives
- How to Have Real Fun out of Life
- Why do Good people suffer?
- Burn Anger before Anger Burns you

Dada's book on the Bhagavad Gita has led me forward in my quest for realization. His teachings have inspired me to write a letter to God every day for the last 2 decades.

These books and the many others I have read of Dada have led me to contentment and fulfillment. I am sure my Guru's writings and teachings will touch, trigger, and transform your life too.

IX



Can We Do without a Guru?

Can We Do without a Guru?

What is "Guru"? 'Gu' refers to darkness and 'Ru' refers to light. So, who is a Guru? The one who takes us from darkness to light is a Guru. These days, we have hundreds of people who proclaim themselves to be Gurus and who are looking for disciples. Need I say more?

A true Guru is absolutely essential for a seeker on the path of realization of the truth to reach his destination. Without the help of a Guru, it is practically impossible for a true seeker to be enlightened and liberated.

The Guru is a manifestation of God on Earth. The Guru's voice is God's voice. The Guru is the one who shows us the path, and then holds our hand and walks with us, helping, guiding, and leading us onward, forward, inward, upward, and Godward!

These words are words I picked from the conversations with my Guru − deep conversations that we had from the

heart and soul − that made me realize the importance of my Guru − my Mentor and my God on Earth!

For those who haven't met a Guru or are new to the subject, we can consider the Guru to be someone who is similar to a good teacher, trainer, and coach. Can any student excel in his education without the help of a good teacher? We may have textbooks that we can read, but is that enough? Don't we need a good teacher to explain what we read in a textbook? Are we capable of reading and then absorbing what we read and implementing it into action? We may succeed, and it's not necessary that every time we need a teacher to show us a practical demonstration of what the theory is. But generally, practical explanations that follow theory are a far more effective method of learning than just learning from the theory.

Teachers come into our life to teach us. At a young age, in school and college, we realize the value of a good teacher. They mentor us, guide us, coach us and finally lead us not just to be schooled but also to be educated. They don't just make us read textbooks, but they make us understand the subject so that going forward, we can practically apply it in our life.

Beyond schooling, we still need coaches. If one were to look at the life of successful sportsmen such as Tiger Woods, Sachin Tendulkar, and M.S. Dhoni, these sportsmen are humble enough to accept that their lives have been successful because of the effort of their coaches. Without the training of their coach, they admit that they would have never made it to the top. Of course, it's simple

to understand that all experts in their fields have reached there not by magic but by logic that follows teaching, training, coaching, and mentoring.

A Guru is not just a teacher, a mentor, and a coach, but also someone who leads us forward in our life. A Guru helps us to form a life philosophy and then helps us to walk that path, to choose a life and live it so that we have meaning and purpose and reach a destination of our choice.

Beyond the world of art and sports, even in the business world, CEOs and leaders in global corporations use the help of advisers who coach and mentor them with their vast experience. It isn't rare for large multinational companies to appoint advisers to the Board of Directors. These advisers act as mentors to young vibrant entrepreneurs who have the energy and the passion to make it happen, but definitely need coaching and mentoring so that their decisions take their company to the pinnacles of success.

While we see the need of a teacher, a trainer, a coach, and an adviser in various aspects of life, especially when we consider a spiritual life, a Guru is not just necessary but also indispensible for spiritual success.

Have we come to the conclusion that it is absolutely essential to have a Guru on a spiritual path? The spiritual path is not a new science. It is something that has evolved over centuries. Thousands of years ago, the rishis and the saints from India, China, Egypt, and across the world realized certain principles of life, certain universal laws and then created a philosophy and theology that has given

a basic foundation to the world. Today, the world has evolved with so many religions and belief systems that humanity is confused – what path should I choose? Every religion proclaims itself to be the best religion in the world and their God to be the most powerful. The common man is actually lost in this jungle of numerous religions, theologies, philosophies and belief systems. If a common man wants to live a peaceful and joyful life with meaning and purpose before his journey ends, he needs the help of a spiritual Master − a Mentor who is honest, humble, and truthful and has the wisdom to explain to him the options that he can choose from.

A Guru is absolutely necessary in this modern world for those who want to discover their spirit and who want to leave behind the ego, mind, and body. By finding somebody who can lead them on the spiritual path, they can evolve, grow and transcend the trials and tribulations of this world.

Therefore, if somebody wants to start on a spiritual path and looks for random books to choose from, without a systematic approach, one would be lost – in fact, totally confused.

A Guru can simplify, clarify and show a spiritual seeker various theologies and explain the principle truths of the universe. Then it is for the seeker to not just read but also understand, contemplate, introspect, and meditate. With the help of the guide and Guru, the seeker will also be able to find his path that will liberate him from this world of attractions and distractions.

A Guru doesn't just become a Guru, but is often mentored and coached by his Guru – without which it may not be possible for him to call himself a Guru. Therefore, a true Guru is one who continues the legacy of a genuine Master, taking a theology and philosophy forward to lead a seeker to God.

