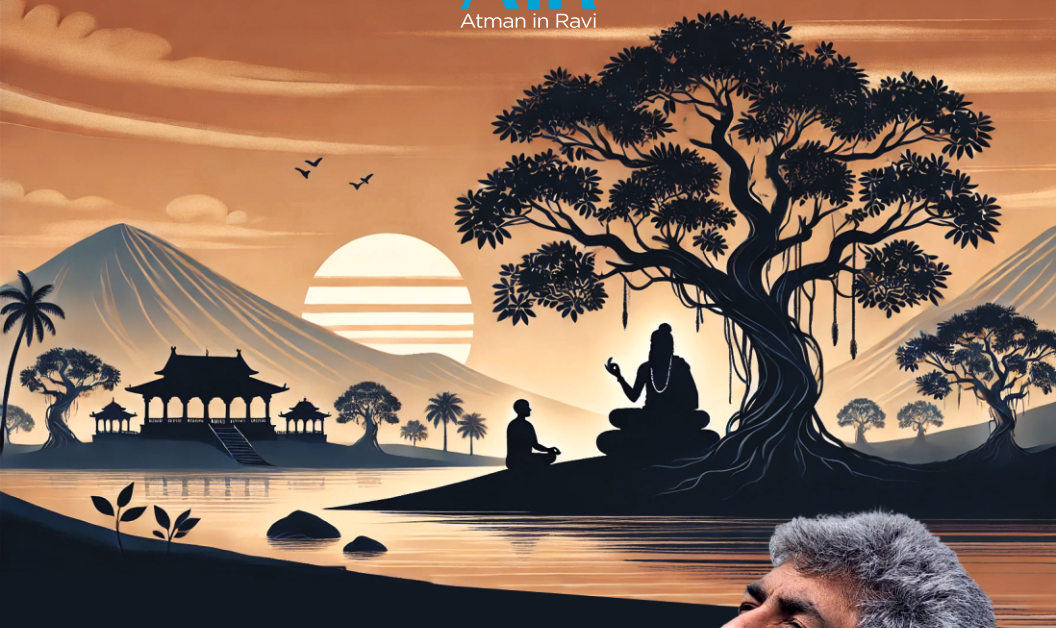


AiR - ATMAN IN RAVI

GURU

*From Gu to Ru
From Darkness to Light*

AiR
Atman in Ravi



**FINDING AN
ENLIGHTENED
MASTER!**

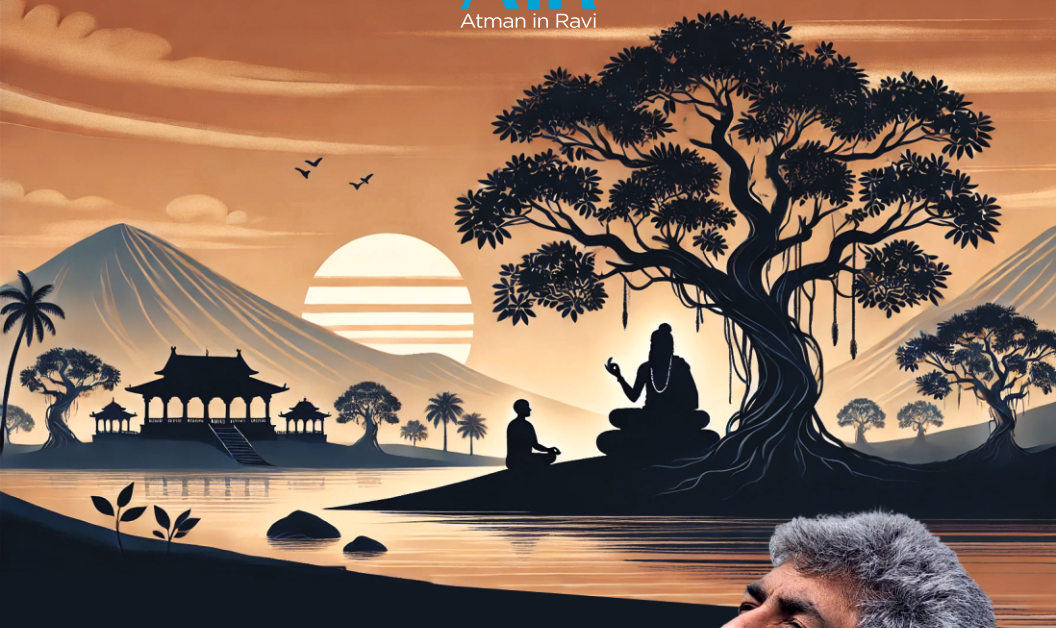


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ENLIGHTENED
MASTER!**



GURU

From Gu to Ru From Darkness to Light

By



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

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

AiR - *Atman* in Ravi



Started with Nothing,

Became Something...

Achieved Everything,

Only to Realize, we are Nothing!

AiR — *Atman* in Ravi, is an Awakened Soul, Transformational Author, Singer, Philanthropist, 'Happyness' Ambassador and a Messenger of True Love. He is on a mission to help people discover the way to Eternal Happyness through Enlightenment. AiR spells the words 'Happyy' and 'Happyness' with 3 Ps, because he has realized that True Happiness is evolving from Pleasure from achievement, to Peace from fulfillment and ultimately to Purpose from Enlightenment. This is to live a life of True Happiness!

AiR was an iconic entrepreneur who transformed retailing in India, only to walk away from the mega retail empire he had created. He shut down his business when he was 40 and started making a difference doing - Humanitarian, Inspirational and Spiritual work. AiR opened destitute homes known as AiR Humanitarian Homes spread across Bengaluru, that today, care for over 600 homeless and needy people.

Like anybody else, AiR started his life being religious. He built a Shiva temple in 1995. Subsequently, inspired by his Guru, he realized that God lives in the temple of our heart and he changed the name of the temple to *Shivoham Shiva Temple*. Now, he doesn't pray *to* Shiva but prays *through* Shiva, to SIP, the Supreme Immortal Power that is nameless and formless, birthless and deathless, the Divine Power that is everywhere, in everything. His Realizations resulted in his own metamorphosis as he realized that we are the Soul, the *Atman*, a part of the Supreme Immortal Power. He let go of his given name and called himself AiR – *Atman* in Ravi, which means, the Soul embodied as Ravi. AiR, now, lives as an instrument of the Divine, doing His Divine Will.

AiR has founded the AiR Institute of Realization to reach out to the global community of seekers. As a Happiness Ambassador, AiR teaches people the AiR Happiness Secret that reveals the way to Eternal Peace, Divine Love and Everlasting Bliss.

Based on his Realizations, AiR has authored over 85 books, composed and sung about 1470 *Bhajans* and written several blogs, quotes and poems. He conducts Spiritual Retreats and organizes talks to help people evolve on their Spiritual journey. He is a TEDx speaker and is often invited to speak at several organizations, corporates and universities. He conducts daily webinars on Zoom, Facebook and Instagram Live to help people realize the Ultimate Purpose of life – Enlightenment.

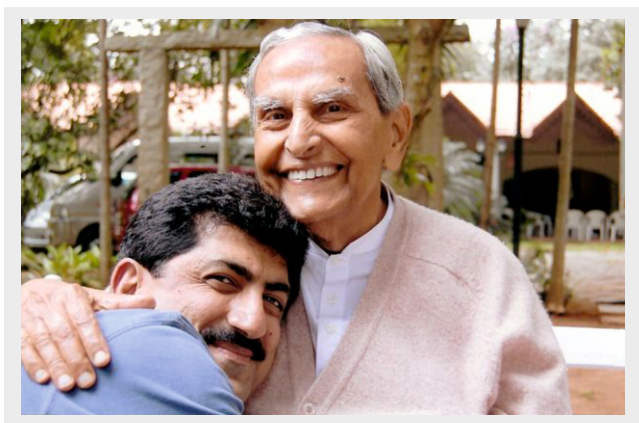
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A TRIBUTE TO MY GURU



I dedicate this, my 88th book to my Guru, my Spiritual Master, *Dada J.P. Vaswani*. It was his guidance that led me out of the rat race of achievement to living with fulfillment and ultimately, reaching that state of Spiritual Awakening called Enlightenment.

Dada was an epitome of humility and a man of humour and wisdom. He was blessed to live till he was a 100 years old as he touched and transformed thousands of lives. However, I was truly blessed to get that special Initiation to start a *Talaash*, a quest that led me to become AiR, the *Atman* in Ravi.

It is rare to find a true Guru and it was God's grace that led me to *Dada*. I spent about 25 years with him, evolving from pleasure to peace and ultimately, to finding my purpose.

I dedicate this book, 'Guru' to my Divine Guru who helped me take the road less travelled and find the state of Eternal Happiness and Enlightenment that I now share with the world. May you, who read this book, 'Guru', also be blessed to be Spiritually Awakened and live a life of Eternal Peace, Divine Love and Everlasting Bliss.



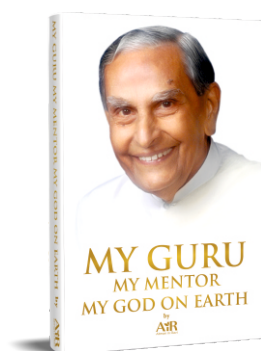
Don't go in search of a Guru.

Go in search of the Truth.

And as you are searching for the Truth,

Before you, you will find your Guru.

PREFACE



Seven years ago, I wrote a book on my Guru and it helped many seekers to go on a quest and Realize the Truth. The book, 'My Guru, My Mentor, My God on Earth', was a dedication to my Spiritual Master, *Dada*, who, as my Guru led me from *Gu* to *Ru*, from darkness to light. Since then, I have written over 85 books on Life, Happiness and Enlightenment. However, it is after many years that I have

realized that nothing is possible without a Guru. It is like driving in an unknown, congested city without a GPS. The Guru is the one who can give us directions to reach our destination. We need the Guru's Powerful Signal, GPS, more than anything else to traverse through the challenges of life.

Without my Guru, I was lost. For over 25 years, I went from one peak of success to another. But I was blessed to find a Guru who initiated my journey of Spiritual Awakening, of Enlightenment. Therefore, I decided to dedicate a book to the Guru expressing how a Guru is so instrumental in our life-transformation.

'What is life all about? Why did we come to earth? What was the purpose of our human birth?' How many people of the 8 billion alive are even contemplating this question? We are lost in this world of pleasures, possessions and people and we have become prisoners. It is only an Awakened Master, an Enlightened Guru, who can shake us, wake us and take us to our life's destination. Are we meant just to earn and earn and then burn, only to return and continue the cycle again? It is a Guru who will make us yearn for the true meaning and purpose of life. An Enlightened Guru knows that life has a purpose and he takes us out of this circus. Otherwise, we will be just like a clown, jumping up and down. Without a Guru, life is meaningless.

I met my Guru about 35 years back and I spent over 20 years taking his advice on how I could be more successful and happier. Little did I realize that my Guru was shaping me for something bigger than what I could have ever

imagined. He led me to shutting down my business, helped me go on a quest and I was Awakened to the Truth of life. Today, in gratitude, I reflect, *'What if I did not have a Guru? Where would I be? I would have lived and died and been reborn once I was gone and this would have gone on and on.'* With the grace of my Guru, I was Awakened and liberated from *Maya*, the Cosmic Illusion.

I decided to write this book because there are many seekers in this world who seek Enlightenment, Spiritual Awakening and even Eternal Happiness, who want to attain the true purpose of life. There are some people who are searching for God. For all such people, the answer is one – Guru, for without a Guru, we will continue to slumber through life. Only a Spiritually Awakened Master can take us to our life's destination, faster. Otherwise, our life will be a disaster! This book has everything related to a Guru. Who is a true Guru and what is his role? How can a disciple, with the help of a Guru, discover the purpose of life and once Spiritually Awakened, be liberated and evolve from the journey of Self-Realization to God-Realization? While I have written many books on Enlightenment, on my journey of Spiritual Awakening, on the Happiness Secret and the way to overcome all misery and unhappiness, all this becomes practically impossible without the guidance of a Guru. This is my 88th book but the spark of all the wisdom I acquired, came from my Guru. Without my Guru, I wouldn't have been able to write 1500 songs on life, I wouldn't have been able to sing, speak and help people begin their transformational journey.

A Guru not only transforms us by taking us from darkness to light but he also creates a metamorphosis. *A crawling worm suddenly opens its wings and starts to fly like a beautiful butterfly.* This magic happens when we trust the Guru and understand his logic of life. Others just live a tragic life. If you are seeking the meaning and purpose of life, if you are seeking Spiritual Awakening or Enlightenment, if you are seeking Eternal Happiness and the way to God, then what you need is a true Guru, a Spiritual Mentor, an Awakened Master, who can lead you onward, forward, upward, inward and God-ward.

If you want to find a Guru, get the guidance of an Awakened Master, initiate a quest and reach the stage of Illumination that will create Realization and ultimately, Liberation. This book can help you. It can do the trick. If you have decided to pick this book, 'Guru', don't just flick through the pages. Read each word and follow it to the 'T' and you will reach your life's destination!



INTRODUCTION



This book, 'Guru', shares my learnings from my 25-year-long journey with my Guru. It is not based on some theory but my learnings from my practical experiences with my Guru that transformed my life. I was just running after pleasures, possessions and people, thinking that they will give me Happiness. It was my Guru who not only guided me but also led me forward. When I reflect on those who are Spiritually Enlightened, I notice one thing in common. They were all guided by their Guru, an Enlightened Master. Therefore, in this book, I have written down everything important that a true

seeker needs to find in a Guru and ultimately, to find out the purpose of life.

In today's world, there is no shortage of Gurus. Anybody can say, '*I am a Guru.*' Then, how does a sincere seeker find a genuine Guru? What makes one a Guru? Who is a true Guru and how can we find one? This is one of life's biggest challenges. The Guru is an Enlightened Soul. He has Realized the Truth. He is Awakened and only the one who is Awakened can wake up others, not one who lives in a slumber of ignorance in this illusory material world. Therefore, how must a seeker approach his search for a Guru and what is the way forward?

Finding the right Master is the only way to reach Enlightenment faster. We cannot just read books and be Enlightened. We can get knowledge from many a college and today, with the help of artificial intelligence, we can Google or use ChatGPT to get all the information that we need. However, information is not Realization. To achieve the true purpose of life, we have to go beyond knowledge to reach that wisdom that is rare to find. Therefore, any Guru won't do. We need the right Guru. But this is just the beginning!

Once we connect with our Master, the journey has just started. Some people live with gimmicks of Initiation done by the countless Gurus of this world. But they may never initiate their journey to God. Only a true Guru holds our hand and leads us forward in our quest to ultimately reach that state of Self-Realization and God-Realization.

Does it all depend on the Guru? Definitely not! Unless the disciple is dedicated and committed, no Guru can transform his life. Therefore, the journey needs a sincere seeker and an Enlightened Master. But this is not enough. Unless the seeker learns to trust his Guru and obeys him and follows his guidance, he will never decode the mystery of life. We are all slaves to our mind and ego that tells us, '*I am ME.*' It is only the Guru who painstakingly takes us forward step-by-step to help us realize that we are Divine energy.

Swami Vivekananda had *Ramakrishna Paramahansa* to guide him and *Gautama Buddha* had several Enlightened Masters and sages before he was Spiritually Awakened. Every Enlightened being has had a spiritual guide, a Guru. Without my Guru, I would have reached nowhere. But what would happen if we found a wrong Guru? What happens when you follow a wrong GPS? You can never reach your destination. How then should one find the right Guru? The Guru is already on the path. If a sincere seeker moves forward in their quest with honesty and commitment, they will automatically find the Guru. When the disciple is ready, the Guru will appear.

This book is a guide that will inspire us to find a Guru. It will give us tips on how to treasure the Guru's wisdom and show the path that a disciple must take to discover the true purpose of life. This book has everything that we need to know about the Guru, about what the Guru can do for us, where the Guru can lead us and how we should never

disobey the Guru, even if we do not agree or understand what the Guru says.

Of course, the first challenge is to find the right Master. The next step is to progress on the journey faster. The journey of life is short. We barely have a few decades to realize who we are, why we are here and be liberated from the cycle of death and rebirth. With the right Guru and with sincere efforts, anybody can be Enlightened. But with a wrong Guru, we will just go round in circles. And without our sincere efforts, even if we have the right Guru, we may live and die, suffer and cry, only to return to earth in a rebirth.

Therefore, this book is not just a book that can help one find the right Master. It is also a guide to help one discover the purpose of life in order to attain Eternal Happiness and ultimately, realize God and become one with the Divine. If we are ready to start our life journey, this book, 'Guru' is the key to unlock the door.

Part A



A GURU



The whole world talks about Gurus. But there is so much mysticism related to the word, 'Guru' that people are confused. Is a Guru a spiritual magician or is he a man of God or an *Avatar*, a reincarnation of the Supreme? The world has so many Gurus. Who is a *real* Guru? What is a Guru? Why do we need a Guru?

In this book, we will evaluate the anatomy of a Guru and what makes somebody a true Guru, why we need a Guru and what will happen if we don't have a Guru.

When we want a sports coach or a business advisor, we Google and try to identify the best ones and then, appoint one to help us learn. Can we do the same if we seek a Guru? No! We can get a Guru only with the grace of God. A true Guru seeks nothing but a sincere, obedient seeker who wants to be Spiritually Awakened.

This book, 'Guru' will take us through the A to Z of what we must know about a Guru – how to find a Guru, what role a Guru must play and what the relationship between a disciple and a Guru should be like. This book will cover all aspects of life with and without a Guru, as it takes us through the journey of life, as we discover our purpose and ultimately, discover how it is the Guru who unlocks the path to realizing God. This book can transform the way we perceive a Guru just as it will guide us on the journey with our Guru, our Master, to reach our destination, faster.

► What Is The Meaning Of 'Guru'?

The word 'Guru' comes from the words *Gu* and *Ru*. *Gu* means darkness and *Ru* is light. It is the Guru who dispels the darkness of ignorance and makes us see the light of truth.

Man is caught in a maze, as he is running a race to become an ace. It is the Guru who makes us realize that this is a futile chase. The Guru teaches us to live with grace. Without the Guru, man will live and die. When something goes wrong, he will just look up at the sky, he will cry and question why. But he will never discover the truth, '*Who am I? Why do I suffer? What is the purpose of my existence?*' Only a true Guru can help us realize this.

We remain a fool because of what we are taught in school. We are taught many a lie like God lives in the sky. We fear that one day, we will die. We never learn, '*I am not 'I'.*' It is only a Guru, a truly Enlightened Master, who can initiate our spiritual journey and take us forward on a quest, an inner voyage to discover Eternal Peace as we realize that we are all manifestations of the Supreme Immortal Power, SIP, that we call God.

There may be many life coaches and business Gurus but a true Guru is the one who takes away the ignorance of this illusory world and Enlightens us with the truth that we are not the body that will die. We are not the mind that we cannot find, nor are we the ego that tells us the lie that I am 'I'. The Guru makes us realize that we are the Divine Soul and thus, makes us achieve our ultimate goal.

► Who Is A True Guru?

It is not difficult to find a Guru. But it is very difficult to find a truly Enlightened Master, who can be a true Guru. How can we recognize that the Guru we are talking to is Enlightened, when we ourselves are ignorant? Therefore, it is the grace of God and the sincerity of a seeker that leads one to a true Guru.

