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CONSCIOUSNESS

SUPERCONSCIOUSNESS & SAMADHI

Lessons
From the Garden:
BLACKBERRIES

Convergence in the Land of Origins: UDAY 2018 ETHIOPIA



Heartfulness

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Consciousness and Beyond Dear readers, The subject of evolution never ceases to intrigue us. From the amoeba to the human being, life on Earth

The subject of evolution never ceases to intrigue us. From the amoeba to the human being, life on Earth manifests in different forms and states of consciousness. This raises some questions: can human beings evolve further? How much of that evolution is about expanding consciousness? And how much is about going beyond consciousness? What methods can help us?

In this issue, our writers explore these questions, including the yogic state of *Samadhi*, the topic of 'Who Am I?' and synchronicity. We bring you Daaji's interview by the hosts of Spirit Matters Podcast, Dennis Raimondi and Philip Goldberg, and also the concluding part of the interview with French artist Fabienne Verdier. There are articles on fear and grief, the benefits of reading, and another inspiring lesson from the garden.

Today, consciousness is a very popular buzzword in psychology, neuroscience and mind-body medicine, but it is worth reflecting upon the words of the great yogi, Ram Chandra of Shahjahanpur, who wrote, "Consciousness is only a toy for children to play with. We have to reach a point where consciousness assumes its true form (i.e. what it really ought to be). We have to make a search for the Mother Tincture from which medicines are actually prepared. We are searching for the potentiality that creates consciousness, and if that too is gone, then we find ourselves on the verge of true Reality." So are we missing the wood for the trees?

We always look forward to receiving your original articles, poetry, photography and artwork at contributions@heartfulnessmagazine.com.

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<u>be</u> inspired

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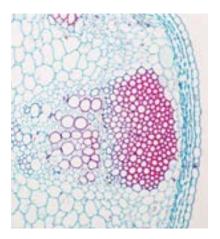
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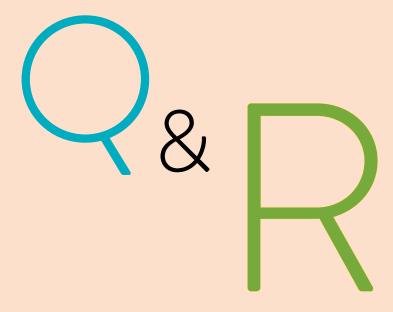
desk of daaji

ocus

This world, this universe which our senses feel, or our mind thinks, is but one atom, so to say, of the Infinite, projected on to the plane of consciousness; and within that narrow limit, defined by the network of consciousness, works our reason, and not beyond. Therefore, there must be some other instrument to take us beyond, and that instrument is called inspiration.

Swami Vivekananda







KAREN O' NEILL Heartfulness Fellow New Delhi, India

'Consciousness' is derived from the Latin words *conscius*, meaning 'to know' or 'to be aware', and *conscrire*, meaning 'to be mutually aware'. Consciousness extends beyond

oneself and includes awareness of our environment and our connection with others.

I believe in Swami Vivekananda's saying that consciousness is a mere film between two oceans, the subconscious and the superconscious. This film becomes more permeable as I delve further into those parts of my consciousness that usually exist outside my spectrum of awareness. I have also found that this permeability continues throughout the night and I am able to recall my dreams in vivid detail. Keeping a dream journal alongside my meditation-diary has also helped me to explore parts of my

What is consciousness?

How do you personally explore the subconscious and superconscious parts of your consciousness spectrum?

What defines today's collective human

consciousness which were otherwise unknown.

There are events in our history, especially violent and traumatic ones, which weigh heavily on human memory and consciousness. I believe that through methods such as the cleaning process, we are actively preventing the formation of new impressions and creating an egregore of peace, love and joy. We are aiming for the purification of consciousness to its highest, and this is what is shaping the collective human consciousness today.



MANAV BENIWAL Pre-med Student Dayton, Ohio, USA

Consciousness is the depth of human understanding. We think on

a conscious level, from where we see and understand the real world. But outside that we have our conscious self, which we do not know or fully understand but can listen to. So in my mind, consciousness is something we can get in touch with by looking inside of ourselves.

I look inside myself and try to listen to the voice of my heart, and while doing so I can feel the intricacies of the subconscious and the superconscious. The subconscious is where we have all of our thoughts and predilections, whereas the superconscious is where we have to go, where our ultimate destination is. In meditation I am learning to understand both better.

At first I think of our collective consciousness as everyone in the entire world – not only our intentions and thoughts, but our general attitude towards the world, towards ourselves and our fellow human beings. But when I think deeper, it's the idea that you, I and everyone else in this world are one. We are all One. If we are all part of that same inner consciousness, then the collective consciousness is just our need and desire to move back towards It.



ELODIE REQUILLART
Product Manager
Lille, France

Consciousness is awareness, and it is also intuition and vision. Also, with experience, I have noticed that the more I meditate the more my consciousness opens. For example, earlier, in the same situation, I would not have reacted in the same manner as I do now.

I think I am able to explore my subconscious and superconscious really through intuition and meditation, because intuition comes from the heart.

I feel that the collective human consciousness is moving. People are more and more aware of their heart, and they want to go deep into their heart. Many young people have this awareness today.



the collective consciousness, which is seen or perceived or known by the environment around.

KAUSHALENDRA PRATAP SINGH

Management Student Lucknow, India

Consciousness is the foundation on which anything happens, has happened, or will happen in the future.

I have a very small glimpse of my subconscious when my intuition tells me the truth or when I see dreams. I'm still exploring superconsciousness.

I believe in a collective consciousness where each and every individual contributes in a very large way. The environment of a place changes with the mindsets of people. For example, a hospital may have a very shocking or fearful environment. In a very serene place, like a hill station, we can feel joyfulness and peacefulness because of this collective consciousness to which we all contribute. The intention with which we do or pursue things contributes to that environment. Our thoughts and intentions make up



ADITYA BARRELA

Investment Promotion Consultant Hyderabad, India

The simple answer is that consciousness is our awareness, but I think consciousness is much more than simple awareness. It is part of us; it's part of our subtle body. It's also an agent for us to think, move, act and make decisions with too.

Impressions are deep-rooted within us because of our childhood and conditioning by the environment. Our interactions leave an impression on us, which takes place in our subconscious. Superconsciousness is something that I personally didn't know exists until I started meditation. When we dive deep within ourselves,

the consciousness that we have, which is our natural state, expands and reaches new heights. That condition becomes the new normal, our new consciousness; it becomes natural to us. Then there is a new level of superconsciousness waiting for us, and that's what is interesting.

Consciousness evolves in nature. It can devolve in rare cases, but I think collectively as a species we're going through major changes, shifts, leaps in our perception. We're waking up to the truth that happiness is not outside but inside us. There is a saying that "We are drowning in information, while starving for wisdom." I think that also summarizes today's collective consciousness. We've so much information and data, but we don't know how to make use of it, how to intuitively navigate through the chaos, through the VUCA world we have created for ourselves (VUCA means Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous). We also have a VUCA world inside us, and unless we simplify the inside, our collective consciousness is burdened, it cannot evolve.

ENHANCING MEMORY & CREATIVITY

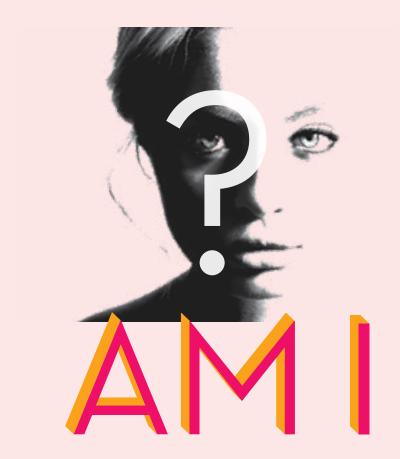
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A Perspective

Knowing the self is a topic of great interest in psychology and also in philosophy.

VICTOR KANNAN reflects on this question that has been intriguing us from time immemorial, and shares the insights he has gained from introspection.

ll aspects of existence – temporal and real – are included in this question, who am I? The idea of who I can be and who I ought to be are also part of this larger question. A simple 10-minute introspective exercise takes us through several answers that reveal our roles, temperaments, achievements and relationships, and eventually our potentiality.

Mel Schwartz, blogger of 'A Shift of Mind', writes in *Psychology Today*, "The universe purportedly exists in a state of flowing potential. And it is essential to understand that we are indeed part of that universe. The goal then is to access that potential, keeping the parts of our identity that continue to serve us well and shedding the old, habitual pieces that constrain us. This process is known as positive disintegration. This permits us to find balance between the extremes ... and enter into a relationship with self that commits to our personal evolution." ¹

Swami Brahmavidananda, in his expositions on the Bhagavad Gita, writes, "The search for identity is nothing new; it is as old as the human race. One recognizes instinctively that one is more than what one has believed oneself to be. 'Who am I?' is the most fundamental question. ... If you understand that, everything in Vedanta is answered." ²

In the past I have explored God as a principle instead of a named entity: what is God rather than who is God?

I am
a manifestation of where
I put my attention,
which is supporting
my intention.

