

VIBRATION OF DIVINE CONSCIOUSNESS

A Spiritual Autobiography

Sadguru Kedarji

The Bhakta School of Transformation, Inc.
Youngstown, Ohio

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*Shri Bhagawan Nityananda of Ganeshpuri
The Master of Sadguru Kedarji's Lineage*

Contents

Invocation	vii
Acknowledgements	xi
Introduction	xiii

My Journey Home

Chapter 1	My Early Seeking	3
Chapter 2	Shaktipat – Full Kundalini Awakening	8
Chapter 3	The Honeymoon Phase	29
Chapter 4	The Storm Within The Calm	35
Chapter 5	Bhagawan Nityananda of Ganeshpuri	51
Chapter 6	Siddha Loka. Visions of Saints	56
Chapter 7	Sex and Marriage	64
Chapter 8	The Aerial Chariot	74
Chapter 9	Karma and Past Lives	78
Chapter 10	My Native American Roots	83
Chapter 11	Selfless Service	91
Chapter 12	Solitude	99
Chapter 13	The Blue Bindu	103
Chapter 14	The Three Devis	107
Chapter 15	Visions of Lord Vishnu	112
Chapter 16	Lord Bhushunda and The Sacred Tree	116
Chapter 17	Visions of Jnaneshwar Maharaj	120
Chapter 18	The Command to Lead	125
Chapter 19	Intense Visions of Bhagawan Nityananda	130
Chapter 20	The Mantra of The Siddhas	143
Chapter 21	Visions of Lord Shiva	147
Chapter 22	The Dawn of Total Freedom	152

Introduction To Nityananda Shaktipat Yoga

Chapter 23	The Bond of Power	162
Chapter 24	Bhakti. The Transformative Power of Longing	184

Chapter 25	Understandings Dictate Feelings	201
Chapter 26	The Importance of Keeping Good Company	215
Chapter 27	Grace Is All There Is	224
About Nityananda Shaktipat Yoga		238
Glossary		276
Bibliography		284

Invocation

Om Sri Guru Mahadev

You are beyond this manifold Universe
And have become everything in it

You are the thought of a thought
The witness to all thoughts
The source of all thoughts
The rising and setting of all thoughts
And that which causes thought to emerge

You are the taste in taste
You are the sight in sight
You are that which hears
You are the feeling in feeling
You are the one who smells

Om Sri Guru Mahadev

You are the word in the words
The power behind the syllables
The sound inherent in the power of
Those syllables
The power behind the power in that sound
And the one who makes it possible to
Understand and to perceive

You are the perception in perception
The Consciousness behind all consciousness
The sense in sense pleasures
And that which causes the senses to perceive
Yet you are also beyond the senses
And you are also the means of going
Beyond the senses

Om Sri Guru Mahadev* *Pashupati Guru Mahadev

You are both immanent and transcendental
And the one who gives meaning to
The phrase immanent and transcendental

You become the object of all ideation
The object of all thought
And yet you are also not the objects that you become,
Reflecting those objects in your own being

You are the one in the many
And the many in the one
You are Spanda Shakti
That power that manifests the perception
Of a world, the perception of a Universe
Yet you have never taken birth
And you have never died either

Om Sri Guru Mahadev

You are the whisper behind the whisper
That dissolves in the wind of the fire
That is contained in your heart,
That same breath that creates, sustains
And withdraws the memory of existence
In the body of your consciousness

You are the created, the uncreated and
That which is beyond the perception of all creation

Om Sri Guru Mahadev
Pashupati Guru Mahadev

You are both real and unreal,
The awareness that gives birth to a Universe

Like the child of a barren woman,
There is no relationship between you
And that which manifests through
Your Spanda Shakti

And yet you thread through everything in this world,
So close, so intimate,
and higher than any concept
Or notion can grasp

Om Sri Guru Mahadev

Who are you? When the question dissolves
The answer is Self-evident
Behind all veils, you are the one
Pretending to hide
Indeed, you become the very veil
That you cover yourself with,
How beautiful is your play!

