

The Adidam Advocate

The Monthly Newsletter for Associates, Pre-Students,
the Third Congregation and others interested in
The Eleutherian Pan-Communion of Adidam

May 2004

Volume 1; Issue 9

The Revelation of Divine Truth

In the depth of every human being, there is a profound need for answers to the fundamental questions of existence. Is there a God? What is beyond this life? Why is there suffering? What is Truth? What is Reality?

The Adidam Advocate is an opportunity to be introduced to the Wisdom-Revelation of Avatar Adi Da, whose Teachings truly and completely address all of these fundamental questions. How can Avatar Adi Da resolve these fundamental questions? Because He speaks, not from the point of view of the human dilemma, but directly from the unique Freedom of His Divine State. Adi Da's Birth in 1939 was an intentional embrace of the human situation, for the sake of Revealing the Way of Divine Liberation to all and Offering the Spiritual Blessing that carries beings to that true Freedom. He is thus the fulfillment of the ancient intuitions of the "Avatar"—the One Who Appears in human Form, as a direct manifestation of the Unmanifest Reality.

Through a 28-year process of Teaching-Work (beginning in 1972), Avatar Adi Da established the Way of Adidam—the Way of the devotional and Spiritual relationship to Him. In those years of Teaching, He spoke for many hours with groups of His devotees—always looking for them, as representatives of humanity, to ask all of their questions about God, Truth, Reality, and human life. In response, He Gave the ecstatic life of real Divine Communion with Him, and all the details of how that process unfolds. Thus, He created a new tradition, based on His direct Revelation (as Avatar) of the Divine Reality.

To read Avatar Adi Da's Writings and the stories of His devotees is a great Blessing—for His Teaching is itself an Agent of His Spiritual Awakening-Power. As you will discover, Avatar Adi Da Samraj does not offer you a set of beliefs, or even a set of Spiritual techniques. He simply Offers you His Revelation of Truth as a Free Gift. If you are moved to take up His Way, He invites you to enter into an extraordinarily deep and transformative devotional and Spiritual relationship to Him.

To find Avatar Adi Da Samraj is to find the Very Heart of Reality—tangibly felt in your own heart as the Deepest Truth of Existence.

This is the great mystery that you are invited to discover.

An Issue Celebrating the New Edition of The Knee Of Listening The Spiritual Autobiography of Adi Da Samraj

Dear Reader,

This year, the new edition of Avatar Adi Da's first book, *The Knee Of Listening*, will be published. Avatar Adi Da has not only expanded upon the original autobiographical section—the story of His life from birth to Re-Awakening—but has added new essays and discourses to the volume, including an entire section devoted to the profound Spiritual transitions that have spontaneously occurred since His Re-Awakening, making it the fullest and most extraordinary presentation ever made of His Life, His relationship to each of His Teachers, and His Divine Work altogether.

In this issue of the *Adidam Advocate*, we offer a selection from the marvelous new introduction to the book by Carolyn Lee, a selection from an early chapter of the autobiographical portion of the book itself, and two stories by longtime devotees about the miraculous communication made to them through *The Knee Of Listening*.

Reality Itself Comes into the "Room"—in Person Excerpts from the Introduction to *The Knee Of Listening* by Carolyn Lee, Ph.D.

From time to time, there is a book that challenges, and eventually changes, the entire perspective of a civilization. In modern times, Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* was such a book—and, centuries before Darwin, *On the Revolutions of the Celestial Spheres* of Copernicus (the first publication of the theory that the earth orbits the sun). *The Knee Of Listening* is such an epoch-making book—in an entirely different way. Appearing at the beginning of the third millennium of the common era, it carries a Revelation that has the potential to transform all future time. This book is not about how life on earth physically evolved, nor the design of the solar system (of which this planet is a part). *The Knee Of Listening* is about Reality Itself, the Reality within which this earth and its cosmic locale arise—the Blissful, Effulgent, Conscious Force of Being which is always so, and which can be located and enjoyed under every possible condition, and in every dimension of space-time.

There are many worlds within the book—from simple narrative to ecstatic poetry to complex argument and sublime revelatory discourse. But there is one single Voice.

The Knee Of Listening is autobiography. It is the first-person account of the life of an unparalleled Spiritual Genius—alive today—whose appearance can be only be rightly understood by referring to the tradition of the avatar, or the incarnations of the Divine.

Aldous Huxley speaks of this tradition in *The Perennial Philosophy*, where he refers to the Divine Being by the Greek term “Logos” (or “Word”).

The Logos passes out of eternity into time for no other purpose than to assist the beings, whose bodily form he takes, to pass out of time into eternity. If the Avatar’s appearance upon the stage of history is enormously important, this is due to the fact that by his teaching he points out, and by his being a channel of grace and divine power he actually is, the means by which human beings may transcend the limitations of history. . . .

