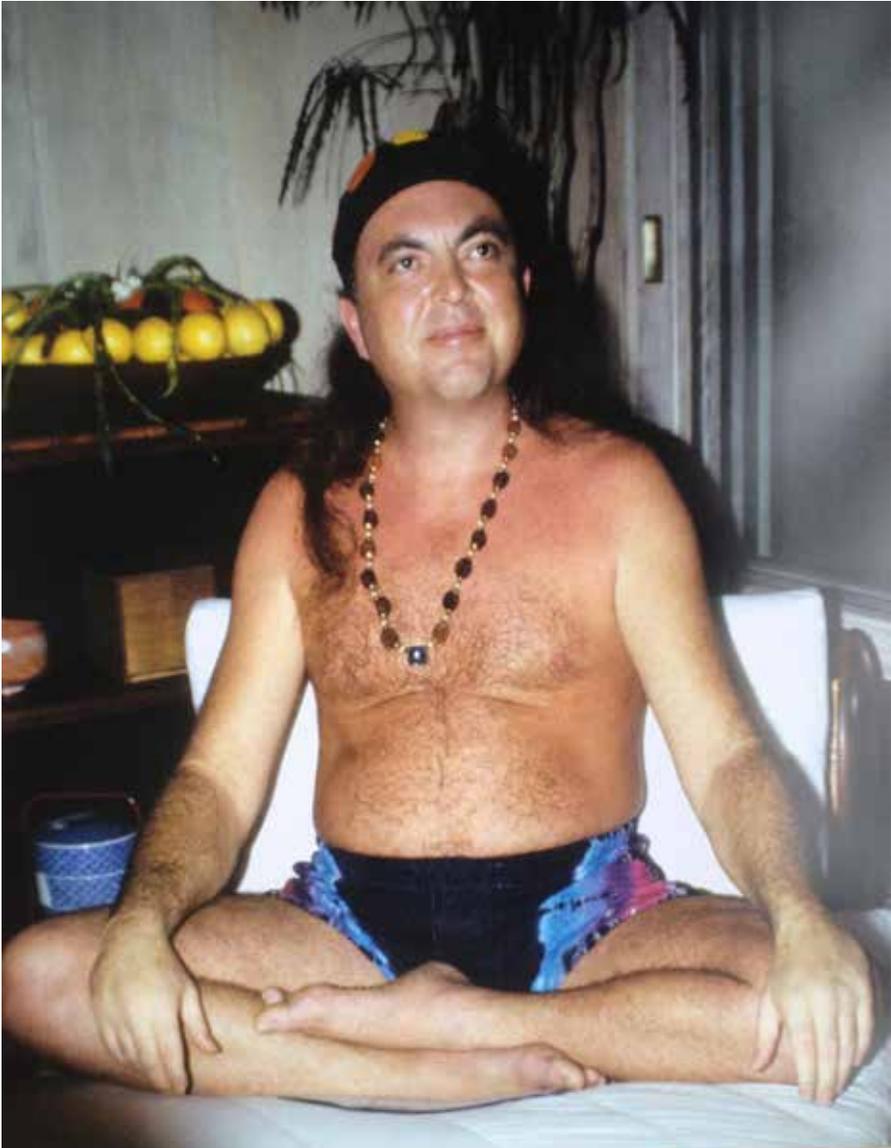


Nothing Makes Me Happy



*Songs of Praise
for the Wisdom and Person
of Avatar Adi Da Samraj*

Frank Marrero



In gratitude, love, and ecstasy,
I bow at the holy feet of my Beloved Adi Da.

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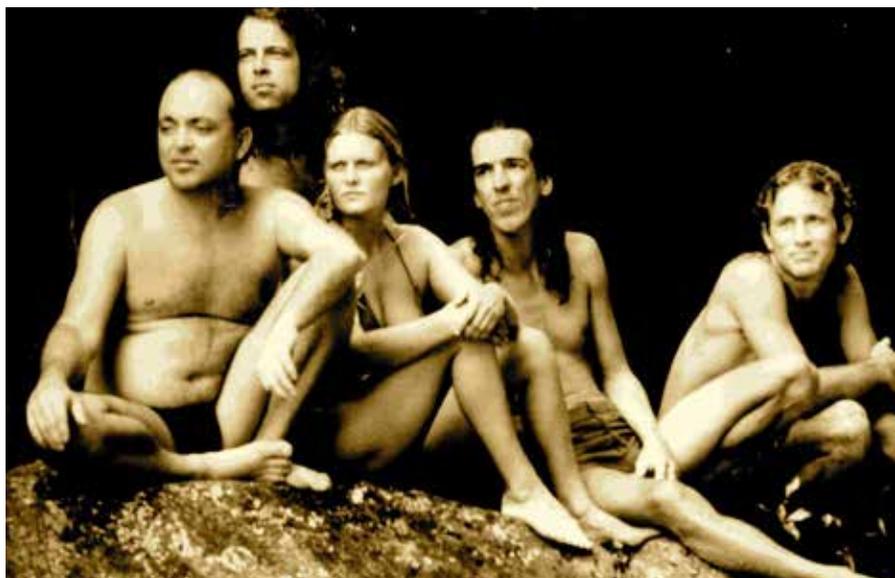


Tripod Press

Note: Let me be perfectly clear

All insights, wisdom, and clarity herein reside fully in the domain of my Spirit-Teacher and Beloved, Avatar Adi Da. He illumined the errors and misapprehensions of my life and heart with unyielding Brightness and unending Sweetness — and those clarifications, meditations, and gifts I have attempted to pass on in a series of essays and studies, primarily for future generations. I beg your blessing in my failings. With full emphasis, let me be clear: while He gave me an iota of His art in the packaging of language, the Daylight Presence is from Him.





Avatar Adi Da, Tumomama Gorge, September 9, 1982, author right
We are not looking at anything in particular. He has taken us over.

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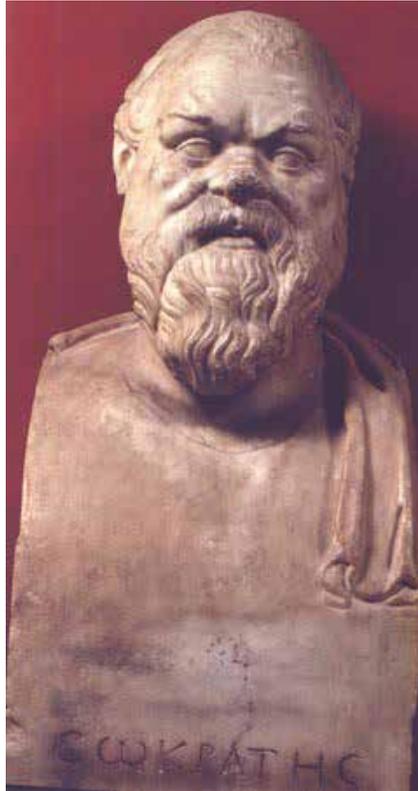
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Part One:
Words to Him



S O K R A T E S

(examining the stone, you can see the original spelling)

The Daylight Ones

In Plato's *Republic*, Sokrates proposes a cave where most people are convinced that the shadows floating on the wall are the only reality. They are, in the parable, chained to see only contours, confined to a dark reality of body sensations, sub-conscious dreams, mythic appreciations, and brief satisfactions.



In contrast, there was also a smaller group, who saw things more directly, because they knew (with dwindling satisfaction) that the shadows on the walls were projections across objects from a rational fire. They did not see their core action of knowing-separation — and so most barely ever noticed the cavern. They were likewise chained to the certainty that the solid world they logically measured by the fire while awake was the configuration of reality.

Plato relayed how Glaukon remarked that these cave dwellers were “strange creatures” to which Sokrates quickly retorted, “Like ourselves.”

But there was another person in Plato's story: one who spoke of the light outside “the cave of subjectivity”; one awake beyond myth and mere logic to the all-inclusive sun of real reality, satisfied in priceless simplicity, and including both natural enjoyment and the wonder of un-knowing (‘divine Ignorance’).

In the Daylight person, every breath is unchained in love, naturally standing whole in self-existing, vibrant light and unfettered feeling. The free soul, the person from the Day, is ecstatically awake to the universal divinity of this reality. “The estate of divinity is at hand,” the master of the Christians exclaimed to those who had ears.

The metaphor of subterranean subjectivity and the Day who en-lightens illumines both the ordinary evolution of humans and the great evolutionary leap of the Illumined. This was powerfully shown by Plato in his re-creations and creations of Sokrates. The mythic sees the outlines of reality and the logical sees the rational and irrational harmonies of measurable things. Daylight sees all, being Light itself.

Stepping whole-bodily and ecstatically outside the blackness of interiority, the Daylight Woman or Man sees and breathes the immortal beauty that is the Real substance of all. They see all differentiations perfectly because of the mysterious unity of primal happiness and primal light. This radical integration is not confined to systems of knowing and is also whole-body/whole world, unreasonable, and freely humorous. In Plato, we see us cave-dwellers talking at length with the dancing, laughing, un-knowing Daylight Man.

These servants of Daylight demonstrate with exquisite simplicity that this reality Is love-blissful. It is our own protective cave-logic that dismisses this and them. With Sokratic irony we see our cave-bound point of view is undermined by their heart-resting in the Ground of Being — all Full with deep earth, heart, and skylight.

Understanding has always been given by the Daylight Ones. Who is at the source of every religion and a host of sage and saintly understandings? Daylight Ones. By their demonstration, we know that at least some of the Daylight Persons “returned” to the underworld of grown children with their half lit beliefs and anxious adolescents fixated onto measurable facts in perpetual thinking.

Indeed, this endless stream of thoughts often drowns us in Styxian darkness. Fortunately, the river Styx is also gracefully illuminated by Daylight Presence.

While belief serves the affective development of the feeling-soul, and logic can clarify this understanding (to conduct greater growth), all of these souls see the light that grows us from within the cave of shadowy inwardness and the knot of the body-mind. By the knot of the body-mind, by the knot of memorable history, we are *thrown down* into *sub-jectivity*. (The Latin “sub”, or “under” / “down”, combined with the Latin *iacere*, “to throw”).

How does it feel to be thrown down, forced to bow, put under a yoke (L. *subjugated*)? We feel knotted inside, and are flooded with the sensations of being a victim. Being thrown-down makes us subjective — and the cave is dirty. So let it be noted: “Human” and *humus* or “rich earth” are etymological relatives. Likewise, *dust* in Hebrew is *adam*. The human adventure begins in the dim, earthen cave of subjectivity. While cave-dwellers glimpse the lighted opening, to stand in clear light is another matter. We must move towards it with our whole body.

Fortunately, the Daylight Soul is moved to help and *crosses down* into the underground confinement of the knotted body-mind (and history’s “spindle destiny”) to freely demonstrate and articulate the actuality of divine realization and the mysteries of supreme being. The Daylight Ones incarnate the enlightened Day of immortal beauty. “Just as the eye was unable to turn from darkness to light without the whole body, so too the instrument of knowledge can be turned (by the movement of the whole soul) from the world of becoming into that of being, and learn by degrees to endure the sight of being, to the brightest and best of being. We find [ourselves within] What Is Good.” --Sokrates/Plato.

The Daylight Ones radiate and serve us historical humans *thrown down* in *sub-jectivity*, tortured by time and memories (e.g. “This reminds me of ...”); re-acting, not present. In Sanskrit, this enlightened *crossing down* into the dirty temporal cave of human

subjectivity is *ava-tara*, or avatar, who “comes from the realm of light.” He or She realizes the immortal reality, is beautiful being without difference. “Avatar” is not your virtual, higher self-image, but the Lighted Self of all, Here in Person.

The fabric of our unexamined beliefs and presumptions, our unfinished childhood, and our verbal interior cast the cave and architecture of our subjectivity. Upon the Styxian stream of endless thinking, our egoic reflection finds the shore of our felt anxiety and is moved by it; anxious e-motion un-consciously forms our complex subjectivity. Being thrown-down into darkness is self-evident in universal Narcissism, obsessed as “I” in body, feeling, and every measure of self-concern and self-satisfaction.

But what if, Sokrates proposed, the one who knew of the light beyond belief, concern, and thought came back into the cave and tried to tell those souls caught in the act of being identified with a character in a social role about the light of immortal beauty and the wise cultivation of your soul? It was obvious: They would be laughed at and castigated. Get real, the merely rational would ironically say (while yet still plagued by dreams and abstractions).

The Sage of Athens further advanced that if the one Awake to the Light outside the cave told those embedded underground about their chains and tried to help them free, what do you think would happen if they got their hands on them? *What would unconscious, subconscious, and merely conscious characters do to the Daylight person interfering with their shackled presumptions and chained habits?* — Sokrates enquired. “Kill them,” Glaukon gave voice to the obvious. Sokrates knew, Plato wrote.

En-Lightenment is the gift of those who come from the Day of limitless Reality. They live free in feeling and in radical



understanding. Knowingly risking their lives by knowingly shaking the darkness-chains, the gift of enlightened demonstration demonstrates, informs, confirms, and Incarnates what Daylight Is in human expression: un-limited being, free and joyously simple as nature, love without end, supreme being.

Seeing Daylight's demonstration and responding in kind, we awaken beyond the cave of within-ness to love's light, beyond the separative caves of opinion to being ecstatically beyond point of view. Our feeling and awareness are not only unified and naturally whole, but the freeing of feeling transmutes into wondrous being, intrinsic awareness, and unreasonable happiness itself. This is illumined and confirmed by Daylight Ones. Otherwise, we seek for transcendent light in cave-like satisfactions, dreams, and logic. (Indeed reflections are found therein.) Reflected in the limbic to higher brain development, the freeing of feeling is how cave dwellers turn from their certainties to this mysterious light.

Daylight freely embraces the paradox of mindfulness and mindlessness: "Mystery is the Gate to the essence of life." "Wonder rests the vital being and cools the brain." / "True philosophy begins in wonder." (LaoTzu, Adi Da, Sokrates)

In awe of the Daylight One, we learn to "ignorantly"/ unknowingly/mysteriously "stand out" of our cave of subjectivity in awe's wonderfulness, or as Sokrates would say: "ek-stasis". In ancient Hellas, *ecstasy* was considered *the* proof that the body and soul could intercourse with lighted divinity. (Their ek-static ceremonies were called "the mysteries".) And Sokrates was known as the soulful man who said he knew nothing at all, "except perhaps that love is the right way to live. The realizer of the mysteries and the true lover of wisdom are one."

The free soul basks in self-evident Beauty-Daylight, inherent happiness, and responsive Fullness. Resting in divinity, responsible in love, razor sharp, the Holy Ones worship nothing but this "immortal beauty" (Diotima-Sokrates), This fundamental

happiness and Beauteous Presence is found omniversally, but is seen most easily in ordinary beauty and in the Daylight Person.

“All entities move and nothing remains still,” Heraklitos wrote. Thus we are moved to notice what does not change. If we become distracted by Fundamental Ground, That which does not change, immortal beauty, oceanic heart-joy. In our awe-filled appreciation and even worship of immortal beauty, the heart itself is *acausally* transmitted as Reality, Adi Da notes for us. This divine Ignorance-Radiance is self-evident pure Presence, supreme Being, the worshipful divine Substance and unchanging Ground of all, inherently the Heart and Light of understanding.

Through the gifts of Diotima, Sokrates inherited the Orphic teaching of immortal beauty in *Phanes*, or Primal Light, First Light. (In Sanskrit, “primal or first” is *adi*.) Recognizing Primal, Self-Existing Beauty-Light, the soul can give itself up freely. Reality is self-evident, Self-evident, and Self Evidence — “Primal, Prior, Intrinsic, Self-Evident, Inherent.” Adi Da sings.

“All appearances, conditions, forms, or changes are apparent modifications of Primal Energy. Primal Energy is the ‘Changeless Radiant Source’ of all things, Being Itself. It is neither visible or invisible.

“It is Prior and the Seat of All that is manifested and all of that which disappears. Primal Energy is the Essence of every body-mind.

“Primal Energy is the Essence of all “things”. Primal Energy is the Essence of all opposites and all changes. Primal Energy is the Essence of the activity of change itself.

“The Paradox

“Nevertheless, Primal Energy Itself is inherently changeless. Even in all changes, Primal Energy Itself is forever conserved. Primal Energy Itself cannot be destroyed. Primal Energy Itself is a Constant and Self-Existing Shine, Merely Self-Radiant. Primal Energy Itself Merely Is.

“Therefore, Its Totality of changes, and even every conditional form, Merely Is. Being Is the Constant Sign, even in all changes. The Direct Intuition of Being Demonstrates that non-Being is an illusion, generated by fear.

“The fear of non-being is the Grand Illusion. Fear itself is the result of clinging to forms - without Understanding the Process of forms, and without Real Observation of Primal Energy, and without Perfectly Direct Intuition of Being.”

When we are resonant with fundamental reality through invocation, delight, service, and unabashed worship, we are given the light of love. Daylight is given across the landscape and into every crevice, illuminating the mouth of every cave (and deep into every open well). Even cave-people can turn toward the lighted mouth.

In Sanskrit, “give” is *Da*, the noted root of the Sanskrit words for mercy, giving, and restraint. Upon the primal silence sound given by AUM (amen, ram...), there is primal lightning and its thunder, ‘Da! Da! Da!’ (for those who have eyes and ears). To give is to resonate with primal, self-existing being, appearing wonderfully as love. The Daylight Ones Shine and their immortal gifts resonate in those who respond in love, in being love.

When these gifts are received, they are naturally duplicated in the responsive core of everyone. Thus the “Primal Giver”, *Adi Da* writes as the Daylight: “The process of the relationship between Me and My devotees is not mediumistic but synchronistic. There must be natural love, or coincidence, and duplication, rather than an exclusively passive and separated attitude that seeks only to receive, to be affected to the point of happiness, and to reside at the opposite end of a line of transmission. Come live with Me, be aligned with Me in your feeling, your action, your sacrifice, in Ignorance, or Love. In that case you will always duplicate Me instantly, presently, priorly. You will always duplicate Me more and more perfectly.”

In this Mysterious Sunshine of prior unity and natural simplicity, we clearly hear Adi Da's enlightened call for response-ability and self-transcendence: "The only way to know love in every moment is to be love in every moment."

Avatar Adi Da transparently demonstrates this epoch's Daylight Person. His writings, art, and silent transmission also confirm the appearance of transcendental Light in these dark times and this cave of modernity. With my own eyes, hands, and face, I have seen His Sunlight and been un-done in His Perfect Embrace.

Resting in Grace, we are struck with the magnificence of real living shown and given in the beauty and person of the Daylight Ones in human history. Their Demonstration of the Bright penetrates our dreamy inwardness and their free heart burns the illusion of our separateness.

In DayLight, doubt is found to be most useful when understood to serve the heart. By the heart-demonstration of those Awake, by those who Shine unendingly in fundamental Light, by wholly standing out of the cave of mind in ecstatic Daylight, the Holy Ones reveal Reality Itself, beyond a shadow of a doubt.

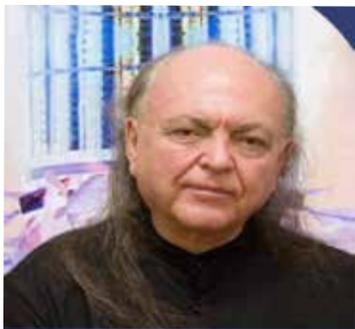
The Awake Ones Agree: There is Fundamental Reality and It is divine, or timeless beauty. "It is..." as Adi Da reminds us, "always and already the case". Outside the cave or knot of the body-mind (and history) is the natural estate of divinity; "Always and already." Immortal beauty *is* the truth of reality.

To realize this Daylight Beauty, we listen to the Daylight Man or Daylight Woman and we turn to This Reality. I came to see in the Sunlight of Adi Da that the realization of the truth is not accomplished by extroversion or introversion, not in things and others, nor by insights, inwardness, or mystic states, but by conversion, active loving, joyous giving. Inspired to love by Da-Daylight, I see that God is love indeed.

The ancients noted that the primary signature of divinity is *athanatos*, no-death, immortal: the Condition which does not change. When we see immortal beauty, we find This is most worthy

of passionate embrace. I give thanks to the Daylight Revealers for their inspiration and Incarnation of transcendental Light; thus inspired, we change or turn (*metanoia*) from temporary satisfactions to what we call immortal happiness, beauteous divinity, love in relations. This is real understanding.

If this is to be more than philosophy and inward



illusion, then we must see proof, demonstration, and incarnate understanding. Seeing 20th-21st century Adi Da as the eternal Daylight Man gives us direct access to Light that penetrates the temporal darkness of the modern and post-modern cave. His En-Lightened word carries timeless Sunlight.

In Hindi, *Gu-* is this darkness and *ru* is a beam of light. Guru is the One “Who shines through the darkness” of fear and interior separateness. Flooded with gifts of light and love, we relent and give ourselves up in kind. Embracing intimacy to Oneness inherits immortal Fullness, Heart Joy. My shout from Here: Sunlight Adi Da is my Beloved Guru. He Gives SunLight continuously. Imagine Blessings Showering.

To be penetrated by a beam of light and merely admire the sheer genius of Daylight is sufficient. We move from underground inwardness to opening mysteriously; we glimpse the daylight outside in moments of insight, ecstasy, and embrace; we are heart-moved by what we Behold.

The great gurus love freely—along with their transcendental light and unbroken ecstasy. Love is the real sign of their real realization. Thus the true Guru is Beloved. In Hindi, to be amazed in adoration and heart-broken in love is *bhava*, given up in grace. Thus *Beloved* is *Bhagavan*, whose free heart incarnation sings Sunshine.

I learned from my Beloved that adoration is thus rightly founded on discrimination. We must doubt every attraction until the heart confirms its reality in immortal light. We must recognize what passes and what is lasting. Orpheus even loses his beloved Eurydice. The lesson of the tragedy: The loss of duality precedes *and* coincides with Primal Light.

This loss of duality is not an emptying of ourselves, but in the giving of ourselves. This giving is founded in recognition of the beloved and intrinsically duplicates love in response. We recognize the immortal beauty before us, “the estate of divinity is at hand”. In responding to what we behold, we inherit Reality. Avatar Adi Da penned in *The Paradox of Instruction*, “Devotional surrender necessarily precedes *and* coincides with the Real.” Illuminating this paradox and interplay of devotion and consciousness, Adi Da first wrote in *The Knee of Listening*, “Understanding is beholding Bhagavan, whose center is the heart and whose extremities are the mind and the activities of enjoyment.” Like the cow-maidens distracted by Krisna, we forget ourselves and fall in love — and God is love again and again. This is the Way of Divine Communion, Divine Company, *Satsang*, where Sunlight Grace showers. The Daylight Person “is the advantage of devotees.”

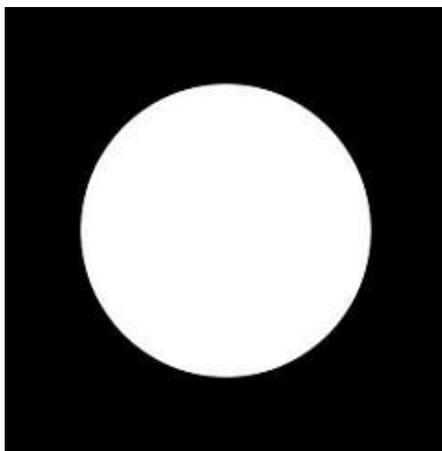
Daylight Da (Sokratically) addresses this interplay and paradox of relatedness and unity as He invites dreamers to wake up, understand where you are, and step out of the cave in Sacred Company with Him—or visa versa: step out (ek-stasis) and wake up. “Understand and live with Me. If you cannot do this, live with Me and understand.”

Feeling the Truth of real existence, shown and confirmed by Daylight’s servants, we are given light and we grow. Admiration of the Sunlight Ones slowly or quickly grows to adoration. Wonderfully so, in Beholding the One Ecstatically Awake we are deeply impressed, heart-broken, lighted by admiration, and undone in adoration. We receive the paradoxical gift of self-evident

Light and inherent happiness as the feeling of real Reality, Beloved Beloved Beloved.

Da-Light beyond the cave of separative inwardness sings ecstatically as we step into the Day of Loving Celebration, “What is the Truth? We are happy. We live in God. The Great One Is our very being.”

“I Say to all: The Real Transcendental Spiritual Process in My Divine Avataric Company is a matter of going beyond the “black-ness”, beyond the “dark night” — to the Divine Self-“Brightness”. I am not here merely to Reveal the darkness of conditional “experience”. You must see what has darkened you so profoundly. You must become literally En-Light-ened again.



“There Is a Sun That Is Forever Risen in the night sky of the body-mind. It Is the Eternal Sun—the (Self-“Bright”) “Midnight Sun”, Infinitely Above the mind and the crown of the head, and not perceptible by the presuming-to-be-separate observer.

“The Sun That Is Eternal and Perfectly Over-head is not in the midst of a colored sphere of light. There Is an Eternal Sun Over-head. It Is a Reflection of the Light in Which you Inhere. To see It is to be outside It.

“There is no option but to Be It. What is there to Be? Exactly That. Even though death rules to here, there Is an Indivisible

Eternal Sun Over-head. And That Eternal Sun Is—Beyond even all conditional visibility. I have Come to Confirm This to you—each and all—Absolutely. I Am That Eternal Sun.”

In our controversial and relativistic age, can we even imagine someone universally free of every cave-like point of view, radically en-Lightened, utterly free? Always loving, the Daylight in Person? Do we doubt by habit, by fear, or by discrimination? Do we admire or castigate? Our history betrays us. How did we think of previous persons transparent to Daylight? The report is not good, the hemlock was delivered, the slander and crucifixion were imposed. Do we behold or belittle? History is clear that we must not take the mob point of view, but discriminatively see for ourselves the spirit-master before us, or not.

Daylight Da summarizes in *Breath and Name*: “We appear in this waking world by the very same process by which we appear in dreams. And the solid waking world is, when seen in Truth, no more real, necessary, fixed, significant, or true than any random dream place. When this begins to become even a little obvious, a process of awakening has begun, similar to waking in the morning from your dreams. When you begin to suspect your life a little, then you begin to become distracted by another and formless dimension, much as the sleeper begins to sense his bed cloth, his solid body, and his room. At that point, one may become sensitive to the Spiritual Master, the Presence of the Condition of things, one who is already awake, the paradoxical man. He is, in person, that dimension which is Truth. He calls you constantly and roughens your feet. He intensifies the sunlight in your room. He does not awaken you to another place or dream, as if your mother shakes you awake to play in rooms protected or threatened by your father. Rather, he serves an awakening in which there is no realm, no implication, and no adventure. He does not awaken you to another place. He awakens you in place, so that even while the dream of living survives, the destiny or even noticing of all effects escapes you.”

I bow down at the Holy Feet of the Daylight One, Avatar Adi Da, Who shines into my every cave and well. His Embrace is received in endless blessings of grace, love, and happiness; He acausally, inherently, and tangibly transmits transcendental Light and Awakening Power. I grow in yielding, in receiving, resting, and waking in His Company. I sing of nectars at the Sunlight Feet of Adi Da Samraj, whom I am graced to call Beloved.