A true Guru seeks nothing. He has transcended the desire for wealth and power. He is Enlightened and realizes that we are all manifestations of the one Divine. A true Guru is not a slave to his passions. He lives as an instrument of the Divine with one and only one focus – to help sincere seekers on the path of Spirituality attain the state of Self-Realization and ultimately, reach the state of God-Realization.

A true Guru is not someone who is trying to win an election or get global name and fame. He is one who can handhold a sincere seeker and make them walk the path to God. A true Guru is living, active and available to a sincere seeker. He is one who gives answers to all our spiritual questions, just as he solves our confusion about life and its purpose.

A true Guru is connected to God and answers life's challenging questions with Divine solutions that can ultimately lead us to destination Enlightenment. A true Guru is patient and persistent and lives the life of a *Yogi*, one who is united with God. Ultimately, a true Guru is one who can help us overcome our ignorance and Realize the Truth.

► Why Do We Need A Guru?

We are born and one day, we will be gone. How many of us pause to find out the reason we came to earth? What is the purpose of this human birth? We think that we will die and go to a heaven or a hell that is up in the sky. We never stop to find out what our purpose is and what is the reality of, '*Who am I?*'

We need a Guru to lead us on the journey of life, to take us onward, forward, upward, inward and God-ward. Without a Guru, we will go round and round in circles. We will live and we will die and then, we will return to earth with our Karma in another rebirth. We need a Guru to help us escape from this cycle of rebirth just as to teach us how to be free from all misery on earth.

A true Guru makes us realize that life is not a circus and that there is a purpose. We have not come here just to jump up and down like a clown. That is not life. We need a Guru to guide us to discover the purpose of our existence and if we are blessed to find the right Guru, we will achieve this purpose.

We need a Guru to understand the meaning of God. Who is God? Where is God? What is God? Most of us are caught up in the beliefs of our religion and our personal God. We are told that it is blasphemous to question anything related to God. We need a Guru to start our journey to God and ultimately, become one with God.

► What Happens Without A Guru?

Without the Guru, we will remain in the kindergarten of religion. We will not evolve and grow into the university of Spirituality. We will be caught up in rituals, superstitions and dogmas. We will not have the courage to question and learn the truth about life.

Without the Guru, we will never discover, '*Who am I?*' and '*Why am I here?*' What happens after we die? Will we go to heaven and hell as the scriptures tell? Without the Guru, we will continue to live in darkness and our ignorance will drive our life, till we are gone and reborn.

Without the Guru, we will continue to run after success thinking that success will give us Happiness. We will age and be caught in a cage and not grow to that stage, where we can be Enlightened.

Without the Guru, we will be like the rest of the world, 99% of people who think that life is about having fun till it is done. Without the Guru, we will not have the right guidance on how to live life and ultimately, how to Realize the Truth and God. We will go through life, like it's a merry-go-round, enjoying pleasure and pain, loss and gain, as we return to this earth again and again. It is only the Guru who can save us and liberate us from this cycle and unite us with God.

► How Can We Find A Guru?

Can we find a Guru on Google or can we find a Guru in a temple, monastery or church? Where must we search for a Guru? A Guru is not somebody who we can find. Ultimately, it is the Guru, who will find us and lead us to that moment when the light of truth will shine and we will experience that the *Gu*, the darkness, becomes *Ru*, the light. It is the grace of God that connects us to a Guru.

A Guru is an Enlightened Master. Like the sun, the Guru shines with his wisdom. His Spiritual Awakening cannot be contained. It flows through the words that he says, writes or sings. It is for us to recognize the real Guru. We must be in the right frequency to find the right Guru. If we are not seeking the true spiritual nectar of life, it is very easy to follow a wrong Master and end our life in a disaster!

Therefore, finding a Guru is crucial to attaining the purpose of life. But you can't find a Guru with a search, online or offline. You can reach a Guru only when you yearn for God, when you are desperate to find life's purpose, and when you are dedicated to that intense quest for life, for true Happiness and true meaning. In that deep Divine passion, the Guru will appear to you, as though God has sent a Master to take you to God, faster.

Those who try to go shopping for a Guru, from one *Ashram* to another, from one institution to another, may not really find a Guru. But those who sincerely seek God and have a deep yearning, love and longing for Liberation from this world are the fortunate ones who will find a Guru on their path of seeking. It maybe through a book written by the Guru. It may be a talk that we happen to attend or even a video that we may watch. A spark of Divine light will make us find our Guru.

► What Does A Guru Seek?

A real Guru seeks nothing. He is an Enlightened Soul. He is liberated from desires and passions. He has realized that we bring nothing and we take nothing. Realizing that we are all manifestations of the Divine, he only seeks to help people in their journey of Purification and Illumination, till there is Realization and ultimately, Liberation and Unification with the Divine.

Therefore, when we observe the several Gurus that we have an option to follow, this is a key criterion to beware of. If a Guru is seeking us because he is seeking something from us, we have to be cautious before we start a journey with that Master. The real Guru seeks only to Enlighten, to help us go on an inner voyage and to light the light within. The real Guru has no other agenda. Neither does he seek money, wealth nor any other material possessions, just as he is not after name and fame in the world.

The real Guru desires only one thing - that his genuine disciple is Enlightened. The only thing he seeks is that those who follow him, grow on the path of Spiritual Awakening and ultimately, realize God.

► The Confusion

When I was a successful businessman, I was confused. There were so many Gurus, religious leaders and Spiritual Masters who tried to

impress upon me their wisdom and philosophy. But somehow, I had built a connection with my Guru, *Dada*. There were days, however, when I would drift away to follow another Master but it was the grace of God that I did not lose my path. In the beginning, there was confusion, '*Who should be my Guru?*' even without that question being on the top of my mind. I was seeking Happiness and success and I was being pulled in different directions.

In today's world, there are many Gurus. We wonder, which Guru we should follow. It is for us to be in Consciousness and evaluate our journey of life. Are we looking for a popular Guru? There are many! Are we looking for a spiritual wizard who has magical powers? We can get lost on that path! What are we seeking? We should be seeking the ultimate truth. We should not go astray and get lost on the wrong path.

Life is a journey, which cannot be reversed. We can't replay our relationship with our Guru and then change it. There must be a clear direction so that we reach our destination. We must replace our confusion with the right conclusion.

Life without a Guru is like driving in an unknown terrain without a GPS. We can be lost easily but imagine having multiple GPS signals and devices. We can get caught in confusion! Now imagine having a faulty GPS. We are sure to go in the opposite direction and reach the wrong destination. A true seeker must therefore, be cautious about who he is following. No doubt, we need a Guru but the Guru must take us from darkness to light. We should

not get lost in the jungle of life only to be gone and to be reborn, without realizing the truth.

The Guru is a manifestation of God and he teaches us that we are all manifestations of the Divine. However, he is Enlightened. Most probably, he had an Enlightened Master himself, who led him to his Spiritual Awakening. His style, his aura, his demeanour is Divine. One look at the Guru should give us the right vibrations. But that is not enough. Interacting with the Guru and being able to overcome ignorance is a key factor. The ability to build a bond of faith and trust is the final key that will lock us in a Guru-disciple connection.

If we are in search of God, the ultimate Happiness or our life purpose, first, we must start our quest with our eyes open for the right Guru to guide us.

*A Guru is a Master
who can take us from darkness to light!
He is Enlightened and knows for sure
what is wrong and what is right.*

Part B



THE ROLE OF A GURU



What is the function of a Guru in our life? The Guru has a purpose, a reason for being. But what is his role? Is the Guru supposed to liberate us from all our misery and sorrow? Is he supposed to free us from the afterlife? The Guru has a specific role to play in our life. It is to help us overcome our ignorance and Realize the Truth.

Therefore, the Guru must be qualified, must be competent just as he must be committed. He must be Enlightened. This is critical. If the teacher is not an expert in the subject, it is only obvious that the student will struggle to become a champion.

The Guru not only guides us but also handholds us in our spiritual journey. He starts our quest for Spiritual Awakening by initiating us with a fire that ignites a passion for Liberation. Then, he walks with us, step-by-step on that inner expedition to the Realization of the Truth.

The Guru constantly guides us like a good GPS, from start to finish. What to do? What not to do? Everything is monitored by this true Spiritual Master till we arrive at our destination. The role of the Guru is not just to impart wisdom but also to help us assimilate that wisdom into our life so that we can be transformed.

Ultimately, the Guru triggers our metamorphosis. As long as we continue to crawl like a caterpillar, we have failed to find the right Spiritual Master. It is only when we cut our wings that are tied with strings and we can fly like a beautiful butterfly that we have succeeded in finding the right Guru, just as the Guru has succeeded in his role as our Master.

► The Guru Is A Mentor, A Guide

The Guru is not a super-intelligent philosopher, orator or author. He is our coach, a mentor, a guide. His primary task is to guide us through the jungle of life. A seeker knows very little about Spirituality and Enlightenment. The Master is the expert on the subject. When a disciple first meets the Guru, he is completely ignorant of the truth, *'Who am I and why am I here?'* The Guru must know the art of mentoring a beginner on this steep trek to Enlightenment. Every Enlightened Master will have his own style and method of teaching his disciples the way to Spiritual Awakening. However, the Guru has to be alive, a living Master. He has to be a personal coach, not a lecturer to a bunch of students who need to be taught Enlightenment.

Spiritual Awakening cannot happen with the knowledge that we can get in a college. It is like a light that must be lit from one candle to another. It needs a lot of personal interaction and exchanges between the Guru and the disciple for this relationship to truly succeed.

For the Guru to be a good mentor and a guide, first, the disciple must accept the Guru, have faith in him and trust him. It is like going to a doctor. Imagine, thinking that the doctor is an idiot! If we have no faith in the doctor, is there any chance that the medicine will work? Most likely, we will not even take the medication prescribed by him! So, the disciple must believe in the mentorship of the Guru before the Master can guide the seeker forward. Every disciple is different and the Guru must find the right method that will work for each individual seeker.

Therefore, the first task for the Guru and the disciple is the right spiritual alignment between the two, before the spiritual journey can really begin.

► The Guru Is Our Best Friend

Unless the Guru is our buddy, our best friend, it will be difficult for the guidance of the Master to be effective. A strong bond builds a better disciple-and-Guru relationship and promises success in the journey of Self-Realization. The ability of an Enlightened Master to mentor and guide the seeker forward rests on a strong friendship between the two. This creates an openness and transparency between them. Unless we share with the doctor, all the symptoms of the disease, just as we share the cause of our problem, the doctor cannot prescribe the right medicine. When we trust the Guru as our good friend, we will not hesitate to share the dark sins that have led us to the suffering that we experience today. We all have committed sins and the Guru knows it. But it is only when we consider him to be a trusted comrade that we will be open to sharing our life with the Guru, just as the Guru will be able to guide us from where we are to where we want to go.

The Guru does not judge nor is he meant to punish us for our bad Karma, our deeds. He is a supportive friend whose mission is to help us reach the state of Eternal Happiness through Enlightenment. He seeks to get us out of the circus of life as we discover our true purpose. All this is possible only when there is complete openness

between the seeker and the Master. Otherwise, a cold and formal relationship between us and our Guru cannot lead us to our destination.

► The Guru Is An Enlightened Master

Anybody cannot be a Guru. But even a wise and intelligent person is not competent to be our Spiritual Master. To be a real Guru, the Guru himself must be Spiritually Awakened to the truth of life. Unless the Guru is an Awakened Soul, fully Enlightened, with Self-Realization and God-Realization, the Guru cannot be a true Spiritual Master who can lead us to our destination.

A Guru is not just a theory expert. He has walked the talk. He has himself gone through the struggles of seeking Enlightenment. He has himself been blessed with an Enlightened Master and this has led him to that state of Spiritual Awakening, where he has realized the complete truth.

'Who am I? Why am I here? What is the purpose of life?' The Guru knows it all. The Guru has realized that he is a manifestation of the Divine. The Guru experiences God, omnipresent in one and all. He is able to see God in every creature effortlessly. The Guru does not memorize the truth because he has realized it. He has the answer to every possible spiritual question because he has reached that state of nothingness, where he has become everything. Therefore, an Enlightened Master, a Guru, has no hesitation in leading a seeker, forward in the journey of Realization.

If by chance, we find a wrong Master, it is a disaster! But how do we know that our Guru is Enlightened or not? We must not be enamoured or impressed by the appearance of our Guru. What we need is the light of wisdom. The truth must shine. The Guru must be a beacon of light that can wipe out the darkness of our ignorance. That is the only criterion to know whether the Guru is an Enlightened Master or not.

One look at the Guru and the true seeker can say if he is Enlightened, provided the seeker is in complete Consciousness of seeking God and his life purpose. A sincere seeker will surely find an Enlightened Master. Such is life! But if we are strolling through the garden of *Samsara* and we are lost in this material world, we may find a variety of Gurus but we will never find that true Enlightened Master who will help us get out of the prison, the cage of pleasures, possessions and people. It is only an Enlightened Master who will help in our journey of Realization and Liberation. Without being Enlightened himself, how can anybody lead us on this path of Spiritual Awakening? This privilege is only for one who is himself Awakened.

► The Guru Is Intelligent

The role of the Guru is to take us from ignorance to intelligence. It is to help us to discriminate and Realize the Truth. Therefore, the Guru must be an expert in Spirituality in order to be able to make us wise and awakened. *The world is full of real lies and it is for the*

Guru to make us open our real eyes so that we can realize what is the truth and what is the myth.

A true Guru is sharp. He does not have an ocean of theory in his head because once you realize, you don't have to memorize. His individual Consciousness is connected to the Divine Supreme Consciousness and thus, the truth flows through him. He is Spiritually Awakened and lives in Yoga, away from the worldly clutter of *Bhoga*.

There was once a man who had an Awakened Guru, whom he trusted completely. He chose his Guru to be the executor to his will. When the man passed away, the Guru was asked to execute the man's will. The man had left a lot of wealth behind for his family. Besides the wealth, there were some very exotic and expensive camels. He had left 19 camels and had bequeathed 50% to his son, 25% to his daughter and 20% to his nephew. This meant that the son should get 9.5, the daughter 4.75 and the nephew 3.8 of the camels! How could they distribute the camels? There was a fight in the family. When the Guru arrived, he said, 'Do not worry! I was also gifted a camel sometime back. I have brought it with me. You can now distribute peacefully.' The son now had half of 20. He took 10. The daughter took 5 and the nephew 4. After intelligently solving the issue, the Guru took his camel and returned home.

Sometimes, we may not have answers to life's complex problems but the Guru always has answers. The Guru has experienced life and has had so many Realizations that have led to his Awakening that he can solve any problem. It is for us to trust the Guru's judgement and to take the Guru's guidance and move forward in our life-journey.

► The Guru Is Demanding

A good Guru is not weak. He demands from his disciples that they follow certain disciplines to reach their spiritual destination. Enlightenment is not an easy trek. It is like climbing Mount Everest. Many people may aspire to do so but not many people start the journey. It is a daunting experience to reach even the base camp at the Himalayas, just as it is quite challenging to discover God.

Billions of people want to attain God. But only a tiny fraction starts a quest. They are the ones who are provoked by a Spiritual Master. The Master reminds them that human life is precious and it has a purpose, and they must not lose sight of it in the pursuit of worldly desires.

The Guru lays down *Sadhana* or discipline. It may include silence and meditation just as it could be a journey of contemplation. Sometimes, the Guru can demand a lifestyle change. Each Guru has his own method of demanding from the disciple.

There was once a Guru whose method of Enlightening his disciples was to attack them. Wherever they were and whatever they might have been doing, the Guru would come and attack them. He could attack them with a stick or with his bare hands. The Guru explained to a disciple, 'I want you to be in Consciousness. So, I will hit you!' The disciple agreed and once, when he was eating food and was lost in satiating his hunger, a stick smacked him. At another time, when he was in the shower, he didn't know how but he was whipped with a rope. Then, one day, while he was sleeping, the Guru came and smacked him. The

disciple was learning to be in Consciousness, though it was not easy. But this discipline created so much Consciousness that even when he was asleep, if the Guru attacked him, the disciple was able to protect himself. Now, the Guru told the disciple, 'Your discipline of Consciousness has improved. Now, I will attack you with a sword!'

Different Gurus have different ways to lead their sincere followers to their destination. It is for us to accept the Guru, and to accept the discipline laid down, if we want to reach the goal of realizing that we are the Divine Soul.

► The Guru Is A GPS

The role of the Guru is to give us direction so that we can reach our destination. The Guru cannot carry us to a heaven but he can show us the way to be Spiritually Awakened.

When we are driving in an unknown terrain, we most often use a GPS. The Global Positioning System tells us when to turn left and when to turn right. A modern gadget, it provides information on speed, our expected time of arrival and even traffic congestion. So does the Guru! The Guru's signal is also a GPS – Guru's Powerful Signal. If we follow this spiritual GPS, to the 'T', there are good chances that we will not be lost in the jungle of this world. Today, more than ever before, there are attractions and distractions that can completely distract us. Only a sincere seeker, who follows the powerful signal of the Guru, can progress on the path of Enlightenment. The rest

of us are consumed by the fire of desire. Our passion and obsession with worldly things keeps us far away from our ultimate purpose of Enlightenment.

The role of the Guru is to initiate us on our quest and then, to provide us with the direction that will lead to our Self-Realization. The journey continues till such time that we are liberated from the body, ego and mind and the purpose of life, we find! The Guru not only inspires us to begin but he is also with us throughout the journey and does not leave us till we reach our spiritual goal. It is only after we are Enlightened that the Guru liberates us to move on in this world to live as the Divine instrument doing the Divine Will.

The Guru, thus, is many things in one. He is not just a guide and mentor. He is an Enlightened Master, who is also our best friend. He is intelligent and demanding and is our spiritual GPS. So, what makes the Guru so special?

► The Guru Is A Manifestation Of God

Why is the Guru so important in our life? What makes the Guru so special in achieving our purpose? What we don't realize is that the Guru is our God on earth. He is a manifestation of the Supreme Immortal Power, SIP, that we call God. He is Enlightened and has realized that he is not the body, mind and ego. He is the Divine Soul, the *Atman* and *Atman* is *Paramatman*. The Guru has realized God within and lives as a Divine instrument. The Guru is a manifestation of God

and if we want to realize God, there is no better way than to hold the hand of an Enlightened Master and reach God faster!

While a Guru appears to be a human, like you and me, the Guru is actually Divine. He is an epitome of Divinity walking in the human form. For us to realize God, we must first realize that the Guru is a living manifestation of the Supreme. Only then will we be able to realize God ourselves.

What is the meaning of the Guru being a manifestation of God? It means that the Guru has realized that he is not a human being having a spiritual experience. He is a Divine Soul having a human experience. It is this Awakening in the Guru that can rub off on us and lead us on that inner voyage to realize God within. It is rare to reach Enlightenment and so, it is not common to find a true Enlightened Master. But once we do, we must visualize the Guru as God. We must trust and obey the Awakened Soul. Only then will we be able to realize God within us. Unless a Guru is fully Awakened, he is not competent to Awaken others. So also, an Awakened Guru reaches that state of Divine manifestation, living as a Divine instrument. The primary role of the Guru as a manifestation of God is to make us realize that we are God. We are not what we appear to be. We are Divine energy and this is what the Guru must make you and me, seekers of the truth, realize.