There have been several attempts to define God by various philosophers and saints from different cultures and eras in history. The Hindu philosophy accommodates a wide range of possibilities of defining who or what God is, and puts them all into two categories: gods with forms and attributes are in the category of *akar*, and the definitions of God without any form or attribute are clubbed into *nirakar*. 'Who' bogs us down in the *akar* and 'what' leads us to *nirakar*.

'Who' gives God a form and name? It is we humans who identify God and assign it a name that is mangiven. Hence, to me God as a principle makes the most sense. It belongs to the *nirakar* category, and the right question would be 'What is God?' not 'Who is God?' If there is any parallel for humans, then the question for us would also address *what* I am instead of *who* I am.

September 2018

¹ https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/shift-mind/201006/who-am-i

SO. WHAT AM I?

According to Schwartz, I am a potential. Is this potential a driving force, and until I understand and achieve this potential do I keep changing? In other words, does who I am keep changing until it is synonymous with what I am?

As I considered these questions, something in me expanded and a simple revelation emerged: I am a manifestation of where I put my attention, which is supporting my intention.

AM is composed of Intention leading to Attention leading to Manifestation.



HOW DO WE FORM INTENTIONS?

An intention is a mental state that represents a commitment to carrying out an action or actions in the future. An intention involves mental activity such as planning and forethought. An intention constantly evolves. It seems to emanate from some place deeper within our consciousness. This consciousness is a constantly transforming and evolving inner space and hence is dynamic. It is the result of our heart–brain–mind interaction with the environment and the way we process that interaction. The uniqueness with which each one of us processes this interaction is due to the particular signature we have on our consciousness at any moment in time.

An intention may be positive or negative, deliberately acquired in this moment or inherent to our nature. But in that deliberate, volitional space of our existence we can act to acquire positive or negative intentions. Life is a school; we can learn to change our intentions, as we learn from their past manifestations and their implications.

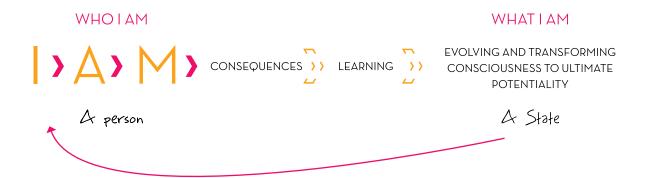
If we are not born with positive intentions we can acquire them.

If we are born with negative intentions we can change them.

Irrespective of whether our intentions are deliberate and conscious or autonomous and unconscious, we change constantly, so what we manifest also changes constantly. From that point of view, if we change constantly, who 'I am' also changes constantly. When this reaches a level of constancy, 'I am what I ought to be', that is, a unified individual fully integrated and balanced. Here both my inside and outside match. What I mean, what I say and how I act are all part of my integrated personality.

HOW CAN WE WORK WITH THE I AM EQUATION TO REACH OUR FULL POTENTIAL?

One thing we can do is to cultivate positive intentions. This brings us to the attention part of the equation. Attention is a cognitive process in which we notice, pause, learn, and then act to manifest the intention more effectively. It is a skill, and when we develop it into a habit, it becomes a continual and dynamic process of transformation. When we finally manifest our intention via attention and action, these manifestations then produce their own results in our life. These results, whatever they may be, good or bad, painful or desirable, form a part of the next reaction pattern influencing our



consciousness. This then becomes a new basis for the next intention to surface.

So intention, attention, manifestation, its consequences and our learning all contribute to our transformation of consciousness. Since intention arises from our consciousness, the purity of consciousness determines the type of intention we will have. The rest is a process of manifestation, and the level of purity of consciousness determines the nature of manifestation.

Thus, who I am is largely predicated by what I am as a level of consciousness.³

At times we are not able to achieve the self-development goal we had set out to achieve. There are hindrances, which are the manifestations of prior intentions and circumstances that we have created. The complex mixture of all our previous intentions, attentions and manifestations is the base we live in and must transcend. Each of us can make that leap by overcoming our old self, changing old circumstances, and creating new intentions that manifest through positive attention in a new self.

If we don't like who we are, we can change, for our potential is nothing short of spectacular. This is the great transformation. When we evolve to a place of

Attention is a cognitive process in which we notice, pause, learn, and then act to manifest the intention more effectively. It is a skill, and when we develop it into a habit, it becomes a continual and dynamic process of transformation.

constancy and purity, then our intention, attention and manifestation become consistent with that constancy, which is the potentiality that Schwartz talks about in 'A Shift of Mind'. When we reach and realize that state of mind and feeling, awareness and intuition, intellect and wisdom, confidence and humility, we reach a state of absolute balance. That potential is what I ought to be. When I reach there, then I can say "This I am," or "That thou art.".

³ The Evolution of Consciousness is a huge subject in itself, which is dealt with exhaustively by Daaji in his series http://www.heartfulnessmagazine.com/evolution-of-consciousness/.

Convergence in the Land of Origins

Highlights from REVEREND DEBORAH MOLDOW's account of the U Day Interfaith gathering in Ethiopia.

o ignite a Global Fire of One Love, first you need a powerful spark! The flame was lit in February 2018 in Ethiopia, the Land of Origins, by 65 cultural, spiritual, religious and musical ambassadors from around the world who gathered for a 'Convergence of Fire'.

Unity Earth, in partnership with the United Religions Initiative, the Inter-Religious Council of Ethiopia and the World Peace Prayer Society, brought together the indigenous peoples of Australia, North and Central America; Buddhist monks from Thailand; Sikhs, Baha'is, Sufis and Hindus from India; and Jews, Christians and Muslims; all standing for unity, peace and compassion. January 30 to February 7, 2018, was World Interfaith Harmony Week.

Highlights of the 7-day U Day festival included visiting sacred sites in Lalibela and Shashamane, a



'Convergence of Fire' torch-lighting ceremony, and an impressive event at the African Union. The mission of the U Day gatherings is to bring people into joyful harmony through interfaith understanding and the common language of music.

The group journeyed to the UNESCO World Heritage site at Lalibela, and were warmly welcomed by the priests in an ancient, moving ceremony. They visited the extraordinary 13th

century churches carved into stone, offering prayers in this special atmosphere infused with deep faith. Mr Qumelachew Muluneh Taye of the Inter-Religious Council of Ethiopia, observed: "You have done here a very historical work. It was the first time in the history of our country that many faith-based organizations speak together in one language according to their religion."

The Convergence of Fire ceremony was held in Lalibela on a hilltop over 2,500 meters high on January 31, which offered both a super moon and a lunar eclipse. Indigenous leaders from Mexico, Canada and Australia joined together to build a sacred fire and lead a Four Directions ceremony. This was followed by the Convergence of Fire, after which three torches were lit: the Torch of Compassion, which was used worldwide in the Compassion Games; the Torch of Peace, which was passed around the world in the First Earth Run in 1986 in partnership with the United Nations Children's Fund; and the Lamp of Unity from Chiang Mai, Thailand, where U Day first took place in 2012.

The African Union event, organized in partnership with Ambassador Mussie Hailu, African Regional Director of the United Religions Initiative, featured the president of Ethiopia, Dr Mulatu Teshome, the Patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, leaders of the Inter-Religious Council of Ethiopia, and other local dignitaries, along with the U Day delegates.

All spoke of the value of harmony among people of diverse religions and the significance of the Golden Rule in demonstrating the common values across religious divides. President Teshome mentioned that



the General Assembly Resolution establishing World Interfaith Harmony Week is based on the shared principles of love of God and love of neighbor. He noted, "Ethiopia is a diverse nation well-known as a land of peace and religious tolerance, with a longstanding heritage of peaceful co-existence." Then the Unity Earth guests delivered speeches on their great diversity.

The Unity Earth 'Keeper of the Flame Award' was presented to Mussie Hailu for his outstanding contribution in the fields of Interfaith Dialogue, Peace Building and Social Inclusion. This was followed by a flag ceremony with fifty Ethiopian children raising the flags of all the nations of the world with the prayer, "May peace prevail on Earth". This beautiful and moving ceremony concluded

with the children and delegates holding the flags of the continent of Africa, followed by the Unity Earth indigenous representatives bearing a special flag of the indigenous nations.

The U Nite concert on February 3 brought together musicians of many different national cultures and faith traditions at the Villa Verde in Addis Ababa. The Unity Earth group celebrated its diversity in musical praise with a dancing rabbi, a drumming Sufi, and everyone united through the joy of music. The performers also took part in a one-hour radio interview on the Ethiopia Broadcast Corporation to promote the U Day Festival.

Simultaneously, an online live global meditation led by Dr David Nicol of the Gaiafield Network attracted hundreds of participants across

This journey of the heart demonstrated beyond any doubt that when people of goodwill gather together with the joy and conviction of their individual religious and spiritual traditions, they will produce a 'Convergence of Fire', igniting a Global Fire of One Love.

the globe (http://udayfestival.org/convergence-of-fire). People of goodwill around the planet were invited to help 'light' the Global Torch of One Love with their collective presence and prayers for planetary healing. This torch is intended to carry the spiritual energy of many global healing initiatives, representing millions of people, and will be lit at the subsequent U Day festivals planned between now and 2022.