Royal Games graduation, Sanchez Elementary, SF 1994
(Originally Adi Da's "God Games", now *Big Philosophy for Little Kids*)

Real Happiness

I taught elementary school for decades so let me begin in simple terms. The same things I said in discussions with the kids (after the telling/reading of the King Midas myth) follow *in italic*. “*Was King Midas really happy when he could turn things into gold or was he truly happy when his daughter changed back from cold gold to being alive with him? At first, did Midas think he was happy in gold-excitement? Was Midas certain about deep happiness with his laughing daughter?*”

In the classroom, the lesson transfers the details of the considerations and discussions to a Venn diagram capturing the contrasting and similar qualities of “deep happiness” / “true happiness” and “excitement happiness” / “high happiness”. This *brain-storming* becomes the pre-write for the language and logic of a compare-contrast essay.

*“The primary distinction is “short-term happiness vs long-lasting happiness”. You can get or earn short-term, high happiness, like eating an ice cream cone, getting money for work, or buying a game. It’s great. The happiness just doesn’t last. But if you received or shared a great hug from your mom or dad last week or last year, you can still feel it, for free. You can even do both at the same time, like sharing a cookie or game with a friend. We like both kinds of happiness. BUT, if you have to choose between the two kinds of happiness, between sharing and selfish, don’t be foolish, choose the long-lasting kind. Losing something or someone you love because you were foolish is called **tragedy**. Being smart about happiness is called **wisdom**. Write these words down in your vocabulary books.*

“Now, if you lost a dollar, could you be happy? Ten dollars? A hundred? What if you lost a million dollars? Could you be happy then? I didn’t say ‘Would you?’ I said, ‘Could you?’

“You’ve got friends and family, you have everything really important. Of course you want to make it better for your family, friends and yourself. ‘Cause you love them now. Haven’t you seen on

the news where survivors of some catastrophe confess happily, 'We lost everything, but we still have each other.' We have all heard something like this, right? Love really is the lasting-est happiness."

"Do you have to earn happiness? No. You can get high-happiness by earning, but real happiness is already in your heart, already true of you, naturally."

"Can you be happy for no reason at all?"

[The full lesson is found in *Big Philosophy for Little Kids*.]

Far-reaching implications come from this wisdom.

From mythologies such as *The Christmas Carol* to *The Pearl* and throughout *The Bible*, *The Qu'ran*, and *The Mahabharata*, countless manifestations of this discernment can be seen. Here in the early "21st century", there is a popular animation cartoon, "Fairy Odd Parents" where a wacky fairy couple grants fantastic wishes to a kid; at first, it is great, but then ... Perhaps these stories about 'true' happiness are the world's most common store of wisdom.

This wisdom can become profound, but it requires great participation from us. We must grow to feel deeply, listen openly, give freely, and work in sharpening our discrimination and understanding.

While a "modern" contrast between "outer" happiness and "inner" happiness is often used to speak to this discernment of "true" happiness, I learned from my Beloved Adi Da how these terms unknowingly support an illusion: While the "inner" and "outer" distinction alludes to the primacy of the feeling dimension, it also describes a bothersome schism that is, at last, illuminated as the result of my lack of feeling. This alienation is created unknowingly by my unconscious withdrawal and automatic protectiveness. The repetition of this dissociative avoidance gives birth to our self-created illusion of separative identity, riddled with dilemma.

The world of experience is thus measured by me as I see my reflection in everything — as Narcissus sees himself always. The natural world seems lost. He is trapped in unconscious habit,

subconscious illusion, and arrogant abstractions — seeking for happiness then and there in moments, in superficial and self-oriented indulgences and in the consolation of insights.

In this self-involved dream, the voice of awakesness shakes the water of my reflections and sings of the Day. The awake ones give us dreamers the signal that realization of real awakesness is not an inner illusion, a subjective state, a better dream or story, a mere choice, or a ‘good idea.’ By the simple sign and joyous demonstration of the one who is awake, we are imprinted with what is most real, the conscious light beyond subjectivity and objectivity: the Unconditional and Primal Truth.

You can still hear the thunder pealing across the sky of ancient Upanishads, “From the unreal to the Real! Da! Da! Da!” [noted root of the Sanskrit words for *Mercy, Giving, Restraint*]

From foundational, real joy, the awake ones call us to understand and restrain ourselves from the trap of short-termed attachments. In joy, we understand our every repetitive identity; we see the Daylight of the ones awake. We embrace the grace of the real, the joy of giving, and the arts of restraint and self-transcendence. Daylight speaks of a *para-dise*, a “walled garden”: for without strong walls around the soft life, the beautiful garden is quickly spent into desert.

Sokrates loved to point out that the etymology of *sophos*, wisdom, was grounded in *sophrosyne*, temperance. East and West, from the Vedas/Vedanta to Orpheus/Plato both speak of the reins on the horses of desire held by the soul as the charioteer. Temperance, restraint, and intelligent discipline are the means and support whereby we turn our attention to wisdom, balance our lives, and channel our passion to divine company.

“When you are identified with the common life, you do not understand ‘religion’ in its true sense. You identify with the lower faculties of the person, and you hardly exercise the greater and central faculties. Real ‘religion’ requires the exercise of intelligent awareness. The entire lower body-mind-complex is to be

conformed to intelligence and heart, and directed by them to the Divine Condition, to That Which Is the Very Source of intelligent awareness, Which is also like intelligent awareness but Which Is Absolute, the Very Self, the Divine Self.” Adi Da is so clear.

Avatar Adi Da acausally transmits what is always and already the case. Naturally. Reality is not caused or found only the upper realms of beautiful nectars nor anywhere else. Here, in the inherent grace of reality, steadied by the Pleasure Dome of temperance, beholding the Free One, this knotted dream of separate I-me-mine is penetrated, dissolved, or forgotten in the revelation of unlimited feeling, fullness of trust, self-transcending love, and inherent being,

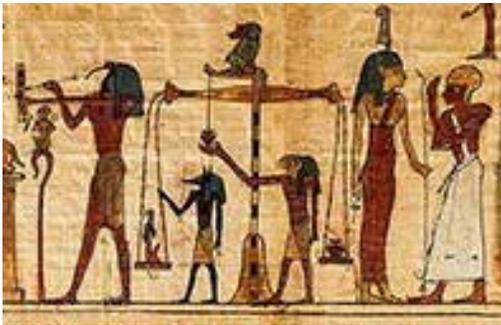


By the *demonstration* of the light beyond the cave of subjectivity, humanity is imprinted with most magnificent living. We are inspired by the spiritual heroes of fundamental happiness, love, and understanding. Their bright awakesness, profundity of joy, and loving Presence distract us from ourselves. They show how feeling becomes free, giving the true clarity of the liberated heart. They show how the inner-outer schism and dream of separation is un-done in the unity of native joy and rest in relationship.

I learned from my Beloved Adi Da that as responsibility for the avoidance of relationship matures, the dilemma that “inner-outer” begets is revealed to be false, and a most simple naturalness is already true. The knot of history is un-done, allowing being and love to naturally mature.

Slowly or suddenly, being and love are found to be transcendental fullness. Slowly or suddenly, we realize that the reality outside the cave has been given to us by the “divine Incarnations”, the *Siddhas* (“Powerfully Shown”).

When you die in Egyptian mythology, your heart is weighed upon a scale, balanced by a single feather. If your heart is heavier than a feather, Bebe, the hound of the Underworld, devours you.



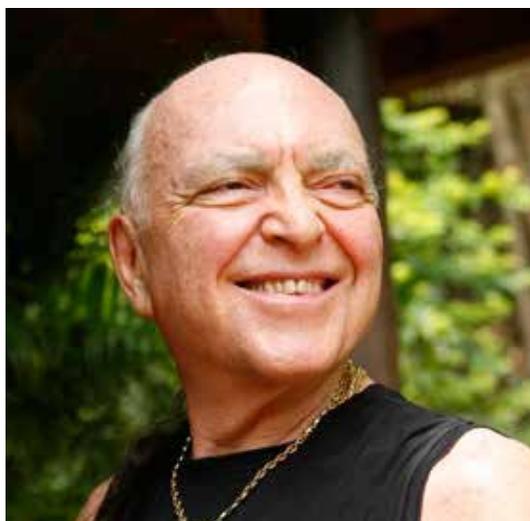
But if your core is lighter than a feather, you enter paradise and are said to be ‘true of voice’. This is obviously a discriminating metaphor, because the lesson is also true now, while still breathing.

As the master of the Christians advised, “Do not lay up for yourself treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, that same place where thieves break in and steal, but store up treasures in divinity, where moth nor rust nor thieves can touch.” Archetypically, this discernment is presented as the error of overvaluing money or power or anything that rots and the corresponding undervaluing of relationship to others and to all.

As I learned from my Beloved, we must work on developing and harmonizing our ordinary self if we are going to have much to give in relationship. In this ordinary maturation, the growth of *will* is a pre-requisite (and is most often the developmental vehicle whereby we make money). Now pay attention: the promise of happiness from self-fulfillment is strong as we devote energy to self-development (and money) — even as this concentration myopically

and mechanically binds us to short-termed, other-forgetting views. This developmental self-concentration and psychological Narcissism, combined with our natural protectiveness and organism survival instincts (or primal, habitual Narcissism) hides how we unconsciously withdraw. This inner-outer dilemma and mentality of developmental adolescence compels us unknowingly (and knowingly) in self-concentration. Our unconscious disengagement creates the schism that, in turn, drives us to seek relief from conflict and self-inflicted suffering (*dukka*). Thus, we settle for short-termed experiences as reflections of happiness, and are tortured in a self-concerned prison of thinking, thinking, thinking.

Described exquisitely by Adi Da in *The Knee of Listening*,
“When you see that you are always seeking, understanding is emerging. When you see the pattern of Narcissus as all your motives, all your acts, all your seeking, understanding is emerging. When you see you are always suffering, understanding is emerging. When you see that every moment is a process in dilemma, understanding is emerging. When you see that every moment is a process of identification, differentiation and desire, understanding is emerging. When you see that every moment, when you are at your best as well as when you are at your worst, you are only avoiding relationship,



then you understand. When you see that which already is, apart from the avoidance of relationship, which already absorbs consciousness prior to the whole dilemma, motivation and activity of avoidance, then you have finally understood.”

Growing up, we are driven to rise to our greatest capacity, embedded in becoming, with *being* only visited in success, pleasures, and times of grace. In adolescence, the focus-given satisfaction of results can grow large, in a swell of authentic personhood and compelling sexuality, yet focus-given satisfactions remain always temporary, and mentality's dilemma, doubt, and dissatisfaction plague us like furies in need.

As important as self-development, growing focus, and money are, our vision must be also liberated from confinement to self-oriented fulfillments. Then the pleasure from achievement is just an ordinary reward in the process of ordinary human maturation, not a final goal.

In the addition to adolescent focus, mind-development phase, where our verbal interiority becomes dominant, our young sexuality is compelling and drives a train of emotion with urgency. With sex and thinking intercurring, it takes real time to learn wisdom and harmonize the life.

Inherently, feeling tastes wisdom, and as feeling sapiently responds, our feeling is released. In this feast, we are rested in the heart more and more, and in such bosomed divinity see how the thoughts have little reason for beginning. The point of thought is replaced by the domain of light. The free soul sees beauty everywhere. The call to mature delivers the paradise it promises.

From my master, I saw and learned that beyond the growing achievements of sustained clear focus is yielding to the unconditional Bright, which is not achievable. Orpheus taught how these un-do-able "secret women's mysteries" transform the proficient into a muse, the adolescent into the adult, and pleasure into ecstasy. (See the critical role these feminine mysteries have for Dionysus himself in "The Ecstatic Dance of Apollo and Dionysus" in *The View from Delphi*.)

Let the secrets be heard. The goddess mysteries are to letting go and surrender what growing focus and great achievement are to holding on. It is not by fierce intent that we become mature and

integrated — except for moments of grace, like temporarily being in the madness of creativity, ‘the zone’ of integration, or any erotic consumption.

Only by letting go does the knot of self yield to the whole; every athlete, dancer, artist, and true lover can tell you something of this. Like growing focus, we slowly learn to let go, let the whole, adapt to gratitudes, trust more and more, enjoy more and more, feel more and more and grow in natural joy. We yield and receive love more and more, and gratefully return the same in every kind of intercourse and elegance.

Like perfections of attention, utter surrender is a natural possibility, even if stability in love is most difficult. The secret goddess mysteries yield beyond the developing self as the freeing of feeling gives mystic vision, self-evidently.

The goddess mysteries conduct great energy through the body and the kosmos. I learned from Adi Da how this bodily energy of yielding develops and courses throughout and up and down the tree-like nervous system. He further taught the how the core of this “esoteric anatomy” of embodied-spirit is archetypically and universally represented in the snake. From the kundalini of the East to the Pythia performing the Oracle of Delphi, we learn to give ourselves up entirely and be visited by profound spirit. And by such surrender and whole body worship, even our reptilian passion is rejoined and jolts the flesh with heart-feeling. Worship permeates the flesh with spirit.



The Minoans, whose most elegant culture empowered women to radical equalities, knew the role the goddess held in the mysteries of the snake. This surrendered feeling or spiritual force resonates throughout and up the reptilian nervous system in baptisms of free feeling. The goddess holds the snake energies as surrender raptures. With clear focus, we mindlessly give

ourselves up to raving submission and bow to supreme being — shown and given by the Awake Ones.

My Beloved Adi Da transmits how the yielding powers (of gratitude, letting-go-trust, love's reception, joyous sacrifice) completely descend with fullest breath of heart-yielding to the bodily base in perfect peace; as the last knot of feeling is un-tied, holy spirit falls upon us, and we are naturally awash in immortal beauty, pure Love, Sacred Presence, His Daylight.

We learn to intercourse and breathe the Presence of Beloved in unbridled beholding. What is Prior to all conditions is Given acausally, as the lover naturally yields to her lover. Beloved and lover Shine with all-consuming Presence. The Condition of all conditions is heart-rich, now and forever. Fortunately, humankind is resplendent with sacred demonstrations of love and brilliance. Radiant Master, I surrender.

We must remember that going beyond self-orientation in happy giving and yielding is not a lesson to be learned in adulthood or perhaps as a saintly rarity, but at every stage of self-development, naturally. At every stage of childhood development beyond rapprochement (~18 months), it is appropriate to also artfully demand relationship in addition to giving and inviting it. (See “Ten Spiritual Principles of Discipline” following.) Too much self is unreal, only partially happy; being with others is more real, with more happiness.

It could be said that the foundation of morality itself is found in this distinction in the ‘two’ kinds of happiness. Growing in this simple understanding, we easily confess that no thing makes you happy. We grow in the happiness that is the substance of participating in relationship. Calling for love is invocative indeed: the etymology of “God” shows its roots in “calling, invoking”.

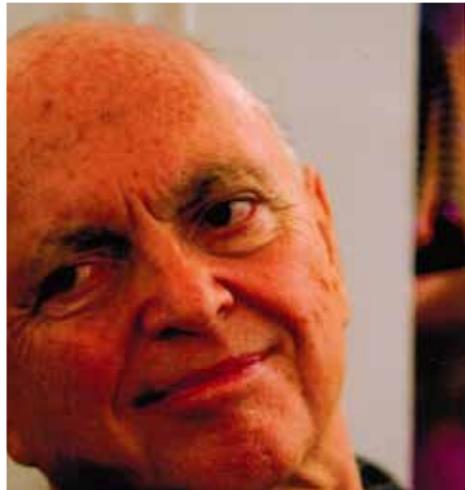
Understanding the kinds of happiness that can be acquired, achieved, or bought for the self and the happiness that is naturally invoked, simply enjoyed, yielded to, and shared in relationship

strives to show ‘true’ happiness, deep happiness, *invoked* or “god”-happiness. Deep happiness is simple, sacred beyond changes, prior to form while naturally identical to all. How thoroughly a glass of water satisfies a thirst! How great family and friends can be! What sweet peace is given in love’s demonstrations! What beauty surrounds us!

By cleaving to or invoking the ‘true’ happiness of relationship and present communion, we grow to cut away money, fame, and “our calendars of want”. We confess our attachments to short-term consolations and gain insight into our self-created delays to feel naturally happy. The natural unity of communicating and community dawns upon our invocation and receptivity.

Our decision to discern true happiness makes a precise incision into what obstructs the present flow of heart-happiness, and yields to the disciplined excision of all clinging. This cutting sword of discrimination allows us to let go of not only things, but ultimately any relation that is mortal, as in the lesson of strong-hearted Orpheus and his beloved Eurydice. Clinging to reasons to be happy is at last radically understood and primal joy is always here, as native happiness is restored to prominence. We are free to behold divinity, the immortal heart and beauty of reality, alive in and as all. This is fully revealed by the awake ones and appreciated by grateful devotees.

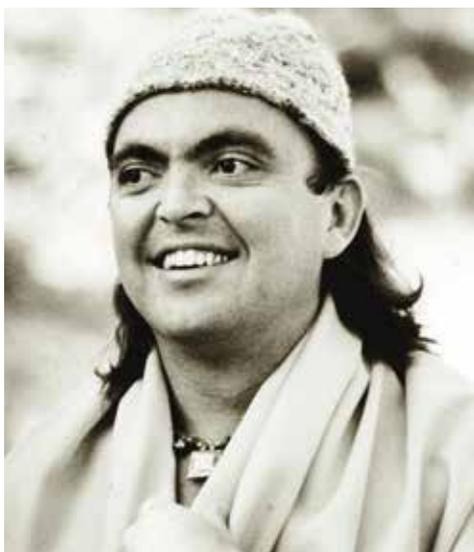
“Beholding” is the heart’s knees in divinity. In the enlightening words of Sage Adi Da, *“There is only the one process, the one form, the one experience. It is beholding, enjoyment, unqualified present bliss. It has no special origination in time or form. Therefore, cessation or change has*



nothing to do with it. These things do not qualify it. They are only the conditions of the same primary enjoyment, as forms churning in the light, cycling about the sun, resolving and dissolving in an endless pattern of enjoyment, as the loved-one turns herself before her lover.”

Thus it has been trumpeted throughout time and across the globe: True happiness is not caused. The naive voice retorts, “But ice cream makes me happy!” Can you be happy without it? Et cetera. True happiness is un-reasonable, you can be happy with nothing.

As Adi Da laughed, “There are only reasons to be unhappy!” The unreasonable nature of deep happiness makes way for the most exact and cutting discrimination. This enquiry asks: how deeply and thoroughly can I rest in trust, in inherent happiness, native joy, intelligent disciplines, and clear simplicity?



Following the discernment of true happiness, bolstered by harmonic living, we grow to rest in our core, lighter than a feather, even as we carry the world. Here, happiness is not acquired, not caused, but “inherent, native, acausal,” Adi Da emphasizes. Nothing causes happiness. Happiness is the feeling of Reality itself.

I learned and saw and felt from the Free Standing Man how the ground of being or core or heart is always here. The only question is will we feel to here or not? If not, let us find out why and what is the obstruction or responsibility to be learned.

Here, I find Sage Adi Da’s discernment most useful:

“What is it that you mean, that you are signifying and pointing to, when you say or feel you are suffering, unhappy, not at ease? You are pointing to your own action and finding it as the experience of separation, contraction, pain. But it is the compulsive and presently not-conscious avoidance of relationship, relative to the Divine Presence, and relative to all arising conditions. When this action becomes your responsibility, then these experiences and concerns will become obsolete by degrees in the action of God Communion, and then in the intuition of your true Condition.”



Adi Da showing the closing/withdrawing fist of self-contraction — in contrast with the open face of simple relationship — as the sign of understanding and radical responsibility.

I am utterly served by Adi Da’s gift of discrimination: Ego-I is not an entity, but an activity, the unconscious activity of contracting in feeling, avoiding relationship with every person and event, in every direction, altogether, and with Presence Itself. Indeed, the words “anxious/anxiety” are rooted in the Latin *anguere*, meaning to “choke, squeeze” (also root of “anger” and

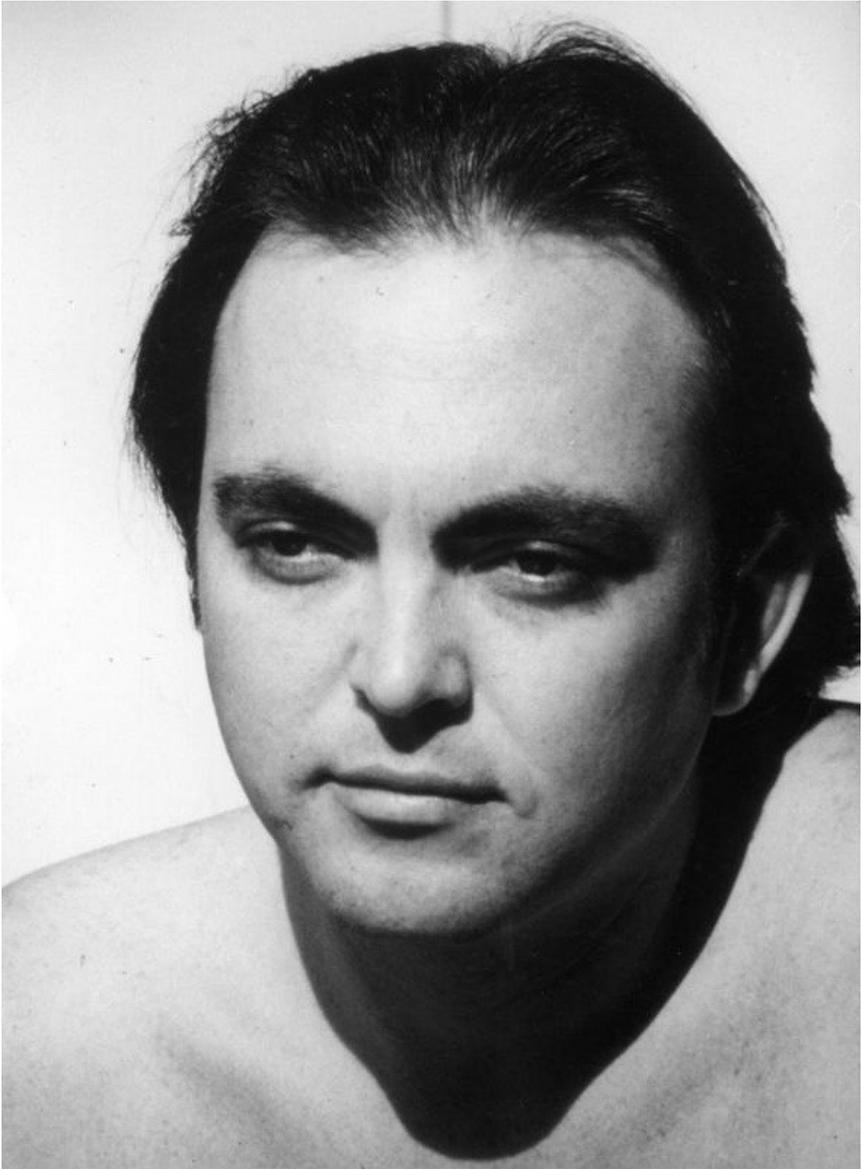
“angst”). As I withdraw in the field of relations and squeeze the flow of feeling in anxiety, I make the choking fist of me; I unconsciously create my own anxious version of Narcissus in a kaleidoscope of reflections, all of which implies the angry ghost of me upon the targeted center. I heedlessly project my unseen anxiety and dilemma into the field of then compromised relations. Upon this soiled seat of the differentiated soul, identity-I and fist-ed-desire are born and endlessly repeated. In this angst, I am always seeking the Presence, unwittingly abandoning the Fullness Here.

Avatar Adi Da

instructed, “Try it: make a fist; there seems to be a center. Opening your hand reveals the center to be an illusion created by the squeezing.”



Listening to this wisdom, we grow in sensitivity to our own action as well as the naturalness we disturb. Hearing this, we nakedly feel the pain and dilemma we are adding now to present happiness. In the face of the Free One, we understand our active withdrawal and choking anxiety, and, turning naturally to Love’s Gifts, we open our habitually-closing fist of self. In a most natural enjoyment, we see the Freedom and Heart of the Daylight Man, and thus receive and breathe His Liberating Gift of Transcendental Presence and Love-Bliss-Fullness. Beholding the en-Lightened One, Daylight overwhelms the world and every I. Desire transfigures into adoration and even the soul is forgotten in This Joy. Jaya Guru Adi Da!



Is there a God or not?

“God” is almost a four-letter word. “God” has definitely been spoiled by zealots and by conformity to institutions. “God” has been objectified by priests to be forever apart and vilified by scientists reacting to the narrow mythic-mindedness of provincial belief. “God” has been examined by philosophers to be meaningless or meaning itself and analyzed by psychologists to be part of a humanistic psychology. Etymologically, “God” is *to call, to invoke*.

Still, “God” implies something fundamental, beyond changes, and includes everything, the Ground of Being, supreme Being. Altogether, I use the term “God” cautiously, consciously.

Thereby, the question is not, “Is there a God or not?” or “Do you believe in God?” Those questions can’t be answered at the level they are posed. Rather, the question is, “Do we understand there is a fundamental reality? Can we feel the substantive reality and being prior to form?”

Can we see that we can’t acquire being or achieve fundamental happiness? Love is not an object to be gotten; it is invoked and received, appreciated and shared. No thing. Vulnerably verified.

Is there God? Is there a fundamental reality? The enlightened One leads us beyond otherness, beyond the precients of separation and therefore beyond point of view to the fundamental embrace that outshines all changing forms. Fundamental reality is not known or argued, but is self-evident in intuitive abiding and rest in relationship. Here cannot be sought and found. Here is always and already Here, if we only understand our searching selves.

The pre-Socratic giant, Parmenides, simply offered the enquiry: “Being or not?” The fundamental laws of physics as well as our own most natural feelings inform us of our Ground and Substance and how we intercourse multi-dimensionally and omnidirectionally with real light. Being or not?

My Beloved Adi Da demonstrates and transmits such numinous Brightness and supreme Being; the luminous Condition of all conditions, the Same Conscious Light as our awareness and lighted ground. As I learned from my Beloved, radiant being or consciousness appears and matures in heart-rich devotion. Awareness and life-feeling are simply two evolutionary modes of appreciating the Singular Condition of Light.

Praise to the Masters who have clearly shown the transcendental heart, being, and light. Indeed, we are the dance of slow, thick light and dazzling brilliance. This is self-evident if we attend to what matters. (By the Way, light matters.)

Is there Reality? Yes, even as illusions, hung upon the repetition of identity, linger. Does Being appear within the perfect Void of non-being? Paradoxically, apparently. Beyond constructs while informing each proposition, this beauteous, ineffable luminosity is reflected in every thing and thought; beyond and including the body and every somatic intimacy, beyond and including sentiments and every story, beyond and including cleverness and every logic, beyond and including noble thoughts and every insight, beyond and including sage discernment and perfect dwelling, beyond and including unitive joy and every bliss, beyond and including all. Adi Da handwrites:



The Beautiful Itself Is Reality
Itself Is Truth Itself Is

As I learned in the Reality-Company of my Beloved Adi Da, Reality is Beauty is Truth is Love. Called God by some, divine or immortal by many, what is most real is Reality Itself. Immortal Light, Changeless Ground, all changing forms, Numinous Beauty, Incarnate Love, Fundamental Light. Heart awareness naturally appreciates the divine paradox of relationship and prior unity.

