

DEWDROP

*There is a free thinker in each one of us
that is constantly searching for eternal truths*



Suresh M. Deo

Also by Suresh M. Deo

- Lightning Bugs
- Seamless Generations
- Twinkling Stars

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To my wife Usha and our three sons, Deepak, Vikas, and Sagar.

Dedication

This book is dedicated to the life energy within each one of us. This is the energy that prompts us to dare climb mountains. Mountains whose peaks have never had their Silence broken. In that Silence, we seek our true self-identity.

Dedicated also to the eternal truths. Eternal is that which has no end and therefore no beginning. Truths are eternal, universal and simply exist on their own, and are not created, prophesied or promulgated by any religious organization. Each one of us has unlimited and unconditional free access to experience eternal truths externally as well as internally. This is an affirmation for those who dare and desire to experience the truths. In the truths lies the singular secret of eternal blissfulness. The self enlightened Masters and the Vedanta philosophy of life allude to this wisdom of reality, which is life”.

Also dedicated to the man who patiently sat by his pet dog and fed him twice a day for nine years. The name of the dog was Moti. The man was my maternal grandfather,
Dr. Purshottam Ganesh Nakhare.

Gratitude

I have always felt Royalty within because of the love and attention that I have received during childhood from my parents, maternal grandparents and High School teachers. For these privileged childhood experiences, I am eternally grateful.

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Introduction

The appearance of a dense morning fog can kindle the feeling of awe in the mind of a six-year old child. Equally interesting is the appearance of a dewdrop on the petal of a flower or a leaf. In such instances, the early morning weather is invariably cool, moist, and invigorating. While standing outdoors in such weather, our skin senses it, our breath inhales it, and our eyes admire the ambience. Meanwhile, our minds are in awe of Nature.

I fondly recall several moments when I was that six-year old. My younger brother and I loved walking barefoot on the lawn at the very sighting of a dense morning fog. Our bare feet felt the soft dew-laden grass, which invigorated us. The fog seemed to moisten the face and enliven our spirit.

Gradually, the gentle rays of the rising sun would penetrate through the fog. On rare occasions, a colorful rainbow would make an appearance. The dense fog, as well as the rainbow, seemed suspended in midair.

Such experiences soak up in our consciousness and become pleasant memories for a lifetime.

Gradually, in the school of life, we learn about the specific weather conditions that cause a dense fog, a colorful rainbow, or a dewdrop to form on the petal of a flower. Different physical laws go on to explain these beautiful happenings in Nature.



The title of this book, Dewdrop, is symbolic of a thought. Like a dewdrop, a particular thought may also appear in our mind under the specific conditions surrounding that moment. In the empty space of a thought, we try to search for its meaning. This book entertains a thought in the spirit of its moment and presents it as a standalone composition. Consequently this book is about the dynamics and biography of constantly evolving thought. A thought remains forever without borders in order to honor individual freedom.

Each composition in this book addresses a thought of the moment with an underlying conviction that universally applicable and acceptable philosophy of life is all about transparent simplicity, and not about the scholarship of mind. Therefore, every individual has an equal access to universal wisdom and opportunity for self-enlightenment.

This book addresses the common man in each one of us, irrespective of one's traditional, cultural, or religious background.

In a constantly changing Universe, an individual's inner experiences primarily guide conscious awareness. Consciously revisiting our individual experiences, thoughts, and belief systems with an open mind enables us to access universal wisdom, which is silently accessible within. Out of this process condenses our true self-identity.

Suresh M. Deo

Acknowledging Our Spirit

Native Americans are those that have inhabited the American continent through the ages and long before the continent was even named as America and further subdivided into North and South America. There were several tribes, large and small that evolved into different civilizations. Mayan, Aztecs, Navaho, Mona, Ponca, Sioux, Yuchi, Cherokee are just a few of the familiar names. On a philosophical level of awareness, the native Americans have traditionally addressed their universal source in the formless manifestation of Spirit. Native Americans communicate directly with the Spirit without the need for any intermediary medium. Their faith in the Spirit is absolute. This essay is in acknowledgement of the Spirit that sustains not only the native Americans but also each one of us:

Spirit is a thirst for freedom and harmony
Spirit is a thirst to share and rejoice
Spirit is not an acknowledgement of anything
Spirit is a feeling within, which excludes nothing

Spirit is formless and bears no name
Name usually implies a physical identity
Spirit owns or claims nothing
Spirit empowers nothing but freedom

Spirit defies any description
Spirit is not a concept or emotion
Spirit cannot be captured or trapped
Spirit flows freely touching everything

Spirit flows freely like the wind
Touching and embracing everything in its path
Flowing easily around every obstacle
Invigorating life all along its path

Spirit is my constant and silent companion
Through my birth, life, and beyond
My life experiences are uniquely mine alone
The Spirit guides me through them all

Spirit is not my thoughts
Spirit is not my conscience
Spirit is so pure and free
Nothing afflicts it as it does me

Spirit embraces me every moment
Whether I acknowledge it or not
Constantly connecting me to everything
Everything within and outside of me

Spirit is not about a higher plane
Spirit is not about a lower plane either
Spirit knows neither planes nor boundaries
Spirit is all pervading and caring

Spirit is not an Angel touching my shoulders
Spirit is not a light glowing in front of me
Spirit is not darkness hounding me
Yet Spirit is always with me, I know

Spirit does not claim me
Nor do I claim the Spirit
We are together in all its meaning
Fused together as one forever

Spirit is not about believing, but just feeling
Feeling in the guts of our very being
That, all animate and inanimate objects
Exist in union for no reason but one

In the depths of our very being
There is a noble silence that uplifts
We can sense it, we all know
Through our instinct, through our Spirit

Acknowledging our Spirit is
Not a trip to name and fame
But it helps open the door to visit
Our own self and its freedom

Attachment to anything transient
Brings pleasure and pain
Comprehending true nature of Spirit
Offers freedom from attachments transient

Rightfully so, science attempts to provide proof
For every thing that is theorized and postulated
Spirit demands no proof, because
In the joy of union, there is no Need.

Note: The title of this composition is dedicated to Oprah Winfrey and her talk show which has been a real ground breaking show for 25 years giving voice to the concerns and aspirations of the common man in each one of us.

A Community

Man migrates or emigrates from one geographical location to another in search of excitement and better opportunities for livelihood. How far a Man travels has depended upon the individual's desire, ambition and mode of affordable transportation. Man is essentially a social animal and therefore tends to immigrate to new frontiers along with people of similar ethnic background. The ethnic background invariably includes some elements of a common place of origin, language, social traditions, food habits including likes and dislikes, and an overall similar life style.

The normal trend has been to move from a village to a larger city, then to a larger metropolis, and in some cases to another country. The twentieth century has witnessed migration and immigration of people on a much larger scale than ever before, and the same trend continues in the twenty-first century. As a result, each country and the larger cities in each country are witnessing broader mix of people of different ethnic backgrounds. However, there is a common pattern that follows each migrant worker as well as an immigrant.

The common pattern is about how the first generation immigrants settle in the new place of their choice. The new immigrant first establishes residence in a place where there are already people of similar ethnic background. That place or neighborhood provides the comfort zone to settle down and pitch the first tent. That place represents his "Community". Some immigrants choose to live in the same community for the rest of their lives, whereas others gradually move on and blend with the mainstream. That is the universal nature and experience of Man.

The following lines give expression to these experiences:

A community is a group of people
Of common habits and bondage
Huddled together as a social group
Sharing a similar perspective of life

A community offers empathetic support
Within cohesive cultural boundaries
But demands in return
Loyalty to its unwritten laws

Communities have always existed
Communities will always exist
Large or small in numbers
It is not the numbers that define its purpose

It is human nature to form a community
In search of social identity and order
To cling to, to hide in, and to grow
To feel secure within and without

Pride in ones community
And in ones social environment
Comes readily as second nature
Absence or rejection of it smothers the soul

Birth in any specific community
Is neither good nor bad
Mother Nature does not judge a Man
Only a community judges a Man

We belong to a community from our very birth
And the community belongs to us
Opposite sides of the same coin
When one side shows, the other side is understood

A community lays down rules and regulations
Just like governments and institutions do

But community's rules are latent and unwritten
Much stricter than the written ones

A community's rules are obeyed by members
With a sense of respect, loyalty and pride
Some rules get challenged and some do change
Consistent with the community's joint consciousness

A community has unmarked territory
That may shrink or grow with time
Serving an innate sense of identity
Of past, present, and future

A community empowers each member
Young and old, male and female
Rich and poor, able and disabled
To help, serve, and embrace each other

A community carves a territory
Within which to identify itself
A territory not physically marked
Yet clearly understood by its members

A community's boundaries binds those within
Separating them from those without
Separating Man from Man
Separating Soul from Soul

Age-old Grapevine of Wisdom

Wisdom of mankind has been captured in sounds and words through centuries. Even before written skills and organized languages were developed, mediums such as sounds, artistic illustrations, and expressions were articulated to communicate thoughts. Recitations of organized thoughts composed in verses of hymns have been relied upon to transmit acquired knowledge from one generation to another. In those times when a spoken language was still not put in written script, the human brain was the only compact disc (CD) available to store information. An organized and refined language invariably has a sound base of grammar. Surprisingly, even in the twenty-first century, there are spoken languages that do not have a written script. And yet, the wisdom of mankind seeps through every level of human consciousness and is captured by one language or another. In every language, invariably it is not the spoken or written word but the essential spirit behind the word that conveys the real message. Words can be interpreted or misinterpreted at an individual level of consciousness. As an individual introspects on a word or a thought, a deeper meaning emerges ~ so does wisdom.

Through centuries, self-enlightened Masters have made profound statements in the spoken language of their times that have captured the minds and hearts of people. These Masters represent various faculties of human mind including philosophy, science, and arts. Their statements have enticed inquiry as well as introspection. These self-enlightened and selfless Masters have asserted that a message of wisdom is immeasurably more important than the messenger.

Following thoughts are presented not as new ideas, but simply to entice introspection at an individual level of consciousness. Thought provoking sayings should invite interpretation in modern context, otherwise the sayings lose their spirit and relevance. Introspection is a precious faculty available to each

individual to continue growing within, which in turn helps relate to the outside world. Some select age-old sayings are listed below to entice introspection:

- There is a reason for everything that happens around us.
- Always have a reason for doing what you choose to do.
- Each action has a corresponding effect or consequence.
- Each action has an equal and opposite reaction.
- You are responsible for every thing that happens to you in life.
- Know your past to understand your present.
- Your present is the consequence of your past.
- Your present will become the cause for your future.
- Your fate is the sum of your own acquisitions before birth and since birth.
- Truth is that which does not change ~ ever.
- A truth is always universal and acceptable to all.

A Journey

I am a human being with the right and freedom to be happy.

As of now, I forgive all those who have hurt me in any way in the past.

All humans, each one of us, makes mistakes.

By forgiving each one of you, I am forgiving and freeing myself.

I forgive myself for any acts or mistakes committed by me in the past.

By forgiving myself, I am freeing myself to become happy.

I will be happy and share my happiness with everybody I meet.

Loving is living, and happiness is the essence of positivity.

Positivity brings deeper or heightened self-awareness.

Heightened self-awareness connects us to the universe inside us.

The journey within is life's most blissful experience and vibration.

(Based on TV Show - On the other side)

A Right Time Period for Everything

There is an old saying in India that says, “If you are planning to do something important tomorrow, do it today. And what you are planning to accomplish today, do it now”. The message is for a procrastinator, and there is a hidden procrastinator in each one of us.

An individual invariably has the option to choose from a range of alternatives. A right or wrong choice is entirely a matter of individual perception. Therefore an individual must always take full responsibility for his or her choices and associated consequences.

During the formative age, a child is pretty much taught and told what is wrong and what is right. The wrong and right is generally presented to a child as black and white in the hope that it may be easier for a child’s developing mind to comprehend. As yet the child may not have the capacity for discriminating between right and wrong. Subsequent mental growth and maturity of a child brings out the gray areas or shades between black and white, or wrong and right. Absolute wrong and absolute right is matter of individual perception and consciousness. However, it is important to recognize that an absolute truth is that which is unchangeable, universally acceptable, and it stands on its own weight.

In autocratic societies, the right and wrong are defined with rigid boundaries. Even in the most democratic societies of 21st Century, the definitions of right and wrong are quite rigid, but with a difference that the value system is open to scrutiny and the majority consensus tends to prevail most of the time. Open debate in democratic governance makes it possible. In a democratic setup, the black, white, and the gray areas in-between get better identified and better defined; thus enabling creation and development of mature democracies consistent with social discipline and order. These comments apply equally

to a nation, a society as well as a family, which is its smallest building block.

Instinctively every human being is born free in mental makeup and consequently resists any pressure of dictates. Observe an infant wheeling and dealing with parents and other adults around it. As yet the infant has no command of any language. Therefore it resorts to body and sound language. One of the very first few words an infant learns from parents includes the overly used word “No”. And the infant knows precisely what that one word means! It is a dictate. We have all seen how aggressively or explosively an infant reacts to this word. An adult also reacts to a dictate of “No” with the same intensity as the infant, but only differing in style of expression. After all, it is the same infant with additional life experiences that has grown up into an adult. Every adult defends self to maintain the inborn freedom instincts.

In the scheme of life, is there a right time for something to be done or accomplished? Who does really decide? Nobody really decides for anybody else. Each individual pretty much decides on a gut feeling and experience-base as to what is the right time to undertake a certain course of action. Each infant, child and adult decides with the freedom of own freewill. An individual’s freewill is often tempered by unwritten rules and regulations of the community. The unwritten rules and regulations of the community or social group are suggestive prompts rather than dictates. Broad guidelines have evolved from the cumulative experience of mankind for suitable time periods in an individual’s life. A discriminating mind tries to make sense out of it.

Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise. This old saying provides a suggestive guideline for a productive life style. There are always exceptions. Some computer loving owls stay up late at night and consequently get up late in the morning. Recognize that some individuals tend to

be constitutionally night people, meaning that their bodies and mind function more productively during night hours.

The body of human knowledge is never static. It is always evolving and it should be so. Young generations of 21st Century are adapting faster and faster to a much broader range of changes than their predecessors in earlier centuries. Time frames for tasks are compressing dramatically, and multi-tasking is becoming a norm. People are busier than ever, prioritizing daily time rather than tasks. It is prudent to be constantly aware that there is a right time for every activity during the course of a day and during the course of our lifetime.

There is a time in life to be a child with innocence and a sense of awe. As a child you enjoy touching a butterfly, touch a flower in full bloom, touch dewdrops on blades of grass, and peek into a bird's nest. As a child, you idly watch chirping sparrows, frogs and toads in swamps, colorful fish swimming in water, an endless row of ants coming out of nowhere in an orderly single file and heading somewhere to pick up food, a colorful butterfly flying around flowers in the garden, and many other sights that just catch your fancy and imagination. As a child you play with the house pet such as a parrot, cat, dog, and sense their unconditional friendship. As a child it is fun to watch torrential rain pouring down, hitting the ground and forming into numerous streamlets. Using a piece of daily newspaper, you try to make a small paper boat and gently place it in the gushing streamlet of rain water and then watch the extent to which the paper boat floats before losing its even keel. As a child, sometimes you do just nothing but look around in awe with no regard for time. I call it being idly busy. This child that is present in each one of us is a very precious and constant companion.

Then there is a right time for the child to step out of the home into the immediate neighborhood and explore with new friends new toys, new games, and then return home excitedly to share

the new experiences with mother and family members.

There is a right time for stepping still farther from home and the immediate neighborhood to attend pre-school. At school you meet a teacher, make new friends, play new games, and enjoy eating lunch with friends. You learn new enjoyable skills from teachers and friends. And after returning from pre-school, share all school experiences with friends in the immediate neighborhood and folks at home. The life experience gradually broadens as the school grades inch upwards from kindergarten to primary school, to junior high, to high school, and then as far as you choose to take it.

As your life flows forward, there is a right time period to identify, understand, recognize, and nurture your own passion for life. Nobody knows your passion better than you do. Passion is that which drives you and kindles your spirit from within.

A right time comes for assuming the responsibilities of becoming a self-supporting individual in the society at large while still retaining a healthy inter-dependence with the emotional home, and neighborhood.

During the course of each day there is a right time to work, a right time to play, a right time to eat, a right time to rest, and a right time to reflect on life itself.

There is a right time period during which one gets fascinated with members of the opposite sex. Although it comes naturally, there is a right time to indulge in these attractions of life. For a growing young person, enchantment and living in the dream land of being in love brings on a new dimension to life. Somewhere in that process, you choose to commit to a partnership of mutual understanding, personal adjustments, sharing, and caring. Going through that process, you may pleasantly fall in love with your chosen mate. There is a fine

line between fascination and love: your heart explains the divide between the two. In this relationship, you go on to experience the fusion of two hearts, minds, bodies, and enjoy the awe of nature's procreation process.

There is a right time, especially for a female, to bear and raise children, and actively participate in the challenges of nurturing offspring ~ as the time seems to stand still for you. You help your children to walk, speak, read, write, compute, communicate, and think for themselves. You experience the miracle of passing on your genes to your children.

There is a right time to soak up information available from outside sources such as schools of learning and massive computer memory banks such as Google.com. Grant a time to reflect on the acquired information and knowledge, and making sure that you do not become an information junkie. Learn to implement and apply the acquired knowledge effectively to advance your personal passions for pursuing a productive life style. The process of knowledge acquisition, reflection and application is a constant on going and overlapping process. While pursuing a career and life style of your choice with full zest and optimism, your own inner voice constantly begs to comprehend meaning of life in its totality.

There is a time period when a farmer ultimately gets tired of working his own fields because he cannot work any more physically. At that point, he gradually withdraws from active farming responsibilities. If he has children, the responsibilities are transferred to children. Otherwise the farm is sold out to the highest bidder. The farmer can now hopefully retire from active hard work and rest. How he defines and lives his retirement life period depends on the quality of emotional foundation that he has laid down for himself. Each one of us is a farmer in this respect. We reap as we sow.

The equatorial regions (along zero degrees latitude) of the world

experience five seasons during the course of one full year. The seasons are spring, summer, rain, autumn, and winter. Each season has its time frame and intensity. Each season rolls out specific flowers, fruits, and vegetables. As you move away from equator towards the North Pole or South Pole, the time frames and intensity of the seasons change. At the Pole, the winter season is long, day light time is short, and night is very long and cold. Each season affects the nature and intensity of the subsequent season. The cycle of seasons repeats itself annually without Man's control. However, these natural forces do affect Man in several ways.

There is a right time during the span of each day, no matter how small, to reflect and focus on unraveling the very nature of our existence and its relationship to everybody and everything around us. You begin to realize slowly that in spite of the diversities and complexities of life, there is an underlying inherent harmony and order in Mother Nature.

There is only one right time to act and that is this very moment. The past including the very last moment is gone and totally out of our reach or control. The future which is the very next moment is yet to come and also not in our hand. The present moment is the only tangible thing available to us to act upon and make the best of. Therefore the best time to do anything worthwhile is "Now". Grab this very moment to focus on and pour your entire energy into it. Look at this very moment at hand as the very essence of life. This wisdom percolates from an old Sanskrit verse whose authorship is unknown. The message is more important than the messenger is. Participate with enthusiasm and vigor in each of life's processes and opportunities, doing the right things at the right time in the right way to ensure full enjoyment and relish the sense of fulfillment.

Awe and Wonder

The child in us is ever present
At times confused, lonely and afraid
Wondering in awe, grasping for reality
Trying to touch, feel, and fathom.
In the innocence of awe and wonder
We may discover our real self.

Believers and Non-believers

You either believe in God or you don't. That is what they say around the world. There does not seem to be a middle ground. If you believe in God, then you are considered a religious person. But if you don't, then god-forbid and watch out for the labels they will put on you. A believer and a non-believer are constantly at odds with each other. Surprisingly and unfortunately these attitudes continue even in the twenty-first century.

Humanity is split into various camps of believers and non-believers. In some cases, they even despise each other. A person who doggedly claims to belong to a specific religion or religious denomination accuses self-proclaimed atheist or agnostic as non-believers. The same religious person also claims that a person affiliated with a different religious denomination is also not a true religious person. The lines of demarcation go deeper and deeper and the rifts grow wider.

Monotheistic religious people believe in their God as the true and only God. Therefore each monotheistic religious group criticizes the other for worshipping a wrong God. The compartmentalization of God goes on to absurd limits drawing a veil of ignorance around innocent believers. It is like claiming that the sun rises in the East only in our village. This dogmatism leads to the religious cliché that "If you are not with us, then you are against us". A self-proclaimed religious person with a closed mind is like a Man who closes all windows and doors of his house and expects fresh breeze to flow through.

A non-believer is simply the person who chooses not to follow the flock of people that claim themselves to be religious. The non-believer simply wishes to be a free and rational thinker who rejects authority and dogma. He believes in himself and therefore tends to concentrate his energy on personal intuitions. He prefers logic rather than blind faith alone. Is he a bad

person because he does not fit the conventional religious mold or model? A believer cannot physically produce his God in front of the non-believer. Besides, a non-believer is simply not interested in seeing God as described by the believer. God does not produce miracles, nor do miracles produce God. Believers and non-believers argue endlessly wasting each other's precious time.

An enduring philosophy of life addresses a believer as well as a non-believer through progressive stages of self-enlightenment driven by the power of introspection. Such enduring philosophy of life has no brand name because it is simply a self-enlightening inner experience.

One lady had appeared as a guest on the Oprah Winfrey Talk Show in Chicago. This lady was born into a traditional Jewish family in U.S.A. She stated categorically that she does not believe in the existence of a God. She admired the achievements of Man in various fields of the human endeavor. She remarked that God did not make our beautiful cities, infrastructure, space shuttles, music, paintings, sculpture, and useful electronic gadgets. She gave full credit for it all only to Man and his creative entrepreneurship. She asked why is a Man so afraid to take full credit for his own accomplishments? Man can still be modest in heralding his own accomplishments, she said. This lady was confident and sure of her personal belief system, and humble in presenting her thoughts. In her concluding remarks she said that it does not bother her when the self-proclaimed religious people brand her with negative labels. Naturally, several religious eyes in the audience were rolling!

Fear of God or an effort to please God is obviously an elementary level of consciousness at which Man has yet to introspect to learn more about himself. Man's ego drives him towards self-glorification and presumption of self-righteousness. Armed with these two explosive and self-destructive forces

some self-proclaimed religious people and politicians in particular, make bold statements such as "We are a God fearing people" or "We are a God fearing nation". Why should any human in the right state of consciousness be afraid of God? Anger is not one of God's characteristic trait; that is not its nature. God does not occupy a throne "Upstairs" from where he expresses anger and doles out judgments. Even a child should not be brainwashed to fear God. For a child, God consciousness should only be an embodiment of friendship, love, compassion, and nothing else. God consciousness continues to evolve progressively in Man during his entire life span. By the end of his biological journey, a Man either gets it or does not get it and the ultimate choice is his. The right kind of religious philosophy provides a broad and flexible framework for its adherents. The framework should be capable of guiding various modes of individual comprehension. It is equally important to recognize that an individual transitions through various modes of comprehension during an entire lifetime. In other words, the awareness of Man keeps on changing until the universal Truth reveals itself. This is the dynamics and biography of human consciousness.

A truly open mind is a free and unbiased mind, which always searches for the truth in every situation. Truth does not change with individual perceptions. Reality of truth is defined and realized in your own heart, irrespective of whether you are a believer or a non-believer.

Brand of Religion

In the old Wild West of the U.S.A., ranchers owned large herds of cattle. Each cattle of their heard was branded with a hot iron insignia for identification. In a similar fashion, but in more subtle ways, it seems that each human has been traditionally branded with the religion of its family at birth. In most societies around the world, each child is branded with the paternal family name and religion. The religion is invariably a way of life, which includes traditions of the family and the community. Similarly at a wedding, the female spouse becomes recipient of her husband's family name and religion. These have been the norms of social and religious traditions for practical reasons. This way, the newborn child of a married couple inherits the family's name (surname) and common religion as a starter kit. It insures an orderly and harmonious transition from one generation to another.

In the twenty-first century, a part of our self-education is becoming aware that different brands of religions and their traditions have existed in parallel in various countries around the world. The ease of travel around the world forces intermixing of cultures, traditions and religious beliefs. Religious organizations struggle in maintaining their brand identity. Any identity faces problems in the absence of genuineness.

A healthy philosophy of life is about an individual's desire and awareness in pursuit of true self-identity in the universal context. When this quest becomes genuine at an individual level of consciousness, the brand name of a philosophy or religion becomes unnecessary and irrelevant. A self-enlightened Master is the genuine seeker for whom there exists no superior brand of religion or an inferior God. There is no duality in genuine universal consciousness. Within the framework of different brands of religions, there appear to be commonalties that often get shadowed by the politics of religion. The politics of religion include the well-publicized notorious religious Inquisitions

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inquisition>), extermination of minorities, and similar acts of violence throughout the history of mankind. Unfortunately and sadly, the politics of religion and its brands is alive even in the twenty-first century. Politics seems to be the art of finding weak ground between two opposing philosophies and building castles on it.

The essential spirit of a certain brand of religion can be better absorbed through mastery of the original language of its texts and familiarity with its cultural base. Translations from one core language to another, such as translating Sanskrit text into English, invariably take away the essential spirit of the original message.