The culmination of the U Day Festival was a voyage south to Shashamane, the territory originally set aside by Emperor Haile Selassie for the practitioners of the Rastafari religious community that gifted the world with Jamaican Reggae music.

Shashamane leaders welcomed the U Day delegates and brought them to see community improvement projects, including a school under construction. Everyone gathered at the Temple of the Twelve Tribes of Israel, where a ceremony of 'uniting the tribes' was led by members of diverse faiths in demonstration of a world of interfaith harmony to come, where every religion is respected and all peoples are honored.

On the night of February 6, an outdoor Earthstrong concert was held as a fundraising event and the U Day delegates returned to Addis

Ababa as a community bonded in a love that transcended their deep commitment to their own religions, traditions and spiritual paths.

This journey of the heart demonstrated beyond any doubt that when people of goodwill gather together with the joy and conviction of their individual religious and spiritual traditions, they will produce a 'Convergence of Fire', igniting a Global Fire of One Love.

Unity Earth will continue its efforts to bring people together in glorious diversity through faith and music with upcoming U Day festivals in India and Jerusalem, plus a Road to 2020 caravan across the United States to culminate in a major concert in New York City on the International Day of Peace, September 21, 2020.

thought in action

Conscious means "having an awareness of one's inner and outer worlds; mentally perceptive, awake, mindful." So "conscious business" might mean engaging in an occupation, work, or trade in a mindful, awake fashion.

Ken Wilbur







It is time we respect each other, look at every one as a brother or sister, and realize that every man, woman and child has something to teach us.

IT IS TIME TO ACT BIGGER, THINK BIGGER AND BE BIGGER!

Divided World: Empathy

CHRIS MEHALOVICH reflects on some examples of empathy and gratitude around him in daily life, and challenges us all to be more empathetic.

he other day while shopping I noticed a boy of around eight years old who had braces on his legs and who used a walker to get around. The boy was smiling as he spoke with his mother and seemed very happy. My immediate thought was one of empathy for him, followed by a feeling of gratitude for the wonderful life I have. This beautiful boy has what most would deem a terrible affliction and yet he still smiles. What he will teach in his lifetime is what most of us dream of. Each and everyone who glances his way will feel immediate empathy, and realize a fantastic lesson in love, humility and gratitude. His positive ripples will affect thousands throughout his life. God bless him!

While greatly effective, his lesson is easy to see and feel. Many more lessons exist on a daily basis in our world; we just need to take off the blinders to see them. If you turn on the news you will see lessons in empathy in every story, but you have to look deep as most stories are negative, told with a sensationalist slant, and certainly do not make us feel good.

One current example is in the sporting world: standing or kneeling during the National Anthem. Which is right and which is wrong? We hear each side stating that the other is wrong, condemning and pointing fingers. There is nothing positive, no solutions, just dense negativity. If we look at the bigger picture we would see this as a huge lesson in empathy. What if I had a close relative in the armed forces who fought in a war, watched his friends get injured or killed and came home suffering with mental issues due to PTSD? On

the flip side, what if I had a dear friend or family member who was ridiculed, beaten or killed by an officer of the law for having different skin pigmentation? It is time we learn to walk in the shoes of others; all others. You see we all have different perceptions of life based on our past experiences, our upbringing, our lifestyle, our education and where we were born geographically. It is time we respect each other, look at every one as a brother or sister, and realize that every man, woman and child has something to teach us.

It is time to act bigger, think bigger and be bigger!

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Bringing it all together

In the previous articles of this series, RAVI VENKATESAN explored factors that influence the outcomes of our negotiations. Many times, we are not even aware of these. We discussed how prior disposition comes into play, coloring our approach even before we begin. We reviewed how feelings and emotions in the heart vacillate between opposites, making us take positions that are not in our best interest. We also looked at how our ego, intellect and mind create their own distractions. In this final article, we'll bring it all together and evolve a simple and comprehensive checklist that you can use for your negotiations.

PRIOR DISPOSITION

Before any negotiation, take a snapshot of your prior disposition using the following steps.

- 1. Gently close your eyes.
- 2. Bring your attention to the lower left side of your chest (approximately where you feel your heartbeat). There is no need to pinpoint an exact location.
- 3. Ask yourself the following questions and spend a couple of minutes in introspection:
 - What are my strongest likes and dislikes?
 - What are my strongest desires and aspirations?

THOUGHTS & IDEAS

Ego perception - Me vs We Intellect - Logic and Reason Mind - Ad hoc ideas and wandering

FEELINGS & EMOTIONS

Clarity vs Doubt

Fear vs Courage Love vs Anger

Peace vs Restlessness Greed vs Contentment

PRIOR DISPOSITION

Worries and Concerns
Desires
Likes and Dislike
Guilt

- What am I worried or concerned about?
- What do I feel guilty about or regret?
- What do I want more of?
- What is making me restless?
- What is creating anger, irritation, frustration or annoyance in me?
- What makes me feel afraid or anxious?
- 4. It's okay if you don't have answers to all these questions. Just jot down whatever comes to your mind in a couple of minutes.

Your prior disposition will bring to your awareness what is important for you. It will also alert you to what may color your judgment, as you get into this negotiation. As you start working through your negotiation, to manage your emotions effectively, and understand and work with the emotions of your counterparts, keep the following brief checklist in your mind.

- 1. Am I being greedy or overreaching? Is my counterpart doing this?
- 2. Am I getting restless and distracted? Is my counterpart doing this?
- 3. Am I getting irritated, frustrated, annoyed or angry? Is my counterpart doing this?
- 4. Am I getting anxious? Is my counterpart doing this?
- 5. Do I feel confused or unclear? Does my counterpart seem confused?

Just by keeping these 5 simple things in mind, you will become more effective at managing emotions as you negotiate. Also, keep in mind the core concerns from *Beyond Reason* by Daniel Shapiro and Roger Fisher: appreciation, affiliation, autonomy, role and status. These are common concerns for everyone and impact negotiations at a non-rational level.



As you move into your head, remember that your intellect is a wonderful tool at analyzing information and making decisions, but it has no moral compass. Make sure that you filter what your intellect evaluates by using your heart.

Your ego is constantly updating your mental model of yourself versus others. Ensure that you don't fall into the traps of arrogance, excessive feelings of self-importance, or for that matter the opposite, a feeling of inferiority. Finally, be alert to the wanderings of the mind. Refocus by taking a minute if needed. You can also use techniques like meditation to ensure that your mind will always be focused and attentive, as it should be.

As with anything else, practice makes perfect. Enjoy the journey as you incorporate these concepts and become a truly Heartful Negotiator, who develops trust, builds relationships and generates win-win outcomes. After any negotiation, reflect and see if that win-win feeling was created.

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Vibrations

JAMIE BUTLER,

healer and medium, founded The Lighter Side Network over a year ago. Here she speaks with EMMA IVATURI about consciousness, belief, feeling stuck, growing pains, intuition and synchronicity.

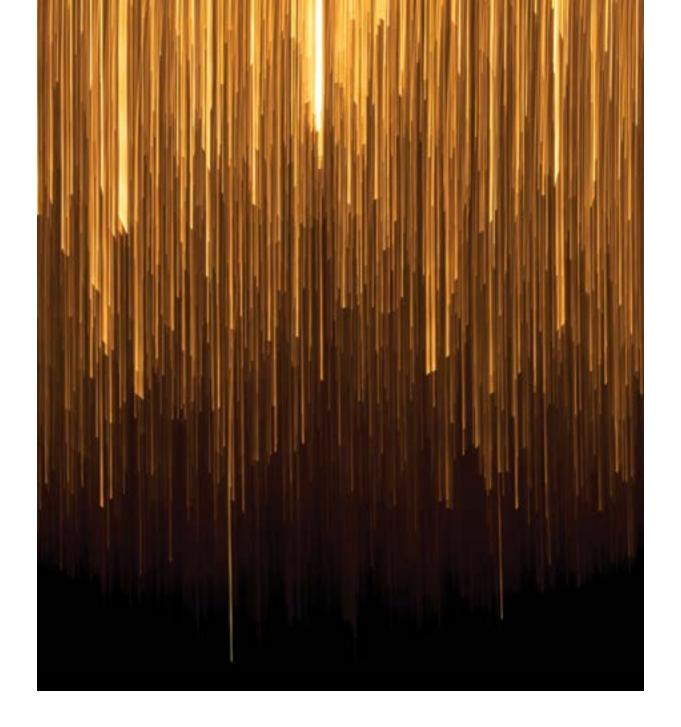
Can you elaborate on how the brain works as a receptor and filter for the countless vibrations around us every moment?

Our brain is not just an organ that runs neurons and sends messages throughout our body. It is also a great transmitter and receiver, much like a radio. In fact, many of our thoughts are not originally ours, but come because of our ability to receive the energy vibrations from all around us. Working this way, our brain can easily be overwhelmed and bombarded with information.

Our ability to focus on what we want to attract is how we filter out all the unwanted vibrations on a daily basis. But it is also the way we are able to attract all the things we don't desire, because we spend time worrying, living in fear and feeling victimized. What you are focused on is what your energy field resonates with. Like attracts like.