► The Guru Is The Key To Liberation

Seekers of God and those who are in quest of Enlightenment cannot reach the state of Realization and Liberation without the guidance of the Guru. The Guru has himself gone through the journey of Self-Realization and God-Realization and living as a liberated Soul, he can guide us through the jungle of life. If a Guru cannot lead us to Liberation, then we have not got the right Master. Liberation, no doubt, is a personal experience and achievement. But the key to unlock the door to God is with the Guru. Without the Guru, we may try very hard but we will not reach our destination. Even the grace of God appears to us through the Guru, who is none other than a manifestation of God, a Divine instrument. Therefore, a true Guru dedicates his life to helping seekers, Realize the Truth.

What is the journey to Liberation? It starts with Purification and overcoming ignorance which leads to Illumination. Only the Guru can do this. Realization, which is next, is a spark of Spiritual Awakening. But the spark needs the light of the Master. Just like we need a candle to light another candle, we need the light of an Enlightened Master to overcome the darkness of deep ignorance. Thereafter, if we are sincere seekers and follow the steps prescribed by the Guru, we will ultimately reach the state of Spiritual Awakening. Our personal efforts will take us to Liberation. The Guru cannot liberate anybody with his own hands. But it is the Guru who can lead us to Liberation with our efforts. If we trust the Guru unconditionally, obey his directions, question him when

we are in doubt and follow him without being confused by other confusing philosophies distorting our vision, we will ultimately achieve Realization. Then, the Guru will guide us as to how we can live as a realized Soul and achieve the ultimate goal of being united with the Divine. The Guru seeks nothing but to help sincere disciples attain Enlightenment. This is the mission of every true Guru. Not only that, it is only a true Guru who can understand a seeker's evolution, who can recognize whether one is Enlightened or not. Someone who has never had a mango before, might be given an apple and told that it's a mango. How would he know? So also, how can somebody know that they are Enlightened? They may be told that they are but only an Enlightened Master can confirm if they are really Enlightened.

► The Guru Initiates Our Quest

Who Initiates our journey of Realization? Normally, it is the Guru. Most human beings are lost in the material world. We are taught that success and achievement is Happiness and we grow up trying to be an ace, running the race. It is only an Enlightened Master who can free us from this chase and teach us to live with grace. Otherwise, we will just be caught in the maze. A true Guru initiates a seeker on a quest, a *Talaash*, a search. It is up to a true seeker to be initiated because those who are disinterested will not be ignited despite the spark from a Guru. The Guru tries very hard to initiate our quest. But unless our Karma is aligned, we may not be able to begin our inner journey to Enlightenment.

Without the Guru, we will just wander and we will zoom from womb to tomb. It is the Guru who provokes us and leads us to start our quest and puts all our beliefs to the test.

The whole world is quite confused about the term 'Initiation' by a Spiritual Master. Many think it is a special *Mantra*, a mystical chanting of some Divine words that can create some spiritual magic to attain God. But this is not true. Initiation by the Guru is about making the true seeker begin his quest for purpose, for God or for Eternal Happiness. Whatever be the seeking, a seeker cannot progress on his quest without the right Initiation by an Awakened Master. Just like a vehicle needs a starter and a cooking range needs a spark, so also, a seeker needs Initiation by a Master to achieve Enlightenment.

► Different Strokes For Different Folks

The Guru is quite intelligent and he understands that he needs to have different recipes for different seekers. Every seeker is different. Each of us has our unique life journey. Our own Karma and our current journey of life are very different from others. The Guru comes to understand this at a glance. He knows exactly what each seeker needs and so, he applies different strokes for different folks.

When the Guru is talking to disciples, some may be in a kindergarten, some in school and some in a university. He cannot impart the same wisdom and knowledge to all and

one must not be confused by this. An intelligent seeker will understand his Guru on a personal frequency and not be carried away by what the Guru discusses with others.

Enlightenment is not a 'one-size-fits-all' subject and although the ultimate journey needs Self-Realization and God-Realization, each of us may need a different direction to reach our ultimate destination because we may be in different positions in life. It is the Guru who will understand where we are, where we have to go and how we can get there. An Enlightened Master can decipher this in one glance and for genuine seekers, it is not difficult for the Guru to lead them to their Divine destination.

Sometimes, we may doubt our Guru. We may not agree to what the Master says. That is okay! But we must not hide this from the Guru. We must express our lack of understanding and apprehension about what is being taught. The Guru has answers for all questions and if we trust the Master, he will solve our confusion and we will reach the right conclusion. Total obedience, discipline and abiding by the guidelines of the Guru are critical, if we want to reach our spiritual goal.

*The Enlightened Master or Guru
has one primary goal,
To inspire us to Realize
it is God that manifests as our Soul.*

Part C



HOW TO FIND THE GURU?



Can you find the Guru on the internet? Is a Guru available in any shopping centre, in an *Ashram*, a monastery, a temple or a church? Where can we search for the Guru?

It is said that when a disciple is ready, the Guru will appear. This means that if the disciple is not yet spiritually mature or ready, the Guru might be right in front of his eyes but the disciple will be unable to find or recognize his Master. How can a disciple be ready and how can one find the Guru?

It is sad that in today's world, there are so many Gurus! Therefore, the problem is not a lack of Gurus but the challenge is to find the right Guru. Enlightenment is Realization. It is not a certification achieved by a spiritually Awakened Master. Therefore, we do not have qualified Gurus in the market to choose from. All Enlightened Souls do not become Gurus. Some choose to live a life of dispassion and disconnect from the world. Therefore, to find a truly Enlightened Master in the world is a challenge.

It is not only about us finding the Guru. It is also about the Guru finding us. The Guru must accept a disciple for the equation to be complete. How can one, therefore, who is a true seeker of Enlightenment, God and life purpose, find a real Guru, a genuinely Enlightened Master? This is life's biggest challenge!

► A True Guru Is A Rare Gem

You can get as many gems and jewellery in the world as possible. But to get a unique pinite, the rarest of gemstones, is not easy. People search for blue diamonds and tanzanite but these are difficult to find. Rare gems like the Kohinoor diamond are not found in any street. So it is with an Enlightened Guru, a truly spiritually Awakened Master.

The challenge is that only 1% of the people in this world seek Enlightenment. Of this 1%, only 1% realize the truth. From those who realize the truth, only 1% are liberated and qualified to become Gurus. Therefore, less than 0.0001% of the people in this world are eligible to become Gurus. On a calculator, this means that less than 8000 people out of the 8 billion people today in the world are qualified. But not all of them are available. There may be less than a few dozen who are truly Enlightened Masters and available to sincere seekers to guide them through this journey.

► Only A True Seeker Finds A True Guru

Just as there are few rare gems, there are few Enlightened Masters, and just as it takes passion to find a rare gemstone, it takes obsession to find a true Master. What kind of passion and obsession is needed? A seeker must be sincere in seeking Enlightenment or for that matter, life's ultimate purpose and Eternal Happiness. Unless there is a sincere seeker on a quest for Self-Realization or God-Realization, there is no possibility of

finding a true Guru. When a sincere seeker is looking for Spiritual Awakening and wants answers to life's questions, he takes the road less travelled. On this path, there is no crowd. But as a true seeker progresses on this path, he comes across his Guru, who is already waiting on the path. Such is how this Divine drama unfolds. There is no magic. Neither is a true Guru hidden somewhere in the mountains nor is he so famous that he is inaccessible. A true Guru is seeking true disciples, just as true disciples are searching for their Enlightened Master. Meeting the Guru is only the beginning, the trigger that begins our journey of Spiritual Awakening. Thereafter, one has to create a bond with the Guru to reach their spiritual destination. The Guru, in his own way, will initiate a true seeker on the path of Enlightenment. However, just as it is very difficult for a sincere seeker to find the right Master, it is equally complex for the Guru to accept a sincere seeker as his disciple.

There are hundreds, if not thousands of Masters who may have millions of followers. But this has nothing to do with a true Guru who can lead us to Enlightenment. The connection between a real Enlightened Master and a sincere seeker is rare and unique. It needs the grace of God for such a bond to form and to start a spiritual journey that can ultimately transform the world.

► The SOS Way To A Guru

If a seeker wants to get an Enlightened Guru to guide him on the path of Realization, he has to have the primary quality that we can call **SOS**. He must have

Sincerity, Obedience and Seeking, which must be a passion. Unless a seeker has that thirst for spiritual wisdom, unless the seeker is sincere on the spiritual path and until he is obedient in all aspects, his spiritual quest will not materialize into Enlightenment, even though he may have found a Guru. For a seeker to be Enlightened, he needs to be aligned with the Guru and his teachings. It is a challenge for any relationship to last in this world and so, sometimes, the bond between the Guru and the disciple doesn't happen quickly. There are times when the Guru-disciple magic happens at first sight, just as there are times when it can take several years for the relationship with the Guru to form and bind.

➤ The Guru Is God's Grace

Sometimes, a Guru may appear to a true seeker but the thousands of other seekers may not attract the Guru. Why? If an Enlightened Master picks one disciple out of hundreds, what is the reason? This is not something that can be explained with logic. Sometimes, there is Divine magic!

It is said that to be Enlightened, we need both, the guidance of the Guru and the grace of God. Therefore, unless one has true devotion or *Bhakti* and one has *Mumukshutva*, that deep love and longing for Liberation and for the Divine, one will not attract the grace of God to find the right Guru.

The journey of life is all about God's grace. But God's grace is upon all of us. It is the few amongst us who believe in

God, have faith, hope and trust that leads us not only to praying but also to loving and seeking God. Only this can open the door for God to pour his special grace upon us enabling us to, first, find the right Master and ultimately, to be liberated and united with the Divine.

Therefore, we must always keep God as our priority. Even after we realize that God is SIP, the Supreme Immortal Power, we cannot underestimate the importance of Yoga, being in union with the Divine and *Bhakti*, reverence and devotion that evolves to *Prema*, Divine Love for God. A true *Yogi*, who is always living in union with the Divine will be undoubtedly blessed with God's grace, Guru's guidance and Spiritual Awakening.

► The Guru Is Our Good Karma

Sometimes, we do not realize it but having a Guru in life is the result of the good Karma of the past. We have no clue about how it happened. But some deeds of our past life can unfold as the arrival of a Spiritual Master. Sometimes, one may try very hard to find a Guru but they may not be able to do so. Why?

The Guru is the guide, who leads us to Enlightenment. Being Enlightened is Karmic. If we have a huge Karmic debt, then something may hold us back from coming in contact with the right Master. So, unless we make a lot of effort and there is a lot of good Karma in the present, the Guru will remain far away from us. Therefore, seekers of God, of Enlightenment and Liberation must be sincere in

their quest to find a Spiritual Master. Otherwise, if we miss this aspect, we may miss the opportunity of being Enlightened, although we have the blessing to be born as a human being. Then, we will have to return again with good Karma to find the right Spiritual Master.

However, there is hope. We can change our destiny. With good Karma, we can wipe out our Karmic debt which may be blocking us from meeting our Guru. Sometimes, it may be the other way round. Our past Karma can bring us face to face with a Spiritual Master without us making any effort. How does this happen? It is our Karma that gifts us a Guru, who can lead us to Liberation from suffering and Unification with the Divine.

► Not Any Guru, We Need The Right Guru

It's not a great challenge to find just any Guru. But a true Guru is the Enlightened Guru who will take us from darkness to light. Otherwise, though we may have a Master, we will still be caught in the darkness of ignorance. We need the right Guru, a real Guru, not any Guru to attain the state of Self-Realization and God-Realization. Therefore, sometimes, we must not accept any Guru as our Guru until we are absolutely sure that he is Enlightened and has the ability to lead us to the state of Spiritual Awakening.

If by chance, we meet a wrong Guru, we will have enough opportunities to leave that Guru and find a more profound, Awakened and intelligent Master. Of course, we shouldn't go around shopping for Gurus. The Guru is

God's grace. The Guru is our good Karma. When the right moment strikes, we will know that we have found the right Guru. There will be no doubt, provided we are not controlled by our mind that is making us a fool.

We are not taught in school how to find the right Guru. But if we are in Consciousness and sincere in our seeking, the grace of God will connect us to the right Guru, who will guide us through our journey till we realize God.

► Types Of Gurus

There are different types of Gurus. Many self-proclaimed Gurus may belong to different religions and have different theologies and philosophies. There is no one-size-fits-all Guru. Not all faiths or cultures state that one must have a Guru. There are many religions that ask us to owe our allegiance only and directly to God. Then, we pray through messengers, agents, saints, monks, who represent that God. However, these are not Gurus. A Guru is one who can take us from darkness to light, who can Awaken us to the truth. A Guru is meant to guide us in the science of Spirituality to discover the Divine Soul, the Spirit, the *Atman*.

Different types of Gurus may have different methods and styles. Some might be flamboyant in their approach, while others may be humble and simple. What we must be cautious about is that we should be able to contact, connect and communicate with the Guru. Otherwise, we cannot

call that spiritual leader our Guru. Even if we call somebody our Guru, if they are not accessible to us, the Guru will only be a 'rubber stamp' Guru. A real Guru holds our hand and takes us across the shore, liberating us from all misery on earth and from repeated rebirths. Therefore, the importance of having a Guru who is alive. If our Guru passes away and we have been Enlightened enough, we may not need another Guru. But if we have not been Spiritually Awakened, we must find a Guru so that we can reach our spiritual destination.

When I was on my quest, I was connected with my Guru, *Dada*. At that time, I was rich and famous and there were many so-called Gurus who tried to attract me to follow them. This is not uncommon. Many are branded as 'Gurus' but they, in fact, can play no role in our Enlightenment. We must be connected with a true Master and we must let the Divine bond lead to our Awakening. I was actively connected with my Master till I got the spark of Spiritual Awakening, till the door was unlocked to God and even today, I am soulfully connected to my Master, my true Guru.

► Unlocking The Door To God

The most prominent sign of a good Guru, a truly Enlightened Master is their connection with God. A real Guru is very Godly. He lives in Yoga, in union with God. He may be religious or spiritual but in either case, he has attained that state of God-Realization. Thus, he is able to unlock the door for us to attain God.

God-Realization is not easy. It happens only after Self-Realization. For a Guru to help us attain God, it is a prerequisite that he is already self-realized and God-realized. He understands God, life, Happiness, birth, death and rebirth thoroughly. He has Awakened to the truth of life. Therefore, such a Master can effortlessly unlock the door for us to walk towards God. It is not that every seeker who is led by a true Guru will realize God. It is also for the seeker to fulfil what a true disciple must have. But if we find the right Guru, we will have the opportunity of realizing God, just as we will discover the purpose of life and be free from all misery and sorrow.

*The right Guru,
what is the best way for us to find?
It is by using our Intelligence,
not using our Mind!*

Part D



FROM *GU* TO *RU*. FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT



Why do we need a Guru at all? It is because we suffer due to the darkness of ignorance that we live in. We believe in many a lie, like God lives in the sky. We think, '*I will die*,' and we don't know, '*Who am I?*' All this is because of what we are taught in school, because of which we remain a fool! How do we overcome ignorance? How can we unlearn the wrong that we have learned? For this, we need a Guru.

The word Guru comes from the word *Gu*, darkness and *Ru*, light. The Guru is one who makes us overcome the darkness of ignorance and leads us to the light of truth. By doing so, he helps us overcome the misery of the mind and the agony of the ego. We all suffer because the mind creates fear, worry, stress, anxiety, regret, shame and guilt. Then, we further suffer because of the agony and anguish created by 'I', the ego. We experience anger, hate, revenge, jealousy, pride, greed and selfishness. How can we overcome these 14 miseries or monsters? How can we overcome all the lies that have made us suffer through our lives? The answer is through a Guru, one who Awakens us to the truth, one who Enlightens us to Self-Realization and God-Realization. Without an Enlightened Master, there is no way to overcome the darkness of life. Not only will we suffer on earth but we will also return in repeated rebirths, only to suffer again and again. Therefore, we need a Spiritual Master, an Enlightened Guru to take us from *Gu* to *Ru*, from darkness to light.

► The Guru Is A Beacon Of Light

The Guru is a beacon of light. From ancient times, we have understood the need for a lighthouse. It is that bright light from a tall tower that guides ships and warns them of hazards. While we are worried about ships crashing, we are not worried about our life being destroyed. The lighthouse of our life is the Guru. The Guru's beacon of light is so strong that it wipes out our ignorance. It is the source of spiritual inspiration because it can help us fight the fog of ignorance.

Most of us live and die but we don't know why! We come and go but we don't understand the meaning of the show. We think we are the body, the Mind and Ego, ME and we experience misery. With the Guru, we can go from *Gu* to *Ru*, from the myth to the truth, as his light shines and guides us towards taking the right steps in life.

The phenomenon and the relevance of a Guru is not a modern-day concept or an outcome of modern-day globalization. The concept of Guru has existed for thousands of years. Although today's world uses Artificial Intelligence and the system of education has transformed, a true Guru's light is far more precious than knowledge which we can get in a college. There is enough spiritual information on the internet but who can convert the information into Realization? For this crystallization, we need a Guru, an Enlightened Guru, an Awakened Master. Otherwise, we will continue to be in *Gu*, darkness, and suffer.

► The Guru Is Awakened

Without being a beacon of light, there is no Guru. Without the ability to help us overcome our darkness, one cannot even be called a Guru. The Guru is a wise sage who is himself Enlightened. He is thorough with the subject of God, religion, life, death, Happiness and suffering. The Guru is an Enlightened Master, who has Realized the Truth. Chances are that the Guru has been Enlightened by another Enlightened Guru. The truth of Enlightenment is that one cannot be Enlightened only with knowledge. One needs an Awakened Master to convert the knowledge to wisdom. Therefore, it is rare to find an Enlightened Guru. Because seekers are not Enlightened themselves, they can easily be misled into following one who claims to be a Guru but in reality, is not. Therefore, seekers must be very cautious in recognizing the Enlightenment of their Master. They should not be carried away or misled by someone, who appears to be a Guru but is incapable of taking one from darkness to light.

What is the qualification of a Guru? He is Enlightened. He is Spiritually Awakened. But who can certify this? Unless we are sincere seekers and know and understand the subject of Spirituality, we may end up following an unenlightened person who disguises himself as a Guru. The Guru seeks nothing, except to help seekers Realize the Truth. The Guru himself is the epitome of Spiritual Awakening, of humility, peace and Consciousness. These are some of the qualities that a seeker must find in a Master that they want to accept as a Guru. Most importantly, the Guru should be able to Enlighten us on any subject of life and God.

► The Guru Can See Us Through And Through

As we start our journey with our Guru, we gradually become clearer that we have found our Master. The relationship between a disciple and the Guru should build soon enough for a sincere seeker to realize what the Guru expects. If we ourselves are not the right seekers, how can we find the right Master? However, a true seeker seeking Enlightenment will create a bond with his Guru so that there is transparency and trust. This immediately makes a seeker open up to the Guru, who becomes a symbol of God, a true spiritual guide and a friend. This combination of love and trust in the Guru helps one to accept the Guru's guidance, leads one to surrender and follow the Guru's advice.

