

AVATARIC REVELATION AND THE  
RESTORATION OF SPIRITUAL CULTURE:  
ON THE LIFE, WORK, AND PASSING OF ADI DA SAMRAJ  
AND THE PRESERVATION OF HIS SPIRITUAL LEGACY

By

Michael (Anthony) Costabile, Director

Adidam Midwest Center

Chicago, Illinois

773-661-0127

A paper presented at the 2009 International Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, USA.  
Preliminary text, copyrighted by the author. Please do not quote without seeking the  
author's written consent.

NOTE: CESNUR reproduces or quotes documents from the media and different sources on a number of religious issues. Unless  
otherwise indicated, the opinions expressed are those of the document's author(s), not of CESNUR or its directors.

## Avataric Revelation and the Restoration of Spiritual Culture:

On the Life, Work, and Passing of Adi Da Samraj

and the Preservation of His Spiritual Legacy

### ABSTRACT

The passing of a spiritual master and the questions of succession, organizational continuity, and fidelity to the master's life, instruction, and work have often been problematic and contentious. These challenges are not specific to any tradition and have been met variously throughout history, but they take on new dimensions in the case of Avatar Adi Da Samraj (1939-2008), the spiritual founder of Adidam Ruchiradam. The multi-tiered task of establishing a new tradition, with all of its spiritual, philosophical, aesthetic, cultural, legal, and organizational expressions is monumental in scale—like the artistic images created by Adi Da in the last decade of his life. There is an untold story in Adi Da's work to create this new spiritual tradition and another in the maturing practice and organizational life of Adidam members—both of which have entered into a new chapter with Adi Da's passing in November 2008. This paper is neither an analytical nor a critical treatment of Adi Da and Adidam, but a narrative one. It provides an overview of the life of Adi Da within the framework of three distinct phases: his early life of “learning humankind” (Part I); his time of “teaching humankind” (Part II), and his time of “blessing humankind” (Part III). Each of these phases was precipitated by significant transformational events that spontaneously called forth the unique approaches, methods of teaching, and demonstrations of spiritual transmission that Adi Da employed throughout his life and work. Understanding these phases is essential to appreciating this contemporary spiritual master, his legacy, and, in the wake of his passing (Part IV), the future prospects for Adidam and its membership.

AVATARIC REVELATION AND THE  
RESTORATION OF SPIRITUAL CULTURE:  
On the Life, Work, and Passing of Adi Da Samraj  
and the Preservation of His Spiritual Legacy

---

*I Have Done What Is Necessary for the Establishment of My Work.*

—Adi Da Samraj, August, 2004

INTRODUCTION: THE CRISIS OF A MASTER’S PASSING

For devotees of any spiritual master, the event of the master’s physical death is a heart-wrenching affair, exceeding in many respects the emotional and spiritual challenges of surviving the death of a loved one. Researchers and scholars differ in their observations about how an emerging religious tradition as a whole is affected by the death of its founding master.<sup>1</sup> There is little doubt, however, that the event marks a critical turning point in the life and future of that religion. Members are personally shaken, their faith and spiritual fortitude often severely tested. The religious community faces the challenges of succession, fidelity to the founder’s teachings, and the securing of his or her spiritual legacy.

---

<sup>1</sup> To offer two contrasting views from scholars on this issue, J. Gordon Melton writes: “Any religion that can last the lifetime of the leader, has a life far beyond that of its founder. While the founder’s death is a sad event, it is not a traumatic one. . . . During the last decade we have watched as a number of groups have passed through the event of their founder’s death without missing a heart beat in the group’s life.” (from A paper presented by J. Gordon Melton at CESNUR 99, Bryn Athn, Pennsylvania © J. Gordon Melton, 1999). While Benjamin Zablocki rejoins: “Like most new small businesses, most new religions do not survive the death of their charismatic founders. . . . Gordon Melton, chronicler par excellence of new American religions has argued (personal communication) that this is not true, that a surprising number of religions do manage to survive the death of their founders. But this perception I think comes from a sampling error. Those religions that do not survive are much less likely to come to the attention of sociologists and are therefore much less likely to be included in any sample.” (“The Birth and Death of New Religious Movements”, presented at the annual meetings of the Association for the Sociology of Religion, Washington, DC; 2000)

Such challenges have often proved problematic and contentious, a situation not limited to any particular tradition. To cite an obvious example: in the wake of Jesus' execution, there was confusion and fear among his apostles concerning their own fate and the future of the small, scattered sect soon to be known as Christians (New Jerusalem Bible, Acts. 11.26). As time passed, various accounts of Jesus' life and conflicting interpretations of his teachings circulated, giving impetus to an array of competing Christianities.<sup>2</sup> Although most of these were short-lived, conflicts over succession, doctrine, and church structure gave rise to heresies and schisms, then wars and conflicts, and ultimately to the present-day multiplicity of Christian sects.<sup>3</sup>

In recent times, the passing of Swami Muktananda (d.1982) precipitated crisis and dissension among SYDA Foundation<sup>4</sup> members. Several months before his death, the swami designated two siblings, Swami Nityanand[a] and Swami Chidvilasananda, to succeed him. In the throes of a personal life-crisis and amidst controversy about breaking his monastic vows, Nityanand[a] abdicated in 1985. These events, along with various political maneuvers within the organization, secured Chidvilasananda's role as sole guru and successor to Swami Muktananda (Wikipedia, "Siddha Yoga," History). Nevertheless, some among Swami Muktananda's longtime devotees quietly withdrew after his death into private circumstances outside of the SYDA organization (Adi Da, Knee 513, 518).

---

<sup>2</sup> Along with Acts, see Erhman, 2003 for a fascinating account of early Christian uncertainty and diversity.

<sup>3</sup> The differences among early Christians began with issues around authority and succession. Roman Catholicism continues to affirm papal succession, citing Jesus' conferment of authority to Peter (Matt. 16.8), while the Eastern Orthodox Church asserts a lineage of bishops presumed traceable to one of the original apostles (Acts 6.5,6; 19.6). Church schisms, that of the Eastern Orthodox Church in the 11<sup>th</sup> century and the Reformation in the 15<sup>th</sup>, spawned further divisions.

<sup>4</sup> SYDA Foundation is the acronym for Siddha Yoga Dham of America, a not-for-profit religious organization founded in 1973 and based on the Siddha Yoga teachings of Swami Muktananda.

In the case of the ever controversial Osho (d. 1990), he himself refused to designate a spiritual successor, affirming:

Nobody is going to be my successor. Each sannyasin is my representative. When I am dead, you all—individually—will have to represent me to the world. There is not going to be any pope. There is not going to be any shankaracharya. Each sannyasin, in his own capacity, has to represent me. This has never happened -- but it is going to happen! You are all my successors (“Each Sannyasin,” par.1).

To cite a final contemporary example, the Buddhist teacher Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche (d. 1987) appointed Ösel Tendzin (Thomas Frederick Rich, Jr.), as his regent. Ösel Tendzin died in 1990, reportedly of HIV-related causes. Controversies surrounding his HIV status and reckless promiscuity, along with other lineage issues, left the Shambhala and Buddhist organizations founded by Trungpa divided and in turmoil. It was not until 1995, with the appointment of Chögyam Trungpa’s eldest son Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche as head of the principal Shambhala organizations, that the controversy over succession died down (Hayward 405-21).

All of this became urgently relevant for devotees of the American born spiritual master, Avatar Adi Da Samraj, on November 27, 2008 (Fiji Time), when suddenly and unexpectedly, Adi Da entered *Mahasamadhi*.<sup>5</sup> He was 69 years old. The news sent shock waves throughout the Adidam community and to friends and supporters around the world.

---

<sup>5</sup> *Mahasamadhi* is the Sanskrit term denoting a realized master’s conscious transition beyond bodily existence into formless eternity).

This paper presents an overview of Adi Da's life and work and considers his sudden passing, its implications, and the challenges now facing members of Adidam.<sup>6</sup> How are Adi Da's devotees coming to terms with his bodily death? By what means is the transcendental spiritual process that he initiated among them to be preserved in its purity and carried forward in time? How are the spiritual culture and the organizational entities he established to be maintained and developed in alignment with his instructions? And how are devotees to secure Adi Da's spiritual, philosophical, artistic, and literary legacy for future generations?

It is argued here that these issues must be treated within the greater context of Adi Da's life, his avataric self-confessions, his teachings, and the transcendental spiritual work he undertook with devotees. These provide the *mise-en-scène* for the Reality-Way of Adidam and the sacred cultural and organizational entities that Adi Da established during his lifetime.

Nevertheless, the treatment of Adi Da's life and work in Parts I-III is necessarily cursory. A comprehensive treatment would require volumes of spiritually informed narrative and esoteric insight beyond the purview of conventional scholarship. Likewise, this is not a critical or analytical review of Adi Da or Adidam. It seeks to present Adi Da in light of his own words, recounting his unique avataric birth, the process of transformation in consciousness that he voluntarily undertook, his radical teachings and teaching methods, and the esoteric nature of his transcendental spiritual work. It also presents the membership of Adidam in its own right. This has required the extensive citing of passages from Adi Da's writings and firsthand accounts from his devotees.

---

<sup>6</sup> Adidam (or Adidam Ruchiradam) are names given by Adi Da to signify both the way itself that he established and its eponymous sacred, cultural, and organizational entities.

I do not here address issues of apostasy, nor do I express the views of those who take issue with Adi Da and his teaching work or methods (although a number of these are clearly referenced). Some may regard this as remiss and imbalanced. However, this is a study of a twentieth- and twenty-first-century Western-born spiritual realizer whose formidable body of work remains largely unacknowledged—not only because it has been viewed as controversial, but also because it is relentlessly paradoxical. On the one hand, scholars, spiritual teachers, and philosophers alike have recognized Adi Da’s writings as supremely revelatory, authoritative, and illuminating; on the other hand, his life and work appear inscrutable to the uninitiated, solipsistic and self-promoting to the skeptical, irreverent and profane to the convention-bound.<sup>7</sup> For this reason, Adi Da Samraj warrants a transparent rendering of the transformative events in his life as he relates them and an accurate presentation of his own account of why he spoke, wrote, and acted as he did in service to humankind. What must attend such a study on the part of the open-minded reader is the acknowledgement that authentic spiritual realizers and their revelations *ipso facto* transcend the paradigm of conceptually acquired knowledge (at times coinciding with it, at times defying it, but never subservient to it). The same may be said (so much as these can be discerned in the crucible of postmodern culture) of our social and moral conventions.

## PART I: LEARNING HUMANKIND: THE EARLY LIFE OF ADI DA SAMRAJ

### *Who Is Adi Da Samraj?*

Upon first encountering Adi Da’s writings, one is immediately struck by their literary and scriptural uniqueness. At their central axis are Adi Da’s “Divine Self-

---

<sup>7</sup> See Jeffrey Kripal’s Foreword to The Knee Of Listening (xii-xvii).

Confessions” of his ultimate avataric stature. These are uncompromisingly rendered in his own unique mode of English, with distinctive stylistic conventions developed and honed over decades of spiritual discourses and writings. Frequent underlining and hyphenation are employed, adding not only emphasis, but denotative precision. Capitalizations abound, generally expressive of the ultimate, Non-Conditional Reality, or That Which “Always Already Is”. Lower case words denote (in general) that which is associated with conditional reality—the ephemeral, or, more precisely, the merely apparent, illusory, and non-binding modifications of Reality Itself.

Equipped with his own spiritual vocabulary, Adi Da Samraj’s self-confession to all is that he is “the Divine Avataric Self-Revelation of the Self-Nature, Self-Condition, and Self-State, and the egoless . . . and Self-Evidently Divine Person of Reality Itself” (Boundless 132). He affirms that his avataric birth and lifetime constitute a spiritual breakthrough into the conditional worlds greater than any before or any yet to follow. To quote one among hundreds of such affirmations:

My Avataric Self-“Emergence” here Is The Consequential (and Factual)  
Breakthrough in cosmic history. . . . My Divine Avataric Appearance here is  
about the Divine Avataric Self-“Emergence”-Intervention of the Divine “Bright”  
Spherical Self-Domain into the apparent sphere of conditionality (Boundless 123).

We have noted that, for a host of reasons, such statements (along with other features of Adi Da’s life and work) have proved a stumbling block to his renown and

acknowledgement among scholars, spiritual aspirants, and the general public.<sup>8</sup>

Nevertheless, intuitive recognition of Adi Da as precisely the one he declares himself to be is the *sine qua non* of his followers' devotional response to him and the foundational pre-condition of their acceptance of him as spiritual master.

*The Childhood Teachings of the “Bright” and the “Thumbs”*

In his autobiography, The Knee Of Listening, Adi Da offers a description of the spiritual and cosmic origins of his divine avataric incarnation.<sup>9</sup> He also narrates the “ordeal of his self-submission” to the human world, accounts for his teaching-methods in relation to devotees, and describes his ultimate work of world-blessing for the sake of all.<sup>10</sup>

Adi Da was born Franklin Albert Jones in 1939 in Jamaica, Long Island, New York, to an ordinary middle-class family. But his birth was not in any sense an ordinary one. It was, he says, the avataric incarnation of Indivisible Conscious Light—the Free and Radiant Condition that he simply called the “Bright”:

---

<sup>8</sup> The current Adidam membership numbers less than 3000, although readers of Adi Da's books and supporters of Adidam number in the thousands (Ngo, Hoi. “Membership Numbers” E-mail to Costabile 2 May 2009). Adi Da is well known in some circles of discourse, and his influence can be discerned in the writings of Ken Wilber, Gabriel Cousens, and Georg Feuerstein, among others.

<sup>9</sup> “Avatar” and “incarnation” are technical terms. “Avatar” means to “cross down or descend”. “Incarnation” is defined by Webster as “the embodiment of a deity or spirit in some earthly form”. In Adi Da's teaching, “Divine Avataric Incarnation” is a description of Adi Da's birth, having crossed down from the divine domain as the very divine reality to take on a bodily human form. It is also an appellative of Adi Da himself.

<sup>10</sup> Adi Da elaborates this throughout his writings, most radically in The Aletheon, his final work completed in manuscript form on the morning of his *mahasamadhi*.

I was the Power of Reality, a direct Enjoyment and Communication of the One Reality. I was the Heart Itself, Who Lightens the mind and all things. I was the same as every one and every thing, except it became clear that others were apparently unaware of the “Thing” Itself. Even as a child, I recognized It and knew It, and my life was not a matter of anything else. That Awareness, that Conscious enjoyment, that Self-Existing and Self-Radiant Space of Infinitely and inherently Free Being, that Shine of inherent Joy standing in the heart and Expanding from the heart, is the “Bright”. And It is the entire Source of True Humor. It is Reality. It is not separate from anything (Knee 26).

The naming of the “Bright” was the first aspect of what Adi Da calls his “childhood teachings”. The “Bright” is the free radiance of conscious light, reality itself, the true and ultimate condition of all beings. By naming the “Bright”, Adi Da was using his earliest acquired language to render a description of reality that he would use throughout his lifetime.

The second part of his childhood teachings is what he calls the “Thumbs”. Experientially, the “Thumbs” was a pressure he felt from early childhood descending from above his body-mind, pressing down into his throat and then further down, expanding, he says, “without limitation or end into some form of myself that was much larger than my physical body” (Knee 84-85). But it was far more than an experience of descending pressure. The “Thumbs” is the means whereby the “Bright” descends into the conditional domain and thus descended into the body-mind of Franklin Jones. It is also

the transcendental spiritual force of Adi Da's transmission of the "Bright" to living beings. He writes:

The "Thumbs" is the Means That I Bring to Awaken and Liberate living beings. I Am the "Bright". The "Thumbs" is a Divine Yogic Spiritual Manifestation, and the "Thumbs" is the Means whereby I was able to go through the course of life in this conditionally manifested Vehicle. The "Thumbs" is how My "Bright" Divine Spiritual Transmission is Able to Serve living beings under these mortal and limited conditions (Knee 688).

Thus, Adi Da repeatedly pointed to his "childhood teachings" of the "Bright" and the "Thumbs" as the root-revelations of his entire avataric life and work.

*The Preparatory Vehicles for Adi Da's Avataric Birth*

Adi Da relates that his avataric incarnation required a unique pattern of conditions generated in the subtle (or super-physical) realms beyond this world. It was, he says, occasioned by a sympathetic love-response of "unknowable Complexity, Subtlety, and Spontaneity" to the sorrows and sufferings, limitations, and illusions of human beings (Knee 473). But his bodily incarnation also required a unique psycho-physical structure, made by a "spiritual conjoining" of two vehicles (or patterns of personality)—one gross (or physical, lower mental, and psychic); the other, deeper (or subtle, higher-psychic, and causal).<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> The gross dimension is associated with the physical body and world, and with the waking state. The subtle dimension, which is hierarchically senior to and pervades the gross, "consists of the etheric (or

The gross personality was that of Franklin Jones. It was an ordinary karmic manifestation, with all the usual physical, emotional, and mental traits inherited through the bloodline of his parents.

Franklin Jones is the gross bodily Vehicle of My Divine Avataric Incarnation, but Franklin Jones is an ordinary birth—the son of very ordinary people, born in an ordinary circumstance, in a domain of life and limitations characteristic of the West. My Conjunction with the birth of Franklin Jones has everything to do with My Divine Avataric Self-Submission. By means of that gross bodily Vehicle, I (first) Did My Work of Divine Avataric Self-Submission, and (then) Purified everything that I had Taken On by virtue of My Work of Divine Avataric Self-Submission (Boundless 82).

Adi Da's deeper personality, however, was a far more complex phenomenon. It was, he says, a spiritual conjoining (in the subtle and causal dimensions) of the “deeper personality vehicles” of Sri Ramakrishna, the nineteenth century Hindu master, and his principal disciple, Swami Vivekananda. As Adi Da describes this mysterious conjunction:

---

personal life-energy) functions, the lower mental functions (including the conscious mind, the subconscious mind, and the unconscious mind) and higher mental functions (of discriminative mind, mentally presumed egoity, and will), and is associated with the dreaming state . . . the ascending energies of the spine, the brain core, and the subtle centers of mind in the higher brain. The causal dimension is senior to both the gross and the subtle dimensions. It is the root of attention, or the essence of the separate and separative ego-‘I’ . . . Its corresponding state of consciousness is the formless awareness of deep sleep” (Knee 776-77).

[At the end of his life,] Ramakrishna Emptied Himself, by Transferring His by-Divine-Grace-Given Spiritual Power to Swami Vivekananda. . . . Swami

Vivekananda was My Forerunner here. He prepared the world (and Himself) for My Divine Avataric Manifestation in the West. He is the Seed and background of My Inherent Oneness with the East. He—or rather, His own Deeper Personality—has since become Reincarnated, returned to bodily (human) life as the Deeper (or Internal, subtle, and causal) Personality (or the Central, and Greater conditionally Manifested Vehicle) of My Divine Avataric Incarnation here (and in the entire cosmic domain) (Knee 464-65).

And again:

Swami Vivekananda . . . did His Spiritual Work as a Vehicle of Ramakrishna—and, altogether, as a Spiritual Combination of the “Positive” (or “Male”) Pole, “Vivekananda”, and the “Negative” (or “Female”) Pole, “Ramakrishna”. And, after the physical death (or Mahasamadhi) of Swami Vivekananda—only the Single Spiritual Personality, Ramakrishna-Vivekananda continued to exist. Now, That Single Spiritual Personality, Ramakrishna-Vivekananda, is the functional Depth, or the total mind-Vehicle (or subtle and causal Vehicle) of My Divine Avataric Incarnation As the Ruchira Avatar, Adi Da Samraj (Knee 471-72).

And finally, to highlight the significance of this conjunction with respect to Adi Da’s own avataric birth and the process of his self-submission to all beings and things:

The Conjunction of the gross bodily Vehicle (of Franklin Jones) and the deeper-Personality-Vehicle (of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda) . . . Became the complete Means of My Divine Avataric Self-Submission here. [This Conjunction] Brought Me into the Process of Perfect Coincidence with everything and everyone—a State of Essential, egoless, and Perfect Non-“difference”, in Which I literally Became everything and everyone, Taking On all the limitations of everything and everyone (Boundless 83).