*That men and women may be thus instructed and helped, the godhead assumes the form of an ordinary human being, who has to earn deliverance and enlightenment in the way that is prescribed by the divine Nature of Things—namely, by charity, by a total dying to self and a total, one-pointed awareness. Thus enlightened, the Avatar can reveal the way of enlightenment to others and help them actually to become what they already potentially are. . . . And, of course, the eternity which transforms us into Ourselves is not the experience of mere persistence after bodily death. There will be no experience of timeless Reality then, unless there is the same or a similar knowledge within the world of time and matter. By precept and example, the Avatar teaches that this transforming knowledge is possible, that all sentient beings are called to it, and that, sooner or later, in one way or another, all must finally come to it. [Aldous Huxley, *The Eternal Philosophy*, 1st Harper Colophon ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), 51, 56.]*

Writing in 1944, Aldous Huxley was more right than he could have known. The Ruchira Avatar, Adi Da Samraj, the author of *The Knee Of Listening*, took birth on Long Island, New York, in November 1939. He was born in the most ordinary of circumstances—to Frank and Dorothy Jones, a middle-class couple, who named their son Franklin Albert Jones. His Life, from the first, has been marked by unusual and miraculous signs—indicators of a Divine Process (or Yoga) that has always been active in Him. Nevertheless, as Huxley suggests, the Avatar must relinquish the free enjoyment of the Divine State and embrace the condition of an apparently ordinary unillumined human being in order to “earn enlightenment”, and thus “reveal the way of enlightenment to others”.

This was exactly the pattern of Avatar Adi Da’s early life, as He recounts in Part One of *The Knee Of Listening*. He was born in a state of unconditional radiant awareness, which He called the “Bright”. But, then, in a spontaneous gesture around the age of two years, He fully Submitted to the usual human life—as He describes here in a Discourse given to His devotees. When He speaks of “I” and “Me”, He is referring to Himself as the Divine Being, Who is associating with the conditional worlds via the human form of “Franklin Jones”.

AVATAR ADI DA SAMRAJ: For approximately the first two years after My Birth, I allowed the gross vehicle to be gradually prepared for Me. Then, at approximately two years of age, I Spiritually Descended to the region of the heart and thus established My basic Association with My manifested personality.

This Spiritual Descent into the gross body to the level of the heart occurred on the basis of a sympathy (or heart-response) to those who were around Me at the moment. It was through this sympathetic response that I acquired the Vehicle of this body-mind.

However, I was Born to make this Submission. Therefore, it is not that the Decision to Acquire the gross body-mind did not occur until I was two years old. It is simply that the Vehicle of this body-mind was not sufficiently prepared until that point. I had consciously Decided to Do this Work before I Incarnated. My Avataric Descent into Incarnation was for the sake of the total world and all beings. I had consciously Decided to Take a Birth in the West. My Intention before this Birth was to Take this Birth and to Do My Avataric Divine Work by complete Submission to the ordinary Western circumstance.

—February 5, 1989

In 1939, the year of Avatar Adi Da’s birth, the western world was poised on the threshold of war, completely ignorant of Who was about to be born in the suburbs of New York City. Even so, we know of at least one individual who was attuned to the unparalleled dispensation of Divine Grace that was about to descend into human Form. Nine months before the birth of Avatar Adi Da Samraj, the great Indian Realizer Upasani Baba made a remarkable utterance. Speaking in February 1939 to the head of one of the most important Hindu monastic orders (the Shankaracharya of Jyotir Math), Upasani prophesied that an Avatar would “soon be born in a European”, or a Western, rather than Eastern, “country”. “He will be all-powerful”, Upasani declared, “and bear down everything before him. And he will see to it that the Vedic Dharma”, meaning the pure and original Teaching of Truth, “is firmly reestablished in India.” [See B. V. Narasimha Swami and S. Subbarao, *Sage of Sakuri*, 4th ed. (Bombay: Shri B. T. Wagh, 1966), 190-91, 204.]

In prophesying the advent of an avatar, Upasani Baba would have been well aware of Krishna’s proclamation in the *Bhagavad Gita*. “Whenever a decrease of righteousness exists . . . and there is a rising up of unrighteousness, then I give forth myself. . . . For . . . the sake of establishing righteousness, I come into being from age to age.” [Withrop Sargeant, trans., *The Bhagavad Gita*, rev. ed., ed. Christopher Chapple (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1984), 207-208.]

As the *Bhagavad Gita* indicates, such a one appears at unique moments when Divine Intervention is necessary to guide or save humankind. Therefore, the appearance of an avatar is an epochal, historic matter. In the Vaishnavite tradition of Hinduism, it is said that there are ten Divine Avatars, and that cosmic history has already witnessed the appearance of the first nine. The tenth and completing Avatar remains to come. And He will appear, the tradition declares, in the “late-time” of the present world-cycle, the “dark” time

of the Kali Yuga, when the Divine is forgotten and denied. As Arthur Osborne, an English devotee of the great twentieth-century Indian sage Ramana Maharshi, wrote some decades ago:

*The time for his [the final avatar's] advent is when materialism and confusion have dominated the world . . . [T]he completion of the downward trend may result in crass materialism and the loss of spiritual paths, like rivers drying up in the desert. The result of this is a secular civilization with no spiritual basis for life, either public or private, and no spiritual scale of values. Material values are enthroned and moralism, which may have survived spirituality for a while, gives place to amorality. This is the type of spiritual decline which has arisen in the West in recent centuries and has overspread the world in the present century. . . . [Thus], today, for the first time in known history, an event such as the coming of an Avatar would have to affect not one civilization only but the whole world. [Arthur Osborne, *Buddhism and Christianity in the Light of Hinduism* (London: Rider and Company, 1959), 84-85, 154.]*

The degeneration of culture that Upasani Baba was observing in India had its root in the secularism of the West, as he well knew. But his prophecy was not premeditated. According to the account, it was a spontaneous outburst. Without thought for Hindu orthodoxy, he was pointing to a World-Teacher, capable of Mastering both East and West. He was foretelling the appearance of One who would bring a unique clarification and completeness to all the Dharmas of the past. *The Knee Of Listening* is about the making of a Wisdom-Teaching of precisely that magnitude.

The Secret Gift of the “Late-Time”

According to the predictions of the ancient Hindu sages about the Yugas (or ages) in the cycles of time, the last of the Yugas of the present world-cycle is named “Kali Yuga”, or the epoch of darkness and conflict. Kali Yuga is calculated to have begun five thousand years ago, and has now entered its “twilight” (or final phase). The “twilight” of the Kali Yuga, in the ancient understanding, is characterized by an acceleration in human strife and in cultural and religious chaos, ending in total cataclysm and the destruction of the species.

In the detailed calculations of the Vedic seers and astronomers, the date when the twilight of the Kali Yuga would begin was established as 1939. [Alain Danielou, *While the Gods Play: Shaiva Oracles and Predictions on the Cycles of History and the Destiny of Mankind* (Rochester, Vt.: Inner Traditions, 1987), 197.] That year, as history has proven, did indeed mark a steepening of the moral decline of human civilization. There was the outbreak of World War II and then the continuing aftermath of escalating weaponry and superpower politics.

Coincident with this pivotal moment in human history, the Ruchira Avatar, Adi Da Samraj, was born. All the necessary conjunctions in the pattern of the ages conspired to bring Him to Birth at this exact time, when humanity is armed with the power of complete self-destruction.

Prophecies of the appearance of a culminating Prophet, God-Man, Buddha, or Avatar, yet to come, exist from ancient times—because religion in its traditional forms has never entirely satisfied human beings. The evidence is to be read in history. The deep-seated fear, sorrow, and anger that drives people to petty and terrible conflicts has not, in the general case, been purified by religion—in spite of the procession of great beings who have graced the earth with their saintly example and inspired teachings. Rather, religion has become the very source and pretext of much of the trouble on earth today. In other words, religion has lamentably failed to accomplish its greater human purposes—however earnest, and even heroic, some of its followers have been, and continue to be.

The healing of a world that is inexorably fulfilling the ancient descriptions of the “dark” time clearly lies beyond the scope of traditional religion. An act of Divine Intervention is necessary, and loudly required by the human spirit. This is the import of the ancient prophecies that a unique God-Man would appear in the “late-time”.

Some of the traditional prophecies tend to suggest that this Divine Coming, when it happens, will be obvious to all. But why should this be so in the “late-time” world that is so desensitized to the greater dimensions of reality? One prophecy in a Hindu text speaks of this Divine Appearance as being largely unrecognized:

“At the end of the Kali Yuga, the god Shiva will appear to reestablish the right path in a secret and hidden form.” [*Linga Purana*, 1.40.12 (quoted in Danielou, 224).]

The Divine Avatar, Adi Da Samraj, truly, has appeared in a secret and hidden form. His early Life was private and outwardly ordinary. Even in the years of His Teaching-Work, He never entered into the public arena—because His Way of Adidam is esoteric, requiring a direct devotional and Spiritual relationship to Him, rather than the following of rules and practices for their own sake.

Nevertheless, the Divine Blessing-Work that Avatar Adi Da was born to do is not merely for those who may come into His physical Company during His human Lifetime. His Avatic Impulse to Bless and Awaken beings is All-Encompassing—global, cosmic, and Eternal. He is moved by an unceasing Urge to Transform the dark logic and destiny of the Kali Yuga into a “‘Bright’ New Age of Real-God-Man”, a culture of true Spiritual practice and Divinely Enlightened living.

This is not about attempting to create utopia on earth (or any transformation of a merely political or social kind). Avatar Adi Da’s Spiritual Work of Blessing is the most profound Divine Act—the perpetual Transmission of His “Bright”, Love-Blissful Person into every form and “corner” of the cosmic domain. His Spiritual Touch (or “Kiss”) is tangible, personal, and unmistakable. To turn and contemplate His human Form (physically present or via a photograph), surrendering all the faculties of the being to Him, is to behold what humankind has never seen before—Naked Divinity in Person, the only One Sufficient for the human heart.

Even though I sit here apparently solemn and quiet,

the Same One Kisses you, Kisses every one. All of you have My Kiss. All of those not even yet My devotees already have My Kiss. I have My Solemn, Deep, Extraordinary, Unknown Work to Do. . . . You must allow Me to Do this Work in the terror of this "late-time", and forever.