And you are the one who removes
The veil that you have cast on yourself
With your own hand,
Disguising yourself
And revealing yourself
For your own amusement, while remaining
The one who is the witness to it all

Om Sri Guru Mahadev
Pashupati Guru Mahadev

One without a second
There can be no other
What use is glory when you are behind it
What use is time when you are
The one behind it
What use is pleasure
When you are behind it
What use is pain
When you are the one behind it

You make what cannot be fathomed,
Readily experienced by the awareness
Of your being

By thinking of you, one experiences god
By worshipping you, one becomes god
The unreachable is reached by you
The unattainable is attained by you

That which is unfathomable
Is easily ascertained by your awareness

Once you are known, everything is known
Even as you wander about
As if knowing nothing

Look, see there.
You are everywhere,
In everything and in everyone

It is you who is looking
At the one who is looking
It is you who is seeking
The one who is seeking
Oh, how playful you are!

***To that one who is the root cause of everything created and
uncreated in this world,
To that one who is the root cause of everything that can be
experienced in this world,
To that one, by whose command I write these pages to glorify
God and my Gurudev,
To that Shiva I bow.***

Acknowledgements

I Dwell In The Timelessness of Love

I sing and I dance in the glory of my Shri Gurudev. By so many blessings of Grace, bestowed on me by my Guru and our time-honored Siddha lineage, I now dwell in the timelessness of Love, forever. O my Beloved, how can I ever repay you? It is not possible. Therefore, I make this offering as the only way I have of thanking you for what I can never adequately repay.

I Am What My Guru Made Me

There is no such thing as ignorance. It is imagined, superimposed. And if there is no such thing as ignorance, how can there be such a thing as Liberation. This is the direct experience that my Shri Gurudev has blessed me with.

I am what my Guru made me!

Some have asked, “Is Kedarji liberated, God-realized?” God is everywhere and in everything. That Supreme Self, the Shiva-Shakti power is the reason we taste sweetness, see beauty, feel both love and hatred, experience compassion, are drawn to sense pleasures, experience fear and fearlessness, desire to be honorable and ethical, as well as, the opposite and, ultimately come to know That which is behind the veil of all these things.

When this is the case how can it be so hard to realize God with the Grace of a Siddha?

I am what my Guru made me! By his so many Blessings of Grace, he entered me and took up residence in me. He destroyed the karmas that I had manufactured to cover up an entire ocean of Love!

So, is Kedarji Liberated? Speak to my devotees and disciples to know more. Because, if I say so, people will say, “Look! He’s tooting his own horn. He’s self-proclaiming so how can he be Self-realized?”

I am content with what my Guru has bestowed on me. It is not even possible for me to get him out of my mind. My Guru permeates my thoughts. By His Grace, the Siddhas of our lineage are fully present for me. My Guru floods my mind and body, even before I see his form inside. Gurudev appears to me in visions, dreams and in my waking state and is as real for me as those I encounter in my offering throughout my day. The Siddhas of our lineage come to me regularly as well.

My Shri Nityananda resides in me and is ever-present. By the Blessing and Grace of my Guru, Shivaji dwells in my heart. I see him there as clearly as I see this page that I am typing these words on. So many Blessings of Grace! What other state should I want!?

I wake up with my heart singing and dancing with indescribable Joy. This state never leaves me. By the mere thought of my Shri Gurudev, I am inspired from within as to both the day's tasks that must be undertaken and all the decisions that must be made, connected to the running of our school, retreat center and organization. This inspiration is my Guru's will and it is unfailing and ever-present.

In one way or another, the Siddhas of our lineage of the Yoga of the Siddhas have all said that the full understanding and direct experience of God's two aspects, the Transcendental and the Immanent, as the play of the Shakti as this world – that one's understanding through direct experience of these must be complete in order to realize the highest. My Guru spoke of this also.

I am what my Guru made me!

What I can tell you is this: for a spiritual journey to be true, it must culminate in the constant, uninterrupted experience that the subtle is, at least, as real as the gross. And there must be signs of this growing experience along the way.

All boundaries between the Transcendental, formless Absolute and the expression of that Ultimate Reality (both the cause and the effect) as this world appearance must be obliterated permanently.