Adi Da dedicates two extensive chapters in The Knee Of Listening, several essays elsewhere in his writings, and untold hours of recorded discussions with devotees to this startling revelation. But even with all the precision of his writing and any given reader’s receptivity to such extraordinarily descriptive revelations, Adi Da’s avataric birth and divine identity remain *rahasyas* (great spiritual mysteries)—absolutely the case, he says, yet utterly beyond human comprehension.

Of Me, and of My Pattern here, There Is Infinitely More than Swami Vivekananda (or Ramakrishna-Vivekananda). My Divine Avataric Incarnation here (and in the entire cosmic domain) is Associated with a Pattern of Flows in time as complex as the pattern of water flowing through beds and mounds of sand. . . . My apparent Divine Avataric Birth is Unique, and Its “causes” are even unspeakably complex—but I Am Reality Itself, Which Is Simplicity Itself (Knee 467).

Indeed, Adi Da's avataric self-confessions expand to astonishing dimensions with such statements as the following:

I (now, and Hereby) Confess That My Great-Siddha (or Great-Jnani-Siddha) Deeper Personality Is, even Beyond the "Single Form" of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda, the Very Form of all the Great Masters of the entire Great Tradition of mankind. I (now, and Hereby) Confess That I (Myself) Stand Eternally Prior to (and Always Already Transcending) My Avataric (and, yet, merely conditionally born) Deeper Personality—and, also, Eternally Prior to (and Always Already Transcending) even all the Great (and, yet, conditionally born) Masters of mankind's entire Great Tradition (in its every part, and as a whole), and, also, Eternally Prior to (and Always Already Transcending) mankind's entire Great Tradition itself (in its every part, and as a whole) (Unbroken Light 175).

Adi Da has firmly avowed that it is the living truth behind his "Avataric Self-Confessions"—and not any appeal to spiritual authority, social conventions, or cultural expectations—that provide the esoteric platform, the divine necessity, and the spiritual justification for what he has said and done during his lifetime. From any other perspective, his actions may appear remarkable enough in their prolific scale, their degrees of paradox, and even their apparent recklessness, but he insists that they simply cannot be appreciated in their spiritual fullness without a concomitant intuition (or heart-

recognition) of his avataric identity. The overview of Adi Da's life and work that follows is predicated on this understanding.

### *Early Years*

Adi Da was quick to undergo a series of transformations in his boyhood. These, he says, were in preparation for his later years of teaching and spiritual blessing. While yet a toddler, he was moved, by an overwhelming love and delight in the people around him, to intentionally assume the ordinary awareness and common limitations of human experience. That is, he identified with the human condition so profoundly that the "Bright" of his infancy gradually receded into the background of his conscious awareness.

This was among his first gestures of voluntary self-submission to humankind. At the age of six he recalls an attempt to distract his parents from an argument one evening "by pointing out the moon and asking them questions about God and life, so they would be calmed, and enabled to feel the Love-Bliss-Energy of the 'Bright' I was Transmitting to them" (Knee 30). Their refusal of it was an early sign to him of humankind's overall insensitivity to the "Bright".

Later, as his adolescent years propelled him into the world of possibility and experience, he writes, "I was driven to utterly experience the heart of the human dilemma, the very essence of human suffering". His purpose was to "learn and transcend" the conflict, strife, and seeking at the core of human experience: "I had felt conflict in the very world. I felt it rising in myself. And I rushed to become it, in order to Know the way that no longer required it for anyone" (Knee 54). Thus, Adi Da was not impelled by the

usual motivations of human life and personality, but by an urgent, overwhelming impulse to awaken and liberate human beings:

My Physical Human Lifetime Of Avataric Incarnation here . . . Is A Constant Act Of Identification With Man . . . In Order To Learn Man . . . In Every Respect, and, Having Learned Man In Every Respect, To Teach and To Bless and To Liberate Man (and all, and All), In Every Respect (and Most Perfectly) (Aham Da Asmi 68).

*Early Breakthroughs of the “Bright”*

Adi Da enrolled in Columbia College in New York in 1957 as a student of Western philosophy. What would otherwise amount to a privileged entrée into the vast universe of Western ideas was for Adi Da a devastating emotional and intellectual experience. He came to Columbia seeking ultimate truth, but found there only an “idolatrous mind” of contradiction, dilemma, and doubt enshrined everywhere. Moreover, he was raised in the Lutheran church, serving there as an acolyte in his youth. But his encounter with such books as *The Lost Years of Jesus Revealed*, by Charles Francis Potter, shattered his Christian beliefs. In a passage filled with the pathos of his experience at the time, Adi Da writes:

Then all was, it seemed, finally lost—for Jesus of Nazareth had finally become, for me (in the trouble of my adolescence), the symbol for the lost (or, certainly, receding and fading) “Bright” of my childhood. Indeed, in that trouble, he, being

but a symbol in my own mind, was a fundamental means whereby the “Bright” was concealed and withheld from me. When the “Bright” deeply receded in me, it left only tracks in the mind, and “Jesus of Nazareth” epitomized them all.

Therefore, when “Jesus of Nazareth” fell to my doubts, it was the “Bright” itself that I felt fall forever away from me. And that fall broke my heart. It drove me into my own vast wilderness (Knee 60-61).

Nevertheless, Adi Da was determined to permanently recover the “Bright”, knowing it to be the reality of all things. While at Columbia he embarked on an intensive, paradoxical quest. He decided to fully embrace the entire spectrum of human adventure and possibility, free of all self-imposed limits, so that he might exploit every experience he encountered without reserve or restraint. He explains his rationale for doing so:

I thought, “If God exists, He will not cease to exist by any action of my own, but if I devote myself to all possible experience, He will indeed find some way, in some one or a complex of my experiences, to reveal Himself to me” (Knee 71).

One night in his junior year Adi Da sat alone in his room. Desperate to recover the “Bright”, but consumed by the endless conflicts in his mind and heart, he surrendered to the shape of all his doubts and suffering. Suddenly, there was a radical revolution in his being:

An absolute sense of understanding opened and arose at the extreme end of all this sudden contemplation. And all the motions of me that moved down into that depth appeared to reverse their direction . . . I felt a surge of Force draw up out of my depths and expand, Filling my entire body and every level of my humanly-born conscious awareness with wave on wave of the most Beautiful and Joyous Energy (Knee 65).

In this sudden awakening, Adi Da firmly grasped two fundamentals that would become cornerstones of his later teaching: (1) “Truth was not a matter of seeking”. And (2) “all beings are always already Free” (Knee 66-67). As dramatic an awakening as this was for Adi Da, it proved not to be the unshakable recovery of the “Bright”, the ultimate realization of reality and truth he had known at birth.

Shortly after graduating from Columbia in 1961, he entered into graduate studies at Stanford University. He eventually moved to a secluded bungalow on a cliff overlooking the Pacific Ocean, where he was given over to an intensely subjective process—a yoga of writing, in which he meticulously recorded the contents of the mind and noted their coincidences in the external world. He wrote exhaustively, hoping thereby to uncover the core logic that binds human beings to patterns of suffering, seeking, and dilemma. At last, his yoga of writing and subjective introspection bore fruit, culminating in a remarkable discovery:

I saw that my entire adventure—the desperate cycle of Awakeness and its decrease, of truly Conscious Being and Its gradual covering in the mechanics of

living, seeking, dying, and suffering—was produced out of the image (or mentality) that appears in [the ancient myth of Narcissus]. . . . I observed, in awe, the primitive control that this self-concept and logic exercised over all of my behavior and experience. I began to see this same logic operative in all other human beings, and in every living thing—even in the very life of the cells, and in the natural energies that surround every living entity or process. It was the logic (or process) of separation itself, of enclosure and immunity. It manifested as fear and identity, memory and experience. It informed every function of the living being, every experience, every act, every event. It “created” every “mystery”. It was the structure of every imbecile link in the history of human suffering (Knee 94).

Informed by this discovery, Adi Da was soon led (via subtle, premonitory visions) to the first of the spiritual masters who served him directly in his unique process. He moved to New York in 1964. Shortly after arriving, he met Swami Rudrananda, a large and imposing man whom students simply called Rudi.

Adi Da quickly became Rudi’s whole-hearted disciple. He threw himself into the life of “surrender and work” that Rudi demanded of his students. Rudi was a spiritual transmitter of what he called “the Force”. Adi Da experienced “the Force” and its purifying effects, confirmed to him the spiritual nature of existence and the reality of what he knew, in its unqualified fullness, to be the “Bright”.

To Adi Da’s surprise, Rudi eventually suggested to him that he pursue a religious career and enter a Christian seminary for this purpose. Rudi insisted that the Christian

scriptures and way of life (which Adi Da had long ago abandoned) were entirely compatible with Rudi's own path of kundalini yoga. At first Adi Da protested, then reluctantly agreed, attending three seminaries during his time with Rudi.

At the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, Adi Da experienced yet another dramatic breakthrough of the “Bright”.<sup>12</sup> He writes that one morning before classes he became suddenly gripped with an enormous rising fear of death. His face began to lose its pliability and his heartbeat became alarmingly erratic. There seemed no obvious cause for this fear, yet he felt certain he was about to die. The terror rose in him like a raging fire. For three days he fought back his fear, desperately hoping it would pass. But on the third day he could hold out no longer. His description bears extensive quoting:

I allowed the death to happen, and I “saw” it happen. . . . There was a spontaneous, utter release of identification with the body, the mind, the emotions of the separate person, and the self-contracting (or reactive and separative) act that is the ego (or the presumed person). When that moment of crisis had passed, I felt a marvelous relief—or rather, simply, a marvelous Freedom. The death had occurred, but I had observed it! I remained untouched by it. The body and the mind and the egoic personality had “died”, but I remained as essential and unqualified Awareness. . . . I Knew Reality, tacitly and directly. There was an Infinite Bliss of Being, an untouched, unborn Sublimity—without separation, without individuation, without a thing from which to be separated. There was only

---

<sup>12</sup> Such events occurred with varying intensity throughout Adi Da's life, eventually becoming a constant in the final years leading to his *mahasamadhi*.

Reality Itself, the incomparable Nature and constant Existence that underlies (and observes, and Knows) the entire adventure of life. And that Same and Very Reality was also revealed as the unqualified living condition of the totality of conditionally manifested existence (Knee 177).

Concomitant with the freedom he felt as the crisis passed came a fundamental understanding:

I understood Narcissus and the entire cycle of suffering and search. . . . Suffering, seeking, self-indulgence, the seeker's Spirituality, and all the rest were founded in the same primary motivation and error. It was the avoidance of relationship. That was it! That was the chronic and continuous source and characteristic of all egoic activity. Indeed, the ego was revealed to be only an activity, not an "entity". The "entity", the separate "person" (or ego-"I"), was revealed to be only an illusion, a mere presumption in mind and feeling, resulting from the self-contraction, the egoic reaction, the single egoic act of the total body-mind (Knee 178).

The understanding of "egoity" as the act and pattern of self-contraction is so radical, so all-encompassing, that Adi Da refers to it again and again throughout his writings. In one of his late characterizations of this "root-error" he writes:

The imagined separate "knowing-self" is a merely apparent "known-object" (and the otherwise mere "shadow" of a conditional appearance), superimposed on the

Perfectly Prior and Inherent Reality-Condition. The imagined ego-life is, thus, “played” on the Perfectly Prior Self-Base of Intrinsically egoless Conscious Light, like a reflection in a mirror (Teaching Manual 149).

All of this, he says, must be understood, the imagined “self” utterly transcended, if Reality Itself is to be most perfectly realized.

### *Discipleship under Swami Muktananda*

Having received all that he could from Rudi, Adi Da was determined to meet Rudi’s own guru, Swami Muktananda. In April of 1968, with Rudi’s reluctant consent, he made the first of several pilgrimages to the swami’s ashram in Ganeshpuri, India. Swami Muktananda (whom, with reverence and affection, Adi Da called “Baba”) was an accomplished *yogi-siddha* (or master of yogic powers). He had undergone an intensive *sadhana* (practice) of devotion and *tapas* (spiritual discipline or “heat”) under his own guru, Bhagavan Nityananda (d. 1961).

Swami Muktananda’s first instruction to Adi Da proved to be the most consequential: “You are not the one who wakes or dreams or sleeps. You are the Witness to all of these states” (Knee 189). However, Swami Muktananda’s work and methods were not rooted in these teachings, but in the transmission of *shaktipat* (spiritual power) to his devotees as a means of increasing their participation in the “play of consciousness”—the higher and subtle dimensions of experiential awareness.

Adi Da received this *shaktipat* in full force. For a time he lived under the swami’s watchful eye in a constant state of meditation, swooning in visions, blisses, and a

fantastic range of phenomenal experiences. On Adi Da's second visit to India in 1969, Swami Muktananda wrote a formal letter of acknowledgement to him, conferring on him the name Dhyanananda and the right to teach others according to the *kundalini shaktipat* tradition. This was the swami's only such formal acknowledgement of a Westerner.

Soon, however, Adi Da began to feel trapped in the endless stream of *shakti* phenomena. As these became commonplace, they also became problematic:

The display of images, the transports to other worlds, the identification with ascended modes of Divine Being, the perception of higher and subtler forms of my own identity and ability, all passed before me, but with less and less interest on my part. I began to feel: "This is not the point. This is not it. Reality is Prior to all of this. Reality is my own Self-Nature" (Knee 231).

But he had not yet stably re-awakened to the "Bright", the prior condition of reality and truth, free of all supports and prior to all apparent modifications of itself.

On his third visit to the ashram in 1970, Adi Da had a series of extraordinary subtle encounters, first with Bhagavan Nityananda (who was still spiritually active) and then with the visionary appearance (in a numinous, yet discernible form) of the Virgin Mary. Initially surprised and amused at the sight of her, Adi Da also felt a depth of reverence. At her behest he agreed to leave Swami Muktananda's ashram and embark on a pilgrimage to various Christian holy sites in the Middle East and Europe (Knee 268-75).

The pilgrimage became an extraordinary excursion into Christian mysticism. For a time, Adi Da was given over to intense contemplation of the image of Jesus in his heart. In the end, he understood this to be a purification of the psychic vestiges of his childhood religion and its symbols. And with this understanding, he completed his "exploration" of the realm of subtle experiences and ascended phenomena. He knew them to be but phantasmagoria of the higher mind—neither ultimate nor more liberating than experiences in the gross physical world.

By August of 1970, all of Adi Da's efforts he had undertaken to recover the "Bright" had worn thin in him. Certain that there was no necessity for him to engage any further exploration of the traditional modes of the spiritual search, he settled quietly in Los Angeles, California.

### *Divine Re-Awakening*

On September 9, 1970, while meditating at the Vedanta Society Temple in Hollywood, Adi Da experienced an intense "spiritual union" with the Divine Shakti (the universal force of cosmic energy appearing as a subtle, powerful, and feminine presence). It was an intense yogic and spiritual encounter. He felt her press against his form with cosmic intensity, "as if to give birth to the universes". The union was overwhelmingly blissful, but its significance, he says, was not the experience, but the event itself. He realized that the Shakti was "the Inseparable and Inherent Radiance of my own and Very being" (Knee 317-18).

On the following day Adi Da sat again in the temple awaiting the appearance of the Shakti. It was then and there that his Divine Re-Awakening happened. The moment

was devoid of fanfare, yet so utterly remarkable that no descriptive summary would do it justice. Here is Adi Da's own account:

But, as time passed, there was no Event of changes, no movement at all. . . . not a single element or change that could be added to make my State Complete. . . .

Then, suddenly, I understood most perfectly. I Realized that I had Realized. The "Thing" about the "Bright" became Obvious. I Am Complete. I Am the One Who Is Complete. . . . I simply sat there and Knew What and Who I Am. I was Being What I Am, Who I Am. I Am Being What I Am, Who I Am. I Am Reality, the Divine Self-Condition—the Nature, Substance, Support, and Source-Condition of all things and all beings. I Am One—The One. One and Only. I Am the One Being, called "God" (the Source and Substance and Support and Self-Condition of all-and-All), the "One Mind" (the Consciousness and Energy in and As Which all-and-All appears), "Siva-Shakti" (the Self-Existing and Self-Radiant Reality, Itself), "Brahman" (the Only Reality, Itself), the "Nirvanic Ground" (the egoless and conditionless reality and Truth, Prior to all dualities, but excluding none). I Am the One and Only and inherently ego-less and Self-Evidently Divine Self-Condition, Source-Condition, Nature, Substance, Support, and Ground of all-and-All. I Am the "Bright" (Knee 318-20).

This was the culminating event in Adi Da's early life. There was, he says, no more to realize. He knew himself to be Absolute Reality Itself. Now, on the basis of his ordeal of self-submission and his own most perfect realization, he could confess—to

all—that truth (or Reality Itself) cannot be attained via any experience. Reality Itself is simply “always already the case”. Paradoxically, its perfect realization requires that one transcend all experience, all identification with the “point of view of ego-‘I’”. Adi Da would forevermore affirm that such ego-transcendence, real and true, can only occur through divine grace. And that such grace is granted most directly by an awakened guru or transmission-master.

Now equipped for this very role by his own divine re-awakening, Adi Da turned outward to the world. He was prepared to engage the second phase of his avataric self-submission. The time had come to receive devotees and, he says, to apply every ego-confounding means to teach, bless, and awaken them.

## PART II: TEACHING HUMANKIND: THE YEARS OF SELF-SUBMISSION TO DEVOTEES

My Life is a little bit like going into the world of enemies and dragons to liberate somebody who has been captured. You cannot just sit down and tell a dragon the Truth. You must confront a dragon. You must engage in a heroic effort to release the captive from the dragon. This is how I worked in the theatre of My way of relating to people, particularly in the earlier years, and in the unusual involvements of My Life and Teaching. You could characterize it as the heroic way of Teaching, the way of identifying with devotees and entering into “consideration” in that context and bringing them out of the enemy territory, gradually waking them up (Discourse 19 Aug. 1982).

There were few outward signs indicating the profundity of what had happened at the Vedanta Society Temple. It was, as Adi Da described it, "an Event in Consciousness". He simply returned home that September evening, saying nothing about the Event until many weeks later. A longtime friend, however, did notice a change in "Franklin" at the time:

When you look people in the eyes, there is a characteristic quality that you can identify as their personality. But when I looked into [Adi Da's] eyes after the Vedanta Temple Event, there wasn't anything. It had disappeared. His behavior in the world did not change—He has always been humorous. But the disappearance, or dissolution, of His personality was evident (D H Magazine v.1 no.1 4).

In late 1970 and early 1971, Adi Da spent his time preparing the original manuscript of The Knee Of Listening (published in 1971 by CSA Press) and assessing what had happened at the temple. He knew that he had re-awakened to the divine self-condition, the supreme goal of the ancient esoteric paths, East and West. And he naturally presumed that he would find correspondences to his realization in the traditions of India, the motherland of spirituality. In particular he felt that the path of Advaita Vedanta, exemplified in our time by the modern sage Ramana Maharshi, would affirm and confirm what he had realized.

But as the process of his divine re-awakening unfolded, Adi Da noted the critical distinctions between the fullness of his own realization and that of the Advaitic sages, including Ramana Maharshi. He would offer precise clarifications of these differences

throughout his writings, distinguishing what he eventually came to call the sixth stage of life—its various paths and methods—from his own seventh stage realization, beyond which, he says, there is nothing more to realize.<sup>13</sup>

Stated briefly, the realization of the sixth stage of life has been traditionally attained by withdrawing awareness from arising phenomena, both internal and external. The intention in the sixth stage traditions is to singularly inhere in the Formless Reality—what the Advaitic sages call the “Self” and the Buddhist sages call “Nirvana”. The sixth stage method is to discriminatively exclude everything associated with the gross (or outer) and the subtle (or inner) dimensions of experience, thus enabling one to “abide as the Self” (or to “realize Nirvana”).

However, Adi Da points out that the Advaitic method of exclusive identification with the “Self”, while idealistic in its affirmation that “only the Self exists”, is in fact dissociative: it rejects the cosmic domain as illusory in order to “seclude” oneself (or one’s attention) in Consciousness Itself. Similarly, the sixth stage schools of (especially Theravada) Buddhism make the same error, but do so from a realistic disposition. They reject the idea of “self”—even the so-called “true Self” of Advaitism. And they do so in nihilistic fashion (i.e., the doctrine of “anatta”), while affirming the Nirvanic Condition. Most often, however, this Condition is expressed in terms of what it is not (i.e., the uncaused, the unborn, the unmade, etc.), as opposed to what it is, as in the Advaitic tradition. In truth, Adi Da says, the two traditions are indicating the same reality and realization, even though they are culturally proposed as distinct in philosophical method and realization.