There is an old and wise saying that “Faith can move mountains”. But, if faith does not move mountains, it can certainly move hearts. Spiritual progress is stifled if the foundation of an individual’s faith is devoid of essential ingredients such as trust, devotion, simplicity, compassion, and equanimity. Discriminate wisely between faith and blind-faith because there is a fine line between the two. Let your heart explain the divide. Blind-faith, like quicksand, may drown you. Spirituality emerges when the brand and boundaries of religion phase out. It is then that the human heart itself becomes the temple, synagogue, gurudwara, church or mosque. It is here, in the heart, that the true prayer and worship begins. At that stage of awareness, the duality between the two, the worshipper and the object of worship, ceases to exist. You become what you are constantly searching for and the brand of religion becomes totally unnecessary and irrelevant.

Dear Departed Soul

It seems
You were with us just a moment ago
But you are not with us now
Comprehensible to the senses
Difficult to sort in heart and mind

It seems
That in birth we marvel
That in life we expand
That in death we shrink or shrivel
Gasping for meaning of life

It seems
There is more to life than enjoying
There is more to life than suffering
There is more to life than death
There is more to life than rebirth

It seems
Good moments of past gave joy
The same memories give pain now
The past cannot be brought into present
What gives pleasure, also gives pain

It seems
In death, only close ones grieve
Not so. Every body and every thing grieves
The house, the air, the pets, and plants too
You have naturally touched them all

It seems
When death brings a sense of separation and pain
You notice an infant looking at you innocently
Smiling and disarming you from your senses
Giving some new meaning and hope to life

It seems
The child in us is ever present
At times confused, lonely and afraid
Wondering in awe, grasping for reality
Trying to touch, feel, and fathom

It seems
Your pain is now healed
You are beyond human emotions
In tranquility and bliss
For ever in safe hands

Empathy

My wife, Usha, was taking graduate courses in Psychology at the George Williams College in Downers Grove, Illinois. One day she had returned from her college and she was narrating that in one of her classes they had discussion on the importance of empathy in a client and counselor relationship. Until that time, I had no clue to the meaning of the word, empathy. Usha's narration of the discussion in her class triggered my interest in the individual faculty called empathy. I wanted to know more.

Psychiatrists and Psychologists are both trained professionals who offer counseling for resolving their client's personal issues. A Psychiatrist is a medically qualified professional who can legally prescribe medications to address physical and chemical imbalances that may be hampering client's functional abilities. However, the Psychiatrist and the Psychologist are both primarily counselors. For the sake of simplicity, person seeking a professional counselor's help is addressed here as a client. Generally an individual is hesitant in seeking professional help until personal and emotional issues seem to get out of control. In such cases, sometimes effective help is luckily available from some members within the close circle, which may be a grandparent, a parent, a schoolteacher, or a close friend. Mutual trust seems to be an important ingredient in this relationship; however trust alone is not enough. As we mature and observe life around us, we notice that some exceptional individuals have unique qualities of listening and sharing wisdom to help individuals in emotional distress. That exceptional individual has the healing power of empathy.

Listening attentively to the client is important, but more important is the counselor's ability to feel the concern, pain, and anguish of the client and understand what the client is really trying to say. The client's words and command of language may be inadequate to effectively communicate thoughts and feelings. Therefore every vibration, twitch, and pain in the client's mind

and body needs to be understood, interpreted, and resolved. In an effective counselor, this ability comes through a unique faculty, which is identified as empathy. A textbook definition of empathy states that empathy is the ability to stand in client's shoes and see the world through their eyes. But this definition falls short of capturing the spirit behind the word, empathy.

Effective counseling is not necessarily an intellectual process requiring use of bombastic terms, analytical skills and labeling the client. In the client and counselor interactions the client should be able to feel a connection with the counselor and the connection has to click. Only then, a counselor can hope to be able to offer help in some small measure. And only then does the client develop respect, trust, and relationship for conducting a meaningful dialogue with the counselor. Reaching this stage in a client-counselor relationship marks the beginning of the healing process. An effective counselor is able to trigger rays of genuine hope in his client's mind to help the client towards self-healing or healing from within. True healing begins from within only when the client is able to assume responsibility willingly. Empathy is an important and essential ingredient in effective counseling. In a spirit of selfless offering, empathy enriches the provider as well as the receiver.

Empathy is a noble quality of the human mind, a silent vibration of the heart that enables one person to connect with the other person in a satisfying positive relationship. It has an enormous power of healing both sides of a mutual relationship. A very wealthy person does not have much in common with a materially very deprived person and as a result they cannot communicate with each other. Amongst the wealthy, only the one with empathy for fellow human beings will continue to prosper in all endeavors of life. This philosophy applies to an individual, a community, as well as a country. Empathy is the bedrock for building genuine and durable mutual relationships.

Every individual experiences dimensions of empathy factor in

childhood-mother relationship. Empathy is a crown jewel in the consciousness of Man.

Four Castes of Man

Psychologists and psychiatrists talk about the possibility of multiple personalities co-existing in a client which could affect the client's responses to the surrounding events. Perception of the outside world is invariably a reflection of Man's internalized conscious awareness.

Cast-system, a phrase that is generally used with grossly negative connotation, is a universal phenomenon that pervades in all societies of the world. It represents a human weakness. The above title is selected to reflect on Man's frame of mind and how it influences perceptions and actions. The title is not in the defense or rejection of any prevalent cast-system. Man is the only living species on this planet endowed with a brain that can think, reflect, apply logic, reason, as well as play mischief. It is also the reason why every society around the world practices a cast-system in one form or another even in the twenty-first century. Other living species do not practice cast-system.

The sun shines and radiates its life sustaining energy equally to all life forms that it encounters in its natural path. Yet, under identical exposure conditions to the sun, each Man interprets the same day differently. Similarly, each Man interprets a cast-system prevalent in the society in different ways.

Using a layman's terminology let us attempt to compartmentalize our human body in four sections starting from the top of head to the toe:

Section #1, is the portion extending from top of head to the neck.

Section #2, includes the shoulders, chest, arms, and palms.

Section #3, is the digestion and excretion tract.

Section #4, is the portion from top of thighs to the toes.

Man's body is designed and put together by Mother Nature in a very specific and functional way. It appears to be a vertically

integrated management system. Section #1 is positioned at the top, whereas Section #4 is at the bottom. Each Section has its functional role to play and simultaneously complement functionality of every other Section. It is a totally integrated and effective system that micromanage every little function in the human body.

Section #1, positioned at the top of the body, has all major built-in sensors including eyes for seeing, ears for hearing, nose for smelling, and tongue for tasting. It also has the brain for storing information in the form of data and images, similar to a hard disk in a computer. The massive data stored in the brain is constantly updated on a moment by moment basis and is available on instant recall. Thus Section #1 oversees the intelligence portfolio of the body, while it stays in constant touch with every other Section of the body.

Section #2 is located immediately under Section #1. Whenever the body loses balance or perceives a threat from outside, the arms and palms instantly stretch out to protect the body. Simultaneously, the chest breathes in and puffs up for the encounter. This Section essentially performs the function of “Home Land Protection”. It protects against any external threat. However, no matter how strong is Section #2, it constantly relies on the intelligence and guidance provided by Section #1. In addition, the Section #2 also relies equally on energy support from Section #3, and mobility support from Section #4.

Section #3, located under Section #2, transacts business internally with all Sections of the body. It receives and stores essential necessities such as foods, nutrients, gases, fluids, and utilizes them to provide energy as needed. It provides essential services for general maintenance of the entire body that include excretion of the undesirable waste matter and toxins out of the body on a regular basis.

Section #4, by virtue of being positioned at the lowest end of the body, bears the weight of the entire body. It facilitates mobility, overall balance and keeps the entire human body grounded.

Mother Nature has positioned each Section described above in its proper place to ensure efficient working of the super-machine called human body. As mentioned earlier, it is a vertically integrated management system in which efficiency is ensured by the constant cooperation between various Sections. Following is a simple example that bears it out. Body's daily bowel movement is prompted by the digestive tract located in Section #3. In order to complete the final paper work (wipe the poop off) cooperation of hands (Section #2) is needed, and equally important is cooperation of legs (Section #4) to keep the body levitated during the entire clean-up operation! Besides the mundane menial operations, Section #4 enables the human body to move around and lift its spirit to serve others. And the vision for it all is provided by Section #1.

Recognize that the same blood stream, circulating in a closed loop system, irrigates all four Sections. Each one of the four Sections shares an identical DNA (biological identity) although each performs its own distinctive functions. The four Sections do not compete with each other, but are complementary in promoting functionality of each other. Within the framework of human body, the legs do not complain about being placed at the lowest end of the body and having to carry the burden of body's weight all the time. But if and when the legs feel tired, the announcement is promptly broadcast throughout the body. In a prompt response, the other three Sections of the body automatically pitch in to assure appropriate rest and attention to the legs. This built-in and nurtured cooperative instinct ensures harmonious functioning of the entire body. However, Mother Nature does not permit one Section of the body to exchange places and functions with any other Section of the body. In total absence of any ego, the four Sections work harmoniously

together.

A social order in human society evolves slowly over a period of time. Each civilization and cultural group around the world has developed its own distinctive pattern of social order. Social order is simply an organized effort for governance of the society as a composite and harmonious group. Although the rules and styles of governance vary from one group to another, some fundamental aspects of governance are common and remain the same. Good governance implies efficient and fair distribution of work. The same principle is applicable to a family unit. The core of each social order seems to evolve in Man's own physical image and consciousness. Just as Man's body has four functional Sections as described earlier, Man's social order also tends to evolve with four functional Sections or groups within its framework. These groups may be broadly identified as Socio-Economic & Cultural (SEC) groups.

Every society is fully aware that a progressive social order evolves based on fair distribution of work responsibilities and rewards for each SEC group. Using these analogies, we may equate the human body Sections described earlier and the corresponding SEC groups as follows:

- Section #1 = SEC Group #1
- Section #2 = SEC Group #2
- Section #3 = SEC Group #3
- Section #4 = SEC Group #4

Within the structure of an organized social order, the socially conscious philosophers, scientists, teachers, judges, and parliamentarians function as SEC Group #1. The armed forces and police embody the SEC Group #2 function. The business community engaged in manufacturing, trading, and related activities embody the SEC Group #3 function. Executors of the assigned menial work embody the SEC Group #4 function. Each SEC group represents an essential and necessary function

within the framework of a human society. No one SEC group can function effectively in a society without the cooperation of the three others. Unfortunately in reality, the four SEC groups within a social structure tend to become separate Castes of a society. They develop tendencies to become segregated and therefore non-complimentary to each other. When the structure of a cast-system deteriorates, it gives rise to several sub-castes within one cast. Then the SEC groups do not function as harmoniously as the Sections of human body described earlier. Only a society and its governance that honors, manages, and implements social harmony amongst all of its four SEC groups will be capable of advancing its social consciousness and prosperity.

It is a human weakness to perceive the four SEC groups as castes in terms of higher and lower status. That is when the terms lower-cast and upper-cast arise and anchor in social consciousness. It is only when you assume that you are a high-cast dude that you treat the other guy as a lower-cast. It is Man's royal-ego at work. Implication of this essay should be abundantly clear by now that every society around the globe practices cast-system in one form or another. The intensity and rigidity of the cast-system prevalent within a society defines it's over all social consciousness. An effective cast-system within a society or a country will allow and insure freedom of movement for an individual to seek his/her own level of SEC group and its conscious level. Rigid boundaries between the SEC groups hamper enrichment of individual and social consciousness. Unfortunately, politicians around the world seem to thrive on maintaining these invisible barriers between the SEC groups to divide Man from Man to promote selfish interests.

Philosophically, a Man can see himself as a blend of four SEC groups. Each SEC group can be associated with characteristic traits. Recognizing and understanding these traits may help a Man to better understand himself and redefine the cast-system.

As an individual, we become or assume the role of SEC Group #1 when our mind reacts to events around us in a responsible way. Traits of responsible attitude include, but are not limited to, equanimity, compassion, tolerance, kindness, empathy, and offer willing assistance to seekers of knowledge. Chasing goals of material prosperity occupy much lower priority because simplicity, humility and austerity are the beacons for this mindful state and function. A constituent of this SEC Group #1 is committed to continuously advancing his/her own knowledge and understanding of the environment and its relationship with every component within its framework.

We become a constituent of SEC Group #2 when we fearlessly protect values of freedom. We protect the weak and unfortunate ensuring their dignity and freedom. The distinguishing characteristics of this member are fearlessness, dedication of purpose and royalty at heart.

We become a constituent of SEC Group #3, when our mind wheels and deals with the world to procure necessities of life in terms of material goods and services to provide for family and community. Accumulation of wealth is a prime motivator for this trait. The accumulation of wealth and material goods becomes a virtue when charity and simplicity are the guiding values in life. It becomes a vice when greed is the primary and irresistible beacon, not realizing that greed is a bottomless pit.

We become a constituent of SEC Group #4 when our mind and its capabilities are limited to execution of assigned tasks. The actions are prone to indulgence with negative energy towards self and others. Negative energy is like a dual-edged sword that destroys self and others as well. Negative energy only produces negative results; it is a simple law of Mother Nature. Negative tendencies of mind reflect as envy, jealousy, greed, anger, intolerance, ignorance, and an over-riding negativity about life. These tendencies are embodiment of moral bankruptcy and incapability of discriminating between

right and wrong, moral and immoral, and various shades of each that lie in between.

Therefore we may see each Man's individual personality as a composite of four distinct traits or castes identified in the preceding paragraphs. It is this composite identity that one projects into the outside world. The overall balance or imbalance of these four traits or castes within that becomes the fabric of our individual identity.

Freedom

The freedom struggle of Man is as old as mankind. Travelling through the journey of life, Man constantly seeks freedom to express himself. Claiming and preserving individual freedom requires awareness, discipline and sacrifice. But the term individual freedom means different things to different individuals depending upon the cultural and social environment. Man seeks freedom of expression in different ways including freedom of speech, freedom in pursuit of individual passions, and freedom of choice in pursuit of life as a whole.

The fight for freedom has been waged repeatedly in so many different ways throughout the history of Man. And yet history promises to repeat itself in future because Man has earned the reputation of having a short memory. In spite of social and scientific advances made up to the beginning of the twenty-first century, little dent has been made in assuring freedom and basic human rights to many around the globe. Some progress has been made, but it is hardly enough.

In recent world history, from 1800 AD onwards, several groups of people including nations have struggled to obtain independence and freedom from their respective rulers, oppressors and colonizers. Since this sort of revolution was prevalent worldwide during this period, it was a positive indication that humanity was waking up to a newer level of consciousness. Freedom of Man was gaining expression and priority. The founding of the League of Nations and subsequently the United Nations Organization in twentieth century was a reflection of mankind's advancing state of consciousness. But then, even in the twenty-first century, wars and conflicts rage on in several countries around the world. Freedom and consciousness of Man is being challenged under newer banners.

In 1945 when I was in eighth grade at Hadas High School,

Nagpur, India, we studied a poem entitled “The Slave’s Dream” by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. The sensitive poem reflects on freedom of Man in a unique but true to life dimension. Therefore the poem is being reproduced below in its original format.

The Slave’s Dream:

Besides the ungathered rice he lay
His sickle in his hands;
His breast was bare, his matted hair
Was buried in the sand.
Again, in the mist and shadow of sleep,
He saw his Native Land.

Wide through the landscape of his dreams
The lordly Niger flowed;
Beneath the palm-trees on the plain
Once more a king he strode;
And heard the tinkling caravans
Descend the mountain-road.

He saw once more his dark-eyed queen
Among her children stand;
They clasped his neck, they kissed his cheeks,
They held him by the hand!
A tear burst from the sleeper’s lids
And fell into the sand.

And then at furious speed he rode
Along the Niger’s bank;
His bridle-reins were golden chains,
And, with a martial clank,
At each leap he could feel his scabbard of steel
Smiting his stallion’s flank.

Before him, like a blood-red flag,
The bright flamingoes flew;

From morn till night he followed their flight,
O'er plains where the tamarind grew,
Till he saw the roofs of Caffre huts,
And the ocean rose to view.

At night he heard the lion roar,
And the hyena scream,
And the river-horse, as he crushed the reeds
Beside some hidden stream;
And it passed, like a glorious roll of drums,
Through the triumph of his dream.

The forests, with their myriad tongues,
Shouted of liberty;
And the Blast of the Desert cried aloud,
With a voice so wild and free,
That he started in his sleep and smiled
At their tempestuous glee.

He did not feel the driver's whip,
Nor the burning heat of day;
For Death had illumined the Land of Sleep,
And his lifeless body lay
A worn-out fetter, that the soul
Had broken and thrown away!

When Man is denied freedom, he dreams it until freedom comes. In the case of the slave described in the above poem, freedom came to him in his dream and then lasted uninterrupted through eternal sleep. Unfortunately, even in a normal life, individuals tend to enslave themselves with self-imposed limitations. These self-imposed limitations are shackles that others cannot see. Freedom from fear is empowering self to remove these shackles.

The aggressor in each one of us needs a constant reminder that in the kingdom of Mother Nature, each and every living being is

born free; and when that inherent freedom is denied or challenged, expect a big fight and its consequences. For every Man, freedom is a birthright and when it is exercised with responsibility everyone benefits.

Friendship

Relatives are inherited, but relationships with them have to be nurtured. Friends are chosen and friendships with them are cultivated. A family adopts a newborn pet and instantly bonds with it. A personalized God image is chosen, but god consciousness needs to be internalized. In each and every personal connection, mutual trust is at the core of bonding and friendship. Friendship is the silent vibration of human heart. In absence of this vibration, friendship merely remains an acquaintance and surface chemistry.

In the context of a personal friendship, I recall the movie *Cast Away*, in which actor Tom Hanks plays the leading role of a busy Federal Express executive. Federal Express is a private American company that delivers mail and packages worldwide. While flying overseas on a business trip, Tom's plane develops mechanical trouble and crash lands in the ocean waters. Tom is the lone survivor. He ends up floating and drifting on to a desolate small tropical island. After living on the island for a few days, Tom shockingly discovers that he is the lone and sole inhabitant of the tropical island.

With absolutely no communication with the outside world and struggling to live alone on the island, Tom craves for a companion. Amongst the few items of his luggage that were washed ashore with him to the island was volleyball with the manufacturer's name "Wilson" imprinted on it. Tom was familiar with the Wilson volleyball since his childhood. Tom scrounged up a felt pen from his sparse luggage and used it to draw large eyes, nose and lips on the Wilson volleyball making it look like a human. Then he placed the ball in full view on a little sand mound. Tom started addressing the ball as "Wilson" and would constantly talk to it about his personal experiences on the island. The inflated Wilson ball was now transformed into his close and only friend on the island. Tom constantly shared his thoughts including his sorrows and joys with Wilson.

Soon Tom had developed a thick friendship with Wilson. As far as possible, Tom ensured that Wilson was constantly in his sight during the day. Together they weathered life on the island. With no hope of any help from the outside world. Gradually Tom started building a small raft.

A day came when Tom was finished building the skinny bamboo raft that would hopefully carry him and Wilson away from the lonely island back to civilization and home-sweet-home. Tom loaded up his raft with the bare necessities. But the most important item on the raft was his constant companion Wilson, the volleyball. He positioned Wilson on the raft's tip section, which was constantly in sight.

Wilson had helped Tom retain his sanity through the toughest of times on the island. Now Wilson and Tom together were on the skimpy raft, which dared the rough waves of the ocean. While afloat on the high seas, a rough storm with gusty winds swayed the tiny raft mercilessly in every possible angle. Tom struggled to keep himself and Wilson anchored on the raft. It seemed as if Nature had unleashed its fury. As the storm raged and mercilessly tossed the raft, Wilson broke loose from the raft and tumbled helplessly into the giant waves. Seeing this, Tom shouted and assured Wilson that he is coming to get him. In split second and without any second thought, Tom jumped in the rough stormy waves and swam towards Wilson to rescue him. Tom kept on reassuring Wilson while the distance between the two kept on increasing progressively. Helplessly, Wilson bobbed farther away and disappeared in the giant sea waves far beyond Tom's reach and physical stamina. Tom was heart broken for Wilson and returned sadly to the raft. The friendship nurtured with Wilson had anchored in Tom's consciousness forever. Recognize how an inanimate Wilson volleyball had become Tom's constant companion, a true friend, and an emotional savior in times of need.

Most religious minded individuals have an image of God in

their consciousness. They claim it to be their God and trusted friend. A personal God's image is empowered by the devotion of the devotee. Man tends to create God in his own image. The image of personal God may be cast in materials of choice such as gold, silver, clay, plaster, or sculpted from materials of choice such as marble, stone, ivory, and wood. Alternately the image may be painted on canvas. In each case, the image is empowered by the devotee and plays the role of a trusted friend and an emotional savior. A child from a self-proclaimed religious family inherits God's image from the family's religious faith. The child cherishes and entertains the personal God's friendship unconditionally. In childhood, even a Teddy bear or an in-house pet provides a similar experience of unconditional love, attention, and friendship. A trusted friend provides just that. In a similar sense, an adult religious believer also perceives a personal God as a true friend that offers unconditional love all the time. A relationship of trust with God becomes rewarding even when one of the partners is always silent or does not communicate with words.

The Hallmark Company had put out a greeting card with the title "Footprints in the Sand". It narrated an interesting conversation between a Man and God. God had assured the Man that he would always be with him at all times, good or bad. At the end of his biological journey, the Man confronted God and complained about the numerous problems that he had to face alone, and accused God of not being there with him as promised. Upon hearing his complaint, God asked the Man, "How do you know that I was not there with you". And the Man looking back pointed out to the footprints in the sand said "Look there is only one set of footprints on the sand". And God replied "There is only one set of footprints because I was carrying you on my shoulders all this time". Even the slightest doubt represents lack of trust in a sincere friendship.

Reflecting back on the early years of life, we sense great beauty in the innocence and beauty of childhood friendships. Each

child should have an opportunity to experience the innocence of childhood to experience the dimensions of true friendship. A carefree childhood is a privilege and a blessing to enjoy. Friendships developed during childhood tend to be resilient, durable, and seamless. Each one of us cherishes the childhood friendships for its unique dimensions.

While growing up in a family setup, we become familiar with the customs, traditions, and daily rituals. For a family, whether it claims to be religious or not, its customary traditions become a way of life. In this sense, each and every religion that is inherited or claimed by Man is also a way of life embracing a specific set of ethnic traditions and rituals. This philosophy of life respects the way of life of every other family and community. Various self-enlightened Masters around the world have consistently suggest that God is not a topic for endless debates although it has been so for centuries. God is nameless and formless simply because it represents a universal and eternal principle. Man gives God a name and physical identity of his choice for experiencing it at an individual level of consciousness. No word from any language ever devised by Man shall have the capacity to describe it. God is the ultimate experience of blissful consciousness. It represents an unconditional friendship at an individual level of consciousness.

Gita Guides

During the years 3,200 – 3,100 BCE (Before Common Era) two royal dynasties, Kaurava and Pandava, ruled their respective kingdoms in the north-central region of India. In modern India this geographical region is now included partly in the state of Hariyana and Uttar Pradesh (UP). A place called Kurukshetra located in this region was witness to an intense 16-day war between these two dynasties to settle their irreconcilable disputes. It was a war between “Kith and Kin” as most of the wars are. Each side was supported in the war by their respective allies from the surrounding region. The Indian epic Mahabharata is based on this period and Bhagwat Gita is a section of the epic (Wikipedia and [www. Hinduism.abot.com](http://www.Hinduism.abot.com)).

Jealousies amongst two ruling dynasties with their kingdoms adjacent to each other are as old as mankind. The relationship between the interrelated Kaurava and Pandava dynasties had worsened to a point that a war had to settle the irreconcilable disputes. Each dynasty garnered support from their respective allies from the surrounding region to build sizeable armies. The war raged for 18 days at Kurukshetra. The war of two royal egos claimed enormous casualties causing pain on both sides. After the war ended, both sides pondered on the wisdom of waging the war and learned some lessons that touched their very being. So far, the story of Kurukshetra is like any other conflict in the history of mankind to this day.

The twentieth century witnessed the first world war (1914-18), the second world war (1940-45), the Korean war (1951-57), the 7-year long Iran-Iraq war, two Indochina wars, and several others that claimed millions of lives and caused suffering to millions more.

The pain inflicted on humanity by the first world war (1914-18) gave birth to the League of Nations organization with the sincere intentions of insuring durable peace and mutual

understanding. That institution saw its demise by the time the Second World War (1938-45) took its stage and caused further human suffering. The resulting pain gave birth to the United Nations organization (UNO) with a renewed effort to commit humanity to peace keeping efforts. The peace was broken again with the Korean war (1951-57). Besides these major conflicts, the twentieth century was also witness to several other conflicts including the Russia-Afghanistan, India-Pakistan, Israel-Palestine, Apartheid struggle in South Africa, Ireland-England, and several others. The pain and suffering inflicted on Man is no different whether the conflict is major or minor. One death or disability caused by such conflicts is one too many in every case. The same saga of conflicts continues unabated in the twenty-first century displayed through acts of worldwide terrorism. The terrorists and anti-terrorists are both terrorists under different labels. The word terrorist is common in both labels. The conflicts that continue unabated to this day are a sad testimony to the joint consciousness of humanity. It is abundantly clear that the joint consciousness of mankind has yet to evolve far before we can call ourselves civilized.

Repeatedly Man has demonstrated a very short memory by making the same mistakes over and over again. Skirmishes, battles and wars continue to this day and promise to continue endlessly because that appears to be the inherent nature of Man. The United Nations Organization (UNO), the joint consciousness of humanity, is struggling to tame an enemy that resides within.