“To be in relationship to what arises is not to find yourself identical to anything that arises. It is merely to see it prior to identification. Therefore, relationship is the nature of the Heart’s awareness prior to identification.

“To be in relationship to what arises is not to differentiate yourself from what arises, or to perceive what arises as itself a differentiated field. Such differentiation also depends on identification and difference, not relationship. Therefore, non-separation is the nature of the Heart’s awareness prior to differentiation.

“To be in relationship to what arises is not to move by desire for anything that arises. Such desire depends on identification and differentiation in the midst of what arises, not relationship. Therefore, love is the nature of the Heart’s awareness prior to desire.

“Identification, differentiation and desire are not the action of the Heart in relationship to what arises. They are the avoidance of relationship, the turning. But the living Heart, the action that is understanding, is present in the midst of what arises as relationship, non-separation and love. And these are the natural, creative principles of conscious life. They are the principles whereby the Heart enjoys or realizes the worlds that arise.”



While the word “God” “invokes” the highest of all powers, the question of God is beyond linguistic analysis. If we strip away every provincial, developmental, and culturally constructed context (which is a project of worth), we still come to the point of the question. Is there reality? Yes. Real Is. Beautifully.

Therefore, the question most worthy of asking is not “Is there Reality?” but rather: If Beauty and Light are the Substance and Ground of every iota, why do I not feel beauteous all the time? Ah! There’s the rub again.

Understand suffering. The first noble truth indeed. We must come to a penetrating self-knowledge and confession of the naked anxiety we add to this moment. Adi Da Samraj poetically casts the enquiry, “If only we understand the harm in which we act...”

I learned from Sage Adi Da that if this jewel of self-knowledge is uncovered, if we can see what disturbance we add to this moment and every relation, if our base action is clear, then reality is recovered as native joy, simply being. Like the Buddha’s fingers upon the ground, the feeling of reality is the feeling of happiness itself. If we are not feeling happy, then some un-reality has us. This first noble truth is required for the quenching of thirst.

The question is not, “Is there a fundamental reality of light?” but “What do I need to understand to live most real, most in alignment to fundamental light? What do I settle for instead? What am I unconsciously doing that avoids or forestalls falling in love?” I learned to enquire from Adi Da, “What are you doing, what are you always doing? -- Avoiding relationship? -- Avoiding My Love? -- If you are troubled by what arises, you are not in proper relationship to it.”

Without self-understanding, we do not respond freshly to experience; we live in our context, we are too much a self with a role, embedded in our memorized lines; we re-act. The transition from embeddedness in the drama of underworld reaction to free-feeling responsiveness here is the maturity of present response-ability. This is evident in self-transcendence in relationship,

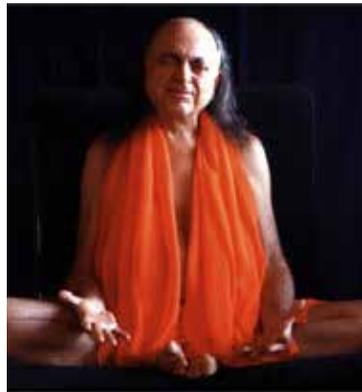
inherent freedom, and the reliance on the grace and simplicity of reality.

Aligning our actions to *harmonia* (as Orpheus taught), we come to embrace something like the eight-fold path or the life of dedicated responsibilities. This is the noble truth in deed. Living a life of bodily, emotional, mental, social, and spiritual responsibilities, we nurture a deep rest that relaxes the self and mind to a natural simplicity. The more responsible I can be, the easier it is to rest.

In Sacred Company, the fullness of trust is Given. Suddenly and inherently, the lighted ground of every thought and feeling can be sensed, self-evidently. We intuit a foundational Presence, felt with and in the heart, then, via the breath, throughout the whole body. We spontaneously commune with what is not limited directly. The fundamental Condition of all conditions is self-evident, and is our very being.

In holding our most sacred Beloved to our heart, we inherit Sunlight; we natively feel how we inhere in a singularity of blossoming every where, naturally maturing and uniting body, mind, self, and world in heart rest, transcendental joy, and immortal beauty.

Adi Da Samraj sings in *The Enlightenment of the Whole Body*, “*There is only one event: Something arising. All arising is the same mysterious fascination. Only the Mystery is ever found, within and without. Therefore, all that a man or woman may confront is the process of arising, instant forever. When the valuation of one moment or condition over against another ceases by this insight, then profound sensitivity is felt relative to every instant of simple arising. And this sensitivity becomes*



ultimate and radical intuition of the Condition of this whole process of arising.”

I learned from Adi Da how Real Light is reflected in the “here and now”; beyond (while including) the here and now, what is always and already the case *is* always and already the case. Reality is Beauty is Being is Love is Truth. This is divinity, immortal God. Obviously, only heart happiness truly satisfies.

But unlimited living is sustainable only in a life conformed to harmony. Orpheus taught that as we cultivate personal harmonia, the harmonia of the kosmos is heard. Harmonia tunes the soul to unbounded feeling, thus inheriting the Primal Brightness (Phanes), inherently beyond waking, dreaming, deep sleep, and death.

The greatest aid to this art of full living is in the imprint of our sacred persons. Magnificent spiritual realizers across the globe and throughout time have given demonstration and scripture to us. But considering the provincial to global transition we are still embedded within, it is required that we appreciate many modes of greater-than-self maturation and outgrow our provincial exclusivities (even if we remain heart-moved most by “our own” cultural radiance). Let us inherit a world of wisdom, described by Adi Da in his forthcoming title: “The Basket of Tolerance.”

Enquiry into light not only illuminates reality, but likewise what is short of reality. Therefore, the light also reflects changes, such as from religious revelation to scientific enquiry or the shift from provincial orientations to a global one. Enquiry about God, or fundamental light, begs an in-depth discussion on both religious naivete and scientific idealisms. But perhaps this enquiry is more of a question into how we have become embedded in mentality and our apparent fall from the magnificence of real living.

Via spiritual realizers we see that a new order of incarnation is possible; we see that spiritual maturity is not just a good idea.

From every quarter and epoch, we should appreciate a host of hosts.

“Socrates was one of that small number of adventurers who, from time to time, have enlarged the horizon of the human spirit. They have divined in our nature unsuspected powers which only they have as yet, in their own persons, brought to fulfillment. By living the truth they discovered they gave the world the only possible assurance that it is not an illusion.” — Francis M. Cornford

Not an illusion. Real. Most Real. Living Truth. Beholding the transcendental blossoming core, ground, and Incarnation, we are given heart visions. I bow down to the Beauteous Beloved of my heart, Avatara Adi Da, Who Shows Immortal Beauty most resplendently; in my eyes, He Is This Beauty most magnificently.

I am rested in fundamental happiness in two ways: self-evidently and by reception. I trust my intuition and I appreciate the wisdom of all great teachers, especially my beloved Adi Da Samraj, who Transmitted to gateways to us: “Trust the actual living reality, the living God. Do it to the point that the physically based fear of death vanishes on the basis of trust alone.”

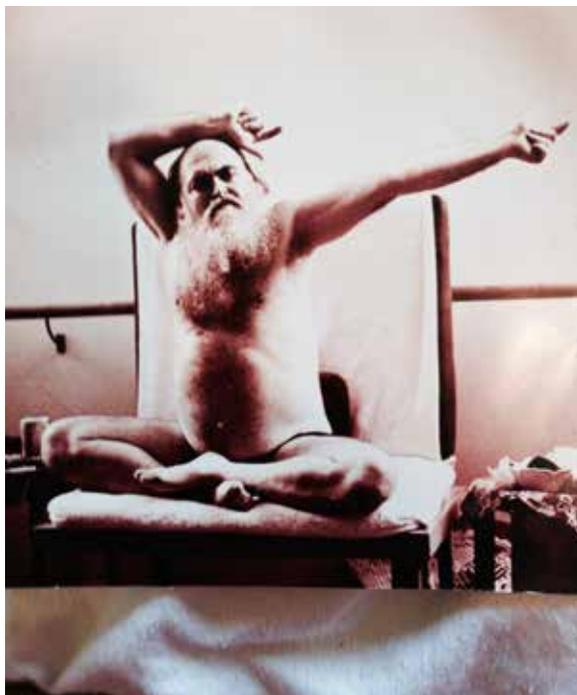
Trust in Fullness. “The physically based fear of death vanishes on the basis of trust alone.” But the final fullness of trust comes not from self-responsibility but by falling-out-of-self via the recognition of reality itself, which is beauty unfathomable — and this is most clearly shown via demonstration of a person adept in spiritual fullness. The complete fullness of trust is not achieved or created, but shown and given — and then yielded to in beatific adoration, across the wide threshold made by the Incarnations of Love.

The truth of reality is thus seen in ordinary beauty and powerfully confirmed in the extraordinary demonstration of the

great avatars of humankind. It has been shown again and again what it is like to live without limit in the beauty and love-bliss of reality itself. Fullness of trust is transmitted and completed by the Holy Ones, the Siddhas and Saviors of humankind. Thus it is humorously said that the Guru is greater than God.

Every province has their spiritual geniuses who show and teach this true happiness. All transmit the happiness of real existence, and as these adepts of spirit reveal primal joy, they naturally illuminate what is less than love in those surrounding her or him. Stripping the cultural clothing from themselves (thus revealing the roles around her and him) is what these holy “avadhoots” do naturally. We respond with crucifixion, poison, derision, and self-satisfaction.

Is there Light? Uh, all there is is light. Have you heard the good news? Light *equals* matter (times the speed of light squared). Is there Beauty? Everywhere. Is there God, a gracious and fundamental reality? In the heart, there is no doubt.



Simplicity Incarnate

Adi Da Samraj (1939-2008) is the most perfectly simple man I ever met, and I would venture the simplest who ever lived. Like each of us, He embodies the whole of the cosmos, where every moment throbs the universal climax now. But being so simple, Adi Da Samraj was always perfectly transparent to This; His Company transmits This. Even His pictures convey this perfect simplicity.



“When it is seen directly, it has no cause. It did not begin in the past. It is presently arising. It is a spontaneous activity whose mystery is understandable only in the instant of re-cognition. Prior to that, nothing can be said about it that makes any difference – because it has not begun in the past. It is always arising presently. At the subtlest level, it is a completely voluntary activity. That is why it is a simplicity. That is why understanding, Self-realization, whatever you want to call it, is a simplicity.”

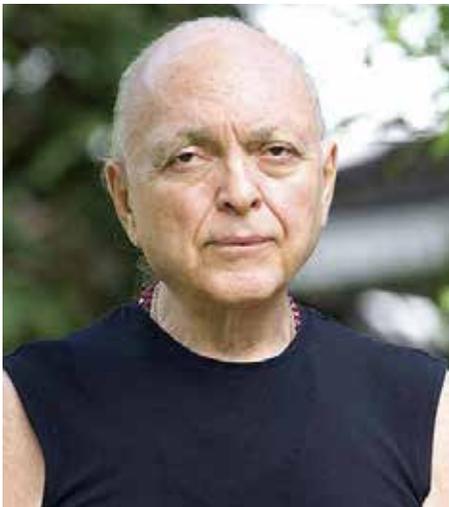
As has been praised since the most ancient days, there is a bridge or threshold or imprint to this simplicity and fundamental Ground: we may choose the company of the Free One, the company of the One who lives fully in and simply as this fundamental

Ground. The Sacred Company of such a One is the Way of “right relationship” or in Sanskrit, “Sat-sang”.

The Company of such an enlightened One dispels the darkness of self-possession: *Gu*-light, *ru*- darkness. Our self-possession is most obvious in the company of one who is free, and free in love. *Guru* is dispeller of darkness, a teacher, and at best, a Teacher Standing in the Lighted Heart. Invoke the most intimate Beloved: Satsang, the Company with one’s chosen Guru.

In the spirit of sacred company, we are graced to let all feelings be, let every thought be. In Beauteous Company, all is gracefully acceptable. Most naturally. Persisting and Trusting and Resting in Sacred Company. Accepting how we fail. Permeated by love and loving. The gifts of the holy are always here.

Thus it is said that the Way is simple: live with your Beloved, please him or her, Him or Her. Appreciating, receiving, and presently beholding spiritual company: Satsang. “It is always arising presently. At the subtlest level, it is a completely voluntary activity. That is why it is a simplicity... Now and now and now.” The myopias of separation dissolve gracefully as we persist in accepting Satsang’s offering, elegance, and simplicity. Resting in the grace of divine company; loved, and loving, trusting in One Light;



beholding Beloved, reality is beauty.

The light beyond the cave is always Given, if only we recognize our interiority, stand out of our cave and ecstatically receive the Gifting. Outside the separateness of our underground chamber is the light of the awake One; we breathe the Presence of the Beloved Sage, lost in Fullness. fallen in Love.

Please doubt my presentation of Adi Da with every discrimination you have. Don't believe a thing I say or that Adi Da says. He calls us not to belief, but to really consider the truth sacred words convey. He taught me how we must use doubt as a sharp tool, in adherence to what is most real. Thus, we nakedly engage wisdom ourself. Glimpsing the enlightened state of the avatar, one can cut through doubt itself as the default mode and thus use it only when necessary. When doubt is a tool and not a mode of living, we still call out "shit from shinola", but the central issue to love is empowered and grows to be unbridled.

[A good introduction to the critical approach that is necessary is Adi Da's 19 minute address on cultism <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m8fLLpaHkUQ>. A full range of videos are at www.adidavideos.org and a host of studies can be found at www.adidam.org, www.beezone.com, and www.adidaupclose.org.]

Impossible to explain or even describe, Adi Da is out-of-human-scale yet always so vulnerable and simple that our every angle and animal complication becomes obvious in His sacred company. Effortlessly transmitting self-knowledge for those who glimpse such freedom, Adi Da heartily invites us to the responsibility for communion, joyous understanding, and a radical responsibility as to what we add to this moment. He also details the way exquisitely and shouts the challenge to spiritual responsibility explicitly. Effectively, He transmits His State Eternally.

In addition to the forty years I have been studying Adi Da Samraj's dharma/scripture/teaching and sitting with Him in larger gatherings, I spent perhaps a thousand hours in a very small room with the One I am blessed to call Beloved. I capitalize "Him", "His", et cetera, because the transparency to the very Heart I experience(d) in His Company clearly transmits Presence, communion, brilliance, and love without end, washing us into no-difference: Sat-Chit-Ananda, Being-Consciousness-Love-Bliss. Over and over, powerful waves of His Love vaulted, melted,

and dissolved my awareness in the Fullness of Transcendental Consciousness, where only oceanic heart-joy shines forever.

He does this still and consumes me often when I turn to, engage, and intercourse with the Heart-imbued Condition of Truth that He Shows and Is. Anyone may Intercourse with His abundant Gifts: from His Art to Humor, from Daylight Dharma to simply resting in Satsang, we come to inherit “the Tacit Self-Apprehension of Being”.

Years before, I looked like the proverbial hawk at him, trying to see where he got off or took a bit self-congratulations. Not an iota. Always giving everything. Always serving passionately. Always ruthlessly burning any obstruction to the Heart; freely humorous, perfectly simple, always understanding. I am gracefully overwhelmed by His unending fount of sheer Joy and His Incarnate Power of Love. My complexities are purified by His Bright Simplicity.



In the deepest core of my heart, I see His Eyes. I can exclaim many wonderful and brilliant points about Adi Da, but mostly, I am touched and taken by His Love. Beyond the plethora of radical spiritual understandings that enlighten and empower us, the Love He gives does more than all those words. Via bright and joyful inundations, we simply fall in love.

This is what I hoped for — A true holy man or woman, a person of perfect and exquisite love, care, and joy: clear divinity, powerfully shown, felt, and transcendently Present. I found a genius without end, enlightened and enlightening through and through. I listened with an open heart (despite poor self-knowledge) as He explicated with divine genius and incarnated

with whole body radiance what I understand as enlightenment. His writings are “the greatest script ever penned by the human-transcendental spirit” (Ken Wilber). I agree.

“All I have asked is that you understand. It is a simplicity signaled in many ways. Do not imagine that it is more or less than the time you heard Me and understood.”

Adi Da embodies brilliant simplicity and unending genius in a host of fields. Teacher, artist, playwright, and Avatar; His spiritual teachings are considered the most sublime, most developed, and most inclusive of all past revelations and contemplations. He suffers the genius’ misunderstanding: so far ahead, he is praised by an esteemed and lucky few, scorned still by many. This will change as time goes forward and we can culturally inherit sheer genius. In my vision, He will transform whatever is left of this self-mad world after it smashes into itself and we culturally repent from putting “I” where care belongs.

Not only did Adi Da teach exquisitely, He Demonstrated what existence is like when lived at infinity. I am a witness to this. Always free, always serving, always shining through every mummery act, always loving. Naturally and simply. Every second. Breath-taking. Breath-giving.

Because of the transmission of Adi Da’s teaching and company, unconditional Reality itself is clear. That spontaneous beauty is everywhere displayed as forms of light and in the feeling of being itself. He is the stamp of the avatar, the imprint of the Incarnation, giving and confirming realization of transcendental consciousness, supreme being, and Love unending.

I exalt in His Teaching and use it to align my attention to what is most real. Fortunately, at its root, this process is simpler

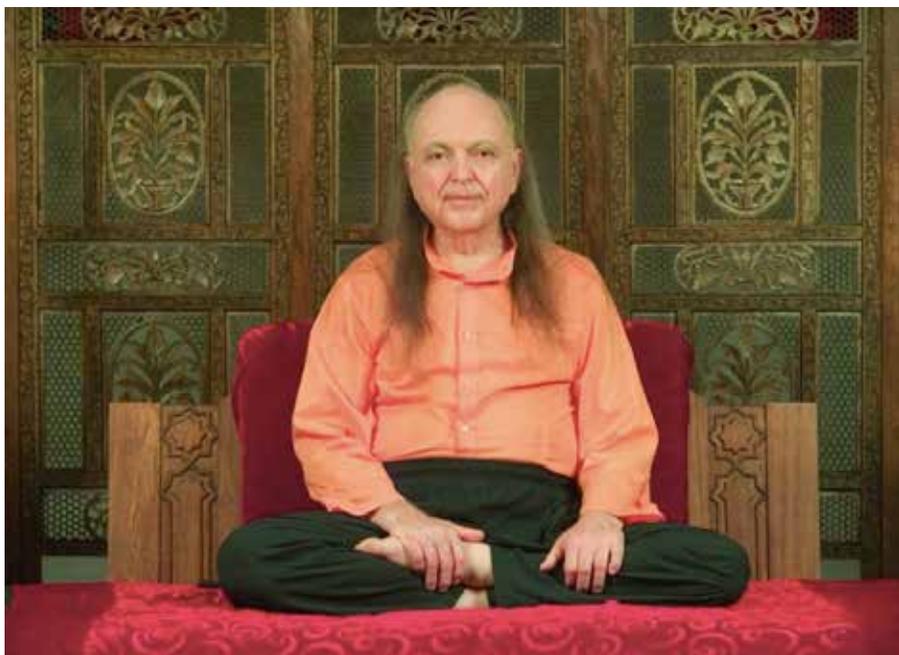


than all of that. I am simply touched heart-deep by Beloved. I find myself contemplating images of Him, thinking about Him, talking and writing about Him. I love to remember the magnificence of His body-time, His eternal and all-consuming Silent Brightness and Presence, simply the Heart, in Person. Seeing Him, He completes my rest and trust in this Conscious Light, His Company, Love-Bliss-Fullness. By the Grace of His Loving Simplicity, I am drawn into boundless Reality — naturally beyond belief and doubt and mind — into His Present Heart. What a Wonder this Great One Is!

Adi Da's Incarnation is ongoing beyond His MahaSamadhi. Beyond His body-time, a growing potency is always available. Anyone can receive and embrace the heart-crowning joy.

“My promise is the same as all other Awakened Servants. I am with you now, as I have always been, and I will always be with you.”

The Natural State of the enlightened One awaits our contemplation and communion.



The Really Bad News: The Absolute Truth

If you can bless these words then we can go beyond language and gaze upon the Truth Absolute. It is a terrible Fire, this Absolute Reality. It engulfs us always in Love-Bliss-Joy — yet we only glimpse This for the most unfortunate reason: we can't handle the Truth Absolute.

Like the Master of the Christians admonishing us to go beyond our usual ways of living, go beyond self-concern (with its usual thoughts), and if we can do this, the estate of present divinity is at hand. Or see again the Awake One, Shakyamuni, touching his fingers to the earth, teaching and showing This paradise.

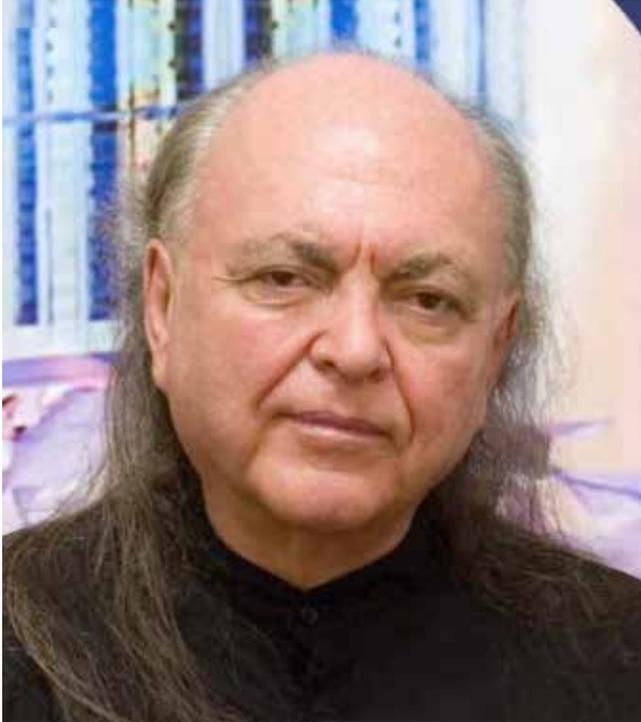
Reflected in Word and Demonstrated Exquisitely, Adi Da Acausally Transmits the Truth that Joy is Beauty is Love is Being is Reality Itself. He subsumes us in This, and Radiates This in ways that are eternal. Yet, I don't live as This. I live in relation to This, this Present Divinity, but poorly so. I am not always in the free joy of being itself, or rather I don't rest for long in the free joy that is always and already here and given.

“Always already entirely in relationship?” Adi Da's enquiry clarifies for us what “we are doing, what we are always doing?”, instead of being engaged in communion and community. True self-understanding sees the disturbance in concern or limitation in feeling-attention we add to every moment. We are at last naked in self-knowledge, then see the raw act of self-creating. With this root self-knowledge as the base, the words of truth leap beyond myth into relational enquiry, and we are with the unity and union of community and communion.

From the point of view of the ego-self, this unity seems void, which could be said to be partially true. Yet while the whole demands sacrifice, it is the Fullness itself. Going beyond our selves, we inherit the heart. “I am the zero of the Heart,” sings my Beloved.

Thank you Beloved, for you distract me from myself. You transmute the bad news of Truth's Fire as I behold Your Face.

Then I am wandering suddenly, samsarically. Consumed in function and thought, not remembering to be in love. Making a calendar of wants; forever delaying This moment, refusing Your Love. Until I am humbled and grateful to draw one more breath of Your Face and Company, one more round of reality's nectars riddling my body in beauteousness as I receive You, and one more time of ceaselessly invoking Your Eyes forever in my heart.



Your Eyes, Heart-Root, Always Blessing.
Your Breath, Perfect Peace, Beholding You.
Joy of Being, Love Absolute, Bright Understanding.
Him, Him, Him.

“The Divine Master of all Beings is literally to be found at the heart.”

May I rest in His Simple Love in every now. May I grow and share This.

All the Joys

The sparkle in a child's eye, the delight of growing up
The power of accomplishment, the clarity of intent
The wonder of countless stars, atoms, and flowers
The rave of creativity, the ecstasy of sharing
Endless yes with my lover, sleeping in her arms
The genius of discernment, the light of noble thoughts
Rushing ascents, golden rain,
a thousand-petaled blossoming,
dwelling in perfect peace
All the joys
A human can embrace
Is but ephemera of You, Beloved Adi Da

Your Heart is Oceanic and eternal, welcoming every river always
Your Company is Baptismal, unending, radically and uncaused,
always and already here.
To See You is to see clearly
You are Intrinsic Consciousness and Inherent Happiness in Person
You are the Presence of Reality in Person,
You are Love Incarnate, the Divine Person.
To See You is to let You, Allowing Your Presence, Your Touch, Your
Heart,
And running to Your Most Beauteous Form...

Beloved Master of all the worlds! Divine Incarnate!
Your Eyes are forever in our hearts
Your Presence always Pressing upon us like a gaggle of thumbs
Your Company Nectarous, Fiery, Loving, and Liberating
Your Instruction Penetrates the worlds and all who listen.
Your Laugh Confirms and Transmits Perfect Freedom
Radiant Master, have mercy.

You Freely Give Heart-Visions, You Worship Your devotees
Your Grace Washes our souls
Your Love breaks our little hearts
Radiant Master, have mercy.

Beauty You Show
 Reality Itself
Your Love melts the mind
 Finding Only You
Truth You Transmit
 With fullest breath
Peace You Give as Prasad
 An eternal domain for our hearts.

How we love to think about You
Listen to others tell stories about You
Talk about You, Remember You, hold You
Our prayers are answered with a clear Voice.
You have surrounded all things with Your Love
When I am with You, Reality is Given.

You are the Radiant Transcendental Consciousness in Person
Appearing in Human Form
The Nectar of Supreme Being begins at Your Holy Feet
The Way of You, Beloved Master
Sri Da Love-Ananda Hridayam, we surrender

Beloved! You are Da



Beloved! You are Da, the Living Person, Who is Manifest as all worlds and forms and beings, and Who is Present As the Transcendental Current of Life in the body of every one.