---

<sup>13</sup> For a full treatment by Adi Da of the seven stages of life, see The Seven Stages of Life. Middletown, CA: Dawn Horse Press, 2000.

In the case of seventh stage realization, there is, Adi Da says, no dissociation from conditional phenomena, no effort of exclusion in order to abide in and as Consciousness. Rather, all that arises is “Divinely Self-Recognized to be merely a modification of Consciousness, or the Self-Existing and Self-Radiant Conscious Light of Reality Itself”, which is the very Source-Condition of all worlds (gross, subtle, and causal), all phenomena, and all beings. The seventh stage realization erases every trace of dissociation from the body-mind and the world, every impulse to seek or to avoid any experience or condition. This, Adi Da says, is the most perfect realization, and it is unique to his divine self-revelation.<sup>14</sup>

Adi Da’s own teaching work began spontaneously and in a remarkable fashion. While sitting in meditation in the weeks following the Vedanta Temple event, he noticed that the various mind forms, emotional states, and karmic conditions arising to his awareness were not his own, but those of others:

I would sit and be aware, visually or in some other way, of great numbers of people, and I would work with them very directly in a subtle manner. In some cases, these people would randomly show up and become involved with Me in a personal way. Others were people I already knew, and I would work with them in that subtle way and then watch for signs in their outward lives that would demonstrate the reality of that manifestation. I would test it in that way. Through the subtle appearance of this Siddhi (Power), the function of My Work with others began to develop (D H Magazine v.1 no.2 8).

---

<sup>14</sup> See “Sixth-Stage ‘Method’ Versus ‘Perfect Practice’” in Reality Is All The God There Is, pp. 162-183.

Thus, Adi Da began to teach those who responded to him. They were, he says, an unexceptional group of Western seekers. Many were from America's counterculture, presenting themselves to him with well-developed illusions about spiritual realization and its attainment. No one, he says, came to him prepared for real spiritual life or equipped with the intensive focus of attention and energy required for its fulfillment.

*The Intensive Years of Teaching-Submission (1972-1986)*

During the Years of My Divine Avataric Teaching-Revelation, I Submitted Myself to My devotees, and I Took On and Suffered all the limitations of My devotees. During the Years of My Divine Avataric Teaching-Revelation, I Became exactly like My devotees. During the Years of My Divine Avataric Teaching-Revelation, I Submitted Myself to My devotees Completely, and I Became more like My devotees than they were themselves. During the Years of My Divine Avataric Teaching-Revelation, I Became exaggeratedly what My devotees were—I Submitted Myself to them, Such That I Became what they were altogether, while My devotees remained only what they could express in the midst of their limitations and their egoic "self"-consciousness. Thus, by Becoming exaggeratedly like all My devotees, I Reflected them to themselves at depth—and, So, I Taught them, and Moved them To Me As I Am. During the Years of My Divine Avataric Teaching-Revelation, I Became My devotees Completely, by Submitting Myself to them As to God, in order to Demonstrate to them how to

likewise turn to Me and surrender to Me and (Most Ultimately) Realize and Be Me (Aletheon manuscript).<sup>15</sup>

In April of 1972 Adi Da opened a small bookstore and ashram in Los Angeles, naming it Shree Hridayam Siddhashram. As word spread of his charismatic presence, his “radical” teaching<sup>16</sup>, and accessible teaching style, the ashram grew in numbers. Adi Da (then still known as “Franklin”) typically worked with small groups, a teaching device he employed to serve all his devotees. Those within his intimate sphere at any given time were his “coins”, a reference to the peculiar habit of Shirdi Sai Baba, the great Hindu/Muslim master of the early twentieth century. Shirdi Sai Baba was known to keep a bag of coins with him and would often rub them while uttering the names of his devotees. He did not like to be observed doing this, but it was understood that he was transmitting his spiritual blessing to devotees in this way (Life History Ch XII).<sup>17</sup> Similarly, Adi Da worked with his “coins” as a medium of his connection, he says, to all his devotees (and even to all beings).

In the first year of the ashram, Adi Da gave the talks that became his first book of published teachings.<sup>18</sup> He would also meet informally with devotees during the day in the small office behind the ashram meditation hall, talking and laughing with them,

---

<sup>15</sup> The Aletheon is forthcoming from the Dawn Horse Press. This quote is from the essay, “Then and Now and You and The ‘Bright’”.

<sup>16</sup> Adi Da employs the word “radical” in its original sense, meaning, “at the root”.

<sup>17</sup> “In the afternoons, between 1 and 2 p.m. devotees were not allowed inside the mosque. During this period Baba would take out 15 to 20 old coins from his bag and rub them with his fingers, saying aloud, ‘This coin is Nana’s, this coin is Kaka’s.’ Perhaps by doing like this Baba was removing their desires.” The quote is from The Life History of Shirdi Sai Baba, Chapter XII. [www.saibaba.org](http://www.saibaba.org). 28 April 2009 [saibaba.org 04 May 2009 < http://www.saibaba.org/lhossb/lhossb12.html >](http://www.saibaba.org/lhossb/lhossb12.html)

<sup>18</sup> Now entitled My “Bright” Word, the book was initially called The Method of the Siddhas.

answering their questions about practical and spiritual life. In both human and spiritual terms, he was living the condition of unqualified relationship to them and calling them to do the same. He soon formalized the requirements (or "student conditions") for his early devotees. These included a series of disciplines relative to diet, exercise, sexuality, and the use of money, as well as disciplines related to meditation, study, service, and participation in the educational life of the ashram.<sup>19</sup>

After a year of such work with devotees, it was clear to Adi Da that their understanding and responsibility remained minimal. Their only real qualifications were their attraction to him as teacher and master, a rudimentary grasp of his teachings, and a sufficiently non-conventional disposition to consider with him the nature of reality and truth in the context of their day-to-day lives. Adi Da saw that a different kind of work was required of him to prepare devotees for the spiritual process in his company. And soon he would begin that work in earnest. This pragmatic approach is a hallmark of Adi Da's teaching work and life altogether. He was not interested in merely passing on a spiritual philosophy, nor, he says, of gathering sycophants around him, but of establishing an enduring spiritual culture, authentic in every respect, for the purpose of serving the process of spiritual realization. And, at any given time, he would employ whatever methods he discovered were necessary to this end.

Before undertaking the first of many radical shifts in his manner of working with devotees, Adi Da made another pilgrimage to India, arriving first at Swami Muktananda's ashram. In a formal meeting with the swami, he presented several questions that

---

<sup>19</sup> Adi Da originally used the term "sadhana" to describe the various disciplines of the Reality-Way of Adidam. "Sadhana" (Sanskrit for "religious or spiritual practice") includes all of the details of ego-transcending practice in the Reality-Way of Adidam. These, Adi Da summarizes, in a three-fold description: "radical devotion, right-life discipline", and 'perfect knowledge'".

expressed the essential differences between his own realization and the mode of realization commonly proposed within the Kundalini-Shaktipat Siddha Yoga tradition (and the tradition of Kashmir Saivism) with which Swami Muktananda was aligned. Even with the awkwardness of communicating via a translator, it was clear that Swami Muktananda was dismissive of Adi Da's questions and unwilling to engage in any serious dialogue with respect to these differences (Knee 497).

Adi Da left the swami's ashram soon after their meeting, acknowledging that Swami Muktananda had dearly served him during his sadhana years. But his own seventh stage realization—in which all arising conditions are intrinsically “Self-Recognized (and Perfectly Transcended) in the ‘Bright’ Divine Self-Condition”—ran counter to the swami's predilection for ascending yoga and subtle phenomena. It was clear to Adi Da that his own realization was, in the end, simply beyond the swami's experience (Unbroken Light 126).

Adi Da continued on to various holy sites and ashrams in India. The pilgrimage marked a critical turning point in his teaching work. Shortly before returning to America, he instructed his devotee-attendant Gerald Sheinfeld to send a letter back to the ashram in Los Angeles informing devotees of the new name that Adi Da had spontaneously assumed:

From this time on, we should call the Guru “Bubba Free John”. “Franklin” means “a Freed Man” or “a Liberated Man”. “Jones” is a Welsh form of “John”. So “Free John” is equivalent to “Franklin Jones”. “Bubba” means “brother”, or “equal”, expressing the Oneness of all (Lee 55).

The curious name was surprise enough to devotees, but no one anticipated the corresponding shift in Adi Da's teaching methods upon his return to Los Angeles. He immediately began to engage devotees in wild celebrations and outrageous theatrical incidents of all kinds. He drank and partied with them, goaded and cajoled them to let go of their inhibitions and to expose their limitations and tendencies. In doing this, he unleashed a firestorm of unrestrained exaltation. Devotees drank, sang, danced, and partied all night—night after night—at the new ashram offices on La Brea Street.

We have noted that many of his early devotees were already unconventional in their personal habits and social attitudes. They had come to Adi Da from America's counterculture, often with a history of free sexual and lifestyle experimentation. Once the "student conditions" they had been living for the past several months were relaxed, devotees either entered into this play with Adi Da with abandon, or—as his teaching demonstration starkly reflected over the years—suffered their own self-contracted resistance. Either way, a lesson was being given.

The name "Bubba Free John" was the outward symbol of Adi Da's conclusion in 1973 that to instruct and prepare his Western devotees for genuine spiritual life he had no recourse but to "come down off his chair" and live intimately with them. He reflected them to themselves—so that they could observe and understand their own ego-bound interests, desires, and illusions, their patterns of selfishness, obsession, emotional reactivity, and addiction. Adi Da's submission to them required that he uncover the very core of their ego-bondage, in order to awaken them beyond it. And that, he says, is what he did.

I went to India in 1973, taking some time away from the gathering of My devotees, and I returned to the Ashram in Los Angeles resolved to do whatever I had to do to deal with the reality of people's unprepared approach to Me. From that time onwards, I accepted the fact that My Work with people was going to involve My Submission to them and their conditions—until such time as they would recognize Me and understand what the Way of Adidam is about altogether, and relate to Me differently. I had no sense at all how long that was going to take, or what it would require altogether. It wasn't that I was thinking I would do it for a few months, and then that would be that. It was a real Submission, with no preconception as to how it would turn out (Lee 60-61).

It was clear to Adi Da that the teaching work he was now doing required remote and private spaces, free of encroachment from the common world. In early 1974, the ashram bookstore was moved from Los Angeles to San Francisco, while he and a number of devotees moved several hours north to a former hot springs resort in Lake County, California. There Adi Da established his first Adidam sanctuary, which he originally called "Persimmon". The sanctuary was well-suited for the dramatic teaching-demonstration (later known as the "Garbage and the Goddess" era) that ensued.

The intensified yogic events and spiritual force emanating from Adi Da and pervading Persimmon at the time are documented in the book Garbage and the Goddess, and events during the wild celebratory weekend of July 6 and 7, 1974, were captured in the documentary film A Difficult Man. The following report from Joan Kelley about her

forceful experience of the Shakti in the sanctuary bathhouse provides a vivid glimpse of the extraordinariness of that time:

When I got to the large pool, I made my way to a place near Bubba. He sat on the edge of the pool with a crowd gathered around him. . . . As I watched his face, his eyes became large and the sneer on his face became so crazy I could hardly concentrate on him or myself or anything connected to the moment. He was holding my hand as I began to lapse into a trance. All I could imagine was dying, and I felt the hard vibrating force of Bubba's strength going through me like an electric shock. I have had powerful Shakti experiences in Bubba's presence before. Some have even been painful, paralyzing ones, located in specific centers and moving in certain patterns. But this was different. It was everywhere at once and utterly consuming. I wondered if I had enough wits about me to hold my mouth out of the water to breathe. My body was totally limp. . . . Later that evening I spoke to Bubba and said . . . "What can you do if I don't give up? I don't want to drain you with my fear . . . I love you so." He just smiled a sweet, loving smile, gave me a quieting shush, and said, "I'm all right. In time you will be ready" (Garbage 53-54).

Amidst the parties that carried on for weeks, Adi Da created incident after incident, generating a remarkable array of ordinary and extraordinary experiences in his devotees. Every day was as subjectively intense as it was outwardly dramatic. As one devotee wrote at the time:

[I arrived at Persimmon from San Francisco], and the first person I saw said to me, “Are you ready, are you really ready?” I embraced her, but really there was only fear. I felt that death was upon us, but couldn’t understand how. I felt that my bullshit was not to be had here. There was an intensity, yet still I didn’t know what was happening (Garbage 71).

To understand the work Adi Da was doing during this period, one must appreciate that the gatherings with him were never just parties. Day and night, Adi Da was intensively considering every experiential aspect of life with his devotees—from money, food, and sex to spiritual visions, inner sounds, and transcendent states of bliss. The guiding purpose behind every consideration was, he says, to convey a fundamental lesson to humankind: no experience, whether high or low in the spectrum of human possibilities, is itself happiness, truth, or liberation, nor can it produce such happiness. Experiences of whatever kind are simply what he humorously called “the bangles of the Goddess”, modifications of conscious light. There is no need to deny or suppress them, nor to exploit them. Ultimately, they must be transcended in the direct and present realization of reality and truth. Adi Da conveyed this lesson in far more vivid language:

I will Tell you right now—it is all garbage! Everything I give you in the realms of experience is garbage—and I expect you to throw it away. Nevertheless, you tend to meditate on it—instead of meditating on Me! Every one of these seemingly precious experiences, all of this profound philosophy—is, ultimately—just more

of the same stuff. . . None of that is the Divine. It is all garbage. Therefore, throw the every “thing” away (and, thereby, Find Me—the Source-Condition of all Gifts, and the Self-Condition of every heart that finds the Gift of Me) (Lee 77).

And again:

My Teaching work over the last two and one-half years has been associated with inner and outer miracles, but it was all a way to demonstrate how the fulfillment of experiential life does not amount in any sense whatsoever to illumination. The arising of miraculous or extraordinary experiential phenomena does not produce the enlightened man [or woman], the wise man [or woman]. Enlightenment or radical understanding depends entirely on the conscious process, not the experiential one (Garbage bk. cover).

Adi Da’s writings and recorded talks of the time are also filled with teachings about non-conditional reality, criticisms of egoity, and technical descriptions of the various traditional paths in contrast to the radical spiritual process that he was revealing and demonstrating. For years afterwards, he alternated periods of such celebration and consideration—which sometimes included sexual experimentation and the use of alcohol and other intoxicants—with “straight” times of self-discipline, meditation, study, and strict dietary practice. His teaching method was, he says, never merely a matter of talking and writing. It was a highly interactive process with devotees, an intensive examination of the realities of their lives—their interests, moods, and experiences. These were

considered over against the Reality-Way of Adidam and the unique features of the sadhana and process of realization that he was offering.

*“Reality Consideration”*

From the scant public literature on Adidam to date, it is clear that most scholars and academicians familiar with Adi Da know something of the early period of his work and the controversies within the Adidam community during the mid-1980s. But little of substance has been written about Adi Da or his work since that time.<sup>20</sup> And what has been written does not adequately present Adi Da’s own account of why he taught as he did during any period of his work, nor does it characterize the response of those who remained his devotees through the mid-1980s and beyond.<sup>21</sup> In this paper, every effort is made to present Adi Da in light of his own stated purposes for the work he was doing—especially relative to the method of teaching-submission that he often called “reality consideration”.

His expressed intention behind such consideration was to expose egoity in all of its forms, low and high, in order to enable human beings to enter into the “egoless Process of Divine Self-Realization”, or the seventh (and ultimate) stage of life (Atma 101-06).<sup>22</sup> To this end, Adi Da spent decades in face-to-face dialogue with devotees, openly examining human life and spiritual realization in minute detail. In every such

---

<sup>20</sup> See “Lawsuits, Countersuits, and Media Circuses” <http://www.adidaupclose.org/Lawsuits/index.html>

<sup>21</sup> See Lowe, Scott, and David Lane. *DA: The Strange Case of Franklin Jones*. Walnut, CA: Mt. San Antonio College, 1996. While this present paper is unapologetically uncritical and seeks to present Adi Da in his own right, it is fair to say that the Lowe/Lang work takes the opposite point of view.

<sup>22</sup> Again, for a full treatment by Adi Da of the seven stages of life, see *The Seven Stages of Life*. Middletown, CA: Dawn Horse Press, 2000.

consideration, he says, he was addressing humankind as a whole—dealing with the root-error that produces the universal pattern of non-realization, its attendant illusions and sufferings:

By means of this Work with My devotees, I effectively Addressed the entire world, relative to every possible form of human experience. In so doing, I Freely and Fully Participated in the total and complete "reality consideration" of the egoity of every one and all. . . . All of My Work with My devotees is "reality consideration"—whether on an apparently smaller scale or an apparently larger scale, whether the devotees involved in the "reality consideration" are in face-to-face dialogue with Me or are physically distant from Me in various parts of the world. And the fundamental content of every "reality consideration" is always the same—the transcending of egoity (or self-contraction), as it is dramatized in each and all of the first six stages of life. No matter what the content of any given "reality consideration" appears to be, I am always Addressing everyone relative to egoity (Hridaya Tantra part 34).

### *And Why Sex?*

Adi Da frequently remarked that, given the state of human beings in general and his early devotees in particular, it should not be surprising that he frequently focused on the area of intimate relationships, emotion, and sexuality when addressing the patterns of human egoity. This is where most people are at and where their energy and attention are most profoundly bound. As he expressed it:

In the only-by-Me revealed and Given Reality-Way of Adidam, the emotional-sexual ego (and, indeed, the ego of “money, food, and sex” altogether) must be really and truly gone beyond—and this must, in real and significant terms, begin in the foundation stages of the practice of the Way of Adidam, as part of the ongoing basis for real and true growth into and in the by-Me-Transcendentally-Spiritually-Awakened stages of the Way of Adidam. Therefore, My devotees must deal with “money, food, and sex” first—before there can be any true advancement into the by-Me-Transcendentally-Spiritually-Awakened stages of the Reality-Way of Adidam. This is an essential part of My Message and My Revelation: Human beings must deal with the money-food-and-sex ego first (Complete Yoga 27-28).

To serve an understanding of the emotional-sexual patterns of devotees requires openness and vulnerability from all involved, free of puritanical attitudes, prudery, or squeamishness. In his Prologue to Love of the Two-Armed Form, written in 1978, Adi Da summarized his approach as follows:

In the case of sex, we gave ourselves up to the “consideration” of this whole matter, this whole immensity, in such a way that every aspect of the matter would be made clear, and every participant would be obliged to change his or her “act”, and to mature and grow beyond the subhuman tendencies of conventionally learned desire. Promiscuity and random desire in general are typical of our

contemporary and subhuman interest in sex. And such interest at first typified the common “wisdom” of those who came to Me. As time went on, however, their “consideration” became more and more mature, responsibility increased, emotional insight became more typical, and sexual intimacy became a matter of loving communion and choice, in relationship to the Radiant Divine Life within which all our functions appear and operate. Thus, our “consideration” became a meditation on the truly human, religious, higher psycho-physical, and regenerative dimensions of this most basic, fascinating, and agonizing motive of humankind (2-3).

Adi Da teaches that sexual problems stem in large part from an emotional ambivalence toward bodily pleasure. The intense desire for pleasure epitomized in sex is a primal urge in human beings, linked to the reproductive and survival instincts of the species. Because of its immense power, sex is readily exploited, individually, interpersonally, and in the social collective—as evidenced by its pervasiveness in the advertising and entertainment industries. But sex is also suppressed. And individuals struggle not only with their sexual urges, but with negative social messages that condemn sex as the “great evil”, as sin, or as the root-source of all karmic bondage— notions that have long characterized our social, moral, and religious traditions, East and West. In Adi Da’s words:

The Great Tradition of humankind is, as a whole, unresolved and ambivalent relative to the entire matter of sexuality, and is even generally sex-negative (or

“sex-paranoid”) in its orientation. All such puritanical righteousness must be gone beyond—otherwise, one’s emotional-sexual egoity is never truly inspected and dealt with. In that case, attention remains fundamentally (even if unconsciously) bound in emotional-sexual dilemmas of all kinds, thereby limiting the degree of real Spiritual growth that is possible.