From the outside, the 18-day war of Kurukshetra seems to appear as common as any other human conflict. However, there is a subtle difference. A unique philosophical message has surfaced out of this historical episode. This philosophical message addresses the conflict that is constantly raging in individual consciousness. It deals with the resolution of internal conflicts of Man to ensure durable peace and bliss within. In turn, this fundamental approach helps Man deal with the

external conflicts and realities of life. Verses in Sanskrit language have encapsulated this philosophy in an epic identified as “Gita”. The philosophical messages of Gita are prompts rather than dictates to challenge and enlighten individual consciousness. For this very reason, various scholars have written commentaries on Gita over the centuries and continue to do so even to this day.

The core message of Gita is woven around two prominent characters, Arjuna and Krishna. Arjun was commander of the army lead by Pandavas. Krishna was his charioteer and wise counsel. Arjuna symbolizes a fearless warrior who can become humble enough by surrendering personal ego to receive words of wisdom from his wise counsel or teacher. Krishna is his charioteer who is constantly positioning, facilitating and guiding Arjuna in battle. Krishna is symbolic of the constant companionship of a genuine Guru, guide or teacher. The battle of Kurukshetra is symbolic of the battle that constantly rages in the consciousness of every Man. The wisdom communicated by Gita is for assimilation in our conscious awareness and not for showing off scholarship.

Gita is an epic that guides and challenges each individual to become fearless and surrender personal ego, so that universal wisdom may surface and bear fruit. Gita does not propose a doctrine for blind faith. Instead, it encourages the innate freedom of man to understand and experience the dynamics of life and take actions in favor of righteousness and truth.

Over the centuries, wise men have condensed the essence of Gita to address the common man in each one of us. Some simple interpretations provide glimpses of wisdom it communicates.

For every hundred bad people there will be five good people that help maintain the balance in a society. The five Pandav

brothers took on the 100 Kurawa cousins and won the battle to protect good values in society. It is symbolic.

An English translation of Gita Saar (Essence of Gita) suggests:

Whatever has happened,
Has happened for the good.

Whatever is happening now,
Is also happening for the good.

Whatever will happen in future,
Will also be for the good.

What have you lost,
That you are crying for?

What did you bring with you,
That you have lost?

What did you create,
That you think is destroyed?

Whatever you have,
You have taken it from here.

Whatever you have given,
You have given only for here.

Whatever you think is yours today,
It belonged to somebody else yesterday.
Tomorrow somebody else will possess it,
Following universal law of constant change.

The only thing that does not change is Truth.
Truth stands on its own weight
And therefore universally acceptable to all.

God Consciousness

What language does God use to communicate? In asking this question, there is an obvious presumption that God is a person. At least at a child's level of consciousness, it seems so. If God does not understand any language of mankind, then how can any body communicate with God? Traditional religious faiths refer to God as a male figure. Is God a male or a female? If, and if, God is only a female, then Goddess would be the appropriate word. What if God is only half-male and half-female? Then what would be the proper word to address God? There is no word in English language for God that is half-male and half-female. An artist thinks of God in a specific way depending on his/her cultural and religious background and expresses it through mediums such as painting, sculpture and music. Similarly, a writer describes God based on his/her cultural background and individual consciousness. However, when a Man proclaims his words to be the words of God, then the same words put in written script are referred by his followers as scripture; and the Man is revered as a Prophet or a Messiah. There has been no female Prophet so far unless Google.com search engine can identify one. Does God preferentially communicate with a male to pass on his message? Two different Prophets appear to be talking about two different Gods. Naturally, the duality triggers endless controversies between different religious faiths.

During the summer of 1955, I visited the Salarjung Museum in Hyderabad, India. The museum was renowned for its broad collection of art objects from around the world. There was one life size marble statue of a Roman soldier sculpted by an Italian artist that caught my eye. Decked in full battle armor, the soldier had a long drawn sword in right hand, a metal shield in left hand, and a metal helmet on head. The tall and imposing figure had the posture of a proud soldier with his chest puffed up and ready to go in battle. As I walked closer to the imposing sculpture, I noticed that there was a huge mirror placed behind

the statue, several feet away from it. In the mirror I could not see the image of the soldier's back, instead of it was the reflection of a beautiful maiden standing in a gentle pose. With an aroused curiosity, I walked around the soldier's statue. As I stood squarely behind the soldier's statue, I was seeing only the beautiful statue of a gracefully standing woman in simple white clothes. The entire backside of the soldier's statue was sculpted to depict a graceful woman, gently bending forward. The area immediately behind the soldier's puffed up chest was skillfully sculpted to create the gentle pose of a woman. The entire rear side of the sculpture was every bit a beautiful and graceful woman. From a single piece of marble, this artist had created an exquisite impression in its totality. A man and a woman, equal and opposite, co-existing in a common body. Maybe, this was the artist's concept of expressing how the latent qualities of a male and female complement each other and manifest equally in an individual's frame, and suggesting further that one is not complete without the other.

One aspect of Hindu religious philosophy is expressed subtly through an image that depicts Lord Shiva and his wife Goddess Parvati in a combined figure. This is referred to in Hindu literature as the "Ardha Nari Nateshwar" which implies half male and half female. A traditional painting or sculpture of Ardha Nari Nateshwar shows vertical half of the standing figure as Shiva (male), and the other vertical half as Parvati (female). In this philosophical context, the male half symbolizes the Source (Mool in Sanskrit) and the female half symbolizes its built-in Intelligence (Shakti in Sanskrit). One is not complete without the other. The two together symbolize Creation (Brahma in Sanskrit). They are both manifestation of the supreme reality. When this Hindu philosophical concept is read and interpreted in the Hindu cultural context, it brings out the realization of universal and complementary role of male and female in life. Therefore, a traditional concept of God only as a male or a female figure needs to be revisited. It seems that Man has encapsulated God in his own image. This is not a battle for

“Equal Rights” between a God and Goddess. Because of traditional religious concepts, the artist and philosopher in each one of us entertains God consciousness through various mediums such as painting, sculpture, music, and written words at individual level of consciousness.

Sexual fixation is relatively an immature level of individual consciousness. At this level of consciousness, Man assigns sexuality to his personalized image of God. Some choose to believe in a male God and others in a female Goddess. Is a male God superior to a female Goddess? Are there two Gods? What is God’s color? Do God and a Goddess bear children? If God is perceived as the creator, does God visit earth once in a while to review his creation? Does God send his son or daughter as an emissary to inspect his creation and deliver his message? In which language is that message delivered? Does God choose one Man/Nation over another Man/Nation on earth to communicate his message? Does God communicate with animals, microorganisms, and vegetation? This list of legitimate questions is endless. Even a child with freedom to think may ask these questions. Satisfactory answers to these obvious and rational questions do not lie in any religious scriptures or scientific journals. A scripture can only provide a road map and discipline to advance individual consciousness. Self-enlightenment comes through reflection and introspection.

Prophets claim to reveal the word of God. Self-enlightened Masters unravel the mystery of God.

Self-enlightened Masters allude to non-duality of God as a universal and eternal principle. The non-duality surfaces only through the depths of Man’s inner consciousness. If the concept of God is approached in a philosophical and rational context, then God does not have a physical form, sexual or a name identity. In this level of consciousness, there is no need to prove or disprove existence of God. God is simply and purely an individual’s inner experience on the path to self-

enlightenment. God, Goddess, sin, heaven and hell are judgments of the human mind, its frailties and limitations. God does not cause Tsunami, earthquakes, draughts, cyclones, floods and other phenomena that cause human suffering. A human being is simply a witness to the natural phenomena. A human being is also a witness to the beauty and bounty of Mother Nature.

God is not a physical entity that descends from Heaven to Earth. Man aspires to the ideals of godliness, not with an intention to become God, but simply to emulate and experience divine attributes such as unconditional acceptance, compassion, fearlessness, and immortality as a state of eternal blissful consciousness.

There have been many individuals in different lands that have achieved levels of blissful consciousness on their own initiative. Such individuals become living embodiment of qualities that are attributed to a concept commonly referred to as God. These individuals are addressed in various terms such as saint, enlightened soul, self-enlightened Masters, and several other terms in different cultures. These terms do not represent any worldly titles, because such individuals are far beyond any need for worldly rewards or recognition. As we journey through life, we meet or hear about individuals of this stature that make us pause and take note. In their personal presence, we feel enriched and blessed.

I am reminded of the story about a simple man named Rahim that was narrated to me during my childhood in India. Rahim, a man of poor means, was revered in the community by virtue of his simplicity and nobility of heart. His true-life story goes like this. Rahim offered food to the poor and hungry daily. While Rahim served food to each person approaching him, his face reflected humility masked with a gentle smile, while his eyes would have tears of joy and an expression of thankfulness. In his heart of hearts and simplicity, Rahim felt blessed that his

hands were useful as God's instruments in dispensing food to the needy. He gave freely expecting nothing in return. If he ran out of food, sometimes he would share some of his own rations with the hungry. The poor and hungry who received food from Rahim were experiencing and witnessing the noble qualities that Man assigns to godliness. Rahim had no expectations whatsoever from his receivers. In such an exchange, the giver as well as the receiver, experience mutual self-enrichment. There is a Rahim in each one of us that needs to freely express and share.

Meherbaba was a Zoroastrian saintly man of 20th century in Pune, India. He said that if you are extremely thirsty in the midst of a desert holding on to your last ration of water and you are approached for water by a very thirsty man, and you share your water with him, then you are loving God.

No poor man should have to die of hunger and loneliness on the streets. Mother Theresa's mission in Calcutta, India offered roof of compassion and dignity to such dying men. Mother Theresa was not expecting any outside authority to bestow the title of sainthood on her in recognition of her mission of compassion. Selfless service for the needy is a noble quality of the human heart that is worth emulating and experiencing. A mother's selfless love, infinite patience, consistent attention, and empathy for her infant child are direct reflections of divine qualities. A mother nurtures her infant for twenty-four hours every day, seven days a week and 365 days of the year (24/7/365) without regard to her personal inconveniences. In these moments of selfless service for the infant, the mother has no expectations. Give this same job to a man and he will start climbing the walls within a few hours! Every living creature has a mother and therefore experiences mother's love of divine quality. Failure to sense this divine attribute in our own mother amounts to emotional blindness. Forgive this Man for he knows not his own mother, nor himself. Self-enlightened Masters subtly remind us that God, the

universal principle, reveals itself through innumerable experiences in life. The entire Universe that we witness is manifestation of that principle we identify as God. God does not sit in a Temple, Church or Mosque waiting to receive audiences. The sanctity of a chosen place of worship is empowered by the devotion and consciousness of devotee. God, the universal principle, exists in each and every heart that throbs and thirsts for self-realization. God is the universal principle that is Omni-present, Omni-potent, and eternal. Late Swami Chinmaya Ananda, an exponent of Vedanta philosophy of life, suggested that “If God is presumed to be eternal and immortal, then he was never born and therefore never baptized”. Sufis sing in ecstasy about an individual soul as akin to a female lover that is eagerly looking forward to uniting with its male lover. The male lover is referred to as the universal Soul or God.

God consciousness is not an intellectual pursuit of scholarship, nor a blind faith. God is the ultimate experience of eternal bliss within. Mr. Shiv Kumar Sharma is a renowned musician who lends soulful background scores on his Santoor (a unique string instrument) to popular Hindi films in India. His latest CD titled “Antardhwani – The Inner Sound” was released in October 2008. During a press conference on this occasion, Mr. Sharma commented “Playing the Santoor is meditation that promises a fulfilling journey to the soul and an encounter with eternal bliss”.

Guru

Life is a learning experience in a sea of constantly unfolding and often mixed vibrations. The word Guru is used in Sanskrit language to address or refer to a teacher with respect. In another context, the same word may be used to address a friend who is trying to pull your leg! For the sake of this composition, we want to use the word “Guru” to refer to a source from which we learn something about life in general and about ourselves in particular. The source can be a person or an inanimate object, or alternately it could simply be an idea that throws light on our experiences with life. So, Guru is a source that enriches our conscious awareness and guides us from ignorance to knowledge. A Guru subtly guides our attitude from saying Ha! to a life situation to experiencing Ah! (Wonder) in the same situation.

The normal period from conception to delivery (birth) of a human is approximately nine months. During this period, the fetus experiences first-hand the gradual process of becoming. Inside the womb, where we are only recognized as a fetus, our learning process had already begun without the use of any language. We are fully wired to receive all essential inputs. Inside mother’s womb, we experienced the bliss of being fully taken care of, physically and emotionally. Our mother’s womb seems to have been our very first Guru.

Then after stepping out of the womb and birth canal, we literally move from darkness to light. From the earlier stage of bobbing around inside a pouch full of fluid and wired through the umbilical cord, we step out in open air and experience a major transition of living environment. Within a short time after birth, the umbilical connection was cut abruptly and we found ourselves on our own. We spread open our arms anxiously and try to grab on to whatever touches us in the hope of emotional support. Touch was possibly the sensor we used most to comprehend the New World. Light and sound were

still unfamiliar forms of energy for our senses. Gradually, we began to recognize and trust a soothing touch and voice. This caring touch and voice of our mother was our closest Guru during these early days after birth. As yet, spoken word or language had not played any role in our communication and learning process. Like a Guru, different vibrations of life guide us through incremental stages of awareness.

Gradually during the first nine months after birth, we begin to recognize and appreciate the gentle touch and voice of one particular person that is constantly taking care of us all the time. Through the gentle caring we feel a vibration of warmth and bonding. Gradually we learn that this special person is our Mother in the subtle role of a Guru.

As we transition further through various stages of childhood, we begin to sense the dynamics of our immediate family and the environment around us. Each element of the surrounding environment gives us some sense of being and belonging. Some life experiences stay fresh all the time and carry subtle messages that gradually unfold. A list of some life experiences follows:

- Catching butterflies was fun as they sat quietly on a flower's petal, slowly flapping their wings. Gently grab their wing tips just as they close on each other. After appreciating the multi-color attractive patterns on the wings, release the butterfly back to its natural freedom. The butterfly whispers "Love me tender and love me true".
- A delicate plant in our garden that had twin color leaves fascinated me. Each leaf was dark green on top and powdery white underneath. If I pressed the white side of the leaf on the back of my fist, a white powdery impression of the entire leaf would transfer on my skin. The leaf would whisper "I am unique and that's why you look at me!"

- There was yet another fascinating plant that stood approximately three-foot tall with a unique personality. The tender branches and attractively shaped leaves of this plant would stoop downwards as I approached and touched them. However, after withdrawing away from the plant, its branches and leaves would gradually spring back to normalcy. We called the plant “The blushing maiden”.
- Occasional raids by a band of monkeys, eyeing the Guava fruit in our garden, seemed to be a nuisance. Our elders thought so, but it was an entertainment for us kids because we were expected to shoo the monkeys away with our own monkey tricks. It was an ideal time to demonstrate our skills with rubber slings using pebbles. We never aimed our sling at a mother monkey that was hopping from one tree to another with her baby tightly hugging on to mother’s stomach. Mother monkeys expect the same courtesy that we extend to a human (mother) carrying her baby.
- Interactions with family pets introduce us to a different dimension of life experiences. Over a period of time we have enjoyed close attachment with a parrot, two dogs, a rabbit, two parakeet, and two cats. All of them loved their caretakers unconditionally and with gratitude.
- Planting seasonal flowers and vegetables, watching them grow and bloom gave a sense of Mother Nature’s seasonal rhythm.
- Seasonal migration of birds and watching their graceful group flying patterns provides clues to the built-in instincts of each living species.
- Sitting on the seashore, we notice beautiful sunrise, sunset, the rhythm of lapping waves, sprinkling of diverse seashells and pebbles washed ashore. The sea gulls fly in formation above, peering down for food. Unknowingly, we soak up the rhythm and beauty of Mother Nature.
- Under the cool shade of a century old sprawling Banyan tree, while the sun pushes the mercury to 120 degrees

Fahrenheit, we feel comfort that is often described as heavenly.

- Watching the massive waters of the Niagara falls from the lower end while riding in a dingy boat give a sense of awe and wonder about the massive energy of water in constant motion.
- Occasional loud thunder from clouds accompanied by awe inspiring lightening spanning the entire horizon for fraction of a second, humbles us in submission. A colorful rainbow seems suspended in space. The sight of a falling star in sky with its lighted up trail for a short moment arouses a silent vibration. The beauty of setting sun or rise of full moon in the evening sky cannot be easily captured on canvas as it appears to the eyes and in the mind.

Such varied personal experiences prompt us to seek the deeper meaning of our relationship with the environment that we live in. Guru's prompts often come in gentle vibrations. These vibrations become internalized and subconsciously play the role of a Guru. We experience the transference in ways that words can not explain. Life experiences are internalized to learn more about ourselves.

Progressively as we step into adulthood, we may raise questions about our own universal identity and seek further guidance. We listen to a preacher who claims to know about God. On the other side of the spectrum, we may encounter a person who claims not to know anything about God but ecstatically sings about God. In between the two is the whole spectrum of humanity desperately searching for self-identity and God. A Guru of a different stature may fill that void. Consciously or subconsciously, every Man is constantly searching for a Guru, just as a river is constantly flowing towards the sea of consciousness. In this sense, a sincere student-seeker and his would-be teacher (Guru) are constantly searching for each other. At the right time, both find each other in a spirit of fusion and union. A Guru is not necessarily always a person.

Guru is a source that we trust. Trust builds up slowly over a period of time. A Guru mirrors qualities that we adore and imitate. A Guru often communicates with minimum words, and many a times a word is even unnecessary or irrelevant. A Guru offers guidance in appropriate ways at appropriate times. It is a mutually rewarding relationship between the seeker and the sought. The search for a Guru may not necessarily be for a Man sporting a beard, an imposing attire or a loincloth. Sometimes, the search for a Guru may follow a networking path similar to that we all tend to use to develop relationships. Association with one teacher leads to another teacher. A genuine teacher in the role of a Guru is only interested in facilitating an individual's journey towards self-enlightenment.

Varied life experiences prompt us to seek the deeper meaning of our relationship with the environment that we live in. Guru's prompts often come in gentle vibrations, various forms and mediums. Our own cultivated intuition and intense desire guide us to an appropriate Guru. The ultimate Guru that fixes in our consciousness may not necessarily even be a person. Guru enlightens awareness of our presence in the universe.

Ultimately, it seems that we turn our attention within to experience the presence of our Guru in our own heart consciousness. That is when we stop running and looking around for a Guru externally. At that stage, our Guru's consciousness becomes our consciousness; and we become what we are constantly searching for.

Self-enlightened Masters have prompted through centuries that:

A preacher preaches.

A teacher teaches.

A Guru guides.

Hell and Heaven

There is no place called hell, and therefore
There is no place called heaven.
Hell and heaven are manifestations
Of the ever illusory human mind.

Concept of hell is a childish way
Of understanding God's creation.
In God's beautiful and unique creation,
Love and harmony are primal forces.

God does not create fear in human mind.
Fear is man's ignorance about himself.
Hell is manifestation of man's insecurities,
With himself and the obscure unknown.

Religions induct concepts of sin and hell,
In a child's mind with fear and guilt.
Once fear of God is seeded in a child's mind,
He may not mature to experience God.

Heaven is an empty promise to Man,
Who does not or cannot believe in himself,
To think of himself as a free Man,
To feel, reflect, and introspect.

God does not assign you to hell,
You alone choose to put yourself there.
God does not assign you to heaven,
You alone aspire and reach out for it.

Heaven, Earth, and Hell,
Sound like three separate planets or places,
Created by Man's imagination,
Constantly in fear and in search of himself.

Teen-age boys are sent as soldiers into battle,
Against an enemy identified as evil.
The real enemy hides inside the warmonger's mind,
The real enemy is fear, greed, and hatred within.

The teen-age soldiers have been promised heaven,
If they get killed in action against the enemy.
Promising them heaven with luxuries,
Far beyond the little soldiers dreams.

Throughout the history of civilizations,
Man has killed man under false pretences,
Of religion, liberation, or self righteousness,
Hiding basic greed and insecurities within.

Precepts of every religion are pure at heart.
Man conveniently twists those precepts
To charter his own path of greed and ego,
Drawing lines on water to claim victory.

Hell and Heaven are here to stay
In the minds of people looking outwards.
Both concepts sublimate away as irrelevant,
When silent consciousness reveals the truth of self.

Human Species in Perspective

Should the human race self-destruct, there wouldn't be anyone left to even witness it. There is no doubt that the current global civilization can be wiped out many times over with the weapons of mass destruction (WMD) that are already available in huge stockpiles. You cannot find the WMD if you are looking for them in wrong places, but it is common knowledge as to who has the large stockpiles. Only the sanity of Man may prevent such a disaster from happening. The Inter Continental Ballistic Missile System (ICBM) and the Anti Missile System are examples of Man's insanity.

In total disappearance of humans from earth, this planet may indeed become a more beautiful place. Realize that Man is the worst polluter of this planet. Without Man and his polluting habits, the ecology of planet Earth will soon come into a harmonious balance and continue to evolve merrily and sustain itself effortlessly and efficiently.

We may humbly look at the human species and its development over the past 500,000 years. The oldest human skeleton excavated in twenty-first century was in eastern part of Ethiopia. It dates back to 160,000 years. The skull of those human looks very similar to that of a modern Man. Obviously the evolution process of Man, has been going on long before 160,000 years. If chimps, orangutans, and gorillas are indicative of the looks of our great ancestors, evolution of human species is indeed a very slow process. In comparison, dinosaurs and many other living species have disappeared from the face of the Earth for more than 65 million years. Since then, new species have come into existence. Some of the existing species in twenty-first century will become extinct in the coming centuries and new species may evolve slowly. The natural process of evolution goes on endlessly at its own pace and rhythm. Rather than limit our horizon, we should permit ourselves to explore and experience the infinite possibilities of evolution.

Modern Man is part of an evolutionary process that has been in progress for approximately five million (5,000,000) years. Man is a living species that started out in a very different physical form and appearance than the form it has today (Ref: TIME, August 23, 1999, Page 51-58). Some modern scientists theorize the possibility of a living sponge like structure as the beginning of human species. In the process of evolution, Man's overall structure and the quality of its brain have undergone considerable evolutionary changes. Man's monkey-like predecessors walked with both hands and feet touching the ground and lived on trees for self-protection. Later, a branch of these predecessors learned to use their hands with more skills and started living on the ground. That's us! Now a modern Man stands firmly on two feet, works skillfully with his hands and brain, and lives in comfortable shelters or houses.

Archeologists have developed various scientific techniques for determining the age of old relics. The Carbon-14 dating system and several other related technologies are helping to ascertain the timings and age of Man's evolution and other species. Dinosaurs have been extinct for 65 million (65,000,000) years and even this time span is small when viewed in the light of the life of our planet Earth, our Solar system and the Universe at large, which runs in several billions of years (www.nationsonline.org/oneworld.earth). And consider the humbling reality that the life span of a human being is merely 100 - 120 years! Yet a human seems to be the most creative of all living species known so far.

During the twentieth century, Biotechnology has unraveled some secrets of our being. Bio-technologists state that each infant is born with a biological signature of its own which is identified as DNA (Deoxyribonucleic acid). The individual specific DNA is a chemical structure that forms chromosomes. A piece of the chromosome that dictates a particular trait in human is called a gene. The DNA serves as the starting resume and a broad

instruction manual for our life (www.biology.washington.edu). From a philosophical standpoint, DNA is embodiment of the Universal Energy and its built-in Intelligence at work. From this philosophical perspective, life may not begin at fertilization of an egg in mother's womb, or for that matter at any other point that we can confidently put our finger on and be absolutely sure. Is birth and rebirth continuation of a cyclic sequence?

American comedian Bernie Mac once appeared on the Oprah Winfrey show. During the appearance, Bernie commented that when he bought a new TV, it came with a detailed manual on how to take care, maintain and repair it. However, when his new baby boy was born in the hospital, the doctor simply handed over the baby to Bernie and said, here take care of it. The human body is a pre-assembled super-machine that does not come with an instruction manual "How to take care of the baby". It comes with its built-in Intelligence that cares for it during its entire lifetime.

Besides humans, every living species has its unique DNA and genetic code. Man did not invent or implant his own DNA and genetic code, but has only deciphered and identified it. Scientific efforts are being made to modify a DNA pattern for medical benefits such as preventing or curing potential disease. Surprisingly, every living cell in our body, even the tiniest, has the footprint of our individual DNA and its genetic code. The evolving technology is mind boggling in its revelations.

In general, the material progress of human has been defined by the speed at which Man has been able to travel. At one point of time, Man's speed of travel was limited by riding on the back of a horse, which amounted to one horsepower. In the twenty-first Century, Man is able to travel in a Boeing 777 airliner which has twin engines that put out nearly 100,000 horsepower each! The cruising speed of the 777 aircraft is around 900 km/hour. So the world has changed from one rider commanding one-horse power, to one pilot of an aircraft

commanding a total of 200,000 horsepower. The consequential rate of change occurring in the material world today is obvious. Needless to say that Man's outer space travel to other planets at speeds much faster than speed of Boeing 777 is contributing further to the magnitude and rate of change in all aspects of human life. The shrouds of blind faith, prevalent in the world, will be challenged ever more and affect the over all consciousness of mankind. It is natural for a Man to be afraid of the unknown. But fear alone need not define a Man.

Identity

In a small rural community, almost everybody seems to know every little thing about everybody. It is a good feeling in many ways because it gives a feeling of belonging to a place and provides a comfort zone. That is the way life is in rural areas where the mobility of people is limited for economic and related reasons. As the size of the community increases and modernization changes the pace of life, less and less people bother to know about each other. In large and unwieldy metropolitan cities, it seems that almost nobody knows anybody and very few seem to care. For example, a teller at local personal bank may not recognize you simply because the turnover of that job has increased and as a result you see a new teller at the window counter more frequently. It is the reality of modern life in large cities and no one is really at fault. Therefore in large cities, individuals are required to carry personal identity (ID) cards. In addition to the photograph, a serial number is assigned to an individual's identity card.