Let's say you are pretending to 'play small', whether you are pretending to be a mouse or you are pulling in your great charisma to allow someone else to shine. When you do this, you are saying you are willing to receive all the energy around you from people, from the room, from conversations, from the history of the room, from plants and animals that match this version of 'playing small', even though it is not your true nature. The energy you are receiving is going to be the energy you are putting out. We can see now the vicious cycle this can create.

We can take this in another direction too. Let's say you are pretending to be confident, to earn a position at work or to impress a love interest. You adopt a confident posture and spoken language and your energy patterns follow suit. Now, your energy field is vibrating with confidence. All the worry energy in the room is unlikely to vibrate with you any more hence you won't receive it nor process it.



Through my decades of working with subtle light energy, techniques are nothing unless we believe in them. It is time to detangle ourselves from being triggered to stay within the same patterns that hold us hostage.

I like this example better. Even reading it allows my energy to fluff up and feel better, however, I have free will and can immediately change this feeling by thinking of all the difficult situations in life and at work. As soon as I begin to focus on all the things going 'wrong', I vibrate with things going wrong. I air-quote the word 'wrong' because I don't necessarily believe there is a right or a wrong, but this is the way we use our language to express the situations we don't want.

To help filter and attract the vibrations needed to grow, we must be conscious of our energy. This means being aware of our intent, emotions, thoughts and imagination. What are they expressing? What are they attracting? This simple act gives us insight into the subtle light world around, which is constantly offering information to better our lives.

Our conscious experience is but a small bandwidth of what we pick up on. How can we expand our awareness to integrate information we perceive less clearly that would otherwise create a cognitive dissonance?

Expanding our bandwidth of consciousness begins with understanding who we believe we are. In this current lifetime, our body is our instrument and our belief systems are the dial to broaden or narrow how we use this instrument. If we want to receive more clarity it is time to get into the gray areas, to step away from right or wrong, black and white, and the learned belief systems that are not working for us.

Through my decades of working with subtle light energy, techniques are nothing unless we believe in them. It is time to detangle ourselves from being triggered to stay within the same patterns that hold us hostage.

Next time you feel stuck try this:

 Center your energy into a neutral space. You can do this through a few minutes of steady breathing.

- Imagine you are without any attachment. Seriously, use that incredible imagination of yours! Imagination and intuition are roommates and share the same space. When you engage your imagination you are creating more room for intuition to use. Once you can imagine that there is any possible outcome, you are allowing new truths to enter into your consciousness.
- Mantras can help you create a single focus and allow different energies to come into your energy field to create the changes you are seeking.
- The mantra I use is: deep breath, re-access, change your perspective.
- Another mantra is: if you want to remain constant, always change.
- From this space begin to assess the images and messages coming to you. Please keep disciplining the monkey mind to stay in the 'gray' and un-triggered by the images and messages. Grab a pencil and paper and start to document what is coming through.
- Once you are done writing, walk away. If you
 can go into nature, allow the outdoors to calm
 and soothe your energy while continuing
 to hold the flow of ideas expanding your
 understanding, connection and energy. When
 you are activating your body with movement,
 you are helping these energies to merge with
 your new discoveries and belief systems.
- When you feel full or done, go back to writing and jot down your discoveries. Be sure to write keywords that will reconnect you with the 'ahha' moments. Re-read your notes frequently. This will help you incorporate your discoveries instead of them being fleeting moments.

When life presents you with chaos, congested energy, a feeling of being stuck, hitting walls or whatever you feel awful about, reach in and pull out acceptance, kindness and surrender and see where the nudge takes you. I bet you will find there is ease to this enlightenment. I trust you will begin to notice how the world around you is supporting you.

Sometimes we misread the growing pains as we outgrow our current circumstances and are pushed into the next level of evolution. Perhaps the next step may not be clear and a leap of faith is needed to let go and surrender to where we're going. How do you bridge the gap between these life phases?

Bridging the gap between life phases requires the art of acceptance, kindness and surrender. Each shift in our evolution is asking for us to change our beliefs. This can be a tremendous burden to the ego and the heart. I have noticed in the last 27 years of being a medium, there are certain ideals to which we hold strong culturally: these include gaining knowledge, loyalty and politeness. These ideals often lead us into shame and dissonance. When we are trained to value these ideals we create suffering and pain when it is time to grow.

Let's look at acceptance, kindness and surrender, and how these three actions can shift our cultural ideals and ease our way while we are becoming enlightened.

 When we are taught acceptance from a young age, we transcend loyalty to provide self-care, we transcend the need to gain knowledge with

- the comfort of the unknown, and we transcend politeness to find authenticity over.
- When we show kindness to ourselves, we find that loyalty is actually an expression of love not discipline, the act of gaining knowledge is an expression of curiosity, and the use of politeness is the desire to create peace.
- When we surrender, our truth is found. Surrendering allows us to accept not only possible outcomes but also the very real impossible outcomes. It allows us to walk away from loyalty when it was created out of guilt, regret or fear, and break commitments that no longer serve us. Surrendering allows us to stop comparing and contrasting our every move, to understand who we are and look at the very deep inner light for guidance. It also allows us to see that true politeness can be based in honesty and not the lens of praise.

When life presents you with chaos, congested energy, a feeling of being stuck, hitting walls or whatever you feel awful about, reach in and pull out acceptance, kindness



and surrender and see where the nudge takes you. I bet you will find there is ease to this enlightenment. I trust you will begin to notice how the world around you is supporting you.

Can you speak about the energies we take on from other people and act out with them in relation to our own character work?

When we are in communication with someone else it is natural for us to connect to them empathically. This helps us understand them. Our own energy will mimic what the other person's energy is vibrating and therefore we will hold their pattern in our energy field. Sometimes people will continue to hold that pattern even after the communication is over. They can even take on other person's energy.

I have seen through the years of working as a medium and healer that we are emotional beings. Our first and foremost ability is to feel emotionally: the rest of life follows suit. Once we can identify that we are emotional beings, we begin to observe the amount of energy it takes to maintain our emotions. Everything we do, think and feel is all empowered by energy. Our chakra system, the energetic highways and byways, contains all the possible energetic vibrations and the way we use our emotions dictates the responses of the chakras. Knowing this we can see how natural it is for us to be empathic, having the ability to connect to how others feel.

Empathy is a powerful tool but sometimes misused. When we are feeling what another is going through, we often come to believe it is ourselves feeling this way. Our brain is not trained to ask, "Is this feeling mine?" so we begin to believe whatever we are feeling must belong to



Synchronicities pop up in our life when we are agreeing to align ourselves with our truth, that is, when we are 'in the flow'. For me, synchronicities are not road signs directing us to change directions, but gentle reminders to stay the course.

us. However, I feel there is no guideline on the kind of work we need to do to evolve. There is no one judging your performance except you. This life is a very personal experience and only you can decide what needs to be done to reach the goals you have aligned for yourself. The only true common denominator I can speak to is our ability to feel emotions and have our needs met.

How can we cultivate a more natural alignment to our intuition?

Start building your trust with your intuition through these little activities:

THE REAL YES AND NO

Take the time to acknowledge how your five senses react to the words 'yes' and 'no'. What color, feeling, location, sensation, taste, sound and more do these words evoke in you? You can use simple yes or no questions to engage your intuition on the myriad of decisions you make on a daily basis.

DOCUMENTATION PLEASE

Write down in a list all the intuitive experiences you have throughout the day, even if they are very small and do not seem to be worth much. At the end of the day, go back and put a checkmark next to the ones that played out to be accurate with good insight. You might find it is a full day or week later before you get your validation. Having this on paper allows your brain to see it documented.

WORD ASSOCIATION

Pay attention to your words. Most of the time we're trying to express our intuition, yet our language does not provide accurate words to convey it. Words like 'lucky', 'coincidence', 'bright idea', 'ah-ha' are all indicators of intuition. Be confident to share information without knowing the source of its origin. For that is a very intuitive thing!

TRUST FALL

Building trust in your intuition allows it to be stronger. When you find yourself doubting, step back. Claim your intuitive place as a no-doubt zone! When you are doubting, you are not connecting and you are not trusting your experience. Step back, take a breath, and begin to ask very simple yes and no questions about what you are experiencing.

BE EFFORTLESS

Intuition does not need you. As soon as you insert your voice, you could be wanting to control, compare, contrast and measure your intuition as if it were a logical experience. When you let go and become effortless with answers or intuition, your accuracy level increases.

How do synchronicities point us in the right direction in our lives? What are some you've experienced?

Synchronicities pop up in our life when we are agreeing to align ourselves with our truth, that is, when we are 'in the flow'. For me, synchronicities are not road signs directing us to change directions, but gentle reminders to stay the course. Synchronicities have helped me create my businesses, especially *The Lighter Side Network*. I did not have a vision to create an online network, but the universe kept putting people in my path who brought out the creative in me. Once I acknowledged this, I began to see my path clearly. *The Lighter Side Network* is now over one year old and growing.