I Call My devotees to the transcending of any obstruction of energy, any dramatization of the “self”-contraction in relation to sex or any other aspect of life. I do not have a moralistic reaction to anything about the emotional-sexual life of human beings. To Me, emotional-sexual difficulty (of whatever kind) is simply a sign of egoity in whomever it appears— and, therefore, it is simply something that the individual must deal with in a straightforward, non-problematic, non-puritanical, and, altogether, non-paranoid (or fearless) manner (Complete Yoga 25-26).

We have seen that Adi Da’s early students were willing participants in this consideration and the incidents attending it. Once it was clear that a truly open context (free of social and sexual taboos) had been established in Adi Da’s company, they felt free to explore their sexual fascinations and interests and also to divulge their sexual concerns, problems, and obsessions.

To illustrate this aspect of Adi Da’s work, it is useful to quote a longtime devotee at length. Frank (Cheech) Marerro participated in many such reality considerations in the early years of Adi Da’s teaching:

Since 1973, a small group of us regularly gathered with Adi Da to consider with Him the personal details of our lives and practice. In the course of these gatherings tobacco and alcohol were used. The alcohol served to break down our inhibitions, so that we would speak more candidly about our most basic problems and preoccupations. Almost invariably, the subject would soon turn to our interests and concerns about sex. In these small, intimate gatherings, Adi Da would surgically address all of these concerns, freely dealing with every question that came up and every motivation and interest that was uncovered in the course of an evening with Him. Nothing whatsoever was taboo to examine.

It turned out that everyone was suffering from emotional-sexual complications of all kinds, including secret feelings of latent homosexuality or bisexuality, machismo, fear of sex, promiscuity, aggression, impotence, frigidity, infidelity, lustful obsessions, and more. With amazing compassion and insight, Adi Da considered all these things with us, pointing out their roots in the emotional-sexual make-up of each individual. And He would teach us how to understand and be free of them. He pointed out, for instance, that whatever one's personal background—whether one was a “goody-goody”, raised by really nice, loving parents, or whether one had a terrible childhood full of abuse and tragedy—behind every individual's social persona there is a powerful emotional-sexual drama being played. And to be honest, what was revealed in those gatherings with Adi Da was not a pretty picture!

For example, my own history of intimate relationships with women was of me always being “a fucker”, as Adi Da called me. I learned how to satisfy women

sexually and bring them to orgasm, but I would never enter into a loving, intimate relationship with them. Many times, I was being unhappily loved by them, but I could not bring myself to truly love any woman. It was all about “me”. By thoroughly considering this matter with me and through sexual exchanges with some of the women who were involved in these considerations, Adi Da helped me to understand that behind my sexual personality and character was a man who was deeply afraid of women. I was using sex as a way to control and keep them at a safe distance from my own feelings of vulnerability as a man.

Adi Da asked me, “Why would you want to control women through sex? Why?” And He pointed out that it was because I really was fearful of women and that I was in fact a loveless man. I had a childish need for attention and love, but I myself simply did not love. I did not know how to love a woman or anyone, really. This was an immense and shattering revelation, and it eventually served a major purification and healing in my relationships with women—in fact, with everyone I knew, including men. Without Adi Da’s compassionate help and intervention, I would still be a loveless and very unhappy man (Costabile, “The Call” 25-27).

To expose the intimate details of one’s emotional-sexual life is a highly charged and intensive process. It requires a genuine depth of intimacy and trust, while challenging one to squarely confront secretive and negative patterns of all kinds. Adi Da allowed his devotees the full play of their tendencies. It was up to each individual to decide the depth and degree of his or her participation in each consideration. Everything related to emotional-sexual life was "considered": promiscuity, lust, romanticism, orgasm, frigidity,

genital size and compatibility, homosexuality, heterosexuality, male and female polarity, eroticism, fantasy, the intricate relationship between emotion, feeling, and sexuality.

Beyond all this, Adi Da revealed a detailed, four-stage process of emotional-sexual yoga by which sexuality itself is transformed and, he says, ultimately transcended (Testament 735-40).

But none of this, he insisted, was for the sake of mere self-discovery and improvement. Divine self-realization was the guiding purpose behind these investigations, and it requires the clear observation, understanding, and transcendence of the root-contraction of the being in devotional communion with Adi Da. A telling incident about the dark side of egoity underscores Adi Da's compassionate manner of working in the course of these gatherings:

One man had fallen into a rage upon discovering that his intimate partner had chosen to be with another man for an evening. It was the classic egoic insult, the extreme moment of betrayal out of which destructive vendettas, lifelong violence, and even wars are tragically made.

The man sat in a circle with a group of men, including the one who had been with his intimate partner. The confrontation was nearly unbearable for both of them. The other man was torn between terror and remorse, yet there was also a hint of gloating exultation in him; he had made the ultimate male conquest—another man's spouse. The betrayed man, his friend and fellow devotee, was flushed with rage and perilously close to violence.

Seeing the critical state of the man, Adi Da seated himself in the circle

with the other men. Addressing the man directly, he said forcibly, “You are so angry. Or, let me rephrase that: you are anger!” Then, in a gentler tone, “This anger will kill you, don't you know? It is a poison of your own making. It is your enemy, not him [pointing to the other man]! You must give it up. You must. You must just let it go, this poison, this rage. Just let it go.” His eyes were soft with immense compassion and understanding. “I know how you hurt, I understand your rage. But you must see that you are destroying yourself and possibly others. You must just give your anger up, you must.”

Then he looked the man squarely in the eyes, and said directly, but with the most broken-hearted expression of vulnerability and love, “Give it to me.” The man looked at Adi Da helplessly, like a wounded child. Then he broke down sobbing and weeping, the emotional pain of his hurt and rage oozing from his skin pores as he fell into Adi Da's arms. The critical moment had passed. “Tcha”, whispered Adi Da. “This is good, this is the beginning.”

There was much hurt and pain yet to reconcile, and beyond that, lay the entire transcendental spiritual process, but this man had accepted that, no matter what others had done, the hurt and rage were his alone to deal with. Whatever the nature of any incident, positive or negative, human beings are free to either suffer or transcend their emotional reaction to it (Costabile, “Da Avatar” Ch 12).

In September of 2008, Adi Da offered a summary appraisal of his teaching-work as it relates to that of other “Adept-Realizers” within the Great Tradition of religion and spirituality as a whole:

In the entire history of the Great Tradition of humankind, there are no complete precedents for My Divine Avataric Work of Teaching-Revelation—because the Moment had not previously existed for an Adept to Work As I Did. All the Adepts, each in his or her time and place, have Worked as they should have. However, My Divine Avataric Work of Teaching-Revelation Coincided with a unique Time, and, therefore, the Accomplishing-Powers of My Divine Avataric Self-Manifestation, and (Thus and Thereby) My Divine Avataric Teaching-Revelation, were Required and Enabled to Be Uncommon and Unusual.

In the entire history of the Great Tradition of humankind, the precedents for My Divine Avataric Work of Teaching-Revelation are only partial. In the entire history of the Great Tradition of humankind, no Adept-Realizer Worked precisely as I Did during the Years of My Divine Avataric Teaching-Revelation. My Work of Divine Avataric Teaching-Revelation Was the most “Heroic” Manner of Teaching. During the Years of My Divine Avataric Teaching-Revelation, I actually (and in every case) Became the limited, or un-Enlightened, being whom I Taught. My Work of Divine Avataric Teaching-Revelation Was an historically and entirely Unique and Divinely “Heroic” Manner of Teaching. Therefore, in due course, My Time of Divine Avataric Work of Teaching-Revelation to all-and-All Became Finally Perfect and Complete (Aletheon).

As these considerations became conclusive, Adi Da would summarize the findings in his written teaching, passing on the wisdom thus revealed to the broader

world. Here, for example, is his summary conclusion regarding the search for sexual satisfaction and fulfillment:

The Ordinary human Search For sexual Possibility Is mere Patterned (or conditionally Programmed) behavior, Based On Being (Effectively) Without Spiritual Awareness (and, Altogether, Without Awareness Of Reality, or Of The Real Condition, Itself). If There Is No Spiritual Fullness, Then You Are Driven To Seek Pleasure (or Merely Temporary Release From The Inherent Pleasurelessness Of egoity) Through Manipulation Of the self-Contracted body-mind. Only Actual Spiritual Fullness Is Inherently Self-Sufficient (or Divinely Love-Bliss-Full) (Testament 799).

Among the lessons Adi Da Samraj demonstrated via such considerations is that the common solutions to emotional-sexual problems, whether social, moral, or psychological, are never conclusive or satisfactory. Emotional-sexual patterns, he says, are “like oceans” in their force and influence over us. Einstein’s epigram is oft-quoted that “problems cannot be solved at the same level of awareness that created them”. Adi Da has stated this same understanding metaphorically in relation to the patterns of emotional-sexual egoity (and human immaturity altogether): The “Garden dog”, he says, must be washed “from head to tail” (Rosary 109). That is, human limitations (of whatever kind) are not exceeded by any address to them in themselves. Rather, the conscious reception of Adi Da’s divine spiritual transmission is the way beyond the untamed “dog” of all ego-bound tendencies and illusions of the body-mind. This, he says, is a key aspect

of his summary revelation regarding the transcendental spiritual process and how it purifies and transforms the being.

*Da Free John*

During the years from 1972-79, Adi Da did far more than engage in reality considerations with devotees. In a prolific outpouring of practical and spiritual work, he continued to give discourses on a vast range of topics, wrote extensively (elaborating his teaching in dozens of books and essays), introduced devotional and sacred practices into the culture of Adidam, worked to establish an esoteric order of mature practitioners, empowered holy sites and sanctuaries, developed the principles for rearing, educating, and serving children within the culture of Adidam, established Adidam's organizational entities, and more.

By September of 1979, it had been nine years since his re-awakening at the Vedanta Society Temple. During those years, he later wrote, "I Came To Acknowledge, Accept, and Embrace The Unique and Ultimate (and, Necessarily, Divine Significance Of My Own Already Realized Life, Work, and Agency)" (Testament 121). On the basis of this acknowledgement, he made a further self-confession to his devotees, revealing the principal name by which he was to be known henceforth:

Beloved, I Am 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 Man. . . . To Realize Me is to Transcend the body-mind in Ecstasy. To Worship Me is simply to Remember My Name and Surrender Into My Eternal Current of

Life. And those who recognize and worship Me As Truth, the Living and All-Pervading One, will be Granted the Vision or Love-Intuition of My Eternal Condition. . . . I Am Joy, and the Reason for It (Lee 125).<sup>23</sup>

“Da” is variously translated from ancient Sanskrit and Tibetan as “the giver”, or “the one who gives and bestows charity”. It appears in The Brhadaranyaka Upanishad with these meanings (v.ii. 3), and also as the onomatopoeic for “thunder” and the force of the divine in nature (quoted in Radhakrishnan 89). “Da” was spontaneously revealed to Adi Da earlier in his life. But it was passed on to devotees for the first time via a handwritten letter (an excerpt of which appears above) on September 16, 1979. In her biography of Adi Da, Carolyn Lee writes of this:

[Adi Da’s Divine Re-Awakening and subsequent Work] was a living process that was continuing to unfold. . . . Adi Da Samraj, spoke as the Divine Person. The Name [Da] itself was not something that He thought about. It was the spontaneous expression, as He explained, of His “Inherently egoless Divine Self-Awareness” (126).

As significant changes were indicated in Adi Da’s life and manner of working, he would often respond with a corresponding change in his name. Thus, the name “Bubba Free John” expressed Adi Da’s submission to teach devotees and reflect them to themselves while living intimately with them in the mode of a “friend and brother”,

---

<sup>23</sup> From a handwritten letter from Adi Da to devotees, September, 1979, quoted in Lee, Carolyn Adi Da: The Promised God-Man Is Here. 125.

whereas the name “Da” denotes his ultimate identity as the divine avatar, being, and person. In his words:

Beloved, This Is My Heart-Secret. I Am Da—The One and Only and Self-Evidently Divine Source and Person, Who Is The One and Only and Inherently egoless (and Boundlessly "Bright") Heart Of all-and-All, and Who Is The One and Only Giver Of Divine Self-Realization To all-and-All (Testament 31).

In addition to “Bubba Free John” and “Da Free John”, Adi Da has been known variously as “Da Avabhasa”, “Da Love-Ananda”, “Da Kalki”, “Da Santosha”, “Adi Da”, “Adi Da Samraj”, “Parama-Sapta-Na Adi Da Samraj”, among other names and honorific titles. Indeed, over the years he has given many variants of his names to be used by devotees in formal sacred occasions and for devotional invocation of him at all times. Similarly, there have been many names by which he has referred to Adidam and the organizations it comprises: Shree Hridayam Siddhashram, The Dawn Horse Communion, The Johannine Daist Communion, The Free Primitive Church of Divine Communion, and The Free Daist Communion, among others. These too, were given in particular moments of his work, reflecting aspects of his total revelation, until he settled on Adidam (or, more fully, Adidam Ruchiradam) as the formal name by which his work and the organizations associated with it would be known in perpetuity.

In 1983 Adi Da moved with a small group of devotees to the remote island of Naitauba, Fiji. A devotee describes the island and its significance for Adi Da and Adidam:

Several square miles in size, Naitauba lies in the eastern sector of Fiji. The site of a former coconut plantation and privately owned prior to its acquisition by Adidam, it had otherwise been untouched by Western encroachment. Though the island is not large by comparison to others in the area, it is, by itself, a massive, primitive place of rock and sea cave, coral reef and beach, rolling hills, lush subtropical jungle, pastoral fields, coconut groves, perpetually flowering hibiscus bushes, and fruit trees. But with all of its lushness, Naitauba exudes a powerful force, a solid, towering strength that exaggerates its mass and communicates an unrelenting vitality and power. It is a fitting place for the Adept to establish His Eternal Seat of Divine Blessing (Costabile, “Da Avatar” Ch 13).

Delighted with the island and the possibilities for its perpetual use as a hermitage ashram and pilgrimage retreat center, Adi Da quickly established Naitauba as his principal seat—the source-point from which his transcendental spiritual blessing would, he indicated, flow to the world. He continued to work spiritually with devotees, knowing that if some number of devotees were enabled to receive his transcendental spiritual transmission and practice at sufficient depth during his lifetime, the process of his divine awakening work could continue unbroken in perpetuity.

Throughout 1984 and 1985, Adi Da gathered with devotees to clarify and elaborate all aspects of his teaching. He worked to summarize his entire avataric revelation in a single volume, which he called The Dawn Horse Testament.<sup>24</sup> He felt

---

<sup>24</sup> In subsequent editions, Adi Da formalized the name of this text as The Dawn Horse Testament of the Ruchira Avatar.

satisfied that this book epitomized the lessons and revelations of his own sadhana years and all the years he had invested in serving his devotees. Its publication in late 1985 presaged a monumental shift in his life and work.

PART III: "BLESSING HUMANKIND": THE DIVINE AVATARIC SELF-  
"EMERGENCE" AND THE RUCHIRA DHAM EVENT

What I Did in My Years of Teaching-Work was not My Method for Revealing My own Characteristics, but it was My Method for Revealing the characteristics of those who came to Me. I Submitted Myself in order to Teach them. Thus, in that process [of Self-Submission], I was not Revealing Myself. Rather, I was Revealing My devotees to themselves. I Made That Self-Submission and Did That Work—until the time came when I Revealed Myself As I Am. Such was the Initiation of My Divine Avataric Self-“Emergence”. Thus, during My Teaching Years, I Revealed the Way of Adidam to all—while simultaneously Addressing the “world” and its present-time realities.

Now (and forever hereafter), in the Fullness of My Divine Avataric Self-“Emergence” Years, I have Relinquished (and Gone Beyond) the Teaching Mode. Now... I Am Communicating Myself Directly and Revealing Myself Fully. Now... I Am in My Time of Direct (and essentially wordless) Divine Self-Revelation. What I Am Doing is beyond ordinary discussion—and I Am Occupied with It constantly (Complete Yoga 35).

---

*The Ashvamedha and Its Significance in the Life and Work of Adi Da Samraj*

In Vedic India and elsewhere throughout the ancient world, a grand-scale ritual was performed. Known in India as the *Ashvamedha Yajna*, or “horse sacrifice”, various descriptions of it can be found in the scriptures and historical records of antiquity.

The Vedic accounts are of an elaborate ceremonial rite enacted by Indo-Aryan kings to maintain and extend sovereignty over their dominions. A white stallion was obtained, anointed, and then set free to roam the countryside for an entire year, while subjects of the king conducted sacred rituals and festivals in its honor. It is reported that in the fullest enactment of the *ashvamedha*, the horse was attended by a guard of several hundred royal subjects. Unless the guard was challenged and defeated, all the areas over which the horse roamed were claimed by the king. When the year had passed, the horse was tethered, adorned, re-anointed, and finally sacrificed on an altar by officiating priests. In the culminating act of this sacrifice, the priests grasped the horse's tail as its spirit ascended into the heavenly realms.<sup>25</sup>

While the temporal purposes of the *ashvamedha* are more readily discernible, the ritual is also replete with sacred and esoteric import.<sup>26</sup> In The Brhadaranyaka Upanishad, for example, the sacrificial horse is depicted as the very form of the manifest world:

Aum, the dawn, verily, is the head of the sacrificial horse, the sun the eye, the wind the breath, the open mouth the [universally worshipped] fire; the year is the

---

<sup>25</sup> The full description of the *ashvamedha* is to found in Eggeling, Julius (trans.) ed. F. Max Muller The Satapatha-Brahmana, Sacred Books of the East vol. 44 (Delhi: Motila Banarsidass 1963), pp. vii-xi

<sup>26</sup> For a glimpse at how scholars discern the *ashvamedha* and related rituals, see Zimmer, Heinrich Robert, and Joseph Campbell. Philosophies of India. Princeton University Press, 135.

body of the sacrificial horse, the sky is the back, the atmosphere is the belly, the earth the hoof [or, the earth is his footing], the quarters the sides, the intermediate quarters the ribs, the seasons the limbs, the months and the half-months the joints, days and nights the feet, the stars the bones, the clouds the flesh; the food in the stomach is the sand, the rivers are the blood-vessels, the liver and the lungs are the mountains, the herbs and the trees are the hair. The rising (sun) is the forepart, the setting (sun) the hind part, when he yawns then it lightens, when he shakes himself, it thunders, when he urinates then it rains; voice, indeed, is his voice (1.1).

The horse is sacrificed at last, but to what end? In the Satapatha-Brahmana, we see the rite's esoteric significance stated explicitly:

Now, the gods did not know . . . the Ashvamedha to be the heavenly world, but the horse knew it. When, at the Ashvamedha, they glide along with the horse . . . it is for getting to know [the way to] the heavenly world; and they hold on to the horse's tail, in order to reach the heavenly world; for man does not rightly know [the way to] the heavenly world, but the horse does rightly know it (Eggeling trans. 304-05).

Thus, the horse is understood to be the very divine, who takes form within (and as) the cosmic domain, then is set free to wander through it subsuming all into itself. It is sacrificed so that it can lead mortals beyond the conditional worlds. Mortal beings do not

know the way to the heavenly realms; only the sacrificial horse knows and can serve as guide and transport. This is the ultimate purpose of the *ashvamedha*.

Adi Da both confirms this understanding of the *ashvamedha* and relates it to his own avataric life and work. In the following talk excerpt, he is commenting on relevant passages from The Satapatha-Brahmana:

The horse is the great mysterious element in this sacrificial ritual, and the means, therefore, for the attainment of What is Great. Ultimately, the purpose of the *Ashvamedha* is for the attainment of the Divine Self-Domain. The Divine Self-Domain cannot be taken by storm, and human beings know nothing about the Way to Realize It. . . . Obviously, a beautiful, physical horse chosen from the herd does not know the way to the Divine Self-Domain! The great performances of this ritual that you can read about in the traditional texts are symbolic efforts, in which all hope is placed on the horse. The *Ashvamedha* is an All-Sacrifice, or a sacrifice of everything and everyone, in which, in effect, all beings, all things, all worlds, grasp the tail of the horse and are returned to the Divine Self-Domain. This is the effect that was anciently sought. Likewise, it is the purpose you in your egoity are hoping to achieve. Yet you do not know the Way. Only the Horse Knows.