The Guru's wisdom, experience, and knowledge are therefore not just six to eight decades of his own life, but also the combined knowledge and wisdom of his Guru and several other predecessors. All these together form an ocean of wisdom and knowledge collected over many centuries that is available to the Guru and which he uses to help his disciples walk on the spiritual path.

How would it be possible for a random seeker to otherwise access spiritual truths that will liberate him? Without the help of a Guru, how does a seeker actually know what is right or wrong? The seeker may presume what he is following to be right, but in reality, it may be just a commercial diversion that will lead him astray or worse in the direction opposite to his destination. A true spiritual Master or a Guru helps one identify the right path and walk on it. It is not very easy to walk on a spiritual path, there are challenges! A true Guru teaches one that without the use of discipline, discrimination, dispassion, and desire for liberation, it is impossible for a seeker to reach his destination.

A true Guru doesn't go shopping for disciples. A true Guru is a true Master. He arrives at the path of a genuine seeker as per the grace of God, and a connection is made not by chance but by design of the Universal Master. True

Gurus are hard to find. They are genuine, learned Masters who help seekers transcend the various peaks of life to arrive at the final state of liberation and enlightenment.

Without a true Guru, one may go to the first step of spiritual progress - reading books and scriptures. But one cannot go to the second and third steps that are necessary for liberation. The second step is the ability to understand and analyze what one has read. A true Guru acts as a sounding board to a seeker. The Guru discusses, analyses, and explains what the disciple reads and makes him understand it. Therefore, a Master or Mentor on the spiritual path is necessary for the seeker to cross the second step of spiritual learning.

Thereafter, the Guru lets the disciple absorb what has been studied and understood within. A true Master watches his disciple as the disciple fights against his own ego, mind, and body. A lot of discipline is needed on the spiritual path. A true disciple not just follows his Guru, but also lives with discipline and desire for liberation. Unless a disciple is genuine and sincere in his efforts, all the efforts of a Guru will be wasted. Therefore, a Guru has to not just patiently teach and explain, but also watch his disciple, correct him, and hold him by the hand. A true Master sees dozens of drawbacks in his disciple, but knows that nobody is perfect. The Guru lets his disciple make mistakes, learn, evolve, grow, and transcend till he reaches the destination.

On my journey of life, I realized that life without a Guru is a sure recipe to bondage and suffering. If I have arrived anywhere on the spiritual path, all credit goes to my Guru.

Without the guidance, mentorship, support, and love of my Guru, I would have been nothing. My Guru held my hand for the last two and a half decades and not only showed me the way forward, but also pushed me, guided me, and taught me to walk onward, forward, upward, and Godward.

He started teaching me 25 years ago, and today, I feel ashamed that it has taken me two and a half decades to understand what my Guru was trying to tell me, not that the efforts of the Guru were insufficient. But the subject is so complicated for a seeker − he is unable to understand the message even though he reads because his mind is his biggest enemy. The mind does not want to accept what it reads and understands. The mind has that aspect of discrimination called the intellect, and it is the Guru who separates the intellect from the mind and activates it so that one is able to discriminate between right and wrong. Without the help of the Guru, the faculty of discrimination remains dormant in a human being.

The Guru guides, coaches, and trains us to use our intellect, to live with dispassion, discipline, and discrimination, and to desire liberation as the only craving of life. Therefore, to me, wanting to have spiritual success without a Guru is like trying to fly an airplane without fuel. It is impossible for any aspirant to achieve spiritual success without a Guru. The Guru is like a blueprint and beyond that − a source of energy and power! He is the driver of our spiritual success. He is the light that shows us the path, and he is the energy that takes us forward. Remember that not just any Guru, but a true Guru is absolutely necessary for a genuine seeker to grow, evolve, and be liberated while progressing on the spiritual path.

X

My Life Story with Dada

My Life Story with Dada

If I have to "plot" my life story with Dada, I would say that it began the year I consider myself "born", in 1992, because that was the year I met Dada, which makes me 25 years old now! I met Dada for the first time at the Sadhu Vaswani Bal Centre in Bangalore, and thereafter, my life has moved from one peak to another. I was a very ordinary person chasing money, wealth, pleasure, and possessions. Dada would look at me and laugh. Somehow he knew there was something beyond − something that I couldn't see, but he could. He loved me and cared for me, more than a father, a brother, and a friend. He was a true Guru. He led me from a mundane life to a life of realization of the truth.

When I met Dada, I was an arrogant and egoistic businessman who thought that the world rested on my shoulders. I thought I was one of the most successful young retail entrepreneurs because that's what the media called me, but then, I was wrong! Today, I realize that if I had not met Dada, I would have lived and died as an

ordinary businessman who had just made money and had gone from womb to tomb without meaning and purpose.

Dada held my hand from 1992 till date, and for 25 years, he has never once let go of me. Through thick and thin, he has taught me the meaning of life, to live with love and compassion, and to serve suffering humanity, as they are God. The Atman, the soul in every creature − man and beast alike, is nothing but God.