In the U.S.A., until the end of the 20th century, generally one or two ID's were acceptable for carrying out a routine commercial transaction including air travel. However, since the 9/11 episode of 2001, two to three ID's are required out of which at least one must be a photo ID. Global terrorism, dramatic increase in air travel, and providing homeland security pose challenges in issuing, checking and establishing correct ID of a person. All of these factors have raised costs of providing commercial services. In modern technological and politically polarized world, trust amongst each other has been sacrificed. The cost of losing trust is always high and the cost of losing trust in one-self is incredibly higher.

Identity crisis is a commonly used terminology in conversations. It means many things to many people. Some jokingly refer to the identity crisis of Gordon who may be struggling with his middle-age crisis. For his 40th birthday, Gordon's wife has put

up a sign in their front lawn that broadcasts “Lordy, Lordy, Gordy is Forty”. Those who cannot find a comfort zone in their personal environment refer to it as their identity crisis.

Who am I? What am I?
Where have I come from?
Where am I headed?

These are the crushing questions individuals keep on asking silently about their self-identity. The answers to these questions are as varied as the conscious awareness level of each individual. Self-identity is a void within each one of us that is constantly begging to be filled.

During the very initial stages of conception in mother’s womb, our individual identity seems to be mostly in the vibrations that we feel. A fertilized egg, which is barely the size of a tiny fluid drop, bears our total identity and has the supreme built-in intelligence to slowly develop in the form of a human. During those nine months, our Mother’s womb is the sole connection to our universal identity.

Immediately after birth, the lungs begin to breathe, the umbilical cord is cut, and there is an anguish of separation. From that point on, an individual’s identity process begins with sex identification, a serial number on wristband attached by the hospital staff, a first name assigned by parents, and the inherited common family name. In customs of several cultures, the name of father’s first name is used as the middle initial which helps to trace the paternal family genealogy. A thumbprint and mother’s maiden name further reinforces the individual identity. These are some of the basic physical identities acquired by a newborn infant. In addition, the newborn automatically inherits the racial and religious identity of the parents, and citizenship-by-birth status of the country of birth. In exceptional cases, when the birth of a baby occurs on a ship cruising in international waters or aboard an aircraft on an international flight, the infant’s

citizenship may become an international issue!

Thus, immediately upon arrival in this world, the infant becomes recipient of a bundle of identities to bear through the journey of life ahead. It would not be surprising in the near future, if an infant is offered a life insurance policy and an international credit card at birth! All of this amounts to offering a bill-of-lading to an infant in the crib.

Then as the journey of life advances into adulthood, a person acquires other identities such as educational qualifications, professional identity, job titles, a passport, and several other. Amongst the countries that entertain a democratic way of life, one individual in three hundred million is able to assume the job title as “President of the United States of America”, and one in a billion assumes the title of “The Prime Minister of India”.

During Adolph Hitler’s regime, Hermann Goering (1893-1946) was Commander in Chief of the Luftwaffe; President of Reichstag, Prime Minister of Prussia and as Hitler’s designated successor, the second man in the Third Reich. Once, during his meteoric rise to power, he was being honored for his diverse accomplishments. For that occasion, Goering was immaculately dressed in his sharp army uniform. On his wide breasted coat, he was sporting a large array of colorful medals and stripes. After accepting the newest award, Goering started addressing the audience. He pointed his hand at the numerous decorations that were bestowed upon him earlier by various organizations. He drew attention of the audience to one specific Medal of Honor on his chest by pointing his index finger at it. He said that it was the very first Medal of Honor, which was awarded to him and that was a big mistake. Because after that, all the other stripes and medals followed suit!

Buried under the heap of all of these external identities is an identity of self, which often seems to get crushed underneath. Those who need to search for this self-identity have to dig their

way to the bottom of the heap of external identities. The size of this heap of external identities is your own creation. Therefore take full responsibility for it and start digging to get to the bottom of the heap. Earlier you start digging, the easier it will be. Naturally, the wiser step is to be constantly aware and prevent the heap of external identities from becoming emotionally overwhelming. Life constantly challenges us in maintaining a fine balance between our external and internal identity. The external identities are essential for fueling the ego-driven hunger for fulfillment. The inner identity serves to access universal consciousness in which we become complete and comfortable with our own self. The comfort zone of individual stems from within and then radiates outward.

The inadequacies of external identity came in sharp focus during two prominent interviews on Oprah Winfrey show in Chicago during September 2009. On September 14-15 singer Whitney Houston candidly shared her struggle in balancing her outside fame and personal identity. In another show on 16 September 2009, Oprah recapped her earlier interview with late Michael Jackson who also struggled with immense personal fame and pain associated with it. Although the degrees of name, fame and pain vary from individual to individual, the struggle for identity remains the same.

Tracking personal Family Tree is an emotional journey in search of self-identity. It is an enjoyable journey in the past that connects you to where you have descended from. Generally a meaningful Family Tree tracks back five to seven generations. Beyond that, it is like reading a history book.

Personally, I have found tracking my paternal and maternal family trees more meaningful and emotionally satisfying. I have had the privilege of interacting closely with several members of both family trees. As a result, I feel that my individual identity, both physical and emotional, bears a hidden emotional imprint

of both sides. The genealogical identity of Man goes far beyond what science can detect or prove.

Experience in life brings forth the realization that you have not been the author, producer, director or an actor in the drama of your past generations. And therefore you don't have ownership for their performance either way, the good or the bad. The individual specific DNA (Biological identity) that you automatically receive is a gift from the evolutionary process of Mother Nature. But now in the present, you are the author and producer of your own life drama and self-identity. You may take the full credit or share the full blame for your own actions. Each one of your action and its natural consequence bears your exclusive individual stamp. For establishing self-identity, looking inward helps a lot more than looking backwards or outward. Accepting your own genuine identity helps you move forward.

Even centuries before the Common Era (BCE), self-enlightened Masters introspected to comprehend universal truths, identity of Man, and the reality of existence. Using philosophy, logic and meditative introspection, the Masters postulated that human body is composed of five basic principles/elements, which were identified as Space/Ether, Gas, Earth, Fire, and Water. These five principles/elements represent the human body's most fundamental physical identity. The same five principles/elements also define the fundamental identity of each and every animate as well as inanimate object on earth. The same principles also apply in the entire universe at large. Modern science bears it out as the fundamental principles of "Matter". The disciplines of Chemistry and Physics have laid out the Periodic Table of Elements to further define most known elements occurring in planet Earth and the Universe at large.

The Vedanta philosophy of life suggests that every thing that is Matter has a beginning, a life span, and finally it disintegrates

and reverts back to its basic elements. It is a universal principle. Human body is simply Matter. After death, whether a human body is buried underground or cremated in fire, the end result is the same. The body reverts back to its five basic principles/elements namely space, gas, earth, fire and water. Body's physical identity vanishes and what remains after death has been a topic of assertions, debates and predictions for centuries. The self-enlightened Masters subtly prompt that it is a topic for meditative introspection or reflection that leads to an inner experience. For gaining this inner experience, you do not have to go to churches, mosques, temples or scientific laboratories. Nor do you try to define yourselves with intellectual dogmas. Introspection is a journey within on your own initiative. Effective introspection gradually leads to a state of involuntary suspended consciousness. It is a consciousness beyond any worldly attachment or experience. No word from any language can describe it. The wisdom and vibration of effortless meditative introspection guides the way to our individual identity as well as our universal identity, and the realization of non-duality between the two.

When the real identity of self reveals itself, we become what we are constantly searching for. Self-enlightened Masters have consistently asserted that this universal message is immensely more important than the messengers are.

Immortality

There is no pill that will help grow hair on a bald head and no pill for achieving immortality. The universal fact that death is an integral part of life is a hard pill to swallow. Animals and other creatures of planet Earth do not have the mental faculty to think about and long for either longevity of life or immortality. In the human race, an infant also does not crave for immortality because his life experiences have not yet brain washed his intellect.

For a young person, death is not yet thinkable or acceptable emotionally. However, the same person upon becoming an adult begins to express his desires for an extended life through various behavior patterns. At this early stage, immortality seems like a craving for some sort of continuity of life, which is not yet clearly defined or understood. A desire for tangible recognition drives a Man forward.

Immortality is a human passion as well as a weakness. In the normal course of life, it is very natural for an adult to crave for immortality. Seeking immortality is like chasing a mirage in the desert; it looks more real when you are really thirsty.

Hindu mythology narrates an interesting story of Gods (Devata) and Demons (Rakshasas). Gods on one side and Demons on the other side, the two teams decided to churn-up the ocean in order to bring its riches to the surface and share the bounty. The churning of the ocean was accomplished with a large mountain placed in the ocean and a thick rope of snakes wound around it. In olden days, buttermilk was produced by manually churning soured milk-fat in a large vessel. A wooden paddle was held vertically in the middle of the vessel and a rope with several turns was wound around the vertical shaft of the paddle. The two open ends of the rope were then alternately pulled outwards by hands to effect the churning action of the fluid in the vessel. As a result of the churning action, butterfat

separates out and surfaces to the top leaving the buttermilk underneath.

The team of Gods pulled the snake-rope from one end, and the team of Demons pulled the opposite end to churn the sea vigorously. To insure fairness in the game, the two teams agreed to a rule. When an object surfaces out of the sea as a result of the churning, one team will claim it and the next object that surfaces will be awarded to the opposite team. As the churning of the sea commenced, objects started surfacing which included beautiful and precious shells, pearls, and various other objects. The two teams strictly followed the rules of the game. Gods had just won an object that surfaced and now it was the turn of the Demons to claim the next object that would churn-up. This time, Eureka! Out came a large pot containing Amrit, which is the nectar of Immortality. The Demons promptly grabbed the pot with great euphoria. The team of Gods was saddened and became jealous of the Demons. With this prized possession in hand, immortality was within grasp of the Demons.

In the evening, the Demons arranged a grand party amongst themselves to celebrate and drink the nectar of Immortality. Secretly, the Gods learnt about the party and decided to steal the Amrit. Gods maneuvered a trick. One of the Gods transformed himself into "Mohini" a beautiful and sexy female dancer. Wearing pretty clothes and attractive jewelry to seduce the Demons, the pretty and voluptuous Mohini walked into the Demon's party and offered to entertain them. Using her charms, Mohini got the Demons heavily drunk during the evening. After serving the Demons into a full drunken state, she quietly slipped out of the party along with the full pot of Amrit. Subsequently, all of the Gods drank the Amrit and rejoiced their ascendancy to Immortality. This mythological story is narrated in varying shades. The Gods and the Demons are symbolic of opposing tendencies, which are constantly at odds in the nature of Man. The Amrit or the nectar of

Immortality and the temptress Mohini are symbolic of the endless passions that Man is constantly chasing. Such mythological stories abound in each culture and their deeper moral message can be better understood and appreciated in context of the respective cultural backdrop.

Worldwide it is a common custom for a child to assume his family name in addition to the first name. Continuity of the family name is retained only through a male child. It is part of a social order and protocol. But there seems to be a hidden desire at the back of mind for immortalizing the family name and personal identity through passage of time.

A wealthy Man donates a large sum of money as charity to an institution of learning, a temple of worship or a social and cultural organization. Sometimes the charitable contribution is acknowledged by engraving the name of donor on a marble slab or a brass plate, which is displayed in a prominent location. The donor receives a gratification that his name stays on the building wall beyond his life span, giving him a sense of immortality. Erecting a bronze or marble statue of a person in a prominent public place leaves a long-standing personalized landmark. Old Egyptian custom of preserving body of a royalty after death as "Mummy" seemed to have provided similar gratification. Building a pyramid as a tomb on top of the grave is another way. The beautiful marble structure of Taj-Mahal was built by emperor Shahajahan at the gravesite of his beloved queen Mumtaj-mahal with an intention of immortalizing their mutual love. Subsequently after his death and according to his wishes, emperor Shahajahan's body was entombed next to his beloved queen. Four centuries later, the beautiful Taj-Mahal stands on the banks of Yamuna River broadcasting the immortal love of a king for his queen.

During the twentieth century, human bodies have been flash frozen (at the request of the dyeing person) and preserved in vaults maintained constantly at cryogenic temperatures (300

degrees below zero) in the hope of reviving the dead body back to life after a desired period of time in future. Hopes have been pinned on new technological advances of future to provide the capability of bringing the dead body back to life in distant future. A wealthy man feels that he may have a better chance at immortality because he can afford to cryogenically freeze himself and sign up a long-term contract with the company that offers the cryogenic facilities. One such company announced for Chapter-13 bankruptcy. Who is going to take care of those rich and frozen guys in future?

Desire for immortality takes people of faith in different directions. Our friend Sandor (Sandy) Zarnoti was born in Hungary. He and his wife immigrated to USA after the Hungarian revolt against Russian occupation. Sandy narrated the story about a Gypsy group of people in Europe who have a custom of burying their dead with money (cash) tucked in between their teeth. The money is for paying cash to the boatman who eventually comes to take the dead to Heaven. When some of their graves were inadvertently dug or exhumed, the buried guys were still holding on to the money between their teeth. Apparently the boatman never came!

Ideas of immortality extend to the Heavens. Men of some religious faiths aspire to ascend to Heaven after death in order to live permanently a peaceful and happy life. Once you are in Heaven you live there happily ever after, some so believe.

Heaven must be a very crowded place because every religious person wants to go there and it seems that nobody ever intends to move out of there!

Self-enlightened Masters prompt that one can lead a peaceful and happy life on earth and not have to crave merely for longevity of life or immortality only if the fundamental concepts of durable peace of mind and happiness are better understood. Attaining total freedom from the cycle of desire, attachment,

pleasure, and consequential pain helps redefine life. Such a Man becomes free and fearless, and a shepherd of his own consciousness. Immortality is a frame of eternal blissful consciousness and not a physical accomplishment in the Twilight Zone.

In Search of Harmony

Harmony is the epicenter of simplicity.
Harmony is not an end to a search.
Harmony is the beginning of a search within.

Simplicity in its most nascent form,
Is a grace that is sensed and admired.
Spirit of simplicity defies capture by words.

Simplicity stems from a sense of completeness,
A sense of bonding within and without.
A bonding not of attachment and its trappings.

Simplicity reaches out with compassion.
Compassion for one and all equally.
A quality that radiates only from the enlightened self.

Simplicity brings peace, tranquility, and joy within.
The joy that can be shared freely and equally with all.
A joy that constantly enriches everybody.

Harmony is the beginning of a search within,
A search that transcends all barriers,
Enabling our spirit to blend with its Source.

Is Heaven a Boring Place?

Reporting from Heaven:

I seem to have arrived here in Heaven without any ticket, a passport, visa, or any luggage. I do not recall who had booked my travel to this place in such a hurry. I have even forgotten to bring along my physical body and emotional baggage.

Therefore it seems there will be virtually no need to shave, take a bath, change clothes, eat, go to work, and no need to do anything. I feel like singing a tune - Oh what fun it is to ride in a no-horse open sleigh!

I know for sure that at the moment I am in Heaven, although I have not yet seen any sign that said "Heaven" or "Welcome to Heaven". I recall feeling happy to see the sign "Welcome to Danville" after a three-hour drive from Chicago. I lived in Danville, Illinois during 1960-65 and often visited Chicago on weekends.

I also know intuitively that this place that I am in at this moment is not Hell. I did not see any sign announcing that either. Besides, I had never entertained any thought of traveling to Hell at any time. How can you get to a place that you have not even planned to visit - unless you have taken some wrong turns?

In childhood, I had heard that Hell was a very scary place to be in. During my secondary school years in Nagpur, India, I had read several interesting and engaging stories in a monthly magazine called Kalyana. My grandfather had an annual subscription for Kalyan, which was published by Gita Press in Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh, India. I used to like the magazine because it contained lot of sketches and colorful pictures along with interesting stories narrated in Hindi language. At that stage of my life when I was eight to ten year old, each story and the characters it portrayed seemed very real. A special annual

supplement issue of the Kalyan magazine would carry several additional stories and pictures. In one such annual issue of the Kalyan magazine, there were graphic sketches of Hell (Narka) in which some Demons (Rakshas) were shown frying humans in a large steel cauldron full of hot oil. Red blazing flames under the cauldron and extreme pain and anguish shown on the faces of convicted humans were indicative of the frying oil being very hot. In another picture, Demons had tied ropes around humans and were pulling them up a thorny tree to torture them. The humans appeared to be crying out for help and mercy. The Demons appeared frighteningly cruel and ugly. The graphic pictures suggested that the humans were being punished for the sins (bad deeds) that they probably had committed during their stay on Earth! At least for me as a child, that seemed to be the connotation of the picture. Having seen pictures like those at the age of eight, I was naturally scared of the place called Hell. I always wanted to stay away from it and especially from those ugly and cruel looking Demons (Rakshas). I did not want any part of it. Therefore, the only destination of my choice besides the Earth was always the Heaven.

The Heaven was always described in the magazines and other children's storybooks as an attractive place. Heaven was a place where impressive looking gods and gorgeous looking goddesses lived in granger and harmony. And several female attendants, who were equally gorgeous looking, served the gods and goddesses. That was my perspective of Heaven as a child and therefore I had always desired to live in Heaven. However, even in childhood, I had never wanted to rush to Heaven. In my mind, Heaven was to be the final destination in the process of living on Earth. Some people used to say that Heaven was the supreme reward for those earthlings that performed good deeds and did not commit sinful acts. I always wondered as to who decided the qualifications and quantification of the good or bad deeds of a Man. Fundamentally, I wondered about what is a good deed? What is a sin or non-sin? But I preferred to leave those judgments to the self-assuming and self-righteous

proclaimers. I was naturally more interested in simply playing around at that age.

Before getting here, I have had no open invitation from anybody to visit Heaven. But after arriving here, I find Heaven to be quite different than what I had ever imagined or anticipated. I find it to be a very pleasant place to be in. But it is not a “Place” in a physical sense. If Heaven was a physical place, I guess it would be a boring place to live in. Any place, no matter how so ever beautiful, does become boring after a certain period of stay. At this moment, I have no words to describe Heaven in any earthly languages that I am familiar with. But I know that I am in Heaven at the moment. And I also know intuitively that God also lives here. I have an egotistic hunch that God also knows that I have arrived in Heaven. I do not yet know when shall I be able to see or meet him, nor do I think that he is expecting me. I am really not in a hurry to meet him either simply because everything is so very peaceful around here.

Time, as we understand it on Earth is irrelevant in Heaven. It seems that Heaven is timeless. Here concept of day, night as well as sense of direction in terms of East, West, North, South, and up or down is also irrelevant. How can I describe it or even begin to explain? I simply cannot. But I do want to meet God. It seems that I am still clinging on to my earthly desire of wanting to see and meet God. When I do meet God here in Heaven, I am wondering how will I greet him? Shall I say hi or hello or fold my hands and say “namaste” in Hindi or shall I simply lay prostrate at his feet and say nothing? Will he understand any of the earthly languages that I know such as English, Hindi or Marathi? Maybe, I will just stand silently with folded hands in his presence and gently flash a smile.

Ever since my arrival in Heaven, I have been in total silence and comfort. However, both of these very words, silence and comfort, seem to have a different meaning or dimension over

here. The words that are very commonly used on Earth such as god, soul, spirit, sin, miracle, angel, saint, sex, hell, demon, comfort, happiness and several others do not seem to have any relevance in the consciousness of this heavenly environment.

There is nobody to guide here. There are no phones, no Internet facilities, no newspapers, and no road maps. There does not seem to be a need for any of those things here. There are no politicians, lawyers, religious gurus, preachers, sports heroes, scholars, or terrorists making news here. All of them could be classified very easily in one common and simple category "Irrelevant" in this environment. There seems to be no need to travel from here to anywhere else. Instead, this environment seems to have a sort of silent and harmonious relationship with me. It does not feel lonely here although there is no company here in the worldly sense. Yet there is a sense of belonging here. It feels like Home.

While I was on Earth, it seemed like people were constantly trying to understand God or see God or meet God. We were always eager to please God or at the least not displease him. However, in Heaven I do not have the urge for going to a place of worship. There is none here. There is no temple, no mosque, no church, no synagogue, and no gurudwara simply because there is no need to search for God. He lives here. Therefore in Heaven, there is no religion - there is no need for it. Presumably, since God lives here, all information about God may be readily available. There is no need for any scriptural books such as the Bible, Koran, Gita, Vedas, Gurubani or any other reference books for spiritual guidance. The precious wisdom that I seem to have readily and effortlessly gained here cannot be emailed back to Earth because the aol.com, yahoo.com, or their likes do not offer their services here. I cannot personally bring the information about Heaven back to Earth simply because I just cannot buy a return ticket. So, I am pleasantly stranded here in God-land. I must admit that as yet, I do not even know if God is a he or a she or neither of the two!

What good will it do even if I find out? I do not seek any answers, simply because I have no questions any more. I am very peaceful and comfortable in this God-land that we earthlings call Heaven. It has no name or identity of its own here.

From Heaven, I get a different perspective of life on Earth. People of different cultural backgrounds on Earth claim to have a personal God. They identify their personal God with a chosen name and form, in spite of the fact that not even one of them has ever seen God. It appears that Man has created God in his own image – in a human form. Each Man seems to claim ownership of his personal God with a customized name and form. Look at the down-to-earth relationship of an infant with its toy. An infant refuses to accept an imaginary toy, but readily claims ownership of a three-dimensional toy that he can touch and feel. Man chooses a personal God, touts it to be the genuine God, and takes an egotistic pride in its ownership. As a result, worldwide there are different personal Gods and as many opinions about God, its nature and personality. Naturally, there are serious differences of opinions amongst men of varying faiths. Each faith is packaged and branded under the name of a religion. Unfortunately, the differences of opinion about God amongst people are serious enough even to wage wars. God never arbitrates between two warriors. In Heaven, there is no trace of any religion. Since God is present here in easily understandable dimension, there is no difference of opinion. Name, form or sex does not identify God here. God's presence is simply felt all around and therefore the adjective "Omnipresent" that is assigned to God seems so very appropriate here. There is no need to pray to God for any help because nothing seems to go wrong around here - everything is orderly, harmonious and peaceful.

One aspect I find interesting here in Heaven. There is no need to ask any questions about anything. So there is no need to find out answers. Therefore there is no need for any directories or

databases to Google-out information. It is an effortless existence in its own dimension. If I have to intellectualize my opinion based on my earthly experiences, I would call this heavenly dimension simply as Space and Energy. But then I realize that I do not have to intellectualize anything around here. I am not looking for any answers.

A childish thought brazes my mind. In Heaven, there is absolutely no action of any kind. There are no golf courses, no night-clubs, no cars or horses to race, no antique shows, no art fairs, no weddings, no terrorist activity, no religious discourses of any kind, no computers, and no nothing. There is absolutely no action. For men of action, this will be an utterly boring place. By now I have realized that Heaven has a totally different dimension than Earth. The worldly languages and human faculties are totally inadequate to describe or comprehend Heaven. One will have to come here and experience this dimension to realize just what I mean. I lay no claim on this heavenly domain, nor do I have any wish for it. It seems that everybody is welcome here. You will not need any personal identification to enter into this dimension because immigration and religious laws do not seem to exist.

Every thing pretty much stays the same here. Nothing ever changes in the earthly sense of the word. If I had my earthly instincts here, I would certainly get thoroughly bored. Here in Heaven, I am neither bored, nor unhappy, nor happy. I am simply experiencing a blissfulness in which there is absolutely no Need.

I remember only one type of life experience on Earth that offered me a small glimpse of Heaven. The experience was when I had fainted, become unconscious or passed out. I experienced it a total of five times under different conditions. No, I am not going to tell you that I had a revelation – that is not my style. The first time that I passed out was during my high school years – I was in eighth grade. I had a bout with

jaundice. I was recovering from it and still feeling very weak. I woke up at night to go to the bathroom. While I was returning from the bathroom to my bed, I suddenly felt unsteady on my feet and the room's walls seemed to start revolving around me. Within seconds I had collapsed on the floor and promptly passed out. My mother narrated the last few seconds of these movements because she was watching me as I was returning to my bed. After a few minutes of lying flat on my back, I regained consciousness slowly. The first thing I noticed was that my mother was sitting on the floor by my side checking my pulse and heart beat. She seemed relieved that I had passed out but not passed away! The other three episodes of passing out during the past twenty-five years were because my blood sugar levels had dropped to a very low level. It was primarily due to my ignorance about proper management of diabetes. During these three different episodes, there was more insulin in my body and not enough food in stomach. And then there was one more incident in which I was made unconscious by an anesthesiologist prior to my heart bypass surgery. The anesthesiologist said in a very pleasant voice that he was injecting the dose to relax me; and sure enough I was in a Twilight Zone within 15 minutes – in short, I had passed out. Obviously during all these instances listed above, I had passed out but did not pass away. That is why I am able to write about it today.

There was one common personal experience for me during each one of the episodes described above in which I had completely passed out - irrespective of the cause for it. The very moment that I had passed out, I became unaware of anything or anybody around me - including myself. This state was truly an experience of being “Out of this earthly consciousness”.

How does it feel during the time that you are out of the earthly consciousness? How can I describe it since it is not even a feeling in a physical sense? All I can say personally about that state is that you are neither here, nor there or anywhere else.

You just don't know; it is as simple as that. However, as you start coming out of it, you regain awareness gradually. Your eyes slowly open up and all you feel is that you just returned from a stage of non-being. Your mind is not yet alert in the normal sense. It is a "Great" feeling but impossible to describe because you do not experience it within the realm of normal human consciousness. That experience of being absent from your own self is so great that you wish you could go back to it. Momentarily, I even felt sad or disappointed that I had come back to my senses. Kiddingly, I say that passing out is a pleasurable experience in the Twilight zone!