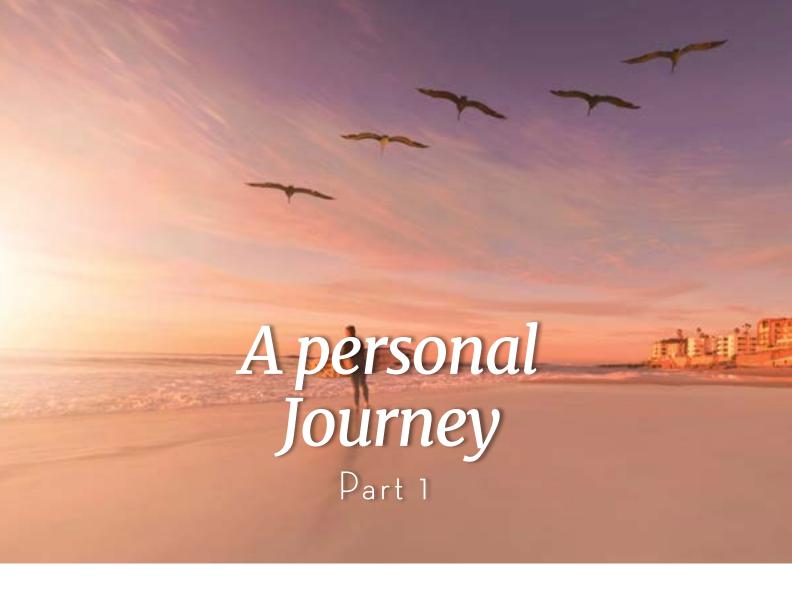
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INTERVIEW



Spirit Matters Podcast is a very popular site showcasing an eclectic mix of talks about contemporary spirituality. The hosts are DENNIS RAIMONDI and PHILIP GOLDBERG. On 1 July 2018, together they interviewed DAAJI about his life, spirituality and his new book, The Heartfulness Way. Here we highlight excerpts from the interview.



KAMLESH PATEL



DENNIS RAIMONDI



PHILIP GOLDBERG

This is Dennis Raimondi with my co-host, Philip Goldberg, author of *The Life and Times of Yogananda*, and our guest today from India is Kamlesh D. Patel, known to many as Daaji. He teaches Heartfulness Meditation from his personal experience as a devoted student of spirituality. He's gone from his work as a pharmacist to a spiritual seeker and teacher, and we are very excited to speak with him today.

So Daaji, thank you so very much for taking the time to come on, and I want to mention your latest book, *The Heartfulness Way*.

Welcome Daaji, you came to our attention through mutual friends, and you have an interesting life. Why don't you fill in our listeners before we get into your new book and Heartfulness Meditation? Tell us how you came to become a teacher of meditation. You were born in India, you lived in America, and you're a pharmacist by trade. Give us a little bit about that history.

Well, I was born in India, as you said. I was educated here and then I studied and got my license to practice in two states, in New York State as well as in California. I started a pharmacy career in Brooklyn, and over a period of time, over 30 years, I must have started almost 20 drugstores.

And my way, my spiritual path began a long time back. We don't know when we begin but officially, to my senses, it began when I started under the guidance of a person known as Babuji in 1976. That was the beginning of my spiritual journey, which I continued after coming to the US in 1981 also. I would give equal importance to both - to my spiritual practice as well as to the business world. Everything was intermingled, and that's how it should be. Nature has created us with a purpose and not to run away from things. So I took both things as a challenge - business as well as the spiritual world - and tried to do my best in both fields.

So this is who I am: I am always a spiritual seeker. On the way, I am fully committed to those who would like to travel with us, experience what we do. And this Heartfulness Way practice that is offered to every spiritual seeker: if you are willing to meditate, this is the way. And here the most magnificent thing that happens with this way is *Pranahuti* or Transmission, which is a unique feature of this.

I have heard about Phil from a friend and from another gentleman who forwarded me some of your videos. So now it rings a bell while I'm listening to you, Phil, your association directly and indirectly with Yogananda. It makes me very happy that you are exposed to meditation.

I am always a spiritual seeker.
On the way, I am fully committed to those who would like to travel with us, experience what we do.

Daaji, I am curious. You were obviously a good student and a good businessman. You studied to be a pharmacist – that's science – and you went into business and you were very successful. Were you surprised, was your family surprised when you decided to go from your business into spiritual teaching? And was there some event that triggered that in your life?

Not really. My family was not surprised because business was going on as well. And while I was doing business I was also training, though right now I am training individuals from a different level. You know, if you were a patient coming to me for medication, we would chitchat, and I would encourage everyone to meditate. I would have a sign outside my pharmacy, 'Learn to Meditate', and I would teach those people who were very curious how to meditate, even before I was in this current position. Often I would close the pharmacy and those who would like to meditate would sit around in the pharmacy area, and we would meditate together. That was the way. So no one was surprised when this bigger responsibility came, because we don't dissociate from usual family life; family life goes together with spiritual life.

When I grew up in Brooklyn we didn't have pharmacies with meditation signs on the outside! But Daaji, most of our listeners are familiar with

When you close your eyes to meditate, you may be meditating without Yogic Transmission. But when I transmit to you this Yogic Transmission, you are able to feel the difference in your meditation instantly. Within half an hour you know the difference that, "Yes, meditation with Transmission can make a big difference." meditation and will have in many cases been meditating in one form or another for a long time. So they'll be curious to know what is different about the lineage that you represent and the method that you call Heartfulness. Can you explain a little more?

Surely. What signifies this method is Pranahuti. It's a Sanskrit word loosely translated as 'Yogic Transmission', which flows from one heart to another heart, with intention, with sankalpa, with determination, with supposition. When you close your eyes to meditate, you may be meditating without Yogic Transmission. But when I transmit to you this Yogic Transmission, you are able to feel the difference in your meditation instantly. Within half an hour you know the difference that, "Yes, meditation with Transmission can make a big difference."

This Transmission was reinvented - it's not that the first Guide of the system invented it. He was born in 1873 in the northern part of India, whereas this technique was known almost 10,000 years back. But somehow in his superconscious state he became cognizant of it, and he said, "Oh, this is very simple and I can do this!" So he started teaching the people in his neighborhood and then slowly the news spread that, "Yes, this man has very striking yogic powers, and instantly he is able to put people into a Samadhi state because of this Pranahuti."

So slowly he became very famous in his district.

Then the person who came after him, who was also known as Ram Chandra (both carried the same name), spread it worldwide in all continents. And after him came another gentleman who was the successor. The tradition continues, and nothing much has changed from the beginning. Meditation, which is offered with Transmission continues the same way. Of course ways change now, in the sense of how it is offered. Earlier it used to be a one-to-one session, if you had to be initiated. Now we don't have time to initiate one person at a time, because if I go to a college and there are thousands of people waiting to be introduced to meditation, I don't have time to spend half-an-hour with each individually. So we do it all at the same time. Also now the world has become smaller, so if someone is interested in New York and there is no trainer who can transmit to them locally, they say, "Oh, let me use this little App or let me connect via email or via internet to make a connection with a Heartfulness trainer, and take a remote initiation," which can be felt also.

And in the course of a month, how many people do you generally teach?

Well now we have over million seekers throughout.



It is mainly the spiritual experience that we all enjoy together. I transmit, and they all sit with closed eyes and we meditate together and see the difference, feel the difference, and become something in the process.



Personally, every week I train roughly 5,000 people.

D Now!

And you have hi-tech methods of Transmission now?

You know we have this app called We Meditate. So people say, "I would like to receive Transmission using the App." In my case, most of the time a lot of people come here to this ashram. Not much of lecturing is done; it is mainly the spiritual experience that we all enjoy together. I transmit, and they all sit with closed eyes and we meditate together and see the difference, feel the difference, and become something in the process.

You have an ashram in Hyderabad. Maybe you should mention the name for people who are listening in India.

Well, it's called Kanha Shanti Vanam. Actually we have so many, over a 1000 Heartfulness Centers we call 'HeartSpots'. You can log in to www.heartfulness.org and request, "I'm in New York. Is there a nearby HeartSpot Center where there is a trainer available or where I can go to meditate?" I think we have over 2,000 such HeartSpots worldwide.

Let me ask you another question: the term 'Heartfulness Meditation' and your book *The Heartfulness Way*, was that choice of name a deliberate counter to the popularity of the word 'Mindfulness', or does it actually predate all of that?

Well, it predates it long, long back, actually. Mindfulness, if I'm not mistaken, started becoming known to the world sometime in 1995 or '96. This has been going on from 1873, and 1945 was the year when this system was officially organized, legally formed as a society in India.

And was it called
Heartfulness then?

No. It was established as an organization called Shri Ram Chandra Mission, but we have always used the heart as a way of meditation. Officially the name Heartfulness was coined sometime in 2003, and we made the decision to move on with the word because it's a very nice word. It expresses everything that we do: do it with the heart. And there is no idea that we should compete with Mindfulness. In fact, integration is better. Friction is not good, that is ego-driven.

Very good.

To be continued ...

You can listen to the full interview on the Spirit Matters website at https://soundcloud.com/spirit-matters-talk/daaji-interview.