I was a meat eater who loved non-vegetarian food, and I used to eat it six days a week for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Therefore, it was one of my biggest challenges to stop eating meat, and I gave it up soon after meeting Dada; it was as if he touched me with a magical wand. I stopped eating meat 25 years ago, not because of religious reasons, but because of my Guru and his humanitarian attitude.

Today, I promote vegetarianism because I believe that reverence for life is very important. If we cannot give life, we should not take it. We can't create life! Life is a gift from God. And so today, I am a vegetarian and I also promote the concept of people eating mock meat, rather than real meat. Mock meat is food that looks and tastes just like meat, but it is a healthy alternative to meat and made of pure vegetarian ingredients. This change in my life is because of the inspiration I got from Dada's vision that this world should stop all killing.

HOW DID MY LIFE TURN?

Dada did not enter my life and try to change me. He advised me to become a good businessman and be successful in whatever I did. My goal was making more

and more money, and he always told me that while making money was fine, we should use our money for the good of the world and society. With Dada's blessings, I started a humanitarian organization – a home for the aged and destitute, and a charitable hospital. As a result, today, 700 poor and destitute people live in our three charitable institutions in Bangalore, which are run by our RVM Foundation. Dada has not just inspired me to start these institutions, but also blessed me at every step and guided me on how I should take care of these institutions.

Dada also encouraged me to become an inspiration to the world. He encouraged me to write quotes and books and give talks and with his blessings, I have addressed several groups locally, nationally, and globally. If it were not for Dada, my life as an inspirational speaker wouldn't have taken a step forward. He mentored me, polished me, taught me, and trained me how I should speak and what I should speak. Sometimes when I speak, I feel that "I" am not speaking, but just delivering a message of Dada. His philosophy and teachings have always been an inspiration for the talks I deliver.

With the grace of Dada, I have authored 10 books on various topics, such as happiness, positivity, philosophy and success. I also wrote a very unique book on the topic of sex transmutation. Dada inspired and taught me way back in 1999 how ojas, the sex energy, gifted to every man is wasted by humanity in the pursuit of pleasure. He quoted great people like Mahatma Gandhi amongst others who realized the power of ojas and who conserved and transmuted the energy to use it as a source to trigger the super conscious mind and to achieve great success as

genius. I followed Dada's advice and went into a deep study of sex transmutation. Despite the criticism that this was not a spiritual subject, I worked on it with the blessings of Dada and eventually published the book called "Succsex". Its copies were sold all over the world. This book has helped people learn the secret of the transmutation of sex energy into creativity and power.

Dada led me and helped me reach the peak of success between 1992 and 1997 when my business prospered, and then started teaching me that the goal of life is not to just make money. He quoted Jesus who said, "What would it gain a man if he gained the whole world but lost his own soul?" He taught me that there was more meaning and purpose to life. Therefore, between 1997 and 2007, I spent a lot of time doing H.I.S. Work – Humanitarian, Inspirational, and Spiritual – work mentored by my Guru. In the year 2007, there was an opportunity for me to shut down my business and I took the proposal to Dada. He looked at me with love in his eyes and compassion in his heart and said, "Ravi, you are not meant for this world. You have a different purpose. What would you do with more wealth and possessions? Your heart belongs elsewhere, your soul is pure, and you are a lover of God. You seek God. You have my concurrence to shut down your business and move towards living a life of meaning and purpose." The world was shocked when a very dynamic business man who had set up India's largest departmental store suddenly decided to shut it down in 2007. I was barely 40 years old, and I decided to move on from a life of making money to a life of making a difference – this big step of my life is inspired, guided, and blessed by my Guru, Dada.

From 2007, inspired by my Guru, I started living a life of contentment and fulfillment, rather than chasing a life of achievement. I was the happiest man in the world. Dada had gifted me a life of joy, bliss, and peace. I had no words to show my gratitude to my Master for leading me from a life of achievement to a life of fulfillment.

I started travelling around the world and visited over 50 new countries, and Dada would laugh when I would show him the photographs of Alaska, Iceland, Australia, and Antarctica where I went to see the penguins. But he never discouraged me from whatever I did. Probably he knew that man evolves and transcends in this earthly journey.

In 2012, Dada led me onto a Talaash – a search or a quest for Self-realization. He supported me for the next 2 years helping me focus on realizing the truth. He saw me fight my ego, mind, and body and lovingly and caringly helped me overcome the ignorance that I was deeply in. I have shared several discussions and even arguments that we had, but kudos to Dada for his patience. He never lost hope and as a true Guru, helped his disciple overcome darkness with light.

My Talaash ended on 31st August 2014 – thanks to the grace of the Guru, I thought I had all the answers. Dada was pleased but he knew that my journey had just started. He warned me that knowledge of realization is not true realization. He helped me introspect till several months later I realized the truth and transformed my life for the second time to AiR *(Atman* in RVM – Ravi V. Melwani).