Therefore, the ritual cannot be effective until a Horse is found that Knows the Way to the Divine Self-Domain. If it can be called a “ritual” at all, this ritual can only be performed by the Horse Itself, which is to say that it can only be done by the Very Divine. Only the Divine Knows the Way to the Divine Self-Domain. Only the Divine can Grant the means whereby conditional beings find their way

to the Divine Self-Domain. The Divine, then, must make the Great Sacrifice (Free Daist 37-39).

In his Dawn Horse Testament, Adi Da states that the true *ashvamedha* is the supreme sacrifice enacted by the incarnate God-Man for the sake of all humanity. Its ritual performance in the ancient cultures only presaged a divine event that has long been anticipated by humanity: the descent of the divine person into the cosmic domain for the sole purpose of liberating beings. He then states with great revelatory force that he is the true *ashvamedha*:

I Am The Divine Avataric Master Of The True (Avataric Divine) Horse-Sacrifice, The Divine Avataric Performer Of The Divine Avataric Ashvamedha, The Divinely Self-“Emerging” Person Of My Own Cosmic Submission (To Avatarically Descend To all-and-All). By The Necessary Means Of My Own Free Divine Avataric Submission To all-and-All, I Am (Now, and Forever Hereafter) Divinely Self-“Emerging” As The True Dawn Horse, The “Bright” Itself (In Divine Person), The Avatarically Self-Giving and All-Giving and To-all-Giving Divine Spiritual Body and Person, The Necessary Divine Gift (Avatarically Self-Given, In Person), By Whom The Truth and The “Bright” Divine Power Of Most Perfect Divine Self-Realization Are (Now, and Forever Hereafter, By Means Of My Divine Avataric Ashvamedha-Grace) Transmitted To The Cosmic Mandala Of all-and-All (1278).

In his final writings about the *ashvamedha*, which were completed only weeks before his passing, Adi Da presses this revelation further still—beyond the traditionally intended purpose of all sacrifice. He notes that the ancient method of sacrifice has been universally regarded as the primary means by which human beings are linked to the divine:

That “method”—used everywhere, in all human societies—involved the “objective” sacrifice of whatever human or non-human form was regarded as most virtuous and worthy. That culture of sacrifice is epitomized in the Ashvamedha, or Horse-Sacrifice, of ancient India. . . . The idealism associated with that sacrificial ritual is that the horse, as an embodiment of energy and Spiritual force, provides, through the sacrifice of its blood, its life-force, a means of connection with the Ultimate Energy, or Divine Force (Boundless 141-42).

However, in reality “there is no separation from the Divine or the Divine ‘Bright’ Spherical Self-Domain”. That such separation exists, Adi Da says, “is the great illusion at the origin of every ‘religious’ tradition” (Boundless 142).

His critique of conventional religion in this regard is fundamental, but it is not the same as Marx’s famous opiate metaphor (Critique Hegel 1). Marx asserts that religion offers a hopeful, yet utterly illusory, consolation (albeit one that is understandably sought) in the face of human suffering. Adi Da’s point is that all religion is predicated on the presumption of separation. That is, it takes as *a priori* the position of egoity. He frequently noted that the traditional etymological understanding of the word “religion” is

that it derived from the Latin “religere”, meaning, “to bind again”—to reconnect, that is, with the divine. All the while the source of trouble and fear is the illusion of separation. It goads human beings to seek an ultimate sustenance—personified in the God-idea of conventional religion (Right Diet 14-20). The means for doing so have traditionally involved not only personal prayers and sacrifices, but sacrificial intermediaries, such as the Vedic horse or even Jesus.

In his concluding remarks about the *ashvamedha*, Adi Da affirms the obsolescence of all religion and all sacrifices *in toto* in light of his own avataric appearance in the world. He makes the astonishing statement:

All “religion” Is Transcended in Me. All sacrifices come to an end in My Person. All sacrifices are forever vanished in the now-and-forever-hereafter Divine Avataric Self-“Emergence” of the Recognition-Time of My Divine Avataric Appearance here. I have Perfectly Vanished the illusion behind every “religion”. I have Perfectly Outshined the necessity and the logic for an intermediary between human beings and the Divine. I Am the Perfect Fulfillment—and the Perfect Transcendence—of the *Ashvamedha*. I am not the performance of the *Ashvamedha* in time and space. I Am the Always Already Accomplished “Brightness” to Which all the sacrifices were made by humankind in its ages of separation-illusion. I Am the Perfect Age of the Non-separateness and Prior Unity of all-and-All. . . .

The Divine “Bright” Spherical Self-Domain has Self-“Emerged” here As My Perfect Divine Avataric Self-Manifestation. My Divine Avataric Self-

“Emergence” here Is the Perfect Fulfillment of all the sacrifices that have been made by individuals and collectives since ancient-upon-ancient time. All of that provided the Incarnation-Vehicle for My Divine Avataric Self-“Emergence” here. My Incarnate Divine Avataric Self-“Emergence” here Cancels the need for a mediator to connect the “world”, the body, and the mind to the Divine (Boundless 142-43).

This esoteric revelation is the key to understanding Adi Da’s confession relative to his avataric appearance in the world. He was, he says, avatarically descended and embodied for a time in human form. Forever after his human lifetime, he remains eternally present as the "self-evidently divine" reality and truth. There is no place to go in order to find truth, nor any state or condition to attain. Once devotionally recognized as the “Bright”, Adi Da himself is all-sufficient—not Adi Da as a person or discarnate spirit, but in and as his own divine self-condition, which, he repeatedly says, is the eternally prior condition and state of all beings. To perfectly realize this, he says, is the ultimate realization of Adidam Ruchiradam.

Realization of the Divine Self-Nature, Self-Condition, and Self-State of Reality  
 Itself Is simply a matter of whole-bodily-responsively devotionally recognizing  
 Me. . . . to whole-bodily-devotionally recognize Me is to participate in That  
 Which Transcends space and time. That Is The Only Light That Is. That Is The  
 Divine Conscious Light—the “Bright”, the Acausal Divine Itself—Beyond and

Prior to conditionality, Intrinsically egoless, Self-Existing and Self-Radiant, Indivisible, without “difference” (Boundless 146-47).

*The Divine Avataric Self-“Emergence”*

By the end of 1985, despite the fervor of his service to devotees over the preceding thirteen years, Adi Da was unable to break the spell of their egoic bondage. There remained a mood of resistance, a refusal to submit to the ego-transcending demands of spiritual life in his company. And while public acclaim for his spiritual genius was growing, there was no broad acceptance of him, his teaching, or his spiritual influence in the world.<sup>27</sup>

People everywhere claim to want truth and happiness, but it was clear to Adi Da that no one was yet willing to pay the ego-renouncing price such happiness exacts of the human heart.

Adi Da’s devotees acknowledged that he had loved and blessed and served them, even to the point of being "a difficult [God]-Man" in their midst. He had laughed and lived intimately and unguardedly with them, humored them, cried with them, sang, danced, ate and drank with them. But most of all, he had taught and blessed them, face-to-face, heart-to-heart, stretching the depth of their feeling far beyond the ego's constricted span. He had done this and infinitely more in naïve

---

<sup>27</sup> The late Wittgenstein scholar, Henry Leroy Finch, wrote, “There exists nowhere in the world today, among Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, native tribalists, or any other groups, anyone who has so much to teach, or speaks with such authority, or is so important for understanding our situation. If we are willing to learn from him in every way, he is a pole around which the world can get its bearings” (*Aham Da Asmi* cover). And Alan Watts commented when he first read *The Knee Of Listening* in 1972, “It’s obvious from all sorts of subtle details that he know what IT’s (sic) all about. . . A rare being” (*Knee* cover).

submission to the sufferings, desires, illusions, power games, sexual obsessions, neurotic demands, and spiritual presumptions of his devotees--for countless hours and repeatedly, in the midst of all their egoic seeking, Adi Da had granted God-Vision and God-Healing to all who came to Him. He had fully Revealed and Radiated the Pristine, Ecstatic Sublimity and Wound of the Liberated Heart—and all, it seemed, to no avail (Costabile, “Da Avatar” Ch 13).

There was simply nothing more he could do to argue the truth to devotees. All that was essential for their spiritual awakening had been spoken, written, demonstrated, and revealed. Where, he continually asked, was the recognition and response? He wrote that the resounding unresponsiveness, both from within and outside of Adidam, was not only astonishing to him, but “[bore on his] body with the sulk of futility”. He told devotees that he had been staving off a profound physical and yogic crisis for years out of sheer resolve to liberate beings. But a final, climactic incident, signaling the death throes of his teaching-submission, was at last inevitable.

On the morning of January 11, 1986, his “Divine Frustration and Despair” overwhelmed his body. He succumbed to a yogic process so extreme that it not only occasioned a permanent shift in the pattern of his life and work, but brought him perilously close to bodily death. While talking on the phone to devotees, expressing his despair and describing the physical symptoms that were overtaking him, Adi Da suddenly collapsed to the floor, his vital signs alarmingly weak and receding rapidly. In shock, devotees rushed to his room to revive him. In the tense, intervening moments that followed, Adi Da’s fragile, tenuous hold on the physical body was starkly evident. After

a time, with physicians and intimates in attendance, he began to re-associate with the body. He later explained that this occurred only because of his immense love, compassion, and sympathy for all beings.

I began to Speak of My Great Sorrow for the billions of humans, and all the other beings in this humble realm. I was Drawn further into the Body through a very human impulse, a love-impulse, as I became Aware (once again) of My Relationship with My devotees, in the process of resuming the Bodily state. Thus, I was Attracted back by very human connections—not by My Impulse to Divinely Liberate humankind, because that Impulse is Always Already the Case. In the midst of this Attraction to human connectedness, I Assumed an Impulse toward human existence more profound than ever before—without any reluctance relative to sorrow and death. . . . In that Great Event, I spontaneously Made a different kind of Gesture toward all, which was (in some fundamental sense) the equivalent of the Bodily Embrace that I would Give to all human beings, and even to all who are self-conscious and dying in this place—by Fully Assuming This Body, in the apparent likeness of all, and Accepting the sorrow of mortality, without the slightest reservation (Knee 618).

### *The Years of Extrication*

From that moment, Adi Da writes that the spiritual energies animating his body-mind underwent a radical shift. It was imperative that he extricate himself from his previous mode of teaching. This, he says, was essential to preserve the physical body, but

also to create the undisturbed psycho-physical environment required for his work of silent transmission and blessing. To this end, he called devotees to transform their relationship to him: no longer would he submit to them as he had done for so many years in order to reflect (and urge them beyond) their egoic limitations. Rather, on the basis of their devotional recognition, devotees were to reverse the pattern of their relationship to him. The time had come for them to submit and conform themselves to him—a calling Adi Da would reiterate relentlessly, even while devotees continued to resist for many years to come.

But the die was cast in the yogic event that Adi Da came to describe as the initiation of his “Divine Avataric Self-‘Emergence’”. It was, he says, his complete descent into the human body, “down to the toes”, but also into the entire cosmic domain of conditional manifestation:

Through that effortless, will-less Integration with human suffering, something about My Divine Avataric Work became more profoundly Accomplished and more Auspicious than ever before. I have not dissociated from My Native (or Inherent) Divine State of Being. Rather, I have Accomplished your state completely, more profoundly than you (yourself) are sensitive to it. On January 11, 1986, I Became this Body—Utterly. And My Mood is different. My face is sad, but not without Illumination. Now I Am the Murti, the Icon—Full of My Own Avatarically Self-Transmitted Divine Spiritual Force, but also completely what you are, Suffered constantly. I have no distance whatsoever from this suffering anymore (Knee 619).

It is fair to say that devotees were stunned and uncomprehending of the profound changes in Adi Da after that fateful event. He began a fast that was to continue for four months. He traveled to California and gathered with devotees there, dressed in fiery orange (the traditional color of renunciation) and emanating a fierce intensity and presence. He described himself as “an ascetic on fire”, making the demand for renunciation his passionate calling. For a time, devotees outwardly conformed to his renunciate requirements: raw diet, celibacy, intensive service, and the esoteric practices described in what is now his Lion Sutra. But their responsiveness was again short-lived, and over the months devotees felt they could not sustain the radical practices in life or consciousness that Adi Da enjoined.

The process of extricating himself from his teaching-submission began to unfold in painstaking cycles: Adi Da would continually call his devotees to respond to him by subordinating their own egoic impulses and fully embracing the way of life he was giving. This, he made clear, was the inevitable demonstration-response of their devotional recognition of him. And it was the means for their liberation. However, seeing their lack of responsiveness yet again, he would engage them anew in various reality-considerations as ever before. All the while, he was working to free himself from this pattern and to stand “Simply Divinely Self-Revealed As I Am, In and As Reality Itself”.

Even though Adi Da stated and re-stated his need for devotees to understand what had occurred in January of 1986, it would be another fourteen years before he himself was compelled by a continuing series of profound yogic crises to end his self-submission work firmly and finally.

Throughout those fourteen years (and remarkably, even beyond), Adi Da recapitulated his entire teaching several times over. Each time, beginning essentially from scratch, he presented his basic arguments about seeking, the self-contraction, the root-error of egoity and “point-of-view”, while also revealing anew the self-existing, self-radiant nature of consciousness and truth and the means of devotional recognition and responsive communion with him that are the essence of the Reality-Way of Adidam. He also enumerated the complex details of reality-practice and the transcendental spiritual process at every level, including its divinely self-realizing fulfillment in the “Perfect Practice”.<sup>28</sup>

Since the Great Event of January, 1986, My Divine Avataric Process has Been an Extrication from the patterns with which I had Become Conjoined. That Process of Extrication (rather than dissociation or detachment) has Been a Process of Purification (or “Tapas”, of the “Heat of Purifying fire”). That Process of Extrication has Been not only the Purification of the Combined Vehicle of My Divine Avataric birth, but also the Purification of all of Its associations and relations. By Means of the Process of My Divine Avataric Renunciate Demonstration, all-and-All have Been Purified by Me. . . . That Purification of all-and-All Began with the Great Event of January 1986 and Culminated fourteen years later, in the Ruchira Dham Event of April 2000 (Boundless 85).

---

<sup>28</sup> See The Aletheon (forthcoming from The Dawn Horse Press) and The Dawn Horse Testament for Adi Da’s description of the “Perfect Practice” of Adidam.

*The Outshining “Brightness”*

On March 9, 1999, symptoms of heart-stress that Adi Da had suffered nearly continuously since 1986 increased to alarming levels. Physicians were summoned, but could detect no physical signs of heart attack. Adi Da indicated that these were yogic symptoms caused by the intensity of his spiritual work and by energy-forces backing up in him due to resistance from devotees and the world. The following day, dressed in renunciate orange, he left his residence at Adi Da Samrajashram and sequestered himself in his *mahasamadhi* temple located on a grassy knoll near the middle of the island. He had been following news reports of the conflict in the Balkans, which had escalated precipitously, and it was clear to devotees that he was working spiritually with the negative forces surrounding the conflict.

For forty-three days Adi Da remained in seclusion, receiving radio and printed news reports of the developments in Kosovo. During that time tremendous storms raged on the island, often with massive bolts of lightning, deafening thunder, winds, and tumultuous rains. The crackling storms struck the terrain all around his *mahasamadhi* site. Devotees reported that the phenomena within the natural world seemed equal in intensity to the Kosovo conflict—an elemental sign of the war and of Adi Da’s contravening spiritual work in relation to its dark forces.<sup>29</sup>

Adi Da continued his spiritual work with the Kosovo conflict until it was announced that a UN Security Council Resolution had been achieved in late June. Adi Da

---

<sup>29</sup> Ruchiradama Nadikanta, a formal renunciate member of Adidam, was attending to Adi Da’s practical needs at the time. She offers this firsthand account: “One night, it seemed that the war [could have been] occurring right there at the ‘Brightness’ . . . [There were no bombs or bullets], but the thunder was so deafening loud it shook my body like a barrage of artillery fire. And the lightning was so bright, just blasting across the sky—the whole field lit up. During the night, the winds were so powerful it felt as though the tent where I was staying was going to be lifted off the ground. The agitation in the atmosphere altogether was extreme” (Knee 648).

later wrote that during his seclusion at the Outshining “Brightness”, he suffered a breakdown of the various systems in the body “to such an extent that I nearly lost Association with physically incarnate existence altogether”.

That entire Yogic . . . syndrome can be characterized as My being “thrown out” of the Body (and up into the Divine “Bright” Spherical Self-Domain of Eternal Light) by the force of resistance to Me that was being manifested in the gathering of My devotees and in the world altogether (Knee 658).

During his seclusion, Adi Da also wrote a summary essay recapitulating his entire life and re-confirming his work in the form of “three Great Processes”: his own (apparent) early-life sadhana prior to his divine re-awakening; his self-submission work with devotees; and his transcendental blessing work with the world. He indicated that all of this was an immensely difficult struggle “beyond the capability of any words to describe”:

My Divine Avataric Life and Work is, Itself, an Expression of an Extraordinary and Incomparable Ordeal that is not at all within people’s experience. I can only Say that much about it. . . . All that was necessary for Me to Do, for the Sake of this conditionally manifested domain is Done. In the midst of the unspeakable Struggle and Ordeal at the “Brightness”, I Established My Divine Avataric Spiritual Work As a Sphere of “Bright” Influence That cannot ever be destroyed. I Persisted until It was Done—and That Is That (Knee 659).

*The Ruchira Dham Event*

In July of 1999 Adi Da returned to the United States—first to Da Love-Ananda Mahal, his sanctuary in Kauai, Hawaii, where he stayed for several months, and then to the Mountain Of Attention Sanctuary in California. The ordeal at The “Brightness” (his *mahasamadhi* temple) in 1999, he says, initiated another extreme yogic crisis in his body that culminated nearly a year later.

On April 12, 2000 Adi Da was being taken to a devotee’s residence on Lopez Island in the state of Washington as he journeyed up the coast from northern California. While on the ferry to the island, Adi Da began to feel weak with the recurring bodily symptoms he had been suffering. When he reached the house on Lopez, he was helped into a jacuzzi. But it became increasingly obvious to an attending devotee that he was losing his hold on the body. Soon he was carried from the jacuzzi to an easy chair and then to his bed. Devotees massaged him vigorously, especially his feet and extremities, in an effort to draw him back into the body. As devotee Stanley Hastings recounted the scene:

It is impossible to describe the love that was being expressed by Beloved Adi Da and those who were with Him. His eyes were flowing with tears, as were everyone’s. His hands and feet were cold and numb. He felt great pressure on His chest and had difficulty breathing. Both of his arms and hands would continually cramp up and convulse. . . . At one point, after His eyes were closed for a while, Beloved Adi Da opened them slightly and softly said, “I am here. Can you see Me

Up Here?” We all said “yes”—and we could. He was Evaporating the entire room in His Light. He was Way Up and Beyond the apparent “here” where we were. Then He continued in a very soft voice: “My Room is Larger than you think. I close My eyes and I am in My Room, Infinitely beyond. This is just a small version of It.” His eyes were streaming with tears, and He looked around at us slowly as He went on, “But this place is good for love.” He was quiet then for a long time (Knee 663-64).

In a remarkably vivid yogic description of this event, Adi Da writes that there was an “‘Urdhvareta’ or complete Upturning of all the Body’s energy flows”. He closed his eyes and it was “the ‘Midnight Sun’—the Divine ‘Bright’ White Orb, Self-Existing and Self-Radiant, On the Infinite Black Field of all potential (and not yet prised, or broken) light”. Then he moved into “association with a vibrational field of energy made of all the colors of the light-spectrum . . . the entire light-field of the Cosmic Mandala was in Front of Me” (Knee 678):

I Am a Spherical Form of “Brightness”, Including everything—from the blue field and its subtle planes to the yellow-red field and this gross plane. Initially, to My left, I was concentrated in the blue light, and simultaneously Seeing (from above) the total expanse of water, beyond the house. . . . The “vision” was fundamentally indescribable, because it was Seen from a “point of view” not located in the Body. And, yet, the expanse of water became simultaneously visible with the room in which My Body was located. . . . At that point, to My

right, the sphere of yellow became apparent—focused down toward the Body in some manner, from above and outside it. It was a yellow, tinged with red and orange. Coincident with Seeing the yellow sphere, the Process of Re-Integrating with the Body began. . . . I Saw My intimates gathered around My bed, and they were all in flames—the flames of the yellow-red realm—but they were not consumed. My Body was numb, without awareness. All of this, beginning with the blue light, was the progressive Process of Re-Integration with conditional existence” (Knee 678-79).