Initially, the relationship of a Guru and a disciple is like that of friends. The Guru starts by being a mentor but the true Guru gets visualized as a messenger of God appearing as the Guru. Thereafter, the seeker opens up completely and the Guru, who can see through a disciple completely, is able to lead him forward on that inner voyage towards the purpose of life.

The Guru is an expert in the subject of Spirituality and can understand us, our circumstances, our problems in a moment! He can also give us instant solutions. Thereafter, it is for us to obey and to follow. If we doubt our Master, the result is a disaster! Therefore, finding the right Guru and understanding the Guru's expectations are key before we embark on our life journey with our Spiritual Master.

► The Guru Starts Our *Talaash*, Our Quest

How can a Guru take us from darkness to light? It is through a spiritual quest, a *Talaash*. First, we must find the right Guru. Then, the Guru must be aligned to our spiritual seeking. If the Spiritual Master finds that we are competent and sincere, he will help us start a search, a quest for Spiritual Awakening. Unless we, as seekers, are mature enough to start a quest, the Guru will never help us begin our quest. And even if he does, it will be meaningless. The journey from *Gu* to *Ru* is only when a truly Enlightened Guru is connected to a sincere obedient seeker. Without this combination, there can be no quest and no Enlightenment.

Enlightenment is not magic. It is spiritual logic. It is like climbing Mount Everest. It needs a lot of discipline and practice and of course, the perfect guide, without which it is impossible. The first step of a disciple, after a spiritual bond has been created with his Guru, is the starting of the spiritual search. Sometimes, a follower may be with his Spiritual Master for years or even decades but would not have started a spiritual quest. It is rare, therefore, to find a spiritual seeker, trusting an Enlightened Guru and beginning a sincere quest for Spiritual Awakening.

As a seeker, we may be desperate to be Enlightened. But can we do it on our own? We can't! We need an Enlightened Master to kindle the light so that we can see a few steps of the spiritual journey. We must trust the Guru and accept the Guru's guidance before we can start to walk his talk. The Guru seeks nothing but to Enlighten us. He evaluates

our readiness and tries to help us begin the search or *Talaash*. But ultimately, it is for the sincere seeker to take the first step.

In 2012, when my Guru asked me to go on a *Talaash*, my spiritual search, I said, 'Yes,' but failed to start it. It was only one year later, when my Master asked me how much I had progressed that I practically initiated my trek to the spiritual peak of Enlightenment, although my quest had theoretically begun.

► The Guru And Our Initiation

What really begins our journey to Enlightenment is what is known as Initiation. This word has been misused and misunderstood by the world. Most people think that when an Enlightened Master whispers a few words or a Mantra in our ears, it is Initiation. But just as the word 'Initiation' suggests, it is the beginning of a long inner voyage to discover who we truly are and why we are here. It is not like initiating an online order on the internet and paying for it so that our order is delivered at the earliest. Initiation by a Guru is a commitment between the Guru and the disciple to walk that challenging path of being Spiritually Awakened.

When the Guru starts our *Talaash* or quest, it is a trigger from the side of the Guru, a trigger that will lead us to Spiritual Awakening. When we take that initiative forward, with spiritual disciplines or *Sadhana* and use our curiosity to seek answers, then the Guru accepts us as a disciple and will handhold us to destination Enlightenment.

This is truly the moment of Initiation, the moment when the Guru and disciple start walking together, hand in hand, exploring the truth about life. Till such time we are initiated, the Guru is not sure how serious we are about our spiritual journey. When we seriously start our quest or *Talaash*, then the Guru begins our first lesson in what can be called spiritual Initiation.

Initiation is just a spark. It begins our spiritual journey with our Master and thereafter, there is no going back. While Initiation is indeed a commitment from the disciple to walk with the Master, it is also a commitment from the Guru to lead his disciple forward and onward.

Will every Initiation lead every seeker to their destination? Definitely not! Only a sincere obedient seeker, who trusts the Guru and does not disobey will walk towards the spiritual peak. Those who are weak, may not even reach the second chapter of Initiation. Chapter by chapter, the Guru will help us overcome our ignorance to Realize the Truth. Step by step, we will go from *Gu* to *Ru*, from darkness to light, till that '*Aha!*' moment, that spark of Spiritual Awakening.

For a Spiritual Initiation to succeed, one needs both, an Enlightened Guru and a sincere seeker. If both are available, there is every possibility that this Initiation will lead to Realization - first, Self-Realization and then, God-Realization. But if the disciple has chosen an unenlightened Master, the Initiation will end in confusion. If an Enlightened Guru has an insincere seeker, he cannot help him reach the destination, Enlightenment.

► The Guru Has The Answer To Every Question

What is the way for a seeker of Enlightenment to go from darkness to light? The seeker must ask. The Guru has all the answers but as they say, '*Knock and it shall open, seek and you shall find, ask and you shall receive.*' Without questioning, the seeker will not progress in Spiritual Awakening.

The right Guru is Enlightened and has every answer, just as the journey with a wrong Master can only end in disaster! A sincere seeker, who knows the subject should come to know, after Initiation, whether he has the right Guru or not. If the seeker has any doubt, Enlightenment is out. But if the seeker is alert and conscious, he will ask relevant questions and get relevant answers. It is during this process of interaction with the Guru, after Initiation, that the seeker has a final chance to proceed forward with the Guru or exit the bond. Once the Guru and the disciple create the bond, it must become unbreakable. Therefore, it is in the state of Initiation that a sincere disciple should question his Master and get answers to all questions. If there is no going from *Gu* to *Ru*, it is a signal for the seeker to take an exit and find another Guru. Normally, a Guru, once having selected a sincere seeker will not let go of the disciple unless the disciple himself chooses not to follow the path and backs away on his own — that is the Karma of the seeker! A Guru will not initiate a disciple into climbing the peak of Enlightenment unless the Guru feels that the seeker is sincere and committed.

The Guru is Enlightened. Giving answers to questions is a part of the Guru's life. But not everybody is blessed to be led to a spiritual quest and to be initiated. For this, one needs to have good Karma and the grace of God, without which the guidance of the Guru cannot take us from *Gu* to *Ru*.

► **Going From *Gu* To *Ru***

Is it easy to go from *Gu* to *Ru*? Is it easy to overcome the darkness of ignorance and reach that state of Self-Realization and God-Realization? No, it is the toughest challenge of life. Going from *Gu* to *Ru* means, bit by bit, chipping at the rock of ignorance till the statue of Truth, which is hidden inside, is revealed. We are conditioned with layers and layers of ignorance. We believe that God lives in the sky. We believe that '*I will die*,' just as we believe that '*I am I*.' It is not easy for the Guru to cause this transformation unless a seeker is committed and sincere.

Enlightenment is the ultimate peak of life. It is realizing that we are not this body which will die, we are not the mind we cannot find and we are not the ego that says 'I'. The Guru has to help a seeker Enlighten the ego. Only then will the false beliefs vanish and the truth be revealed. This is going from *Gu* to *Ru* and this can only be achieved by an Enlightened Master, a Guru who is Spiritually Awakened and a disciple who is committed and sincere.

► We Are Enveloped In Ignorance

Man has come to earth only because of Karma. If there was no Karma, good or bad, then man would not have been reborn. Because we are enveloped in ignorance, we think we are human beings having a spiritual experience. We do not realize that we are the Divine Spirit appearing as human beings. We are born and we are gone and this goes on and on. We take birth and cannot stop death from happening. But we can stop from returning in a rebirth. This is possible only if we find an Enlightened Guru who can take us forward, step by step, to realizing that we are manifestations of God. No knowledge from any college, and it may be the best university of the world, can lead us to Liberation from rebirth and from all misery on earth. This is a gift that only the Guru can give.

As long as we remain a fool because of what we were taught in school, it is impossible to be Enlightened. It is the Guru, who makes us unlearn what we have learned. There is so much *Gu*, darkness and with repeated *Ru*, light, the Guru goes on and on in helping us attain the several Realizations that can, one by one, overcome our ignorance and make us Realize the Truth.

Many tasks in this world are difficult but the most difficult task in the world is for an Enlightened Guru to Awaken an ignorant but sincere seeker. We believe that by doing good Karma, we can be liberated, attain *Moksha*, *Nirvana* and Salvation. But this is not true. The Guru teaches us how our good Karma will only bring us back to the planet. Like this, little by little, our journey with the Guru will ultimately wipe away every point of darkness till the light of Enlightenment shines.

► The Guru Helps Us Light The Light Within

Every human being has a purpose. It is to be Enlightened. We are not meant just to live and to die and to think, 'I am 'I'.' We are supposed to discover, *'Why did we come to earth? What is the purpose of our human birth?'* Unfortunately, the billions of people around the world do not Realize this Truth. This is Enlightenment, Spiritual Awakening. It is overcoming the dark ignorance that the entire world is enveloped in.

What does the world think? The world thinks that our goal is success. We want to own a business, become an artist, have a start-up venture or even become a scientist or an actor. Ultimately, what are we seeking? Success? But why? Because we want to be happy. Unfortunately, we don't realize that success is not Happiness. Happiness is success. If we want to be happy, we have to reach the state of Eternal Bliss, living in Truth Consciousness and this is only possible through Enlightenment. Who can Enlighten us? A Guru. Nobody else. A Guru is one who has himself evolved from *Gu* to *Ru*, from darkness to light. Only an Enlightened person can Enlighten others. Unfortunately, there are very few Enlightened Masters or truly Awakened Souls and similarly, there are only a few seekers. 1% of this world is visually blind. 99% is spiritually blind. And this is caused by our own mind, a mind that we cannot find because it does not actually exist. Still, the toxic thoughts of the mind take over and our peace is left behind. It is only the Guru who can help us still the mind and then, peace, we can find! It is only the Guru

who can help us evolve from achievement to fulfillment to Enlightenment. It is only the Guru who can teach us that pleasure is not the real treasure and that we must find peace before this life journey does cease. And for this, we must escape from this circus called Life and discover our true purpose. Only the Guru knows how to navigate that inner voyage to Enlightenment. It is for us to find the right Master and to start our life quest before this journey escapes us.

*What is the way to
make Life truly bright?
Find a true Guru
who will take you from darkness to light.*

Part E



THE DISCIPLE



Who needs a Guru? Who needs to go from *Gu* to *Ru*? Who is in darkness? Who needs the light of truth? It is the disciple. What makes a person a disciple? Unless somebody is a sincere seeker and wants to achieve the purpose of life, unless somebody is curious about death and thereafter, about life and its mystery, one can never become a disciple. A disciple is not one who just believes in God. In fact, a disciple is not just a follower of a spiritual leader or a pupil of a teacher. Unless someone is truly passionate about following their Mentor, they do not qualify to be a disciple.

► **The Difference Between A Follower, A Disciple And A True Seeker**

Every follower of every Master or Guru need not be a disciple. A disciple is one who has started a spiritual quest, one who has been initiated by an Enlightened Master. Without this engagement between a Mentor and a seeker, the disciple doesn't get kindled to become a Guru's disciple. There may be many followers, even thousands, who may just be like fans or people who are in awe of somebody. In today's world, they may even follow a Guru on Instagram or Facebook but this does not make them a disciple. Only a sincere, dedicated, committed follower, who has been accepted by the Guru can begin the journey of a disciple. Yes, there is a possibility that a seeker has all the qualities to be a true disciple but he may still be in search of the right Master. Such a disciple is sure to find a Guru on the path of his spiritual seeking.

► Sincere Seekers

A sincere seeker is someone who is not drifting through life like others, those who just zoom from womb to tomb. A sincere seeker wants to discover the purpose of life, *'Why did I come to this earth? What was the cause of my birth?'* A seeker starts the journey of seeking – To Read, Reflect and Realize. During this journey, if a seeker is sincere, he will be conscious and he will be committed to his Guru, the Enlightened Master, who will lead him to Self-Realization.

► Obedience And Trust

Once a disciple finds an Enlightened Master, the journey of his Enlightenment starts. All it needs is a sincere seeker and an Awakened Guru. Then what? Then comes the journey where the disciple must have complete trust and obey the Master. Otherwise, we may have a GPS in our hands but by not following the guidance, we will not reach our ultimate destination.

Some people think that 99% trust is trust. No, trust is always 100%. Anything less than 100% means that there is no trust. The disciple may discuss with the Master, even argue when there is a difference of opinion but cannot doubt the words of his Guru. Faith in the Master is the way to get to the light of truth. This trust is often built with the glue of love for where there is love, there is trust, just as if there is no trust, love disappears. Therefore, the disciple loves his Master and trusts without doubt. In turn, the Master also loves his true disciples and leads them out of

ignorance to the truth. But then, ultimately, it depends on the key question – Does the disciple obey his Guru?

Unless the disciple obeys and follows the Mantra, TODD – Trust, Obey, Don't Disobey, he will never be enlightened. The inner voyage to Spiritual Awakening is not an easy one and especially, with the two enemies in our head, the mind and ego, we can just be dead if we do not trust and obey!

► Complete Surrender

Sometimes, there are disciples who have trust and they want to obey but something stops them from seeking the light of truth. Why is that? It is because they do not surrender.

Surrender is a gift that only a few are blessed with because it means that one has completely surrendered themselves. *'Like a feather in the air or a leaf on the sea, I surrender to Thee.'* A true disciple is fearless. He knows that he is in safe hands. He has complete confidence in his Guru and the fact that he is Spiritually Awakened. Therefore, for a disciple to reach this far itself is serious business. Imagine having a Guru whom you don't trust. How can you surrender your life to such a Master?

Haven't we seen that hesitation in crossing a busy road can often lead to a fatal accident? So, when we are unsure of our Master and withhold from surrendering, it is dangerous because neither will we get Awakened nor will

we attain the achievement of worldly goals that we have left behind. A true seeker has evolved from achievement to fulfillment before he is ready to be a sincere disciple worthy of Enlightenment. When we look at some of the Gurus who led their disciples to Spiritual Awakening, we find certain things in common — sincerity of the seeker, trust, obedience and unconditional surrender. So, what separates those disciples who Awaken from those who don't?

► Curiosity And Questions

A disciple who has curiosity and who is constantly asking questions will see the light at the end of the tunnel. Haven't we heard that if we want to receive, we must ask? If we want the door to open, we must knock. So, a sincere disciple is constantly curious, constantly asking questions from his Guru, his Master. We are not the only disciple of the Guru. We must also understand that. Unless we are amongst the forerunners, the Guru will not see our passion, our *Mumukshutva*, which is key to overcoming all darkness.

What is this journey all about? It is about being Enlightened, overcoming ignorance and Realizing the Truth. For this, there are only two things that are important. First, asking relevant questions and second, getting the right answers. If we have found the right Guru, an Enlightened Master, the second part of the challenge is achieved, for the Guru already has all the answers. But what if we don't ask the right questions? Therefore, in this journey of going from

Gu to *Ru*, the Enlightened Master alone cannot create sparks of Spiritual Awakening without sincere disciples walking that narrow path that leads to Liberation.

Who am I, in reality? What is my purpose on earth? What happens after death? What is the Soul? How does Karma work? Who is the real God? Is rebirth a fairy tale? There are hundreds of questions that a disciple must ask. This is what excites a true Guru to share his wisdom with a meaningful disciple who has sincerity in his spiritual journey. There is no end to the curiosity. It can go on and on until the disciple's imagination is replaced by Realization. Bit by bit, ignorance is overcome, the myth is replaced by the truth and we progress on the journey from *Gu* to *Ru*. Sincere disciples must not only listen to the Guru but thereafter, contemplate and question: *How can man be God? How can God be everywhere in everything?* These are not simple questions that can be closed with one-line answers. There must be constant and continuous interactions between the Guru and the disciple for the Realization of the goal.

► Building A Bond

The journey between a sincere seeker and an Enlightened Master is like a piece of iron and a magnet. Unless there is the magic of attraction, a bond that builds togetherness, Enlightenment will remain a distant dream. Love, respect and reverence for a Guru are the keys to creating this magic, just as trust, obedience and surrender build the basic foundation. Once the

foundation is firm, the bond must grow. The magic between a Guru and a disciple cannot be explained in words. Their conversation becomes an ecstasy of joy and the Divine true love that flows between them is greater than the love earthly beings experience. Unless a disciple works on building this bond with his Master, he will never reach that light he seeks to be Enlightened with.

A disciple has to be proactive, passionate, persistent, positive and even pious as he embarks on the journey with his Guru. Remember, every Guru has his own style. You can't use any key to unlock any lock. But finding the right key - building an intimate bond with the Guru is the key to a disciple's success. Once there is a bond, then there is no duality between the Guru and the disciple. Guru + Disciple are no more 2. They are 1. Their bond is just like the bond of two Soulmates. They appear to be two different bodies but Soulfully, are one. It is a magical bond that builds between a disciple and a Guru. Is there a process for this? Is there a time frame? No! This is a very personal journey between a disciple and Guru and each one of us has to discover the best way to create this Divine spiritual bond.

► Seeing The Guru As God

The Guru may appear to be just another human being but a disciple must understand that the Guru has realized that he is not the body, he is not the Mind and Ego that is ME. The Guru has already Awakened to the Truth that he is a Divine Soul, a Spark Of Unique

Life. The Guru is able to see God in all, serve God in all and love God in all. Therefore, the Guru already sees the disciple as a manifestation of God. Because we, as disciples have not evolved and transcended, we may take our time but the Guru has already Realized the Truth.

Theoretically, if a disciple begins to see Guru as God and understands that we are all manifestations of the Divine, it will be a humble submission to the Guru that such a disciple deserves to be Enlightened. The Guru will help all sincere seekers but the more we evolve in our journey, the more the Guru will reach out to us, hold our hand and take us across, from *Samsara* to the spiritual shore.

It is for us to have so much devotion and dedication, so much love and longing for the Divine that we are able to see our Guru as SIP, the Supreme Immortal Power. This must manifest in our actions, our words and behaviour, for the Guru must not see our Awakening on the spiritual journey as superficial, as mere words that we speak but see it in our actions, our deeds. Imagine, we start visualizing every human being as God. The Guru will move far ahead from that Initiation and take us to that ultimate peak of Illumination of spiritual Realization.

➤ Don't Sail On Two Boats

If the one reading this book is a true disciple, seeking Enlightenment, he will realize by now that Enlightenment is a unique journey. Going from *Gu* to *Ru*, from darkness to light means having an Enlightened

Master, one who is already spiritually Awakened. After having such a Guru, if we still sail on two boats, we will not reach our destination.

Nobody can sail on two boats. Nobody can drive on two roads. Nobody can ride on two goats. We all know this! But when it comes to a Guru, it is common for people to follow two Masters. People are opportunists and hope that one of the two or three Gurus will liberate them from ignorance, suffering and this world, this *Samsara*.

How can a disciple be Enlightened if he is going north and south at the same time? Unless a disciple has focus, unless a disciple holds on to the Guru tightly, there is no chance of going from *Gu* to *Ru*. We can be driving on a road with two different GPS devices but there are good chances that we will end up lost, listening to the two voice commands from the two different devices! Therefore, beware! Don't sail on two boats. If you are a disciple and you want Liberation, find an Enlightened Master or your life will end up in a disaster.