From Heaven, I cannot file this report for transmission to Earth. Would I recommend Heaven to you or anyone else? You have to come here and experience it yourself. But there is no reason to rush. Take your own time. There is a right time for everything. Enjoy the present moment, irrespective of whether you are on Earth or in Heaven or in transit – if there is a transit lounge.

As described earlier, Heaven is not a place that you visit. It is a state of consciousness that is accessible to those who dare and desire to climb the mountain at the top of which Silence has never been broken. That mountain stands at the core of our consciousness.

Labor

In normal usage, the words such as labor and laborer seem to imply hard manual work. Nobody wants to perform hard manual work by choice. Most people dream of employing others to do their work. Some people have to work very hard in life to earn a living, whereas others not as much. Therefore life seems to deal an unfair hand to some. Philosophers suggest that it is how you deal with the cards in hand that determines how far you go in the game of life. The philosophical interpretation does not seem quite that simple for a struggling common Man.

In several countries, May 1st is celebrated as an International Worker's Day or Labor Day holiday. United States celebrates its Labor Day as a Federal holiday on the first Sunday of September. In either case, the basic thought behind it all is to recognize and honor the hard work of laborers. Government legislation's to limit working hours to 8-hours per day and the holidays on Sunday are efforts to protect such rights. Human civilization and its joint consciousness has yet to evolve far to develop equitable distribution of labor and wealth in the eternal pursuit of happiness in life.

This composition wants to honor "Labor" that goes unrecognized in the larger context of life. It is not about the conventional Labor-Day holiday, which is usually celebrated as a 3-day holiday with an outdoor picnic, a parade, and fireworks at night.

Recognize that labor laws are initiated and implemented only by human species. All other living species work every day during their entire lifetime. The work ethic of red ants or the honeybees is beyond human comprehension.

A mother goes in labor during the birth of her baby. After delivering the baby she may be temporarily immobilized, but

then she gets back on her feet as quickly as possible to take care of her baby. From the very moment of conception, a mother's womb is constantly taking care of the fetus (unborn baby) for an entire nine-month period. After the birth of the baby, the mother labors to meet almost every need, physical and emotional, of her baby during the first nine years. During these nine years, the mother is busy like a bee in serving her baby 24/7/365 without even entertaining a single day off as a holiday (in the normal sense of the word).

When we are riding a train, bus, or an automobile, we can be thankful for the labor and sweat that toiled in constructing the road, railroad and the bridges. Each drop of sweat represented the labor of a human being. Today we live in a safe dwelling compared to a cave man. We are thankful to the labor that built the house that we live in.

Hard labor goes into mining diamonds, coal and minerals. The sweat of miners needs to be appreciated by the consumers of products made from the minerals.

Sheer sweat and labor of thousands of workers built the magnificent wonders of the world including the Taj Mahal in India, Pyramids in Egypt, Blue Mosque in Turkey and others that we admire. This is not an effort to take the credit away from the Emperors, Architects and Engineers that contributed to the joint efforts.

A genuine social worker expends life energy by working tirelessly to uplift the spirits and wellbeing of fellow Man.

In each case and every day, we honor the labor and nascent sanctity of the human spirit behind the physical act.

Man Judges Himself

Does God judge Man? Religious books talk about the Judgement Day. Some talk about God keeping track of Man's good deeds and sins in order to come up with the individual's balance sheet at the end of life. Based on the balance sheet, Man is rewarded or punished; and assigned to either Heaven or Hell. That sounds like a Federal Government run program that keeps track of each citizen. There is a very good probability that God's office, if there is one, is not run like the Federal Government. It would update the individual balance sheet every moment and not wait until the end of Man's life. Is God really interested in tracking and maintaining balance sheets of almost six billion individuals living on Earth? Man has the temptation of setting up God in his own image.

On the other hand, God may be comprehended in the form of all pervading universal Energy that does not judge anybody for anything. From this perspective, Man judges himself and then gets rewarded or punishes with consequences of his own acts. Each and every one of Man's actions binds him to corresponding consequence, which follows the natural laws of cause and effect or action and reaction. Man's action may be physical, emotional or a combination of both. A positive action can only generate a positive reaction or consequence. A negative action will only produce negative manifestation. The intent behind an action ultimately decides its real consequence. Consequently, events of life are manifestations of previous actions and corresponding consequences.

In real life, the timeframe between an action and its consequence may not necessarily be immediate. It is like a jetlag experienced in air travel across several time zones. Alternately it may be likened to sighting supersonic aircraft flying over head and hearing its shrieking soundwave a few moments later. In the journey of our life, the time lag between our action and its corresponding consequence could lag through days, decades

and even lifetimes. This reasoning alludes to the possibility of rebirth(s).

An infant steps out of a Mother's womb totally naked, free and with nothing to hide, protect, or prove. However, recognize that at birth each infant does bring a hidden identity. In scientific language of Biochemistry, the hidden identity is the individual's specific DNA, which serves as a starting blue print for life. The DNA may broadcast the starting abilities and limitations of the infant. A philosophical question arises. Why and how does an infant inherit the individual specific DNA? What previous action(s) makes the DNA a consequence? Can the actions of last life effect consequences in this life? It is a common observation that each infant is born unique and unequal in physical, mental and emotional capabilities.

It seems that the Laws of Nature make sure that each Man does pay his debts before setting him free. This lifetime is a responsibility for settling old debts (consequences of previous actions), and an opportunity to move forward to become debt free. Man cannot carry any material luggage beyond this lifetime. However, the emotional baggage of consequences will be forwarded or carried-over to subsequent manifestation. Some describe that this baggage is carried forward as the causal body (rebirth).

A self-enlightened Man masters the art of freeing himself from the cyclic effect of his actions and consequences in order to set himself free. From this perspective, Man alone judges himself and takes responsibility for his own destiny.

Man's Own Make Believe World

Maya is a word from Sanskrit language, which implies illusion, and it also implies slightly different meanings as well depending on the context in which it is used. Maya is the cloud of ignorance, which obscures reality. Maya connotes the illusory effect of senses and the truth that it hides (www.hinduwebsite.com). Maya may also imply the make-believe world.

Raman Maharshi, an Indian Saint (Self-enlightened Master) of early 20th century, drew attention to the spider's web to explain the make-believe world of Man. A spider oozes out or secretes a variety of silk (filament type materials) from his own biological system for constructing the web. Recognize that the spider's natural built-in intelligence allows him to design the architecture of his web and then spin the web with select silky materials. The silk used for the outer structural members of the web is stronger; whereas the silk used for trapping the prey is sticky. The spider then positions himself at the center of the web and waits to trap its prey. The web is large or small depending upon the conscious needs of the spider. But the web is the spider's expression of his entire make-believe world. He lives in it totally. Ultimately at the end of his biological journey, the spider entraps himself in his own web and dies.

Meditation

A six-year old asks a legitimate question. What is meditation? A golfer said “I relax completely while playing on the greens and don’t need to meditate”. A mother managing four children ranging in age from two to twelve said that she has no time to do meditation. An 80-year old enjoying good health and comfortable life style calmly admitted that he does not know what meditation is all about. Some believe that indulgence in some special drugs bypasses need for meditation. A seventy-year old mentioned that he had no use for meditation because God had disappointed him at critical times in life. A ten-year old asks why does Grandpa sit cross-legged with closed eyes to do what ever he does? Some individuals perform daily meditation oriented rituals for decades and yet go into serious depression. Self-claimed righteous individuals have a compulsive desire to mention that they meditate every day. The above examples are typical in normal life observations.

Generally meditation is looked upon as a ritual in order to attain a certain degree of peace in life. Initial efforts to attain quietness of mind are often frustrating. Mind is like an infant that by its very nature is playful and cannot stay still.

Meditation is not a topic for serious and endless discussions. It is an inner experience at individual level of need and awareness. Different practices of meditation have been initiated and practiced around the world. Interpretation of the purpose of meditation varies. An individual interested in meditation tries different techniques over a period of time, and eventually makes a conscious choice in favor of a most suitable technique for his/her own level of consciousness. In that progressive experience, the objectives of meditation gradually become more and more clear. Self-enlightened Masters have prompted through centuries that meditation helps cross the boundaries of ignorance. Meditation leads to the experience of universal consciousness.

Universal consciousness is a state of blissful inner experience in which a realization surfaces that “When we tend to intellectualize life, we raise questions, and when we embrace silence, we find answers”.

We are constantly bombarded with sounds, and it seems that we are drowned in a sea of sounds. Consider silence as absence of sound and thought. Drowning in silence is an uncommon experience for Man.

In a busy lifestyle, we may not be aware of the sound levels around us, but our eardrums are sensitive and constantly aware of it's various decibel levels. Lowered sound levels for a short period of time seems peaceful. But too much quietness over an extended period of time can be unsettling for most people. Solitary confinement is intentionally meted out to high profile convicts in custody to break down their emotional defenses. Silence and being alone are frightening for most people.

Even while sleeping or sitting quietly in a noiseless place, the human mind constantly entertains thoughts. Emotionally troublesome dreams give a sense of fatigue upon waking up. Even while awake, some people hallucinate and hear sounds that others nearby do not hear.

People use various techniques to shut off undesirable outside sounds in search of peace of mind. Moving out to a forest preserve, lake, river, seashore, mountain resort, private yacht are some of the choices. But most efforts marginally succeed or utterly fail because the mind stays constantly busy. At the end of a vacation, most commonly heard comment is that “The vacation was lot of fun, but now I need a few days of rest”. Seeking peaceful silence is like chasing a mirage in desert. What looks like water, a mirage, seems to be out of reach.

Self-enlightened Masters suggest considering the possibility of attaining peaceful silence without having to physically move out

anywhere. Human mind constantly entertains flow of thoughts because that is its inherent nature. Flow of river water cannot be stopped, but it can be wisely diverted for useful purposes. Similarly, the flow of thoughts and its energy cannot be stopped, but it can be channeled in useful directions. Meditative silence serves as the vehicle for the peaceful journey within.

At Kitt Peak National Observatory located on outskirts of Tucson, Arizona, USA, powerful land based telescopes have been installed on mountaintops several decades ago. Out of sheer curiosity our two sons, Deepak and Sagar flew from Chicago to visit Kitt Peak Observatory for a 3-day visit to peek through the powerful telescopes of the observatory. Professional astronomers help visitors on a one-on-one basis to explore the skies by peering through the telescopes. While looking through these telescopes, one realizes that their sight is blurred by the interference of Earth's atmosphere. Astronomers have always yearned for better ways to scan the skies. To avoid the atmospheric interference, the Hubble telescope was developed and subsequently deployed in space far above the Earth's atmosphere. Although Hubble has much less power than the land based telescopes, it is able to more clearly focus deeper and wider in the skies simply because interference of Earth's atmosphere is eliminated. In a similar sense, meditation or introspection in silence removes worldly interference and opens up new dimensions of self-awareness.

While physical sciences focus on the outside, meditation focuses on the inside in search of our universal identity. Self-enlightened Masters suggest that our universal identity is ultimately realized or experienced through an "Effortless state of meditation". One way to comprehend the dynamics and essence of the effortless state of meditation may be to understand the flight of a space shuttle such as Discovery, which is launched by National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). In preparation for the flight, the shuttle is mounted on a stationary launch pad at Cape Canaveral in Florida. The shuttle requires tremendous thrust from its rockets and engines to overcome the gravitational

force and lifting off into space. Once Discovery is positioned in space at a pre-determined altitude from Earth, the space shuttle automatically and effortlessly orbits around the Earth following universal laws of Nature. At this point all of its engines are shut off. No further human effort is required to maintain Discovery's assumed orbit. In this example, the thrust of the rockets and engines is the effort (Cause), and the assumption of the natural orbit by Discovery is the effect. In a similar sense, meditation is an effort (Cause) that is required in order to reach an effortless state of meditation (Effect). The conscious state of effortless meditation is the seat or womb of universal consciousness. In this state of consciousness, universal wisdom and aura of silence reveals itself. The wisdom and vibration of silence leads to realization of universal truths. The ultimate experience of meditation is a state of blissful consciousness basking in reality of universal truth(s). Universal truths exist in the universe eternally.

In a physical sense, the process of attaining the state of blissful consciousness is like attempting to conquer Mount Everest, the highest peak of the world. Initially at the foothills, you start the effort by carrying essential gear, which includes tent, sleeping bag, food, clothing, navigational and communication equipment, medical supplies, oxygen tank, and other necessities. You may engage local Sherpas to help carry the gear and act as guides for you. Gradually as you ascend to higher altitudes and get closer to the peak, every step upward becomes more strenuous and challenging. At higher altitudes the air becomes thinner and has lesser oxygen. Lack of oxygen is tiring for the body. To conserve energy, gradually you have to minimize heavy gear, which has now become baggage. Any unnecessary luggage becomes your baggage. You keep only the absolute essentials. In the final assault on Mt. Everest, you have to carry yourself to the peak to conquer it.

When you reach the top of Mt. Everest, a reliable camera seems necessary to capture your personal glory. On the other hand, when you attain the ultimate realization or state of blissful

consciousness through effortless meditation, a camera is unnecessary and irrelevant. Various terms are used to describe this state of blissful consciousness, which include divine consciousness, Nirvana, Heavenly and other. A label is unnecessary and irrelevant.

Self-enlightened Masters prompt that in practice of meditation, an individual reaches a moment at which the wisdom in silence begins to reveal itself. Know it as the point where your journey to a clearer level of consciousness has just begun. This clearer level of consciousness minimizes emotional attachments to impermanent aspects such as physical body, thoughts, actions, and leads to comprehension of our universal identity.

Various meditation techniques are available in different cultures for progressively advancing individual consciousness. Eventually, each individual chooses a meditation technique most suited to his/her level of consciousness. Meditation transcends rules and regulations because it is about the freedom of Man and his spirit.

A musician may entertain meditation through vibration of strings (guitar, violin, sitar, sarod, santur), drums, and vocal cords (singing). A painter channels individual energy through the medium of easel, brushes and a mix of colors. Sculptors and architects create forms. Scientists fathom secrets of Nature and attempt to define them in mathematical equations. Writers capture vibrations of thoughts that seep into their consciousness. A farmer tills the farmland and smells his connection with the soil, which he fondly addresses as mother earth. A good chef strives to relate the taste and aroma of food to satisfy the taste buds of the guests. Even the simplest of daily task performed with mindful concentration is a form of meditation. A meditator listens carefully to the sounds of Nature and feels its rhythm. The vibration of meditative silence offers peace of mind in the form of blissful consciousness. These are assurances offered by Self-enlightened Masters.

Meditation is a process of self-enlightenment. Only an individual with fearless and free mind devoid of personal ego entertains self-enlightenment. The spirit of self-enlightenment does not address masses, because the politics of masses and organizations is driven by Man's ego that does not and cannot relish true freedom. The temples, synagogues, churches, mosques and gurudwaras are places of worship for students of religion at the kindergarten level. Unfortunately, the management of most places of worship is driven by politics of organization. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that kindergarten level is an essential step for laying down a healthy foundation. Real form of worship, prayer, and comprehension of universal principles may only be grasped in the consciousness of an effortless state of meditation complemented with an art of living life in harmony with Nature. In the state of effortless meditation, there are no rules and regulations because freedom of the spirit of Man reigns paramount.

Duality is manifestation of conflict. In meditative state of consciousness, duality ceases to exist in all aspects of life. Then the real place for prayer or worship is Man's inner consciousness for which there is no need of bricks, mortar, and labor.

In meditation, the realization ultimately surfaces that the River of Consciousness is an eternal stream that includes all and excludes none.

Om Consciousness



Oh my universal Source, bless me.
Bless me, so that I may become Om.
Om is that consciousness in which
Ego and fear completely sublimate.
In that egoless and fearless consciousness,
All dualities of life cease to exist.
The dualities of life include separation between,
I and you, worshipper and the object of worship.

Water vapors from the ocean waves,
Rise to the skies as clouds and drift overland.
Clouds drift and rise to higher altitudes.
Cool temperatures in skies turn clouds into rain.
The rainwater flows down the slopes as streamlets.
Streamlets merge forming larger identity as river.
The river flows effortlessly down the planes headed for the
ocean.
There, river merges its identity effortlessly with the ocean.
Water in the form of vapor, cloud, streamlet, river, or ocean,
Has non-dual identity that Om consciousness brings into focus.

Om is not an alphabet, a word, or a religious chant.
Sound of Om exhaled with breath, creates a vibration within.
Om uttered silently is also a vibration.
Om is vibration of our breath, our very life itself.

Our body inhales and exhales breath automatically.
Breath has a rhythm and identity of its own.
We sense that our breath is our very life.
We grasp for non-duality of breath inside us and out.

Scientifically, breath is Oxygen and Nitrogen.
Philosophically, breath symbolizes the universe.
Breath exhaled merges with the universe outside of us.
The outside universe resides in us.

Breath cannot be seen but only be felt.
Breath can be felt through our senses.
Presence of breath is undeniable and universal.
In breath lies the universal and eternal reality.

Om disconnects us from our trials and tribulations.
Om connects us to our inner self and reality.
Om connects us equally to all "beings" around us.
Om connects us equally to all "things" around us.

Om cannot be explained in words of a language.
Our mind cannot comprehend or fathom Om.
Om is a silent vibration within us
Silently disclosing the reality of our existence.

From Om, everything emerges moving out.
Everything from outside merges back into Om.
Nothing is destroyed in the transference process.
Om discloses the never-changing truth in ever-changing
universe.

We were Om before birth.
We are Om as we live.
We remain Om beyond life.
Truth of Om is universally eternal.

To experience Om in its realistic dimension

Jump in, and dive deep within to explore.
Om is epicenter of our inner consciousness.
The journey to Om is alone but not lonely.

Om reveals that which nothing else reveals.
An experience and joy not of this material world.
The realization that the world is full of Om and only Om,
Only sensed by those who dare and desire.

Opposite Forces Co-exist in Nature

The beauty and secrets of Mother Nature constantly engage Man's conscious awareness.

Trekking through the hills and dense forests was always fun in childhood. We seemed to be looking out for surprises all the time. One of the local guides who accompanied us on one such trip was showing us a poison-ivy plant and explaining how to identify it. He cautioned us about the troublesome itching it causes upon contact with our skin. Then he also explained to us that within approximately ten feet surrounding the poison-ivy plant, you would invariably find another plant that will be an antidote for the itching caused by the poison ivy. He commented in his self-assured voice that there are provisions like this throughout the kingdom of Nature. We just have to become familiar with these plants and their respective properties. Although this guide was an uneducated young man, his confidence and familiarity with Nature surrounding him was very admirable. He was a self-educated child of Nature.

Morning sun's rays on a clear day give a cheerful feeling to all-living creatures and vegetation alike. Yet, excessive exposure of the human body to direct sunlight can cause a life threatening skin cancer. Exposure to direct sunlight, over a period of time, degrades and disintegrates many materials. One aspect of the sun's rays nurtures life and another aspect threatens life and materials. Opposite forces co-exist and are balanced efficiently by Mother Nature. The magnetic field of planet Earth protects it from excessive radiation of the Sun's rays. Yet the same magnetic field overheats the space vehicle reentering the Earth's atmosphere after completing its mission in space.

Another simple example is oxygen gas, which promotes life. Without it we will not be alive. Oxygen is present in air along with nitrogen gas in a balanced ratio of approximately 21 parts oxygen to 78 parts of nitrogen (www.ntionsonline.org/earth).

The built-in intelligence of mother Nature controls and balances this ratio automatically. The presence of oxygen gas in the air is essential for promoting innumerable chemical and biological reactions, which are beneficial and essential for sustaining life on planet earth. And yet the same oxygen is also responsible for promoting oxidation reactions, which destroy living cells in body. Where as Antioxidants present in natural foods that humans consume, prevent damage to such cells. Mother Nature provides antioxidants by incorporating them in nuts, grains, vegetables and fruits. Oxygen in combination with moisture promotes the rusting of ferrous metals. Medical science has revealed presence of bodies and anti-bodies, cancer cells and anticancer cells. Astronomical science and physics have revealed the presence of anti-matter and black holes that destroy matter. In the larger picture of the Universe, realize that the forces that are essential for creating and sustaining life and matter coexist with the forces that have the capability for disintegrating the same life and matter in a parallel phase. These are realities that are confusing and mind-boggling.

These are some of the examples of the balancing acts managed skillfully, effortlessly, and constantly by the supreme intelligence of Mother Nature. And there are innumerable other balancing acts like this in perpetual execution. Acknowledge and appreciate this innate supreme intelligence that creates, perpetuates, balances, transforms and facilitates every natural process.

In a similar sense, divine and devilish tendencies are simultaneously present in the human mind and consciousness. Just as Mother Nature constantly balances two opposite forces, Man also has to learn to constantly balance and harmonize the divine and the devilish tendencies within. Recognize that a bar of magnet naturally entertains opposite polarities, which are commonly identified as North and South.

Amongst the humans, a self-enlightened Master is one who maintains consciousness of equanimity at all times and is unaffected by energy draining tendencies.

Opposite forces coexist in the Universe in a sea of possibilities and constant change. And yet there is a constant undercurrent of harmony to witness, comprehend and experience in the kingdom of Nature.

Prose of Life

Prose + Poetry = Prose

Prose and poetry combined is prose.
Life is at times plain as prose,
And at times touching as poetry.
Prose and poetry transmit different vibrations.

Prose seemingly stirs up thoughts,
Thoughts drive emotions and actions.
Poetry touches depths of human heart,
With a blend of joy, sadness, and reality.

Prose is one aspect of human life,
It is not complete without poetry.
Both are necessary to whet the human spirit,
To bring union, harmony, and meaning to life.

Sadness makes prose dry and morbid,
Sadness makes even poetry seem like prose.
Joy brings both prose and poetry alive,
Prose and poetry wet the roots of life.

Prose is an expression of life for the living,
Capturing various levels of human consciousness,
An effort to comprehend the veracity of life,
In a sea of emotions with caring, quieting, and loving.

Rebellion of Man

Rebellion mirrors conflict of Man.
Rebellion is negation of harmony.
Rebellion is frustration personified,
Reflecting in actions and spoken words.

Passive and active rebellions
Are opposite sides of the same coin.
One hides while the other one shows,
Playing a game of hide and seek.

Rebellion pitches the injurer and the injured,
Both sides get injured.
How can there be a victor,
When both sides lose?

Rebellion is often youth without reason.
Youth is not an age.
Youth is lack of maturity, logic and reason.
Rebellion is mostly a negative energy.

Rebellion is judging others constantly.
Judging others is so easy and effortless.
Judging self takes effort and commitment.
Knowing self is positivity and strength.

How convenient it is to point a finger at others,
While your other fingers point at yourself.
Look at your own faults,
And first judge yourself.

Rebellion is often a misguided missile
Advancing to target unknown,
Explosive and destructive in force,
Hitting unintended target, producing wrong results.

Rebellious energy channeled with positivity,
Pursued with vision, vigor, and right focus,
Continually advancing with corrective actions,
Promotes logic, reason, and wisdom.

Scholarship is not only about reading and writing.
Scholarship is also learning to discriminate,
Discriminate wisely between right and wrong,
And the various shades that lie in-between.

Right and wrong are vibrations,
Vibrations within our heart.
Fine tuning those very vibrations,
Helps Man blossom into a human.

Positive energy leads to positive results,
Rebellious energy to negative results.
The choice is always open for us,
To create or to destroy.

Religion and Spirituality

What is religion? Let your traditions explain

What is spirituality? Let your heart explain

Look around the world and it seems:

Religion divides humanity in different groups

Spirituality bonds an individual to humanity

Religion has been an excuse to wage conflicts

Spirituality stems from within and embraces harmony

Religion produces waves of rhetoric

Spirituality is calm and naturally deep

Religion claims origin in a Prophet and date

Spirituality requires no proof of origin

Religion stresses on spoken words and written scriptures

Spirituality is absence of word, fountain of awareness

Religion is framed and marketed by its believers

Spirituality is the built-in essence of life itself

Religion's protectors wield titles and garbs

Spirituality, inherent in Man, needs no decorations

Religion properly understood leads to spirituality

Spirituality is the ocean into which religion merges

Religion tries to define right and wrong

Spirituality thinks no wrong, does no wrong

Religions claim superiority over one another

Spirituality is effortless and has no need to compete

Religion is an individual's external identity
Spirituality is an individual's inner world

Religion connects Man to an external God
Spirituality bonds Man to the bliss within

Religions pronounce dust to dust, ashes to ashes
Spirituality simply connects energy to energy

Religion entertains God/Goddess to worship and please
Spirituality entertains neither rituals nor limitations

Religion proclaims to be God fearing
Spirituality is fearless, egoless, and free

Religious hypocrites indulge in love and hate
Spiritual aspirant is ever loving and forgiving

Religion claims and protects its boundaries
Spirituality has no fences to defend

Religion offers conditional passport to heaven
Spirituality has no need to travel anywhere

Religion promotes group empowerment
Spirituality empowers Man's inner self

Religion raises support through charities
Spirituality needs no external source to thrive

Religion can be a training ground for spirituality
Spirituality does not have to start with religion

Religion is branded on to a newborn baby
Spirituality is the inherent nature of a baby

Religion has a brand name

Spirituality is anonymous, a latent force

Religion has created social classes and levels
Spirituality knows no levels to discriminate

Religion designates a place and an object to pray
Spirituality is simply an inner vibration of the heart

Religion tries to bond Man to God
Spirituality identifies God in Man

Religion converts Man from one faith to another
Spirituality sees nothing that needs conversion

Religious interpretations may fail you at times
Spirituality empowers self only for enlightenment

Religion is Manmade and therefore has limitations
Spirituality is the Nature's vibration in all beings

Religious Conversions around the World

A religion is Man's creation. It is simply a philosophy and a way of life embodying a set of traditions, rules, regulations, rituals and belief systems. Over the span of centuries, several different religions have been initiated, branded by its followers, and each bears its regional footprint.