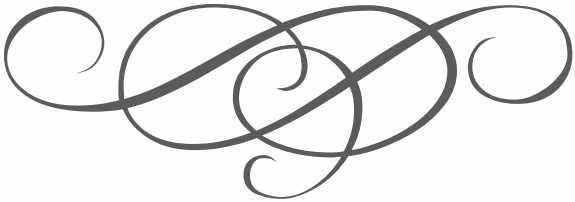
Dada has taught me about the Upanishads and scriptures that are relevant to realize the truth. He made me

understand that no two realized souls follow the same path, and unless it is the grace of God, we will not be able to achieve what we are supposed to achieve. Post 2014, as I lived a life as AiR, I published two books with the blessings of Dada – "Talaash" and "3 Peaks of Happiness". I continue to live a life that has only one mission: to realize God and help people realize God.

My entire life is indebted to Dada. What would I be without my Guru, my Master? That's why for me, Dada is not just my Guru and my Master, but he is also my God on Earth. He is the soul, the *Atman,* the *Paramatman* embodied in his physical body and sent to Earth to be my Guru to lead me across to God. No words can express the feeling of gratitude in my heart, love, deep reverence, and respect I have for Dada. Dada is the most important person in this world for me. Nobody can take the place of Dada, and to me, when I look at Lord Shiva; I see His presence on Earth in the form of Dada.

My life actually started in 1992 and my life is filled with Dada. Every breath I take has Dada in it. Not a single day goes by without thinking of Dada, thanking Dada, and sharing my thoughts and feelings with him. Although Dada and I may be physically apart, in different cities, countries, I feel that Dada is with me all the time and he is always a part of me, not just because I keep his photograph on my desk, but because of his energy in my heart and soul.

XI



What Dada continues to teach me as AiR

What Dada continues to teach me as AiR

I continue to learn a lot from Dada, after 2014 when I underwent the second life - changing transformation - a metamorphosis. I no longer call myself RVM, but AiR - the *Atman* in Ravi V. Melwani. Dada continues to guide me as my Guru and my Mentor to live life as a liberated soul.

The teaching process of a Guru and the learning process of his disciple never end. It goes on till the last breath. Till I breathe my last, I will continue to seek and learn from my Guru. To me, the most important thing today is absorbing the energy from my Guru, my Master.

One of the first lessons that Dada taught me after I started the AiR journey was that although I had realized that I was not the ego, the mind, and the body, I still had an ego, mind, and body. "These will continue to attack you; they will not stop until your last breath," Dada said. He cautioned me "Beware! They are your enemies. They are going to try to destroy your realization and make you sink

in the maya of samsara so that you lose your way in the illusion of this world. Don't think that you are through. You are not! The tug of war continues; the fight and the challenge continue. Every realized soul faces the same challenge - to be able to transcend the ego, mind, and body. As we live, the mind continues to wander, the body continues to crave, and the ego constantly believes, 'It's me, I am everything!' Of course, you know you are not what you seem to be. But then who is that who knows that you are not? It is the use of the intellect, which makes you know, but the intellect is a part of the mind. The mind, intellect, memory and ego are the inner instruments or the Antahkarana. The Antahkarana is either under the command of you, the soul or you, the ego. If your ego wins, you lose. If your soul is pure and you are able to discipline your ego, mind and body, then you are able to transcend them and realize the truth. You need the grace of God to do this. You don't have to put in too much effort. The best thing is Bhakti - love and devotion for God. Focus on that! Just love God. Pray to God, live with entreaty, shed tears, cry to God and tell God that you seek Him and nothing else. Be a Mumukshu – a true seeker of God and liberation. Seek nothing else, you are already there. You may have overcome the desire of things, but tomorrow, the body can start to desire and the mind can go astray and lead you in the opposite direction. So beware! Continue to live with discipline, continue to live with Sadhana, spend time in yoga and in Bhakti, and continue your journey as the *Atman,* realizing that it's not over and you have got to be aware and awake."

Dada had taught me 25 years back "Tat Twam Asi" or "Thou Art That," but then I didn't understand it. Then

several years ago, Dada mentioned to me “Shivoham Shivoham” and I couldn't understand it. Today, Dada continues to lead me forward on the principles of the Upanishads. He is able to now take me forward because I have understood that I am not “This” - ego, mind and body. I am “That” - the Divine Spirit. And so Dada continues to teach me how to try to live as the Divine Spirit. Dada knew many years back that I have to learn the meaning of Shivoham, which means that Shiva is not just in the temple outside us, but Shiva is inside the temple of our heart. There were times when I would wonder why Dada would not pay much attention to idol worship or rituals and now I realize what it meant. Dada continues to encourage me to believe in the truth, the realization. Although the whole world may not agree that God is not just in a temple, mosque or church, God is within – Shivoham, I have realized this is the truth and Dada endorses it.