As there, so here. For the one experiencing, there can be no difference between the two, for that is the Joy of all joys.

I have been blessed by my Guru's Grace with a permanent state of indescribable Joy - Bliss beyond measure that is a state of constant rapture that does not fit into worldly, mundane perceptions, beliefs, notions or opinions of such a state. I had to surrender my own such notions in order to receive the incalculable. What can such a state be called?

I am what my Guru made me!

Due to this Blessing of Grace, I found God everywhere – even in gardens, in paved, crowded cities and in forests and abandoned places. As a result, I know and experience, without a doubt, that this world is nothing but a paradise of Joy!

If, after reading this, there are others who say that God-realization is a state other than what I have shared of my experience here, fine. But then whatever that is, I don't want it. In the loving arms of my Guru I am carried to beyond the beyond! I exist there and here simultaneously and forever.

Therefore, I am content with what my Guru has bestowed on me, content with what my Guru has made of me.

If I have power, it is His power and the power of my beloved Siddhas of our lineage. If I have Love to share, it is His Love, the Love of Shri Bhagawan Nityananda of Ganeshpuri who is also the full embodiment of my Lord Shiva.

Kedarji is the name my Guru gave me, after entering me through Shaktipat. But whose name is it really, when I am That? I am He and He is me. All that I am and have to give is my Shri Gurudev. This offering is made by His command. I place my head at His lotus feet forever! Jai Muktananda Mahan! Jai Nityananda Bhagawan! Jai Shiva, Shiva, Shiva!

Om Guru Om,
Kedarji

Without the Grace of my spiritual leader and the power of my lineage of Sages, <https://www.nityanandashaktipatyoga.org/our-lineage/> I could not have attained anything worth-while.

I also offer my thanks to the Shakta Adepts in the Spanda School of Trika Shaivism and Vedanta, including; Vasuguptacharya, Vyasa, Abhinavaguptacharya, Bhagavad Utapala, Utpaladeva, Ksemaraja, the sage Vasistha and Jnaneshwar Maharaj. To my ancestors in the Choctaw and Shawnee tribes I also bow and give Thanks.

To my teachers in the field of Holistic Health and Healing including, George Oshawa, Mischio Kushi, Lima Oshawa, Aveline Kushi, Ann Marie Colbin and Weiru Ohashi of Ohashi Institute. These people were first responsible for my longing for well-being. I give thanks to them also.

~ *Kedarji*

Introduction

It is my experience and absolute conviction that everyone in this world desires to be happy. *Everyone*, from the beggar to the businessman to the criminal, wants to experience peace and joy on a permanent basis. Permanence is the issue. Where does one find these on a permanent basis **and in a way that is uninterrupted?** *Saints appear on this planet in order to lead us on a path that becomes the answer to this question.*

You are all great beings. Your perfection is already with you. Your task is to break the karmic habit of hiding this fact from yourself. You have acquired a state of amnesia. You have forgotten that you are the Self, that Highest Power that is the cause and effect of everything and everyone. This amnesia is your identity crisis. You need a certain medicine to cure this.

I have written this work out of my experience of finding this cure. I want to share my experiences in retracing my steps back to the Self, under the instruction and guidance of my spiritual leader, but also to advocate for permanent spiritual transformation. So, this is a book for those who want to adopt a spiritual lifestyle that leads to permanent spiritual transformation and higher and higher states of spiritual awareness. This is also a book for those who want a better understanding of the approach to discovering and realizing one's true nature, *the Self, also called the Supreme Principle, Supreme Intelligence or God.*

The great beings tell us to honor the sacred in everything and everyone, in every day life. This is a matter of Love, a matter of the Heart. Life is the stage on which the amazing unfolding of this *play of Divine Consciousness* takes place. And life is the stage for realizing our True nature in the moment, from moment-to-moment, in the transforming Love of the true Heart.

Spiritual life cannot be sustained without Love. It cannot be sustained without the experience of the Abode of The Heart, that purest place within us that reflects light, love, compassion and forgiveness everywhere. Going to this sacred place within is how we remember the Self; that Love, Peace and Joy that is who we really are. This is the only way to permanent spiritual transformation.