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it changes everything

The most beautiful people we have known are those who have known defeat, known suffering, known struggle, known loss, and have found their way out of the depths. These persons have an appreciation, a sensitivity, and an understanding of life that fills them with compassion, gentleness, and a deep loving concern.

Elisabeth Kübler-Ross

THE (HALLENGE) OF OUR TIME

FRANCOIS BOUDERLIQUE shares with us his journey of discovering meaning behind the challenge of our time and how he finds the Gift in any challenge.

The state of our world is in front of us. The stages of grief described by Elisabeth Kubler-Ross can help us to identify the category in which we stand in front of our 21st century challenge of a global civilization on the verge of collapse.

DENIAL:

I continue my life, business as usual, like a consumer animal, considering the problem to be 'out there'. After all, how could I be responsible for such a global crisis?

I live in an illusion.

ANGER:

What a mess! It is all because of them: politicians, multinationals, wrong governance by the 1% holding the strings. Whether I am an extreme ecological activist, a conspiracy theorist or I believe that the masses have not enough cognitive capacity, it doesn't matter; I am angry and I voice my conviction to the world, less than my actions. People will hopefully wake up. Revolution is coming!

I live in the past.

BARGAINING:

I am aware of the predicament in which we are stuck. I recognize some of my compulsive consumer behaviors as partly responsible for the situation. I am stuck in a lifestyle from which I would like to extricate myself. But what can I do? I alternate between moments of guilt and thrill, I compromise very often my inner values to cope with the world and my desire as I want it to be.

I live sometimes in the past and project myself from time to time into the future when I am in pain.

DEPRESSION:

Why bother with anything? It is already a mess and it is getting worse. I indulge in thinking about dark times and doomsday, for which all have to prepare. I am a pessimist, a cynic and I feel lonely with no hope for a better world or a better 'me'.

I live in the dark.

ACCEPTANCE:

I can't fight so I had better prepare for it. I am pragmatic and willing to see reality as it is. I am aware of the 'unit' of my impact in this world. I am willing to do my part of the job, considering each and every responsibility within my circle of influence.

I live here and now.



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I worked for 20 years in the banking industry. In 2014, when I decided to leave my job with one of the top megabanks in Europe, I went through all these stages:

Denial of what I was selling to my customer for years,

Anger after the 2008 crisis when I understood the whole set-up of financial institutions to suck-up profits,

Bargaining to keep my huge salary,

Falling slowly into depression after being a smalltime whistle-blower for one year within my company, and finally

Accepting the fact that I should quit the industry and find a conducive lifestyle more suited to my values.

Looking back at this process of loss, whether of a job, a marriage or a close family member, I noticed that there is a fundamental principle in the process of introspection in our lives:

the greatest gifts are always found in the darkest places.

It is in the midst of inevitable changes that we can clear our vision and allow ourselves to move forward for a kind of rebirth. The bigger the challenge, the greater its potential gift. We understand what was holding us back and we are on the path of authenticity, being more and more honest to our true Self.

When I stepped into creating a resilient community after my so-called successful corporate career, I had much more time to meditate on the core values residing in my heart, contrasting with the philosophical mind-constructs with which I had filled up my brain during many years. I realized that those stages of loss or grief were steps into my consciousness, and that to cross each stage required a subtle destruction of my own web, culture, education, belief etc.

How does it work?





As we clear the stages, a new consciousness brings us towards a reality in resonance with our inner authentic nature.

We feel liberated from a prison that we created for ourselves, compromising for years with a value-system that we borrowed from outside ourselves.

Because we have acknowledged the fact that we are our ultimate defect, a big compromising machine, we enter a state of gratitude for the gift of liberation.

Suddenly we begin to see the spiritual nature of things, as the possibility to expand our consciousness opens in a grand avenue.

If we are ready to see life as a wheel of change, where our old vision dies on a regular basis, we will welcome the birth of new visions, new levels of awareness, and new states of consciousness.

When we successfully clear all the stages of grief, we start asking ourselves: what's next? Life becomes thrilling again if we welcome any of its natural challenges.

If there is a gift, there must be a giver. And who is the giver? I to myself! So the source is infinite, as I will always be motivated to grant myself more gifts.

If we are ready to see life as a wheel of change, where our old vision dies on a regular basis, we will welcome the birth of new visions, new levels of awareness, and new states of consciousness.

Through the practice of meditation, I observe that I accelerate the process of these 5 stages. Keeping in view my inner resonance, any discomfort is recognized as a denial. I can almost jump systematically toward acceptance and bring a new awareness each time, accessing a new level of consciousness. My life becomes joyful as every time I anticipate a gift waiting for me. A gift that I can offer to myself only through acceptance.

At this stage, I experience that I am on-and-off in a state of surrender towards whatever is coming towards me. I surrender both to life and to myself. In contrast to the western interpretation of surrender as 'acceptance of defeat', I now understand surrender as an opportunity for true victory, an opportunity to find the Gift of insight that waits hidden in the darkest corners of life's experiences.

Finding Gifts is the key that has created all great men and women. One of my favorite quotes from a great saint, Ram Chandra from India, is, "Really, the path nearest to your Self is the path nearest to God."

So friends, let's keep our lives light and joyful, in a permanent quest for the Gifts that come our way.

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VILASINI KUMAR shares the joy and benefits of reading to complement her meditative practice.

ooks on spirituality have always held my interest. I have a shelf full of them and have the habit of pulling one out at random.

Is it random? I wonder.

I pick the one that calls me and read parts of it. It is as if something guides me to pick up a particular book that is right for me at that moment and prompts me to open a certain page. I then stay engrossed for a while.

If meditation is direct food for my soul, reading books on spirituality sends supportive vibrations to my core. Reading the insights and experiences of others always takes me deeper within myself. I experience many 'aha' moments of supposed realizations. Truly, they open my mind and heart.

Books have a way of transmitting. Don't you feel a flow of energy just holding them, reading or scanning through them? That is enough to feel a sense of joy, happiness and fulfillment. Reading is like listening; the words of my Guides, who are constantly merged with their higher selves, have a way of radiating and entering my heart. In fact, I have often felt like I am hearing them speak directly to me.

At times, reading reinforces and clarifies my understanding of things. Often I find that the same text communicates different meanings at different times, maybe depending on the state of my mind and consciousness at that point in time.

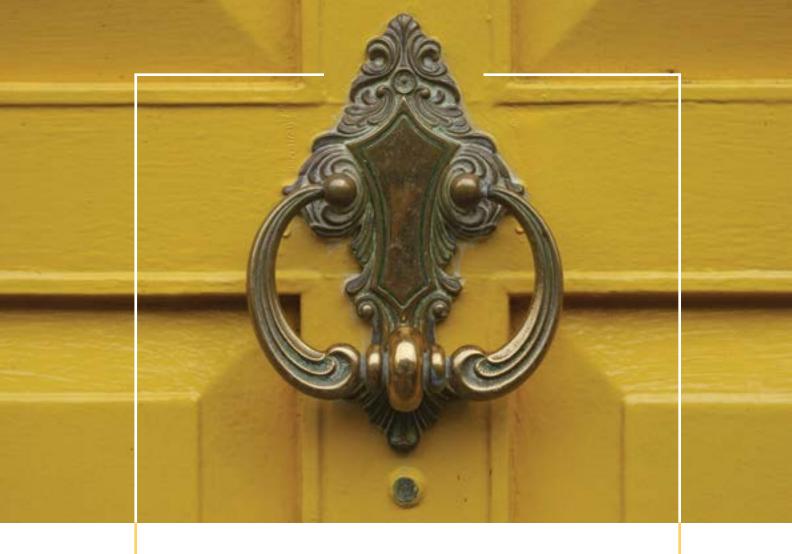
I have a habit of noting down quotes from a particular book at the end of my morning meditation – those words that communicate the right thing at the right time. For example:

It is the vacuum in the heart that lets grace flow in. By calming one's thoughts, a true heart to heart can be established. We can settle in and do our work.

I read this on a day when my mind was restless and I was not able to go into a deep meditative state. At another time:

Read again our teachings. With the passing years, you will discover things that had not struck you on the first reading: 'the truth' will appear to you. You will be amazed to realize that previously you had missed the very thing that you discover now. You will be able to see from this a sign of your progress and the distance you have come.

Reading enriches my inner world. Does it for you too?



When Fear Knocks

A MADHUSUDHAN REDDY explores the role fear plays in holding us back from success. He also shares some tips on how to overcome fear and develop courage and confidence.

verybody wants to be successful, but we succumb to things that are hurdles on the path of success. Though our hearts aspire for success, there is always some fear consciousness deep inside that keeps pulling us back. So if the fear is removed at the outset, we will come closer to success.

We have fear of failure, fear of enormous future. We fear people may ridicule us – that either we are too old for the job or too young and immature, that we don't have the required qualifications or we are inexperienced, that we lack the intelligence. Thinking that we are inadequate in some way, most of us lose the opportunities we have in hand. When we hide behind such pretexts, opportunities are closed to us.