Dada encourages me to ask the question Koham (Who am I?), and the answer comes: Soham (I am that). Dada has no doubt about “Tat Twam Asi” or “Thou Art That” and “Neti Neti” or “Not This, Not This.” Dada speaks less about these topics because he knows that the world doesn't understand all this. But when he sees that a person is a true seeker, a Jigyasu, a disciple who is genuine in his Sadhana, then Dada explains the treasure of spirituality. He is an expert in these treasures. He is the Master. But there's no point in trying to teach a child in kindergarten a complicated lesson of science or electronics as he can only learn the alphabets. Dada taught me that we should realize that not everybody is evolved enough or will be on the same

wavelength of understanding these profound secrets of spirituality.

Dada tells me that although we are the *Atman,* we are embodied creatures; we have an ego, mind, and body that imprison us and throw challenges - such as lust, duty, and shame - at us every day. Dada once explained to me that if I want to overcome the world and be liberated, I should overcome these three bottlenecks, which are roadblocks on the highway to liberation.

Dada said that the first is "lust". Lust will attack you in a direct or indirect form. There will be this deep craving that will come and disturb your focus as the *Atman.* It is natural for the mind to wander. It is not rare for the body to fall prey to lust. If you have control over the intellect, if you are a truly realized person who knows 'I am the *Atman,*' then the *Atman* controls that faculty of mind called the intellect or Vivek or Buddhi. The Buddhi discriminates and destroys the lust. It does not let the lust overcome the intellect and the *Atman.* Therefore, there is a war between right and wrong - between the *Atman* on one side and the ego, mind, and body on the other. Dada told me, "You have to win over the first roadblock – lust."

It is not over! The next roadblock is "duty." Sometimes, it will be the call of duty that will make you leave your Atmic journey and go on a Samsaric (worldly) journey. The journey of the soul doesn't get carried away with the journey of the world. The world is an illusion; it doesn't exist. It is just a 4D projection; it is a myth. Of course, it's like a dream. The dream is there, but it is not there. Similarly, the world is there, but it is not there. It is like a

game of Monopoly - as long as you are playing, it's there, but when it's over, it's finished. So, when duty attacks us on the highway of liberation, we should not let duty stop us. Of course, we should do whatever we can do on the path. This doesn't mean one should ignore one's spiritual responsibility. Dada says, “When an earthly responsibility competes with a spiritual responsibility, it is at this time that we need to have devotion, dedication, and love of God to use our discrimination and be dispassionate to overcome that duty that pulls us away from liberation.

The third aspect is “shame.” So often we give up the spiritual journey because we are ashamed what people would say and what the world thinks about us. Of course, the world will not understand us! Of course, you don't expect people to understand you when you are on the spiritual path, but that should not stop you. You have your own conviction; you have your own conscience, the inner voice of God, which is telling you to move on. Don't stop! Move on the spiritual path. Don't be ashamed of what you are doing. Be proud in a humble manner. Let there be humble pride of your spiritual realization and the path that you follow.

Another thing that Dada continues to teach me these days is: we are nothing, God is everything. Being a spiritual Master, he knows that we may look like this, but we are not this. He knows we are that, that spirit, energy, Prana, and *Atman.* And Dada is so absolutely sure. Recently, we had a discussion on how science has proved that although I may look like this, I am not this. When scientists examined a cell under the microscope, they found the cell was made of molecules, atoms and when further broken

up, electrons, neutrons, protons, photons, till they found quarks – the tiniest of particles. They realized a human body that looks like matter is not actually matter; it is energy! We are therefore trillions of small tiny invisible energy particles which when put together, appear as a human being. This is not a spiritual belief. It is scientific research. And Dada knew about it decades ago! Many years ago, Dada had mentioned to me that even a table and chair has life. At that time I laughed. I thought Dada was joking. Dada now tells me, "After all, you know now that we are nothing. God is everything! God is the energy that manifests as you and me, the table and chair, the mountains and rivers, and the trees and seas. We are nothing. God is everything!"

The Law of Causation falls into place and Dada endorses the fact that while the wave thinks itself as the wave, it is not the wave; it's the water of the ocean. If we remove the water of the ocean, there is no wave. Similarly, a ring will think "I am a gold ring." If you take out the gold, it is nothing. A pot may think "I am a pot." But if you take out the mud, it's nothing. It is only the mud that makes the pot. In the same way, we think that we are this, but actually we are God. If you take out God, we are dead and we become nothing. Dada explained all this, and continues to teach me to live with this realization, "We are not this. We are that!"

Dada never loses the opportunity to remind me that our mind is our enemy. Our mind always wanders. He says we are not disciples; we are wanderers because we let our mind wander. The mind takes us away from God and spiritual thoughts. It uses the five senses of sight, smell,

hearing, taste, and touch and sinks into maya, the illusion of the world. Therefore, Dada always says, "Beware of your mind. Control the mind like a saddle needs to be put on the horse and controlled." The mind is even wilder than a monkey that keeps on jumping from tree to tree. We should use our intellect, Buddhi, or Vivek to discriminate between what is right and wrong. God has gifted us intellect, and we should make it sharp as a knife constantly with the help of the *Atman,* the conscious energy inside, and let the intellect be controlled by the *Atman,* not the mind.