There is a Consciousness within each of us waiting to be fully realized and embraced. *This Consciousness is a Love so pure*

that it is without distinctions. Embracing it allows us to love ourselves and others so fully, and without conditionality, regardless of the varying levels of interaction we engage in that are dictated by the roles we play. *This Consciousness is everything about us that is sacred and whole.* It is a spiritual awareness imbued with Joy, Peace and Total Freedom. That is who we really are. We just have to stop hiding this fact from ourselves.

In this book, you will find that I place emphasis on the relationship between a true spiritual leader (a.k.a. Sadguru) in a spiritually-perfected Master, and the student or devotee who may, one day, choose to adopt a spiritual lifestyle in order to retrace his/her steps back to God. The final state, sometimes referred to as Liberation, Self-realization or God-realization is indescribable. However, it is a state that, in our approach, can be understood and experienced in a very specific way.

The state to be had, the culmination of any true spiritual approach and all true spiritual practice, can be known through the experience of the fullness of Humanity in the constant delight of the inner Self. To argue over labels will not allow you to get your feet into the ocean of Love that embodies this state, as it is a state beyond all names and labels.

After having participated in a variety of spiritual approaches and paths, it is my experience and firm conviction that a relationship must be established between the spiritually-perfected Master and the student or devotee, for genuine and permanent spiritual transformation to occur. Because true spiritual leadership is required. Indeed, we learn best by example. So, this relationship is necessary for a period of time, until the devotee reaches a level of practice where he/she is steeped in Sadhana (daily spiritual practice under the leadership of a living Master - see Chapter 23, *The Bond of Power*).

Our approach is embodied in the very ancient oral tradition of the Shakta lineage. In today's world, the words 'Guru,' 'Master,' 'Self-realized Being' often frighten people and prevent them from allowing themselves to be taught. This is, in part, due to poor behavior on the part of some 'gurus.' However, just as you would not stop buying a car (a necessity if you rely on a car for your travel) just because you purchased a couple of 'lemons' in the past, in spiritual life, if you desire permanent spiritual transformation, you should not stop seeking out a Master who can

not only teach you, but who has the power to give you a direct experience of what is being taught. Continue to seek out such a being, even if you have read about or have experienced one who turned out not to be authentic.

In the approach of the holy beings of my lineage, to be taught by one who has attained the state you seek is essential. If you've never experienced the constant state of rapture that the great beings describe as being awash in an uninterrupted state of Peace, Joy, Content and Love without conditions, *how will you find it on your own, without being led to it?*

I want to help 'demystify' our approach and the role of the Master with some simple definitions. **The dictionary defines the word 'mentor' as a wise and trusted counselor or teacher.** In our approach, the Sadguru (true spiritual leader) is just that, *a wise and trusted spiritual companion and mentor.* **The difference between a spiritual teacher and a living Master is that the Shakta Adept, the living Sadguru gives you the direct experience of what is being taught, by way of the power of Grace.**

For this reason, the words 'Master,' 'Sadguru,' 'Shakta Adept' or 'Spiritual Leader' may be used interchangeably in this book to refer to the wise and trusted spiritual companion who has been given the authority, and also *earned* the right to lead others to permanent spiritual transformation and the *Abode of the Heart* we refer to as the inner Self – by *mastering* what he/she has been taught by another living Master, by way of direct inner experience.

Our Shakta Approach

The lineage of Shakta Adepts, spiritually-perfected Masters to which I belong, is the Shakta, Parampara lineage of Lord Shiva. The Internet is ripe with confusing and skewed definitions for some of the terms used by our lineage of spiritual leaders. Here are some helpful definitions taken from our sacred texts.

Shakta Approach - The entrance into the Shakta Upaya (upaya means approach) that begins with full Shakti Awakening or full Kundalini awakening. This initiates one into the power of live Mantras, with the experience that the power of your longing, your feeling and devotion, burns away all that you are not. This

approach also embodies the easy means of purifying all of the subtle spiritual energy centers of all the karmic impressions that keep one's true nature concealed from oneself. A Shakta adept is the *catalyst and leader* for this unfolding approach.