—Avatar Adi Da Samraj
The Knee Of Listening, Part Three

The Ruchira Avatar, Adi Da Samraj, offers *The Knee Of Listening* to you and to all human beings as the living Revelation of His "Visit" to this place of earth. As He says, His "Visit" is unique and unrepeatable. It does not need to be repeated, because It will never end.

A Selection from *The Knee Of Listening*
by the Ruchira Avatar, Adi Da Samraj

Just previous to the few passages from the first chapter of The Knee Of Listening that we offer to you here, Avatar Adi Da has explained to His reader that, at birth, He was not yet identified in the ordinary way with the gross mind and body of "Franklin Jones". He describes that when He was about two years old, He made a conscious decision to fully assume that body and mind, in the usual manner that all human beings do at birth:

The reason for this gesture was a spontaneous motivation associated with a painful loving of the people around me. It was not merely compassion for them, as if they were poor people I could help. It was a painful emotional and physical sensation in my heart and in my solar plexus. It was profoundly painful even then, and it always has been. It was associated with the full knowledge that these people to whom I was committing myself were going to die, and that I would die. I knew that if I Incarnated in this life-form and circumstance, if I became this body and its lifetime, I would also die its death. And I knew that, as this bodily incarnate being, I was, in due course, going to be separated from every one and every thing I loved in its lifetime. This was all fully obvious to me—and, yet, this spontaneous gesture, this painful loving, this profound sensation, awakened in me and moved me into the body, animated me physically. Thus, it was, altogether and simply, a sympathetic response that brought me into the sphere of human conditions, and of gross conditions altogether. That response was identification with mortal existence, but it took place by means of Delight. In that Exaltation, the wound of mortality was forgotten. Thus, it was not the noticing of mortality, in and of itself, that generated my Movement into this plane. Rather, it was the Love-Response, the attracted Response, in which all of the negative aspects of gross conditional existence were effectively forgotten—in Love, in Delight, in Love-Bliss.

My father was always a salesman, and my mother was always at home. They could always use a little ordinary humor, but I always loved (and love) them, and love was always the premise of our life together. That is why we were always free to be so reckless, stupid, unfeeling, uncommunicative, unhappy, and separate! None of that ever

amounted to anything less than an enjoyment of our separate spectacles. Quiet, long-suffering, fathered mother. Emotional, violent, elaborate father-son. Crazy, secluded, independent son away.

I always grew up on Long Island—mostly in a town called Franklin Square, which was not named after me, or my father (whose name is also Franklin). Mother is Dorothy. A sister, Joanne, was born when I was eight years old, whom we also always loved (and love), except she and I grew up at separate times and not together.

I was early brought to the Lutheran Christian Church, and so became combined with the mind of Christianity, and especially with the myths and legends (or the so-called history and historical person) of Jesus of Nazareth. Eventually, the ideas I received from that early association with Christianity became crucially important life-supporting beliefs for me, after my own "Bright" Strength of Being had been (temporarily) undermined by my experience of the human world of conflict, illusion, and death. Indeed, even quite early, I began to see there was a fundamental difference, or a very basic unlikeness, between myself and others—not a difference of ultimate essence, and not at all a social or (otherwise) merely physical difference, but a difference of point of view, and of experience, and of life-practice. Thus, schooled by conventional religion, and puzzled by the conventional mind and the disturbed manner of others, I gradually (but only tentatively) accepted the three root-conventions of the common mind: the idea of "God" (as "Creator", and as separate from all "creation"), the idea of separate self (in my case, and in all cases), and the idea of the world (as itself separate, and as itself composed of separate "things", or absolute differences).

Two Stories About *The Knee Of Listening*

"Realize What It Is That You Have Stumbled Upon While Wandering in the Wilderness"

by Anthony Costabile

I'll never forget my very first meeting with Avatar Adi Da Samraj. It wasn't at His Ashram. Nor was it during a scheduled personal audience with Him or some other pre-arranged engagement. In fact, it wasn't even a meeting with Him in person. But it was the defining moment of my early adult life. It happened in 1974.

I was living in the Denver/Boulder area, which, at the time, was a virtual Mecca of the new age movement. Ram Dass, Swami Satchidananda, Chogyam Trungpa, and Maharishi Mahesh Yogi were all approaching superstar status, and Eastern mysticism and spiritual seeking had become a thriving sub-culture among Western youth. I was in the habit of browsing the spiritual bookstores and frequenting the ashrams and new age centers that proliferated during the era. I found the scene fascinating, though I was also put off by the pretentious attitudes and spiritual posturing I encountered.

I, too, was looking for something beyond the insular

emptiness of middle-class life. But I was not about to settle for anything that could not reach to the depths of my heart and satisfy my intense spiritual longing. Nothing I came across on the new age circuit, and nothing in all the philosophical and spiritual books I read at the time, spoke convincingly to me. I was acutely sensitive to the disparity between the intuitive spiritual paths of the East—with their subjective and inward focus—and the outwardly focused paths of the worldly, materialistic West. None of this was abstract to me. I was emotionally and spiritually torn between my own inclinations to retreat from worldly life and the urges I felt to exploit and indulge myself in every way possible. At last I saw no clear way to reconcile these opposing impulses.