Recently, in one of his creative moods, Dada told me that we should live like a tortoise. Have you noticed what a tortoise does when the enemy attacks? It withdraws within its protective shell. It shuts off when it is attacked. We too should learn to live a life like a tortoise. When external influences tempt us and attack us, what should we do? We can't face them; we will be defeated. We should withdraw. We should go within our protective shell. If there are passions, obsessions, desires, and lust that come around us and attack us, we should be like the tortoise. We should not try to experience these passions because when we experience these passions, there are chances that we will drown in them. Therefore, instead of going and attacking them or facing them, one good option is to live like a tortoise, to withdraw into our own protective shell and let the enemy pass. After the enemy passes by, just like a tortoise does, we too should come out of our protective shell and continue our journey on the spiritual path by letting the passions pass.

"Live like Raja Janak" – Dada started this conversation many years back but I didn't understand what Dada was

saying. Recently, Dada endorsed his guidance to me that when we are pursuing the path of spiritual realization, it is not necessary to become a Sanyasi, to give up our business, our life, our money, and our family. It is not necessary to give up everything and go to the forest.

Raja Janak was a liberated soul. He was a man of wisdom, the father of Sita. But he knew that as long as he is alive, there cannot be freedom from action, one need to have freedom in action. Dada said, "We should be like the lotus in a dirty pond. We don't have to sink in that dirty pond, but we can shine like a lotus above the pond. We should live like a boat on a river. The river may be dirty and muddy, but the boat doesn't sink into the dirty river. It uses the river to navigate from one point to another. It travels on the river and reaches its destination. Dada continues to teach me to live like Raja Janak - to live with Vairagya (dispassion or detachment). Although you are like a king and have everything, you don't need to go to the forest. You can live without lust and craving right here in the world. Each one of us, as Dada said, is born with Samskaras - a personality - and we cannot change that. We cannot change our mother and father, our city of birth, or our family. We all have Samskaras, which is what we grow up with and become. Instead of leaving it all and running into the forest, we may be better off by living dispassionately wherever we are.

Dada, in this context, always mentioned about so many people who ran to the forest but failed. Running away into the forest as a Sanyasi or a Sadhu is not the solution or the right way to spiritual realization. To me, Dada said, "You don't have to give up the world. You can achieve Moksha

or Nirvana living in the world. Although you run your business, you do your charity, you are an inspirational speaker, you sing bhajans, and you run a temple, the only thing to do is to annihilate and transcend your ego. The moment you think YOU are doing it, and then you will fail."

Of course, you can't kill the Ego because it is the ego that keeps us alive. We can only transcend it and give it up at death. Go beyond the ego and use your discriminative power to choose the right from the wrong. Refuse to compromise on your principles. Live with love of God, be in constant yoga, uninterrupted union with God − whether it is yoga of action (Karma yoga), devotion (Bhakti yoga), education (Jnana yoga), or meditation (Raja yoga). Learn to live meaningfully like Raja Janak who used his kingdom as a domain of wisdom. He had wise people coming in for debate and discussions on how to realize God. His Dharma or duty was to make the people of his kingdom happy. He was a renowned king and lived as a Self-realized soul.

Dada has a great sense of humor. Jokingly, he recently said, "You know you can fail even on the last day of your life." I asked Dada, "What do you mean?" He said, "It means when an aspirant who is a *Jivatman* or embodied soul has to become a Jivanmukta or the liberated soul, the aspirant has to learn to live as the *Atman* and not the jiva." The aspirant is attacked by desire, lust, and all the passions of the world. This onslaught doesn't stop till the last day of life. Every day is a new challenge. The five famous enemies – kaam, krodh, lobh, moh, and ahankar, which are lust, anger, greed, attachment, and ego, respectively - constantly, attack us. If we fail and if it happens