Shakta Adept - A Shakta Adept in our lineage is a Master or spiritually-perfected leader (Sadguru), a Self-realized Love Being. Spiritually-perfected means Self-realized or God-realized. In our approach, this is a state where one experiences and is able to express the fullness of Humanity in the constant delight of the inner Self. *Such beings are rare* (see Chapter 4).

Sad means true. A Sadguru in our lineage is a true, living spiritual leader or Shakta Adept who has the ability to transmit the Grace-bestowing power of a lineage of Sadgurus, through *Shaktipat*. *Such a being is a Love being* who has stored up the *maximum* amount of Divine Conscious Energy (Shakti) necessary to fully awaken this dormant energy in others. A spiritual mentor such as this does not harm others and, instead, uplifts them (see page 60).

Just as a teacher or mentor is required in the arts, sciences, athletics and so on in order to become really competent in those fields, so too in the field of permanent spiritual transformation, a competent living Master is required – *one who has attained the goal of spiritual life*. True spiritual approaches exist in order to provide the leadership necessary to lead people to union with Divine Consciousness or the Self, an active principle that is indescribable and Universal.

However, in order to realize one's true nature completely and experience the Natural, Free State of the inner Self, one has to take a companion in the living Master, until one has become rooted in one's own true state of Joy, Bliss and Divinity. It was due to this understanding that I consciously chose a Shakta Adept to initiate me and to lead me.

Such a being is a spiritual companion who leads by example and has an impeccable ability to instruct you. In our approach, the living Sadguru is the easy means. The means to what? *The means to leading you to the revelation of your perfection, to the inner Guru, the primordial Guru that we refer to as the Shiva-Shakti power (the highest power); after which, over*

time, you merge with That.

This process takes time. If you are impatient, or if your expectation is to see profound, permanent shifts in your awareness overnight, you will be disappointed. Permanent spiritual transformation requires a steady spiritual practice and some time, although not necessarily a lot of time. With the right Spiritual Mentor, you can realize your true nature in 12, 9, 6 or even 3 years. For some it will take longer. *But we are talking about a matter of years, not weeks or months.*

In light of the many allegations (some of them well-founded) regarding Gurus and cults, I have set aside an entire chapter in this book entitled *The Bond of Power*. If you want to understand how spiritual practice and permanent spiritual transformation are attained in our approach, please read Chapter 23 carefully.

Because I was raised on a spiritual path that uses the Sanskrit language (the oldest language known to human kind), I have grown fond of using certain Sanskrit words due to the power they carry. I will use the transliteration of those words throughout this book. Please refer to the glossary for the meanings and pronunciation of these words.

Kali Yuga

As of this writing, we are a little more than halfway through the Kali Yuga age. This is the last of the four ages spoken about in some of our scriptures and other sacred texts, and also made reference to by the holy beings of our lineage – in which there is a gradual and firm decline in true spiritual experience when the masses turn away from God, in favor of the perceived pleasures of worldliness. This is why so many holy beings have graced the planet in this age.

There are debilitating qualities of this Kali Yuga age that, when understood, will help you to imbibe the spiritual *urgency* of what you read in this book. Some of those qualities are:

- A time ruled by lust, excessive sex and the pursuit of personal power.

- Dominated by people's attachment to words, causing the brainwashing of the masses and mind control, where attachment to pleasure and pain are concerned.
- The destruction of true spiritual awareness in favor of false notions like God is the body and what can be acquired and enjoyed through the senses.
- Abandonment of the common good.
- The complete decline of the collective spiritual awareness of the masses.
- Taking refuge in the personal gain of people, places and things.
- The pursuit of wealth and fame and the worship of these.
- A pill for everything, expressed as the desire of the masses to take refuge in mind-altering drugs that cause the increased desire for fantasy fulfillment.
- The increased preference for superficiality by the masses.
- The decline of Human Dignity, especially where female-embodied beings are concerned.