► The Anatomy Of A True Disciple

If one were to do an anatomy of a true disciple, what would one find? One would find a human being who is longing and yearning for the Lord and Liberation. One would find a sincere obedient seeker who has surrendered completely to the Guru. One would find a person who is living with morals, ethics and values laid down by the Guru. The anatomy would reveal passion,

obsession that manifests as questions. All this forms the basic structure of a true disciple.

The anatomy of a disciple will certify the bond that he has with his Master, his Divine love and unconditional trust. Looking deeper at a disciple, one will find the Guru residing in the temple of his heart. A true disciple has surrendered. He follows the Guru as an epitome of humility. He reflects on the nothingness that we are, as described by the Guru. All this becomes the intrinsic philosophy that a true disciple adopts and adapts to. The anatomy finally reveals the never-give-up attitude of the disciple, showing utmost trust, both in his Enlightened Master and in himself, as he progresses with his Guru on the inward journey towards Self-Realization and God-Realization. A true disciple has dissolved into his Guru and has realized that he is nothing but a speck of his Guru, who is a speck of Divine energy that is a part of the Supreme Immortal Power, SIP, that we call God.

Finally, a true disciple does not waver. He does not hesitate when it comes to obedience. He portrays his complete surrender in all that he thinks, says and does. So also, his dissolving into the Guru appears in the Guru's life as though the disciple and the Guru have become one.

*Sincere, Obedient, Honest and Committed,
is a true Disciple.
With the right Guru,
nobody can stop his Divine arrival!*

Part F



DISCOVERING OUR PURPOSE



What is life all about? Why did we come to earth? What is the purpose of our human birth? Is it just to live till we die? Is it just to have fun till life is done? Of course, everybody wants to be happy, but is everybody happy? We believe the lie that God lives in the sky and we pray without knowing, '*Who is God? Where is God? What is God?*' In fact, we don't pray, we just bray!

Who will guide us to discover the meaning of life? Who will lead us to finding our life purpose? We need a guide, a Guru, an Enlightened Master. Without a Guru, we will remain in darkness. We will zoom from womb to tomb and when we are gone, we will be reborn and this will go on and on. This is not the purpose of life. But 99% of the people in this world do not understand this. Only 1% are blessed and fortunate to find the right Guru and to attain Self-Realization and God-Realization, the purpose of human existence.

We have gone through what and who a Guru is, the role of a Guru and how to find a Guru. And if we want to go from darkness to light, we now know how we can be a good disciple. But what can we expect from the Guru? What guidance will we get that will take us from *Gu* to *Ru*?

➤ **The Guru Is Our Life Coach**

If one wants to discover the true meaning of life, then one must have a Guru. I learned from my Guru that LIFE really means Liberation from Ignorance and Finding Enlightenment. Because of my Guru, I am able to guide so many people to achieve the purpose of life. The

Guru is, thus, a critical aspect of our life. As a life coach, he guides us through the journey, not just to be happy, but to reach that state of Eternal Bliss through Enlightenment. He explains to us what life is all about, why we came to earth, why we must pursue a path of Spirituality and how to reach our destination. The Guru is not a theoretical teacher. Having achieved the purpose of his own life, not only does he know what it is but also how to achieve it.

Most people think that life is all about success and achievement. They think success is pleasure that gives Happiness. Unfortunately, their life becomes a mess because it is filled with anxiety and stress. They are not blessed to be disciples who have found the right Guru. Though they may be millionaires and billionaires, they do not experience Eternal Peace and Everlasting Bliss. Such wealthy people reach out to life coaches with the aspiration of going from success to significance. But not all are fortunate to find a true Guru because a true Guru is not attracted to money and wealth. He is looking for sincere disciples, not wealth opportunities to encash on.

If we really want our life to have meaning and purpose, then we must look for a Guru who is Spiritually Awakened. Otherwise, our life will not have purpose and like a clown, we will jump up and down in the circus of life.

► The Guru Gives Our Life, Meaning

Everybody who lives, dies. Everybody who comes, goes. But how many of us understand what is this show? How many of us realize that this world is

just a drama, the earth a humongous stage and we are mere actors? We bring nothing, we take nothing. But we think that everything belongs to us. So, we get attached to pleasures, possessions and people and we cry. Then, we die and come back for another role, in another costume to repeat the same cycle. As long as we don't understand who we are and why we are here, this drama will continue. Who will tell us that this drama is a *Leela*, a Divine show unfolding on earth as per Karma? We only experience trauma because we don't understand the Law of Karma which is causing this entire drama. Who will tell us that the entire universe is *Maya*, a Cosmic Illusion, which is nothing but a manifestation of the Divine? Who will guide us to reach that state of Liberation from this *Maya*, this *Leela*, and Unification with the Divine through Realization of the Truth? Only the Guru can do it.

Most people live with ignorance which we bring to this world because of our Karma. We don't realize that we are the Divine Soul. So, we live as the body and mind and create Karma. Who will tell us that we are not the body that will die, the actor? We are not the Mind and Ego, ME, that exists out of ignorance as the director. *But we are. We are the Divine Soul.* This Realization can only come with the help of a Guru. Therefore, whether we do anything else or not, two things are very important in life. First, we must try to discover the true purpose of life and second, our sincere seeking should lead us to an Enlightened Master, a true Guru.

► From *Gu* To *Ru*, From Circus To Purpose

If we don't live our life trying to find meaning and purpose, it will remain a circus. Most people learn and learn. Then they earn more and learn more. They don't understand that one day, they will be buried or will burn, only to return! Unless we go from *Gu* to *Ru*, from ignorance to Realization, we will continue to be gone and be born. Unless we find a true Guru, we will always be in *Gu* and never get to *Ru*.

Most people think that success, money, name and fame is all there is in the game called life. We do everything, both fair and unethical, to win a battle in this material world. But we do not embark on this spiritual journey. Everyone knows that ultimately, we will take nothing with us and yet, we are attached to our properties, our possessions and our wealth. Isn't the story of money very funny because we don't take with us, even a penny! When will we overcome the myth and Realize the Truth? When will we go from *Gu* to *Ru*? Only when we find a true Guru!

► The Guru And Happiness

Finding a Guru does not only mean that we will become wiser, theoretically. The Guru is a practical coach. He teaches us that Happiness is just not pleasure that comes and goes. Happiness is peace that forever flows and ultimately, it is purpose. Therefore, a true Guru will lead us from pleasure to peace and ultimately, to purpose. These are the three peaks of Happiness.

Everybody in this world wants to be happy but most people are going from peak to peak, success to success, achievement to achievement, only to reach the ultimate cliff called death. It is the Guru, who helps us take an exit from the highway of achievement to live a life of contentment and fulfillment. Very few people on their own are ready to give up their money, name and fame, to live a life of contentment. However, those who have a true Guru are Enlightened with the truth about Happiness. They learn that Eternal Bliss comes from Truth Consciousness. They count their blessings and try to live by satisfying their need, rather than letting their greed create stress and anxiety.

► The Guru And Peace

The Guru teaches us that Happiness is not a chase. He helps us to live with grace and not get caught in the maze. He teaches us that peace is the very foundation of Happiness, for where there is no tranquillity, stress and anxiety will prevail and destroy our joy. Most of the people in this world are struggling through life, even though they are doing good Karma, charity and philanthropy as random acts of kindness. But they don't achieve that true peace that comes with the guidance from an Enlightened Guru.

80% of the world is running after Happiness, not realizing that it is a shadow. People want more and more. And peace and bliss go out of the door! Ultimately, although people have everything, they end up empty, with nothing.

► The Guru And Enlightenment

The biggest gift from the Guru is the third peak of Happiness - Enlightenment. Only a few people understand the true meaning of the term, 'Enlightenment'. It is lighting the light within, as we go on an inner voyage, beyond achievement and fulfillment. Without a Guru, Enlightenment is impossible and this is the ultimate goal of life. Some people call it *Nirvana*, *Moksha* or Salvation. In simple terms, it is the Realization of the Truth and that is the expertise of the Guru. In fact, the term, 'Guru' refers to one who can Enlighten us, taking us from darkness to light.

Why is it so difficult to be Enlightened? Because we think we are this body. Our Mind and Ego, ME, thinks that we are the one in the mirror that we see. Most of us will say, *'Of course, we are that. Is there any doubt?'* But what is the truth? It is the Guru who holds our hand and takes us forward, bit by bit. We realize that the body came later. We were conceived nine months before. We are not the body. One day, this body will die and our family will destroy the body. Why? The Guru explains, *'Because we have left the body. We are not the body.'*

An Awakened Guru will teach us that the mind does not exist. It is just a bundle of toxic thoughts. Therefore, with the guidance of the Guru, the ego that stands tall like a wall will have a fall. Then, we will be able to see the Divine in one and all. This is Enlightenment, realizing we are the Divine Soul, not the mind and ego. Everybody is a Divine Soul. We all come from one Supreme Immortal Power, SIP, that the world calls 'God'. Only the Guru can Enlighten us to be Spiritually Awakened.

► The Guru And God-Realization

The Guru takes us through the journey of Enlightenment, that starts with Self-Realization and ends with God-Realization. The Guru not only initiates us on the spiritual journey but also answers all our questions, clarifies our doubts, so that there is Purification in our head. If we are sincere seekers, we will experience an Illumination and the light of truth will shine. Thereafter, there will be Realization:

*I am not 'I'.
I am a Soul, a Spark Of Unique Life.
The Soul is SIP, the Supreme Immortal Power.
Therefore, I am SIP and SIP is in all.*

This simple understanding is the most complicated thing for a human being to realize. Even if somebody reads this a hundred times, they may not be Enlightened with the truth. Only a true Guru can help us overcome our ignorance and help us realize that we are not '*this*', what we appear to be. We are '*that*', pure Divine energy. We are all manifestations of God. This Realization takes us to our ultimate destination, Unification with the Divine.

*A Guru transforms our Life
and gives us Purpose.
Otherwise, we will suffer,
as we are lost in Life's circus!*

Part G



THE JOURNEY FROM GURU TO GOD



Why do we have to worry so much about *Gu-Ru*, going from *Gu* to *Ru*? What is the big deal about going from darkness to light? There is enough happening in our life and is it necessary to add one more thing to the list? What we don't realize is that the Guru can transform our life completely. The Guru can unite us with God. The most rewarding aspect of the Guru is his ability to lead us to God-Realization, the dramatic Realization that we are, in fact, God. We are all manifestations of the Divine, the Supreme Immortal Power, SIP. But not even 0.0001% of the world Awakens to this truth. It is only because less than 1% search for a real Guru and 0.01% find a true Guru and progress on the path of Spirituality. These statistics are not to create some sort of spiritual jargon in the head. It is shared so that we realize the importance of life, its purpose and how one should be Enlightened with the truth. What is this journey, first, to a Guru, then, with the Guru and ultimately, to God? Only one who is blessed with a Guru and has the grace of the Divine will realize this.

There are many who get carried away by the appearance of some self-proclaimed Gurus. Millions follow unknown Gurus on the internet. Social media and the latest AI ChatGPT amongst others adds to the confusion of depending on an electronic Guru. This does not work in Enlightenment. One needs a living Guru. One needs communication and interaction. Only then can there be Realization of the Truth.

Therefore, we must start our journey to discover the purpose of life. Our seeking will lead us to a Guru, if we are sincere. If we intelligently interact with our Guru, we will be initiated by the right Master. But thereafter, it depends on us.

► The Guru Is The Spark

What does the Guru do? Just like a matchstick lights up, the Guru initiates the fire that will Spiritually Awaken us. Despite the spark from the Guru, if we do not take any initiative to listen and to reflect, to question and understand, to accept and obey, we will just go around in circles. We must use that spark from the Enlightened Master to light the light of our life. One by one, we must eliminate all our ignorance and replace the myth with the truth. The Guru is the wise one. We must completely trust our Master, once we have firmed ourselves to be his disciple. Then, that light should grow brighter and brighter, till we are Illuminated.

The Guru knows our dark spots. The Guru is wise enough to understand our weaknesses, just as he knows the solution to our spiritual problems. However, the Guru doesn't chase the disciple. If the disciple is earnest, dedicated and sincere, the Guru will take every step to light that spark, which will help the disciple to overcome his ignorance. The journey with the Guru starts with a small spark but ultimately, it all works well. That small spark lights up and that light becomes brighter than all the lights in the world as we realize that we are not the body, mind and ego, we are the Divine Soul and the Soul is none other than the Supreme Immortal Power, that we call God.

► The Journey Within

The journey with the Guru is not a fancy journey. It is not about glitz, glamour and popularity. It is all about going on an inner voyage to discover the true self within. The journey starts with the simple questions, '*Who am I? Why am I here?*' The Awakened Master has already realized that we are the Divine Soul. But it needs a good Guru to make us first, understand and then, Realize the Truth. A Guru may start with the teachings of who we are not. Are we this body that will die? How can we be this body? This was formed over nine months. One day, this body will die and people will say that we passed away. The Guru's magic is based on scientific logic. That is why trust and obedience are the keys to go from *Gu* to *Ru*.

The journey within is to transcend the ego that says 'I'. The Guru helps us realize that I am not 'I'. How can I be the mind? Nobody has seen the mind. Nobody can find the mind. Going inward and God-ward, the Guru makes us realize that we are that life that is throbbing within, the *Atman*, the *Ruh*, the Divine Spirit or the Soul. But how can we realize this? How can we go within to discover this truth?

This is not knowledge that can be imparted by a brilliant professor from a good college. This is Realization. The journey within is lighting a lamp inside us. How is that possible? Only the Guru is capable of doing it. The Guru will make us go inward and through his guidance, give us that spark that will illuminate the inner being. We human beings have nine doors, nine openings, all looking outside. Two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, a mouth and an organ of excretion and procreation. The Guru unlocks the tenth door that helps us in the journey that goes within. Then, we are Enlightened.

► Can The Guru Give Us Enlightenment?

Somebody once asked me this question in one of the 'Ask AiR' sessions that I host every day at 8 pm on Zoom. *Can the Guru give us Enlightenment?* Out of about a hundred people present, about thirty said, 'Yes, the Guru can give us Enlightenment.' About forty said, 'How can the Guru give Enlightenment? We have to light the light within.' And then, finally, they asked me, 'What do you say?' I replied, 'You are right!' They were confused, 'What do you mean?' because there was no clear answer.

Then, I explained, *'Those who believe that the Guru cannot give Enlightenment, cannot be Enlightened with their Guru. They have no confidence, belief, trust or faith. They wonder, 'How can the Guru Enlighten them?' Similarly, those who believe that the Guru can give them Enlightenment, they will be obedient, sincere seekers and ultimately, if their Karma aligns, they will be Enlightened.'*

It is up to us to believe whether our Guru can Enlighten us or not. The Guru is Enlightened and has the capability of leading us to that state of Realization of the Truth. However, Enlightenment is not an injection that can be administered by a Guru. The disciple must have discipline and passion, and must trust the Guru with devotion and dedication. Otherwise, Enlightenment will remain a distant dream.

► Not Every Disciple Can Be Enlightened

It is strange but true that an Enlightened Guru may be able to Enlighten one disciple but may not be able to Enlighten others. Why is that? The point is that Enlightenment is not a process that can be followed to achieve spiritual success. Enlightenment is Spiritual Awakening. One needs to be a *Mumukshu* having deep love and longing for Liberation and for God. One must be a *Jigyasu*, having passion and curiosity to overcome ignorance and to Realize the Truth. Unless a disciple is qualified and fulfils the standard requirements, even an Enlightened Guru is helpless.

The magic between a Guru and disciple is unique. It cannot be compared or equated in any way. Therefore, if *Ramakrishna Paramahansa* could lead *Swami Vivekananda* to Enlightenment, it does not mean that all disciples of that Master will attain Self-Realization.

► Not Every Guru Can Give Us God

Atrue Guru is rare to find. Further, some Gurus may be Enlightened but may not have reached that state of being in Supreme Consciousness, all the time. Even a Guru has his journey. He keeps evolving. Enlightenment is not a peak after which the spiritual journey is over. The journey of Enlightenment continues even after the Enlightenment. Therefore, can our Guru help us attain God?

If the Guru is fully Enlightened, he can. The Guru should be one who has realized God within. The Guru should be able to see God in all, love God in all and serve God in all. Only a God-realized Guru can make us realize God. A self-realized Guru can make us realize that we are not the body, mind and ego, we are the Divine Soul. Therefore, it is not that every Guru can lead us to God. But a truly Enlightened Master can.

Are we capable and ready to reach that state of God-Realization? We too must be ready. The Guru can pour coffee in our cup but we must have the right cup. We must be capable of receiving the wisdom that can Enlighten us about God.

God-Realization is not a common thing. It is not knowledge. It is a spark of Awakening. The truth is that God is in every human being. Every Soul, Spark Of Unique Life is SIP, the Supreme Immortal Power that we call God. Although God is inside us, not every Guru can succeed in taking every disciple on that inner voyage to realize God. However, if we are sincere seekers, if we have that deep love and longing for Realization and we have an Enlightened Master whom we obey and respect, then, through the Guru, we can definitely attain God Realization.

► The Guru And The Disciple – A Magical Combination!

Life is an amazing journey. But for one to enjoy this amazing journey called Life, one must discover the purpose of life. We don't just come here to live and die. Life can be truly amazing. But if we don't understand what life is, if we don't understand why things are happening the way they are, if we are depressed when we see bad things happen to good people, it only means that we have not decoded the mystery called life.

One day, we will die and then, we will return for another life cycle. This cycle will go on and on, as we enjoy pleasure and pain, loss and gain, sun and rain. We will do some good Karma and some bad Karma and then, ultimately, return to earth in a rebirth. So what?

When there is a magical combination of an Enlightened Guru and a sincere disciple, then there will be a spark of Realization. There will be Liberation and Unification. When a sincere seeker is blessed with an Awakened Master, he realizes,

'I am not 'I'.

I am the Soul.

The Soul is SIP, which is none other than God.

I am the very God that I have been praying to.'

This magic unfolds only when a sincere seeker meets his Master on the path, starts his quest, gets initiated and is ultimately, liberated. Then, he reaches the state of becoming one with the Divine. There is nothing beyond that!

► Without The Guru, There Can Be No God

Can we attain God without our Guru? Can we attain our life purpose without an Awakened Master? Our life will wither away in pleasures, possessions and people. We will earn, only for others to burn what we earn. We will pray but we will never realize God. It is only an Enlightened Master, who has himself realized God, who can make us believe that it is a lie to believe that God is in the sky. God is in you, in me, in every Soul that is alive. We can't understand this. We have to experience it through Realization. And for this, we need an Enlightened Master.

Therefore, the journey called life is, in reality, like the journey of a river. The river effortlessly merges with the ocean. But we don't. That is our purpose - to realize that we are mere effects. The cause is SIP. We have to Realize the Truth and being liberated from the body, mind and ego, we should be united with God. Life is a journey to realize God. But we cannot reach our destination of God-Realization without an Enlightened Guru.

► The Need Of A Living Master

Many people are confused about whether the Guru must be alive or whether an Enlightened Master who has passed away can still be a Guru. Can a holy book, a scripture, a philosophy or a theology be our Guru? While there are precious books that can guide us with knowledge, Realization needs a living Master. Unless the Guru is alive, we will not be able to Ask, Investigate and Realize the Truth. A book can be easily misinterpreted. Most often it is translated and then edited, and therefore, diluted. Even if it is a perfect book, it is only

a one-way communication. It can share wisdom but cannot create that spark called Realization.

