

*The Spring: An Autobiography of a Mahayog Guru*, by Ma Ruteshwari,  
Ashok Printing Press, New Delhi, 2011, RRP \$15 (To obtain copies in English, email the  
senior editor: [devsanjayd@gmail.com](mailto:devsanjayd@gmail.com))

Ma Ruteshwari was born into a middle class religious family, situated in Pipli of the Taluka Kodinar district (India), in 1949. She holds degrees in Sanskrit and philosophy (B.A., 1971), Sanskrit (M.A., 1973) and education (B.Ed., 1977-78). During her childhood - and strict upbringing from her father - she encountered several spiritual experiences. These experiences were often related to religious symbolism. Even though she accepted the experiences for what they were, she had to ask herself two things – Why me? And what were they?

The experiences began to occur quite frequently whenever she chanted and/or meditated, or sometimes they would occur spontaneously. She would experience hallucinations of religious figures, or human images, and frequently reported a feeling of electricity flowing through her spine. No one she knew could relate to these ‘spiritual experiences’ – they appeared to be more intense than general meditative states. She turned to her lecturers for explanations, but due to the subjectivity of the events, they were unsure as to why Ruteshwari’s experiences were so intense (the experiences changed her physiologically: heart rate, menstrual cycle, etc.) Some of her lecturers referred her to psychology literature, in the hope that she might find a personal explanation, or find cases of other people with such reports of intense spiritual experiences. However, she found no satisfactory answer for her experiences at that time.

Ruteshwari became more and more accomplished at meditation over time and throughout difficult school years. She continued to seek answers to her experiences from saints, her masters, and other religious figures, but to no avail. She also described how she became in control of her physical body and astral body, and could operate either of them and her level of awareness whenever she desired (something commonly reported by people well accomplished at mediation).

During her early twenties, Ruteshwari began to obtain guidance from a divine voice, an “invisible master” through what can be presumed to be ‘psychic processes’ and a link to the inner voice of inspiration of ‘Divya Adesh.’ Finally, her Sanskrit professor acknowledged her frequent spiritual experiences, and advised her to read the biography of the great saint of Bengal, Shri Ramakrishna Paramhans. On reading the book, she found great emotional gratification in knowing that she was not the only one to have had such bizarre spiritual experiences.

Following this she pursued a career in education, and found great passion for the sharing of knowledge and wisdom. This is what led to Ruteshwari obtaining two degrees - against her father’s constant nagging that she should marry rather than pursue a career in science or education (though her father had hoped at one point that she pursued a potential career as a medical doctor). Throughout her teaching years, and even till today, Ruteshwari is still constantly involved with theology, music, chanting, meditation, and spiritual development.

The autobiography stands alone as a useful insight into a spiritual path of academic struggle and exceptional human experiences (from a religious point of view). Paranthropology and psychological anthropology has been particularly keen in exploring experiential evidence of anomalous phenomena, particularly when it comes to altered

states of consciousness through dreams, meditation, chanting, séance, music, and even psychedelics. Therefore, the book would act as a useful tool to anyone dealing with these issues in life or in research. The only criticism of this book I can raise, is that at times the translation into English isn't perfect, but it is still readable and a captivating life story. The fact that the private printing company in New Delhi attempted the translation – to make the book more universally accessible – is at least commendable.

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