Unless you've been living in total isolation or on another planet, I think you will agree that the above points made by the Saints do, in fact, qualify much about the age that we now live in. This is why, with respect to permanent spiritual transformation, the great beings tell us "Do it now. Don't wait."

The understanding of the spiritually-perfected Love beings of our approach is that Divine Consciousness contracts to take the form of language so that the Universe can manifest and be sustained. Without letters, syllables, words and sentences this world would not exist. **Divine Consciousness is indescribable. It is truly beyond words.** But the human intellect, until merged into the Self or the Supreme Principle, requires words in order to direct its attention toward that which is indescribable. We call these words/labels 'educational terms.'

There is but one Divine force that exists inside each and every one of us, that is also apparent everywhere in the Universe. This Supreme Intelligence or Highest Power or Divine Energy exists equally in every living thing and has contracted to take the form of insentient objects as well. This same Absolute, this same Divinity is also known as God, Supreme Consciousness,

the Supreme Being, Shiva, Shakti, Yahweh, Jesus Christ, Great Spirit, the Ultimate Reality, the Absolute, Jah, Rah, Allah, Divine Consciousness, the Self, etc. All are a reference to this same indescribable principle that creates, sustains and withdraws everything.

In some cases, words like Shiva, Jesus Christ, Mohammed, Buddha and Krishna are also names of great beings who lived on this planet in human form. Throughout this book, when it comes to speaking of the Self, the Ultimate Reality or Cause, I will use several of these names interchangeably. Just know that I use these labels with the understanding that they are attempts at defining that which is beyond language and in which language finds its support.

ALL of these names point to that one unifying principal, the Supreme I-Consciousness, that is apparent everywhere and that also dwells EQUALLY inside every human being. So, try not to get stuck on any of the educational terms. Do whatever it takes to get your feet into the water so that you can begin swimming in the ocean of your own Bliss, the Joy and Love of the Heart.

For example: If you are having trouble with the references here that you are God or the Self, *then you can begin with the understanding that it is possible that you are much greater than you think you are.* At the very least, I encourage you to start there, if it makes it easier for you to listen and imbibe.

The purpose of Yoga is the transformation limited human awareness into Divine Awareness of The Ultimate Reality. This is the discipline of which I am a part and it is the subject of this book. **There is *no disparity* between worldly life and spiritual aspiration.** In fact, our approach harmonizes these two in the culmination of the direct experience of one's own inner Peace and Joy, while going about one's daily activities.

To begin to understand the inner Self, you must believe that ANYONE (starting with you) can realize one's true nature, that sacred space within, with the right spiritual leadership and practice. To begin to understand this, you also have to cultivate the belief that it is a mistake to think that you have lived too long in your old, contracted ways to change now. It does not matter how long a room has been dark. If you light a candle in that dark room, the light still shines immediately, filling the entire darkness with light. And if you believe that God only dwells in heaven and that he

looks down on us in judgment and punishment, you will find it difficult to embrace any part of this book.

Above all else, to begin to understand what you read in these pages, you have to be willing to, at least, open yourself to the possibility that Divinity actually dwells inside you and that you carry the promise of becoming one with the Self that you already are, *by breaking the habit of hiding this fact from yourself.*

In this book, I share the experiences of my Sadhana (spiritual journey under the guidance of a living Master) and the transformation that occurred as a result. I am eternally grateful for the light of my Master's touch and the perfection transmitted to me that led me to imbibe the Truth. The spiritual leader in the Shakta Adept truly is the means.

It is to describe my experience of the God-Principle or Shiva-Shakti principle and how one attains permanent spiritual transformation by recognizing that principle, that I write this work. Through the instruction of the spiritually-perfected Love beings and the leadership in daily spiritual practice that I received from my spiritual companion and mentor, I have become completely alive. I have been transformed spiritually, emotionally and physically.

I experienced this transformation while living in this world, while going about my daily work and routine, while interacting with wife, friends, relatives, family and business associates, and while earning a living in my chosen profession at the time. Without selling my belongings and moving to a deserted place, I perfected my practice and retraced my steps back to God. Through the Grace of my Master I reached the final goal.