Religious conversions are the manifestations of ego and ignorance on the part of those who try to convert and those who get converted. Forced conversions under any and every pretext is the worst form of mental enslavement that has been practiced by Man for centuries. This is the politics of organized religions, inquisitions, and ethnic cleansing that has been played out all around the world, and unfortunately continues even in the twenty-first century. History repeats itself in different disguises. Followers of each organized religion with varying shades of comprehension commonly use words to express ideas such as god, faith, immortality and salvation. Blind faith and ignorance are weak foundations for any religious philosophy. Philosophy of a religion that embraces universal truths will stand the test of time, because a truth stands on its own weight and strength.

Traditionally each Man inherits religion at birth from parents. That has been the conventional social order. There is deep and practical meaning to these age-old traditions. A newborn child is branded with parent's religion as much as the family's surname (last name). Changing of an individual's religion-of-birth to another is often referred to as a religious conversion.

Converting from one religion to another seems like switching from one political party to another for a better deal. In some instances of religious conversion, a real and more genuine God and a superior philosophy of life is being offered as a part of the new deal. In some cases conversion is carried out through methodical and progressive insinuations. In other cases, the conversion is carried out forcibly with coercion or economic

consequences. There is always a hidden agenda behind an act of religious conversion or in being converted. Fundamentally, the act of conversion is manifestation of ignorance and egotistic self-righteousness on the part of those who try to convert others to their own way of life. Switching from one religion to another by an individual amounts to making superficial changes such as changing a baby's diaper, ones name, residence, brand of clothing or an e-mail address.

A self-enriching conversion is when an individual converts voluntarily and with conscious effort from negativity to positivity in self-awareness which derives from a deeper understanding of Inner-self. Trinity is a consciousness in which the disciplines of Philosophy, Science and Truth fuse together.

Swami Dayananda Saraswati who is an exponent of the Vedanta philosophy of life suggests that when a rational theory or philosophical thought is proposed, it must stand on its own and be open to strict scrutiny by anybody, anywhere, at any time. Anyone trying to scrutinize the proposed theory should be able to reach the same conclusions. Upanishadas, the books of knowledge, state that "Ultimately Truth alone Triumphs".

Man or religions do not initiate Truths. Religious conversions do not confirm truths. Truth stands on its own weight.

Revisiting Mother's Womb

Mother's womb is the seat of universal consciousness. Every living creature has a mother. In mother's womb every creature experiences the pleasant vibrations and automatic rhythm of the Universe.

Psychologists and psychiatrists talk about Regression therapy. Some patients that seem to have troubling emotional symptoms and imbalances, which cannot be easily diagnosed or explained, are sometimes treated with Regression therapy. It is suggested that voluntarily or involuntarily, human mind blocks the unpleasant past memories to shield itself from the pain and anguish. Often that very shield becomes an obstruction in the process of emotional healing. Hypnosis and Regression therapies have been effectively used to get to the source of emotional problems and provide relief to suffering patients.

Regression therapy implies helping a patient recall past memories, which are blocked for one reason or another. The word past may imply the immediate past, early childhood period, pre-natal stage, and in some cases even previous birth(s). Apparently, a Regression therapist is capable of guiding a patient in traveling backwards to visit old memories, time zones and respective experiences. For those who are skeptical about Regression therapy, it seems like an agency that helps travel to personal past at a hefty charge. And the only transportation that is provided for this journey is a reclining armchair in the consulting room.

Like everyone else, I am a frequent commuter to my own past. Therefore, I figured that I might not require the services of an outside agency to revisit my own past. I wished to undertake this emotional journey back to my mother's womb for my own inner-experience. Since I have come from there, I figured that I should be able to retrace my way back. My hunch is that in this trip, I may learn lot more about myself. But I am not sure

because I have never undertaken this journey before. In my travels, I am ever ready for surprises. I will cherish this journey and its experiences as “To mother’s womb and back”.

The journey began like this. As I was permitted re-entry in my mother’s womb, I was completely stripped off my personal identity that I had acquired after stepping out of the womb. Once inside my mother’s womb, I became at once an integral part of it. My entire consciousness became the womb itself.

Inside my mother’s womb:

There was no sense of darkness or light. Totally immersed in a fluid and bobbing around comfortably, a flexible cord connected me from my navel to somewhere I did not know. The environment was quiet, comfortable and peaceful.

Inside my mother’s womb:

My self-awareness and sleep alternated seemingly without my effort. No effort seemed necessary for anything.

Inside my mother’s womb:

Consciousness about my own self seemed to emerge through a sense of vibrations. The fluid around me supported me effortlessly.

Inside my mother’s womb:

Only one flexible umbilical cord seemed to do it all including quenching all of my needs. Nothing else seemed to be necessary or desired. There was a constant sense of total comfort and bliss, which cannot be described in any words. It is a stage that you wish would last forever.

Inside my mother’s womb:

One day, the fluid bag in which I had stayed comfortably suspended, seemed to develop a major leak. The cushioning fluid all around me quickly disappeared. A scary feeling

engulfed my consciousness in anticipation of a change unknown.

Inside my mother's womb:

Now without any cushioning fluid around me, I twisted and turned with the flexible umbilical cord still intact. The flexible cord seemed to hold me back, while some other force was trying to push me in the opposite direction. Intuitively and with a sense of discomfort, I moved through a narrow and restricted space, not knowing where I was headed and why. Then I felt a whip of fresh air and a gentle touch that held me. But this touch was no match to the comforting hug of fluid all around me while I was in my mother's womb.

Now out of my mother's womb:

For the first time, I sensed glaring light energy and cried out loud for help. Soon after that, I was disconnected from my flexible umbilical cord. For the first time, a sensation of being separate and alone emerged. It was not a pleasant feeling.

Now out of my mother's womb:

My emotional journey through the transit lounge had ended. It was time for me to re-claim my personal identity and move on.

One thought about this trip into the past "To Mother's womb and back" lingers on. If there is a place called Heaven where there is no need to do anything, where you are completely taken care of and there is no need for anything, then it is unquestionably the mother's womb. Drawing on the varied experience of this trip "To mother's womb and back" enables us to move on into the future. Mother's womb subtly guides to the universal womb. At the end of our biological journey on planet Earth, we will journey onwards to the universal womb of Mother Nature. A womb is always a comfortable and peaceful place to be in.

River of Consciousness

There is a vast expanse of ice spreading over a 75 square miles area at approximately 14000 feet altitude in the Himalayan mountain ranges. The large ice cap is called the Gangotri glacier. This glacier is the source of streams that end up becoming major rivers identified as the Ganga (Ganges), Yamuna, Brahmaputra, Sindhu (Indus), and the Yangtze. These major rivers irrigate the lands of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and China. If the global warming melts away the Gangotri glacier, it can jeopardize the lives of approximately two billion people. There are other major rivers such as the Volga, Mississippi, Amazon, Nile and others that have supported and nurtured civilizations along their respective paths. A River flows towards the plains, and effortlessly goes around every obstacle in its path. River plays a significant role in the lives of people living along its path. The river Ganga (Ganges) has been fondly addressed in India as the Mother Ganga (Ma). In this composition, the River represents the consciousness of Man.

Knowingly or unknowingly, a River is always headed towards the low lying planes and the sea. At the sea coast where it merges with the sea, it surrenders its identity as the River. In turn, the waters of the sea mingle effortlessly with the vast Oceans.

The surface waters of the ocean evaporate due to exposure to the sun. The water vapors naturally rise upwards and form clouds. As the clouds rise and encounter cooler atmospheric temperatures at higher altitudes, they condense and come down as rain. Some of the clouds drift overland towards the mountain ranges where they encounter cooler temperatures, condense and pour down as rains on land. The rain water showering on Earth eventually finds its way to the River that in turn merges with the ocean; thus completing the cycle.

Water in the form of vapor, cloud, fog, snow, ice, rain, river, ocean or a drop of dew on a blade of grass has the same common identity, which is fondly described by a chemist as H₂O. Hydrogen and Oxygen are the fundamental building blocks of water. Mother Nature blends these two gasses in the proper ratio under suitable conditions of temperature and pressure, resulting in a liquid that is identified as water. Water has very specific properties. Between the temperatures of 0 and 100 degrees Celsius, water is a liquid. At and below zero degrees Celsius, it freezes and at or above 100 degrees Celsius it boils and evaporates. Just as ocean waters cover a large amount of the earth's surface, a large portion of the human body's composition is also water. Without its presence in appropriate amounts in the oceans or human body, the very existence of planet Earth and its inhabitants will be in jeopardy. Earth's inhabitants include all living species, humans, and the entire flora and fauna. This is not rocket science, but a simple effort to acknowledge the simple realities and essential elements of Mother Nature that humans often take for granted. It is also an acknowledgement of Nature's beauty that surrounds us in its varied forms at all times.

Water is only one of the five primal forces of Nature that are recognized universally. The five primal forces are identified as sky, air, earth, fire and water. Recognize that the five primal forces co-exist in Nature complementing each other. Through meditative introspection, even philosophers living in the pre-scientific era, had envisioned that the entire limitless Universe embraces the same five primal forces.

Modern scientists incorporate these five forces as building blocks to describe the principles of Matter. The word Matter includes animate as well as inanimate matter. The animate matter category includes all living species. The human body is matter.

Progress in science helps interpret these very concepts farther. Hydrogen and oxygen are the fundamental building blocks or elements of water. In a similar sense, the five building blocks of matter, namely the sky (ether), air (gases), earth, fire and water may be interpreted with a different perspective provided by science. The word Earth may imply all of the fundamental elements reported by scientists in the Periodic Table. The Periodic Table reports 117 confirmed elements as of October 16, 2006 (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Periodic-table>).

Since the human body is fundamentally matter, the same five primal forces are also its building blocks. When a human body dies (stops breathing), it simply reverts back to its five primal forces. A dead body does not just disappear to make it a miracle. The same rules apply equally to all forms of matter, animate or inanimate. There are no exceptions to the laws of the Universe.

Two or more fundamental elements mentioned in the Periodic Table combine to form a new compound that displays significantly different properties than its constituents. Oxygen gas combines with Hydrogen gas in the synthesis of water, which is a liquid at ambient temperatures. Gold, Copper, and other metals are combined in molten state to form an amalgam to enable the casting of gold jewelry. The amalgam is harder than pure gold, softer than pure copper, and when melted it flows easily into the intricate mold for casting artistic jewelry. A chef combines different spices for producing a new flavor to please the pallet. A musician experiments with "fusion" techniques to synthesize notes that are pleasing to the human ear and spirit. Synthesis is a technique of combining two or more elements and their respective energies.

Individual consciousness is very much like the stream of a River. Initially at its origin, the River is narrow, shallow, turbulent and cold, but its water is pure. Progressively as it winds its way through and around obstacles, the stream

becomes wider, deeper, and irrigates land and life all along its path. The River also becomes progressively dirtier as humans try to wash their sins in its waters. The River stream symbolizes individual consciousness, which is constantly moving and is headed towards the sea of universal consciousness. Tears of joy or sadness flowing down from both eyes, down the cheeks, are symbolic of little streams of individual consciousness.

Each tributary that joins the River's main stream starts out from a different physical location. Each tributary is symbolic of a religion (and its philosophy of life) that starts out from a different geographic location, and follows its own independent path. Subsequently a tributary joins the main stream of the River. Ultimately the River, the main joint stream of human consciousness, merges effortlessly into the ocean that symbolizes Universal consciousness. At this stage of consciousness, the names of various tributaries and the River itself lose their individual identity.

There is yet another aspect to the dynamics of the River. As the River winds its way downwards through the mountain ranges, small rocks of various sizes start moving slowly along with it. The River becomes instrumental in moving rocks of various sizes and compositions along its flow path. Larger rocks move in the current of water very slowly, whereas smaller ones move more quickly.

Various pieces of rocks tumble and rub against each other in the flow of the River and ultimately show themselves off as colorful pebbles. Ultimately when the River merges with ocean waters, some of these pebbles are washed ashore on the beaches. A child playing on the beach may pick up a smooth and colorful pebble out of sheer curiosity and awe. A philosopher strolling on the same beach may pick up a smooth and colorful pebble as a representation of a universal process that has been going on for millions of years. An artist or a geologist may pick up a colorful pebble for use as a decorative piece in the living room.

Two lovers strolling on the same beach may not even notice the colorful pebbles. For a spiritually inclined individual, the pebble is symbolic of the five primal forces of the Universe at work. The beauty and presence of the pebble on the beach is internalized by the inner consciousness of Man.

The River owes its existence to all the primal forces of Nature that complement each other. Humanity also owes its existence to the same primal forces. No element in the entire Universe stands alone in the River of Consciousness.

Seamless Generations

A thought appears in the empty space of our consciousness for sometime and then disappears and another thought follows it. The chain of thoughts seems endless. Between two adjacent thoughts, there appears to be no perceptible seam like the seam we see on the outer cover of a baseball. In a similar sense one generation of people connect seamlessly with another generation through an uninterrupted flow of human consciousness. The imprints of human consciousness are the thoughts that seamlessly connect one generation with another. A thought is given a different meaning or interpretation based on life experiences. From this perspective, a thought is never new although it may have been given a different meaning and dimension. For example words such as God, Devil, Hell and Heaven represent separate thoughts, sounds and vibrations that have been given different interpretations throughout the history of mankind. All generations are seamlessly interconnected through the joint consciousness of mankind.

The modern expression “Generation Gap” is an admission of either an inability or an unwillingness to communicate with members of another generation. In generality, mothers and teachers do not perceive generation gap as an issue.

In normal daily life we casually notice people of various ages ranging from a newborn baby to a person approaching the 100-year anniversary. This scene was especially common on a daily basis in large joint families in which almost four generations lived under a common roof. Prior to the nineteenth century, a joint family system was common in all societies around the world. In those times, mobility of people was limited and therefore people lived and worked in the same place that they were born in. In the joint family environment, every member of the family casually experienced the interactions between family members of various ages. The natural process of childbirth, growing up, maturing into adolescence, growing old and

subsequently dying lay bare and soaked up in each family member's consciousness. It represented life's most grounding experience in which each family member gradually learnt about sharing, value of mutual respect and dependence, price of confrontation, and many other fundamental lessons of life. In the hierarchy of a joint family system, usually the oldest member, male or female was respected and accepted as the head of the family. Unfortunately, many mother-in-laws gained their global reputation in a joint family system.

Gradually as the industrial revolution surfaced offering employment to males and females away from their ancestral homes, the size of family has shrunk dramatically. The natural affection and guidance that was available to children from parents, grandparents, uncles and aunts living under the same roof is now being replaced by counselors at school. Even the adult members of the family now receive guidance from professional psychologists, psychiatrists and electronic media such as Internet, TV and DVD. This is the reality of the 21st Century.

During the formative years of a child, from birth to approximately 12-years of age, nurturing offered by mother is of paramount importance. There is no other equivalent substitute for it in the universe. This aspect of quality nurturing and upbringing is not available in a typical modern "Nuclear" family in which a mother performs a full time job out of home to complement family income.

Especially since the 1950's, the rate of change in all aspects of human life is nothing short of mind-boggling. In this composition we are observing the change and not trying to judge it.

The process of transference of thought, information and wisdom from one generation to another continues inspite of changes in size of families and their life styles. Most valuable

lessons of life are subconsciously and effortlessly soaked up in our consciousness through living experiences. Each generation connects seamlessly with the other generation mostly through living interactions. Through our conscious awareness surface our thoughts. A thought is simply energy and its vibration. The vibrations of life experiences, the good and the bad, constructive and destructive merge in the continuous stream of life consciousness.

Human mind soaks up information and stores it in its hard disk, which is the brain. The brain processes this vast information to formulate thoughts, dreams, logic, philosophical concepts and scientific discoveries. These thoughts and ideas are first held in space and then converted into words, spoken language, illustrations, sculpture and mathematical equations. A thought is put out in the form of a vibration, which travels freely through the space that we live in. The space around us is the open and free library for holding these vibrations, which are freely accessible to every individual. A writer picks up one of these vibrations, converts it into a thought, gives it a meaning at individual level of consciousness and presents it to the reader. Therefore a thought forever remains without borders in order to honor individual freedom.

Thoughts, in the form of vibrations, are omnipresent and therefore effortlessly available from one generation to another. In a sea of constant change, each generation may interpret the same vibration of thought differently. Generations after generations have been seamlessly connected with each other even without conscious effort.

Simplicity and Silence of Mind

Simplicity and silence of mind reveal:

Spirituality - not religion
Wisdom - not information
Meditation - not rituals
Reality - not perception
Empathy - not judgment
Love - not attachment
Sexuality - not sex
Numbers - not statistics
Communication - not conversation
Language - not scholarship
Learning - not intellectualization
Wealth - not possession
Duty - not imposition
Service - not showmanship
Self - not the "I"
Humbleness - not weakness
Sharing - not hoarding
Creativity - not imitation
Prayer - not begging of favors
Healing - not quick fixes
Religion - not dogma
Revelation - not hallucination
Bliss - not cycle of joy and sadness
Sainthood – not miracle and magic
Effortlessness – not absence of action
God loving – not God fearing
Faith – Not blind action

Slavery of Man

Men are born unequal in each society,
In each country around the world,
As if decreed by Nature and Man,
For the past, present, and future.

Because slavery exists in all humans,
Does not make it right.
Legal abolition of slavery,
Does not make it disappear.

At all economic and social levels,
Slavery is practiced by Man,
Of increasing vices and decreasing virtues,
To fuel the fire of personal greed and ego.

Practice of slavery, physical or emotional,
Under the guise of human endeavor,
Brings power and pleasure to the controller,
Sweat and suffering to those controlled.

Thirst and lust for power and pleasure,
Never quenches for Man and his greed.
So exercising slavery becomes second nature,
For Man of constant greed and multiple vices.

The very word “Slave” flashes a picture on mental screen,
A man with shackles around his neck, arms and feet,
A submissive expression on his face and spirit,
To serve the master and his greed.

Shackled neck, wrists and feet do not make a slave.
Forced labor and harsh commands do not enslave a soul.
For those who practice slavery, punishment does come
At a right time, from their own conscience within.

Slavery is practiced in different forms,
The harshest form being the slavery of the mind.
For once the mind is enslaved,
Freedom of human spirit is smothered.

Slavery is an abuse of the body, mind, and spirit.
An abuse so commonly exercised by Man
At home, at work, and in all social interactions,
Only visible if we pause and reflect on our own self.

Slavery exists and is practiced only by humans,
But not by any other living species in the world.
Humans are blessed with the power of thinking,
Makes them responsible for all of their actions.

Slavery stunts the growth of Man,
In all aspects of human endeavor,
Slowing the progress of human race
Towards the path of peace and harmony on earth.

Unfortunately, slavery persists in 21st Century
Mirroring the joint consciousness of mankind.
Abolition of slavery begins at an individual's level,
Purging it from individual mind, body, and spirit.

Spirituality Has No Brand

The word spirituality is described in Webster's English dictionary as:

"Something that in ecclesiastical law belongs to the church or to a cleric as such".

This is a very complicated explanation for me because it does not convey anything to me. Spirituality is an English word that means different things to people of different cultural and religious backgrounds. As a neutral observer and reader of Webster's dictionary, I ask and wonder who enunciates the ecclesiastical law and which church or cleric exercises it? This is not an effort for challenging any religious faith, but a sincere effort to understand the underlying universality of the concept implied by the word spirituality. At different levels of individual consciousness, the meaning conveyed by the word spirituality varies and defies a clear universal definition. The Arabic language has a word "Ruhaniyat" to connote spirituality. The Sanskrit language with its 52 alphabets, richly evolved grammar, and extensive Vedic literature does not seem to have an equivalent word for spirituality.

U. S. President Abraham Lincoln's wife Mary Todd Lincoln was saddened by numerous family tragedies, which included the sickness and subsequent deaths of two young sons. One of the biographers indicated that Mrs. Lincoln started feeling very depressed and at some point she started believing in Spirituality. As a result, the biographer described that Mrs. Lincoln started hoping to see Angels who would help her in her troubled personal life. As stated earlier, the meaning of the word Spirituality seems to vary with individual faith and level of consciousness.

During my school and college years, I lived with my maternal grandparents . I loved them both equally for multitude of

personal reasons. Grandfather died when I was 21 years old and Grandmother died much later when I was 39 years old. Having observed both of them very closely for several years, I had subconsciously made some observations. Through my Grandmother's life I learnt what Religion is. It is a way of life that reflects traditional belief systems, rituals, and social interactions. Through my Grandfather, I got glimpses of Spirituality which is reflection of an individual's inner strength and harmony. Neither of them ever lectured us on meaning of religion or spirituality. My personal experiences with them and subsequently maturing through five decades gradually gave some meaning to those two words, Religion and Spirituality.

Since I had lived with my maternal Grandfather throughout my high school and college years, I could not help but notice him intimately. I hung around him a lot because he was always loving, caring, and accepting. His presence along with Grandmother and their joint demeanor made their residence a peaceful home. Now decades later, I reflect back and sense that through my Grandfather's life I seem to have some degree of comprehension of the meaning of the word spirituality. How did my Grandfather's daily life reflect spirituality? My Grandfather was essentially a quiet man and communicated with few words. Silently and consistently, he communicated his cultivated powers of love, kindness, compassion, calmness and empathy for all. However, I had some growing up to do in order to realize and appreciate what he had revealed, was so enriching.

Unique encounters in life with different people and places offer insight into concepts and vibrations of Spirituality. I had the privilege of watching saintly people like Raman Maharshi in 1940 and Meher Baba in 1944 in India. At the time when I had seen them in person, both saints did not speak at all because each one of them was observing a spiritual discipline of observing Silence which is called "Mauna-wrat" in Sanskrit. The self-imposed discipline is observed to enhance Spiritual

consciousness. Each one of them had observed mauna-wrat for almost a third of their respective lifetime. Their overall demeanor reflected warmth, pleasant calmness, and total acceptance of every individual in their presence. It was a unique vibration to sense in their presence in which one felt blessed and totally accepted. I experienced similar vibrations during my 1952 visit to a place called Shirdi in Maharashtra, India. It was a very small village at that time. I had gone there along with my sister, Sarojini, to visit the place of residence of Sai Baba. In this instance, we were aware that Sai Baba had passed away many years before our visit. His place of residence was a small hut, which was maintained in its original condition. The hut had a sense of sanctity about its simplicity. In his photograph, Sai Baba's eyes radiated warmth and simplicity along with a vibration of kindness. Listening to the narration of his simple life and words of wisdom gave us a sense of what Spirituality may be all about. Life stories of people such as Sai Baba, Raman Maharshi, Meher Baba and their words of wisdom provide glimpses of Spirituality and its deeper meaning. The essence of Spirituality defies explanation by words of any language. Spirituality does not have labels or brands and every person aspires for it at individual level of consciousness. Spirituality is not tied down by any religion.

Spirituality is not attained through membership in church, temple or mosque. It is not attained by human organizations. Rules and regulations do not define its boundaries because it has none. Only an individual aspires for it and attains it on his own. That is self-enlightenment. A self-enlightened individual effortlessly becomes a beacon of light and hope for guiding others.

Realize that in a historical sequence there has been only one Rama, one Krishna, one Gautam Buddha, one Mahavir, one Moses, one Jesus, one Muhammad, one Guru Nanak, one Baha'u'llah, one Jalaluddin Rumi, one Kabir, one Kahlil Gibran, one Sai Baba, one Ramakrishna Paramhansa, one Vivekananda,

one Raman Maharshi, and one Meher Baba. These are people who have lived in flesh and blood. And throughout the history of mankind, there have been others who have displayed the aura of Spirituality or elevated consciousness. These are all Self-enlightened Masters with high levels of Spiritual consciousness. It is for us to be aware that such individuals are relatively few in numbers. Even today there are some self-enlightened spiritual Masters around, but we can recognize them only if we are earnestly seeking them. There will be self-enlightened Masters (men and women) in future as well. We follow the self-enlightened individuals of our choice to enlighten ourselves. We call them Spiritual. We subscribe to their elevated level of consciousness. A Spiritual individual is invariably a noble teacher, friend, and guide alluding to the eternal universal principle(s).

An individual nourished and enriched in his own faith or belief system gradually comes to appreciate the nascent universality and truth about Spirituality. No one religious faith has ownership to it. Unfortunately a Man bloated with self-righteousness fails to receive a Spiritual message in its true spirit.

Spirituality is not a Brand, a Medal of Honor for display or a topic for endless conversations. It is an inner experience for self-enlightenment. It is a journey without any baggage and limitations of the mischievous human mind. It is the consciousness of ultimate and total freedom.

Concluding remarks for this composition percolate through the vibrations of poetry as follows:

Spirituality is not about religion, rituals and brand.
Spirituality is not about philosophy or scholarship.
Spirituality is not of the mind with its limitations.

Words in dictionary cannot define spirituality.
Mind cannot tread in the realm of spirituality.

Spirituality is vibration of absolute positive energy within.

Spirituality is acceptance and love of all,
All that is part of the universe,
Universe that lies within us and without.

Inside us is a simple and orderly universe,
That is identical to the universe outside of us.
Spirituality bridges them both harmoniously.

Taking Full Responsibility

If you feel that somebody treats you like “shit”, realize that it is only possible because you permit it. Without your express permission, nobody will dare treat you like that. You have to take full responsibility for yourself, your actions and the consequences.