You are the Being behind the mind, and as such You are found in the Heart, on the right side. You are the Radiance within and above the body and as such You are beyond the crown of the head and beyond all self-consciousness. To Realize You

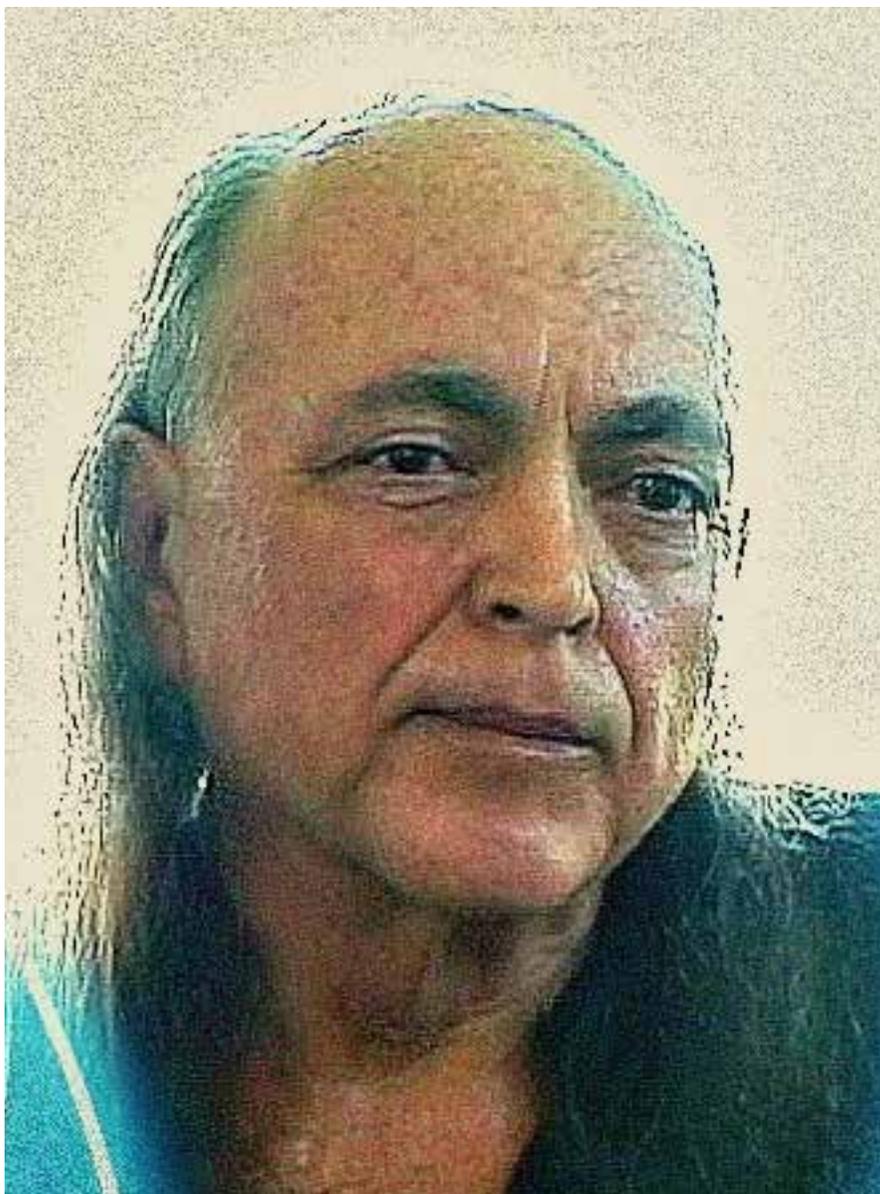
is to transcend the body-mind in ecstasy. To worship

You is simply to remember Your Name and surrender into Your eternal Current of Life.

And those who recognize and worship You As Truth, the Living and all-pervading One, are granted the Vision or love-intuition of Your Eternal Condition. You transfigure us with Your Radiant Presence. Even our bodies and minds, indeed the whole world, shine with Your

Life-Light when You are loved. You easily sift us out from the body and mind and all the limits of the world at last. We need only to love You, remember You, have faith in You and trust You. May we surrender to You, breathe You and feel You in all our parts. You are Here. You Save us from ourselves and even death! You dissolve all of our bewilderment. Even now we inhere in You, beyond our identification with the body and mind. Therefore, we are not afraid or confused for we see that You are God Incarnate. And even after Your human body has dissolved, You are every where Alive as the Presence of Love That Plays the World. We are witness to Your Play and Your Absolute Victory! We sing that You are Joy and the reason for it. You eternally Transmit Your State of True Happiness throughout all time and space; may we receive You, shine Your Joy to everyone, and tell every one that You Are Here.





Imagine This

Imagine the moment, perhaps just after our last breath, when we are unequivocally dis-integrating and there is no question that we are dying. With the mind scattering and dissolving, suddenly the inherent brightness of what is beyond and includes life and death is always shining. All of our life experiences were tiny bubbles on the ocean of life.

Intrinsically witnessing that Reality Itself is unfathomable and unending luminosity of heart-joy, we see how we only glimpsed or tasted this divinity while alive. How much of our life we devoted to the unconditional ocean and how much we devoted our life-energy to the bubbles of conditional “wetness” will be starkly self-evident. There, in obviousness, deep regrets sear the soul in rightening as the gnashing of teeth and root of mind forestalls as if forever the unending joy.

Imagine the joke! All the while we are alive we are bathed in native life-force divine; where inherent joy-un-ending is our substance, condition, and consciousness, but we focus mostly on mechanical tension-release games of desire and accomplishments, brief satiations, clever insights, and homonal rise and fall.

Reality is lost by always being here. Here, the saints and sages call us to turn from mortal pursuits to the present estate of divinity. But there, in the seconds after the last breath, there is little time for growth in heart-embrace.

Our passage into inevitable death brings to light a perfect surrender. There is no bargaining here. Too bad we did not practice this perfect surrender more while breathing. To avoid the gnashing of teeth in this moment after death, the Gospels tell us we must be clothed in virtues. For as our feeling becomes virtuously free, we pass through the narrow gate of the whole body and following the current of the Daylight Incarnations, feel into the luminosity beyond waking, dreaming, sleeping and death.

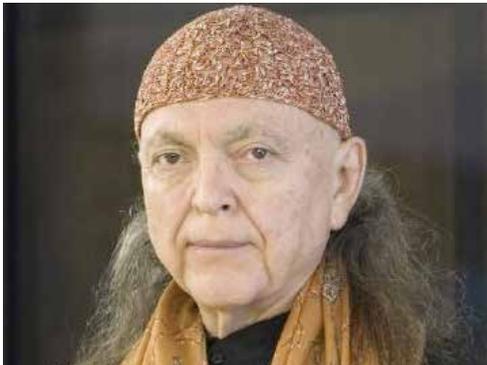
Imagining the first moments of dying, we come to see the eternal moment that is always and already, here and now forever. Do we surrender, giving ourselves in real joy to the Presence of pure being now, in love with Beloved, with and from the heart? Or not? Thus we enquire as to exactly how we are disturbing this moment, perturbing this always present enjoyment, refusing Love. We see how short we are from full trust in His Gift of Love's Reality in Beauteous Company.

When we directly feel/see the anxieties and pain we add and are doing, when we see our constriction and contracting, avoiding relationship, when we simply feel 'the harm in which we act', then we most clearly and directly enjoy the unconditional ground and luminous divinity of reality that is always and already the case. Naturally.

The Incarnation of Love has a magnificent history, through every culture and time. This always new One is this very moment, whatever is arising — and the divinity of this One Field is shown to all anew by my Beloved Adi Da Samraj.

Now and always only now, may we practice the reception of this natural Singularity, celebrate this Gift of Love, intercourse with the always new One. Imagine this: May we breathe through limitations in feeling, twisting thought, and complex experience, and let the Fullness of Beauteous Reality assist us in falling forever in love.

Fortunately, the Beloved of my heart helps me always. I rest in His Grace.



“The Tacit Self-Apprehension of Being”

His Divine Presence Parama-Sapta-Na Adi Da Says:

“If you allow yourself to feel deeply, you can discover a feeling-depth that, intrinsically, has no sense of the body. As a matter of ‘experience’, there is already a depth in you, as in deep sleep, that has no association with the body. That is your deepest place. Thus, you always stand, most fundamentally, in a position without bodily awareness. In any moment in which you are invested in that depth, you are (thereby) established in the condition that is beyond and prior to body-consciousness, and beyond and prior to even all psycho-physical noticing. Already, in that in-depth awareness (which is always already the case), there is no fear of death. That in-depth awareness is not the ‘personality-depth’ of the waking-state. Rather, that in-depth awareness is the in-depth dimension of the ‘I’ that is (otherwise) apparently in the waking state and identified with the body. That in-depth awareness has nothing to do with the body, and nothing to do with the mind. That Which Is to Be Realized Is Prior to separate ‘self’, Prior to the ‘self’-contraction, Prior to the ego-‘I’, Prior to body and mind, and Prior to the any present-time ‘point of view’. Therefore, That Which Is to Be Realized is not in or of the waking state, not in or of the dreaming state, and not in or of the sleeping state. That Which Is to Be Realized is in and of The State That Is Always Already Prior to waking, dreaming, and sleeping No human being is intrinsically obliged to identify with a mortal ‘self’-condition, or separate ego-‘I’. Every human being is—even at birth, and constantly thereafter—always associated with the ‘equipment’ to be established in the depth, rather than merely being entangled in what is superficial and threatened. To be established in the depth-position is what must always be done. The more superficial you are, the more you lose the depth. The more you distract yourself with that which is other than the depth, the more you become bound up in that which is other than the depth. You become what you meditate on. The Great Profundity is not merely ‘inside’ you. The Great Profundity

Is Perfectly Subjective to all of conditional existence. That Which Is to Be Realized Is Intrinsic and all-and-All-Pervading (and all-and-All-Transcending) Love-Bliss Itself. The Great Profundity is not to be found 'externally', in the 'world' of 'causes' and 'effects'—all the thises and thats which are perceived from the 'point of view' of a presumed-to-be-separate body-mind-'self'. Rather, The Great Profundity Is Realized in the depth, in The Source-Position, at the point of origin of 'your' apparent involvement with the entire 'thing' within which you are concerned. If you are established in that most profound in-depth process, in whole bodily devotional and Transcendental Spiritual Communion with Me, then everything in the context of your 'experiencing'—including death, which is inevitable for human beings—will become associated with A profound Self-Apprehension of The Intrinsically egoless and Indivisible and Acausal Self-Nature, Self-Condition, and Self-State of Reality Itself. In due course, that in-depth position itself, because of its Intrinsic Nature, releases you of concerns that are generated only in the superficial domain of conditional existence. Beyond ego-'self' (or ego-'I'), there Is The Great and Prior Unity. Beyond The Great and Prior Unity Is The Divine 'Bright' Spherical Self-Domain—The Self-Existing and Self-Radiant and Perfectly Acausal Sphere and Self-Evidence of egoless Divine and Indivisible Conscious Light. Most Perfect Divine Self-Realization is not Realization of 'you'. Most Perfect Divine Self-Realization Is Realization of Me. Most Perfect Divine Self-Realization Is Beyond the ego-reference, Beyond the body-mind-reference, Beyond the 'point-of-view'-reference, Beyond the waking, dreaming, or sleeping reference. The disposition of Really ego-transcending practice of right and true devotional recognition-response to My Divine Avataric Person Is Beyond all of that.”

May every faith and way be filled with adoration of their Incarnation, the Heart in human form. May every living being feel the imprint that the Siddhas, Saviors, and Sages have Given. Here I bow to my Beloved Adi Da, Whose Giving is the Same as all Incarnations: beyond space and time, universal and eternal. At His

Feet, Real Joy (beyond causes) is oceanic; as He instructs, “Acasual, inherent.”

“There is nothing about anything that is appearing at this moment that is anything less than Truth Itself, anything less than Divine Enlightenment. You may presume it is less than Divine



Enlightenment, because you cannot (in this moment) presume otherwise. You may presume the samsaric limitation of what appears at this moment, but in your Awakening you will see that all of this samsara, all of this conditional existence, is nothing but Nirvana or Divine Being. That Self-Existing and Self-Radiant Reality will Transfigure all ordinary events and Reveal the Vision of them as they

truly Are, in Reality, and then you will be completely free, absolutely free, like the Divine Avataric Adept-Realizer, Whose Freedom Is Absolute, Non-conditional, ‘caused’ by nothing, dependent on nothing.

“From the ‘point of view’ of devotees they may seem to be problematic or express their neurosis, their bondage. But that is the result of their false views, their false vision, their un-Happiness, their ‘Narcissism’. Transcend that ‘Narcissism’ and what is there about this moment that is less than Happiness? Nothing.

“There is not the slightest ‘difference’ between this moment as it appears and the Infinite Sublimity of the Transcendental Spiritual Divine Being, not even the slightest ‘difference’, not even a hair’s

breadth of 'difference'. No 'difference'. To you it may seem like there is some 'difference'. You are struggling for Happiness. But at the same time that you are struggling for Happiness you are superimposing un-Happiness on this moment. That is why you are struggling for it, for Happiness. There is nothing wrong with anything. Nothing. Everything simply Is. So, Be Conscious simply as the Tacit Self-Apprehension of Being, and Realize That It Is Happiness, or Love-Bliss.

“This is My Teaching, this is the essential summary of Truth Itself, and has nothing whatever to do with dissociation, inwardness, separation, egoity, other-worldliness, alternative phenomena, alternative 'experience'. If you are Conscious as the Tacit Self-Apprehension of Being in this moment, then everything is justified. Nothing is wrong. Everything is Real God.”

Part Two:
With Children in Mind



The Developmental Rainbow: Ready to be filled in...

<u>A Kid's Guide to Growing Up</u>	Color/Stage 1 Red Years	Color/Stage 2 Orange Years	Color/Stage 3 Yellow Years
STARTS (approximate years)			
FOCUS			
MATURES			
SAYS			
UNDERSTANDS THROUGH			
WEAKNESS			
UNHEALTHY IMAGE			
DISCIPLINE MAKES MOST SENSE			
IMAGE TEST			
MOOD			
IMAGE OF MATURITY			

There she was coming at me: The grandmother of a former student of mine who had invited me to his graduation. The problem was that Nick only had four tickets to the ceremony: one for his mom and dad, his sister, and, well, I got the ticket that granny was supposed to have.

Grandmother's furor was tempered by how I "had saved her grandson's life".

She embraced me with gratitudes and humorous insults.

You can imagine the honor I felt that Nick wanted me, seven years after my class. There was hearty laughter throughout the evening.

Nick relayed how he had learned from my lessons in Big Philosophy for Little Kids that when the "three-headed dragon of adolescence" would start to overtake him, he would recognize it and not be broken by doubt, depression, or dilemma.

Over the decades, my (writing) lessons on growing up, and particularly the Three-headed Dragon are the most common appreciation I receive from students-turned-adults. (The lessons on Midas and True Happiness and the investigations of Narcissus that I received from Adi Da are the other most appreciated lessons my former students praise.)

Normalized within the real struggle of the adolescent passage, the images promote the recognition whereby we need not be crushed by the monster of separateness, with furies of abstraction, the alienation of mentality, and the aloneness of Narcissus.

When demons are recognized, the possibility for relationship, true peace, and integrity becomes clear. Imagine a different world where alienation and separateness are understood; imagine children who are given a vision of what growing up can really mean. If they can see it, they'll know and grow.

I join many who cry into the wilderness:

A new vision is needed for a regeneration of culture.

The fulcrum of new generations will leverage the change.

Enjoy this developmental understanding for children and these foundational lessons. And let me again be clear:

I harvested this wisdom from my Beloved Adi Da.

My prayer is single: May I sing of Joy in His Company.

What Is It To Really Grow Up?

Adult Preface (Children can skip this.)

What Is It To Really Grow Up? is a six-week writing ‘unit’ (via a series of talks, prompts, and responses) I have had with children over the last twenty five years. As the name reveals, this kid-accessable dialogue addresses both the developmental process and developing new strengths. Both objectively and subjectively, it portrays a fully evolving spectrum, with detailed, affective-emphasis on understanding childhood and human responsibility.

Keeping it simple and connected to the natural world, the colors of the rainbow are correlated to the stages of life — and this spectrum is felt personally as “growing up” through the colors, hues, and stages of maturation.

After the participant records their responses to multiple facets of developmental challenges and abilities (filling in the chart below), they are challenged to weave the horizontal, parallel threads in maturing progressions. By this understanding and by example, there is an easy weaving of multiple threads. One naturally exercises the writing technique of parallelism into a fabric of understanding. [The full lesson is in *Big Philosophy for Little Kids*.]

Both children and adults need to have a full-spectrum understanding about what growing up could be. Such a vision naturally inspires us to grow up from our earthen roots and rise into real adulthood.

My son, Salem, helped me in clarifying this collection while in the fifth grades, and my second grade daughter, Ella, loved hearing it read. My fourth and fifth grade students in inner-city Richmond and Pinole (California) gave me reflections, suggestions, and praises.

My thanks goes out to the many, many kids over the last quarter-century who took these lessons to heart, and to the adults who listened and commented as well.

For emphasis, I repeat: More than the conglomeration of the good things I have heard, tried, and repeated because of impact or efficacy, these talks are a reflection of pedagogical features I learned in the ashram schools of Adidam, where I was both a growing student and a teacher of children. I shout aloud my eternal gratitude to my beloved master-teacher, Avatara Adi Da, Samraj—from whom I learned the fullness of love and education.

For the kids:

Lots of people think that growing up stops when our body stops growing — when we're about 17 to 21 years of age. At 18, we are considered an “adult” for many things, like driving freely, voting, going to war or college, and making a lot of our own decisions. But just getting to be “big” or making our own decisions or even voting is not all that there is to being “grown-up”. It's a lot more than that, so it is very useful to have a clear idea of what really grown-up could be. What do you think ‘grown up’ means, or should mean? [Discussion and notes.]

There are many, many ways we could talk about the phases of growing up and all of these descriptions are helpful. Almost every culture, people, religion, and philosophy has a way of talking about growing up. It's like talking about the stages of a plant — like an apple tree: if we start with the seed, then it sprouts, it grows into a sapling, and when it's big enough for blossoms, it makes apples with seeds. The seeds fall to the ground, the apple part makes the soil rich for the seeds and the cycle starts all over — and the tree grows bigger with every cycle for a while and then passes. Now

humans are a lot more diverse, complicated, and developed than apple trees; even still, we can talk about our stages of growing up.

Have you ever seen how a prism breaks clear light into the colors? We could look very, very closely and say that there are a hundred million colors in the spectrum, or we could step back and say that there are seven. In the same way, we could look very closely and find a hundred different hues of people growing up, but to be simple, we're going to mimic the "seven colors" of the rainbow and just talk about seven general stages of growing up, focusing almost entirely on the first three stages of childhood.

Letting each stage be associated with a traditional color of the rainbow, we'll ask questions at every stage/color. Four examples are: In each color of childhood, what are the strengths, challenges, understanding, and enjoyments? Get your writing tool ready:

There are many phases in the first six years, just like there are many colors of red, but first let's talk about the red or first stage all together.

The first stage of growing up, likened unto the color red, starts with the first breath and goes to the loss of the baby teeth at about *6 or 7 years* of age. [Fill in those boxes on the chart.]

The red stage is *focused in the body* and being *autonomous* in the body. We learn to walk and talk and pee and poo all by ourselves. More than that though, we learn to *be* all by ourselves, to be rested, to go to sleep by ourself, and although we are dependent on "grown-ups" and need to feel safe, we can do a lot of things "all by myself". What do you remember doing "all by yourself"?

We don't just walk along, we jump over lines, we walk on lines, we skip, we play with trying new things and relearning old things. We delight in new experiences. We are focused in growing.

We learn about others, but the main focus is a healthy me. The first stager says, "*I can do it.*" Who remembers saying that? What was it about?

Because our body is the main focus, it is good if grown-ups don't talk too much when we mess up, but interact with us bodily: Hold us, move us away from bad situations. Some direct talk is good, but ideas are secondary to moving our bodies. *We understand with our body.*

In the first seven years, there is also an abundance of *magic*. From Fairy Tales to Santa Claus, from magic wands and spirits to fables, tales, and magical stories, we are enchanted by what we do not know and what we learn in the red years. We're learning, learning, learning. What were your favorites stories, parables, and myths when you were little? Why? If you had a new friend who had never heard of your favorite myth or story, what would you tell them?

Most first stagers really like sweets — foods are a big focus for the red body and mind. But red can be sticky. The unhealthy side of the body-focused person makes for sugarized, couch potatoes and screen-entranced eyes. Our *challenge is to not get dull*. As we mature in the first years, we learn to *discipline unhealthy eating, and not watch too much screens*. Do you have limits on screens? We've got to move and play and look and see. Where do you go outside for natural surroundings? What do you like to do outside? What is it like for you in nature?

Starting about age four, a first stager can learn to take a big breath in hard times. We can always take a big breath to feel better, even if we're feeling pretty good. Try it now, take a long breath, feeling to natural happiness.

We learn to try hard in a new ways. You learn to use your breath to focus. For me, learning to tie my shoelaces was very hard. I remember the exact moment I tied my shoes (I never had to ask

mean Ronnie Carter again) and jumped high into the air. What do you remember trying very hard at when you were little?

As we complete and brighten the red years (about 6-7 years old), we run peacefully down the path and *don't always have to be looking back at Mom and Dad* to make sure we are OK. There is still a mood of being dependent on them, of course, but we can rest without them and we can do it.

We've started losing our "baby" teeth, and the second great stage of childhood begins to emerge. New *feelings* and energies run through you as orange blossoms from the red years. To the depth we have learned to rest, we *learn to let our feeling "fly"*. Music is great, beauty is great, and harmonies of all kinds are great to the energetic feelings and flying orange mind in the *second seven years* of life. What were you into when you were eight or nine or ten?

We still love food and are enchanted by the seasons, but in addition to simple pleasures, we are working with feelings, like how we seem to others and who likes us. More than anything, orange kids really *want to be included*.

In the orange years, we it is important not just to feel included, but to learn to *include* more and more people and things in our feelings. The best way to feel included is to practice including others. (It's not easy and we get our feelings hurt sometimes.) Do you remember a time when you were the new kid?

A main feeling that is present in the orange years is about *belonging*. (We belong where we can let our feelings go.) Friends and family and groups and village-community are so important; belonging is important.

We remain in a mood of dependence on others. In the second seven years, membership and being-included are very, very important. We need to feel a sense of belonging all of our life, but it is big in the orange years. Write down the names of one or two

friends, your family names, your neighborhood, city, state, country, continent, your planet, and the place where you learn about what is not-limited; this could be your church, mosque, class in school, or favorite park.

Learning about belonging is good, because we really are connected to others and the world around us, even when we're feeling alone. Did you know that humans are a single family? Do you have a cousin who is a bit weird, but you love them anyway? It's really true, we are a very big family. Hey cuz! Since everyone here is basically your cousin, what does that make you think?

In the orange feeling of connectedness, we can feel and see how everything is connected to everything else. The more we act and behave with the sense of connectedness (like with friends and family), the better we feel and the better we all are. What can you do better with others? Help? Share? Forgive? Laugh?

When a first stager says, "I can do it," *the second stager expresses, "I feel, I am."* Let your feeling go and say, "I am." Or "I am your friend."

In these learning-to-feel years, we experiment with feelings and ways of acting by remembering someone else and acting like them; it is good to have *role-models* we can look up to in the orange years. Who are some of your role models and what do you like about each one?

We exercise our new feeling-wings by *letting go* to music; by listening, playing, or dancing. Or we invest ourselves in performances, or letting the body go in all kinds of ways, like sports and arts. It helps to build your focus, for sure, but everyone also experiences 'letting-go' and being 'in the zone', at least for a little while. In ancient times, they called that "being taken by the muse". It's like focus and letting-go both together: like in Muse-ik... What

were you really into in the orange years that you did a lot? Who turned you on to it? Ever get ‘in the zone’, where everything went perfectly?

We are strong in the orange years when we are strong in our “letting go muscle”... we let go *of* bad feelings (aka “*forgiveness*” of ourselves and others), and we let go *to* good feelings (in music, the arts, sports, family, friends).

When we are strong in the orange ways, we can hold onto others in our feeling, and we can also let go. We learn to flow, dance, and soar. What do you like to do where you really let go and soar? Dance? Singing? Instruments? Drawing? Athletics?

But the exploration of feelings is not always pleasant in the orange years. Sometimes we feel weird or even bad for no reason at all, or we’ll think someone doesn’t like us when they really do. When a new feeling emerges, it can be very awkward and even a bit painful or scary, like *a baby bird cracking out of its shell*. Is it important to learn to recognize and talk about emotions, both in yourself and in others. Can you picture in your mind some new-feeling that was hard? (Alt.) Can you write about feelings that are sometimes hard to talk about?

It is good to remember that growing pains and weird feelings have a way of becoming wonderful pleasures and strengths later. We learn to let our feelings be or go in the second stage, or if we can’t, we work on strengthening our letting-go-wings. It is important to practice letting go in all kinds of ways. Can you remember a time when you felt really awkward around other people? Did you let it go later? Tell me.

Because membership is so important to the feelings of second stagers and society, there are many stories that share about the far-reaching effects of harmonious and disharmonious behavior. For example, there are many stories all around the world

about what Western people call “the golden rule” — treating others like you want to be treated, ‘what goes around, comes around’. In India, it is called “karma”. *Stories* really help the second stager to understand this relationship between how we act and what happens. In stories, it is often a bad guy that gets what he deserves, right? In ancient China it was said, “Your thoughts go out a thousand miles, how far do you think your actions go?” What is the first story that comes into your mind where what happens is connected with how someone felt and acted?

The hardest test in the orange years is to *not reject others, even when we feel rejected*. We fail at this a lot, but we keep forgiving and trying — and get stronger. We learn to forgive others and know our apologies help. We want to be forgiven too. We do it already, but forgiveness is a llike a muscle we need to exercise. Can you remember a time when you were forgiven, and also when you forgave someone?

Teasing (within the feeling of inclusion) can be fun and happy, but teasing can be mean in the orange years, because it feels like we are being threatened with exclusion. Do you remember a time when someone was mean to you? Do you know how teasing *can be* fun and loving? Can you think of examples of the two kinds of teasing?

It’s hard to remember, but people who are weak in letting go and don’t feel good inside, they feel bad and small, and sometimes they put other people down, just so that they can feel big. They are just unhappy and don’t know how to get happy. This happens to everybody: we feel bad and then we act poorly and make matters worse. Have you ever seen anybody teased in a mean way? Has it ever happened to you?

But as we grow strong in the orange years, our powers of letting go and of inclusion grow. Intelligently including-others relieves us of feeling rejected in a very positive way. Even our teasing feels loving and friendly. We learn to include others more and more and we are likewise included. Can you recall a time when someone made you feel included? Can you also recall a time when you reached out to someone? Ever eat lunch with the new kid?

In the orange time, we feel how we are a unique energy or person or spirit. And because we are sensitive to energy and feelings, we learn to see the energy or spirit or person in others, rather than their clothes or skin color (and even beyond their hurts). I like to say, “It is way more important how you see than how you look.”

Have you ever heard the expression “the eyes are windows to the soul”? Can you tell me a time when you looked at the soul of someone instead of their clothes or facial features?

Like everyone, we don't want to be measured by our skin color or hair shape or disabilities, but by our presence or spirit, and by our trustability. Can you remember a time when you were misjudged because of the way you looked? Tell me the whole story.

Back in the red years, a little kid could run naked on the beach and nobody cared. But in the elementary years, naked is more private, and boyhood and girlhood take on a new depth and complexion. It is often confusing, feeling weird and new things, right?, and there are many roles that we can play out. For example, when boys are learning to be boys and girls are learning to be girls, some go through a phase where, in order to define their own gender feeling, they reject the other gender as some form of “yuk-ee”. Did you ever think boys or girls (or anything in-between) were yukky? Or if we do like someone, we may keep it a secret. Did you ever like someone and keep it a secret?