It was in that mood that I chanced upon two books by Avatar Adi Da Samraj (then known by the unlikely name of “Bubba Free John”): *The Knee of Listening* and *The Method of the Siddhas*. I had seen these books side-by-side in several bookstores, and presumed them to be companion volumes about Adi Da and His Teaching, but I had never examined either one. I remember the striking cover photos, however, and recall their impact on me. *The Knee of Listening* photo captured Adi Da’s youthful, radiant face, the certainty and happiness of His demeanor, and the clearest, most wide-open, and brilliantly compelling eyes I had ever seen. But *The Method of the Siddhas* cover struck me as ostentatious and offensive. There was Adi Da dressed in white and seated cross-legged on an elevated dais, a flower lei around His neck and enormous arrangements of flowers on either side of Him. He sat in an ornately carved chair and gazed into the camera with, it seemed to me, immense arrogance. I passed both books by, feeling attracted and curious, repelled and skeptical all at once.

Then one day in a small bookshop, as I turned my attention to other books on yoga and spirituality, *The Knee of Listening* suddenly fell—or did it leap?—off the shelf, landing on the floor in front of my feet! I picked the book up in surprise, and with a sigh of resignation, as if to say, “All right, all right, you win,” I began to leaf through it, at last turning to the middle section, which contained a series of black and white photos.

I was immediately struck by a silhouetted profile of Adi Da, His right hand open and upraised, His fingers spread and extended in an obvious gesture of blessing. The caption underneath simply read, “I Am the Loved One, I Am Shakti, I Am He.” The photo and caption were a complete communication. It seemed to me that Adi Da was innocently contemplating the incomprehensible Mystery of His Own Divine Being. And I felt an inexplicable penetration in my heart, as if I had just been touched at the deepest level of my feeling. I did not, in that moment, consider what had happened—I simply bought the book.

In the days that followed I often returned to that page to ponder the staggering profundity of the caption and silhouette. Together they communicated a Mahavakya [literally a “Great Statement or Pronouncement”], that amounted to Adi Da’s Original Avataric Divine Self-Confession to the world. Intuitively I knew that if this Statement were actually true—and my heart deeply affirmed to me that it was—then I had chanced upon the most

Miraculous Spiritual Gift and Treasure the human world has ever known.

Somehow, that photo, those simple words, and the whole circumstance of my strange encounter with this book registered as a sudden piercing deep in my heart. I also noticed a responsive current of energy surging throughout my whole body. It was the body’s means of expressing a sudden intuitive recognition: “My God, He IS here! Yes! He IS Really Here!” All of this occurred instantly, as an Epiphany. I knew that because of Adi Da’s appearance here, my own spiritual destiny—and perhaps that of the entire world—was forever changed and blessed.

I was soon to discover that Avatar Adi Da truly was a genuine Guru and Spiritual Master of ultimate stature, deeper and more profound than any of the ancient teachers I had read of in college or in the course of my own private spiritual quest. He was also more contemporary, more informed, more humorous, and infinitely more hip than any other spiritual teacher of the time (and I had seen a good number of them on their speaking tours through the Denver/Boulder area). In Adi Da Samraj, the ancient cultural divisions between East and West (and the corresponding dilemma in my own life) were resolved. He offered a Teaching and Way of life that embraces and transcends both world views, both parts of the body-mind, both contradictory impulses in the being.

I began reading Adi Da’s Teaching voraciously, marveling that His understanding of the human condition was more incisive and penetrating—His description of the nature of God, Truth, and Reality more cogent and straightforward—than any religious or spiritual teaching I had ever read, past or present.

There was, I’m convinced, something far beyond the merely serendipitous in that first encounter with Adi Da. It was Divine Grace Itself responding to my inmost plea for spiritual help. Later I discovered a single sentence in one of Adi Da’s Discourses that summarized the significance of that meeting—not just for me, but for anyone who is suddenly introduced to Adi Da and His Divine Teaching. It simply read, “Realize what it is that you have stumbled upon while wandering in the wilderness: I, Appearing here in your own likeness, Am the Liberating Function of Real God.”

“Just Do Everything in Relation to the Guru”

by Frank (“Cheech”) Marrero, Sr.

CHEECH: I grew up in the worst neighborhoods of New York City, an area of youth gangs, drug pushers, and criminals. Although I came from a humble and good family, right outside my parents’ front door loomed a world of constant threat and danger. I dropped out of school at fourteen and went to work at the waterfront docks, wheeling and dealing in anything I could to make money and survive. By the time I was thirty, I had spent more than eight years in prison.

In 1967, I was imprisoned at Rikers Island Penitentiary, awaiting trial for a crime I had not committed. At a plea bargaining session, I was told that if I pled guilty, I would receive “only” 20 or 30 years, instead of life without

parole.

I then came to lowest point of my life. One evening around midnight, the lights were out and the cell-block was quiet. Sitting on my mattress, I concluded that death could not be worse than this life. I calmly made the decision to end it all.