Whether you are born in a wealthy or a poor family does not automatically determine how the world around you will treat you. Material wealth or lack of it is external attribute of an individual. The individual frame of mind and its continual enrichment or depletion determines the real worth of a person. This fact surfaces in an individual’s mind or consciousness only after reaching a certain degree of mental and emotional maturity. Emotional and moral bankruptcy is the ultimate form of poverty. Equanimity, which is balance of mind under real life conditions, determines the real and enduring empowerment of an individual. To be or not to be miserable under any condition is a choice that each one of us makes consciously or subconsciously all the time and therefore bears full responsibility for it.

Public speaker and writer, Wayne Dyer has a cassette on “Ah Meditation”. In that cassette, he puts forth several affirmations for early morning meditation. One of the suggested affirmations is that “I am fully responsible for every thing that happens to me in my life”. Mindfully weaving this affirmation in daily consciousness can become a powerful transforming force in life.

Misery and happiness are intentions of mind. Mind’s anticipation of misery creates a framework of miserable coincidences in life, which become self-perpetuating. The same mind also has the freedom of choice to intend, manage and perpetuate happy coincidences in life. The mind can either limit or expand its capabilities to a degree desired.

Mother Nature's innate laws govern inequality at birth. Some are born rich, some are born poor, and some are born healthy while others are born with physical limitations. Wisdom prompts that we flow with the natural currents and forces of Mother Nature.

United groups of people as well as nations also have to take full responsibility for their joint actions and corresponding consequences. No one escapes the fundamental and universal law of action and its corresponding consequence.

An affirmative action stemming out of selflessness will always generate positivity and beneficial consequences. A genuine Man of peace always wills harmony amongst all men because he constantly seeks harmony within himself and his consciousness. The consequences of negative and selfish actions are all too self-evident. An age-old statement reminds us that a Man who lives by the sword dies by the sword.

Life can be as simple and straightforward as we wish to make it, and alternately as complicated as we choose to twist it. A wise man constantly tries to harmonize and simplify life because he recognizes that life is an ongoing process, a journey to be enjoyed, and a journey with an unknown destination. It is the uncertainty of the life journey, which makes it interesting for some or painful for others. Some take risks and dare experience surprises, while others choose a straight road avoiding surprises.

Those who do not take full responsibility for themselves, end up blaming their environment and fellow men for their life problems. Those who take full responsibility for themselves are those who change themselves and the world around them for the better, leaving footprints of positive change and pleasant coincidences of life.

Terrorism

It seems that use of the word “terrorism” came into vogue around the middle of the twentieth century. At least I had not heard the word mentioned frequently until I graduated from high school in 1948. During 1750- 1950 sentiments against colonialism were rising all around the world, and the term such as freedom fighters was more in vogue.

Looking at the global political developments during the past fifty years, it seems that spilling of aggression in absence of reasoning and hope have translated into manifestation of terrorism. Man’s fears, frustrations, ego, anger, and greed have fueled the fires of terrorism.

History reminds us that terrorism is not a new phenomenon since it has been going on for centuries in one form or another. The cruelty that is displayed in terrorist aggression is a reflection of Man’s inherently unbalanced and warped nature.

Individual Terrorism:

An act of individual terrorism is invariably a reflection and expression of unresolved internal insecurities resulting in anger and aggression. Armed with this negativity, an individual can become his/her own worst enemy and terrorist. Internal pressures generated by bottled-up anger condense in acts of external aggression. The individual carrying out an act of terrorism or aggression hurts his/her own inner-self as much as the injury that he/she inflicts on others. In the process both sides get hurt in negative ways. How can anybody win when both sides lose? Therefore, any meaningful anti-terrorist campaign must start by addressing our inner-self first; only then there is hope of effectively combating the conflict between Man and Man.

Terrorist and the anti-Terrorist:

In today's world, the word terrorist suddenly projects on our mental screen the picture of a masked and well-armed person, who is hell-bent on carrying out a mission of revenge and destruction. This is the traditional, well-publicized picture of a terrorist worldwide. In the twenty-first century we also know that terrorists come in all sorts of disguises wielding their respective elements of surprise. Terrorists have hijacked ships, commercial flights, buses, planted bombs with remote control detonation devices, and ambushed enemy with a critical element of surprise to gain maximum psychological impact.

Terrorist is a label that is generally applied by one side on the other side. Terrorist is always the other guy. In between the two is a dotted line of separation. The dotted line is very much like a line drawn on flowing stream of water or a line drawn on desert sand. On one side of the dotted line is a terrorist and on the opposite side is automatically the anti-terrorist. Both are labels and there is a common word in the two labels; and that word is "Terrorist". The two labels are conveniently reversed by individual perception on either side of the dotted line. A self-proclaimed terrorist is convinced that he/she is fighting terrorism waged against him/her to protect personal interests. On the other hand, the anti-terrorist is apparently protecting his/her own interests. Consequently, terrorism and anti-terrorism becomes a double-edged sword in which both edges are designed to kill. And killing is a form of negativity, which only perpetuates itself. Terrorist and anti-terrorist are both like high-octane and highly flammable fluids.

Twenty-first century Journalism:

With the availability of modern tools of communications such as lap tops, cell-phones, video cameras, TV, U-tube, I-Phones, live satellite and fiber optic transmissions, the terrorist acts occurring around the globe are projected on our home TV screen with 24/7/365 news coverage. Sometimes, competitive

journalism seems like a race to rush the selective bad news to the TV screen in each living room. The journalists are making their best efforts to gather and publish news that their readers seem to be demanding and are interested in. Any news that catches the attention, fancy, and imagination of the viewers is good news or story for the journalist to cover. That is what makes news and journalism a financially successful enterprise. Reporting a new story seems to be an exercise of codependency between the journalist and the news-viewer. It is a two-way exchange in which both sides eye each other with interest as well as a degree of skepticism. If the news is not interesting, the reader or viewer has free choice not to read the news or to turn the TV off. This is not an effort to run down the profession of journalism. Unfortunately, good news travels at the speed of a snail and bad news travels faster than the speed of sound!

Individual perceptions and interpretations galvanize the social consciousness with respect to the news that is published and broadcast. In a democratic society, free and responsible press is a powerful mechanism for challenging and moderating social consciousness. Responsible, dedicated, well informed, and eloquent journalists around the world have laid exemplary high standards for their profession. Their professional contributions continue to challenge and enhance individual freedom and consciousness. Independent and free journalism helps in promoting a healthy democratic society to mature and blossom.

Victims of Terrorism:

Most of the time, the victims of terrorism are innocent people. The innocent victims become the sacrificial lambs for the feud between two warring parties or ideologies. The negative energies of both, the terrorists and anti-terrorists, listed earlier keep the feuds burning for years, decades and in some cases even for centuries.

Terrorism, is invariably a guerilla warfare in which the terrorists

revel on little missions and successes. In retaliation, the anti-terrorist organizations continue their never-ending search for more effective containment of the terrorist activities. There is a constant war that is being waged in the hearts and minds of people on both sides. It is an ongoing war of mistrust, aggression and counter aggression with no positive resolution in sight.

Role of political solutions:

Politics is an art of finding weak grounds and building castles on them. The weak grounds are the volatile emotions of people that divide them. Generally, the topics of terrorism and anti-terrorism are both intellectualized and no-win solutions are proposed to resolve the conflicts between Man and Man. Bartered peace initiatives and truce provide only temporary breathers. Politics appears to be a naked dance that reveals everything except the truth.

And yet the services of politicians as skillful negotiators are essential to smoothen out discords and produce reasonable solutions. A political solution is often anchored in selfish motives on both sides. Since the very foundation is weak, the negotiated structure built on it is also weak and temporary. The politicians on opposite sides know it very well. At best, political solutions are temporary fixes. From a historical perspective, a political solution invariably turns out to be “No solution” at all.

Resolution:

It is naive or presumptuous to claim that any one of us has an ideal political solution to the conflict between Man and Man. A meaningful and durable resolution has to manifest itself through elimination of weapons of destruction on both sides of a conflict. The weapons of destruction include mutual mistrust, intolerance, fanaticism, and other frailties of human character. Mankind has yet to travel far to reach out for this level of joint

consciousness.

Each one of us has the elements of a politician, terrorist as well as an anti-terrorist. Each one of us also has the element of a peacemaker. Only a fearless and selfless approach, armed with truth and power of empathy, can lead the way to positive and lasting results for humanity. Mutual respect and trust sets a foundation in which empathy acts as a binding mortar. In this framework both sides become accepting of each other inspite of individual differences.

Genuine mutual respect and trust are vibrations that are solely expressed in deeds, not in words or peace accords. A word only reinforces the personal vibrations but does not initiate it. Watch how an infant instinctively and spontaneously assesses an approaching adult and decides in a split second whether or not to extend its arms in acceptance of the adult.

The Dynamic, Seamless and Eternal Universe

For centuries, Man's eyes have gazed at the sun, moon, planets and the sea of stars with awe and curiosity. Equally interesting have been the magnificent sights of Mother Nature all around us including the oceans, mountain ranges, flora and fauna, various species of animals, birds, creatures and living organisms that inhabit planet Earth. Collectively, we identify it as our Universe. There has been a constant desire and passion to better understand the Universe through philosophical and scientific disciplines. These are different approaches reflecting two different faculties of human mind. Each one of this approach searches out for a comprehensive, unifying, and satisfying truth that explains the Universe in all of its magnitude and our place in it – and the underlying reason for it all.

Philosophy is a faculty of the human mind and therefore each and every individual is a philosopher at his own level of consciousness. Philosophical mind uses rational reasoning and deductive logic in order to develop universal theories. For this composition, we want to differentiate between two kinds of philosophical minds and their respective approaches. One uses primarily introspection (in a meditative state) to support its theories and the other one uses physical measurements to quantitatively support its theories. The first type of individual will be identified in this composition as a “Philosopher” and the second type will be identified as a “Scientist”. In order to understand the mystifying Universe, Philosophers and Scientists use different approaches for investigation and different modes of travel.

Common Ground and Recognition:

A Philosopher as well as a Scientist, as defined earlier, recognize that an absolute universal fact or truth does not require a theory for its support because it stands on its own weight at all times in every possible situation. However, as a necessity, some

assumptions are made and partial theories proposed to get to the truth in a stepwise fashion. The search goes on until the truth surfaces. A universal truth is that which never changes and does not bear any ambiguities.

The Philosophical Approach:

The title of this composition, “The Dynamic, Seamless and Eternal Universe”, is a philosophical statement. It is an outgrowth of progressive philosophical assumptions and experiences based on insight gained through power of introspection by self-enlightened philosophers. To gain this experience, the primary vehicle is a meditative state of introspection. It is a journey within - inside of one’s own Self.

From a philosophical standpoint, it is envisioned that all that is here around us, out there “yonder” (as the friendly folks of Mississippi would say), and the limitless beyond as the Universe. Human imagination effortlessly extends out to infinity in all possible directions. In referring to the dynamic, seamless and eternal Universe, the word “dynamic” implies that it is ever changing. The word “seamless” implies that the essence of Universe is all pervading throughout the entire Universe. This Universe is not bound by any limitations of time and space. Finally, the word “eternal” implies that the Universe never perishes or dies, which automatically implies that it was never born or created. All animate living species (including humans), and inanimate matter (vegetation, mountains, and oceans) are an integral part of this Universe in its totality, and all universal laws apply equally to each one of its component. The Universe is an order by itself, which “Effortlessly” evolves and manages itself.

A human takes birth, grows up, lives a life and eventually dies. When the human physical body dies, it reverts back to its five basic elements namely the sky, gas, earth, fire and water. Every thing that is matter in the Universe follows the same laws without an exception. However, an invisible component of the

human body never dies because it is an integral, dynamic and eternal part of the Universe. Which is the invisible component of human body that never perishes? A universally acceptable answer to the question surfaces only as an inner experience in a disciplined state of introspection. The Self-enlightened Masters allude and guide mankind to this inner experience, which is accessible to each and every individual that dares to desire it.

The Universe does not have a time clock of its own like humans do. Instead, Universe has its own rhythm. Based on this very rhythm, Man has devised the clock to measure finite time. Everything in the Universe happens in an orderly fashion with a unique built-in intelligence and mechanism of its own. This built-in intelligence of the Universe is seamlessly and eternally all pervading.

A human being is an integral part of the Universe, and therefore bears its imprint - just as a child's DNA (biological imprint) matches with that of its parents. The marvels of human conception, birth, growth, old age, death and life after death are a part of the natural universal phenomena. The Universe creates, nourishes, and transforms all forms of life and matter. The Universe carries out all of its multi-faceted functions "Effortlessly" on its own, with its built-in intelligence and with unparalleled efficiency. Every event that happens in the realm of the dynamic, seamless and eternal Universe has a logical reason, but we humans don't always know why. Intelligence of the human brain as well as the most sophisticated super-computers developed by Man to date is very limited as compared to the built-in intelligence of the Universe that effortlessly manages itself. The Universe in its totality is non-dual and without a parallel.

The Self-enlightened Masters (philosophers who are Masters of their inner self) prompt us to understand and comprehend that the Universe outside of us is identical to the Universe that lies inside each one of us – and there is no duality between the two.

The Universe that lies inside us is seamlessly connected to the Universe outside us through our breath. When our rhythmic breath stops, we stop living. The built-in intelligence of the two seemingly different universes, inside and outside of us, is identical. It is a latent (hidden) and fundamental human need to comprehend this non-duality. When we comprehend this reality, we experience eternal harmony and bliss within. Throughout the history of mankind, there has been a constant pursuit for genuine and enduring philosophy of life that is free of contradictions and in total harmony with the Universe.

Each generation of mankind is beneficiary of Self-enlightened Masters. They experience the Universe and its vibrations within and are able to connect seamlessly with the limitless Universe. These Self-enlightened Masters share their inner experiences freely and selflessly, because they want every human being to experience the ultimate joy of knowing and becoming self-enlightened. Self-enlightenment is purely an individual's inner-experience. A truly Self-enlightened Master attains a level of universal awareness where there is no further Need.

In reality, human faculties of philosophy and science co-exist supporting each other constantly. Before the dawn of modern scientific era, some ancient philosophers introspected on how small a number could be. If one is the smallest whole number, it could be still further divided into smaller fractions and then progressively into yet smaller and smaller fractions – such as 0.1, 0.01, 0.001, 0.0001, 0.00001, and so on until what? Out of this thought process emerged the concept of “Zero” which cannot be divided or sub-divided. If zero is the end of the numerical order from one side, then what lies beyond the zero on the opposite side of zero? One side of zero was assigned positive and the opposite side became the negative. It is like a mirror image. On either side of zero, the numbers may increase and extend out without any outer limit. The concept of Infinity derived from Zero. What emerged out of this philosophical reasoning is the science of mathematics, the very base for

scientific measurements. Through this philosophical thought process emerges another concept of Zero as a state of neutral consciousness. It is the consciousness in which positive and negative merge and totally disappear. This enlightens the universal perspective of an individual in ways that cannot be put in words of any language, because it is purely an individual's inner experience. This philosophical approach was initiated on the Indian sub-continent, and it is an eloquent testimony to logical and philosophical reasoning in a dimension of its own.

Zen philosopher suggests that “ Everything stems out of nothing, and everything merges back into nothing”.

The native Americans of North and South America, who have been mistakenly labeled as American Indians, have had several civilizations that have entertained varying levels of universal consciousness reflecting their own philosophy of life. One of their rich philosophical thoughts embraces the Universe as a sole entity with Constant energy/spirit. You may take away from it or subtract from it and yet the total energy/spirit always remains Constant. As a simple example, if the birth of a baby is perceived as an addition of energy, then the death of an individual is considered a subtraction while the total energy/spirit of the Universe remains Constant. Man communicates directly with this energy/spirit without the need for an intermediary (medium). Real emotions of Man and its vibrations are the sole medium of communication.

For a proper comprehension and appreciation, every philosophical thought needs to be understood in the context of the respective civilization and cultural base. Each civilization has entertained self-enlightening philosophy of life that makes us an integral part of the Universe.

The Scientific Approach:

Scientific approach is another complementary faculty of human

mind that investigates and reaches-out for knowledge and comprehension of Universe in its physical form. In the fundamental approach a scientist reaches-out, where as, a philosopher reaches-in. The discipline of science also makes assumptions based on past experiences, postulates theories, and acquires physical data to support its theories. If physical data does not support a proposed theory, then the theory is either modified or abandoned. An acceptable scientific theory is that which any professional scientist can investigate and confirm anywhere at any time. Blind faith in a proposed theory has no place in scientific pursuits. Thorough physical measurements, data acquisition and analysis, science lays the foundation to determine magnitude of Universe. Physics, mathematics, chemistry, astronomy, biotechnology are some of the important scientific disciplines that contribute to laying the foundation of science.

In order to determine the nature and magnitude of the Universe, it has been difficult so far to devise a singular scientific theory to define the Universe all in one go. Therefore, the scientific approach has been to split the problem or project in pieces and develop partial theories for each. As a result, several partial theories have been proposed and developed progressively in order to complement and/or supplement existing theories. Scientists are fully aware that partial theories provide partial solutions and constantly check them for accuracy. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, scientists are able to describe the Universe with some basic partial theories – namely the Special Theory of Relativity ($E=mc^2$), Quantum Mechanics, and the Loop Quantum Cosmology (LQC).

The Special Theory of Relativity describes the force of gravity and the large-scale structure of the universe ranging in scale from only a few miles to the size of the observable universe. Initially, Man's ability to observe the sun, planets, stars, and our galaxy with naked eyes was very limited. But now with the help

of sophisticated telescope, such as Hubble mounted on satellites, it is now possible to peek far deeper into the skies. New universes and galaxies besides ours, are being discovered and studied with sophisticated scientific tools.

Big Bang is a scientific theory: According to it, approximately 13.7 billion years ago, the distance between neighboring galaxies must have been zero. In other words, the entire universe was squashed into a single point with zero size, like a sphere with zero radius. At that time, the density and temperature of the universe would have been infinite. It is the time that science calls the Big Bang, and it represents the beginning of time for a scientist. In scientific models of the Universe developed so far, Time-Space are finite and therefore have limits. Because science knows only what has happened after the Big Bang, it cannot determine what happened before the Big Bang. What conditions were responsible for the Big Bang? After the Big Bang, science is theorizing an expanding universe and confirming it with observations. How long will the Universe continue to expand cannot be predicted so far. At a later time, if the Universe stops expanding and collapses back to a point with characteristics of infinite density and temperature – would it be called the Big Crunch? Then, if Big Bang is the beginning of Universe and time, the Big Crunch could be the end of Universe and time – unless a cycle of Big Bang and Big Crunch repeats itself! Scientists predict that at the time of Big Bang, all the scientific laws of universe predicted so far break down, and the same thing will be true at the time of Big Crunch – if there is one. At the present, physicists are only aware of an expanding universe.

Quantum Mechanics or Quantum Physics, on the other hand, deals with phenomena on extremely small scales, such as millionth of a millionth of an inch. It is the scientific study of small and micro particles of matter. With the rapid progression of technological advances, scientists have attempted to explore the most basic particles of matter and forces that hold them

together. Initially, scientists identified atom as a small unit of matter. Subsequently an atom was successfully split revealing subatomic particles held together with bonds that can be unlocked to release vast amounts of energy. It is now common knowledge, that Man has harnessed atomic energy for several constructive as well as destructive purposes. Man chooses to construct or distract and reaps the corresponding consequences.

Further scientific research in Quantum physics has revealed particles that are the smallest and simplest building blocks of matter and the forces that control their behavior. The smaller particles are identified as quarks and leptons; the forces are gravity, electromagnetism, the weak forces and the strong forces. They state that the laws of physics are valid in the whole Universe and throughout the whole of time - The Quarks to Quasars Story (www-ed.fnal.gov/qtop_story.html). The particles that scientists are studying now are so small that the naked human eye or even the most powerful microscope cannot see them. Therefore the instruments that scientists now use for studying these very tiny particles of matter include huge accelerators, detectors, and powerful computers. Inside the huge accelerators where the particles are driven at high speeds, the scientists can see only a tiny trail of light behind an invisible accelerated particle. The sight is analogous to witnessing a falling star or a comet in the sky. Thus an atom, which was previously presumed to be the smallest unit of matter, is progressively revealing smaller and smaller units, displaying dynamic forces and energy.

The Loop Quantum Cosmology (LQC) proposes that our Universe could conceivably have emerged from the collapse of a previous Universe. It theorizes that our Universe expands and then contracts over and over again, rebirthing for infinity.

Current Status of Scientific Theories:

Scientists inform us that unfortunately, however, the two

current partial theories namely the General Theory of Relativity and Quantum Mechanics, are known to be inconsistent with each other. While one points out to an orderly and predictable Universe with a finite time-space, the other one points to random behavior at quantum level and therefore unpredictable. Therefore one of the major endeavors in physics today, is the search for a new theory that will incorporate them both. Physicists do not have such a theory as yet, and it may be a long time before one is developed. However, even the partial theories developed so far, amounts to a relentless march of logical reasoning unmatched in the history of human thought – comments Stephen Hawking in his book titled “A briefer history of time”.

In a recent book (2010) titled the “The Grand Design” physicists Stephen Hawking and Leonard Mlodinow suggest that “Because there is a law such as gravity, the universe can and will create itself from nothing. Spontaneous creation is the reason there is something rather than nothing, why the universe exists, why we exist”.

As a result of partial theories proposed and pursued so far, enormous strides in science and technology have been made, and newer technologies are surfacing at faster and faster rate. The General Theories of Relativity and Quantum Mechanics have offered benefits of nuclear energy and microelectronics - to name a few. For a common man, the benefits translate into electricity from atomic energy, and smart electronic gadgets in and around the house. For mankind, the benefits and challenges are huge.

Scientists constantly work towards a common objective that ultimately a unified scientific theory should be able to explain in simple terms, how and why Universe exists and our place in it.

In generality the Universe known to scientists, so far, is finite in time and space, and that it is an expanding universe. The partial

scientific theories developed so far have enabled scientists to learn so much more about the Universe. We cannot but wonder about the mind-boggling achievements which are reproducible scientific facts: A beam of light travels 186,000 miles in one second. Simple mathematical calculation will indicate that the light will travel lot more in one year – and that distance is identified as a light-year. So a light-year is a very long distance. Scientists use the unit of light-year to measure very large distances, such as those between our earth and the stars, between stars and other stars. The nearest star to earth, besides our sun, is called Proxima Centauri, which is about four light-years away. This is so far away that even with the fastest space ship designed so far, a trip to it would take about 10,000 years. Scientists are aware that at the present time, traveling faster than light is physically not possible.

Time, speed, temperature, weight, pressure are some of the yardsticks developed by scientists to gauge and understand the Universe and its marvelous mechanisms. Scientists have contributed data based on measurements and offered progressive partial theories in an effort to better understand the Universe and its mechanisms.

Concluding Remarks:

A theory, whether it is philosophical or scientific, is not a fact. That is why there is a constant need for accumulation of data to support a theory. On the other hand, an absolute fact does not require a theory for its support because it stands on its own weight. In trying to comprehend the Universe, the approaches through philosophy or science are like two concentric circles that share a common center. There is more than one view of looking at the Universe, and the choice depends on the conscious level of the individual beholder.

Osho, an eminent Indian philosopher of 20th century commented “Physicists are mystics of the Universe and the

Mystics are physicists of Consciousness”.

The Trinity in Yourself

Three is not a magical number. It just happens to be an “Odd” number in the language of mathematics.

Three in a family:

The first child of a married couple marks the beginning of a family of three. The child becomes an apple of their eyes, and adds new dimension to the dynamics of the family. The child did not appear because the couple ate a forbidden apple.

Three reasons why God exists in human form:

- To honor his devotee’s faith.
- To satisfy devotee’s insatiable desire for favors.
- For lack of a better tangible alternative.

Trinity of entrepreneurship:

This Trinity is manifestation of three significant traits that are present in an individual in varying proportions. Each trait represents an entrepreneurial energy, which may be identified simply as Creator, Preserver, and Transformer.

- Creator is an entrepreneur who creates an enterprise based on his larger than life dream.
- Preserver is an entrepreneur who takes charge of an existing enterprise and runs it efficiently.
- Transformer is an entrepreneur who takes a bankrupt enterprise and redirects its energy to transform it into a financially viable enterprise.

However, an entrepreneur who wields the combined traits or energies of Creator, Preserver, and Transformer in optimum proportions, creates an enterprise that benefits mankind. He holds and bonds together the energies of Creation, Preservation and Transformation with a durable mortar with ingredients

identified as simplicity and charity.

Three faculties that are inter-woven into the fabric of an individual:

- Thought
- Spoken word
- Action

Three traits that enlighten the consciousness of Man:

- Ego-less
- Fearless
- Charity of heart.

Trinities to Identify in yourself:

Three important people you look up to.

Three important friends of yours.

Three passions of your life.

Three important glands in your body.

Three tasty foods that you relish.

Three colors of your choice.

Three things you fear the most.

Three wishes for the future.

Three blessings in life for which you are thankful.

Honest answers to the above list may reveal the essence of your real Self.

Three Kinds of Mind Faculties

Every individual's mind seems to be a composite of three basic faculties, namely Theoretical, Emotional, and Practical. Each one of these faculties is simultaneously present within the composite mental framework of a person. However, generally one of the three faculties tends to predominate in the makeup of a person. That is why in common conversations, we tend to label somebody either as a very theoretical or an emotional or a practical person. As an individual matures to advanced levels of self-awareness, the proportions of the theoretical, emotional and practical faculties change in the overall makeup of the person. Each one of us lives in a sea of constant change and awareness.