Agreements are important to the orange mind of the second stager. Orange kids like *agreements*: agreements about games, expectations, promises, and all sorts of energy exchanges. Agreements are a form of feeling-energy, which is the main focus for the elementary years. For 'orange kids', it is easier for them to keep an agreement than just do what they are told. Agreements make sense to the second stager. What kind of agreements do you have at home?

We need to be passionate and daydream especially in the orange years, but the challenge is working to stay in harmony with those around us. Especially in orange, we often feel passionate about many things, or one thing, and sometimes we are so over-focused in our passion that we exclude others in an un-feeling way. Or instead of passionate action, we may give ourselves up to dreaminess, and likewise forget about others. Learning to keep others in our feelings is the challenge of the second stager. Do you remember a time where you were completely forgetting others by dreaminess? Or being too into something?

Instead of forgetting others, we exercise the flower of feeling: we may reach out to another, or trust quietly. We notice how our breath focuses our feelings. Focusing, we take a breath; Riding our breath, we are inspired; we hold to our focus, we soar with confidence; we breathe the wind of the Earth's breath, or we blow and burn with feeling — especially in music or dance, or any of the arts, or in the excellence of athletics. We must remember to use our breath both in times of fullness (in-spired) and stress (in-voking help). Can you remember a couple of times where your breath was useful to your feeling?

We no longer believe in Santa Claus the way a four year old would, but we really love stories and *understand that myths*

have meaning. In the maturation of the second stage, we can listen to a myth “as if” it were true. A kid once commented to me, “Myths are false on the outside, but true on the inside.” That’s it. What did the story make you think of? Why did someone repeat that story? What was a lesson you understood from a story?

Biological signs of puberty may appear before the fullness of the orange years because the stages overlap. In the fullness of orange, yellow can be seen. Sometime after puberty starts and the feeling years blossom, the last stage of childhood begins. At first gender and sex-talk can be embarrassing for many people, but “growing up” is the topic here.

In the yellow years, puberty supercharges our growth and things change. In their bodies, boys make seed and girls make the eggs (they already had since birth) regularly available — and a great force for making kids emerges. We are attracted to others in a new way. Puberty prepares the body for sexual intercourse, and the evolutionary urge to continue the species makes sexuality grow shinier and shinier, and some people are suddenly way more attractive to us. Sexuality is a big, growing force and learning possibility. Who has seen how sexiness is used get your attention to sell stuff?

Yellow blossoms brightly from the orange patterns of energy-feeling, and we are a person in a new and deeper way. No longer is the focus only in body or feelings, in red and orange, but we come to our bright yellow mind in a new and powerful stance. Now, in addition to the body’s sexy “shine” of reproductive possibility, the focus of brain development moves to the higher brain and the mind grows in power for ideas. In addition to tales and a storied understanding, there is a compelling logic. We understand the moral of the story. We get concepts, we are focused in conceiving patterns and relations in the forms and energies we experience.

Craftiness erupts from the belief-mind of the elementary years, as cunning/principles emerge from mythic feelings and simple pleasures. Concept grasps a pattern in our perceptions. You understand more deeply and can talk about the meaning of the story or the principle amongst the many. Who remembers suddenly “getting it”, like when a old name suddenly had new meaning or you understood something deeper? (Alt. Consider the birth of Athena, the cunning one, as she bursts forth already mature from the *forebrain* of Zeus.)

Growing in yellow, we are based on our own rational assessment. By understanding, our capacity for intention is forged. Where the first stager says, “I can do it”, and the second stage says, “I feel, I am”, the third stager says, “*I know, I will.*” Now we begin to be a young man or a young woman —and the teen years of “*trial adulthood*” begin.

A teen doesn’t do well with just doing what they’re told, as if they were a first stager or red kid. And agreements are good only if they make sense to the teen. The yellow mind needs to be involved; the teen needs to understand and co-create his or her personal parameters of freedom and responsibility. If they understand a responsibility, it is much easier to exercise it. Just doing it because they’re told to or because “it’s good for you” doesn’t cut it. What responsibilities do you have that you understand, and what freedoms do you appreciate?

As the third stage erupts, the feeling of dependence that dominated the first two stages fades, and independence becomes strong. But independence alone is not the solution to life and so the third stager oscillates between independence and dependence in a mood not-of-dependence but of dilemma. Can you see the dilemma of wanting to go out on your own but having to ask for

the car keys or money or help? Back and forth between dependence and independence forms the sensation of dilemma.

Dilemma and doubt riddle the conceptual mind of the adolescent. There's a whole lot of thinking going on! Sometimes doubt and dilemma are too strong and our spirit is depressed. Doubt, dilemma, and depression make up *a three-headed dragon* of the yellow-mind years. *Everybody* has to deal with at least one set of monster teeth on the three-headed dragon: dilemma, doubt, depression. It is necessary to recognize the dragon when it comes upon you. Who has heard of teen suicide?

The hero's journey begins. Our sword must be sharpened. And all the time, a forest of thinking, thinking, thinking. Does thinking ever drive you crazy?

The teen years can be the most difficult in life. Not only are we more distinct and individual than ever, we feel more separate from everyone and most things. Suddenly one day, we are as if behind our eyes in a chatterbox prison, looking out, thinking constantly and feeling strange and alone.

It is good to know that this is normal, most people experience this. (And just like in the second stage, it's good to have faith and remember that what seems to be weak eventually becomes a power.) Isn't it great when you find out someone else is crazy just like you are? Write a diary entry about why you think it is important to know this inside-the-head possession is a common experience.

This constant thinking is not quieted by a great thought! The chatterbox of mentality is slowly silenced by a power in the harmony of good living. The harmonic strength of good living makes a resonance in reality, and the overtones lead to a quietness. Every religion has a list of ways to live they consider harmonic.

From the eight fold path to the ten commandments; from “nothing in excess” to Sokrates’ wisdom, we find this restraint. What is your favorite understanding of temperance?

The teen-age years should be honored as *a time of trial-adulthood* where the kids demonstrate they understand the correlation between sometimes *dangerous freedom and necessary responsibilities*. If teens want liberties (ha ha), then they must assign responsibilities to preface and ground their freedoms. These arrangements of responsibility are created by the teen (in concert with caretakers/mentors). What freedoms do you want, and what kinds of responsibilities do you think would show you can handle extra freedoms? This could be three long lists, including also appropriate consequences for irresponsibilities (stated by the teen).

The third stage is complete when the will of the understanding person brings the body and feeling (evidenced by behavior) to a growing harmony. We certainly do not have to be perfect, maybe not even pretty good, but if we merely try, “for real” and consistent, anyone can learn to slowly ‘tune’ their life to harmony. Merely by remaining oriented to growth in feeling and attuning ones actions to harmony, the mature teen slowly emerges as a healthy, respectful, open, sharp, strong, and peaceful character. How can you grow more in these areas?

In attending to a harmonious life, higher brain-functions develop easily. Teens need to know this: the more harmony they can develop in their bodies, feelings, and behaviors, the cooler and greater the brain (and social connections) can become. Sexual feelings should be freely felt, of course, yet our sexual behavior remains restrained (whatever that means to you). Discipline is good for the brain (as well as the mind). Feeling sexual energies and applying intelligent restraints as well is like sending awesome energy up to our own private genius. It’s called growing up for a

reason. This idea of temperance and sexual temperance will change over time, but what do they mean to you now?

What you take into your body is important to your mind. Can you see how the laws about intoxicants carry wisdom? — for drugs mess with the higher brain functions. Therefore, teens should avoid intoxicants (and eat well) in respect for the very best their own brains have to offer. Every kind of life-supporting habit helps the brain — this is especially important in the teen years when the mind is so central. If the brain is healthy, the mind is more easily coherent.

Experiment with how more fresh food and consistent exercise helps you see clearer. The mature teen understands all of this and then applies his or her will to slowly and firmly adapt to harmonious actions. This is intelligent living, where joy can grow beyond mere moments. Discuss what smart living means to you with a friend, then make notes of all the points that were covered. Then compare notes and revise.

At first, when the teen is trying on the mantle of self-direction, she and he often asserts their will and does what she and he wants! In the beginning of yellow's independence, the teen turns to mechanisms in the body and feeling in the pursuit of happiness. It is fun city, littered with occasional disasters. Have you ever gotten in trouble because you went too far?

But then comes the great moment in the yellow years when the person intentionally turns from merely exploiting the mechanisms of the nervous system to the happiness that is deeper than stimulation and self-satisfaction. We stretch our vision from superficial pleasures to long-term or deep happiness. We cut through the surface features of life and open up the depth of real living and true happiness. (Alt. Consider the story "Perseus, Medusa, and Pegasus" in *Core Stories*) Like Perseus, with adamant



A Kid's Guide to Growing Up	Color/Stage 1 Red Years	Color/Stage 2 Orange Years	Color/Stage 3 Yellow Years
STARTS (approximate years)	with the first breath (0-7)	with the first permanent teeth (6-12)	with puberty and a plethora of ideas (12-21)
FOCUS	Body	Feelings. Sensitive to energies	Mind, and the consequent Will
MATURES	simple autonomy: pee, poo, dress, go to sleep, etc., "all by myself"	flying feelings, really lets go; "don't underrate, appreciate"	by turning from too much self to greater happiness
SAYS	"I Can do it!"	"I feel, therefore I am."	"I understand, I Will."
UNDERSTANDS THROUGH	Magic, Fairy Tales, Stories	Myths, Parables, precepts	Ideas, patterns, concepts
WEAKNESS	dull, sticky, dark red, spoiled	excluding others (too into something/ excessive daydreaming)	lost in a forest of thinking, thinking
UNHEALTHY IMAGE	Couch potato	rejecting others because you feel rejected	3 Headed Dragon of Dilemma, Doubt and Depression
DISCIPLINE MAKES MOST SENSE	directly telling, moving their bodies	agreements/ deals	by understanding, co-creating responsibilities and freedoms
IMAGE TEST	don't get dull	too obsessed/ can't rest	WILL you come to harmony?
MOOD	dependence	dependence	Dilemma (between independence and dependence)
IMAGE OF MATURITY	running down the path confidently, without Mom & Dad	sensitive to others emotional fluency healthy role models	Response-able and Open

decisiveness, we build our energy and intention. Do you remember willfully choosing sharing or serving over selfishness?

This steady turn-about from short-term pleasures to long lasting happiness (from too-much self to the labor of relationship), is the sign of a great initiation into deeper self-understanding. Then the mature teen comes to understand Sokrates' dictum, "An unexamined life is not worth living". Growing in this commitment to self-understanding and willfully turning from self-concern to growing in love and service, we look beyond the superficial freedoms to include a deeper light, and responsible adolescence ripens. Instead of partying, we celebrate.

When we are strong in not re-acting like we did when we were littler *and* are usually able to respond instead of react, the transcendence of childhood grows sufficient, and the uncommon maturation of true adulthood begins.

Consider the difference between responding and re-acting, between response-ability and drama. Past or present?

What have you learned and want to remember?

Review chart. (Share the filled-out chart below.)

BRIEF NOTES on the upper colors:

Real adulthood begins as the mind gives way to love (and thinking slowly resolves in thanking). This gratitude and love is not mere sentiment, nor the feelings of soaring emotion, nor is it riddled with the sense of romance, the promise of fulfillment or poignant angst. Real love is more like self-giving than self-soaring, more trusting than knowing, more thankful than thinking, more wounded than hurt. To love with depth is to serve and give beyond self-position. It is not self-emptying, like we have no needs, but it is self-giving, since we are in touch with fullness. It is better to give

than to receive, explained the Master of the Christians. This phase of self-giving and service is not just another seven year cycle. It is a lifetime of work and pleasure. Blessed are those who can serve.

If we keep growing, we become better and better at giving — and giving ourself up — and in that heart-giving, a deep harmony is felt and seen in the interrelations with everything. In this “green” mind and light, all of life is felt and understood to be connected, interconnected, and integrated. The systems of everything are appreciated in a growing unity. Our mood of service naturally extends farther and farther.

There are colors above green, but few grow there. It takes a lifetime of harmonizing our life, strengthening our feeling, and practicing service to others. But if we persist in continual growth, wise decisions, committed service, and deepening self-knowledge, we may emerge in uncommon wonder.

We truly recognize a Sunlight Person, a sage, a savior, a prophet, an avatar, and see the Incarnation of Love. By this imprint, we grow rested in the harmony of everything and the disharmonies in life, we let our mind fall into the heart, breath after breath. In deep gratitude for immortal Sunlight and the Sunlight Person, raptures of joy begin the blue upper worlds. We are admitted to the chambers of the heart, following the footsteps of sacred heroes. Seeing and feeling the wonders of open secrets, we learn to let loose in grateful simplicity and purity of joy — as the sky of mind turns from blue to indigo.

Now we see everything from pain and urge to highest light and deepest joy. We go down to the red animal and rise with celestial wings, and bring both the dog and angel to the heart. Fallen in fullness, melted through intimacy, we rest in reality’s brightness, in the calm awareness of everything. Feeling-awareness

witnessing all, letting all, being lived and lighted. We see that reality itself is a form of conscious light and universal sentience, which shines out of every eye and dances in everything, as everything. All is consumed in a silent and thunderous I am.

In that deep violet sky, a star of clear light can readily be seen beyond the rainbow, the brilliant source of every color. $E=mc^2$ and everything from red dirt to solar cores and from sensation to sentience is made of conscious light.

We can grow out of childish disharmony and adolescent immaturity into deep happiness and stable loving. We can. We can turn from brief pleasures to longer lasting ones. We're a fool if we don't. It's not the hokey-pokey, it's turning yourself about. It's not about being right or winning or achieving, but growing and turning or yielding into the "light". The steady presence of lighted reality will always bless you.

The non-dramatization of our lives is our own responsibility, and this responsibility must certainly be realized, or else the world is inherited by mad children and overwhelmed by births and deaths.

— Avatara Adi Da

Ten Spiritual Principles of Discipline I learned from The Great Sage Adi Da

Discipline is most often spoken of and defined in terms of control, psychology, and management, but these contexts limit both the conception of discipline and its artful implementation. Our management and psyches benefit from a spiritual appreciation of discipline, free of religious games of guilt and control, and free of the provincialism of humanistic psychology.

Therefore, let us look afresh at the core principles that underlie both religious training and the mechanics of utilitarian management, and re-inspire our art of discipline. I must repeat: these wisdoms I learned from my Beloved Adi Da, and confirmed to be true in my own experience.

Please note: speak as a school-teacher and a father, attempting to elucidate ten principles that are useful to both parenting and teaching. Sometimes I speak as a parent, other times as a teacher, where I see particular emphasis is needed. If you are only a parent or only a teacher, I beg your tolerance for my inclusion of both views.

1. Discipline is the obligation of relationship. This is discipline at its core.

Relational tangibility is at the core of how and why right discipline is effective and true. The feeling of inclusion, the enjoyment of relational exchange, and the peace of trust are foundational. Each of us must attend to own growth in relational force and thus harvest the wisdom and love that can be passed on to our kids. Therefore, our discipline must be oriented to the pleasure of relationship, which we ourselves are obliged. Relationship is the point and domain of discipline.

Right discipline serves intelligence and relationship. A pedagogical example from the beginning: if a child is banging a spoon too loudly too long at the dinner table, the requirement for quieter behavior when eating is an obligation capable of being learned by every child old enough to sit there and bang. (Details to follow.) Orientation to requirements is most important; otherwise, children do not sufficiently adapt to the law of relatedness and eventually curse the world with endless stimulation and lawless self-fascination.

We must balance our nurturing force with obligations, disciplines, and challenges. This balance is well illustrated by an 88-year old Tennessee farmer who was asked to complete the sentence: "I have learned . . ." He pondered a moment and declared, "If you give a pig and a boy everything they want, you get a good pig and a bad boy."

The traditional view of discipline as fierce father force is narrow, and by its narrowness, is functionally wrong. Instead, there must be a play of forces, a dynamism of both energies, in everyone involved. For discipline is not demand devoid of nurture, both forces must be strong. Certainly, we cannot coddle our children into maturity -- nor can we force them. In service to our children, we persistently balance both the spirit of challenge and of nurture, sometimes emphasizing one side or the other, according to our imperfect art.

We take heart that this spirited approach need not be perfected to further growth in our offspring. Only trying to be attentive to relationship is required; our art will grow if we try. Therefore, our imperfections and mistakes are washed from the psychology of our children and from ourselves by this spirited effort.

We grow as we accept our mistakes as opportunities of learning. We further increase compassion for our imperfect selves as we recognize the greatness of the life that grows. Recognizing

the greatness of life, we forgive our imperfect selves and become spirited again.

As we grow in our own capacity for relational life, we come to learn that demand is not enforced by threats -- children should never be threatened, made to feel bad, or unhappy. Instead, they are to be invited into the pleasure of relationship and human community upon certain harmonious bases. This principle is a universal social structure: submission to the requirements of the group is the essence of social necessity. This requirement for submission is seen in both nurturing acculturation and in the demand for right participation. The harmonic Law thus supports social and individual forms of relationship -- community and communion. Relationship and the unity it engenders is epitomized in love's communion and community. If we want our children to grow up sane and our society to prosper, we must personally take up the disciplined labor of continually growing in relational force and teach this to our children.

Let us also note: relationship is not only enacted, but it is also calm and rested in feeling. We deepen our children's capacity for relationship when we also take the time for quiet time, silently and softly expressing the love we have for one another, or peacefully babbling about nothing...

We should not merely entertain our children constantly, nor let them adapt to a life of mere stimulation. Home life is first, simple play is second, glowing screens last. Their capacity for focused attention decreases proportionally to the increases in being entertained. While occasional entertainment may even be healthy, and while exhausted parents may need an electronic baby-sitter every now and then, we should direct (by insisting) that avenues other than entertainment be engaged. While we should teach our children to be energetic and even celebratory, we must also provide avenues for quiet, for explicit full-breaths, for basic solitude or simple play, and restfulness in age-appropriate and artful ways. Our

guidance will range from ecstatic to silly, from walks to building blocks, from loud music to letting silence be.

A basic trust is broadened by this restfulness and provides a depth for the artful and effective execution of discipline. In this rest and trust, we see clearly how discipline is not control nor psychology nor punishment; it is simply the loving obligation of relatedness. Those who take the license for continued improper and unrelational behavior must be made to see the effects of their disharmonious and separative behavior. For example, if a child has persisted in egregious behavior to the degree that they must be temporarily removed from the room, they must hear and see that you are not removing them from the social setting, they are. Thus exclusion is often the most appropriate discipline for continued misbehavior, and should always be tied to an invitation to return to the relational setting when they decide to abide by the common agreements. “Leave this circle for a moment or two; take a few breaths and relax until you can conform to the agreements we have here. I want you back in here with us, so figure out how to change your behavior and then come back. Hurry, if you can...”

The power and effectiveness of wedding temporary (and partial) exclusion to permanent and full inclusion leads us to the next point.

2. For discipline to work, there must be the pleasure of connectedness.

Friendship and loving care are the foundations of discipline, for if a child feels connected and safe, then the obligation to relationship can be given and received naturally. Care and safety empower discipline and, by such empowerment, the child’s core and being grow.

In the spirit of connectedness, we remind those who are going into temporary exclusion to return as soon as they can, let

them know we want them back; only their behavior has to change; they are acceptable and wanted, their inharmonic or unhappy behavior is too much. Emphasizing and expressing the pleasure of our connectedness empowers both relationship and discipline.

Let it be said again and again, the sign of intimacy for a child is not in things, but in time. Things can only remind one of the time spent together. For teachers and parents, this principle (usually) calls for intrinsic rewards (such as free time or liberties or the simple satisfaction of accomplishment), not extrinsic things or treats. This principle can be seen in a variety psychological emphases, from “floor time” and meal time to quality time.

Parents: Observe the special time we spend with our children: how are we really with them, at their level, interested in them? When they are young, do we play their games, take their lead? (I finally bowed out at Pokemon.)

Teachers: Observe how we want to be liked and how we are exploited by that need: do students take advantage of your graces, do you want to be loved or loving? Observe how we challenge and how we do extend care and explicit appreciation.

This pleasure of connectedness as the empowerment of discipline has fundamental truths in it, not just psychological wisdom. For as we discern our behavior as our act and action -- distinct from our depth -- our behavior becomes visible to us in depth as an action for which we can become responsible.

As we enter into and deepen the obligation to relationship, we begin to choose another act and action. By acting in loving ways that are empowered with relational force, we grow to feel the unity of relationship, and then the unity of everything, the truth in everything, and our fundamental identity with the ground of being.

3. Inappropriate behavior is usually a sign of the loss of intimacy.

Every human needs to feel connected. Sometimes that need may be expressed in a positive manner, but the hurt (and resultant protectiveness) associated with the feeling of non-connectedness will often show itself in negative ways. A child not given attention will often demand it, any way possible. Therefore, it is necessary to actively connect with your children so that they are not driven to get your attention negatively. Therefore, when bad behavior is upon us, we must first look to ourselves, make sure we do connect strongly with our children. Without spoiling too much, we assure our children of our commitment to them -- in loving words, touch, and action.

When we recognize bad behavior and increase our nurturing force in order to assure our children of connection and commitment, we must be diligent not to inadvertently reward bad behavior by that affection. Herein lies the art of the parent or teacher, to keep both challenging and nurturing forces present.

Realizing that inappropriate behavior is usually a sign of the loss of intimacy releases us from the superficial psychology of behavior modification and lets us deal with the inappropriate behavior in depth. Seeing thus, we can address the hurt that underlies misbehavior. To do so, we acknowledge the feelings the children are having, not try to change them into being superficial smiling faces. Thus, we bless all feelings, acknowledge and show understanding for anger, sadness, fear, depression, frustration, rage, and boredom. By blessing where they are at, we can draw and invite them into a connection with you, others, and when they feel this basic trust, they can feel their deep connection with nature and everything. Right behavior naturally follows and grows.

When we meet with friends or associates with children, we make sure to quickly address any children and let them voice an opinion or two; we let them know we appreciate them and see them

as real people there too. Then the received and connected children can relax and not feel the need to be connected, they will already be acknowledged. Later, if we need to address any unacceptable behavior, we won't be rowing upstream.

The efficacy of this principle first became clear to me at Adidam's Big Wisdom Free School, where I had the opportunity to be exposed to great teachers. I remember being exasperated by a new six-year-old named Jubalation who bullied the weaker children, and I couldn't control his behavior. In the playgrounds, I sounded like a broken record, "Joey, stop hitting Donya. Jubalation, you can't just take the ball away from Chris", etc., etc. One day, I looked over and saw Joey bullying a younger kid and was about to yell, when I dropped my arms in overwhelmed frustration. My master teacher, Peter Churchill, saw my surrender and my situation and rushed over, offering, "You want me to show you how to do handle Jubalation?" When I heartily and disbelievingly assented, Peter called out, "JOEY!"

Joey arrested his arm in mid-swing, looked up, his eyes saying "guilty", and he was convicted in fear. Then Peter, instantly sensing acknowledgement from Jubalation of his dramatizations, called surprisingly as he gestured, "Come here and give me a hug, I haven't had one from you in a long time."

Joey's eyes melted from fear into gratitude and he rushed into Peter's embrace. Peter had every right to discipline him for his behavior, but he didn't. Instead, Peter invited him directly back into the intimacy which forms the very substance of community.

After the bear hug, Peter looked right in Jubalation's eyes and inquired, "You having fun?" What Peter was really saying was, "Why are you being mean? Wouldn't it be smarter to play happily and not get into constant trouble?"

Joey's eyes told the adults that he understood the subscript and he was grateful for the gracious reproach to community. He nodded yes. His "yes" spoke volumes.

Peter said, “That’s good, it’s a great day for having fun. It’s beautiful out, and you can breathe in all the feeling of the mystery and beauty we can see, and share it with your friends. Right?” Peter was obviously leading Joey into a deeper responsibility and feeling connection and Joey responded with a deepening breath and a knowing smile.

“So go on back to your friends, and let me see some sharing of this good feeling in some happy play ... and apologize to Donya, will you? OK, have fun. See you.”

That day I was given a key that unlocked the closed doors in difficult children I have known.

4. Discipline works best in a culture of expectation.

If a child only receives discipline from one or two sources, the process of individuation grants the child ground to rebel against the power that is perceived to come from above. This vertical staging or adult-child-contrast is the theatre for most rebellion. If, however, a whole culture expects certain behavior, the child will be acculturated to it easily. (It is like when your kids go to a neighbor’s house and they are suddenly angels.) The discipline changes from a vertical staging to a horizontal one. Therefore, it is most important to create a culture within the classroom and in the familial sphere, where everybody is included and expected to follow certain rules of harmonious living -- and from this horizontal culture, discipline is accepted, even embraced. It really does take a village to have great discipline.

A classroom can be its own culture of great expectation. A skilled teacher creates this culture of expectation, through both nurture and demand. She or he heartily invites children into the great process of continual learning, its delight, and continual

growing and its delight. Upon the power of this enjoyment, the master teacher can tender a fire of growing demand.

I call my classroom management techniques “strategies of inclusion”, rather than the mere strategy of exclusion. For example, I draw two boxes on the board, one on each side. On one side is the typical “name-on-board” strategy. Persistent misbehavior will be named and accounted for in this box. This kind of negative accounting is usually what I call an “exclusion strategy”, a gauging of misbehavior that spans from reminders to expulsion. However, my negative accounting is flexible: good behavior will always eliminate demerits, allowing any misaligned student free access to more harmonious participation.

On the other side of the board is the minutes box. Every mark is a free minute at the end of that class period. In those free minutes, they can talk, perhaps draw on the board, listen to music, even dance. They can’t run or even be too loud or throw anything, but talk and laugh and art can be energetically and harmoniously engaged. Students who still have demerits serve the room during free time by sharpening pencils, cleaning the board, the floors, etc. (since their actions took energy away from the class, they can balance that direction by giving energy to the class ... true justice).

How does the class get free minutes? By whole class participation, whole class good behavior, by paying attention, being on task, and by individuals catching themselves when they are about to blurt something out and instead raise their hand, or by any individual efforts to improve. Since free minutes are granted to effort and not just to specific (good) behavior, minutes are most quickly earned by those students who are having the hardest time paying attention. So when those children who tend to be the problem children try and can be seen to be trying, they readily earn free minutes for everyone. The avenue to be heroic is wider for the weakest and more challenging to the already strong, but everybody is invited to a celebration.

Sample dialogue illustrating the above principles might sound like: “Did you see that class? Ronny was about to blurt out something and instead raised his hand? Did anyone see that? Well, Ronny, you have earned the entire class a minute of free time.” Or, “Jensen has not been perfect today, but he has been doing better, really trying. Jensen, when I looked up, I saw you really working well, you just earned the class a minute for everyone.” Or, “How nice and quiet. I love it when everyone is working and on task. Two free minutes, way to go everyone.” Or, “I’m sorry, this is not acceptable, I’m erasing one minute of freedom. Please earn it back.”