I remember putting on the best clothes I had, shaving, and brushing my hair. Then I lay down on my mattress and prepared to kill myself.

At that point, everything around me became acutely sharp, every sound and feeling. I could hear my heart pounding. I could hear every tiny sound in the cell block. The intensity of it dissolved my mind, which up to that point had been racing.

I brought my hand to my throat and paused for a time. The room suddenly filled with bright light. I felt a Presence I could not explain, but which was as obvious to me as the brightness of the room. I bolted upright and looked around the cell. I knew that not only was I not going to go through with it, but that somehow everything was going to turn out okay. Charged by this intuition, I stayed awake all night, until the guards came in the morning to load me onto the prison van for the long ride to the courthouse.

I was not the same person after this experience. I felt that life was greater than how it had appeared from my previous perspective. I began to make different choices about my life. And, in a miraculous turn of events, I discovered the identity of the man who had committed the crime, and was released within a year.

While in prison, I had educated myself in counseling, psychology, and law. After my release, I continued my education, eventually enrolling for a Ph.D. in psychology. I co-founded a multimillion-dollar drug and alcohol rehabilitation program in the South Bronx section of New York City, where I became the executive clinical director, responsible for over five hundred live-in residents. In my free time, I socialized with successful Latino professionals. I was successful and professionally respected. Underneath all of this, however, I was still a guarded and mistrusting person.

One day in June of 1971, I had an eleven o'clock appointment with an executive from a meditation institute who was selling a program for treating addictions through meditation. The program was expensive, so my decision was important. At twenty minutes to eleven, I began preparing for the interview, but since I had no personal experience with meditation, I didn't feel comfortable. I remembered that an associate of mine had a friend named Franklin Jones who knew about meditation, and He just happened to be visiting my associate in his office that morning.

I walked right into the office and said to Avatar Adi Da, "Hi, you must be Franklin! Can I borrow you for a few minutes? I have a meeting with this guy who's trying to sell me a meditation training package for our program. I don't know much about meditation and I heard you know a little bit." He gave me a big smile and said, "Sure."

I liked Him right away. He was very bright and open, and His smile was genuinely happy. I don't remember what He said as we walked through the hallways of the center, but He laughed a lot, and soon He had me laughing.

We laughed most of the way to my office. I remember my secretary looking up in surprise—this was not my typical disposition.

For the interview, I placed three chairs in a triangle. During the interview, I kept asking the salesman if he used these techniques himself, to which he responded affirmatively. But it was obvious to me he was not happy at all. After the salesman left, I looked at Avatar Adi Da and said, "Well, what do you think?" He pointed both thumbs towards the ground, and we both laughed. He said, "They are well-intentioned people, but there is much more to meditation than that."

Then Avatar Adi Da noticed something in my office. In a far corner, partly hidden by a plant, I had a small photo of Swami Muktananda. A few months earlier, I had responded to an article about Swami Muktananda, and received an invitation to meet him during his upcoming New York visit. The photo had been a gift from Amma, Swami Muktananda's secretary, who, I learned later, was also a great Spiritual friend of Avatar Adi Da. Avatar Adi Da seemed interested that I had this photo, and began asking me questions.

In the course of my explanation, I remember asking, "What do you think about somebody like this that claims to be in direct Communion with God?" He looked straight into my eyes and said, "Just do everything in relation to the Guru." Then he left. It would take me many years to realize that He had given me the essence of His Teaching in that single statement.

I was really impressed with Avatar Adi Da after that meeting. After He left I kept thinking about Him. The next time I saw my associate, I said, "I really like your friend Franklin. There's something about Him—a really nice man. We must have lunch together sometime, soon!"

But I had no recognition of Avatar Adi Da as Spiritually Enlightened. I didn't even think about such things, let alone believe in them. I had little Spiritual background besides my Catholic upbringing. I tended to be cynical about life, and regarded religion as mostly nonsense, doctrines to keep people from abusing and killing one another. Although I felt something special about Him, "Franklin" was just another man to me.

The ten months following that first meeting were oddly unsettling. By conventional standards, and especially in contrast to my early life, I now had every reason to be happy: I was successful in my profession, I was engaged to a beautiful, successful woman, I had more money than I needed, and was respected by friends and family. Inwardly, however, I was discontent.

All my life I had been aware of a fundamental disturbance in my body that was always present, regardless of whether times were good or bad. Why did I still feel like I was suffering, despite all my success? It didn't make sense.

During this period, I was stuck in quiet despair. All the ordinary enjoyments to which I was accustomed—watching TV or going out to dinner with friends—were no longer really enjoyable. It became apparent that the field of psychology did not bring relief from my unhappiness and, in spite of years of therapy, the fundamental sense of disturbance I felt remained untouched. My mentors, some of

the most respected analysts in the field, seemed no more illumined by their knowledge than I was. They could not address my questions about life and death. Because I was clinical director, I started to feel like a blind man leading the blind. Right around this time, my associate sent me the manuscript of *The Knee Of Listening*, Avatar Adi Da's autobiography.