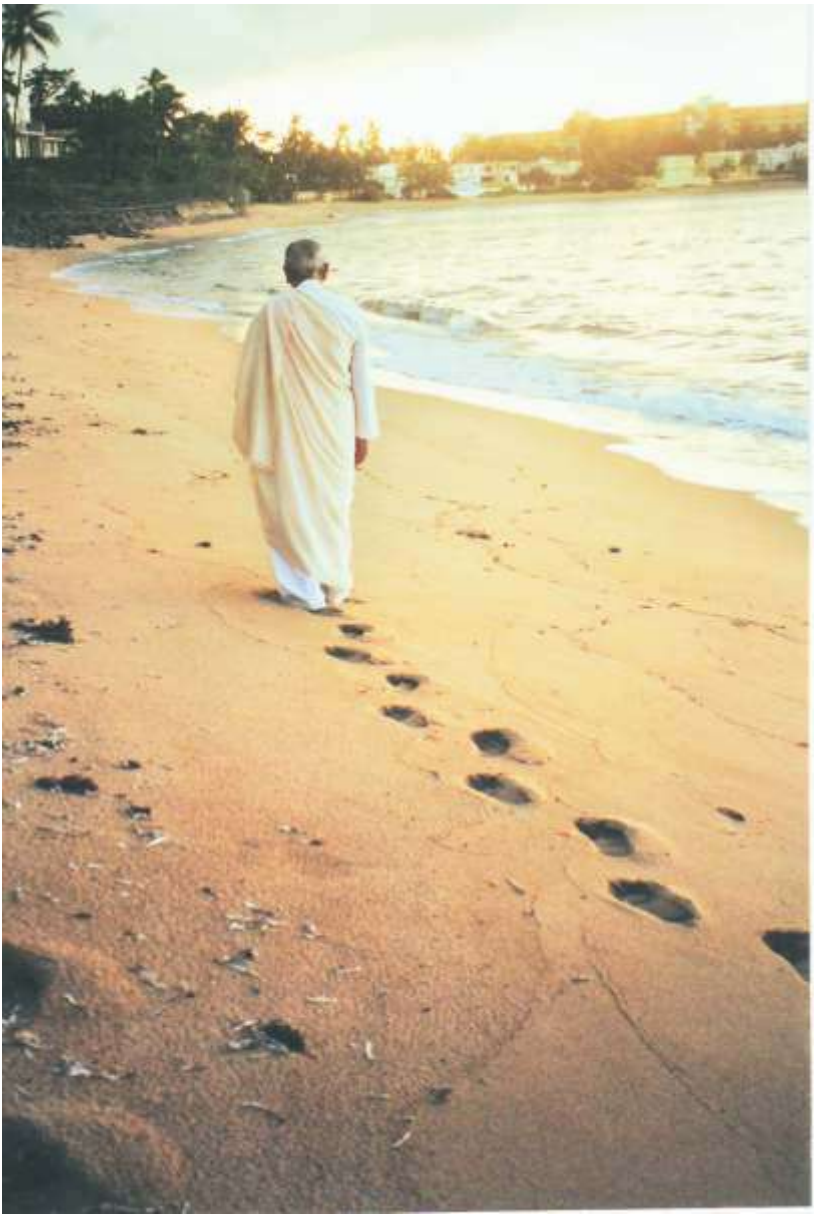
to be our last day on Earth, then we have to come back to Earth again and again. Therefore, Dada warns that we should live each day as a Jivanmukta - a liberated soul. Every single day, we should not fail nor let these temptations overcome us, because if they do, then we will fail to realize God. Dada mentioned to me that enlightenment has three processes – illumination, purification, and unification. I always questioned Dada when he says something in order to learn its deeper meaning. I always ask him to explain, and he always explains with love, care, compassion, and kindness. For him, life without Karuna, kindness, or compassion is incomplete. Dada explained to me the first part of enlightenment: we are illuminated so the knowledge comes to us as a spark, like a light - the Upanishads call it Sravana. The second part is purification. This happens when we process the knowledge to purify our mind and our life. The Upanishads call it Manana - we reflect upon it, we try to absorb it, we move from theory to practical, and try to pass the second phase called purification. Then Dada says the third part is unification. Unification is the ultimate phase where we become one with God. We unify, we are always in yog or yoga and this is Nididhyasana.

Nididhyasana is actually realizing God. You realize you are not the ego, mind and body. You realize you are the *Atman* and this is the toughest of all. First, you should have illumination, then purification, and only finally you can reach unification.

Dada is now 99 years of age, although he considers himself to be a teenager. It's true because while his body might have lived for 99 years on planet Earth, his mind and soul are as fresh as a newly bloomed flower. Dada is so full of life, enthusiasm, faith, hope, fun, and laughter that it is difficult to

be somebody like Dada. Even now Dada doesn't stop discussing, even though it's so difficult for him to speak. When you ask him a question, he doesn't hesitate to reply and to explain. Of course, Dada loves intellectual questions. He loves to be provoked on spiritual subjects on life and God and I continue to ask him such questions. I believe that these questions and answers over the last 25 years have actually changed my life. My habit of asking Dada questions never stopped. It started 25 years ago when I was Ravi V. Melwani, it continued when I was RVM and it still continues today. I recently troubled him with another question and he smiled. He said, "Just remember one thing - I am nothing! That's all! Nothing else! Just remember this one thing."

Yes Dada! I realize I am nothing but I live in ignorance.
I need Thy grace.
I need God's Grace to be liberated from this ignorance. Without you my Guru, what would I be?
Continue to lead me, my dear Master to the one reality. Continue to guide me.
Continue to bless me.
I need you.
I can't do without you. I Love you.
I am nothing.
I know! I realize.
And I realize I don't know what I know.
Only you can make me realize this by opening my 'real eyes',
My Guru, my Mentor, my God on Earth



About AiR
(The Author)

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.

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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 Fulfillment 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.

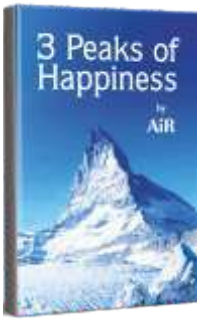
Since then, AiR's life has been dedicated to reaching out and helping people to eradicate the ignorance that we live in. Truth is Truth but our mind does not realize that. With AiR's own realization, he has published several books, written bhajans, blogs, quotes, poems and taken up several other initiatives 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.