Effectively, he said, the entire process “was death—in terms of the Body. . . . It was the Infinitely Profound Samadhi of Outshining.”

Adi Da was brought by ambulance to the local medical clinic. After examination it was determined that his symptoms, although extreme, were not those of a heart attack, nor were there imminent signs then of physical death. Adi Da later described the event as one of “Divine Translation”, the ultimate phase of the seventh stage of life, which, he says, could not otherwise be physically survived by a human being.<sup>30</sup> It was a demonstration for all beings of the fulfillment of the complete process of divine self-realization and of his divine self-revelation to the world. In 2008 he wrote of that event:

I Am yet Appearing bodily here, in a Non-ordinary State—Able to Confirm to you, for your Sake, that Divine Translation Is the Real and Divine Great Destiny of all-and-All. Divine Translation is not a myth. Divine Translation is not an

---

<sup>30</sup> For Adi Da’s description of the four phases of the seventh stage of life see The Dawn Horse Testament Of The Ruchira Avatar (383-85). See a simple summary see also The Boundless Self-Confession (176).

illusion. Divine Translation is not a mere and “local” apparition of brain phenomena. Divine Translation is not an hallucination. Divine Translation is not a “maybe”. Divine Translation is not a mere “philosophy”. Divine Translation is not merely to be “believed in”. I Affirm and Confirm to you: Divine Translation Is Real—and Divine Translation Is the Ultimate and Perfect Reality-Demonstration of Real God. . . . If you [live and fulfill the Reality-Way of Adidam] the Truth of Divine Translation will, inevitably, Be Realized and Proven in your own case (Boundless 57).

“The Ruchira Dham Event”, as Adi Da came to call it, was the continuation of his Divine Avataric Self-“Emergence” in 1986. He described it as the “Seal” on that event. In yogic terms, it was also its precise opposite. Whereas his Divine Avataric Self-“Emergence” was his fullest bodily descent into the conditional worlds and his submission to all in the humble circumstance of earthly embodiment; the Ruchira Dham Event was “My Direct Ascent, to the Primal ‘Bright’ Spiritual Self-Condition of Conscious Light” (Knee 680).

He wrote that “At the ‘Brightness’ (and afterwards), I was Struggling with the ‘dark’ forces of this time—and, ultimately, I had to Endure the ‘darkness’ and Suffer it to the point of naked death” (Knee 673). It was a yogic death of such intensity that the gross and deeper personality vehicles were cindered to ash. Physical life persisted, but from that point onward, Adi Da’s body was like a shroud, or transparent gauze—so fragile that each passing day was effectively stolen from the natural course of things by his sheer will and persistence. He described how Divine Translation “Shatters the body-mind, and

Obviates the body-mind's foundation of existence" (Boundless 58). Nevertheless, he was not yet prepared to finally relinquish it, even though nothing substantial remained of it at root. In summary, he wrote of his condition:

I no longer have the capability to associate with people in any conventional manner whatsoever. This is not merely a matter of My Disposition. The mechanism to do so literally no longer exists in Me. In the Great Events of Yogic Death Which I have Undergone, there was the actual Disintegration of the various levels of patterning that I Carried by virtue of the Born Vehicle of Franklin Jones and the Deeper-Personality-Vehicle of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda (and all the "Causative" Births that Preceded Them). In each Great Event of Yogic Death, an aspect of that patterning fell away—because I had Sufficiently Done the Work I was Born to Do with that aspect of the "Equipment" of This Divine Avataric Body-Mind (Final Work 18).

It is difficult to characterize the effect that the Ruchira Dham event had on devotees. Many rushed to Lopez Island from around the world to see their master and were astounded as much by the magnified intensity of his spiritual presence as they were shocked by his physical fragility. As one devotee wrote:

I arrived at Lopez Island only a day or two after the Ruchira Dham event. I was immediately invited to the door of Adi Da's bedroom. He was sitting cross-legged on the bed, propped up by pillows, with several devotees attending him seated

around the room. He looked to me extremely feeble and almost etheric. His head was bent down toward his chest like a weight he could not hold. But as I stood in the doorway with my hands held upward in prayerful beholding of him, he lifted his head and gazed into my eyes. The vastness of his gaze and the thickness of his presence were like infinite oceans of blessing-force and feeling. I whispered that I loved him, weeping now with devotion and gratitude at a vision of divine beauty so profound that no description could do it justice (journal 1).<sup>31</sup>

Adi Da says that he maintained his association with the body in order to complete his work in the physical world for the sake of all future generations. He was also determined to grant his physical darshan to devotees for as long as possible.<sup>32</sup> He characterized all of this as a “More-Than-Wonderful Manifestation of My Divine Avataric Grace” (Boundless 58). But from April 12, 2000 onward, his self-submission work was over and done with—or so it should have rightly and finally been.

In actual fact, Adi Da began a series of gatherings with devotees from around the world via the internet in August of 2004, continuing with these gatherings as he traveled one last time to California in 2005-06. Again, he re-capitulated his entire teaching, but with an increasing emphasis on his “Perfect Practice” teachings and his ultimate self-revelation of the seventh stage of life. These teachings would take their summary written form in what are now his three “Great Revelation-Books”: The Aletheon, on the seventh stage Reality-Way of Adidam Ruchiradam; The Gnosticon, on the sixth stage

---

<sup>31</sup> From an anonymous devotee’s private journal.

<sup>32</sup> Darshan is Sanskrit for the sighting of a realizer or of a revered object or manifestation of the divine. It is considered the greatest gift to the beholder—in the case of a realizer, the vision of God in human form.

transcendental teachings of the great sages (and his own transcendental spiritual revelation of Adidam-Ruchiradam), and The Pneumaton, on the devotional and spiritual traditions of humankind (and his Reality-Way of Adidam Ruchiradam). Adi Da made his final refinements to The Aletheon manuscript on the morning of November 27, 2008, the day of his *mahasamadhi*.

*Divine Image-Art and Global Peace*

At the “Brightness” in 1999, Adi Da spontaneously added a new non-verbal dimension to the communication of his divine self-revelation. Since childhood, he had had the intention of communicating through the medium of the visual arts, and now he began the process in earnest, first using a camera, shooting in black-and-white (with increasing multiple-exposure complexity) and eventually adding all kinds of digital means to his artistic process. Over the next nine years, he produced images of ever-increasing technical sophistication, nuance, and beauty, in the multiple thousands. Art critic Donald Kuspit characterized them as “icons meant for meditative immersion . . . ever-changing images . . . perceptually riveting, indeed, sometimes excruciatingly intense, but always balanced and even sublime sensory experiences” (Spectra Suites 6). In 2007, Adi Da was invited to mount a solo collateral exhibition at the 52<sup>nd</sup> Venice Biennale. Critical acclaim for his image-art continues as of this writing.

Adi Da described his images as egoless visual communications of “Reality (Itself), Truth (Itself), and The Beautiful (Itself)”, universal in their perceptual accessibility. He writes:

The purpose of the art I make and do is to “assist” the viewer in the profound (and rightly “subjective”) process of participating in Reality (Itself and altogether)—beyond all effort to “objectify”. Beyond separate “self”, beyond mind, beyond mere “talk”, and, altogether, beyond “point of view”. . . . Right and true art can (and must) illuminate (or serve to En-light-en) the lives of those who rightly and truly make or use it. So be it” (Transcendental Realism 73, 92, 95).

In the final years of his life, Adi Da was concentrated in creating these images and finalizing his summary teachings. He continued his transcendental spiritual work with devotees and his silent blessing-transmission to the whole of “earthkind” (his inclusive term for all living beings). He also composed the essays that now comprise Not-Two Is Peace.<sup>33</sup>

The book is his final wisdom-treatise on world peace. In it Adi Da issues his call for a global cooperative forum to collectively enact “the working presumption of prior unity” in our human dealings with one another:

What needs to be supported everywhere is cooperative, participatory existence for the entire human population globally—and the establishment of a Global Cooperative Forum to express and implement that reality. A Global Cooperative Forum representing humankind as a whole would operate on the principle of “prior unity”—meaning an acknowledgement of the fundamental unity of humanity and of all existence (Not-Two 45-46).

---

<sup>33</sup> The third edition of Not-Two Is Peace was published posthumously in 2009.

Adi Da's final two years were essentially passed in silence, except for necessary speech and communications regarding various aspects of his work. As with The Aletheon, his final words for inclusion in Not-Two Is Peace, along with his instructions for preparing the manuscript, were given on the morning of his passing.

### *Parama-Sapta-Na Sannyas*

Adi Da formally and finally declared the end of his self-submission work on July 10, 2007, when he fully embraced what he called "Parama-Sapta-Na Sannyas", his final seventh-stage disposition of "Divine Self-Revelation-Only".<sup>34</sup>

At the end of all of his years of self-submission and all his efforts to awaken humankind thereby, Adi Da had, he says, conclusively (and paradoxically) demonstrated that the method of self-submission does not and cannot work. That is, only his egoless divine self-revelation, and not any address to the ego in its presumed separateness, enables the process of transcendental spiritual awakening. Knowing that he had long seen the futility of his self-submission, one might ask why he persisted in it with such intensity and for so long a time. Of this he writes:

It was absolutely Necessary that I Do everything, in order to See if My Blessing and Liberation of beings were possible by Means of My Self-Submission. I have Demonstrated, with Absolute Conclusiveness, that Such is not possible.

---

<sup>34</sup> "Parama" is Sanskrit for "supreme". "Sapta" is Sanskrit for "seven", indicating the seventh stage of life and its perfect realization in his case. "Na" is short for "Naitauba", his principal hermitage sanctuary, the site of his *Mahasamadhi* Temple, and the source-point of his transcendental spiritual transmission on Earth.

Therefore, there is no purpose in any continuation of My Self-Submission....My Impulse to continue Working in the Manner of Self-Submission utterly Vanished—most conclusively, on July 10, 2007. The fruitlessness of My Self-Submission became so overwhelmingly obvious that That Effort entirely Fell Away.<sup>35</sup>

But Adi Da was never only engaged in his self-submission work of reflecting egos to themselves. He was always, he says, simultaneously revealing himself as he is:

Until I am whole-bodily-responsively devotionally recognized, the ego sees itself in Me, and sees the “world” on Me (or in My Person), as in a mirror. All of My years of Divine Avataric Self-Submission-Work have been a Sign of how I have been approached as a Mirror—rather than being approached As I Am. Nevertheless, I have Always Been Revealing Myself As I Am—Stimulating the surface of the water in order to Awaken “Narcissus” to the Water Itself, to the Nature, Condition, and State of My Own Person (Boundless 156-57).

From July 10, 2007 on, Adi Da says that he embraced Parama-Sapta-Na Sannyas, his radical renunciate disposition, standing entirely apart from any submission to devotees or the world and expressing only his free blessing toward all:

[Now] I Am a Sapta Na Sannyasin, Utterly Free. I Did My Submission-

---

<sup>35</sup> From the unpublished essays, “I Stand Free Apart and Not In The Middle Here”, and “Adidam Is No-Seeking Practice Is Perpetual Reality-Practice”, forthcoming in The Aletheon.

Work—and This Is How I now Am—As I Am [and the] Blessing [of all and All] Is simply My Nature, My State, My Intrinsic Condition of Self-Radiance (Aletheon).<sup>36</sup>

Parama-Sapta-Na Sannyas, then, is the ultimate mode of Adi Da’s divine self-revelation and, he affirms, the entirely sufficient means for the realization of reality and truth. Nevertheless, devotees recognize that the practical teachings and wisdom-revelations given by Adi Da during his years of self-submission remain among his essential gifts to humankind. His considerations, insights, instructions, and revelations about ordinary life (the “money-food-and-sex ego”) are available to humankind as a whole, now and in perpetuity. As one devotee writes:

There is a way to live in the fullness of our common humanity—profoundly given over to love and self-yielding in relation to the Divine Reality and to all others. How to do so with a truly open and wounded heart is a fundamental wisdom-lesson conveyed in all the Teaching-Work done by Adi Da during the entire epoch of His Self-Submission (Costabile, “The Call” 52).

### *My “Secret” Biography*

Before proceeding to an account of Adi Da’s *mahasamadhi* and a discussion of the future of Adidam, here is Adi Da’s own final statement of the significance of his life and appearance in the world:

---

<sup>36</sup> From the unpublished essay, “Adidam Is No-Seeking Practice Is Perpetual Reality-Practice”, forthcoming in The Aletheon.

My Avataric Lifetime Is A Divine and Unique Demonstration of Intentional Entanglement—In Which The egoless Divine “Bright” Self-Nature, Self-Condition, Self-State, and Divine Transcendental Spiritual Self-Force of My Prior and Perfect Freedom Is Constantly Self-Revealed In Spontaneous Acts, Great Events, Remarkable Conjunctions, Extraordinary Processes, and Beyond-Wonderful Demonstrations of Perfect Dis-Entanglement—For The Sake of all-and-All. By Means of My Avataric Lifetime of Divine Self-Revelation, all-and-All who are, as if by accident, entangled here (and everywhere), in egoic time and space, Are Divinely Avatarically Given All of Necessary and Perfectly Acausally Effective Means For Perfect Dis-Entanglement—now, and forever hereafter, In Me, and Where and As I Am. This Is The Key to rightly and truly understanding All of The Acts, Events, Conjunctions, Processes, and Demonstrations of The Totality of My Lifetime-Evidence (Boundless 49).

#### PART IV: THE PASSING AND LEGACY OF ADI DA SAMRAJ

##### *Adi Da’s Mahasamadhi and the Days That Followed*

Adi Da Samraj was working in his art studio at Adi Da Samrajashram (Naitauba, Fiji) on the afternoon of his passing. It was his custom each morning to address various issues related to his overall work and to continue developing his latest spiritual writings. After his midday meal, he would turn his attention to his image-art (rendered in a highly sophisticated digitized medium). Often he would grant darshan to devotees in the early

evening before returning to his secluded forest retreat for the night. This was the anticipated pattern of his day on November 27, 2008.

At 5:05 PM, however, Adi Da suddenly collapsed in his art studio. Attendants rushed to ease his fall to the floor. His physicians arrived only moments later and applied every available medical procedure to revive him. Devotees gathered in vigil outside the art studio offering chants and prayers for their master's revival. But from the moment of Adi Da's collapse, there was no pulse and no heartbeat. At last it became obvious that the physicians could do no more. In a shocking moment of somber acknowledgement, it was announced that Adi Da Samraj had passed beyond the physical body.

His body was lovingly wrapped in orange cloths and carried in solemn procession across the green expanse of lawn to his house. There it was prepared, seated in half-lotus asana, for *mahasamadhi* darshan in Adi Da's bedroom, while a three-day vigil commenced on the veranda outside. All was quiet and solemn, amidst preparations for his interment. As word went out from Naitauba, devotees around the world were left to contemplate the stark, unimaginable reality of their master's passing.

Devotees streamed to Adi Da Samrajashram to honor their beloved heart-master. On the morning of November 30, Adi Da's orange-shrouded body was transported to the small white temple there in an open vehicle, accompanied by a procession of devotees, Fijian residents, family, friends, and supporters amidst an outpouring of devotional chanting.

Inside the temple, Ruchiradama Quandra Sukhapur Rani, the senior member of the Ruchira Sannyasin Order of Adidam,<sup>37</sup> performed the interment according to Adi Da's instructions. Outside, as the searing summer heat gave way to drenching rains,

---

<sup>37</sup> See PART IV, especially pages 100-03.

devotees chanted and held vigil. Only after evening settled over the meadow was the interment completed and the burial chamber sealed. Then all present took pause in the palpable presence of their master to feel and contemplate anew that his bodily human lifetime was suddenly and irrevocably ended. A year-long vigil of mourning was announced, and devotees and friends were invited to Adi Da Samrajashram to honor Adi Da Samraj at his *mahasamadhi* seat. A steady stream of visitors to the island hermitage continues as of this writing.<sup>38</sup>

In the torrent of emotions surrounding Adi Da's passing, communications were sometimes confused and confusing. Some felt it possible that he would re-inhabit the body, citing accounts of realizers in the past, such as Shirdi Sai Baba, who reportedly re-animated his body three days after his presumed *mahasamadhi* (Rigopoulos 81-99). These feelings are understandable. Some expressed the disbelief, denial, or irrational hopefulness that often attends such moments.<sup>39</sup> All of this was short-lived. In the end devotees did not require illusions, but reconfirmations of what they already knew at heart: that their relationship to Adi Da is eternal, and that he is "not gone from here". Instead, it is as he always affirmed: "Even After My Avatarically-Born Human Physical body Is dead, I Am (Myself) Infinitely Present and every where Alive" (Aham 73). The overwhelming experience of devotees from the moment of Adi Da's passing is that he remains transcendently spiritually active in every sense. An excerpt from a letter written by James Steinberg, who was at Adi Da Samrajashram at the time of Adi Da's *mahasamadhi*, underscores this affirmation. The letter was sent electronically to all devotees on December 2, 2008, less than a week after Adi Da's passing:

---

<sup>38</sup> See The Divine Mahasamadhi of Parama-Sapta-Na Adi Da Samraj for a full account of these events.

<sup>39</sup> See Kübler-Ross, Elizabeth, On Death and Dying Touchstone edition, 1997.

There are now many devotees from all over the world at Naitauba. Some have never been here previously or are here for the first time in many years. There is tremendous change and healing occurring through the Gift of Bhagavan Adi Da's Blessing. But what is most healing for all is the Divine Mystery of His Continued Presence and Blessing of us all.

A note to those who simply were not able to come and are feeling the sorrow and longing to be here: It has been the testimony of those who have just arrived that they felt Bhagavan Adi Da so tangibly where they lived at the time of His Mahasamadhi and afterwards. The truth of His Promise to Always Be with us is being fulfilled now, moment by moment. It is for all of us to truly practice turning to Him via body, emotion, mind, and breath, and so Realize that we will never lose our relationship to Bhagavan Adi Da Samraj. He was never simply the Body-Mind, but Is always the Very and Eternal Divine Person.

In the weeks that followed, the intimate tone of such communications connected devotees to one another and reinforced their practice of devotional communion with Adi Da. Relevant excerpts from Adi Da's writings were posted on the Adidam websites and sent via email to devotees. An example from his later writings:

I Am the Divine here-Presence—now, and forever hereafter, Divinely  
Avatarically Self-Revealed and Self-Given to all-and-All, in Always Already  
Perfect Coincidence with all-and-All, and Intrinsically As all-and-All. I Am

Divinely Avatarically Self-"Emerged". . . . I Am here—and My Divine Avataric Self-"Emergence" here cannot be reversed. My Divine Avataric Self-"Emergence" here Is Universally and Eternally Established (Boundless 144, 146).

Various long-time devotees gave internet presentations, reading from Adi Da's teaching and recounting the stories, lessons, and realizations of members in the wake of Adi Da's bodily death. These helped to seal the intimate connection among devotees and further reinforce the knowledge of their master's continued presence and influence in their lives. Yet, all of that said, it was a time like no other, and many members grieved openly over their great loss. For some time to come, these extremes—mourning and disbelief on the one hand, and the tangible magnification of Adi Da's living presence on the other—were to live side by side within the culture of Adidam and in the feeling-depths of devotees.

*Residual Emotional Patterns and the Message of Mortality*

We have seen that, for devotees, the relationship to Adi Da is both a deeply personal and a deeply spiritual matter. Adi Da's death has precipitated a sustained and sober confrontation with the ineluctable fact of mortality within the culture of Adidam. Ultimately, such a confrontation is required of everyone, even though it is mightily resisted and suppressed in the common world. Indeed, as Ernest Becker observed in the final years of his life, the universal denial of death motivates virtually everything that human beings do.<sup>40</sup> In The Knee Of Listening, Adi Da affirms this same understanding

---

<sup>40</sup> Ernest Becker makes this point masterfully in his culminating philosophical treatise, The Denial of Death.

when recounting the dramatic “death event” he experienced as a seminarian: “All my life I had been constantly brought to this point. All the various seeking methods of my life had constantly prevented this experience from going to its end. All my life I had been preventing my death” (Knee 177).