I remember thumbing through it briefly and making a mental note, "I have to read this. After all, I have met Him." But I left it on my desk at home. One evening about six weeks later, I was feeling agitated and I noticed the manuscript. I read it intently for several hours.

At around two o'clock in the morning I was still reading, and an unusual feeling started coming over me. I looked up from the book. The room had become bright. Every color stood out brightly and distinctly. My first thought was, "Damn, one of the residents put some LSD in my coffee!" Then I noticed that I felt attracted to this brightness. A feeling of calmness moved throughout my body, and I was attentive to everything around me, rather than to myself—an unusual state. I enjoyed that feeling of attraction and, after a while, I allowed it to engulf me.

Then my mind kicked in and a rush of fear overtook me. The fear wasn't about anything in particular—raw terror without content. My heart pounded as if it was going to leap out of my chest. My body pulled into a fetal position, and I lay there with my knees pressed up against my chest, sweating profusely. Then, in an instant, everything became perfectly calm. An immense bliss washed over me, and my body opened like a flower.

Having spent countless hours in Avatar Adi Da's Company since then, I have come to recognize this Presence as His direct Blessing, a Transmission of Grace and Divine Love that awakens and heals the being. One can receive this Transmission in His physical Company, but it is available with equal force outside of His Company, as on this occasion. In other words, Avatar Adi Da's Blessing-Power is not limited by time and space. However, once the being receives His Blessing Transmission, all the darker elements of the limited self are "stirred up"—reflected back to oneself and felt with magnified force. This, I realized later, was the terror I had experienced. It was my own deep, primal feeling of being a separate ego, threatened by everything in a hostile world.

But none of this was clear to me then. My rational mind had no way to explain these experiences. I phoned a psychiatrist who worked at our program. After apologizing for waking him up in the wee hours, I explained what had happened.

He said, "It sounds like you're having an anxiety attack." He told me he would call in a prescription, and that I should pick it up right away. But I knew this was not an anxiety attack. I felt calmer and clearer than I ever had. I knew without question that my experience was related to something else.

Next I called my fiancé. Her solution was, "Come on over. I have some good wine we can share together." This seemed equally ridiculous. Then I remembered there was a phone number in the back of *The Knee Of Listening*. I

thought, "Why not call this number, since this happened while I was reading the book." It didn't even occur to me that it was 11:00 pm in Los Angeles. I called and explained what had just happened to the man who answered.

As I spoke, I could hear Avatar Adi Da's deep, expansive laughter in the background. I thought, "What kind of a Spiritual place is this? I'm going through this heavy turmoil and they're having a party!" The devotee who had answered left the phone for a couple of minutes. When he returned he said, "I spoke to Franklin and He said you should come right away." I said, "Right away? It's two in the morning!" I explained all my responsibilities. The man left the phone again and then came back and said, "Franklin says to come as soon as you can."

We Praise and Acknowledge the Following People Who Deepened Their Formal Relationship to Avatar Adi Da in April:

New Course Participants

Howard Gay, San Diego, CA
David Whitehead Los Angeles, CA

New Novice Student-Beginners

Tony Lewis, Moorpark, CA
Ida Bodin, Moorpark, CA

What's New in the Bookstore

The newly expanded *Knee of Listening – The Divine Ordeal Of The Avatic Incarnation Of Conscious Light - The Spiritual Autobiography Of The Ruchira Avatar, Adi Da Samraj.*

The Knee of Listening has transformed the lives of thousands of secular and religious seekers since it was first published in 1972. Avatar Adi Da's Spiritual Autobiography tells the miraculous story of His unique Incarnation and Revelation in the West for the sake of Liberating all beings. This newly expanded edition includes:

- An expanded description of Avatar Adi Da's early-life, leading up to His Divine Re-Awakening in 1970
- The secrets of Adi Da's "Pre-History" before His birth in 1939
- Revelations about the Spiritual Work of the great Realizers in Adi Da's lineage, and His unique Demonstration of the Seventh Stage Of Life
- The profound events of "Yogic death" (in 1986, 1999, and 2000) that occurred after His Divine Re-

Awakening--events that completed Adi Da's process
of Incarnating the Divine Conscious Light

24.95, Illustrated, 840 pages
Cost: \$24.95

New Chanting CD: *Ishta Da*

This CD contains original devotional chants offered at the Feet of the Ruchira Avatar, Adi Da Samraj. By Naamleela Free Jones and Tamarind Free Jones. This CD is beautifully contemplative and wonderful to listen to. His daughters are very gifted chanters and really invoke His Blessing Presence. \$16.95.

SUPPORT FOR THE SPIRITUAL CENTER & BOOKSTORE

As the Adidam gathering in Los Angeles area has begun to grow this past year, the Center on Melrose Avenue (now formally the "Adidam Spiritual Center and Bookstore" of Los Angeles) has continued to be renovated and developed as a prototypical space for anyone in the Southwest United States to access the Life, Teaching, and Person of the Ruchira Avatar, Adi Da Samraj, through the "reality consideration" that is Adidam.