A person generally displays a predominantly theoretical faculty with a scientific or logical approach to life. A fundamental research oriented physicist, mathematician, chemist, biologist would be typical examples. A person who displays a predominantly emotional or sensitive bend towards life is likely to be involved more in the arts and religion. A person with a predominantly practical faculty is naturally one who strives to strike a harmonious balance between his theoretical and emotional faculties of mind.

An overwhelming majority of human beings are skewed towards the predominantly emotional frame of mind. That is why most people tend to be followers. Organized religion and its deep-rooted traditions appeal to this frame of mind because it provides structure, stability, sense of unity, continuity and belonging. Most organized faith-based systems tend to demand blind faith. In some cases, blind faith is akin to walking in broad daylight with blinders on. In such cases, it can be detrimental for emotional maturity. Blind faith may become like quicksand and drown the person. Faith understood and practiced in proper perspective is unquestionably an enormous force.

A religious claim that the scriptures were inspired, dictated or written by God carries its own condemnation. Definition and comprehension of the word "God" varies from one person to another depending upon level of individual consciousness and the respective cultural background. It is like the relationship between the outer circumference of a circle and its center. Individuals located at different points on the circumference of a circle view the center from a different angle, and therefore may have a different perception of the center - the one and only center. Each point on the circle represents the conscious awareness of each individual.

To advance this concept further, consider only three separate points, each located at the 4, 8, and 12 o'clock positions on the circular dial of a clock. Position the practical, theoretical and emotional faculty of mind at the 4, 8, and 12 o'clock positions respectively on the circular dial of the clock. Recognize that each frame of mind is viewing the center of the circular dial from its own angle and perspective.

In a religious context, imagine that the followers of three different religions are positioned at the 4, 8 and 12 O'clock positions. Each one of them is looking at the "One and only" center, but chooses to identify or address it with a different name such as Ishwar, Allah, and God. Fundamentally, there is no duality about the center because it always remains the same. Just as each point on the circle connects to the center with a different line, each religious philosophy connects with the center using its own path.

Recognizing the three predominant faculties of mind, three different paths or approaches to life are encouraged. A standard common approach to all three is impractical.

- Theoretical: The theoretical mind is addressed with the path of knowledge and reasoning. A philosophy of rational inquiry appeals to the mind of theoretical inclinations. The

Vedanta, Buddhist, Jain, Tao, Confucius, and Zen philosophies encourage rational inquiry reinforced with discipline of introspection.

- Emotional: The emotional mind is addressed with the path of devotion, faith and religious rituals. Religious denominations provide a God figure with multi-dimensional attributes to follow this path. Judaism, Christianity and Islam are devoted solely to the message delivered by their respective prophets that are male figures. These three religious philosophies are primarily paths of devotion to singular male prophet that in turn have addressed God as “He” a male figure. Hinduism offers the concept of various Gods and Goddesses for this path with an underlying subtle message that a God or Goddess is manifestation of the Universal Energy (UE), which is the fundamental building block of life, matter, and the universe at large. Therefore, assigning a male or female gender to the fundamental concept of God becomes irrelevant. Besides, no singular prophet on behalf of God laid down the universal principles of divine consciousness identified in philosophy of Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Shinto, Tao and Sikhism. Self-enlightened Masters through centuries have revealed the fundamental universal and eternal truths. Truths stand on their own weight.
- Practical: The practical mind is addressed with the path of action. Generally, this faculty indulges in actions and decisions involving larger number of people. The Indian epic Bhagwad Gita prompts on how the intention(s) behind the action of an individual determines the consequence(s).

The three different paths mentioned above are complementary to each other in enhancing individual consciousness. The three different paths are not dictates or commandments by any supernatural beings, but simply a road map offered by Self-enlightened Masters from all parts of the world through

centuries even Before the Common Era (BCE). The key is in harmonizing the three faculties of mind mentioned above, which are ever present in consciousness of each individual. Each individual is free to engage in any one or all of the three faculties of mind. A balance of the three paths optimizes human effort.

The word Yoga in the Sanskrit language implies a harmonious integration of mind and body energies. The harmonious integration is essential to comprehend the ever present Universal Energy (UE) and its built-in Intelligence, which is envisioned as the prime source and driving force of life. An individual is not necessarily locked into any one of the above three paths mentioned above. While journeying through life, an individual consciously transitions through the paths of his choice searching for a comfort zone. Ultimately when the comfort zone is established, the individual finds himself at the center of the circle. The center of the circle represents a state of mindful consciousness that embodies holistic balance between the theoretical, emotional, and practical faculties of mind. Happy or sad incidents of life do not emotionally disturb equanimity of this person. This person is not to be misunderstood as insane, insensitive or indifferent. On the contrary, he is very alert and sensitive to every event around him, but his responses are measured and balanced without affecting his inner peace or equanimity. It symbolizes an art of living in a constant state of awareness.

Various Images of God

It seems that God appears to be manifestation of the human mind. God is mind's ultimate personification and idealism about perfection, simplicity, and unconditional acceptance at individual level of consciousness. Towards that end God is Man's idealized and idolized image. As Man worships an image, which is symbolic of his personal God consciousness, he empowers the image with supreme powers and qualities that he idealizes and yearns for. And there are some people for whom the use of word God or an image of God is unnecessary in their individual quest.

It is indeed very difficult to visualize that which cannot be seen, touched or heard. Due to limited life experience, a child has difficulty in comprehending the nature of God. Many adults may also encounter the same difficulty. Human mind progressively matures with real life experiences and tries to grasp the dimensions of life. In order to help the progressively maturing mind grasp nature of God, various images and symbols of God have emerged in various cultures around the world. The images have been in the form of symbols, sculptures, and drawings. Traditionally, the chosen image of God or Goddess has been a human form. The symbolism of Om used in Hinduism, the sign of the Cross used in Christianity, and the Crescent of moon and star used in Islam, are typical examples of symbolism.

Islam does not use idols in any form for worship. The huge granite cubical structure in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, known as Ka'aba, has a special revered symbolism in Islam. It is considered a unifying focal point for Islamic worship.

Thus a sculpture, painting, or a symbol, became a representation of the idea of an invisible but all pervading God. The philosophy of each religion has been encapsulated in the language of the respective times. The philosophy of Hinduism expressed in Sanskrit language has used several words such as

Dev, Ishwar, Prabhu, and several others to connote idea of God. Several thousand verses written in Sanskrit enumerate attributes assigned to God. In the English language, people of the Christian faith (those who worship Christ) commonly use terms such as Lord and Heavenly-father for God. Islam uses words such as Allah, Khudah, Parwardigar, and Maalik to address God. Other faiths and languages around the world have assigned their attributes of choice for God. Some also worships the energies of the universal elements such as the air, fire, water, sun, moon, planets, stars as symbolic of God. Human mind has the choice to either restrict itself or expand its horizons.

It seems that each religion has a God of its own. Emergence and identification of a personal God in individual religion is colored by regional and cultural preferences. Assertions made by some religious faiths that only the God they worship is real and the God worshipped by others is not real, is a childlike play being played amongst different religions of the world for centuries. This attitude is personification of Man's ego and perpetual desire for ownership in all aspects of life. Each religion that has withstood the test of time has voluminous scriptures and literature to trace history in order to support its philosophy. Some religious philosophies discourage logic and tend to support blind faith. If some members of such faiths entertain logic, reason and debate, they are conveniently excommunicated by their peer group. The progression of Man's spiritual maturity and consciousness can be traced through the history of religions written by objective and impartial historians. Ultimately, a God of personal choice is a manifestation of the conscious level of Man.

Not every one entertains the idea of God from a traditional religious perspective. That may be why a simple statement on the face of an American penny that states "In God we Trust" raises discord in the minds of some Americans who do not accept the idea of a traditional God. The group of people who

insist on a prayer to God at school are implying their own choice of a specific name for God; whereas others are opposed to the idea because they do not believe in that God. And there are some that choose not to believe in any traditional concept of God. If the word God is interpreted and embraced by all as an all-pervading Universal Energy, then there may be no reason for any discord. Unfortunately, mankind has not yet reached a universal level of consciousness. A democratic vote or legislation is not going to solve this problem, which is evident from past centuries that bear witness to it.

Images and ideas of God vary from the religion of one culture to another. In addition, some religions have specific Prophets that are addressed as Son-of-God or a Messiah. The role of a Prophet or a Messiah is claimed to be the medium of communication between God and Man. There are other religious philosophies that do not subscribe to the very idea of a Prophet. In such philosophies, the seamless connection between the concept of God and Man removes dualities and conflicts. Recognize that the very concept of the idea called God varies from one philosophy to another.

God or God consciousness is purely an individual's level of awareness. No one religion of the world has exclusive rights to God consciousness. Direct communication with God is freely accessible to each and every individual irrespective of the faith he/she is born in.

The literature or scriptures of each of the world's major religions are precious gifts to mankind. Unfortunately, different interpretations of the same scripture over a period of centuries have been the cause of ugly disputes amongst the followers of the same faith. Factions that exist within each and every religion are a testimony to these phenomena. Such disputes get further amplified with self-serving religious, political and economic agendas. One simple message that "Direct communication with God is freely accessible to every individual

irrespective of individual faith” invariably gets drowned in the politics of religious philosophies. Unfortunately the essential spirit of the core message invariably gets lost.

Within Christianity, the Catholics and Protestants continue to disrespect each other, and many more sub-groups have emerged. Similar disputes are evident in two major factions of Islam, namely the Sunni and Shia. The two oldest religions, Hinduism and Judaism, also reflect factions. In every man-made religion, there are fundamentalists and non-traditionalist factions. The rifts between these two frames of minds in each religion seem to be widening. You do not have to look too far to find evidence of such disputes brewing constantly.

Barbaric acts due to inter-religious and sectarian conflicts are still continuing in 21st Century and are claiming millions of lives in the name of God. This reflects sadly on the joint consciousness of the race of Man. An attitude of "We are right and they are wrong" seems to keep the disputes brewing endlessly. Man's ego and greed are potent driving forces that fuel the energies of self-destruction.

A thinking child or an adult asks simple questions when it pertains to the topic of God. Typical questions commonly posed are:

What does God really look like? Is God male or female?
Is God black, white, brown or yellow?
When was God born? Who are God's parents?
Where does God live?
How many Gods are there?
Does a God of one religion talk to the God of another religion?
What is the language that God speaks?
Does God favor one nation or people over another?
Does God favor one baseball team over another?
Does God create Tsunamis and earthquakes?

Individual cultural background and levels of consciousness or awareness color the illusive answers to these wide ranging questions. For some faithful, it seems that the answers to all of these questions are etched on granite tablets or a book of verses. However, for most people, acceptable answers to the above questions seem to elude constantly like mirage on desert sands. Realistic answer may lie some where in between.

You Hate Thy Neighbor as Thyself

The above title is not a commandment pronounced by anyone. It is a statement for examining our inner consciousness.

When a person has a poor image of self, there is a continuous effort to hide the real self-image. This symptom or state of mind is sometimes described as inferiority complex. Often, it seems natural to camouflage or hide the inferiority complex with a diametrically opposite complex called the superiority complex. While another complex is used to hide the first complex, then it becomes more and more difficult to unravel and resolve the real complex.

When we dislike ourselves, we dislike others. We project and mirror ourselves unto others. In the mirror, the left appears to be right and the right seems to be wrong! If we do not like our image in the mirror, then we will have to take responsibility and change our inner self. Nobody else is going to do it for us.

Once in a while, upon waking up in the morning, there is an extremely good feeling inside the whole body giving the feeling of a very relaxed sleep during the night. At that moment, there is a very positive and upbeat frame of mind to enjoy the moment and the day. After getting up from bed, the morning sunrays appear pleasant, the coffee/tea smells better, desire for breakfast is self-inviting, and there is a desire to greet each member of the family with a radiant smile. The time on the clock goes by unnoticed because every moment is being enjoyed. The daily morning chores seem simpler to handle. Noticing a neighbor next door, there is a desire to step out and express, isn't this a pleasant morning! The neighbor nods affirmatively with a mirrored enthusiasm. Our internal enthusiasm seems infectious. With such a happy beginning in the morning, the day moves forward with optimism and pleasant experiences. On such a morning, the frame of mind assumes a very positive upbeat mood. This one factor alone,

change outlook of the mind towards the entire environment embracing us. At the end of this particular day, we look back and realize that we really had a wonderful day. There seemed to be an infectious cheerful mood around us throughout the day. Then we wish and wonder if it would be possible to reproduce this day tomorrow and may be more frequently in future. This is a common experience for each one of us.

The above mentioned pleasant experience of a single day reminds us, that how we view the world around us depends upon how we have been touched by our own inside feelings. Our outside expression or demeanor at any moment is a mirror reflection of our genuine inside feelings. Sometimes we do not feel well inside, and yet try to put on a plastic happy mood, and even succeed in fooling the world around us. But we cannot fool ourselves even for a moment.

Disliking or hating some one else stems from a distrust of ones own inner world. It is manifestation of negative vibrations stemming and oozing out of negatively charged internal energies such as anger, envy, distrust, indulgence, physical and chemical imbalances. All of these negative energies generate high levels of toxins in our body.

Toxins are generally chemicals generated within our body. A simple example is mental tension. When the mind is tense for whatever reason, body reacts to it and internally produces toxic chemicals, which are often detrimental to the normal functioning of human body. These toxins, in turn, contribute to further chemical and physical imbalances. Excess stomach acidity is a common problem in tense life situations. It is obvious from this simple example, that a negative mental thought which is “non-matter” contributes to the production of toxin in body which is “matter”. Since toxins are detrimental to the body, it is desirable to consciously minimize the formation of toxins in the mind-body complex. Otherwise a body purged of toxins with medications, refills itself with more of the same

self-induced toxins. In a constipated body, merely taking a purgative and emptying the stomach provides only a temporary relief, but it does not address the chronic tendency for constipation. A constipated body tends to repeat its cycle. Realize that in such a situation, the body and mind are both constipated. Naturally, to get rid of toxins in body, we have to address our own mind that creates the toxins in the first place. To cleanse the body of toxins effectively, first the mind has to be cleansed and there is no overnight purgative for this operation.

There are time proven simple techniques to begin the cleansing of mind. There are three faculties, which are administered by the mind. These three faculties, which are equally weighted for their importance, are:

- Our conduct
- Our thoughts
- Our spoken words

Our conduct: Our conduct or behavior towards ourselves as well as others should always be pleasing and positive. Indulging in criticism of others is self-incriminating.

Our thoughts: Our thoughts about ourselves and others should be positive. Prejudice towards another individual is self-destructive. A sincere feeling of good will towards all people and living creatures on the planet enriches our own self.

Our spoken word: Our spoken words should be pleasing, encouraging, and positive towards ourselves and others.

Realize that it is important to learn to honor and respect ourselves first, before we can genuinely honor and respect others. Recalling the day when we experienced, upon waking up in the morning, a burst of positive energy and a good feeling

all over, is the day when our body's important glands are perfectly tuned in. In other words, all of the glands are operating at peak efficiency. These glands are the Adrenal, Pituitary, Thyroid, Pineal, and Pancreas. These glands are primarily energy centers, which are supremely interdependent. The harmony of our three faculties namely, our conduct, thoughts and spoken word bring the important glands or energy centers in tune with each other. The energy centers within the human body are described in different ways by various healing techniques. Universally used energy balancing and healing techniques such as Reiki, Mahikari, Pranic-healing, Vipassana, Accupressure, Pranayam and several other address important energy centers in the body to promote internal harmony. The internal harmony in turn promotes emotional and physical balance and wellbeing of the entire human body.

We can strive to reproduce that pleasant morning by paying close and conscious attention to our conduct, thoughts, and spoken words. To do so requires our total commitment and does not cost anything.

“Love thy neighbor as thyself” is an advise that is commonly pronounced and repeated like a parrot, but seldom implemented in real life. Before we can love our neighbor, we will have to begin loving ourselves so that our inner happy self projects effortlessly through our conduct, thoughts and spoken words.

Wisdom in This Moment

At this moment, be here
Be here, in this moment.
In this moment lies the secret,
What you are and what you will become.

Last moment is not this moment,
Next moment is not this moment.
This moment has its own imprint,
Fleeting like a line drawn on moving waters.

Knowledge is simply available information,
Wisdom is knowing what to do with it.
Meditation is silencing of the mind,
To gauge dimensions of our very being.

As children, we hear that old is gold,
But realize that very little of what is old is gold.
You must break the rock and sift through tons of debris,
To extract from it a mere ounce of pure gold.

Travel near or travel far,
With open eyes, ears, mind, and instinct.
Appreciate beauty of everything around,
Learn, fathom, and feel with awe.

To unlock the secrets of life,
We need not travel far and beyond.
The secrets lie in the moment at hand,
Only if the mind can stand still, and reflect within.

In this moment, behold your self.
Behold the universe that lies within.
In it lie the realities of existence.
Universe is orderly, harmonious, and all energy.

Wisdom and Vibration of Thought

We cannot hold a “Thought” in our hands and examine it with our senses. Our eyes cannot see it, hands cannot feel it, nose cannot smell it and ears cannot hear it. A thought seems suspended in the empty space of our consciousness. A fleeting thought is like a line drawn on the moving water of a stream. However, our mind can pause a fleeting thought and then introspect on it to seek its deeper meaning. A thought finds expression through a word, its interpretation and action associated with it. Sometimes, a thought is simply internalized. In the empty space of a thought resides its wisdom and vibration. A thought is not new since it is always omnipresent. It percolates in our consciousness from the environment and we try to give it a meaning. Every Man is born free to entertain a thought and give it a meaning at individual level of consciousness.

In the demonstrations of Laser and Hologram technologies, we see colorful images that seem suspended in a confined space and out of reach for us to touch and feel. We watched a Laser show in the Disney Land’s theme park at Anaheim, California. The Laser show commenced soon after darkness of the evening had enveloped the grounds. The audience gathered around a large water pond to watch the hour-long show. The Laser show provided a feast for the eyes by showing colorful images suspended in open space. The audience looked up in awe and wonder while watching the show. With similar curiosity and wonder, we watched the Hologram technology exhibited at the Museum of Hologram in Chicago, Illinois. The Holograms displayed three-dimensional effects of objects such as human faces and figures that appear to be suspended within the space of a transparent box of glass. During my high school years I was thrilled to watch magician P. C. Sarkar display his skills. In one demonstration, he invited one of his assistants to lie down horizontally on top of a table and then a white sheet of cloth was draped over the entire body. Then magician Sarkar waved

his magic wand artistically to gradually raise the horizontal body of his assistant almost four feet above the table. The magic wand was then moved under, over and around the floating body to indicate that the draped body was suspended in mid air without any tangible support. Later during the same magic show, a ten-year-old boy was invited from amongst the audience to the stage. As the boy stood there, magician Sarkar held a white sheet in front of the kid so that the audience could not see the boy. After holding the sheet in front of the boy for barely ten seconds, the sheet was withdrawn. And Walla! Instead of the kid there stood a bare skeleton the same size as the boy. Then the magician Sarkar instructed the bare skeleton to walk across the stage from one end to the other end. In recent years magician David Copperfield has demonstrated his skills in making large objects such as a tiger, an elephant, and a Boeing jet disappear in front of amused audiences. From a layman's standpoint, all of these technologies present very interesting shows of imagery and illusion. All of these images appear suspended in relatively confined spaces.

In dream also we see images of familiar people and objects. Our dream appears to be a reflection of our thoughts in the space of our consciousness. In dream we see virtual life images, which disappear as soon as we wake up. We participate in our dreams just as we participate in real life. We are the producer, director, actor as well as the audience of our dreams. Dreams seem to be a confluence of our thoughts and conscious awareness.

As individual awareness changes with time and experiences of life, a specific thought takes on different meanings or interpretations. This dynamics demands that a thought forever remain without borders in honor of individual freedom.

The human brain claims to be the seat of thought. The brain is endowed with the unique faculty of thinking and applying logic. Anthropologists report that millions of years ago, the size of the

human brain was initially very small in size and that it has slowly grown larger to the present size. Whether the larger size is a favorable sign or not remains to be seen! A Neurologist and a brain surgeon can better describe how human brain functions and responds to various stimuli. But there is no part in the human anatomy that is identified as the “Mind”. In normal conversations, a thought is usually associated with the brain and the mind, and the two words are used interchangeably. Some of the expressions in common usage about the brain, mind and heart are:

“My brain is exhausted”.

“My mind is not working any more”.

“Use your brains to argue your case”.

“ I love you with all of my heart”.

“ The seat of passion is the reproductive organs, but the seat of love is the heart”.

Where and how does a thought originate? A thought seems to surface through two separate vibrations in our consciousness. The vibrations may be identified as:

- Vibration originating in the brain or mind
- Vibration originating in the heart, our very being

We can point our index finger at our brain but not at our mind. A brain-surgeon can operate only on our brain. Psychiatrists and Psychologists claim to address client’s mind without surgery. Our brain does not seem to be our mind, although there appears to be a connection between the two.

Some thoughts are expressed through a spoken language, whereas some thoughts are internalized without the need of a word. A specific thought expressed through a spoken language and the same thought internalized through introspection seems to communicate different vibrations. A Philosophical mind tends to intellectualize a thought, whereas Self-enlightened Masters allude to different dimension of thought and life.

Some Self-enlightened Masters allude to an effortless meditation technique in absence of the mind and therefore in absence of thought. Other Self-enlightened Masters allude to an internal journey undertaken by riding on the silent waves of breath and its natural rhythm. Irrespective of the approach taken, the ultimate common objective is realization of universal consciousness. In this context, the word universal implies absence of duality and ambiguity.

The human brain is like a computer's hard disk drive which stores enormous amount of data that is fed into it by a programmer. Based on this data and the software program, which includes the techniques of Artificial Intelligence, a computer provides optimized solutions or conclusions. The hard disk of a computer is incapable of obtaining data or information on its own. That is its limitation. On the other hand, the human heart has no hard disk of its own and has no need for programmed software. Instead, its operating system is the breath (inhalation and exhalation) which has its own natural rhythm. Self-enlightened Masters rely on this system for their internal journey.

A thought seems to be processed by the brain, mind and the heart at different levels of consciousness. When the vibrations of brain, mind and heart work in balanced confluence, there seems to be harmony within and in life. Mind and heart have the combined energy to guide the vibration of our thought towards universal consciousness.

Terminology

Dhyana: A conscious state of effortless meditation.

Gita: An epic of universal consciousness based on legendary character of Krishna who lived in Mathura, India.

Man: This word is used to connote a male or a female. In the Sanskrit language an equivalent word “Purush” is used to connote an individual (male or a female).

Ramayana: An epic that is based on legendary king Rama of Ayodhya, India.

Rishi: A Sanskrit word used to refer to a Self-enlightened Master in India.

Sat-chit-Ananda: A state of blissful consciousness in which an individual experiences the reality of universal truths.

Self-enlightened Master: An individual that has enhanced his/her universal consciousness through the disciplines of introspection, meditation, and subsequently an effortless state of meditation. A Master who has experienced the difference between body and soul, and the non-duality between a soul and the universal soul.

Urja: A Sanskrit word implying universal energy that is omnipresent.

Veda: The word Veda implies “Book of knowledge” in Hinduism. Some of the Vedas are – Soma veda, Yajur veda, Atharva veda, Ayurveda, and Vedanta.

Vedanta: Name of the last book of the Vedas.

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The desire for internalizing life experiences comes naturally for each individual. Some experiences of life touch us; where as some challenge our thoughts and change us. However, the common denominator in all life experiences is our interactions with living beings, including people and pets, with whom we share our life intimately. I express my gratitude to each and every living being with whom I have interacted with as I have journeyed through life. Each individual interaction has brought forth a different dimension of life to observe and learn from. The cumulative influence of all of these interactions continues to enhance my life consciousness.

Daily experiences in life continuously teach us “What life is” and prompt the wisdom “What life should be”. Ultimately, each one of us is a beneficiary and an integral part of a grapevine of relationships and friendships.

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About the Author

Born on 4th December 1932 in Nagpur, India, Mr. Suresh M. Deo has lived his first twenty-five years in India and the latter fifty+ years in U.S.A. For Suresh, the passion for writing stems out of a simple desire to better understand “That” which was previously taken for granted, or presumed to have been understood. Writing is about giving a thought some meaning at our own level of consciousness and therefore offers silent opportunities to rejuvenate self in the dynamics of an ever-changing environment.

Suresh has Bachelor’s degrees in Science and Chemical Engineering from Nagpur University, Nagpur, India and a Master’s in Chemical Engineering from University of Mississippi (Ole’-Miss), Oxford, Mississippi, U.S.A. Traveling around the world over a period of six-months, at the age of thirty, has been one of life’s most rewarding experiences for Suresh. It offered opportunities to experience the commonalities amongst people of diverse nationalities and cultures. Commonalities surfaced in the aspirations, frustrations, and bewildering fears of the unknown in life.

Suresh has worked in several facets of the American Plastics and Composites industry for forty years. Suresh’s wife Usha has a Master’s degree in History from the University of Delhi and a Master’s degree in Psychology from George Williams College, Downers Grove, Illinois, U.S.A. She worked for the State of Illinois as a Mental Health Counselor at the Crisis Center in Lombard, Illinois. Subsequent to retirement in 2001, both of them are enjoying traveling and indulging in their respective hobbies. During the summer months they live in their home in Addison, Illinois and during the winter months in Pune, India.

Suresh and Usha have three sons Deepak, Vikas and Sagar. Names of the three sons symbolize an oil lamp emitting soft light, progressive self-enlightenment, and sea of consciousness respectively. All three sons were born in Illinois, U.S.A. and now live and work in the Chicago area.