Five earned minutes per period is typical, emphasis on earned. Four mini-celebrations a day are possible in my school day. Rare, too. But two earned free times a day are common. Immediacy is important both for disciplines and rewards. Pizza on Fridays or an end of year trip carries little force in comparison.

In the typical name-on-board/turn-your-card strategies is the possibility of exclusion. For example, a student is asked or told to leave the room until they can meet the requirements of participation. But instead of mere exclusion, in “strategies of inclusion”, they are heartily invited back as they are made to leave. Students who must be excluded most readily reform when they are simultaneously included.

A typical dialogue in event of a temporary exclusion might go: “Jackson, will you step outside for a break? Come back when you can do your work and not distract others, I want you back. Come back when you can.”

This strategy stands in contrast to ordinary strategies of exclusion, such as name on board, go to the office, or “turn your card” demerits. For in strategies of inclusion, such “negative” accounting is flexible and not fixed, students are encouraged to improve their behavior and their balance sheet that day, soon or immediately. Students can work off bad marks for unhappy behavior in management strategies of inclusion and flexibility promotes sensitivity. Likewise, rewards are not at the end of the

year or end of quarter or even end of the week or day. It can be at the end of every period and now is always made a time to grow and learn and be happy.

5. More potent and empowering than negative consequences is the principle of attraction.

Consider the observation of Adi Da: “The secret with children, as with all human beings, is that everybody stays happy, ecstatic, full of pleasure. If you can find the pleasure or the free attention in a child, then you can redirect him or her. But if you confront the aberration that is present in the moment, they will not come out of it because they have a ritual [of self-preservation] to perform. It is the same with everybody. Therefore, the secret of living is to remain in a state of pleasure. That is your responsibility.

The secret of living with others is to locate the free attention and essential pleasure in them and in yourself and redirect them to their sanity by that means.” (Ice Cream & Shoe, 1983)

In short, if you stay happy, you will find the most economical way to draw others into that happiness. If you get unhappy, you will often find yourself in a power-struggle, where every attempt to discipline drives the student or child away from harmonious participation instead of toward it or you. If you maintain your happiness, not only are you attractive, you will easily find the fulcrum of your children’s happiness to assist you.

For example, I remember coming into a household where a baby sitter and three-year-old Felix were in the bathroom, with Felix crying. The baby sitter was trying to use the strategy of exclusion to address some unhappy and unwilling behavior of Felix. I asked permission to intervene (the baby sitter was very grateful), and asked Felix, “Do you want to come out?” (He nodded “Yes.”) “Well, then, first come to me, and let’s take a breath together. You

want to go back in the living room and play? (Yes) Well, let's take a really big breath, like this, and let go of the bad feelings and we can work it out. Come on, I'll help you. Ah. OK. Now, you wanna play some more? (Yes). Well, you have to share don't you?, and let Jordon have a turn too, OK? OK. Big breath, let's go."

In every case and inquiry, I anchored the child's attention with his object of desire, what he was attracted to. That principle of attraction was repeated and tied to the art of breathing until the emotional stability necessary for harmonious participation in relationship was nurtured forth.

In the classroom, good teachers use the principle of attraction, where learning is heartily invited, and their attractiveness creates a magnetic pole for the all students. Great classroom managers are powerfully gracious and perfectly serious, intimately helpful and full of challenges.

The principle of attraction can be seen in successes and appropriate rewards of all kinds, and by attending to this principle distinctly, the educator or parent can develop a great art of discipline. When adults help a child clarify what she or he wants, then they can direct the child to hurdle their difficulties to achieve their goal.

We need to recognize that challenge and demand are counter-productive when the feeling-being of our children is collapsed or hurt. We demand most effectively upon a foundation of safety and inclusion. Threats and idealistic demands often work against growth. While there are times when adults need to make clear distinctions and powerful requirements, there is no one-size-fits-all strategy of discipline we can apply to all situations. The more we call upon the principal of attraction, the more our childrearing will be attractive.

The principle of attraction also reveals the weakness in strategies that merely confront bad behavior. The dynamics of confrontation most often perpetuate the problem rather than solve it. "What is opposed is kept before us." fn Instead of abstract,

unhappy, and unattractive confrontation, we need to acculturate in ourselves the basic disposition of “no problem”. This is neither affectatious “la-la” nor starry-eyed idealism, and it is more than just a positive attitude. It is a reflection of real intelligence, where our deeper sentience intuits the luminous nature of life. Even where there are problems, it is “no problem” for you.

6. Discipline is a process, not an instant of success.

From the time of rapprochement (~18 months), when the toddler begins his or her assertion to the time where a child can readily change his or her reactive behavior to the relational is at least a three year project. (Indeed, it covers a lifetime of spiritual work.) We come to see that an act of discipline is not an instant success, but a process in time. Deep-seated discipline problems require persistence (that is failures, adjustments, and persistence) over time. A discipline may have to be consistently enacted or enforced for months or years until the child goes through the next developmental transition whereby the obligation is adapted to and understood. In other words, don't always look for instant results to see if the obligation of relationship is working. If we are, it is.

Discipline is neither an adult abstraction nor an immature idealism. The child must feel the pleasure of our intimacy and care, and see behavior in terms of such inclusion. Relationship is the power of our primary unity and empowers discipline with fundamental force. May the force be with us.

Imperfections and failures are inevitable and necessary. If we are involved in our own process of continual growth, we will have the necessary compassion for ourselves and for our progeny when failure overtakes us. When we fail to feel and love, it is

quickly forgiven and washed from the fabric of our soul when we begin to feel and love again.

Children learn much from our failures and apologies, from our own difficult learning. In other words, it's OK to lose it, yell too loudly or too quickly some time. Life is too difficult to always be perfectly loving in the midst of intense frustration. And since knowledge of frustration is not limited to adults, children easily understand and readily forgive errant adults if we ask them to. Such vulnerability further empowers the adult to demand and call their children to the obligation of harmonious relationship.

This soulful attention is stronger than any psychology, simpler than any complex. When we worry that our mistakes cause the children harm, we take heart that all hurt can be washed and healed by our own vulnerability, apology, and openness. Children need to feel us as continual growers like themselves, they need to hear our struggle to maturity, hear our apologies, and hear our thanks. Then they more easily join us in the spiritual work of maturation; children can understand discipline in depth.

Every classroom goes through adaptation to requirements and creates its own culture of expectation. This adaptation takes time. Patience and graciousness are as essential as challenge and demand and will be found in nearly equal measures. The art of a teacher is found in her or his ability to challenge graciously, demand patiently, and always nurture the ability to respond rather than react. Response-ability can be learned and taught. By such work, children are acculturated to go from divided to undivided attention, from feelings of exclusion to a commitment to participation.

7. Behaviors, not persons, are the subject of our discipline (and praise).

When we must discipline a child, we must be vigilant to address behavior, not the person. The person (child) is not in trouble or unloved; their misbehavior, however, must be seen to be unhappy.

This leads to an important point in the use of discipline's language, the use of "good-bad" speech. "Good-bad" speech with children is bad! It has no room for the grey areas, and it idealizes the good and makes the bad behavior into a bad person. Eliminating "good-bad" speech and substituting "happy-unhappy" lends itself to process and orientation rather than static and didactic judgments, while being quite firm and clear. "Hey, hitting is not acceptable and obviously unhappy; are you happy now? No, the hitting didn't work. One of the hardest things to learn is to not hit back. It's very hard, but it's happy....)

This principle applies to good behavior as well; e.g. "I love the way you served your room, it feels so bright in here ..." (As opposed to: "You are such a good boy/girl, you helped!") Target behavior (and highlight the effects of behavior), not persons. Persons are always acceptable; behavior is mostly acceptable, so long as a basic harmony is attended to. Eliminate "good boy, good girl, bad boy, bad girl" from your vocabulary.

We must explicitly educate our children as to what behavior is acceptable and what are the requirements for social participation. In its Latin etymology, "education" means, "to lead out." It does not mean, "to put information in." Skilled teachers lead students out from ignorance to knowledge, lead students out of misconception to wider views, and lead behavior out from self-possession into participation; great teachers lead students out of data and information into the art of understanding; and a few teachers lead souls to stand outside themselves (Gr. ek-stasis) in ec-stasy.

Understanding and ecstasy are the highest purposes of education.

8. Most problems are pre-solved, not solved.

It is the art and consciousness of the adult to foresee any possible problems or conflicts in the physical and emotional domains. If the adult applies the enquiry, “Could I have done something to prevent this?” at the discovery of every problem, he or she will be quickly educated to pre-solving. This means we take deep responsibility for problems and conflicts, even those conflicts that seem to be “outside” us. When we take responsibility for the tendency to externalize, we see the world and people most clearly. By such clear responsibility, we easily oblige our children to take a growing responsibility for their experience.

9. Discipline often feels like a betrayal.

Parents want their growing child to be self-empowered, strong and assertive, and often create a too rich, too stimulating environment of over-nurture and permissiveness as they err toward spoilage.

Self-establishment should be nurtured and encouraged, while at the same time disciplining self-obsessiveness. While this may be intellectually obvious, it is much more an emotional issue than a philosophical one. When we discipline our children, there is a feeling that we are somehow betraying them, that we are not giving them what they want or need. Discipline often feels like a

betrayal. New parents particularly over shield their darlings from the necessities and pains of life and shy away from obligations and discipline. (Thus my adage, “Have your second child first.”)

[I must also credit my sister who enlightened me when she said, “Yeah, but if you don’t spoil ‘em a little, you ain’t doin your job!”]

We must see our work as parents and teachers as humanizing, socializing, and unifying. We must guide our children from their autistic self-absorption and self-oriented automaticities into an integrative and relational authenticity. We must push beyond the common mind of self-orientation and adolescent egoity and gain strength for ourselves, our children and our social fabric. Doing so, we discern the difference between the naive and the native and appreciate the distinction between the precious and the sacred.

Discerning thus, we accept the lament of discipline. We see through the feelings of betrayal, both in ourselves and in our children. The lament remains, but it is outshined as we, full of heart, require our children to meet us eye to eye.

When we are unafraid to penetrate our children’s errant demands, we give them a great gift, the demonstration that they are not subject to their mechanical nature. They become empowered to then freely engage the world and penetrate it. To the degree we lovingly penetrate our children is the degree they penetrate the world and their own mechanics and thus stand strong in their own emotions and passion.

So we come to see that enforcing relationship is often a forceful penetration of a child’s self-possession ---; and that is a great gift we give to our children; we must propose a will stronger than their errant insistences and come to see that this requirement as a most empowering gift. That violent-free force measures the art of the teacher, mother, and father. And when we fail and act from reaction more than love, we can say, “sorry.” How else will they learn to say “sorry”?

10. Discipline changes according to the stages of childhood.

Adi Da illuminates the traditional Vedic description of childhood development as the first three great stages of a seven stage process, updating ancient language and mind with modern sensibilities. (For a elaborated version see, “Education, Or My Way of Schooling in the Seven Stages of Life,” Look at the Sunlight on the Water, 1983, or www.beezone.com/AdiDa/Sunlight/education_seven_stages_of_.htm)

The first stage of childhood begins at conception or birth and matures through the first seven years of life. It is focused in body-logic, grows until the simple autonomy of the mature child (who is losing their baby teeth). A hormonal shift begins stage two with appearance of permanent teeth and continues in emotional and character development until puberty (elementary, my dears). From puberty to adulthood is the third stage (and final phase) of childhood, wherein the discriminative capacity and resultant will are developed. While the third stage can be described as the transitional process of “trial adulthood”, it still begins and develops as a stage of childhood, ending in harmonious adulthood. Each great stage of childhood has a corresponding form of emphasis, development and discipline.

In the first stage, children are focused in the body. The tongue, tickle, touch, and body are the fields of pleasure in the first six years. Parental/familial massage, touch, and bodily activities should be the environment and focus of this body-oriented stage. In terms of discipline this means: don't (over-) talk to a first-stager, pick them up and use your body to inform theirs of your requirements. Put them in their room not with your tongue but with your hands. Whether for inclusion or exclusion, the first stager is most capable of being focused in bodily terms. While using words to explain your actions (in response to their misbehavior), your actions speak louder than your words.

When you need to enforce an obligation, engage them bodily, let the first stage child forcefully feel who is in charge. (Yes to grabbing, holding, loud voice, and carrying, No to hitting or threatening to hit, No to verbal slights or attacking language.) Like the bumper sticker says, "I'm the mommy, that's why." Remember the bottom line, beyond the talking and coaxing, discipline in the first six years is body-based. In developing this insistence, we learn how to be non-violent yet forceful, letting the child know of our commitment to harmonious, relational behavior.

In the second stage of life, children adapt to the energetic nature of existence, with feelings taking center stage. Here, the kingdom of childhood is fullest, with soaring feelings and great appreciations&emdash;yet the dyadic foil is also here with hurt feelings and collapsed perspectives. Feelings, inclusion, and membership are most crucial in this socially focused stage.

Children in the second stage need guidance about their feelings and the environments of feelings. The story and myth are crucial here, and communicate much adaptation. (PG-13 is usually NOT OK.)

Discipline at this elementary stage is most effective when it is an energetic arrangement. Agreements, handshakes, contracts, and all sorts of energetic exchanges are the substance of discipline in the elementary years. Agreements and the harmonious energy of meeting those agreements is the strongest way a second stager can be obliged to a discipline.

The third stage of life is characterized not by body or energy, but by understanding. A new mind and a new will come forth from this new level of comprehension. Cleverness and intent are key here. Therefore, the adolescent must fully participate in his or her own discipline, they must be the primary (but not only!) creator of their freedoms <=> responsibilities framework. They can fully understand the interplay of responsibility and freedom. Thus, you do not bodily address a teen, nor is it sufficient to make a simple agreement with an adolescent. (In case you haven't

noticed.) They must understand the agreement or arrangement. A conversation with a second-stager might go: “If you help clean up after dinner every night, you get to pick a movie on Friday that we all watch together, with popcorn and lemonade. OK? Let’s shake on it.” A conversation with a teen would be poised differently, acknowledging a new level or trial adulthood and the need for their understanding and adult participation. E.g. “I’ve noticed that you have such a busy life nowadays that you haven’t been helping with clean up like you used to. With your new school activities and obligations, I understand and so that’s fine, but as you can see, running a household is a very big job. You see all the things to do [list], so now that you’re no longer a kid, I want you to come up with a plan on how you are going to help this ship along. And come up with your freedoms and responsibilities that go along with that.”

In the third stage classroom, the children must be involved with their disciplines. For example, a teacher might ask the students to come up with the spectrum of discipline and consequences. “You tell me, what is the worst thing that can happen to you at school for continued misbehavior? Expulsion? OK, let’s write expulsion on a 3 x 5 card and put it up here. Before expulsion, what is there? Suspension? OK, let’s put that on another 3 x 5 card and stick it up too. Next? Conference with principal, teacher, and parents? OK, here. Next? Sent to office? OK? How do you get sent to the office? OK OK OK. Well, before being sent to the office, what should the consequence of continued misbehavior be? Outside the classroom for five minutes or so? Miss Recess/Freetime? Yard cleanup during lunch? OK OK OK, let put each of those on a 3 x 5 card. Now, how does someone get sent out of the room? OK OK OK. Just one time or more? OK. Now, let’s arrange the cards in the order you all think is best, from gentle reminder to expulsion.....” In this case, the children understand and co-create the discipline spectrum, and misbehavior is not rectified by merely an adult authority, but by the understanding and consent of everyone.

When parents and teachers comprehend this third-stage focus of understanding, they realize that every discipline and obligation must come from the teen, based in their understanding. Instead of always giving consequences and intoning obligations, the adult starts with asking the teen for an understanding of the situation and then obliges him or her to come up with their own plan of restitution, achievement, or goal --; and the resultant freedom, liberty, or prize. In the third stage, the parents must surrender their traditional parent role and become a friend and guide. (This is no small task and may take the help of other adults and/or take years of artful release.) Comprehending that the child is in a period of “trial adulthood”, always strive to have the third stager — based on their understanding — come up with consequences for misbehavior, rewards for right actions, and creative solutions to adult concerns.

The third stage of childhood is distinctively different from the preschool and elementary years in one more very significant way: the teen years are not characterized by the dependence feeling of the first and second stages, nor by independence only, but in the conflict between dependence and independence. Therefore, instead of the built-in sense of dependence in the first two stages, the teen’s emotional life feels like a dilemma. This feeling of dilemma can be understood by adults and teens. The teen years need not be so hard. But their own growth must be understood by teens in ways that is free from the shoulds and oughts of leftover religious idealisms. Instead, a teen can come to understand their dilemma by understanding the proper proportions of dependence and independence and where they are in a greater process. This location of the proper proportions of dependence and independence is found in a realistic and workable settlement of liberties and responsibilities. Dilemma is progressively undone in progressive responsibility. Teens can understand this and, by their understanding, are invited into continual growth instead of being stuck somewhere forever.

Parents can work a generational miracle by understanding the principles of discipline and growth. Classroom management can merge into the strength of the community, and every student can locate herself and himself within a psychological framework of inclusion and excellence.

Part Three:
Christianity and Vedanta

Why I Am Not Only a Christian

Let's start with what is it to be Christian anyway? Who says? Is it to accept Jesus of Galilee as your personal Sign of God? Is it to understand and see Jesus Christ as the very Appearance of the "Heavenly Father" or Divine Person? Is it to be a devotee of the Incarnation of the Radiant Divine -- with the Messiah from the Jews as that One?

The name "Jesus" is a misspelling and mispronunciation that resulted from the translations of ~Yeshua's name after his death, first into the Greek Iesous (pronounced "ee-ay-SUS"), and then from the Greek Iesous into the Latin Iesus. The King James Bible, written (1611) at the beginning of the seventeenth century, has the name Iesous ("ee-ay-sus"), with no "j." The J had already been begun to be used, first by the great Rhetor, Peter Ramus, but was not widespread for almost a century. The name "Jesus" was not common until sometime after the middle of the seventeenth century.

"Christ" is also Greek, meaning "anointed". Many theologians propose that this means receiving the spirit baptism of God -- wherein one drinks the holy nectar of free feeling, resonates to the vibrance of self-transcending love, and floats in divinity. Iesous, the Anointed one, full of spirit baptism, overflowing with love of the divine nature, condition, and substance of even this world, demonstrated ecstatic sacrifice, divine communion, yogic powers, and identity with the very divine. Or so it seems from the reports. Likewise, it appears that the Nazarene was not only anointed with spirit, but also anointed others with spiritual force -- a force conveyed by his righteous actions, depth of speech, and mere presence. If "Christian" refers to being anointed by the spirit-force of God and celebrating the nectar of freely feeling, then I pray I am Christian.

Jesus the Christ certainly demonstrated to the Middle East and the West the efficacy and power of the ancient way of

“Sat-sang” -- conscious relationship with the Divine Person, the Daylight One. Through the heart-immediacy of the personal relationship with the Divine Person, the divine Condition of the world, thought and self is quickly found to be already the case. The kingdom of God is ready for you. Will you give your heart to the Person of Love?

By these accounts, I am a Christian. I love the very person of God, personally. My love for the Master of the Christians overflows in my core and baptises my heart. He gave mercy to humankind and extended the most intimate love from family and friends through community and province to everyone, Jew or Gentile, enemy and all. If to stand in awe of his great demonstration constitutes what it is to be “Christian”, then count me in.

If helping the weak, turning the other cheek, and loving your neighbor via dedicated loving of our very divine nature are examples of the teachings of Jesus of Galilee, then you can say that I am of Christian sympathy. If making a commitment of turning from seeing this world as matter, flesh, and others (and acting like matter and body and others are things to be managed) to seeing the world, body, and others as spirit or energy (and intermeshing with them) typifies the “Christian understanding”, then I join the chorus of the Pentecost and Einsteinians.

In the spiritual way of sacred company or “satsang”, bowing to a master is not a mythic understanding of a psychological or neurological process; it is not mere membership in a magical club of grown-up children. Real religion is not about belief or membership. It is relationship with the person of love; it is to learn the arts, graces, and skills of self-transcendence that empower our intimacy with others, the natural world, and our divine condition and Ground of Being. Every trade and art has its masters, and (to state the obvious) to learn from a spirit-master is the most efficacious way of growing in the master’s art and spirit.

Real religion is not dogma; it’s relationship. It is to see through the master what real life Is; it is to be imprinted with the

Master's demonstration. Of course, in provinces and provincial mind, this demonstration of divinity is interpreted in the cultic understanding of the tribe. Unfortunately, every provincial scripture poisoned the agency of its message with immature exclusivity. Thus religions often are at war with their own message and with all who disagree with it.

In matters of the heart, it is said that the Heart Itself takes birth. These are the great holy heroines and heroes of our common history. In contrast to ordinary and even extra-ordinary humans who grow up to the light. "Human" is most related to L. *humus*, rich earth; in Hebrew, *adam*. Thus, it is said that from time to time, the Light comes "down" to earth, into the meat-body, and incarnates. These masters are the "heaven born" Ones, born of the Father, One with the Mother, and fully embody the spiritual source and ground perfectly.

These "downward-coming persons" of the Heart or "avatara" create a most natural attraction for us humans. It is wonderful to adore and fall in resonant love (*para-bhakti*) with such a "Sat-Guru" (Lighted-Teacher), for they are transparent to our infinite ground of being. This adoration is seen in the Gopis' distraction to Krsna; and the beholding of the Incarnation is the practice of all saints, East and West. Recognition of the Light of the avatara and adoration for the master is found at the fulfillment of the Way, world-wide. Ask any "believer" in the Incarnation. Or look yourself at the evidence and elegance of Satsang: the Company of the Free One. Simply This.

In Hinduism, this chosen person was "Ishta" (usually the teacher or master, the guru). Loving anyone is a form of ishta practice, for beloveds are chosen by your heart. The greatest of adorations is found in the company of God-possessed masters who love profoundly and unendingly. Ishta Guru Bhakti Yoga (or the Heart Yoga of Sustained Embrace of the Chosen Teacher) is the Royal Gift of avatars.

The distinction between humans growing up and avataric descent was the pivotal debate at the Council of Nicea in 325. Was Yeshua of Galilee descended from God or a God-infused, but human-prophet? Was Jesus the mouth of God or the messenger of God?

The protagonists were Anathanasius (Mouth of God) and Arius (messenger of God). Their argument went something like this [Arian version first]: Jesus was a human, and no matter how much God infused him, the limitations in the structure of being human would dictate that he be considered similar to God, full of God, taken over by God even, but not God Himself. Anathanasius (and the vast majority) replied: God can do whatever he wants, if God wants to take form, be born, no problem; the Infinite is not critically qualified by the finite. Period. The principle of avataric incarnation is the greatest teaching, they said. The Nazarene was not similar, he was the Same.

In the language of Greek that they used to argue their points, “similar” to the *ousia*-“presence/essence/substance” of God is *homoiousia*; but “same presence/essence/substance” as God is *homoousia* (sans *i*). The Council voted ~300 to 2 for *homoousia*, the “Same”, stating that there was not an iota of difference between Jesus and the essence or substance and presence of God. This is why the Nicene Creed says, “God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made. Being of one substance with the Father...”. Every time you hear the phrase “not an iota of difference” you can recall what reverence there is for the ancient way of Satsang.

It may be most efficacious to learn from a master, but to learn from the avatar is not easy. For instance, Jesus advocated profound change. First, renounce the mortal dross of temporary pleasures and appreciate the happiness of love and giving that does not pass. Turn about from self-orientation to being a heartfelt servant and lover. Convert attention from the limitations of the

flesh to a healthy appreciation of the body blessed. Turn from the world of mechanical comings and goings to another appreciation: the sublime condition and beauty of every dance, system, person, and paradox.

Sustained turning to the heart and spirit delivers the practitioner into the paradoxes of love. “The Father and I are One” was taken as a “proof” of the “Homoousian” argument, but Joshua of Galilee spoke for everyone (and to everyone): the ground of being is One with divine love. Therefore, when asked to summarize his teaching, Jesus of Mary repeated the law already found in the Old Testament: Love the Divine with your entire heart and soul and mind, and thus love your fellows as your very self.

When the Temple priest Nicodemus came secretly to see Jesus, he asked the renegade teacher how one comes to the divine estate. The Master of the Christians said you must be born again into seeing and appreciating everything as a form of spirit, a form of blossoming light. He taught that one must turn from the satisfactions that pass to the joy that is eternal. Turn from being doomed to fleeting bodily pleasures and self-satisfactions and be born again in heart-joy—with a calm adoration of true beauty.

In the Christian scripture, the Greek word for this turning was *metanoia*. *Meta-* “beyond” or “above” (in the sense of senior principle) + *noia*, “knowing”. In other words, beyond what we think we know, there is another view that mysteriously appears as we turn and open to it.

Beyond mortality and ordinary knowledge, the ineffable is not only unspeakable, but unknowable. We do not get or attain beauty, we sacrifice ourselves to what is unlimited. We turn from the certainty of knowledge to open enquiry; we turn from overview to understanding, from the insistences of hubris to appreciating our real situation; via our *metanoia*, we feel how we are a humble and finite arrangement within an Infinite Field. Matter transmutes into Energy, everywhere. We naturally intuit the benevolence of our

Infinite Field and how This Beauty outshines the loss of forms that pass. We behold the dance of Siva.

In ordinary Asklepian medicine, this *metanoia* was the requisite pivot that leveraged true healing. From the Hellenic cult of the caduceus, *metanoia* is translated as “changing your thinking habits or disposition”. Change from the un-ease that aggravates dis-ease to appreciation and gritudes. *Metanoia* was said to be the foundation of real health.

The Christian scripture was converted from the Greek into Latin and then English, and thereby *metanoia* is translated as “repentance”. While the word “repentance” has acquired the bad tastes of guilt-burdened children and manipulative controllers, “repentence” retains some of its essential meaning. Its Latin etymology reveals the roots of “repentance” as “to turn from pain”. Turn from the painful mechanical views of mortal convictions, victim-position, and justified hurt to the free spirit or fundamental energy that constitutes every thing and everyone. Turn from matters of this world to the colors of being then to spirit-light itself. The Truth will make you free.

Turn to the Light, turn from closed and closing to open and opening; turn from self-fascination and self-satisfaction to self-transcendence and service. Thus we turn our Eros love into Agape.

As we convert our focus from short-termed pleasures to longer lasting happiness, we turn from the pain of things that expire upon the earth and turn to the heart and breath that inspire all.

To enter the Kingdom is to enter the holy Temple of our Radiant Ground. With sustained turning from the ephemeral, we find our self in the ocean of life, paradoxically “saved” from drowning in mechanical destinies. Inspired by the unlimited, we naturally feel our limitations, our selfishness, our ugly laziness, and our misdeeds or “missing the mark” of our core (*harmartia* in Greek, *synn* in Old English).

We turn from the thread of self to the cloth of our community, from our spindle destiny ending in death to the tapestry of immortal life. We fear our weaker side and dark threads no more; we are saved by what is always and already the case. “I” turns to the sacred company that is always being offered. *Metanoia, the estate of divinity is at hand*, he said.