Adi Da teaches that the only satisfactory answer to the fact of mortality (and to the heart’s yearning for what is greater than the ordinary human possibilities) is ego-transcending spiritual practice and divine self-realization. Remarkably, everything else, including all the common searches and enterprises of humankind, is a futile denial of our inescapable destiny. The fundamental desperation at the core of human experience is transcended only when one embraces the eternal spiritual reality amidst the insecurities of this brief and mortal life. This is not unique to Adidam. On the contrary, it is fundamental to religious and spiritual understanding.

Nevertheless, within the culture of Adidam, members more deeply acknowledge that full responsibility for participating in the process of transcendental spiritual realization rests squarely with each individual. This is as Adi Da has always insisted: he did not appear in the world to fulfill humankind’s childish expectations for salvation. Rather, he came to liberate humankind from all such illusions and to transmit the divine spiritual reality directly to those prepared to receive it with fullest human and spiritual responsibility. The shocking confrontation with mortality that overwhelmed devotees on November 27, 2008 served to reinforce this understanding.

*The Esoteric and the Practical Dimensions of Adidam Ruchiradam*

There are two obvious levels at which Adidam members are coming to terms with their master's *mahasamadhi* and the future of Adidam. The first and senior level is esoteric in nature. It relates to the reality-process of transcendental spiritual realization that Adi Da revealed and established during his lifetime—and how this process is to be cultivated, served, and advanced in the case of each devotee and within the collective culture of Adidam. It is predicated on the intrinsic acknowledgement by devotees that Adi Da's Divine Avataric Self-“Emergence” is eternally established and that devotional communion with him is both the means and the way of divine self-realization.

The second level is firmly rooted in the first and has to do with all the practical workings, organizational structuring, and cultural and managerial hierarchy within Adidam—how these relate to the life and practice of each devotee and to the public at large. We begin with the spiritual and esoteric issues faced by Adidam members.

Early in 2009, Ruchiradama Quandra Sukhapur Rani wrote a series of inspirational communications to the Adidam membership on behalf of the Ruchira Sannyasin Order. She focused primarily on the esoteric (or transcendental spiritual) dimensions of Adidam Ruchiradam and how these can be understood, preserved, and cultivated by devotees now and into the future. In a letter dated April 11, 2009 she wrote:

Avatar Adi Da Incarnated in His Bodily Human Form so that His eternal Form could be recognized, located, and realized by all. Devotees must deeply recognize Bhagavan's Eternal Form in order to have this Way continue. . . . All His Play was only a reflection of us, but His Play was to Reveal Himself as the Eternally

Present Divine Reality Itself. The entire Secret of His Incarnation was that everything He did was so that we could locate and identify Him in this respect.

In this paper we have traced Adi Da's life as an avataric incarnation—a unique spiritual manifestation involving an extraordinary human birth and a subsequent process of self-submission and self-revelation. Its appreciation in these terms by members derives not from any belief or mere personal conviction, but from an actual intuitive recognition of Adi Da in precisely the manner that he describes. It is also rooted in the understanding that true spiritual awakening as Adi Da described it requires intensive participation in the Reality-Way that he revealed and established during his lifetime.

In the various traditions of Hinduism, the *leelas* of a spiritual master—his or her actions, especially in “play” with devotees—are understood to constitute a revelation in and of themselves. The legendary Krishna *leelas* are rendered in countless ways, with little or no concern over issues of historicity. The *leelas* serve to delight, inspire, and instruct, regardless of their factuality.<sup>41</sup> The hagiography of venerated saints, mystics, and sages in all traditions serves a similar purpose, although the traditions of the West generally emphasize historicity over myth and legend.

Within Adidam, however, Adi Da insisted that events be told exactly as they happened—not as mythological accounts and not with any embellishment of facts or circumstances—but as reports of his actual doings. Much care has been taken to record,

---

<sup>41</sup> Although many today regard the Krishna stories as legendary, the historical existence of Krishna is still affirmed by some writers. For example, Sri Aurobindo writes in his Essays on the Gita, “The historical Krishna no doubt existed. We meet the name first in the Chandogya Upanishad where all we can gather about him is that he was well known in spiritual tradition as a knower of the Brahman . . . We have also in the Harivansha an account of the life of Krishna, very evidently full of legends, which perhaps formed the basis of the Puranic accounts” (19-21).

preserve, and validate the accounts of Adi Da's life and work, including an extensive Adidam archive created for this purpose. The understanding behind this archival enterprise is that all of Adi Da's actions have significance in the greater context of his avataric revelation. Again, this is not predicated on beliefs or doctrines, but on an esoteric appreciation that the pattern of his manifestation—now and into the future—has (and continues to have) a transformative effect on the substrata of patterning within the cosmic domain. As Ruchiradama Quandra Sukhapur Rani writes in a letter to devotees:

The critical Reality of Revelation of Adi Da's Divine Eternal Form can only be known through both the Agency of His Word and the Pattern of His Living. The Leelas Prove His Divine Avataric Existence—that the Divine literally did Pass Down [or Avatarically descend into this realm]. The Divine actually Broke through into the Pattern of human existence in all of the cosmic worlds. That proving of His Divine Avataric Existence is the story to be told—that the Eternal Divine Person does Exist as the Source of all beings and everything (11 April 2009).

Devotees of Adi Da accept as a spiritual fact that he is the eternal revelation of Real God and Truth. This is not different from the understanding of devotees within other guru traditions:

Gurudev is the touchstone that surpasses all. Gurudev is a tank of the nectar of immortality. Gurudev exists from the beginning of the beginning, from the

beginning of ages and persists through all aeons. Gurudev, the true Guru, is Supreme Reality and the Supreme Lord (Guru Arjan, Ruchira Gita xliv).

Thus, all aspects of the guru's manifestation have transformative force, as well as revelatory significance.<sup>42</sup> It is useful to quote again from Ruchiradama Quandra Sukhapur's letter in this regard:

The process at root [the fundamental spiritual process] is our future direction. It is through the sacred [and spiritual] form that one gives over one's life—mind, body, heart, and entire being—to be Blessed by the Divine. Functional activity is a lower activity, and it is something Bhagavan requires to be done with great *tapas*. However, it must be subordinated to the Spiritual Process.

Rather than making functional activity the senior dimension of our lives, we must now make the cultural dimension, the Spiritual process itself, the primary Reality. Essentially, the instruction from Adi Da is that we meditate, be silent, and speak no case (meaning that we refrain from relating to others in terms of their egoic limitations, but rather only in light of their true condition of egoless reality itself) (11 April 2009).

---

<sup>42</sup> "Agency" in this context refers to all the means that serve as complete vehicles of Adi Da's divine awakening power. These include, his reality-teaching, his image-art, the spiritually empowered sanctuaries of Adidam and the various objects and articles that he has empowered for the sake of devotees' remembrance of him and reception of his spiritual blessing (Boundless 170).

*Spiritual Communion and Transmission*

In the 1974 documentary film, A Difficult Man, one devotee notes that individuals go through various phases in their relationship to “Bubba”. As the relationship develops, he says, “you [begin to] like him or love him so much that pretty soon all you want to do is be with him”. The interview makes clear that the relationship to Adi Da is similar in many respects to any genuine love-relationship. However, it also has its unique features and intensity. To illustrate this, Adi Da has often invoked the allegorical legends of Krishna and the gopis (the cow-herding maidens of Vrindavan) described in the Bhagavata Purana. The gopis pined for their beloved Krishna with such fervor and passion that they forgot about everything else in their lives. Beside themselves with longing, they wandered off in search of him.<sup>43</sup> Krishna played on this attachment, appearing at random to the gopis, only to intensify their longing. By these means, the gopis became utterly absorbed in Krishna. As the legend has it, their overwhelming attachment to him became the principle of their spiritual transformation.

Now, in the post-*mahasamadhi* epoch of Adidam, Ruchiradama Quandra Sukhapur Rani is pointing to the same principle of attachment illustrated by the Krishna legend. But, as she emphasizes, such attachment must become a spiritual matter, not just a human (or allegorical) one for Adi Da’s devotees. That is, for the esoteric process

---

<sup>43</sup> (1) Srī S'uka said: 'When the Supreme Lord so suddenly disappeared were the young ladies of Vraja just as sorry not to see Him as she-elephants missing their bull. (2) The smitten ones who in their hearts were overwhelmed by the movements, affectionate smiles, playful glances, charming talks and other games of enticement of the husband of Ramâ [Krishna], enacted absorbed in Him each of those wonderful activities. (3) The dear ones lost in the movements, smiles, beholding, talking and so on of their Beloved - who factually thus was speaking through the women their bodies - doing so intimated intoxicated by Krishna's ways: 'He's all in me!' (4) So all together singing aloud about Him, searched they like mad hither and thither in the forest and inquired they with the trees for the Original Personality present alike the sky inside and outside: (5) 'O as'vattha [holy fig tree], o plaksha [waved-leaf fig tree], o nyagrodha [banyan], have you seen the son of Nanda [Krishna], who has gone away after He with His loving smiles and glances stole our minds (Prabhupada Ch 10 Canto 30 1-5)?

revealed by Adi Da to take hold and mature, devotees must “locate” him spiritually, and they must be willing to make the esoteric spiritual process itself the enduring focus and reality of their lives. This is in keeping with Adi Da’s teaching-admonitions to devotees all along. And it clarifies what he expressed years ago: that his physical body was the greatest advantage for devotees, but it was also their greatest impediment. That is, to be attached to Adi Da’s physical appearance alone, without engaging the profundities of spiritual practice in his company, is itself a form of bondage and was never the purpose or intention of his work with devotees. What remains after his physical passing, then, is simply the spiritual process itself, as it is tacitly revealed by him and practiced in relation to his eternal presence and state.

### *The Silver Hall Process*

To make this understanding concrete during his lifetime, Adi Da regularly sat with maturing devotees in a spiritually empowered meditation hall adjacent to his principal residence at Adi Da Samrajashram.<sup>44</sup> He did this for many years prior to his passing (as he had done at random with maturing devotees throughout all the years of his work). In this set-apart hall (and elsewhere at various times) he initiated devotees into a tacit spiritual intimacy with him of extraordinary depth. The sittings involved the simple, yet profound, practice of “searchlessly beholding” Adi Da, while allowing both the transcendental process of standing at the “root-position of consciousness itself” (beyond and prior to identification with the body-mind) and the egoless reception of his transcendental spiritual transmission to “happen” as they will. More precisely, as Adi Da

---

<sup>44</sup> Known as the Silver Hall, since the doors to this hall, the chair on which Adi Da would sit, and the dais on which his chair rests are trimmed in silver *fleur-de-lis*.

expressed the esoteric nature of these extraordinary transmission sittings: “I Happen”.<sup>45</sup> He indicated that truly egoless participation in this process, coupled with persistent, ongoing devotional communion with him even outside of the sittings, “acausally enables” all that is revealed via his “Perfect Knowledge Teachings”<sup>46</sup> to spontaneously manifest. This, he said, is how his transmitted spiritual grace works (and will always work) to awaken devotees.

Appreciating that this quintessential dimension of his work is ongoing and must continue in direct relationship to Adi Da’s eternal divine form—yet obviously without his physical presence—mature devotees (under the guidance of the Ruchira Sannyasin Order) resumed these transmission sittings immediately after his passing. They also persisted in the moment-to-moment process of “searchlessly beholding” Adi Da at all times. This was in keeping with Adi Da’s admonition that these sittings (and the transcendental spiritual process he reveals and “acausally enables”) should continue in perpetuity. This is the esoteric key to a spiritually authentic Adidam into the future. Here is a testimonial report from a devotee who participated in the first such “transmission sittings” following Adi Da’s *mahasamdhi*:

Two evenings ago, I was invited to the first formal Transmission sitting since Bhagavan Adi Da’s Passing. The extraordinary pressure of His Divine Presence descending into my body was so potent and forceful that I could hardly conduct

---

<sup>45</sup> These practices and the process indicated above are described in Adi Da’s Aletheon (forthcoming).

<sup>46</sup> See Adi Da’s The Teaching Manual of Perfect Summaries for his “Preliminary ‘Perfect Knowledge’ Teachings”. His Teaching on the “‘Perfect Practice’ of Perfect Knowledge” is given in The Dawn Horse Testament.

the intensity. My head felt pressed to the floor with this pressure, and then, alternately, my head and neck would be stretched back and upward as I sat upright and felt the brilliant force of His Presence flooding my head and body from above with waves of radiant light. Even more so, the clear communication of His always-already Divine State Outshined apparent differences, and the Prior and singular Reality that Bhagavan Adi Da always Reveals, beyond conditionality, was simply, self-evidently so.

So the Transcendental Spiritual signs of Avatar Adi Da's Presence and State are overwhelmingly obvious here. I myself feel that I have been doing little else than "searchlessly beholding" Adi Da Samraj since His Mahasamadhi. This I take to be His Grace and Gift, for which I am so incredibly grateful (Update 1).

From reports such as this one, Adi Da's spiritual presence was obvious to devotees and served as a powerful source of blessing and inspiration to them in the weeks immediately following his passing.

### *Handling Business: the Practical Dimension*

After the initial days of the *mahasamadhi* vigil, members holding leadership positions within the cultural and organizational entities of Adidam began to meet and confer (many via teleconference from around the world). Their concern was the preservation of Adi Da's teachings, his artistic work, and all that he had established spiritually and organizationally during his lifetime. Among the first steps taken was the

preparation of formal communications, publications, and other media about Adi Da, his *mahasamadhi*, and its significance.<sup>47</sup>

Broader discussions were also held about how to advance Adi Da's work and his influence globally in this time of world-crisis; how to call higher-level attention to his unique contributions to religion, esoteric spirituality, philosophy, the arts, global conditions, world peace, and his ultimate revelations regarding the nature of reality and the process of divine self-realization.

### *The Question of Succession*

As it turns out, the issue of succession had long ago been settled by Adi Da and expressed unambiguously, both in his formal writings and in legal documents stating his resolution. In "No Seeking / Mere Beholding" he writes:

I Am Beyond the "point of view" of the body-mind-complex, or total psycho-physical ego-"I", of My any and every devotee.

Therefore, there can be no substitute or successor for Me—and even My Words and My "Representation"-Forms are (now, and forever hereafter) merely Extensions of Me—neither substituting for Me nor succeeding Me, but only providing Means for turning My any and every devotee to Me (Beyond and Prior to My Words, Beyond My "Representation"-Forms, and Beyond the ego-"I", or total body-mind, of My any and every devotee) (manuscript 17).

---

<sup>47</sup> These have included written and pictorial booklets, internet presentations, slide shows, and yet-to-be-released films about Adi Da taken in the final months of his lifetime.

Adi Da's writings are filled with descriptions of how his work and influence are to continue beyond his lifetime. As early as 1974, he was making both the spiritual and practical provisions for his passing:

My devotees themselves will be the special instruments of this work beyond my lifetime. It is my expectation that I will not leave behind me a special individual who can assume conscious responsibility for my work as a whole. Rather, the total community will share my complex functions at the level of life and the spiritual functions will be performed through the Community as a whole by the action of the Divine Siddhi, which I have regenerated here. Thus, the practical work should be shared by many, and organized much as it will have been during my lifetime. The sources of the teaching should remain in the form of my books, other collected writings, and recordings of my talks. Devotees who have the responsibility for instruction should make use of these resources and keep them always available in published forms (Garbage 205).

Later, in the first edition of The Dawn Horse Testament, published in 1985, Adi Da spoke of a lineage of "Murti-Gurus", who would serve, not as his replacements or successors, but as primary human touch points for contacting his transcendental spiritual presence after his death. Adi Da removed this provision from subsequent editions of the text—because it eventually became entirely clear to him that it would simply not be possible for an individual devotee to rightly function in this manner. He was determined

that no contentious politics or egoic motives of any kind undermine the essential integrity of all he was to establish during his lifetime.

Moreover, his single purpose was, in the words of Ruchiradama Quandra Sukhapur Rani, “to re-connect all cosmic worlds to That Which Is Reality Itself, or Truth at the ‘root’, prior to any separate identity in time and space” (Boundless 189-90). Devotees understand this to be a divine function, uniquely his own; it simply cannot be duplicated by any one else. There is a paradox here: Reality Itself is one and indivisible—not the exclusive province of any religious tradition or spiritual revelation. But Reality Itself must be realized as such. In the common experience of human beings, it is not. Thus, Adi Da’s avataric incarnation was an appearance and work within the conditional worlds, done once for the sake of perfectly revealing this Reality, and never to be done again. In his most radically paradoxical language he proclaims to one and all:

This “world” is totally non-necessary. There are infinities-upon-infinities of “worlds”, all flying out of apparent nowhere. There is an endless profusion of “world”-illusions—as many as there are dreams. No one can Wake Up Most Perfectly without My Divine Avataric Intervention. My having been Born here was all that was required. My having been Born here Is the Gift. I Am The Teaching. I Am The Revelation. I Am The One To Be Realized. I Am (Boundless 151).

From this standpoint (affirmed by Adi Da and his devotees), his unique avataric Guru-function is not to be (and, truly, cannot be) assumed by anyone after his passing.

Thus, the devotional relationship to Adi Da—in (and as) his divine body, his eternal presence, and his self-revealed state—is the Reality-Way of Adidam. That relationship is the means whereby Adi Da reveals and self-transmits the egoless condition of Reality Itself to all beings. Therefore, the devotional relationship to him as avataric master is to remain eternally accessible to all, without mediating influences of any kind. During his lifetime, Adi Da took every conceivable means to ensure that this would always be so.

Interestingly, his original inclusion and later removal of the Murti-Guru within Adidam is in keeping with the pattern of “reality consideration” he employed throughout his life (and most dramatically during his teaching years with devotees). He always freely considered issues large and small, based on whatever factors were indicated in any given moment or circumstance.

Integral to his “reality considerations” were the play of contrasting possibilities and the testing of tentative conclusions—sometimes many times over and at varying intervals—before a firm and final conclusion was arrived at. In this manner Adi Da considered every area of human life and every aspect of his teaching—from the range of “right-life disciplines” to esoteric meditation to the matter of succession after his passing. It is this reality-process, intensively engaged without pre-conceptions or fixed notions, that accounts for the refinements, additions, and elaborations he frequently made to his written teaching over the years.<sup>48</sup>

His final writings, however, bear the mark of ultimate and decisive resolution. They are free of every trace of his self-submission-work. He says of them that they simply do not take the egoic point of view, or the self-contracted body-mind, into

---

<sup>48</sup> It should be noted that his essential teaching of radical truth and reality-realization in Satsang with him as Guru and spiritual master was never changed or made ambiguous.

account. Instead, they speak only from the intrinsically egoless reality-position of prior unity and indivisible conscious light. As such they speak radical truth, without compromise or concession to egoity.

Adi Da worked with great intensity to complete these writings. Just weeks before his passing, he formally designated five texts as principal among all his written works: The Aletheon, The Gnosticon, The Pneumaton, Transcendental Realism, and Not-Two Is Peace.<sup>49</sup> All of these (and several others) were written, compiled, and finalized by Adi Da between early 2006 and his passing in November of 2008.

### *Sacred Authority, Sacred Structures, and Sacred Entities*

Over the years Adi Da brought the same degree of consideration to the legal and organizational aspects of Adidam, as he had to matters of ultimate realization. By 2007, with the publishing of The Orders of My True and Free Renunciate Devotees, he had formally established Adidam's structure of five formal practicing orders, four sacred organizational entities, and four congregations.

---

<sup>49</sup> Following is a brief indication of the content and focus of each of these texts (Boundless 206, 213, 216):

The Aletheon: *The Divine Avataric Self-Revelation of His Divine Presence, Avatar Adi Da Samraj*. Ruchira Avatar Adi Da's Completing exposition of the "Seventh Stage" Way of Adidam Ruchiradam.

The Gnosticon: *The "Perfect Knowledge" Reality-Teachings of His Divine Presence, Avatar Adi Da Samraj*. Ruchira Avatar Adi Da's examination of the Transcendental Teachings of the Great Sages and the Transcendental Spiritual Reality-Way of Adidam Ruchiradam.

The Pneumaton: *The Transcendental Spiritual Reality-Teachings of His Divine Presence, Avatar Adi Da Samraj*. Ruchira Avatar Adi Da's discussion of the devotional and Spiritual traditions of humankind, particularly as seen in Christianity and Hinduism, and the Transcendental Spiritual Reality-Way of Adidam Ruchiradam.