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

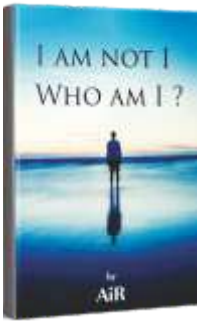
In the journey of his life, AiR realized many Truths. One of the Truths was that he would never die. The body will die, but the one who lives in the body never dies. We are not the

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.

4. 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 happen – 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.

5. 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.

6. The Mind is a Rascal

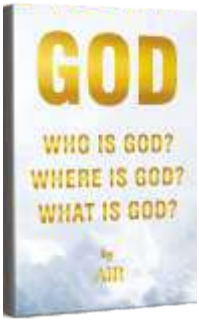
Can you believe that the mind is a rascal? You always thought that the mind is king – it is everything. But just try this. Sit quietly for an hour, and try to find the mind. Where is it? You

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?

7. 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.

8. Who is God? Where is God? What is God?

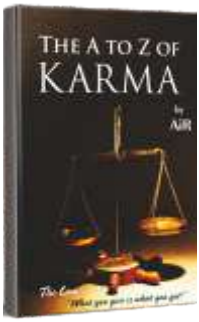


Well, this might seem to be a simple set of questions, but nobody really knows the answers. We all know that God exists. We pray to a God as per our religion but what is the Truth about God? Has anybody seen God? Where is God? This simple book will change your perception and belief about God and bring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

9. The A to Z of Karma

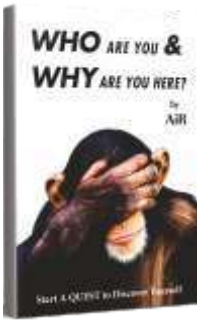
Most people are aware of the concept of Karma – the Law. What you give is what you get. But not everybody knows the A to Z of Karma, that we can actually transcend Karma,

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.



10. 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.



11. 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.

12. **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 tranquility 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.

13. 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?

14. Suffer No More

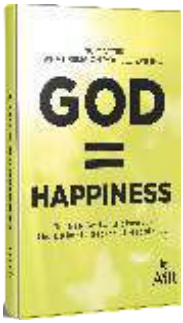
Suffer No More is a personal experience of overcoming anguish, anxiety, distress, and grief. We all suffer physical pain. Who on earth can escape from it? But while there is pain, can we do away with the suffering? What is suffering? While we all experience it, have we gone on a quest to understand what 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!

15. 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 fulfillment. It's time for us to realize the Truth. Instead of chasing Success to be Happy, we should try to be Happy.

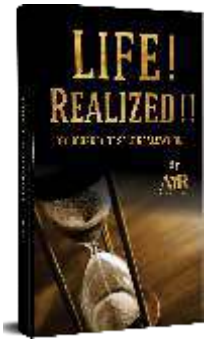
16. God = Happiness



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

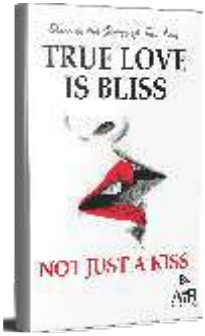
religion. It takes us far beyond religion to Realize the Truth about God and how God is Happiness.

17. 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.

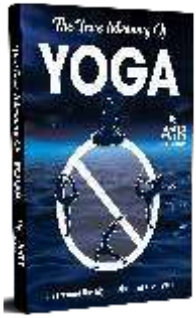
18. True Love is Bliss Not Just a Kiss



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.

19. The 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 practiced and how through Yoga, one can be liberated and experience ultimate Bliss and Divine Peace .

Coming Soon

20.The Ultimate Goal of Life MEN - Moksha Enlightenment Nirvana

21. Religion ! A Kindergarten To Spirituality

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

Please visit the link if you would like AiR to answer any questions.
www.air.ind.in/ask_air/

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MY GURU
MY MENTOR
MY GOD ON EARTH

Not everybody is lucky to find a Guru in their entire lifetime. A true Guru takes one from "Gu" to "Ru" – from darkness to light. One may search for a Guru, but unless one is blessed with the Grace of God, it is difficult to find a Guru. It is said that when a disciple is ready, a Guru will appear.

A Guru is not just a teacher, a mentor, or a guide. A Guru is a friend, a soulmate, and a life partner. He is the one who holds our hand and takes us across this world, helping us realize the true purpose of life. He leads us to our ultimate destination, our goal, to realize who we truly are and to realize God.

I was fortunate to meet my Guru – Dada J.P. Vaswani. He has not only influenced my life, but also touched, triggered, and transformed it so much that he caused a metamorphosis, which made me grow from a crawling caterpillar to a beautiful butterfly – free and liberated!

I am indebted to Dada. With utmost gratitude, I dedicate this little book to my Guru, my Mentor, my God on Earth as he starts his 100th year of life on Earth.

I am sure that his teachings will transform your life too!

By

AiR
Atman in Ravi

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