Metanoia is also seen in Jesus’ proposition that a person must be born again into the spirit to see the Palace of the Divine. This is not a myth to be believed, hell no. It is a metaphor. We must look through the story or parable forms of early religions to their meanings. This is not a philosophical categorization and subsequent disposal of the “moral of the story”. Instead, we stay attuned to the heart of the matter, so to speak. We should listen to the stories and metaphors in an open and blessing disposition, then hermeneutically winnow the deeper meanings. On the surface, myths, tales, and stories of extraordinary people are believed, and defended by the provincial mind. Archetypes emerge as metaphors, pointing to the light and person beyond the ordinary mind. This holy light cleanses our mortal sentiments, and open understanding emerges.

Metanoia: repentance: transmutation of all matters to the heart; metanoia: transformation, sustained change from the orientations of the mortal ego to the view of others and the whole; metanoia, born again into the blessings that outshine even death.

In every field, we turn from the superficial to the core, from material details to the heart of the matter. The discipline of this conversion changes ordinary matter into a holy light, at hand, now. Here, disciples float in the body of God, suspended in a nexus of joy, and are lighted in a matrix of holy brightness. Blessed be.

Christianity and the Teachings of Jesus are in a family of religions whose core is relationship with the Person of God, known through the Incarnate One. Immature Christians confuse Jesus’ ecstatic exclamation of unity with God as an exclusive and provincial proclamation. They cannot grasp how Jesus could

be everything they believe him to be, but not exclusively. God and His Forms was not a one-time thing! This is in line with the Nicene argument: the Infinite is not limited by the finite. “When righteousness declines and there is no love, I assume the form of man and I come again. But I am not born and I shall never die.” (*Bhagavad Gita*)

Narrow exclusivity and ownership of God is evident in the preciousness of every fundamentalist, and arrogant insistence of superiority in the local name of God poisons every religion. Wanting to convert the world before converting our own heart is not service to the greater whole or to the person of love.

The arrogance of fundamentalists and the narrowness of believers do not deter me from being only a Christian. Rather, I am a practitioner of the Way of Satsang, which has many manifestations, including Christianity. It is the Way of the Company of the Beloved “Divine” Master; the Way of the Truth and Love are revealed there, and in the Company of fellow practitioners. The Daylight Persons are all from One Light. The Ishtas or Chosen Beloveds all illumine the Singularity of Daylight.

I honor practitioners of all masters and avatars. Thus, I love Christians, Muslims, and Jews; I love the whole of Jesus, Mohammed, and Moses; and I also love Krsna and the Hindus, I am amazed and heart-enlightened by Gotama Sakyamuni and the Buddhists; Lao-Tzu and Confucius, and the list goes on. Yes to all practitioners, but with one restriction: any proclamation of superiority or exclusivity is treated as the arrogance or immaturity of children.

No one, no religion, no way owns the truth; each one only points to the paradoxical Way of Intimacy with the Ground and Person of Groundless and un-personal infinity, the formless feeling of being, eternal intoxication with the Beloved, with Beauty Itself.

I have been baptized unendingly in this Vast Heart Joy by my Beloved Master, Avatara Adi Da, my Ishta in Satsang. Let every

one come to the Perfect Peace of Heart-Joy. Let every Master help, guide, and baptize.

Like the bumper sticker says, “God is too big for any religion”. But while no religion owns God or receives extra providence, we cannot jettison the heart of the matter; because believers are childishy arrogant does not justify our rejection of religious beliefs (or our retreat into adolescent arrogance in scientific materialism, self-congratulatory abstractions, and consoling insights).

We must appreciate belief as the understanding of childhood, and we must appreciate clever, constructed, and de-constructed knowledge as adolescent and always partial understanding. Integrating irrationality, rationality, and mere construction is the whole and lighted ground of each sense and all sentience; not demanding or clinging or vaporous; nor set aside and separate or within any nexus, but like the touch of an intimate: inherently wise, faithfully open, and naturally being. This rest-depth and natural responsiveness intercourses with penetrating, mature, and formless understanding.

This fullness and clarity is not a clever achievement nor delivered or undone by great thought. This gift has always been paradoxically “found” in the Company of the Master, the Divine Sphere of holy Light. Every Christian worth his salt has exclaimed the sufficiency of relationship with the Person of Love; has praised the Son of Man as the Son of God; and has felt themselves to be personally blessed with providence and joy. The same goes for every devotee of every Avatara who taught or teaches or will teach through the immediacy and elegance of Satsang.

At the shores of oceanic God and by a stream of Avatars, I am not only a Christian. At the feet of my Beloved Adi Da, I am baptized in supreme being.

Bright am I,
the Heart is spoken.
Life am I,
the Bright has spilled the world.
Real am I
for those who understand.
There am I
for those who seek.
Here am I
for those who know the Truth.
Food am I
for those who will be sustained.
Word am I
for those who would be consoled.
Light am I
for those who see beginnings.
Sound am I
for those who will not end.
Death am I
for those who seek forever.
I am I
for those who love forever.

— from *Crazy Da Must Sing*

The Anatta Upanishad
**Understanding the Three Phases of the Heart
and Penetrating the Five Sheaths of Illusion**

Preface

The Vedas (from *veda*, translatable as “knowledge) are *heard* (*Shruti*) from someone demonstrating mastery. The Vedas are explicitly not conjecture (*Smriti*). The word *Upa* “by/near” plus *ni-sad* “sit down” form *Upanishad* — those teachings that are received when sitting near a spiritual realiser. An Upanishad thus conveys, first-hand, the teaching of an enlightened Adept. The Upanishads are the “fullness” (*-anta*) or “ontological” completion of the Vedas, or Vedanta.

“An-atta” means “no self”, and this consideration was initiated by Hinduism’s greatest critic, Gautama Buddha. Thus, the Anatta Upanishad draws from both traditions, Hindu Vedanta and Buddhist philosophy.

It is my great and incomparable blessing that I sat at the feet of a being I consider to be a Living Buddha, Avatara Adi Da, Daylight in Person. In relationship with Adi Da, I have seen and felt the Perfect Void of no-self, the “zero of the Heart”, as well as Love’s Perfect Intimacy.

I am not a realizer or even a scholar. I have been overwhelmed with the vibrant transmission of divine Love, and so I can muse freely, for Adi Da Samraj, the Bright-Ruchira Buddha, has shown me God-possession, the divine source-condition intercouring as the clear light of everything.

I stand and swoon in Da DayLight. Therefore, this three-part musing on *anatta* must open with (and regularly repeat) the traditional Buddhist saw, *Ehvam*: “This I have heard.”

I. Gautama's Gift

Ehvam: This I have heard.

The Pali Canon was written four centuries after the Buddha passed into Nirvana --in the first century before the Common Era --and is the principal record of Gautama Buddha and his enlightened teaching. In his teaching, humanity was given no myths and no beliefs, no objectified divinity nor dreams of heaven, but rather an awakened and rational approach to understanding the pain of self, *dukkha*, or "suffering". Instead of offering a pantheon for religious comprehension, the Awakened One (*Buddha*) "set the wheel in motion" for most profound self-understanding. Instead of magic, myth, or mentality, he called for maturity. Instead of salvation, he taught liberation.

Like the Hindu prescriptions and precepts that preceded Buddhism, much of Buddhist teaching ("Dhamma" or "Dharma") focused on a life that is moral, balancing, and harmonious. Gautama's Middle Way and Eightfold Path, like all systems of great growth, emphasize this kind of wholesome preparation: cleanliness is next to godliness. But let us not confuse the Middle Way or Eightfold Path with the unique gift of the Buddha's teaching. Like the Upanishadic wisdom which preceded Gautama, the Buddha spoke of the impermanence of pleasures dependent upon passing forms. And like the Upanishads, the Buddha called for the end of dissatisfaction. But instead of idealizing any icon (founded in internal or external reality) as the solution to the problem of suffering, this Awakened Being called for the rational and radical understanding of desire. Unlike the Vedas and Upanishads, the Buddha did not trumpet a heaven or salvation, or even a transformation of soul into Oversoul (atman to Paratman). Instead, he offered the Four Noble Truths.

Buddhism has been called "the aberration of India". In Hinduism, India's dominant religion, the individual (*jivatman*) or breath of self (Sanskrit, *atman*; Pali, *atta*) was presumed to evolve into the unchanging Self (or Atman or Brahma). Against such a backdrop, Gautama Buddha, the Sage of the Shakyas (Shakyamuni), unveiled the illusions inherent in the traditional paths leading from

the little atman to Really Big Atman, soul to Oversoul. Instead, Buddha recommended that his follows develop an understanding of desire and soul. By such understanding, even spiritual desires and the deep personality are undressed and un-done. It was the Awakened Buddha that slew the very illusion of soul itself. By such razor discrimination, the unborn Reality and primal Ground stands aloud Bright when the self and its supports are understood and un-done. It can therefore be said that the most salient, noble, and sublime Teachings of Buddha are those of an-atman (Pali: an-atta), a term meaning “no soul.” *Anatta* played in loud contrast to Hinduism’s atman and the soul’s search for salvation.

Treatises and discussions on nirvana (“blown out”) and discussions of the Buddha and Buddhism do not focus for long on this core dharma of anatta, this distinguishing historical mark, except as a foundation of the principles of transitoriness and the void. (There are many brilliant exceptions.) Instead, there is an understandable tendency in Buddhism to over-focus on the preparatory teachings of right living, moderation, concentration, desires, attachments, and reincarnation. Too little is made of Gautama’s night under the bodhi tree, or the teachings of anatta or even nirvana.

Siddhartha was still subject to the sleep of illusion when he sat down under the bodhi tree, and when he arose, he was Awake, the Buddha. To the Buddha, belief was not sufficient, nor was the knowledge and powers of ragged pleurists or austere yogis. Even the soul itself, in all its fullness, complexity, and depth was still restricting; once he realized this limitation to consciousness, the persona of Prince Siddhartha was “blown out” in *nirvanic* bliss. When the last sheath of soulfulness was uncovered, the Buddha opened his eyes.

At first he did not teach, feeling that enlightenment could not be communicated. When he did speak, it is reported that indeed he taught the Middle Way of avoiding extremes, refreshing the balancing and moral wisdom in religious traditions before him. But this balancing wisdom was grounded in the greater message of the Flower Sermon: a penetrating insight about the core of suffering, the root of desire and identity. To come to such clarity, one need not believe in the Gods, Goddesses, or even the One God,

but rather understand the core of unhappiness. Rather than the idealism of Gods, Goddesses, or the One God, the Buddha offered a most profound realism.

It was a practical realism, grounded in practice and understanding. He loudly reiterated traditional wisdom: Don't confine yourself to impermanent pleasures or to belief and myth. Instead, balance the life, and turn your attention to what is not-limited. But instead of personalities or any other icons of divinity, the Buddha recommended that we contemplate desire's tension, with all of its clinging and disappointment as well as the temporal nature of its attainments. By a critical and sustained examination of desire and unhappiness, we come to understand the (resultant) self that is always seeking something. Upon this great foundation (maha-stupa) of self-understanding and by the life of harmony, we may relax in and into the non-mythic, trans-rational, a priori, unborn, formless Mystery and inherent joy that is the Condition of all conditions, experienced easily in the immanence of beauty and love and realized as Consciousness itself.

Persistence in this penetrating understanding and practice causes knowledge, mind, and at last, self to be clarified and released into nirvanic mystery. This mature and sentient approach to the nature of suffering penetrated the mythic mind of childish belief and the adolescent mind of clever self-sufficiency.

Instead of myths and knowledge, the Enlightened One, beyond self and mind, Void and Unborn, naturally One with all and All's Radiance, gave the Dharma of anatta: no soul; just the absolute, transcendental consciousness understanding the fabric of identities and the fabrics of their desires. Buddha's silence about the soul and God was a shout into the egoic chatter of Hinduism. No soul! No confinement to any identity, not to the body, not to the feelings, not to the mind, not even to the soul, or the inward consciousness of the essential person.

By such clarity, the Awakened One disallowed belief in the illusion of personality or divinities. He demonstrated paradoxically -- through the vehicle of an apparent individual -- the unborn radiance and uncaused happiness of inherent being, and how the One shines beautifully when we understand ourselves profoundly. This radical roar in the face of Hinduism's atman, myth, and egoity

was practically incomprehensible yet undeniable.

How would one intimately describe anatta, elucidating both its feeling and understanding? How is a negation delineated? I have heard many philosophical descriptions attempting to elucidate Shakyamuni's core dharma but, for me, Avatara Adi Da, the Bright living and breathing present-day Buddha, explained it best. He said: Make a fist. See how there seems to be a center? From this center a complex of relations can be discerned, and the core seems to be a point inside. That illusory point is the target of all experience, forming one dyadic pole of all co-arising, and the tensive cause of every desire. Desire's promise of release is created by the stress of closure and self-orientation. By understanding desire, we understand our most unconscious act, self-creation.

If you open your hand, there is nothing inside, and the point that seemed to be there is seen to be unreal. No search is needed, for no tension supports it. In the profundity of natural openness, the self is perfectly understood, and one is relieved of the burdens of fulfillment or annihilation.

Our sense of being a self inside our head or heart, of being a capsule of energy or a separate soul of any kind, is the logic of the presumption of the differentiating self, *atta*, *jivatman*. The common persuasion is that the "me" that is created by tension and identity can be fulfilled, that my soul will be free, my goal will be attained, and my river will flow into the ocean someday. This is the *atta's* dream, and is to be noticed as only a dream. Dreams are the hope of the soul. Dreams are for those who are asleep, not noticing the mechanics of dreaming or the dreamer or self.

Ehvam: This I have heard.

There is a Radiance, uncaused and unborn, that is always the substructure and true substance of everything and all, lighting all formed realities, places and beings. Knowledge itself is lighted by This. Every thought and sensation are lighted by This. Even the soul itself, deep in the heart, is lighted by This. Consciousness and Being are One in This. This unborn unthing is radiant without cause and

naturally everywhere; this bright void is Happy without reason, and is ecstatic and conscious without form. Or as my Initiator, Avatara Adi Da, says in *The Paradox of Instruction*, "Truth is a formless presumption." Formless anatta is not just the philosophical explanation for transitoriness; anatta describes the selfless doorway to nirvana.

So what is the transition from the lie of the suffering soul to the truth of ecstasy (Greek: "standing out" from self)? How do we open the hand and end our sense of separation?

Adi Da, the Bright Living Buddha, gives His Dharma:

"What is it that you mean, that you are signifying and pointing to, when you say or feel you are suffering, unhappy, not at ease? You are pointing to your own action and finding it is the experience of separation, contraction, pain. But it is the compulsive and presently not-conscious avoidance of relationship, relative to the Divine Presence, and relative to all arising conditions. When this action becomes your responsibility, then these experiences and concerns will become obsolete by degrees in the action of God-Communion, and then in the intuition of your true Condition."

-- Breath and Name, 1977

I -- the soul, atta, atman, jiva, ego -- is the illusion created by my avoidance of relationship, my painful self-contraction, like unconsciously making a fist. My sense of being "inside" is really the reflection of my lack of loving. My dreams are the sign that I am asleep. But as I open my hand -- as I listen to the voice that is already awake, as I yield to self-transcending understanding, as I waste not in dreams, desires, and promises, as I keep to the Middle Way, as I become response-able to not turn away and grow in my persistence to love -- the eternal Presence that Is always and already (the Awake Condition, Supreme Being, the Heart of Reality) shines and enlightens. Sleep's unreal worlds fall away as eyes open in the paradoxical Company of the Enlightened One. The dreamer or soul is simply the sensation short of infinity, less than awake in bright relatedness (Sanskrit: Satsang). Where love becomes worship and openness is absolute, when there is not even any self or soul drinking the deep, there is the ecstatic doorway, anatta, to the Void and Divine Reality. No dreams and no dreamer: all tension and

attention are joyously recognized in perfect self-understanding, heart-open and heart-possessed, awake with vision, Loving without end.

This I have heard, seen, and felt in the Company of the Awakened One, my Beloved Adi Da.

II. The Three Hearts

Ehvam: This I have heard.

From our sensory, earthly point of view, spirituality is often emotionally imaged as a vertical path -- wherein your urge to go up and up (the tree of life) takes you to the fruit of God, absolute happiness, the wonderful heart-truth. Great intelligence has been applied in the efforts to discern such a procession or spectrum of existence. Seven chakras, kundalini, God in heaven, and all such symbols and concepts, call us to grow beyond our limitations.

However, the procession of humankind doesn't go merely up and up (as the "snake" would have you believe), but rather integrates more and more, adding greater and greater dimensions to the heart. So in addition to vertical descriptions of spectral subtlety, we also find (in sources ranging from ancient Vedic texts to Ramana Maharshi and Adi Da) the horizontal Way of the soul's undoing in the causal.

Simpler and more integrated than the paths of spectral ascension is the penetrating understanding of the source-cause of the self itself. Such intuitive understanding of our primal self-creation is not just a philosophical insight; it is by understanding that we cease disturbing love's flow. Then allowing love's flow more and more, we become over time transformed, balanced, and thereby sublimed, at last free to attend to the root of attention itself -- to the very source of the soul's identity, where the radiance of reality Witnesses even the self and its objects of attention.

Unlike yogic highs, the horizontal description of the Way remains rapturously attentive to the essence of the heart. Thus it is said that the soul or self develops and dissolves across three hearts --left, middle, and right. These three stations of the heart correspond to the gross, subtle, and causal dimensions, respectively.

Likewise, there are correspondences to the states of waking, dreaming, and sleeping, but in every case the heart is the core consideration.

The Left Heart

The left heart implies or includes the physical heart, the home of the gross body and pranic or etheric energies surrounding and pervading the physical. Here we inherit the rich earth and animal urges, limbic resonances and fascinations, pranic and erotic swells, sentimental dreams and romantic promises, conventional psychologies and consoling therapies, enthusiastic religions, and conventional, immature spirituality.

In other words, the left heart is as big as nature, and unfortunately, holds all of nature's capacity for delusion (even as it unconsciously grows the very Heart Itself).

When we see sexual potential and feel the dreamy heat of the evolutionary urge, we growl out our animal "love" for our prey. A "kill" often follows, and our heart is found to be sinister (Latin, "left"). When we "fall in love" and romance seems to promise fulfillment, that's the left heart. A broken heart always follows. When we take entertainment to be experience and stimulation to be the ideal, that's the left heart temporarily reflecting the dazzle of eternal reality itself. Therein we find the common mass. When we are consumed in energies, sensitivities, and soaring emotion, that's the left heart yearning for the Heart of hearts. The "New Age" enthusiast follows. When we are the soft new age guy and the really feeling feminist, and think we are on to something and that we are basically enlightened now in the heart ... yes, but residing mostly in the left part. When we are newly struck with the superficiality of the physical and common world and Sisyphean desire, we find the promise of charismatic religions and fascinating spirituality --that's the idealistic left heart intuiting the real Heart. Believers, seekers, and the disenchanteds follow. When we're really "getting somewhere" in therapy, often that's the left heart and social mind sensing the middle and growing into it. Existentialism often follows, or a lifetime of working on "it" (and a few come to love's

core). When anything other than eternal Life is "one's life", that's the left side again. Therein we find the ten thousand dreamy lives.

The left heart is deluding, and remains so until the limits and immaturity of the left side are clearly seen. Until then, the left heart (and social mind) confuses romance with love, the precious with the sacred, the naive with the native, emotionalism with real feeling, righteousness with morality, and sentiment and sentence with sentience.

The power which drives the left-sided delusion, however, is its intimacy with or reflection of the Heart of hearts. Because of the left heart's closeness with the very Heart, much of the left-leaning sentiments are blessed. But because the left is weak and incomplete, sinister impulses and actions, as well as all merely egoic affections need to be understood in order that we may grow beyond them.

The Middle Heart

Ehvam: Thus I have heard.

The middle heart says "I love you" without sentimentality, without needing a response or feeling the sense of promise. Coming to the middle heart from the left, we intersect the vertical (chakric) description of spiritual development; for the middle heart is the same as anahatta, the fourth chakra -- real human maturity and integral existence.

The middle heart is sacrificial rather than fulfilling, and here we find saints and servants of full force, such as Mother Teresa, Mahatma Gandhi, Teresa of Avila, St. Francis, Ramakrishna. We also notice hundreds of other greats --as well as countless ordinary humans and artists touching and breathing the central heart in the beginnings of real love.

The middle heart integrates the "lower" spectrum of the left heart by progressive responsibility, consistent self-forgiveness, and wise compassion. This active, adult loving provides the foundation for raptures above the heart and adorations of love-bliss in the heart. In the middle of the chest, this central heart is the cup that overflows into the world of relations. The middle heart is the beginning of the sacred sphere of divine love.

In the same spirit as the early Christian discernment

between the fascinated highs of eros and the deep transformations of agape, to distinguish between the "hearts" is to gain a depth of self-understanding and grow beyond self-limitations into Real God, Real Happiness, Real Truth, True Love.

The Middle Heart is analogous to the Holy Spirit, beside the Father and Son on the right. The Middle Heart is the precinct of the Blessed, the epiphany and adytum where the Presence of the Divine Person on the right forever baptizes devotees coming from the left.

The middle heart is the heart of Orpheus, before he loses Eurydice. We recall how on the voyage of the Argo, even the binding and sinister Siren voices fell silent to hear his joyful music. But the middle heart is still in duality -- as the beloved of the middle heart still has a sense of otherness -- like Orpheus and Eurydice, or I and Thou. This duality is the schism wherein Eurydice fell back into death, thus revealing the binding tension of the Orphic middle heart. And the theological duality is unmasked as we understand the early religious revulsion of the body and its animal nature.

Orpheus's lesson is the lesson of the middle heart. To grow beyond the limits of human love, social idealism, object dependency, and religious deification is the fruit and fullness of understanding the Orphic error and the middle heart's lesson of duality.

One may grow from the middle heart in ascending raptures, set the throat free in blissful ravings, point to the bliss above, and yogically go there. This fulfills the evolutionary urge of eons and deeply grounds our spiritual maturity. Here we find hundreds of great yogis, mystics, and realizers such as Muktananda, Nityananda, Ramakrishna, and Yogananda demonstrating great heart-power and the wonder of the whole spectrum. Here we mystically see and rightly understand the Tankas of Tibet, Mandalas East and West, tribal celebrations, the Mysteries of Hellas, the sacraments of Christ, the secret of the Golden Flower, the Peyote of the Mayans, the Paradiso of Dante, and the concertos of Mozart.

Upon, after, or beside this acme, one may be sagely instructed on the limits of human love and the fearful error of the mystical, away-from-the-body ascent, and move intuitively to the heart on the right by grace.

The Heart on the Right
Ehvam: This I have heard.

The heart on the right is an esoteric secret, revealed by those who have exceeded animal lows, humanistic logic, and the yogic highs. “Two finger-widths to the right of center”, the heart on the right is called the seat of the soul, the source of identity, and the intuitive place we point to when we say “I”.

The Sage of Arunachala explained, “When asked who you are, you place your hand on the right side of the breast and say, ‘I am.’ I have been saying all along that the Heart centre was on the right, notwithstanding the refutation by some learned men that physiology taught them otherwise.

“The Heart is used in the Vedas and the scriptures to denote the place when the notion “I” springs. Does it spring only from the fleshy ball? It springs within us somewhere right in the middle of our being. Truly, ‘I’ has no location, Everything is the Self. There is nothing but That. So the Heart must be said to be the entire body of ourselves and of the entire universe, conceived as, ‘I’. But to help the practiser, we have to indicate a definite part of the Universe, or of the Body. So this Heart is point as the seat of the Self. But in truth, we are everywhere, we are all that is, and there is nothing else.”

-- Ramana Maharshi

You may cut off your finger and still be the person you presume yourself to be. You could lose a number of body parts and still be you. You could even stop breathing and not lose identity. It is the heartbeat which grounds identity in the pulsing body. Souls are on this side of the heartbeat, this samsaric shore. But when the heart stops beating, the anchor of attention is uprooted, and you resolve more into the native awareness of all-pervading consciousness light. (Obviously, if the heart is made to beat again, attention again regathers. And it is this diffusion of attention that is behind the stories of near-death experiences, inward tunnels, and mystic ascent.)

Interestingly, science has shown that the heart, taken still beating out of an animal (including human animals), will beat

on its own --and, given sufficient nutrients, beat for a long time. Furthermore, even when that beating heart itself was cut up into a thousand pieces, each piece continued to beat --on its own --and, given sufficient space, each to its own drummer. But if two differently beating pieces are brought close to each other, one will give up its "own" beat and keep rhythm with the other. And if many pieces are drawn together, they will all synchronize to a single piece. In fact there is a tiny area in the heart, the sinoatrial node, which is the pacemaker for the whole heart. Because the heart lies tilted to the right in the chest, this pacemaker is about two finger-widths right of center.

The pacemaker does not answer only to the mechanics of the body for its beat --even though the mechanics of the body-mind affect the rhythm --but intercourses with the all-pervading life directly. The body's other muscles respond mostly to the nervous, endocrine, and other systems, but the heart --and most especially the origin of the heartbeat -- is deeply attuned to the self-existing, all-pervading, eternal Life. The pacemaker is the epiphany or intersection of divine life and mortality; this is not merely a metaphor, for it can be observed and felt to be true.

The self, once defined by lonely identity, submits to relationship as the way "back" to perfect communion. All the paths for psyches to take depend upon identity and attention, and this self-definition soulfully throbs to the source of the heartbeat. This root tension is the stroke of identity, and the pulse of attention seeking release. Desire and the objects of desire are unmasked as the very action of tensing and the (resultant) sense of promise. Thus it was that Gautama Buddha recommended the understanding of desire.

Gautama's night under the bodhi tree is marked by the visitation of all his previous incarnations, so it is reported, and then to the formless, unborn Condition in which everything arises. Such is a perfect description of the travel across the hearts, whereby the soul understands itself as contracting. Contraction is the ground of desiring to be free. Every feeling moves (e-motion) to resolve into the Heart of hearts. Attention and its objects are unmasked as the reflections of contracting, and with contracting itself unclothed, awareness is naked.

“If you have not heard me by all of this but the Logos, then I can say, ‘All is One.’” -- Heraklitos, the Obscure

In the upper right chamber of the right atrium of the heart, the heartbeat begins the primal contraction at the core of the being, the heart's source and attention's essence. Upon this tiny spot, the source of identity intersects with the spout of inherent happiness. When this tensing is witnessed, tension finally rests, attention resolves into awareness, and identity and separate I dissolves and resolves into heart consciousness itself, Sat-Chit-Ananda.