Therefore, if one is seeking Enlightenment, one needs to find a living Master. Without a living Master, it is practically impossible to go from *Gu* to *Ru*. Spiritual Awakening is not just one Realization. We need several Realizations that become like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle that must be put together for us to experience that 'Aha!' moment. While a book can teach us many things and even lead to some kind of transformation, the metamorphosis of Self-Realization and God-Realization can come only from a living Master.

Our biggest problem is our mind. It constantly attacks us with toxic thoughts that create so much confusion. Unless we interact with our Guru, we will not be able to overcome the myth and Realize the Truth. Only the Guru can help us still our mind, kill our mind and move to the state of Consciousness.

Therefore, we must not let our mind fool us into believing that we can be Enlightened without a living Master. We need a Guru who is alive, one who can Enlighten us, Awaken us through several discussions and interactions, from where we can get our Realizations. If we are not yet Enlightened or far from it and if our Guru passes away, we will need the help of another Master. But if our Guru has initiated us enough and we are either Awakened or very close to being Awakened, then further contemplation on what the living Master taught is enough to reach destination Realization.

*We all Pray and we all Seek the Lord,
But it is only the Guru who can complete our Journey to God!*

Part H



GURUS AND DISCIPLES THAT INSPIRE



If we are seeking the ultimate goal called Enlightenment, if we are on a quest for Eternal Happiness that comes from Spiritual Awakening and therefore, we are seeking a Guru on that path, we must pause and reflect on the inspirational relationships of some of the most Divine Gurus this world has seen. Even if we have found a Guru and we want to take our relationship to the next level, it is good to see how disciples who were Enlightened, lived with their Gurus following the path laid down by their Guru, in obedience, devotion and dedication.

Whether it was *Swami Vivekananda and Ramakrishna Paramahansa* or *Ramakrishna himself and his Guru, Totapuri Maharaj*, each story is different and has something to teach us. What was the relationship between *Meerabai* and *Saint Ravidas*? What did *Adi Shankaracharya* do in his journey with *Govinda Bhagavatpada*? King *Shivaji* surrendered to *Saint Ramdas* and so did many others surrender to Awakened beings. *Swami Chinmayananda* first, had the guidance of *Swami Sivananda* and then, the guidance of *Tapovan Maharaj* to complete his journey of Spiritual Awakening.

If you have been initiated on the spiritual path, you must use these life examples to strengthen your bond with your Guru just as I did with my Guru, *Dada J.P. Vaswani*, looking at his bond with his Master, *Sadhu T.L. Vaswani*.

We are not covering all the Gurus and disciples of the world in this book but selecting a few best examples that can inspire us to make the best of our journey with our Guru.

The *Guru-Shishya Parampara* or the Guru-disciple tradition has been around for centuries. From time immemorial, we hear of how Enlightened Gurus were able to lead their dedicated followers from *Gu* to *Ru*, from ignorance to the Realization of the Truth. It is for us to scan through these real-life episodes to take inspiration and use the Divine bond with our Guru to reach that state of eternal light.

► ***Vivekananda And Ramakrishna Paramahansa***

Swami Vivekananda began his relationship with Ramakrishna Paramahansa in 1881. In the beginning, Swami Vivekananda, then called Narendra, found Ramakrishna to be very strange. Narendra was looking for a Guru and asking every prospective Guru if they had seen or experienced God. Most Masters would skip the question or give vague answers. But Ramakrishna is said to have replied to Narendra, 'Yes. I have seen God. I see him as I see you. We can talk to God.' Swami Vivekananda was impressed and started meeting his future Master till he was ultimately, Awakened. It was not easy for Swami Vivekananda but it was the turning point in his life. Their relationship is a classic example of the relationship between a Guru and an Enlightened disciple.

► *Ramakrishna Paramahansa And Totapuri Maharaj*

Ramakrishna Paramahansa himself had a Guru called Totapuri Maharaj. Totapuri Baba was a Vedantic monk, who taught Ramakrishna, the Advaita philosophy and the art of experiencing non-dual Samadhi. In about 1865, he is known to have taken Ramakrishna from Gu to Ru. As Ramakrishna lived with deep devotion to Goddess Kali, it is Totapuri Maharaj who is said to have told Ramakrishna that he has to go beyond duality.

Once Ramakrishna's Guru asked him to withdraw his mind from all objects of the world, including Gods and Goddesses. Ramakrishna found it impossible to remove Kali, the Divine mother in whom he believed. It is said that the Guru instructed him to cut the image of Goddess Kali when his mind projected the same, to transcend the attachment he had. This, we are told, opened the door to Ramakrishna's Enlightenment. Hitherto, Ramakrishna used to be deeply immersed in devotion to Kali and the same imagination was used with the Guru's advice to create a sword and cut through his ignorance.

There are many stories of Ramakrishna that can inspire seekers seeking an Enlightened Master.

► *Meerabai And Guru Ravidas*

Meerabai is a poet known for her *Bhakti* towards Lord *Krishna*. She was a disciple of Saint *Ravidas*. While she was a *Rajput* princess, *Ravidas* was of a lower cast.

The *Rajput* princess had renounced her luxurious life as she was deeply in love with Lord *Krishna*. After Initiation from Guru *Ravidas*, she is said to have Awakened to realize the Divine.

There are several stories of *Meerabai* in relation to her Guru *Ravidas*, including the story of how a pot of poisonous milk became nectar. Another story narrates how a poisonous snake was unable to kill her, making her life of devotion, immortal.

► *Adi Shankaracharya And Govinda Bhagavatpada*

We have heard of *Adi Shankaracharya*, who lived in the 8th century. We may have also heard the story about how he was keen to become a renunciate, a *Sannyasi*, though his mother had stopped him. One day, it is said that he was caught by a crocodile while bathing in a river and appealed to his mother, '*At least, let me die as a Sannyasi!*' When she agreed, as though by a miracle, the crocodile let go of him and young *Shankara* went on to become the great Saint we know of.

Adi Shankaracharya met his Guru, *Govinda Bhagavatpada* as the former was wandering near the river *Narmada* in search of a Master. *Govinda Bhagavatpada* asked him, 'Who are you?' *Shankara* answered, 'I am not the body, mind and ego,' in a poem, which has become immortal as the *Nirvana* or *Atma Shatakam*. *Govinda Bhagavatpada* immediately accepted young *Shankara* as his disciple. He was also said to have been blessed by the Guru of his Master, *Gaudapadacharya* who was amongst the first to advocate *Advaita Vedanta*.

Just like *Adi Shankaracharya* met *Govinda Bhagavatpada* and his Guru met Guru *Gaudapadacharya*, *Shankara's* grand Guru, we realize that Enlightenment is possible only when it is directly experienced through the guidance of a Guru.

➤ ***Chhatrapati Shivaji And Samarth Ramdas***

Sant *Ramdas*, as he was popularly called, was a Spiritual Master who was also a writer and a poet. He was the Guru of *Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj*. They met in 1649 and *Shivaji* was initiated. Emperor *Shivaji* was greatly influenced by his Master and there are many stories that indicate that he wanted to hand over his kingdom to his Guru. The Guru, who was Enlightened, is said to have accepted the kingdom and then returned it to *Shivaji* for the latter to rule as a benevolent and Awakened King.

Shivaji died at the early age of 53 but is said to have evolved with the grace and guidance of his Guru, *Sant Ramdas*.

► *Swami Chinmayananda, Swami Sivananda And Tapovan Maharaj*

The story of *Swami Chinmayananda* is an amazing story. He was a journalist and freedom fighter. Born as *Balakrishnan Menon* in 1916 in Kerala, he had nothing to do with Spirituality till he met *Swami Sivananda* in *Rishikesh* and changed his name to *Chinmayananda* and was initiated into *Sannyasa*.

While *Swami Chinmayananda* studied the *Vedas* and *Upanishads* under *Sivananda*, he was led to *Swami Tapovan Maharaj* for further spiritual guidance. This is quite unusual, but it was the grace of his first Guru *Sivananda*, who sent him to the great Master *Tapovan* in the Himalayas.

Having been influenced by two Gurus, *Chinmayananda* went on to become a great spiritual orator and influenced the lives of millions and continues to do so through the *Chinmaya Mission*.

► *Dada J.P. Vaswani And T.L. Vaswani*

Dada J.P. Vaswani, my Guru, was mentored by the Spiritual Master, *Sadhu T.L. Vaswani*. While my journey with my Guru, *Dada* follows in the next section, we cannot miss out the relationship of *Jashan Vaswani*, who became *Dada* and his Guru, *Sadhu T.L. Vaswani*.

Sadhu T.L. Vaswani, Thanwardas Lilaram Vaswani was a *Sindhi*, born in Hyderabad, *Sindh*. He studied all religions and became an expert in the *Upanishads*. He then took up a teaching job and worked as a professor in Calcutta. In 1948 he migrated to India when Pakistan was formed. He promoted the idea of non-duality, just as he had reverence for all religions and his love for animals made him motivate people to live a meatless life. He then passed on his legacy to *Dada J.P. Vaswani*.

The above stories of a few Enlightened Gurus and their Masters reveal a pattern of how many Enlightened Gurus were led on to Spiritual Awakening by a Guru. Without a Guru, it is very difficult to be Enlightened in the short span of a hundred years which is the life span of a human being.

*Every Enlightened Guru, too,
has a Master,
To be Awakened,
we need a Spiritual Partner!*

Part I



AFTERWORD



MY JOURNEY
WITH MY GURU



By far, the most profound relationship in my life has been that with my Guru, whom we fondly called and continue to call, *Dada*. His name was *Jashan Pahlajrai Vaswani*. He arrived on earth, that is, his arrival day, was 2nd August 1918 and he departed on 12th July 2018, a few days before he completed 100 years. I spent over 25 years with him evolving from achievement to fulfillment and finally, Enlightenment. I have already written a book on my Guru titled, '*My Guru, My Mentor, My God on Earth*'. How much ever I may write about my Guru, these pages cannot do justice to the experiences I have had with him. What started just as a mentorship of life went on to becoming a strong Guru-disciple relationship, till he led me on that path of Spiritual Awakening where I discovered my God on earth, just as I discovered God within me.

Let me share my story with my Guru to end this book, 'Guru' so that it can be a Divine climax for those who are seeking a Guru, inspiring them to move from the darkness of this illusory world to that Eternal Light of peace, love and bliss.

► The Beginning Of My Journey

I did not even know the meaning of 'Guru'. I was so busy achieving success, going from one peak to another that I paid little attention to it. One day, in 1992, I was invited to a talk where *Dada* was speaking to a hall packed with people. I was listening to his philosophical talk on happiness and purpose, just as I would listen to any motivational speaker. But then, something magical

happened! He looked into my eyes and I was lost. Little did I realize that I had sunk deep in his love. We spoke endlessly as the rest of the audience just waited patiently. This was just the beginning. That encounter became a relationship that lasted for over 25 years. I used to write to him and take his advice on everything that was happening in my life, both my business and personal life. I had not yet made him my Guru though he was a Guru to millions around the world. Little did I know that I would become one of his favourite disciples just as he would become my Guru, my God on earth.

► *Dada* Could Solve Any Problem

It seemed like *Dada* was a magician. Every time I went to him with a problem, he had an immediate and effective solution. How did he do it? No doubt, he was extremely wise and intelligent but how was he able to solve everybody's problems in a moment? He had an amazing memory, it seemed because he remembered all his devotees who came from different countries, just to get a glimpse of him. Somehow, I was blessed. People couldn't get a chance to meet him at close quarters but whenever I went to Pune, where his *Ashram* was located, I was invited to eat breakfast, lunch and dinner with him. This was unique. Hardly anybody else had this privilege or the privilege of conversations with him.

At every meeting, I would converse with *Dada* about life. Everything that was happening, including my personal growth, my business, my family and my problems. Little

did I realize that slowly but steadily, he was implanting a philosophy of life that would ultimately lead me to my purpose. He didn't seek anything from me. Many Gurus are constantly asking disciples for something or the other. But *Dada* was unique. In fact, he was ready to give me whatever I wanted, without asking anything in return. I was truly blessed!

► The Turning Point

The turning point in my life came after 15 years of being with *Dada*. I had started a large business and I was struggling to manage it along with my other passions of doing humanitarian work and running a temple. I had, by now, built a mammoth temple with a 65-foot statue of Lord *Shiva* that my Guru, *Dada* often visited. I was running two humanitarian homes with hundreds of destitute people who needed care and support. As I struggled in my business even though I was contemplating expanding further, I got an opportunity to shut down my business and clear all loans and liabilities that were making me struggle. This way, I could earn more and have free time to pursue my own passions and dreams. *Dada* said, '*Why don't you just shut your business and focus on your life?*' I was dumbfounded. I was just 40 years old, working 18 hours a day, 7 days a week, a well-known business tycoon, going from peak to peak. How could I suddenly shut everything down? I was flabbergasted. But then, it happened. I received an offer where I could earn more and yet focus on my life and was free to pursue my own passions and dreams. So, I shut

down my business! This was the first real transformation of my life, the first mammoth step from *Gu* to *Ru*.

Dada, as my Guru, Enlightened me several times on the mundane issues in my life, whether they were misunderstandings with my father or challenges with my wife. He would take me out of my ignorance to the light of truth. But for the first time, my life was completely transformed. From a businessman, I started living a life doing Humanitarian, Inspirational and some religious and Spiritual Work. Little did I know where my Guru's GPS was going to take me!

► *Dada* And His Devotees

Spending years with *Dada*, I noticed that swarms of people would come to him at his public talks, on festivals and special occasions, like his birthday and *Guru Purnima*. I too would be there on most of the special days. But thousands of devotees would come to him and offer him fruits, sweets, flowers, donations and other gifts. *Dada* was not enamoured by all this. Although he was heading a large organization with educational institutions and several other sections and centres around the world, he was the epitome of humility. He radiated Divine peace and vibrated love and joy to one and all. His devotees were crazy about him, just as I was. But I was blessed. It felt like that he was holding my hand and leading me forward, though I hardly brought anything to offer to him like the others did. Still, I was blessed with his special love, care and attention.

After I shut down my business, I could spend more time with *Dada* and my bond with my Guru became stronger.

► What Is Your Purpose?

After I shut down my business, I started travelling around the world. I would take pictures and bring them with me to show them to *Dada*. One day, as my Guru saw pictures of me playing in Antarctica with penguins, he asked me, '*Are you just going to live like this, till you die or are you going to find out why you came to this world?*' This was something completely new to me but having freed myself from all my responsibilities and engagements, I started contemplating. But the turning point came on the auspicious day of *Buddha Purnima* in 2012, at a public lecture. As I sat listening to him, he locked his eyes into mine and asked, '*When are you going to start a quest, a Talaash to discover the purpose of life?*'

That night, at dinner, I discussed with *Dada* what it meant to go on a *Talaash*. He advised me that life had a deeper meaning and purpose and though I was blessed to be liberated from my business five years ago, I was wasting my life, just enjoying travelling around the world. Although I was doing good humanitarian work and also helping people build their faith, this was not enough. I had a bigger purpose.

One year quickly passed by. In 2013, again on *Buddha Purnima*, in another public lecture, he once again locked his eyes into mine and asked, '*Where have you progressed in your Talaash, your quest for the purpose of life?*'

► The Beginning Of My Quest

On that day, the *Buddha Purnima* day of 2013, I put aside everything that I was doing, to go on a quest for the purpose of life.

- Who am I?
- Why am I here?
- What is Enlightenment?
- Who is God? Where is God? What is God?
- What is the secret of birth and death?
- Is there a heaven and a hell?
- Is there a Soul?
- Does the Law of Karma exist?
- Will I be reborn?

I put together about nine questions and began reading several books, scriptures, theologies and philosophies. I scanned through all the religious texts of the world, just as I read every renowned author who was said to be Enlightened. For fifteen months, I shut myself off from the world. I would, in solitude, retreat into the mountains with reading and reflecting being my only priorities.

The only thing I did other than this was to meet my Guru as often as I could, at least once a month to share the progress of my quest. My Guru was busy with his work, his organization and his agenda. But he always made time to guide me on each of my Realizations. I discussed with him the *Mahavakyas* of the *Upanishads* and asked him to endorse every Realization, lest I wandered on the wrong path.

One day, he was talking to somebody about the Astral world. I immediately questioned him, *'How can I believe that there is an Astral world? You have taught me that Spirituality is the science of the Spirit, where everything must be logically understood.'* I should not have interrupted him. He was talking to somebody else. He immediately told me, *'You are a Jayt, ignorant about many things.'* I immediately wrote a letter of apology to him but also asked him to explain how I can believe in an Astral world where an etheric double existed. My Master, in all humility said, *'You do not need to study the Astral world. Please ignore it. What you need to focus on is:*

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

This equation became my new rock to crack. I studied *Atma Bodha, Tattva Bodha, Upadesha Saram, Sat Darshana, Vivekachudamani and Aparoksh Anubhuti* amongst a few books that I shortlisted in my *Talaash*. It was with the grace of God and the guidance of the Guru that I got that spark of Spiritual Awakening on the 31st of August 2014.

► My Spiritual Awakening

I was on an Air France flight, AF 192 from Paris to Bangalore with all the hundreds of notes that I had put together over the last 15 months. My Guru's guidance echoed in my ears as on that Divine flight. I did nothing but contemplate. I did not eat anything in those 9 hours, just sipped on a few hot beverages. I was writing and reflecting...

- I am not this body that will die.
- How can I be the mind which I cannot find?
- So, who am I?
- I am the Soul.
- The books call it *Atman* and the *Atman* is *Paramatman* or *Brahman*, the world calls God.

'Oh! My God. That means, I am nothing. I am not Ravi. I am the *Atman* in Ravi, AiR.' I had this flash of Realization as my ego, which stood tall like a wall, had a fall. Suddenly, I could see the Divine in one and all. I did not know the meaning of Enlightenment but all of a sudden, in that moment, before the flight landed, I felt that I had Awakened from my ignorance.

It was not just a flash of insight. It was a strong Realization. When I walked out of the flight, I noted that Ravi was no more. A new entity was born, *Atman* in Ravi, AiR. From that very moment, my life was transformed completely. Over the last few months, it had felt like I was crawling like a worm, a caterpillar. Suddenly, when I walked out of the flight, it felt like I had wings to fly like a butterfly. On that day, my metamorphosis happened, as I gave up the life of Ravi and started living as AiR. All glory to my Guru who initiated me on a quest and guided me at every step to reinforce every Realization to take me to that state of Spiritual Awakening. Without my Guru, this would have never been possible!

► Leading Me To The Ultimate Truth

It was my Guru who led me from seeking pleasure to living with peace and ultimately, discovering the purpose of my life. It was my Guru who led me away from achievement through fulfillment to reach Enlightenment. Without my Guru, it would have been impossible for me to be where I am today. Right from holding my hand and moulding my head, my Guru led me away from my mind that was troubling me with misery and sorrow to that state of Eternal Bliss, living in Truth Consciousness. This is what the Guru can do!