Not-Two Is Peace: *The Ordinary People's Way of Global Cooperative Order*. Adi Da's vital wisdom on the root of human conflict, the limits and errors of conventional religion and politics, and the necessity and means for global cooperation, tolerance, and peace via "the working presumption of prior unity".

Transcendental Realism: *The Image-Art of egoless Coincidence With Reality Itself*. Adi Da's writings on the tradition and purpose of true art, and on the profound artistic, philosophical, and revelatory elements of His own image-art.

The fact that Adi Da will not have a successor does not mean that Adidam is devoid of cultural leadership. Adi Da designated the collective Ruchira Sannyasin Order as “the senior, hierarchically central (entirely renunciate and non-managerial) one and only culturally governing authority” within Adidam (Orders 33-34). The first generation of these renunciates has been identified by Adi Da himself. Demonstrating unique maturity in spiritual fidelity to him and a life of perpetual retreat, they are collectively responsible for aligning and guiding the practicing culture of devotees, ensuring the rightness of all sacred activities, and maintaining the purity and spiritual alignment of the hermitage sanctuaries and holy sites within Adidam—especially those directly linked to Adi Da during his lifetime (Orders 36). About this renunciate order, Adi Da writes:

Only the full members of the Ruchira Sannyasin Order of Adidam are (now, and forever hereafter) Called and Empowered by Me to Function (collectively) as the physically living, (human) Instruments of My Divine Avataric Blessing-Work, and, by their unique (and uniquely authoritative) cultural service (simply by Wisdom-word and practicing example) to provide all other practitioners of the only-by-Me Revealed and Given Way of Adidam with the principal Good Company (of fellow devotees) that is necessary for the inspiration and guidance of their practice of the Way of Adidam (35-36).

Within the Ruchira Sannyasin Order, Adi Da has identified another order of formal renunciate devotees, which he calls the Sapta Na Sannyasin Order:

The members [of this order] are those of My seventh stage Ruchira Sannyasin devotees in whom the Transcendentally Spiritually manifested sign of Priorly egoless indifference has been uniquely intense and life-pervading, such that a life entirely free of all social, organizational, cultural, and public obligations becomes both appropriate and necessary (Orders 37).

The managerial responsibilities within Adidam fall to members of the Lay Renunciate Order, who are hierarchically accountable to the Ruchira Sannyasin Order. The full practice of Adidam is also progressively adapted to by members of the two lay congregationist orders, as shown here:

#### **The Five Practicing Orders of Adidam Ruchiradam**

<b>Formal Name Of Order</b>	<b>Type of Order</b>
The Melrose Lay Congregationist Order of Adidam Ruchiradam	General Lay Practicing and Service Order
The Clear-Lake Forward Lay Congregationist Order of Adidam Ruchiradam	General Lay Practicing and Service Order
The Muliwai Lay Renunciate Order of Adidam Ruchiradam	Formal Renunciate Lay Cultural And Managerial Service Order
The Naitauba Ruchira Sannyasin Order of Adidam Ruchiradam	Sannyasin (Legal Renunciate) Culturally Governing Authority
The Sapta Na Sannyasin Order of Adidam Ruchiradam	Sannyasin (Legal Renunciate) Order That Simply Embodies the Authority of Realization

(Orders 124-25)

*The Organizational Entities of Adidam Ruchiradam*

The Divine Avataric Samrajya of Adidam Ruchiradam preserves and protects Adi Da Samrajashram and Adi Da's sacred environments on Naitauba Island. It oversees, protects, and supports the life-circumstance for members of the Ruchira Sannyasin Order and has responsibility for preserving Adi Da's teaching, holding the copyrights to all of his writings, his artistic work, and the media materials produced in his name.

The Divine Avataric Holy Domains of Adidam Ruchiradam has responsibility for preserving the remaining Adidam hermitage sanctuaries—two in northern California, one in Hawaii, and one in northern Washington state. It also holds in trust the sacred treasures of Adidam Ruchiradam, including the archives of Adi Da's writings, talks, and sacred items associated with his life.

The Divine Avataric Holy Institution of Adidam Ruchiradam (also called AdiDaSala) is the organization that publishes Adi Da's teaching, maintains the principal Adidam websites, and makes his spiritual work broadly available in the world. It also oversees the educational services provided to devotees and the public and is linked to the various regional centers of Adidam around the world.

The Divine Avataric "Bright" House of Adidam Ruchiradam provides for and manages the practical and cooperative life of devotees, including cooperative living, educational services related to the "right-life disciplines", cooperative businesses, schools, clinics, and end-of-life services.

*The Four Practicing Congregations of Adidam Ruchiradam*

Adi Da's intention was that all human beings be given the opportunity, based on their spiritual impulse and practical circumstance, to participate in the devotional relationship to him. To make this possible, he created four "congregations" of the Reality-Way of Adidam:

The First Congregation of Adidam Ruchiradam comprises those who engage the full and most intensive process of "radical" devotion, right life, and "Perfect Knowledge" in the Reality-Way of Adidam. This congregation serves the fulfillment of the entire transcendental spiritual process, potentially including the ultimate awakening to divine self-realization.

The Second Congregation comprises the gathering of Adi Da's devotees who engage the foundational process of "radical devotion", right life, and the beginning "consideration" of Adi Da's "Perfect Knowledge" teachings. Members adapt to the full range of disciplines. Those who are moved to enter the First Congregation necessarily engage a period of adaptation within the second congregation.

The Third Congregation of Adidam Ruchiradam comprises those who respond to Adi Da and are moved to embrace a simple practice of "radical devotion" to him and support of his work. Members study Adi Da's teaching, engage a simple name-invocation practice, offer services and provide financial support to the public mission of Adidam.

The Fourth Congregation comprises those from indigenous and traditional cultures who devotionally respond to Adi Da and are moved to embrace a simple life of practice and service in relation to him. They too engage a simple name-invocation practice in devotion to Adi Da (Boundless 172-73).

Thus, there is no successor to Adi Da Samraj. If one understands (and accepts) Adi Da's unique avataric appearance, revelation, and function, it is clear that no successorship is possible. There is, however, the process of devotional and transcendental spiritual communion with him forever after his lifetime. There is an order of legal renunciates, designated by Adi Da, with senior cultural governing authority for the continuation of his work and the alignment of Adidam to his instructions. There are Adi Da's authoritative writings, the oeuvre of his artistic images, and the hermitages and sanctuaries he spiritually empowered. And within these sanctuaries, there are many spiritually empowered temples and holy sites. Finally, there is the collective of all devotee-practitioners. These are the abiding features of the Reality-Way of Adidam Ruchiradam and the means by which it will continue, now and into the future.

“How can the physical presence of the Master be imagined?” they will ask in the year 2300. They will not only have to read The Dawn Horse Testament, they will enjoy the Presence of My living devotees, linked in Revelation with the devotees who survived in My Company while this Body Lived (Discourse 30 Nov. 1985).

## CONCLUSION: THOUGHTS ABOUT THE FUTURE OF ADIDAM

While Adi Da Samraj was physically alive and doing his avataric work, the primary focus of Adidam was essentially centripetal. That is, the attention and energy of devotees were focused on Adi Da—the devotional relationship to him, the services of attending to him bodily, responding to his callings and instructions, and direct accountability to him for service in the extended areas of his work. No one among his devotees would argue that this was anything but appropriate and necessary. It was essential to each one's own spiritual practice and expressive of the devotion devotees naturally felt for their divine master.<sup>50</sup>

But they were also challenged by Adi Da's fiery demands as he worked at an astonishing pace and intensity to bring an entirely new spiritual revelation into the world. From any conventional standpoint, his actions during his years of submission-work were sometimes inscrutable, always spontaneous, seldom predictable, and, as he characterized them, sometimes seemingly "crazy".<sup>51</sup> They were, he says, his free response to the microcosmic "configuration of totality" appearing within the sphere of his own circumstance (and simultaneously within the spheres beyond, visible and invisible). To appreciate his freedom and to be moved and inspired by his actions required (and

---

<sup>50</sup> This was true even though Adi Da fiercely criticized any and all cultic attachment to him—meaning the exclusivistic, childish dependency and man-in-the-middle approach to him, which inevitably results in "the scapegoating game". His devotees were by no means immune from these criticisms. On the contrary, the tendencies and patterns of cultism were pointed out by Adi Da time and again, always with the calling to observe, understand, and transcend them in true devotional communion with him and "right-life" practice in his company. (See the essay, "Do Not Misunderstand Me—I Am Not 'Within' you, but you Are in Me, and I Am Not a Mere 'Man' in the 'Middle' of Mankind, but All of Mankind Is Surrounded, and Pervaded, and Blessed By Me" (Aham 5-24). See also The Mummy Book for Adi Da's scathing literary indictment of cultism.)

<sup>51</sup> "Adi Da uses the term 'Crazy' to point to His Spontaneous Mindless Freedom, both while active in bodily (human) Form and forever after . . ." (Testament 1285n17). For Adi Da's usage and meaning of the word "Crazy" in reference to himself and his work, see The Dawn Horse Testament of the Ruchira Avatar (219-20, 262-63, 988-89, 1251-53).

continues to require) the intuitive recognition and certainty that Adi Da is indeed a supremely liberated divine avataric master. As one early devotee wrote in his diary after a raucous evening of drinking and partying at Adi Da's house in November of 1975:

Nobody can understand the content of what this Being is doing without loving God and being in that room with him and actually hearing and seeing and feeling at heart all that went on there. Because without the sadhana [recognition-responsive practice], without the Satsang [practice of devotional turning to Adi Da], it would all have another meaning, and its spiritual import would be entirely lost. But with the sadhana and Satsang, the exquisite perfection of his every action is an amazement to behold (1).

Overall, Adi Da's devotees now clearly see and affirm that he was always shaping, aligning, and correcting the pattern and process that would survive his lifetime—the pattern of Adidam Ruchiradam (which, in esoteric terms, is the primary pattern of his own divine being). The multitude of references in his writings and discourses to “now, and forever hereafter” likewise attests to this intention on his part. He was simply doing all that was necessary and possible for the divine liberation of human beings. As he expresses it:

Such compassion is the origin of the Adept's willingness to do anything—not speaking now in terms of the potential to do something terrible and negative—but the willingness to do anything outrageous yet benign for the sake of liberating

others. The compassionate Maha-Siddha does not do for others everything He can do within the bounds of propriety. The compassion of the Maha-Siddha is such that He will do everything, whether in the realm of propriety or not, for the sake of Awakening others (Fire Gospel 110-11).

And again, more radically expressed:

I Function Freely As The Source, In My Avatarically Self-Manifested Divine “Bonding”-Play With My Devotees. I Am . . . Free Among all. I Am Not The Seeker. I Am Not Obligated By ordinary vows and rules. I Stand Apart From all limitations and all restrictions. I Am . . . Free Of all ordinary obligations. I Am here Only By Vow and Obligation Of My Own, For The Sake Of all-and-All. I Do Whatever and All I Must Do For The Sake Of The “Bonding” Of every one and All To Me, and, Altogether, For The Sake Of The Divine Liberation Of all-and-All. I (Myself) Appear To Me here and every “where” (As My Very Self) In the bodily form of each and every conditionally Manifested being, and (In Order That My Revelation-Service Become Effective In each and every one) each and every one Must Come To Me and Be My True Devotee (Testament 119).

Adi Da’s legacy now hinges on the ability of devotees to reverse the centripetal motion that characterized their lives with him while he was bodily alive. Impelled now by their intensified devotion to Adi Da and their ever-deepening experience of his eternal presence and transmitted blessings, it is incumbent on devotees to find him spiritually

active everywhere as they turn outward in service to the world. (This is not true of the formal renunciate devotees, whose practice remains one of perpetual retreat within the hermitages and sanctuaries of Adidam.) The spiritual practice of each devotee remains specific to his or her own degree of recognition and response to Adi Da. But the practical work of all devotees is to make Adi Da's teaching, his literary writings, and his artistic work broadly available; to preserve the sanctuaries and holy domains of Adidam; to develop its cooperative sacred culture; and to do all of this in the context of devotional communion with Adi Da Samraj. This remains the collectively stated intention of Adidam members.

It should be emphasized that securing Adi Da's legacy does not depend on the efforts of his devotees alone. Adi Da has bequeathed a trove of spiritual teachings, artistic images, literary works, and leelas to humankind, and these are only now finding their respective audiences within the public domain. It is for scholars, clerics, religious thinkers, opinion leaders, and practitioners of various traditions to acquaint themselves with Adi Da and to avail themselves of the spiritual wisdom and esoteric revelations contained in his works. Those who do so with openness and receptivity will acknowledge Adi Da's religious and artistic genius, his indefinable presence, and the abiding relevance of his teachings to an imperiled and spiritually impoverished world. Adi Da's work was done with a few for the sake of all. He bequeaths his spiritual legacy to the collective of humankind, where the need for his enlightened wisdom and spiritual revelations is greater and more urgent than ever before.

## WORKS CITED

*BOOKS, PAMPHLETS, AND MANUSCRIPTS*

- Adi Da Samraj. Aham Da Asmi (Beloved, I Am Da). Middletown, CA: Dawn Horse Press, 2003.
- . Atma Nadi Shakti Yoga. Middletown, CA: Dawn Horse Press, 2008.
- . Enlightenment of the Whole Body. Middletown, CA: Dawn Horse Press, 1978.
- . Garbage and the Goddess. Middletown, CA: Dawn Horse Press, 1974.
- . Hridaya Rosary (Four Thorns of Heart-Instruction), standard edition. Middletown, CA: Dawn Horse Press, 2005.
- . Love of the Two-Armed Form. Middletown, CA: Dawn Horse Press, 1978.
- . My "Bright" Word. Middletown, CA: Dawn Horse Press, 2005.
- . My Final Work of Divine Indifference. Middletown, CA: Dawn Horse Press, 2007.
- . Not-Two Is Peace, third edition. Middletown, CA: Dawn Horse Press, 2009.
- . "Radical" Transcendentalism. Middletown, CA: Dawn Horse Press, 2007.
- . Ruchira Avatara Gita. Middletown, CA: Dawn Horse Press, 2004.
- . "Ruchira Avatara Hridaya-Tantra Yoga Manuscript". Dawn Horse Press, Middletown, CA
- . "The Aletheon Manuscript". Dawn Horse Press, Middletown, CA
- . The Ancient Reality-Teachings. Middletown, CA: Dawn Horse Press, 2006.
- . The Boundless Self-Confession. Middletown, CA: Dawn Horse Press, 2009.
- . The Complete Yoga of Human Emotional-Sexual Life. Middletown, CA: Dawn Horse Press, 2007.
- . The Dawn Horse Testament, new standard edition. Middletown, CA: Dawn Horse Press, 2004.
- . The Fire Gospel. Middletown, CA: Dawn Horse Press, 1983.
- . "The Gnosticon Manuscript". Dawn Horse Press, Middletown, CA
- . The Mummery Book. Middletown, CA: Dawn Horse Press, 2005.
- . The Knee of Listening, new standard edition. Middletown, CA: Dawn Horse Press, 2004.
- . The Only Complete Way to Realize the Unbroken Light of Real God. Middletown, CA: Dawn Horse Press, 2000.
- . The Orders of My True and Free Renunciate Devotees. Middletown, CA: Dawn Horse Press, 2007.
- . "The Pneumaton Manuscript". Dawn Horse Press, Middletown, CA

- . The Seven Stages of Life. Middletown, CA: Dawn Horse Press, 2000.
- . The Teaching Manual of Perfect Summaries. Middletown, CA: Dawn Horse Press, 2008.
- . "The Way of Transcendental Spirituality" Manuscript, Dawn Horse Press, Middletown, CA.
- . The Yoga of Right Diet. Middletown, CA: Dawn Horse Press, 2006.
- . Transcendental Realism. Middletown, CA: Dawn Horse Press, 2007.
- "History of the Dawn Horse Communion Manuscript". Dawn Horse Press, Middletown, CA.
- A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada Srimad Bhavavatam: Bhagavata Purana.  
Los Angeles: Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 1988.
- Costabile, Michael (Anthony). "Da Avatar Manuscript", Dawn Horse Press, Middletown, CA.
- . The Call to Be Love. Middletown, CA: Dawn Horse Press, 2008.
- Ehrman, Bart D. Lost Christianities. Oxford: University Press, 2003.
- Fontenrose, Joseph. The Ritual Theory of Myth. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966.
- Hayward, Jeremy. Warrior King of Shambhala. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2008.
- Kübler-Ross, Elizabeth. On Death and Dying. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1969.
- Lee, Carolyn. Adi Da: The Promised God-Man Is Here, new concise edition. Middletown, CA: Dawn Horse Press, 2003.
- Lowe, Scott, and David Lane. DA: The Strange Case of Franklin Jones. Walnut, CA: Mt. San Antonio College, 1996.
- Marx, K. A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right. Collected Works, v. 3. New York: International Publishers, 1976.
- Muller, F. Max. Ed. The Satapatha-Brahmana, Sacred Books of the East (vol. 44). Trans. Julius Eggeling. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1963.
- Radhakrishnan, S. and Charles A. Moore. Ed. A Sourcebook in Philosophy. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1957.
- Rigopoulos, Antonio. The Life and Teachings of Shirdi Sai Baba. Albany: SUNY Press, 1993.
- Sri Aurobindo. Essays on the Gita. Twin Lakes, WI: Lotus Light publ. 1995.
- Tsiknas, William, and Naamleela Free Jones. The Divine Mahasamadhi of Parama-Sapta-Na Adi Da Samraj. Middletown, CA: Dawn Horse Press, 2009.
- The New Jerusalem Bible. general edition. New York: Doubleday, 1985.
- Zimmer, Heinrich Robert, and Joseph Campbell. Philosophies of India. Princeton University Press, 1951.
- PERIODICALS*
- "I Submitted to Be the World", The Free Daist, 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter. Middletown, CA: Dawn Horse Press, 1994.

Dawn Horse Magazine, vol.1 no.1. Middletown, CA: Dawn Horse Press, 1974.

Dawn Horse Magazine, vol.1 no.2. Middletown, CA: Dawn Horse Press, 1975.

#### *DOCUMENTAR FILMS*

A Difficult Man, Middletown, CA: Dawn Horse Communion, 1974.

#### *ELECTRONIC SOURCES*

“Lawsuits, Countersuits, and Media Circuses.” [adidaupclose.org](http://www.adidaupclose.org). 08 March 2007. 06 May 2009 <<http://www.adidaupclose.org/Lawsuits/index.html>>.

Melton, J. G. “The Rise of the Study of New Religions.” [cesnur.org](http://www.cesnur.org). 06 May 2009 <[http://www.cesnur.org/testi/bryn/br\\_melton.htm#Anchor-47383#Anchor-47383](http://www.cesnur.org/testi/bryn/br_melton.htm#Anchor-47383#Anchor-47383)>.

[oshoworld.com/onlineMagazine](http://oshoworld.com/onlineMagazine). “Each Sannyasin has to be my Successor”. 6 March 2009. 02 May 2009 <[http://oshoworld.com/onlineMag/march09/htm/main\\_story.asp#1](http://oshoworld.com/onlineMag/march09/htm/main_story.asp#1)>.

“Siddha Yoga.” [Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siddha_Yoga). 27 April 2009. 02 May 2009 <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siddha\\_Yoga](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siddha_Yoga)>.

“The Life History of Shirdi Sai Baba”, Chapter XII. [saibaba.org](http://www.saibaba.org). 28 April 2009. 04 May 2009 <<http://www.saibaba.org/lhossb/lhossb12.html>>.

Zablocki, Benjamin. “The Birth And Death Of New Religious Movements”. [rutgers.edu](http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~zablocki/). 06 May 2009 <<http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~zablocki/>>.

#### *E-MAIL CORRESPONDENCE*

Costabile, Anthony. “Update from Naitauba.” E-mail to McCarthy. 8 December 2008.

Goodman, Richard. “Beloved’s Mahasamadhi.” E-mail to Costabile. 3 June 2009.

Ngo, Hoi. “Membership Numbers.” E-mail to Costabile. 2 May 2009.

#### *LETTERS*

Ruchiradama Quandra Sukhapur Rani. “Letter to Gathering.” 11 April 2009.

Steinberg, James. “Letter to Devotees.” 2 December 2008.