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The whole world sometimes kills your enthusiasm. In those times it is better to follow your inner voice than listen to others. How to get rid of fear and fill yourself with courage? Take time and question yourself: What is the cause of my fear? Why am I taking shelter behind these pretexts? If you want to be successful, taking risks is unavoidable. So how to take those risks now?

The whole world sometimes kills your enthusiasm. In those times it is better to follow your inner voice than listen to others.

When you are in complex situations, even if others discourage you by saying it is useless, continue to try. Think on your own. Once you understand the facts thoroughly and take the risk, it can pave your way to success. But make sure that on your own you try to understand the situation. Once you understand the situation thoroughly, you will be able to take the right decision and never lose the opportunity that you have.

You may as well fear quick success, not failure, because if you want to multiply success it is unavoidable that you will face failure. Do not lose courage when you fear the loss of face you may have. You may fear that you will lose your reputation, or you may not have courage to speak in a meeting because you think everybody will laugh at you. Instead say to yourself that the future is full of best prospects, that you will certainly reach the goals you cherish, that you will face any kind of situation courageously, and then you may witness everything happening in your favor.

Gradually courage will become a part of you, and there will be no place for fear, anxiety and negativity inside you. Even when there is a challenge or a problem, you will not need to develop courage afresh. All fears and doubts will disappear. We are all inherently powerful but somehow we are discouraged by what others say.

If you observe carefully, all power is within you.

All the help that you require is also in you.

If you think you are successful, you will become successful.

If you think you are a failure, you will become a failure.

So chose what you want to be.

What is courage?

Courage allows us to transcend all kinds of fears, in my opinion – fear of death, fear due to discomfort in the body, fear of hunger, fear of insults, fear that others may disagree, fear of evil powers, fearing other's anger.

Use the tears of your eyes to cultivate your dream. Convert that which is burning you into a lamp and encourage the heart to share the light. Wake up! Your destiny is calling you. Fear nothing.

From Fear to Courage

When the mind is pure you will naturally feel courageous. When you lose this purity many things create fear.

If you believe in yourself and respect yourself, you become courageous. Self-confidence removes fear. Instead of thinking about weaknesses, focus on your strengths.

Subtle intelligence works like a medicine that cures diseases. Try to acquire the self-knowledge that removes fear. Constant practice helps to overcome all sorts of challenges.

Develop right thinking and you will not even fear death. Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita says, "Duty if done without any desire even in a small way will protect us from the greatest fears."

Cultivate a pure mind, a moral life, self-confidence and mental restraint in daily life, in order to live happily devoid of fear. Courage can take you to heaven in a moment. Do not run away from the difficulties in life; difficulties

run away and vanish when you face them boldly.

Desire, anger, greed, pride, illusion and envy create a lot of fear, taking frightening forms and restricting consciousness. They do not allow you to reach your goal. In the ancient texts they are compared with poisonous animals such as sharks, cobras, crocodiles and scorpions. In order not to be influenced by them, do some spiritual practice that will enable you to digest all these poisons. Then you can get to that urn of immortality, the nectar. Face your enemies within.

Life is a struggle for everyone. Success lies only in that struggle. Set your first step on the mountain; take things head on; have a strong hold on your way to the goal. Those stones that stop you can be your foundation. Mold those who chase you to grow to move forward.

Use the tears of your eyes to cultivate your dream. Convert that which is burning you into a lamp and encourage the heart to share the light. Wake up! Your destiny is calling you. Fear nothing.

If it is day, the sun says, "I'm there," if it is night, the moon says, "I'm there," blessing us with the necessary courage. Therefore, when fear knocks open the door of courage.



Samadhi but extends my conscious realm
Beyond limits of the mortal frame
To farthest boundary of eternity
Where I, the Cosmic Sea,
Watch the little ego floating in Me.

Paramahansa Yogananda



What if someone told you there was a simple set of practices that could help you manage every aspect of your daily life, and at the same time take you to a level of human potential beyond your wildest imagination? Would you be interested? Most people would at least be curious.

That is in fact an accurate explanation of the practices of Yoga, but most people don't realize it. Yoga includes a holistic set of practices for overall self-development and the well-being of the body, mind and soul. A few thousand years back, the great sage Patanjali compiled the current yogic practices of that time into a simple framework consisting of eight parts or limbs, and that framework is still used today. It is known as Ashtanga Yoga.

But the practices of Yoga have evolved since Patanjali was alive, in response to the needs of the time and especially during the last 15O years. So in this series DAAJI explores each limb of Yoga in the light of the modern day yogic practices of Heartfulness. He shows us how to integrate inner spiritual practices with living in the world and refining our personality, so as to create that true state of Yoga – skill in action and integration of the spiritual and worldly aspects of life.

SAMYAMA

part 4

Dharana · Dhyana · Samadhi

Samadhi is the eighth limb of Patanjali's Ashtanga Yoga. It is considered to be the goal of Yoga, an inner experience of purity and balance that is one with the original state that existed before creation. During our yogic practice, we also encounter various stages or glimpses of Samadhi as we progress on the journey towards this original state. In the final article of this series, DAAJI explains this unfolding experience of Samadhi and how we eventually come to the ultimate goal of Yoga through our practice.

e have now reached the real purpose of Yoga, the zenith of yogic practice, the much sought-after state of *Samadhi*. The word '*Samadhi*' simply means 'that which prevailed before creation came into existence', the absolute balanced state of oneness or nothingness or total emptiness. Our soul has always been craving for that ultimate state of balance, and, unless and until we attain it within, the soul will always find some sort of shortcoming in whatever we do in life. Once we achieve that *Samadhi* state in all our activities, both worldly and spiritual, then true happiness comes on its own, even when we fail in our actions. We remain unshaken.

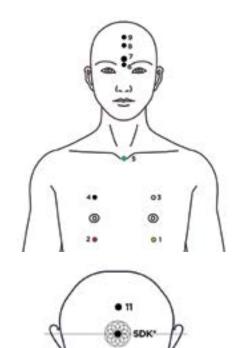
Samadhi is the ultimate spiritual relaxation and the ultimate effortless concentration, and it is considered to be the goal of human existence in Yoga. You might even say that it is the reason for our existence as a species. Every species has a purpose on this Earth, and ours is to go back to the original state. Hence we have a spectrum of consciousness of a high enough order so that we can realize this purpose. Every other limb of Ashtanga Yoga is only a training and a preparation to help us arrive at that goal. It is the reason we refine our posture, our breath, or thoughts, our sensory inputs and our behavioral reactions to the outside world. It is the reason we turn all our faculties inwards and meditate. We are going home.

STAGES OF SAMADHI

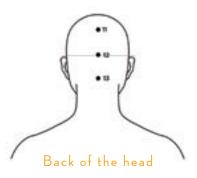
In its pure form Samadhi is that ultimate state, but we also experience various glimpses or stages of Samadhi along the way, throughout our journey. Those experiences vary according to the view from the vantage point we have reached at any given stage. We view the ultimate state from the position we are at in the present moment, and that becomes our current experience of Samadhi. In the Heartfulness Way, we invite such states of Samadhi day after day and make them permanent. So when practitioners speak of experiencing Samadhi during meditation, they are speaking about these experiences that vary from person to person, and for the same person at different stages in the journey. There is a different flavor of Samadhi at each point or chakra, and also within each chakra, as we enter new levels. It goes on changing until eventually we can experience all of these states in one go. By the time we are at chakra 12, for example, we have already experienced infinite variations of Samadhi.

These stages of *Samadhi* have been described in a number of ways in classical yogic texts. In his Yoga Sutras, Patanjali describes the lowest levels of *Samadhi* as the experience of stone-like unconsciousness, where we don't feel anything and we are oblivious to what is happening, because we have journeyed into those parts of our mind beyond awareness. In the second level we are in a dreamlike subconscious *Samadhi*, and in the highest we are fully alert and aware within our absorption. This is known as *Sahaj Samadhi*. Of course these are broad categories for the sake of understanding.

Sahaj Samadhi is a condition where we are deeply absorbed in meditation, and at the same time fully conscious of everything else that is going on. In the Yoga Shastras this is known as the *Turiya* condition, or the fourth state. Everything is in view. When we learn how to take this state into our day, we are then simultaneously able to focus on work, on the surroundings, on the TV, on something happening outside, and still remain in



Top of the head *SDK: Sahasra dal kamal



communion with our inner spiritual state, the condition that is prevailing within, something that is about to come into our system, thoughts that arise, and the next step we should be taking. We are peaceful witnessing all these things simultaneously. This is known as the *Turiyatit* state in Yoga, where we have three-hundred-and-sixty-degree consciousness with eyes open. There is



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no need to focus on any particular thing. The moment we focus on a particular thing, it is no longer meditation, but concentration.

REFINING THE SUBTLE BODIES TO EXPERIENCE SAMADHI

Trying to experience *Samadhi* at a physical level is only a reflection of Reality. When the heaviest layers of our system are removed, and we transcend the various sheaths of the human system, known as the *koshas*, *Samadhi* has a different flavor. It is like the difference between seeing the bottom of a pond through still crystal clear water versus through dirty turbulent water. The more sediment in the water, the more turbulence, the more obscured the view and the less we are aware of what is happening.