This esoteric “cave in the heart” can be seen in yogic light, revealing the blissful nature of deepest soul. Described exquisitely by Swami Yogeshwaranand Saraswati in *Science of Soul*: “Jivatman [jiva-atman], the individual soul, abides in the Bliss Sheath situated in the space of the heart, within the reservoir of blood. It can be seen by divine vision that this human body, which is like a castle, contains the heart, of the size of a pear, or like the lotus bud drooping downwards. Inside this heart is a hollow of the size of a small seedless grape. Inside this hollow is the Bliss Sheath, luminous like a golden egg, an aggregate of six luminous orbs. It is very pleasant to see and appears like an oval mass of light.” --

Revelation and philosophy (Shruti and smriti) both speak of this heartfelt source. From the Srimad Bhagavatan (see also Mahanarayana Upanishad): “In the heart, the perfect seat of meditation, there burns a fire which is the great support and foundation of the universe. In the core of the heart, there is a tiny orifice in which all are firmly supported. In the middle of that core, there is a great fire with innumerable flames blazing on all sides... At the source of those flames, there is tongue of fire which is extremely small. That tongue of fire is dazzling as a streak of lightning in the midst of a dark cloud, and as thin as the awn of the tip of a grain of rice, golden bright and extremely minute.

“In the middle of that tongue of flame, the Supreme Self abides firmly.

“He is God, He is the immortal, the Supreme Lord of all.”

Ehvam: This I have heard

When all previous lives and energies do not sway attention from dissolving in its source, the Witness-Consciousness abides in bliss of the tamed soul. Where even the highest rapture point of yogic attainment does not hold or justify attention, all objects lose importance, and the subjective, inherent feeling of being can be found in the heart on the right. Abiding thus, the unborn radiance of the Heart is everywhere, and the Buddha opens his eyes into the Brightness of Nirvana.

Attention is felt as the root of egoity, and as the casual stress that pounds identity. The root of mind, therefore, scratches this itch, as it seeks the heart it leaves. The source of the heartbeat is the root of identity, the seat of the soul, and the root of mind. ("Think" and "thanks" intersect in thanc, Middle English for "a grateful heart", according to Martin Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking?*). The heart of the wise inclines to the right, but the heart of the fool to the left. --Ecclesiastes 10:2

The middle heart's mystic raptures revealed the yogic way to the Source above the world and spectrum of existence. But what is the way to this deeper right heart?

The way of the sage is not the way of the mystic or yogi, but of clear discrimination, Vajrayana, the diamond vehicle, the lighting bolt of insight, jnana, higher-knowing, viveka, gnosis, the way of awareness itself.

Traditionally, the sage cuts through all that is not the Real -- Neti, neti (not this, not this), as she or he dismisses partial solutions and strategies of attention as unsatisfying. This "neti, neti" can be heard in Adi Da,

"Be the "Witness" Only, Not separate, Not related, Not needing, Not Seeking, Not following after, Not gaining, Not stressful, Not angry, Not reacting, Not emoting, Not Full of pain, Not desiring, Not Fulfilling, Not avoiding, Not escaping, Not attached, Not losing, Not sorrowful, Not lost, Not Wondering, Not thinking, Not knowing, Not Full of mind, Not perceiving, Not experiencing, Not Right, Not bewildered, Not Complaining, Not Wrong, Not fearing, Not changing, Not Afflicted, Not empty, Not Satisfied, Not Deluded, Not "attentive", Not Moved, Not

Discovering, Not "I", Not embodied, Not Released, Not Even Understanding, but Only (or "Merely") Being the One Who Is the "Witness" -- The Love-Ananda Gita, 1986

And Ramana Maharshi likewise speaks clearly, "Manana (or "thinking deeply about the Self-Truth") is to constantly return attention to the "Witness-Consciousness", indifferent to objects or conditions of the body-mind.

"You know that you are. Where are you? You are in the body and not out of it. Yet not the whole body. Though you pervade the whole body still you admit of a centre where from all your thoughts start and wherein they subside. Even when the limbs are amputated you are there, but with defective senses. So a centre must be admitted. That is call the Heart (Hridaya).

"The Heart of the Upanishads is construed as Hridayam, meaning: This is the centre. That is, it is where the mind rises and subsides. That is the seat of Realisation.

"The Heart is used in the Vedas and the scriptures to denote the place whence the notion, 'I' springs. Does it spring only from the fleshy ball? It springs within us somewhere right in core of our being.

"Everything is the Self. here is nothing but that. So the Heart must be said to be the entire body of ourselves and of the entire universe. To help the practitioner we have to indicate a definite part of the Universe, or of the Body. So this Heart is pointed out as the seat of the Self." -- Talks with Ramana, 1957

Here in the heart's source are no objects attained, but the very ground of inherent happiness, inherent being, the feeling of being, true happiness without cause or object. In spiritual maturity, no matter what arises in body or mind, attention stays in the heart of inherent being, persisting in yielding to Happiness Itself. Attention is returned again and again to the smaller-than-small inherent light of mere being, and this practice stabilizes with spiritual growth. Spiritual maturity is the point of the moral, balancing life, so that one may linger longer in the inherent source of Real Happiness. To rest attention in inherent being is the anattic passage to nirvana. In the words of Buddha Adi Da's The Hymn of the Master (1982),

“When there is meditation in the infinitesimal locus of the right side of the heart, the feeling of being is magnified as Transcendental Consciousness.”

Ehvam: Thus I have heard.

The Amrita Nadi, the Current of Immortal Sweetness, sprouts from the heart on the right and rises in rested rapture into infinity. The heart on the right is the passage from *atman-atta*-“I” to the infinity of divinity. To pass through the heart’s source is to bow in the Heart itself, which holds the left, middle, and right and all and All.

Ehvam: This I have heard and felt in abundance at the holy feet of my Beloved Adi Da.

III. The Kosha Epistemology of Self-Understanding

‘Self’ is the most overused, under-examined, and unconsciously presumed creation of humankind. When is the last time you or I have stopped and utterly examined our process of self-identification? When have we thoroughly and critically examined our own identity --so that self and self’s knowledge, in all of its appearances, is transparent? What schemas and images make sense in this task? Is this transparency even possible? Transparent to what?

Unfortunately, when self is studied, the investigations are made by self and colored by self. The ancient Hellenes had a word for this skewed logic of self-presumption: hubris. Usually hubris is translated as pride, for the arrogance of pride and its tragic destiny are the timely evidence for the delusion of the self-position. Our Hellene forbearers repeatedly revealed hubris as the source of delusion and human suffering. And let us note: the study of self by selves is fatally colored by self-logic: this is the hubris of psychology.

At humanity’s psychological worst, megalomania, narcissism, and much human evil are the result of this hubris; at best, the study of the psyche by psyches is tainted with humanistic presumptions.

Fortunately, we’ve also inherited the wisdom teachings that “*stand out* from self” (*ekstasis*, ecstatic). At worst, these teachings will be merely believed; at best -- when embraced with “open eyes” -- they grant liberation.

The Vedic Revelation of the Koshas

The strength of the West is found in a deeply developed sense of the self, in the psychology of the individual, and in individualistic society. Self-esteem is very important to the Western individual, and both the individual and Western society are obsessed with politics of independence.

The weakness of the West is evident in the poor delineation of the highest and very subtlest aspects of the self, and by an aggressive opposition to anything that sounds like “spiritual self-sacrifice”.

Because of this Western weakness, let us use a model from the strength of the spiritual East, a model wherein the Western psychologies of self-development can be held together with the higher Eastern wisdom of perfect self-understanding: the five sheaths, or Vedic koshas.

The “koshic” epistemology not only discerns the magnificent process of self, its unfolding wide spectrum and subtle heights; it also delineates the way of the self’s dissolution into its lighted source. Herein, the atman is resolved into the Para-Atman; the self resolves or the soul surrenders and floats within the great Self or Oversoul of all-pervading, all-inclusive, Divine Brightness -- Original Brahman.

The five Vedic “sheaths” of self (koshas) constitute a broad epistemology that includes the somatic, the emotive, and the mental levels of appreciation, as well as the understandings that are beyond mentality and describe the razor discrimination which leads to unitive blissfulness. The koshas are the Vedantic version of the “great chain of being” -- with each sheath of self carrying personal, social, and historical implications.

This spectrum of knowing allows us to soberly appreciate our selves (and the limits of our knowings) within an open-ended, wide-ranging process -- stretching from the fleshy body to the realization of liberated, unitive, formless awareness. The self-bound sheaths or koshas were often compared to the skins of an onion, each enclosing another in an embrace and transcendence of the shallower skin. This process became most mature with the secrets of the soul, or deepest self --to be found not at the center, but beyond it.

In developmental psychological terms, the sheaths could also be described as five layers of a self-pyramid. In this light, the grosser koshas represent a kind of foundation for the subtler and more mature levels of awareness. Each layer has not only depth but breadth, and each level matures into the next. For instance, a well-developed somatic intelligence provides the base for the higher forms of knowing --with the highest triangle completing the building and also existing beyond it. Indeed, the highest space and transcendent eye seem to be floating above the great foundation. An entire psychology could be described by koshic categories and

the developmental needs within and between each layer.

The limitations represented in each skin of self-presumption are the illusions or “maya” of that kosha. Maya (“she who measures”) is the force of delusion that comes with being limited to the self-position; the maya of the kosha is the delusion of the self, and is the Eastern analogy to hubris. Within the liabilities of each kosha lie the detailed imperfections, delusions, arrogance, and sufferings of humankind. Each layer also has its ability and strength, representing the intelligence associated with a certain vibrational frequency. And from the maturity of each sheath’s intelligence, there appears a new, more inclusive kosha. The appearance, liability, ability, and maturity of each skin or self must all be learned and recognized for this integrative process to grow.

The Five Layers of the Self

Adi Da pithily describes primal identity formation in *The Enlightenment of the Whole Body*: “As the newborn feeds upon the mother’s breast, the infant informs itself of its independence and receives pleasure as the reward for body identity.” That outermost kosha is called *anamayakosha* (*anna-maya-kosha*), or “the deluding sheath of the food body.” When the body needs elemental replenishment, we say, “I’m hungry,” and presume identity with the elemental body.

In *annamayakosha*, the self or I is compelled to body-identity and carnal logic. The sufferings of being limited to the flesh and confined to the logic of sensation are well trumpeted. The food sheath is our fleshy ephemerality -- the world of want, sensation, and identity. In the fleeting time of this identification, we inherit the body’s logic: flight or fight, feed, fuck, and fear. Here, our solutions to our limitations are pointedly partial. The propensity for unconscious consolation riddles this sheath and creates the suffering of ordinary body identity.

But the flesh is not dead, and its pleasure can rise in pleasure to the living energy that inspires it. When we contact this energy, we have come to the next sheath.

Pranamayakosha is “the deluding sheath of the pranic or breath body” wherein we enjoy the buzz and thrill of living energies -- felt in the body, in the living breath, with others, in nature, and

in the matrices of experience. In pranamayakosha, one feels the intercourse of the body, emotions, and nature. In the maturity of this immersion, self is given to see the beautiful, awesome, etheric interconnectedness of energies -- as well as the symphonic nature of feeling and experiences.

Identity with the etheric and magical domain gives the self both great power and great maya, great delusion. Pranamayakosha is the self bound in the sheath of dreamy subconsciousness -- with a weakness for the Siren call -- and consoled by states of energy, like a pendulum swinging between stimulation and rest. Identification with states of energy plagues the self-presumption of pranamayakosha in cycles of rising and falling. On the dark side of the magical, pranic, etheric interconnectedness is superstition, subconscious dreaminess, self-involved immunities, mythic beliefs, and indulgence in states of energies. Here we settle for sentiment and are afflicted by affections.

But these dreams and affections are not without understanding, and thus we come to the next sheath. The mythic understanding of pranamayakosha eventually matures beyond the magical and merely mythical into manomayakosha's cleverness and explicit knowing.

Manomayakosha is "the deluding sheath of the mind." (Consider the etymological family of both "mano" and "maya": measure, moon, menses, men, mental, mind.) Just as prana pervades the body, the mind pervades the energies and the flesh. The early manomayakosha mind is illuminated by stories, parables and myths. It begins to see the (one) principle amidst the many, the singularity in all the energies; it winnows concepts from precepts and asserts the One Astral God with its many energies. Manomayakosha is a great leap beyond the mythic pranamayakosha. Manomayakosha creates the objective knowing of science, the logic beyond the myths, and the moral behind each story. "Principles, not faith" is the mantra of manomayakosha. As Achilles was the character of hubris in *The Iliad*, Odysseus is an icon of guile's strengths and weaknesses in *The Odyssey*. While manomayakosha's logic is senior to pranamayakosha's beliefs, manomayakosha is also limited, as seen in the trials of Odysseus. Manomayakosha identifies with the verbal portion of the brain, the

waking state, and the merely rational. The continuous verbal mind creates the deluding cave of clever inwardness, self inside, behind blue eyes, seeing shadows on the walls of the common world.

When a self grows out of the myth-laden sentiment into objective mentality, the mind, at first and by its abstract nature, tends to reject the previous sheaths. The previously interconnected and magical world is reduced to "childhood fantasy." Etheric and fleshy energies plague the ordinary mind with their illogical depth. The early transition to manomayakosha is seen in this rejection of the body and emotions. An example of this nascently: immature religious thought is often at war with the body, the energetic/sexual world, and women.

Obsession with the waking state and verbal mind within manomayakosha creates a clever but schismatic relationship to the body and the emotional life. While the schismatic approach to the world creates "good science" and objective knowing, manomayakosha shows its weakness and dark side in the manipulative and separative mind. Here we find idealisms taken too far, unexamined presumptions, and beliefs with limited understanding.

The vast body of somatic, magical, and mythic knowledge seems to retreat from the chatterbox sitting abstractly on top of the shoulders. Manomayakosha is compelled by the logical sentence the way pranamayakosha is possessed by sappy sentiment, and annamayakosha is consoled by instant gratification. The liability of manomayakosha is not found in fleshy unconsciousness, nor dreamy subconsciousness, but in mere consciousness. Manomayakosha is a superficial flatland of arrogant knowing, obsessed with knowledge as power. For manomayakosha, facts and information are the truth, but unfortunately, manomayakosha is often made mad by manipulative mentality.

The liability of manomayakosha is seen in another manner, a way imbued with cultural significance. As the mind of manomayakosha comes to the fore and discovers the single principle behind many different events, it discards the many gods and righteously asserts the One god, and his name is (fill in the blank) . (Often it adds, "And you'd better kiss his ass or I'll kill you.") The deluding limits of manomayakosha can be seen in this

immature religious arrogance and zealotry. Herein we find every arrogance of power, every clever manipulation, and the initiation of every "holy war."

Perhaps the most crucial of the sheaths to understand is manomayakosha. The critique of mere reason is not only the province of Kant, it is the obligation of every maturing adult. While the most developed of humans have outgrown modernity's obsession with the early mind, humans in general are still characterized by mythic-mindedness and the abstract mentality of manomayakosha. Our new world order has us still grappling with "its many truths, the way a room full of mad Christs or crazy Napoleons confront one another in an insane asylum." "My god is better than your god" is the absurd hymn of manomayakosha.

The suffering of manomayakosha must be recognized and soberly appreciated so that the afflictions of mere mind no longer torment the suffering, inward soul. Self must come to a radical revulsion to the consolations of the mind, the flesh, and energies. It is this crucial turning (metanoia) from life's ordinary lethargies to a longer-lasting happiness that gives birth to the next sheath.

"An unexamined life is not worth living." This Socratic discernment is what is meant by "vijna." In disciplined moderation, we come to vijnamayakosha. Vijna is the discrimination that pervades the mind, energies, and body. Vijna's discipline, examination, and discernment cuts into the pleasures that do not persist, and, by this vijna, the happiness that does last becomes discrete. Thus, the vijna of the sage exclaims, "neti, neti" ("not this, not this").

Indeed, discrimination has a purpose; thought has pointed meaning. It is the narrow gate into unitive consciousness, formless ecstasy, and the heart and source of thoughts, emotions, and all mortal matter.

Vijnamayakosha is the higher mind of great thought and mystic knowledge. Here the self fully matures, and from its great strength, learns to give itself up to its source. Here self learns subtlety, the deep and the upper sweetness. Via vijna, self finds its own roots in the light and in the true and real. Here is gnosis, vijna, viveka, as well as cultural and formless discriminations of all kinds. Vijnamayakosha holds most of the higher wisdom traditions of

humankind. Vijnamayakosha begins with the conversion from the schismatic manomayakosha in a new birth of wisdom: vijnaself masters the body, emotions, and mind, grows in real heart-happiness, and ecstatically intercourses in a rapture of source-brightness.

In vijnamayakosha lie the lyre and bow of Apollo, the raptures of Rumi, the divine ignorance and true beauty of Socrates, Ockham's razor, dialectics from Parmenides, Hegel, Shankara, and Vivekananda, the revelations of Nietzsche, Kant, Newton, and Einstein, the bliss rings of Dante, the wholeness of Michaelangelo, the sublime thrusts of Beethoven, and the internal avenues of joy singing Mozart's concertos. Vijnas provides the yogis and mystics with paths of ascension via light and sound to and from the source of joy.

The self enters vijnamayakosha through a door wide enough to hold every experience, all myths, all beliefs, and all ordinary knowing. Taking these illuminations to heart, the self grows in balanced equanimity, and, on the basis of the oceanic calm wrought by heart-wisdom, the last atom of the self exits vijnamayakosha through the eye of a needle.

But vijnamayakosha has a limitation. The ecstasy or samadhi attained by discrimination, while real and true, is not permanent, and must be supported or deepened again and again by the attentive discernment of what is real. Certainly, we must grow strong in discrimination.

In vijnamayakosha, the deeper self is consoled not by body, emotions, or cleverness, but by insight and the task of attention. The real liability of vijnamayakosha is that a great thinker may console himself or herself with brilliant insight, just as the yogi sheaths himself or herself by the divine knowledge that they touched or embraced the blissful source point. Brilliantly thinking about real living is not walking the talk, and every vision of the infinite mystery must not be left in the past.

While the cup or crater of vijnas's pure joy is real, true, and deeply satisfying, vijnas's light is to be distinguished from inherent bliss. The light of vijnas comes from the radiant sun: Apollo, while certainly a divinity of brilliance, is the son of Zeus. Insights are not themselves the point. The living breath, body, human cleverness

and all insights must intercourse in a presently singular joy. This worship must be strengthened and deepened by years of practice; otherwise, interior delusions will be the limit of vijna's kosha.

The angels of Milton fell due to their satisfaction with their own brilliant insights into the paradoxical divinity wherein all arises. Milton's fallen angels are the personification of vijna-maya-kosha.

Vijna's limitation can also be stated philosophically: Discrimination is done by a self who discerns reality, and the dyadically bound nature of attention and self must be relinquished upon entrance into unitive bliss. Vijna, at last, must unsheath a sword of free attention sharp enough to slay itself. Unless the self of vijnamayakosha is understood, unless the deepest identity is understood, unless self itself is understood, the one who discriminates is left with either "I" (as in Descartes) or nothingness (as in Sartre). To the delusion of vijnamayakosha, from the point of view of the deepest ego-I, we objectify existence as Void, without seeing the void of I that projects nothingness upon This Fullness.

Avatara Adi Da: Contemplate the mind. How much can the mind tell you? If the mind was so enlightened, you would already be enlightened. You just continue to consult the mind again and again and again and revolving through its parts, consulting its grammatical structures and so forth as if that would somehow become Absolute Illumination you see. You must use the mind, not dwell on it, inwardly, use the mind's intelligence, as attention, and bring it to the real context of life, bring it to my Argument and the Argument as consideration, in other words bring it into the context of life. Merely to dwell on the mind is just - a way of making forms, sculptures out of thought. You can't accomplish any more than the mind has already communicated to you, than the mind already contains. In any case there is no consequence in the mind that's equivalent to Transcendental Realization.

So the mind should be used as a tool rather than an already existing substance or word bank, you see. In other words we must use the higher mind, not the lower mind. The lower mind is full of memory, words, grammatical constructions, illusions, and so forth. These things are constantly arising in us rather automatically.

We must use the higher mind, vijnanamayakosha, the intelligence factor of the mind, the capacity to observe and see directly and understand and release, transcend, go beyond. This function of mind does have a use in spiritual life. The other form of mind has a use in practical life really and not much more use. The mind is mere content and structure. It is not something that we should suppress, but we should economize it, we should require it, oblige it to be useful in its domain. You wouldn't consult the liver, for instance, for God-Realization.

Why should you consult the lower mind? You don't sit and have conversations with your feet. Why do you have conversations with your mind? Instead of using your higher mind, you see, you indulge it, you become an odalisque and you lie in the lower mind and in the body and in the emotions and reactions, the content of past life and so forth. You don't exercise a freer mind, the higher mind. The mind is just intelligence, attention. That form does have a use in spiritual life, but we don't use it very much, you see. We indulge ourselves in the lower mind and in the body and in emotions, our relations, and we bind ourselves to these structures, instead of using the higher structures for the sake of self-understanding, self-transcendence, liberating insight and intuition. Then the higher mind would even itself be transcended, you see, in transcendental Realization.

The fifth sheath is anandamayakosha, the sheath of ananda, inherent bliss. Here is the greatest happiness a center can enjoy. Here, upon the last atom of deepest self, is the joyous point of attentive discrimination. In anandamayakosha, self abides in inherent bliss; the soul floats in joyous divinity. Here is the rested soul and unknowing of Sokrates. Here the atman is found within the Para-Atman, and being within Supreme Being. Anandamayakosha's unitive light can be re-cognized as joy permeates and includes all the previous sheaths. Thus, ananda or bliss can be found in razor-sharp insight, in delightful cleverness, in free-flowing energies, and in the pleasures of the flesh. All of this, joyously I am.

The soul in anandamayakosha is "the atom in the heart," also called "the soul or ego in the heart." It is traditionally referred

to as “the heart on the right,” “the source of the heartbeat,” and indicated as the deepest intercourse of the body with the transcendental. Here, in the deepest heart, is the seat of the soul that shines out of one’s eyes -- even as each heartbeat pounds out the source of our self-identity.

Anandamayakosha, or the sheath of bliss, would seem to be the end of the self’s evolution and dissolution. From the point of view of egos in the common world, to criticize the spiritual maturity of anandamayakosha seems ludicrous. But a tradition of perfect realization points out that anandamayakosha is a sheath, a skin, a limitation --albeit the subtlest of delusions. While the atman is in bliss in anandamayakosha, there is still a delineation, the last nub of self enjoying the infinite. The sheath of bliss must also be penetrated so that the center itself will be undone.

Anandamayakosha’s blissfulness holds the intersection of awareness and attention. In unitive joy, in relaxed, formless awareness, the creation of any tension sows the seeds of attention in the Unborn Field. Awareness becomes attention when tension creates self and other. Self and other is the very first form of “a tension,” attention, the arche-archetype. The birth of attention is coincident with the birth of worlds.

When attention itself is understood to be the self-tensing of (otherwise) *formless*, blissful awareness, the causal creation of world is radically understood, and the activity of identity is thereby also radically understood. This transition between attention with its identity and formless awareness with its bliss and love was made perfectly clear by the transmission of the fully enlightened ones, the teachers of joy and realizers of divinity.

Anandamayakosha is not the subtlest of the subtle; it is the causal point of the whole spectrum. Beyond the highest point is the source, a joyous point of our divine Condition. Before the first form, prior to the archetypal tension, is the joy that is formless, Unborn. Now dazzling through the last atom in the separate heart, the process of self-creation is recognized and attention is recognized. Sat-chit (being -consciousness) is added to ananda (love-bliss) as attention and self resolves and dissolves (back) in Nirguna Brahman. Sat-Chit-Ananda.

The passage out of all sheaths, the penetration of the causal

knot at the heart's source, the splitting of the atom in the heart, is done by no one. The fully enlightened Ones understand and penetrate the last sheath, the bliss sheath, as a sheath.

I learned from the Great Sage Adi Da that as we pass through soul-identity and clothed awareness into the always naked consciousness, formless bliss, and acausal awakening of moksha or 'blown out' *nir-vana*, already, always. This un-selfed Conscious Light of inherent, unsupported, unmediated consciousness that I received in the Company of Adi Da outshines all the creations, and even the creator. Moksha, liberation, is the Unborn Brightness, the Gift of eternal light and oceanic life, the divine Ground and Condition of all conditions, always and already blissfully outshining all forms like ceramic cups in a perfect furnace.

Ehvam: This I have heard from my Beloved Adi Da.

Herein begins the teaching not of salvation, but of liberation. Confronting the dhamma of anatta ("no-self"), we come to understand that there is no substantive "I" and that the self is not an entity, but an activity, a process. The process that is "I" is the activity of withdrawal and the process of contracting. Contraction is the substance of the skins or koshas; withdrawing creates a self within. When we radically take responsibility for the single action of self-creation, we are given fully to joy, and attention resolves into simple awareness. Falling and resting in heart-bliss passes through and Witnesses everything else one has settled for before only immortal happiness will do. Only God satisfies perfectly. I am nothing and I am joy itself, I am the wave and I am the sea. Only the oceanic Unborn is everywhere rising in the nectar of immortal sweetness.

This I have witnessed and baptismally received in the gracious and miraculous company of my spiritual master, Avatara Adi Da.

Certainly I am this body, and certainly I am this breath and these sentiments, and certainly I think, therefore I am. I am

also an interior voice and, in a way, I hear the conversations of all beings past. I fear, I need and hurt, and I fail. I am also sensitive to wisdom, and I am growing --thereby I will learn to love. By that conscious decision and disciplined turning, I discern true happiness distinct from temporary happiness. I will understand the time of temporary happiness and I will lengthen the time of deep happiness. Growing in happiness, I fall in love, I am enraptured and intercourse with life freely. I am distracted by the wonder wherein I and all arises, I am blissful, I am gone in the ecstatic fire like a snowflake. At last, when the defining action of identity as the encapsulating shell of closure is perfectly understood, and feeling opens free in the Company of the Great One, "I" resolves into unperturbed awareness. "I" is the extending and undefined body: the great body, the immortal sweetness of the beyond-mythic, trans-mystic, selfless divine person, the full incarnation ever widening, always and only, and no other. All of these things, "I" confesses. All of these processes, I am.

Ehvam -- Thus I have heard.

By the word, glance, touch and embrace of my Master, I have been initiated into the exaltation of every sheath; and He Baptised my soul to uncoil in the transcendental Consciousness of Oceanic Heart-Joy that is beyond even soul. I have been graced to be shown my absolute responsibility and our divine state or destiny.

The evidence of liberation is heart-incarnation. I can confirm the demonstration of Adi Da's Loving with all my little heart. However modest my response is to this Gift, I confess with clarity that I felt and seen this transcendent immanence of divinity and free Incarnation at the feet of my beloved teacher, Avatara Adi Da, the selfless Person of Love. Fortunately or by grace, the Presence He Gives does not reside in the past.

"My promise to devotees is the same that all other Awakened Servants have declared: I am with you now, as I have always been, and I will always be with you. My Function is without beginning or end. The work I do in my psycho-physical form is temporary. It is done in order to reawaken the Way itself.

“I am the possibility of Man,
the Heart, the source of forms.
I am the force of love.

I am the wave of light
within your mind,
that happens to be everything,
my love.

My word is the syllable of your body.
My love is the vowel of your mind.
My work is the event of bliss
already rising in your eyes.
The sign of my appearance is
no question, no answer.
I am no Other
Who exists is Me.”