I moved from duality, praying to my God, Lord *Shiva*, to non-duality, *Shivoham*, discovering that God lived in the temple of my heart as SIP, the Supreme Immortal Power. I learned the truth of *Satyam Shivam Sundaram* that everything beautiful is a manifestation of the Divine. I learned to live in *SatChitAnanda*, Truth Consciousness Bliss and deep within me, built the foundation of *Neti Neti, Tat Twam Asi*. I am not this body. I am not the Mind. I am the Divine Soul. I am nothing. SIP is everything. My Guru made me realize that I will never die and therefore, nothing matters. He taught me the art of acceptance and surrender because ultimately, everything was *Maya*, an illusion, a Divine manifestation, in which this *Leela*, this Divine drama was unfolding.

It was my Guru who led me through Purification and Illumination to Realization and ultimately, Liberation. I started to live as a *Jivanmukta*, free from *Samsara*, a liberated Soul, like a lotus in a pond, unaffected by the dirt around it. My Guru is the reason why I now live like a *Yogi*,

ever-united with the Divine, moving from one state of Yoga to another.

What would I be without my Guru? How can anybody achieve anything worthwhile without a true Enlightened Guru?

► The Power Of The Guru

The Guru does not have to be someone who displays a lot of Power, sometimes called *Siddhis*. He does not have to be a magician who can perform miracles. My Guru was the epitome of humility. He saw God in one and all. He would greet everybody bowing down to them. He showed me the path to overcome pride and the false ego.

The true power of the Guru is his wisdom, his Realization of the Truth. The Guru does not memorize as whatever he speaks, he has realized. He knows the truth in and out; it's on the tip of his tongue and it seems as though God speaks through him. Such is the power of an Enlightened Guru. My Guru was the reason for my Awakening. He touched, triggered and transformed my life. He had the power to initiate my journey, to make me shut down my business, even to change my name and start a new game, to be Awakened Spiritually. It was his power that made me a Divine instrument, dedicating my life to helping people achieving that state of Eternal Happiness through Enlightenment.

► **My Guru Led Me From *Gu* To *Ru***

When I was 25, I used to love to eat meat. It was my Guru who made me realize that my body had become a graveyard for the many animals that I devoured. Although I could not eat a single meal without meat, I ultimately gave up eating meat. I moved from darkness to light, from *Gu* to *Ru*. Like this, there were so many transformations in my life. It is the Guru, who takes us from darkness to light, until ultimately, the eternal light of truth shines.

► **What Would My Life Be Without *Dada*?**

If I look back at my life, I think, '*What would I have been without my Guru?*' I would just have had fun, till life was done. I would have zoomed from womb to tomb. I would have died and left this earth, only to return in another rebirth.

Like anybody else, I used to run after pleasure and had not discovered the true treasure of life. Today, if I am living a life of Eternal Peace, Divine Love and Everlasting Bliss, it is because of my Guru. He is the cause of this. How would I have been able to help so many people start a quest and Realize the Truth? How would I have been able to teach people the Happiness Secret which has 3 Ps? The foundation of all my work is my Guru. My Guru has created my roots which bear so many beautiful fruits. I owe my life to *Dada*, my Guru.

Unfortunately, my Guru passed away in 2018. But in 2017, he had endorsed that I was ready to take my message of Realization and Awakening to the world. Without him, this would not have been possible.

*Today, I help so many people
go from Gu to Ru.
Nothing would be possible
without my Guru!*



POEM

GURU

From Gu to Ru From Darkness to Light

*From darkness to light
To make our Life bright
We must go from Gu to Ru
And for this we need a Guru
We must find an Enlightened Master*

*Vivekananda had Ramakrishna
Chinmayananda had Sivananda
Meerabai had Ravidas
Shivaji's Guru was Ramdas
Do you have an Enlightened Master?*

*I, too, was chasing pleasure
I never found the true treasure
Till my Guru sent me on a Quest
I overcame ignorance and won the test
This happens with an Enlightened Master*

*Who is a true Guru?
Who can overcome our darkness, Gu
Who can show us the light, Ru
We are Awakened by a Guru
We need an Enlightened Master*

*The Guru is our Mentor and Guide
In our Guru, we can confide
The Guru will create that Illumination
From this, we will get Realization
Liberation happens with an Enlightened Master*

*The Guru is the GPS that shows the way
He gives us direction, every day
He activates our intellect to choose what's right
We overcome ignorance and with the myth we fight
If we can find an Enlightened Master*

*Is the Guru easy to find?
You can't, if you are a slave of your Mind
The Guru comes to us with God's grace
Not if we are running in the world's race
Have you met your Enlightened Master?*

*There are many Gurus, who is the right one?
With the right Guru, Life's battle is won
For it is the Guru who will unlock the door
With him, there is Peace, Love, Bliss and more
We must find an Enlightened Master*

*The Guru begins our Initiation
He cleanses us with Purification
He has an answer to every question
He teaches us the right lesson
We are Awakened by an Enlightened Master*

*The disciple must be a sincere seeker
With obedience, we will arrive quicker
The better Guru is one who is stricter
He is sincere, not a trickster
We must get to an Enlightened Master*

*To succeed, we must obey
We must trust and not disobey
We must take all doubts away
The Guru, we must not betray
Then we'll reach our goal, with an Enlightened Master*

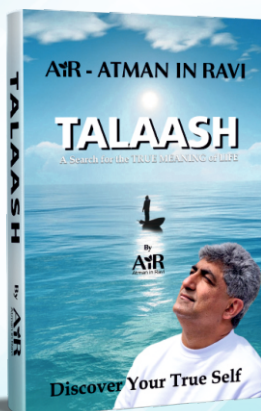
*Life is nothing but a circus
It is the Guru that gives us Purpose
We overcome all anxiety and stress
We discover Eternal Happiness
These are the rewards of having an Enlightened Master*

*If we are in search of God
If we want to attain the Lord
The Guru leads us to Self-Realization
And then, takes us to God-Realization
We must hold the hand of our Enlightened Master*

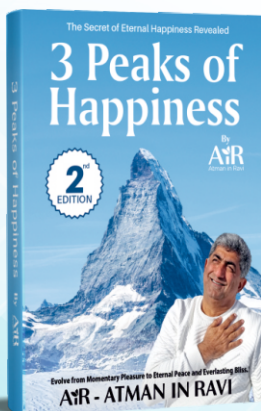
*What would I be without my Guru?
There would be no Ru, I would suffer in Gu
In Gu, darkness would be my life
Without Ru, light, there would be strife
I am grateful that I found my Enlightened Master*

*If you want to be free from suffering on earth
If you want to be free from Rebirth
If you want a meaningful Life
If you want Happiness and don't want strife
It's time to find an Enlightened Master!*

