

# A cup of good cheer

Chai Talk is all about uniting people and forging relationships

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**T**ea shops have always been a place where different sorts of people converge, seeking the warmth of steaming cups of chai and human companionship. Sequestered from life beyond it, it has always been a space where one can talk, network, share dreams and most importantly simply be.

Das Sreedharan, founder and chief chef of the organic restaurant Rasa admits that this is what he is trying to achieve with *Chai Talk*, an event organized regularly at the restaurant. "It is part of my efforts to reach out to the larger community, unite like minded people, start conversations and communicate.

My grandfather owned a tea shop in Kerala so I grew up watching the way people came together in a tea shop. It attracted different kinds of people to it, fostering a coming together of people across societal layers. It also was an escape of sorts--there are things you tell people in a tea shop that you may not tell your own family and friends."

And this edition of *Chai Talk*, certainly manages to achieve this, engaging its myriad audience and bringing them together on a common platform with R Ravi, Chief Advisor, mentor and Healer at Aashwasan Foundation spearheading the discussion.

Ravi started by relating his own story. An alumnus of the prestigious Indian Institute

of Technology, Ravi was one of the few people who after graduation refused to succumb to the American Dream. "There was a plane chartered from Chennai to New York, especially for IIT graduates around that time," he reminisces. "Of the 500 who graduated with me, 480 went abroad and only 20 stayed behind here," he says.

Wanting to do something different he dabbled in a number of things including starting a company, patenting unique software, writing books, teaching, reading voraciously, taking up self-help courses with organizations like the Art of Living Foundation and Bharath Thakur and composing poetry. "But the self-questioning constantly went on," he says.

In 2005, he began working with the Aashwasan Foundation—an enterprise that transforms life using Life-force Mechanism and Timeless Phenomenon, a discipline that puts people in touch with their infinite self bringing in holistic well being at physiological, psychological and spiritual levels. "The questions stopped after exposure to this science," he smiles.

Talking about the work he does he says, "We offer tools and techniques at Aashwasan services that end up changing the lives of individuals, organizations and societies. We tap into the power of the mind and help it experience a different kind of reality, so powerful that it transforms you."

Dreams are also a part of



CONVERSATIONS WITH THE SOUL R Ravi at Chai Talk

this alternate reality, "I love dreaming. It's the first step and once you begin the entire universe rushes to help you achieve them."

Continuing on the same note, he asked the audience at the session to share their dreams. And they did—reluctantly at first, but as the mood built up and more confidence seeped into the audience, their dreams, small and large acquired a strange intransience when shared with a non-critical audience.

"Most people have dreams that go beyond what they do and it is important that they find platforms to acknowledge it. Our society lacks positive spirit and there is a growing frustration in individuals because of that. We are part of a global society and our responsibility to it goes far beyond our little lives. We need to unite people, forge relationships and bring happiness to everyone. And Chai Talk is one step towards that mission," explains Das.