The significance of this still leaves me in awe. I write this work so that those I serve, and may come to serve, can better understand how close at hand Bliss really is and how this Divine Conscious Energy threads through every experience we have in our lives.

For those who want a personal relationship with this Supreme Intelligence, for those who want to become more aware of the power behind their own existence, I write these words. **Certainly, if a wretch like me can realize his true nature, so can you, so can anyone!**

For those whose hearts are ready to receive, I offer this book.

My Journey Home

In life there are many journeys. But there is only one journey that will take you to the Truth. That journey begins with the understanding of Shivo' ham – I am Shiva, I am the inner Self.

Chapter 1

My Early Seeking

My Life and Early Career In The Performing Arts

My mother was a great opera diva who performed all over the world. She had a great career that was cut short when she decided to raise my brother and I. One might say that she decided to express herself through us. My mother trained us in the Performing Arts. She taught us to sing, dance and act.

As a result, I had an early career as a child actor in starring roles on Broadway, landing my earliest roles in the musical *Maggie Flynn* and the play *The Great White Hope*. My younger years were spent travelling as a working actor with many known celebrities of the time. I enjoyed this period of my life because I had the opportunity to make audiences happy by performing in shows and I loved interacting with people.

I left my acting career in my late teens to pursue music. I studied violin, piano, composition and conducting, graduating from Manhattan School of Music with a degree in performance. Right out of school, I spent several years earning my living exclusively as a performing artist. During this time, I saw the powerful effect the Performing Arts have on people's inner state.

I saw that a skilled performing artist has the power to take people anywhere they want to go, to experience any emotion and any state of being, at least temporarily. It was at this time that I decided to compose music and learn music improvisation as a means of experiencing my creativity and becoming more creative. This experience of creating changed my vision of the world. It was my first real glimpse into the mystery of all creation, something I wanted to know much more about.

Holistic Healing

In my early teens, I suffered a variety of illnesses, one right after the other. My mother became very concerned about my health and felt I needed a change in diet. She bought me a book and

demanded I read it. The book was *Sugar Blues*, a popular volume by Gloria Swanson and Bill Dufty that spoke of the dangers of processed sugar and processed foods and outlined a movement that was fast-growing in America at the time, *Macrobiotics*.

I became invigorated by the concept that a diet high in organic veggies, legumes, whole grains and fruit could change awareness. So, I engaged in the study of Macrobiotics, changing my diet completely by starting with a 3-week, brown rice fast. I stopped eating red meat, chicken and pork. I removed white sugar from my diet and I stopped smoking. My health did improve drastically. As a result, I moved into the Kushi Institute, run by Michio Kushi, one of the founders of the Macrobiotic movement here in the West. There I studied Oriental Medicine, Macrobiotics, and learned to cook.

Michio's philosophy was that one can experience a closeness to the Self and a desire to know the Self by eating a diet that aligns one's body with its natural vibration. This includes eating foods grown in season, in the region one lives in. In my case, it worked. Similar to the experience I had when becoming more creative in the Performing Arts, Macrobiotics and my time spent in the company of Michio Kushi studying Oriental Medicine and graduating from the Kushi Institute did alter my vision of the world and my perception of life. My longing to become more spiritual increased as a result.

Experience of Death

In junior high school I became obsessed with all things occult. I consumed books on white and black witchcraft before finally settling on the Tarot. I actually became quite knowledgeable and had a steady clientele of fellow classmates (and their parents) who came to our house for readings. The Tarot opened me to the understanding that other worlds exist and power is not simply that which is defined by money and political influence.

During these years, I developed a psychic ability I did not know I had. I would often see visions or get premonitions about people just before they arrived for a Tarot reading. I then shared

with them what I saw without reading the cards. This started to happen more and more regularly.

Again, all this served to intensify my desire to know God.

During my career in the Performing Arts, I had spent a good deal of time getting to know the celebrities I performed with. Later, while pursuing business ownership, I was mentored by wealthy business owners who were millionaires. I came to know them personally, and also spent time with their families.