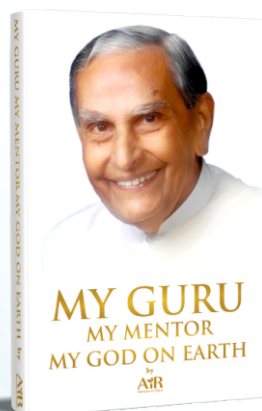
OTHER BOOKS BY AiR



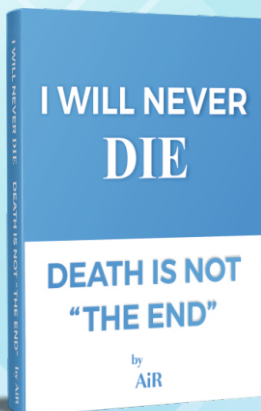
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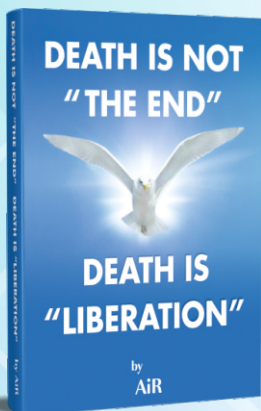
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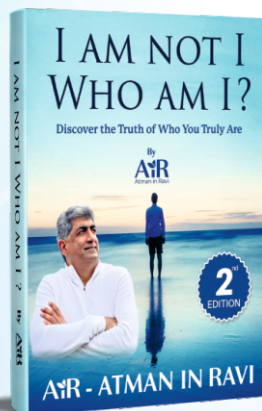
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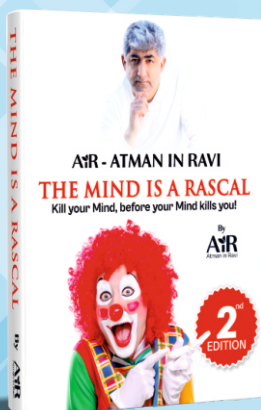
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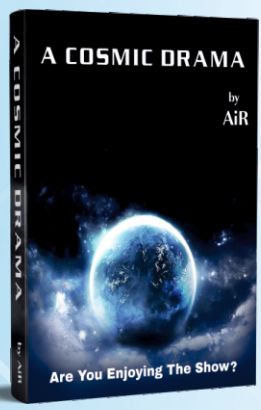
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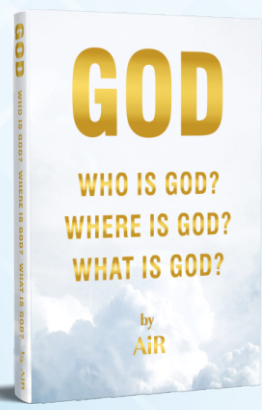
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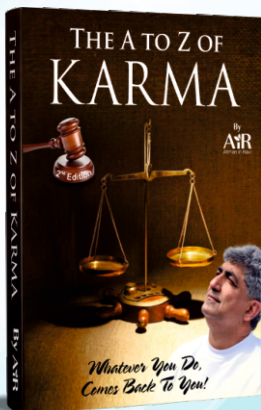
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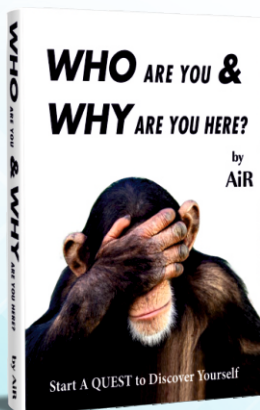
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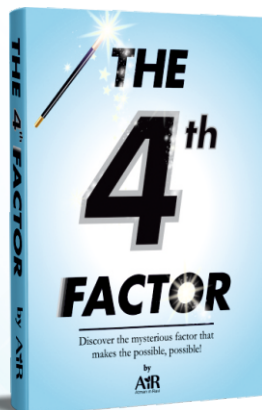
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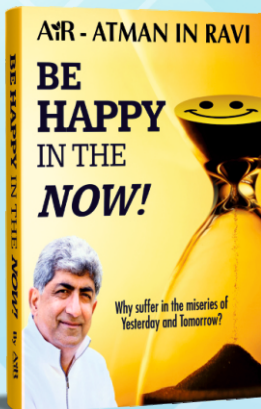
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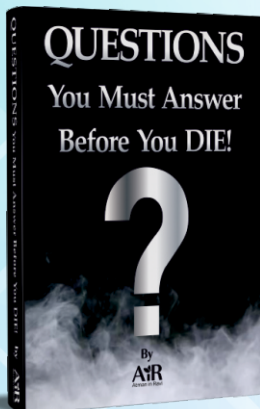
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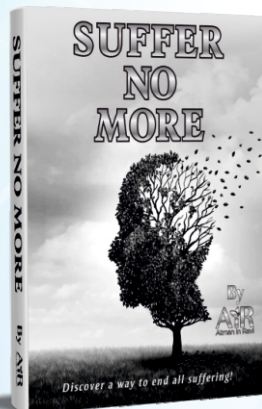
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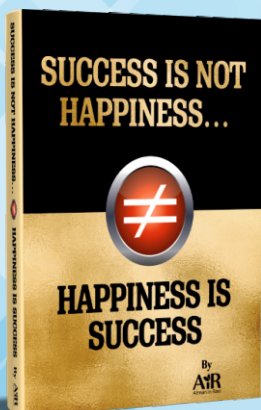
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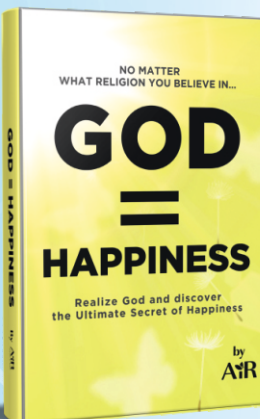
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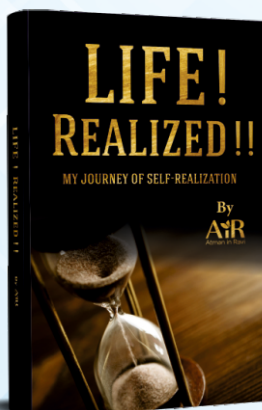
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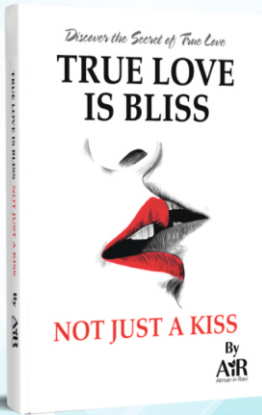
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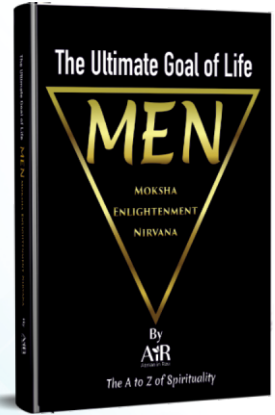
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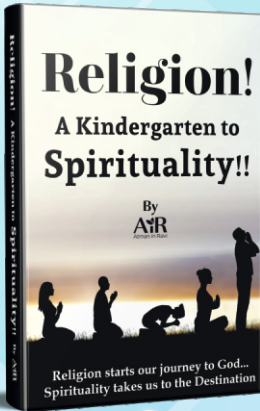
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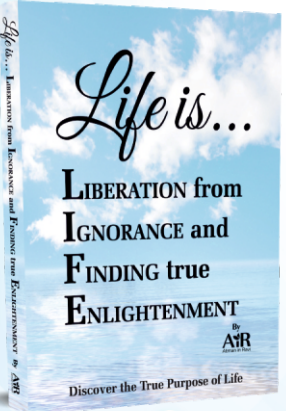
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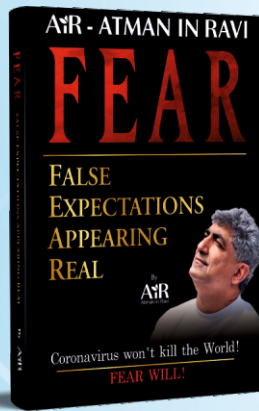
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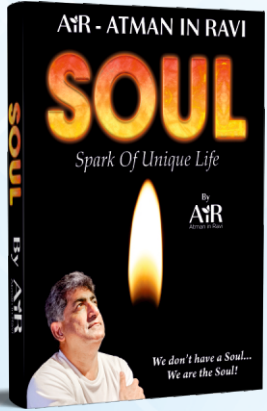
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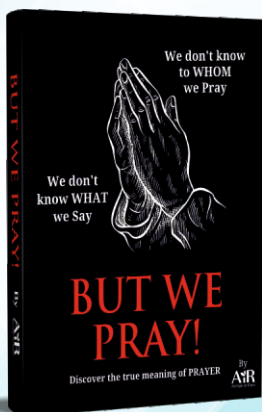
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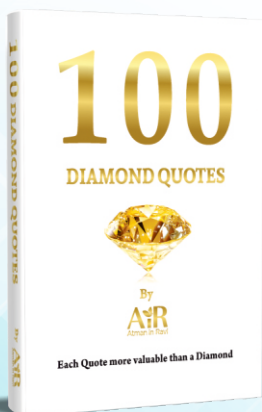
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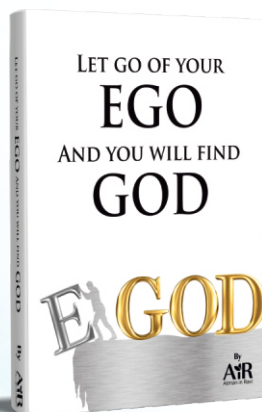
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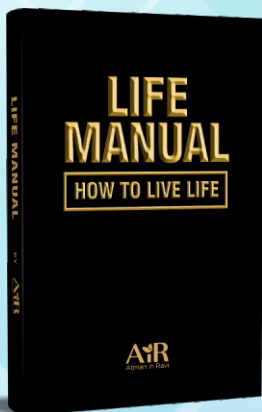
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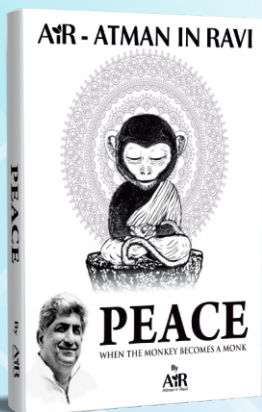
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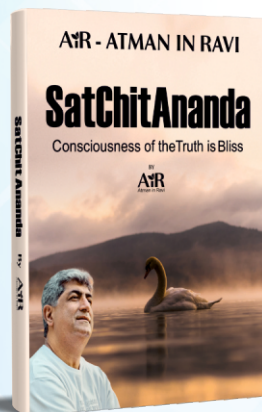
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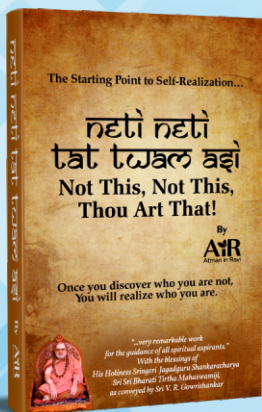
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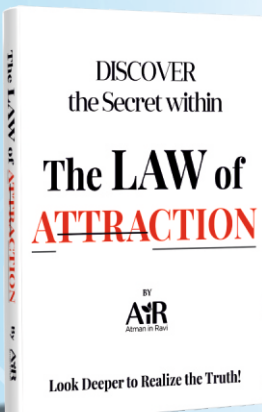
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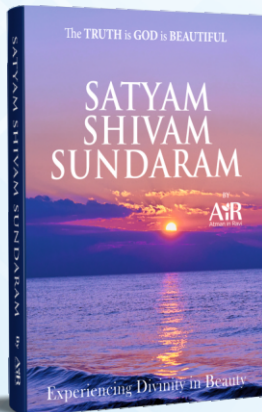
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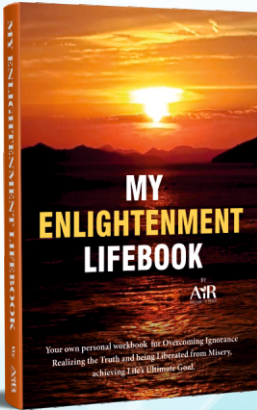
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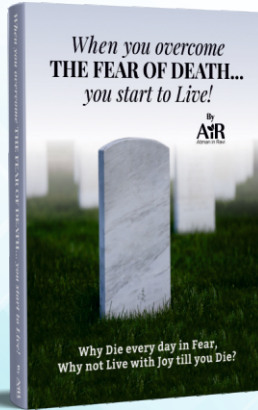
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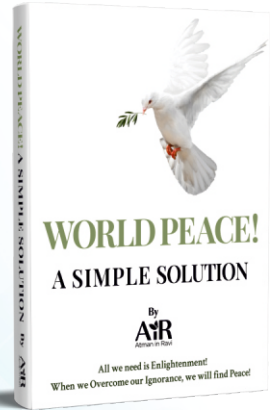
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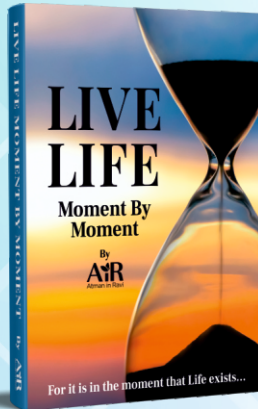
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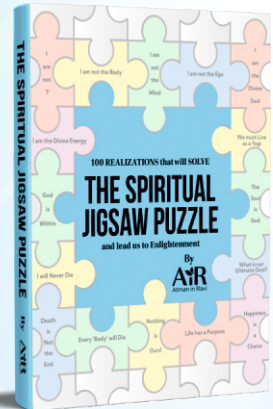
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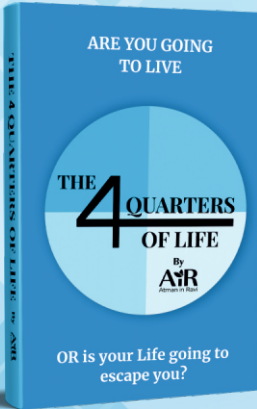
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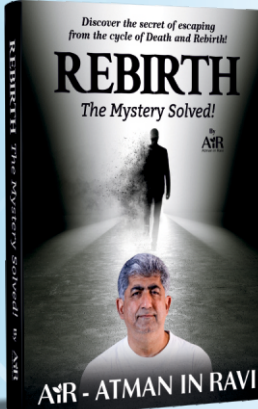
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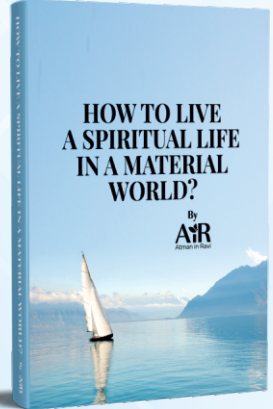
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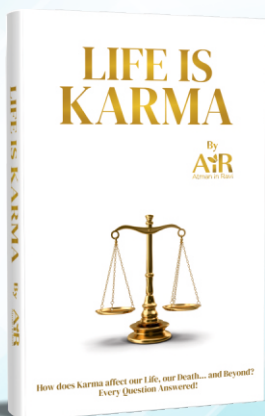
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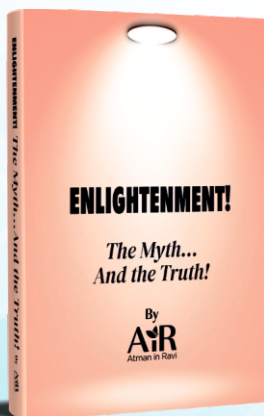
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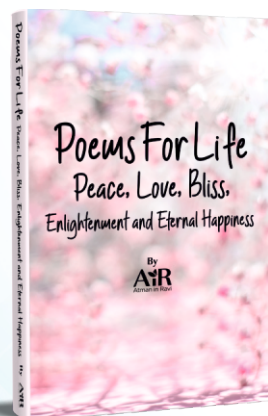
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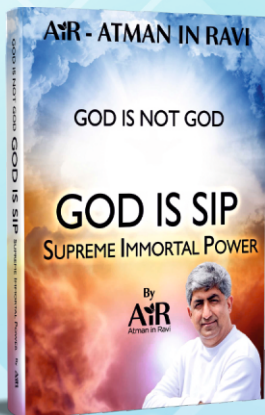
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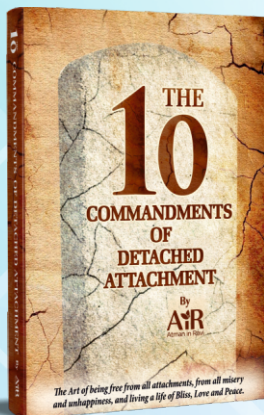
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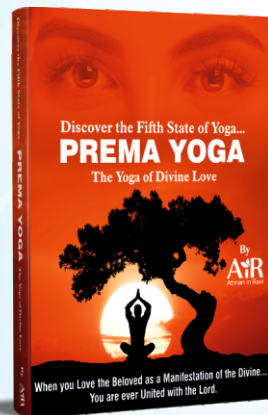
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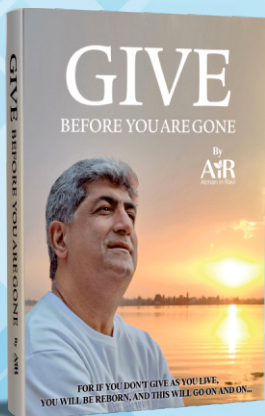
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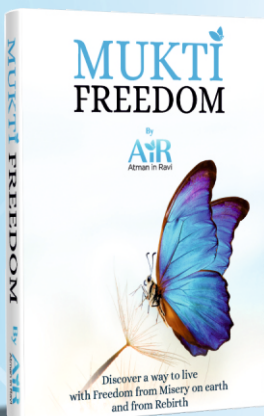
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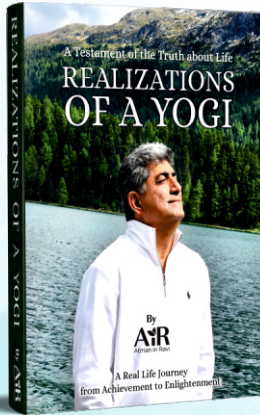
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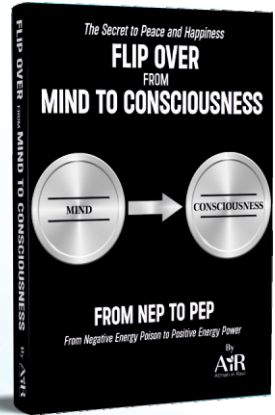
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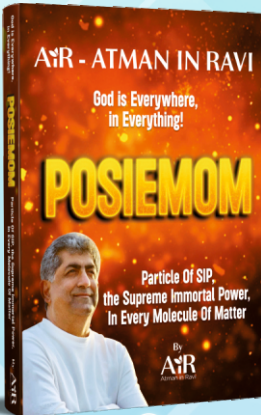
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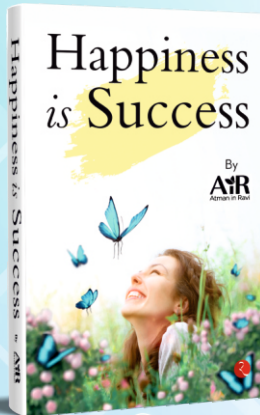
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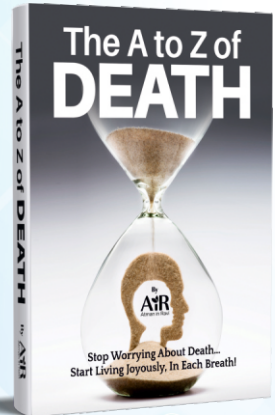
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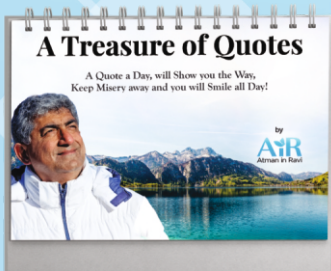
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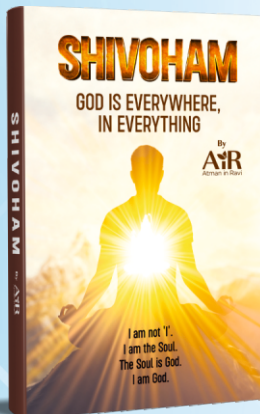
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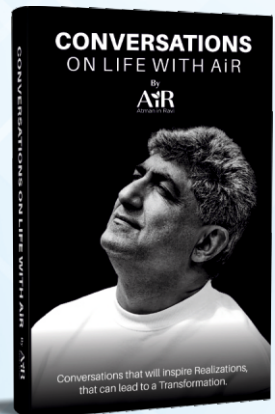
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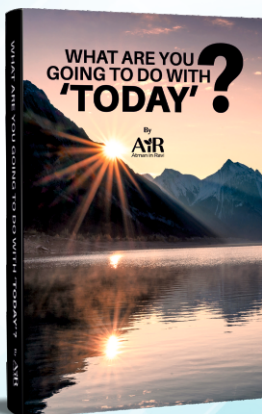
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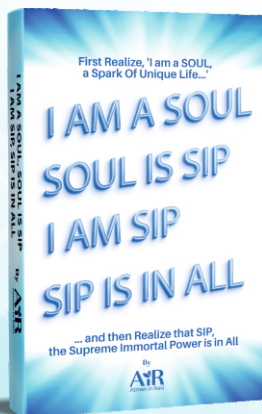
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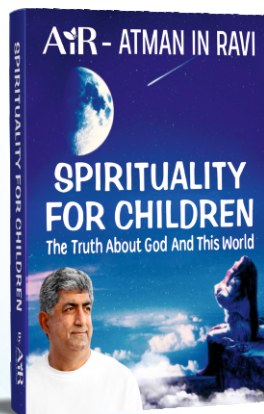
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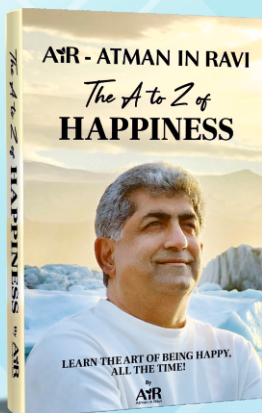
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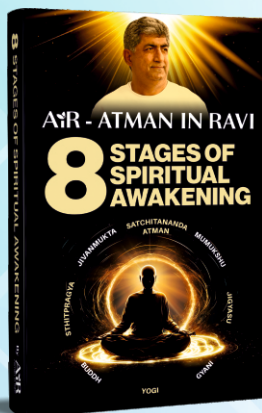
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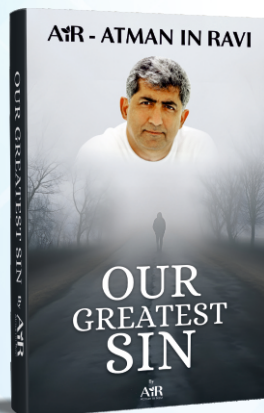
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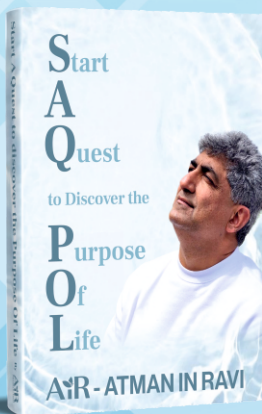
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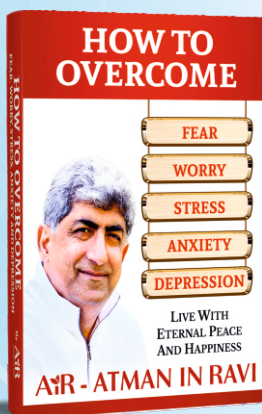
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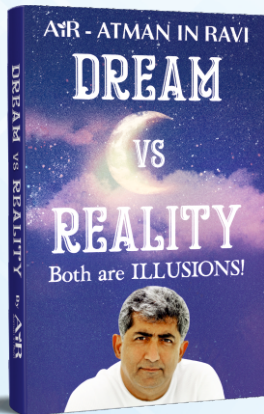
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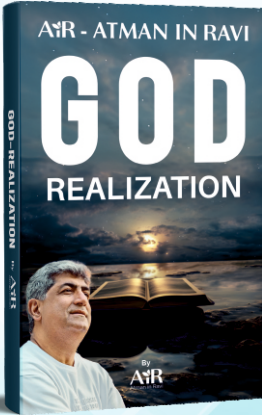
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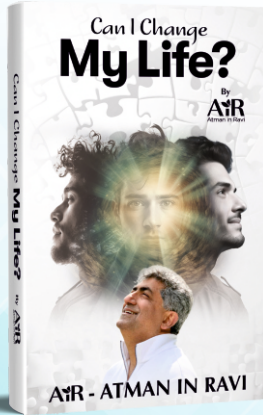
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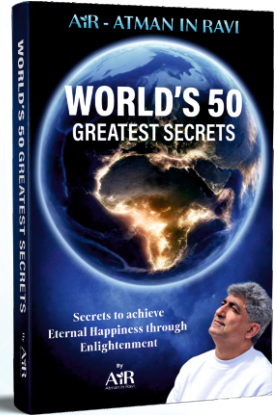
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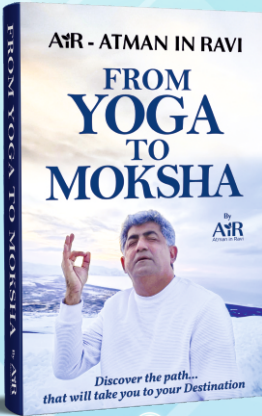
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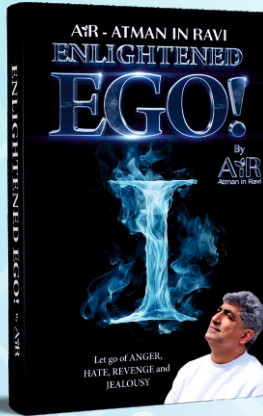
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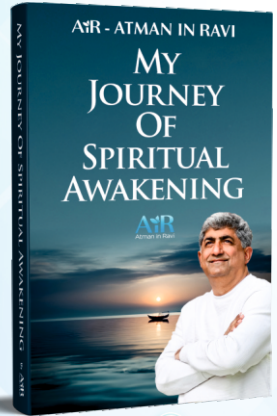
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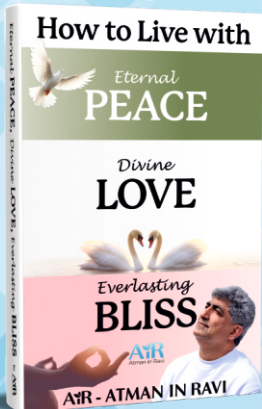
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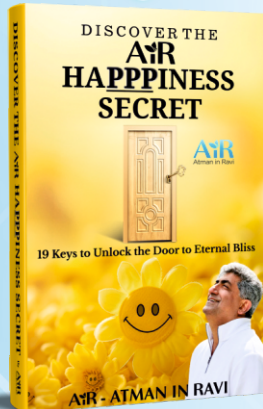
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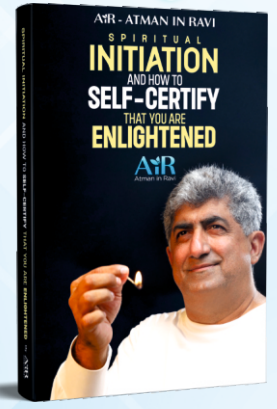
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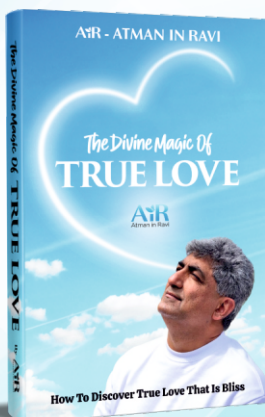
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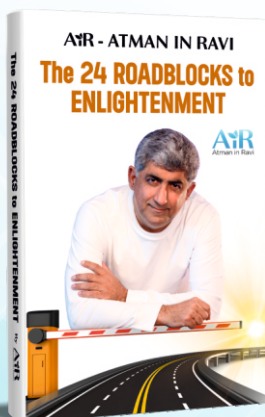
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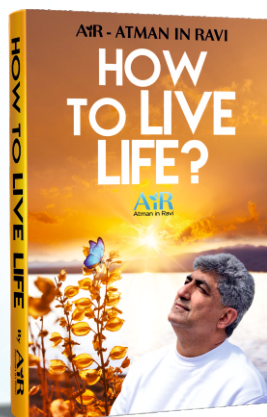
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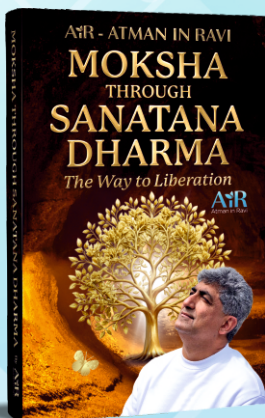
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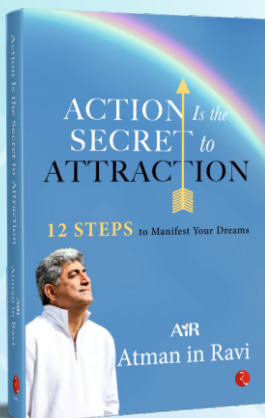
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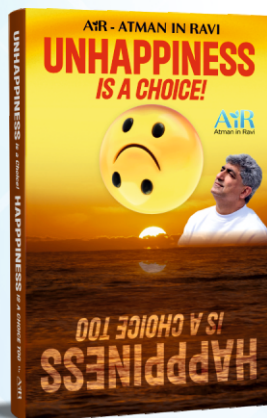
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*If you have any questions on Happiness, Suffering,
Life, Death, Rebirth, Karma, Liberation, Enlightenment
or anything related to Spirituality,*

YOU CAN DIRECTLY

?
Ask AiR

And be ENLIGHTENED

at 8 pm every day

on  zoom



ZOOM CALL QR CODE

Meeting ID: 85021104431

Invest minutes
ELEVEN.
Get 1440 minutes in
HEAVEN.
Come on Insta every day at
SEVEN!

AiR
Atman in Ravi
Eternal Happiness
Through Enlightenment



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7:00 PM

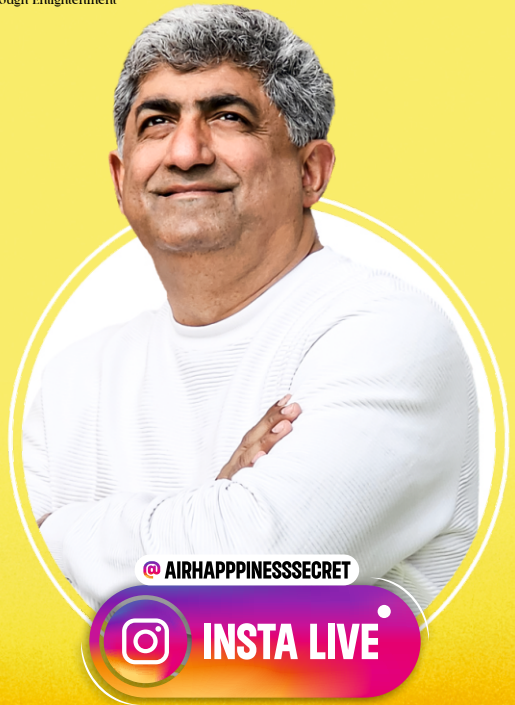
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I met my Guru, *Dada* who inspired me to go on a Quest. He showed me the path and also answered all my questions till one day, on 31st August 2014, I was Awakened. Now it is my mission to help people go on a quest to discover, 'Who am I?' and 'Why am I here?' and attain the ultimate purpose of life and be Enlightened. But for this one needs a Guru. Without an Enlightened Master, a True Guru, this is impossible!



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