At the beginning of this year, we established a formal design guild and created a scale model to guide the vision for this prototype. One of the key agreements with the guild is to keep the Center open while renovation is taking place. With this in mind, the development plan was accorded into project areas, prioritized and cost-estimated.

Some of the features for the new Adidam Spiritual Center and Bookstore are . . . an Altar/Temple Space, CD listening station, a Flat-Screen TV, Modular Wall with History of Adi Da Samraj, and an Outside Courtyard Garden and seating for contemplation and study.

You are formally invited to help us renovate this important and unique space. Help us with your financial support. To date we have raised \$1300, and the total amount needed is \$12,000.

Your contributions (by check) should be made to "ADIDAM" with "SUPPORT FOR CENTER" in the memo line. Mail to 8572 Melrose Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90069. Call 310.358.0555 for credit & debit card donations. Visit the Center Tuesday through Saturday 11am - 7pm.

Thank you very much for your generous support, and remember that these donations are tax deductible.

The Heart's Connection is published by The Outreach Department of the Southwestern Region in cooperation with the Third Congregation Office of the Advocacy Department of the Eleutherian Pan-Communion of Adidam. For more information please contact Tim Peterson at 310-358-0555.

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Calendar of Events
The Adidam Bookstore & Center of Los Angeles
8572 Melrose Avenue (across from The Bodhi Tree Bookstore)
Phone 310-358-0555, www.adidam.org

“I Have Come For The Sake of All Beings” - Introductory Event

The great mystery of who Adi Da is and what he has come to give is not a claim to be believed but a joyous secret to be discovered at heart. Countless people have already experienced this overwhelming and wonderful surprise and have become devoted to Adi Da as their beloved spiritual master and divine liberator. Once the depth of that secret is revealed nothing is ever the same again. Join us every Saturday from 5:00 – 6:30 pm for a weekly introduction to the extraordinary life and teaching of Avatar Adi Da.

Wednesday Educational Evenings

Join us every Wednesday from 7:30 – 9:00 pm to participate in our on-going study courses. This is our forecasted schedule:

- The *Adi Da* Course 3/1 - 5/16

Cost: \$60/month. You can audit one class for free. Before joining you must attend a Saturday introductory event.

Prestudent Course

This class meets at our Center in LA and can also be taken by conference call for people that live at a distance. Call 310-358-0555 for more information.

Special Events

Divine Distraction

James Steinberg is an internationally renowned scholar and lecturer of the religious and Spiritual Traditions, and author of three books including *Divine Distraction*. In this seminar, James will clarify the following: Is the Spiritual Teacher or "Guru" really necessary for Spiritual realization? How can you tell the difference between a true Guru and a charismatic personality? How does Spiritual transmission work to purify and transform your body, mind and emotion? How can a relationship with a Realized Being serve your own Realization? What can we learn from the famous experiment – the three Christ of Ypsilanti? Please join us for this special event!

Dates: Wednesday, June 23rd, 7:30 – 9:00 pm

Time: 7:30 – 9:00 pm

Location: Bodhi Tree Bookstore, 8585 Melrose Avenue, West Hollywood

Cost: \$15

Love of the God-Man

Avatar Adi Da offers the relationship to Him (called "Satsang") as the principal means of maturing in the Way of Adidam. However, many of us do not come from a background where Guru-devotion is rightly honored and understood. James' seminar will uncover, explain, and help us move through any obstacles that we might feel to the devotional relationship with a Spiritual Master, so that we can make further use of Adi Da's Immense and Profound Grace.

Join us to consider:

- What is it like to practice the Graceful Way of Adidam in relationship to Avatar Adi Da?
- The laws and principles of the Guru-devotee relationship and the necessity to overcome Western prejudices and misconceptions in relationship to the Spiritual Master.
- How Avatar Adi Da has taught in the likeness of traditional Tantric and "Crazy Wisdom" to Awaken His devotees.
- What is Ruchira Avatara Tantra Yoga?
- "Come to Me when you are already happy!"--Why Avatar Adi Da has always reserved Himself for those that have prepared themselves to be in His Company.
- Do the ancient Spiritual laws of Guru-devotion need to be changed for our increasingly Western or Westernized world?
- How do consumerism, revisionism, the "Chinese menu approach", and other Western approaches to Spirituality slow down advancement?

We will also show rare video footage of Avatar Adi Da receiving the aboriginal musicians of Yothu Yindi in His hermitage, Adidam Samrajashram.

James Steinberg is a religious scholar and author. James' wisdom, humor, and depth of knowledge make this seminar a rare opportunity. He has been an intimate devotee of Avatar Adi Da for more than thirty years, as well as a principal educator in Adidam and speaker on the Guru-devotee relationship.

Date: Saturday, June 26th, 2003

Time: 1-5pm

Cost: \$50 in advance (\$60 at the door).

Location: 106 N. Flores Street, Los Angeles, CA 90048

Registration: Call 310-358-0555. Space is limited, so reserve your seat today!

Parking for the Adidam Bookstore and Center of Los Angeles: General valet parking is available in front of the Bodhi Tree bookstore for \$3.50.