What I observed in these people is that, even though they had fulfilled so many of their worldly desires and fantasies, they weren't happy. They did not know peace. When I asked them "What is Love?" they did not have an answer. When I asked, "Are you happy?," they answered "Who is really happy. I'm normal."

Through this experience I decided that the people whose lifestyles I wanted, the people who I had looked up to and wanted to be like for so long, had not attained what I was seeking. So, I decided not to pursue their lifestyles.

It was at this time that I started to ask the questions; **Is this all there is? What is fate? What is destiny? Who am I? Why am I here? Why was I born?**

During this period of my life I had an experience of death. I was riding in a car with my mother and brother. The car suddenly veered off the road on a sharp corner and flipped over into a ravine. The car landed upside down and was almost completely flattened. My mother and brother were thrown several feet from the car and escaped injury. I was pinned inside the car. A boulder had smashed through the roof of the car and landed on my chest. My body was pinned between this boulder and the floor. I was unable to breathe.

I was not breathing but I was still conscious. Suddenly, my awareness left my body and I found myself hovering several feet in the air above the wreck. I could see my mother and brother on the road being tended to by paramedics. As I looked straight down, I saw my body trapped inside the car and I saw rescue workers with saws, carving away the metal in an attempt to get to me. *I hovered in the air watching this scene with complete calm for several minutes.*

I then heard my mother screaming my name hysterically. With this, I found myself back in my body. I was being dragged

from the wreck and my breathing began again on its own. As the rescue workers attempted to revive me, I sat up on my own and called out to my mother and brother. Although my chest was a little bruised, I had no other injuries.

This experience caused me to pause and contemplate my entire life. I knew I had experienced death. *I wanted to know who it was that was able to witness my body and this entire event in this way.* This was the first time that I understood that there is more to a human being than just this body.

My Years As A Seeker

I first started meditating as part of my study of martial arts. I studied Karate, Kung Fu and Jeet Kun Do. Each of these disciplines required the study and practice of Meditation. The Meditation was of the Buddhist tradition and, as a result, I embarked upon the study of Zen Buddhism for several years.

Although Zen Buddhism sparked my interest in Meditation, I felt there was still something missing. My mind still troubled me and I was not able to quiet it. After Buddhism, I engaged in several different meditation paths, including Transcendental Meditation. I followed a number of gurus during this time, all of whom were great teachers in their own right.

Still I did not experience the bliss of Meditation that I had heard about. I found it difficult to enter into a thought-free state, let alone maintain it. I later realized that what was missing for me was the spiritual awakening that would allow me to experience a more spontaneous Meditation. I also needed a master teacher who had completely realized the goal of his own practice.

I had become very wary of cults and gurus and I had become skeptical of spiritual paths in general. But still, deep in my heart, I knew I needed the right Master and approach. I had yet to find such a path.

My Upbringing In Churches

I was born a Catholic and raised a Catholic in my early youth. As a young boy, I went to Catholic school and became an altar boy in my local church. I embraced Catholicism completely at that time, mostly because I loved the stories of Jesus Christ and his

life. I had always wished that I could have lived in a time when such a being existed in the flesh. My mother, however, was raised in the Baptist tradition. After my mother and father divorced, I spent a great deal of time in the Baptist church.

I loved the ritual of the Catholic ceremony and I really took to the Gospel tradition of the Baptists. "Catching the spirit" also intrigued me. Although I loved aspects of both these traditions, I wanted to know and wanted to have a direct experience of God, as a constant in my life. I did not feel I was getting that from either of these paths.

The experience of joy, peace, bliss, happiness, abundance, fearlessness, courage and strength -- these are things that I wanted to stop talking about over cocktails and coffee and wanted to experience directly; not just a little or once in a while, but on a constant basis.

Starting in my late teens, I came to observe that, here in the West, many religious paths form a type of "spectator" practice where intellectual discourses are dispensed and then the celebration is over before it even gets started -- *like someone talking about a fabulous meal without ever serving it up*. It was this experience, and the lack of teachers who practiced fully what they preached, that led me away from the traditional approach to religion and spirituality that I found to be so common.

I had to find something that *was not* just about the psychology of religion, but something that would give me a direct experience of the Ultimate Reality.