We have entrapped the soul in heaviness, turbulence and complexity as a result of our *samskaras* – the impressions we have accumulated from the past, and the layers formed due to the seeds of future *samskaras* – as well as our ego. Until our inner journey crosses the 5 points in the region of the heart known as the *Pind Pradesh*, we

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It is perhaps the greatest tragedy of humanity that most of us have lost control of these subtle bodies. Instead we let desires, ego, worldly worries, passion, guilt and prejudice pull us in all directions. This is the reason for the problems humanity faces today: human conflict and abuse, environmental issues, emotional problems, mental illness and stress-related diseases. The whole purpose of Yoga is to lighten this burden constantly created by the subtle bodies.

are still very much entrapped in duality, in opposites or *dwandwas*, in likes versus dislikes, in likes versus indifference, in satisfaction versus dissatisfaction, in clarity versus confusion, and in all of the emotional spectra that characterize human life. These emotions include: greed, jealousy, lust, guilt, resentment, self-pity and prejudice versus contentment; anxiety and worry versus peace; hate and anger versus love and compassion; and fear versus courage. While our minds are prey to these opposite polarities, they become the seeds for the transmigration of the soul from life to life, recycling from one body to another in the process we know as reincarnation or rebirth.

When we remain away from the Source, from the cause of our existence, these opposites continue to prevail, because our senses continue to be drawn outwards. The functions of the mind known as the <u>subtle bodies</u> – *chit* (consciousness), *manas* (contemplation), *buddhi* (intellect) and *ahankar* (ego) – are also directed mostly towards worldly matters. In the process, the soul is buried within layers of complexity and we cannot connect with the center of our being. Because it is buried, it is impossible to lead a balanced joyful life because joy emanates from the soul. In fact it is the quality of the soul, so what do you think happens when we bury it and cannot connect within?

Once our attention is directed towards the Source of our being, then our inner world begins to open up. The three mental functions of contemplation, intellect and ego begin to fulfil a higher purpose. They become refined and attuned to assisting consciousness to evolve to a higher plane of existence. Then the soul receives its due attention and nourishment, and we are able to function holistically, with body, mind and soul in harmony. Though our consciousness transcends from one level to another, yet during deep sleep none of us are aware of it. The intellect and ego have no recourse during sleep; during sleep we are nobody. In contrast, in true *Samadhi*, unlike sleep, there is a natural recourse to the Source.

It is perhaps the greatest tragedy of humanity that most of us have lost control of these subtle bodies. Instead we let desires, ego, worldly worries, passion, guilt and prejudice pull us in all directions. This is the reason for the problems humanity faces today: human conflict and abuse, environmental issues, emotional problems, mental illness and stress-related diseases. The whole purpose of Yoga is to lighten this burden constantly created by the subtle bodies. But it is not that we are external and passive victims of our own destiny. God has bestowed us with the wisdom to use the same instruments, these subtle bodies, to trace our way back to the Source.



Swami Vivekananda explains it so clearly in his commentary on Patanjali's Yoga Sutras when he says, "Chit manifests itself in all these different forms – scattering, darkening, weakening and concentrating. These are the four states in which the mind-stuff manifests itself. First, a scattered form is activity. Its tendency is to manifest in the form of pleasure or of pain. Then the dull form is darkness, the only tendency of which is to injure others. The Ekagra, the concentrated form of chit, is what brings us to Samadhi."

Ekagrata is the centripetal tendency of consciousness, which we can bring about in meditation supported by all the other practices of Ashtanga Yoga. Patanjali summarizes it in one of the most important and profound of his Yoga Sutras, when he says:

4.6: Tatra dhyana jam anasayam

Only the original mind, which is uncovered as a result of meditation, is desireless and free from impressions. The original mind exists in itself, without the need for support, cause or motivation.

PRACTICAL TOOLS

In Heartfulness, it is *Pranahuti* that makes meditation so effective, as it gives us glimpses of our original mind from the very first meditation. Just as fish experience different depths in a pond of water, by swimming up and down, *Pranahuti* carries us effortlessly to depths

Each morning in Meditation, we create a meditative state to carry out into the day. Each evening during Cleaning we create a state of purity to carry with us, and each time we pray we create a prayerful state in the heart so that we stay connected to the Source, vacuumized and receptive. When we retain and nurture these three states throughout the day, it keeps the top spinning of our inner condition creating a beautiful balanced state.

of *Samadhi* consciousness we would not otherwise experience so easily and quickly. It can also be likened to a lift in a high-rise building – a one-way lift upwards to the purpose of our existence.

The <u>Heartfulness Prayer</u> also has a very profound impact on our deepening experience of *Samadhi*, when it is practiced before sleeping at night and on waking in the morning. Done properly, it connects us prayerfully to our deepest *sushupti* consciousness, and this brings about awareness in the deep-sleep state. We experience the entry and exit to and from various levels of consciousness – known in neuroscience as the spectrum of brainwave frequencies from Delta waves in deep sleep to Gamma

waves in highly alert learning states. Our consciousness becomes elastic, expanded and more easily able to move between surface and depth. Gradually, over time, all these states are able to coexist simultaneously in the 360-degree consciousness of *Sahaj Samadhi*. This has to be experienced to be understood – it is such a dynamic, fluid and responsive state of mind.

The daily practice of <u>Heartfulness Cleaning</u> supports the goal of Yoga by purifying the subtle bodies, the field of consciousness. As layer upon layer of *samskaras* are removed, as the purified *koshas* are transcended, as thinking, intellect and ego are refined, and as stillness results, *Samadhi* becomes effortless.

Each morning in <u>Meditation</u>, we create a meditative state to carry out into the day. Each evening during Cleaning we create a state of purity to carry with us, and each time we pray we create a prayerful state in the heart so that we stay connected to the Source, vacuumized and receptive. When we retain and nurture these three states throughout the day, it keeps the top spinning of our inner condition – creating a beautiful balanced state. This practice is known as <u>Constant Remembrance</u>, and when we are able to hold it throughout the day, we not only stop the formation of *samskaras*, but naturally develop the capacity for *Sahaj Samadhi*.

How to do this? First, meditate well. Second, surrender to the soul's existence, to the Source, to the Master within. Surrender is the key, because then there is no force in our efforts, and effortlessness is needed to experience *Samadhi*. After all, how can there be force in the original state of nothingness before creation?

This quality of surrender in a spiritual practitioner is generally not well understood. The ego rebels against surrender, so often there is resistance to the idea. But without this vital quality, *Samadhi* is not possible. It is one reason why having a Guide of caliber is so important, even for those at the highest pinnacle of spiritual evolution. The greatest saints have always

had Guides, just like the greatest tennis players have coaches, because without that feeling of receptivity, humility, willingness to accept, and becoming nothing at the feet of Divinity, how will the current of Grace flow? How will dynamic evolution continue? As soon as we say, "I am there," we are done for! So the third thing is to create dependency on a Guide of caliber and see where that takes you.

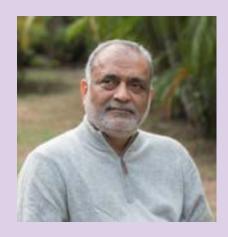
one day you are able to swim in the infinite ocean while also living a joyful human existence. And that swimming is also endless in nature, so actually there is no endpoint to this journey of Yoga.

SOME THOUGHTS ON THE ULTIMATE STATE

Many people think that *Samadhi* is associated with Divine Light, with *Sat*, with *Purusha* or God, but *Samadhi* is beyond all these things, way beyond Satchidananda, even beyond the potentiality at the base of consciousness. In true *Samadhi* we go beyond the beginning of creation, beyond the first mind of God, to the state of *Tam* or *Prakriti* that rests at the base. We come to the realm of the Absolute, of formlessness, of *Akasha*. It is the nothingness out of which everything arose and will return, like the nothingness at the center of the seed from which a giant sequoia tree grows.

But let me end with something for you to ponder. Is this life simply for the soul to return to the Source with the same nothingness with which we came into this world? If that were the case, what would be the point? In each life, each existence, we come with a certain potency or potential. Do we go back with a higher potential, enriched spiritually? If we come with 15X potency, do we return with 100X or 1000X potency? Certainly we would want this life to contribute something to our collective existence. Maybe even after the end of this universe we can also carry forward a greater potential of possibility to contribute to whatever comes next. It is worth considering.

I wish you all the experience of subtler and subtler states of *Samadhi* through the practices of Yoga, until



Known to many as Daaji, Kamlesh Patel is the fourth guide in the Heartfulness tradition of meditation. Embracing the many roles of a modern-day teacher, he has that rare capacity to dive deep into the center of his existence in the heart, and simultaneously have a scientific approach to original research in the field of meditation, spirituality and human evolution. He is a prolific speaker and writer, and you can read his latest book, *The Heartfulness Way*. To learn more about Daaji, go to www.daaji.org.

SAMADHI & SUPERCONSCIOUSNESS

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA explains the relationship between consciousness, superconsciousness and *Samadhi*.

ust as unconscious work is beneath consciousness, so there is another work which is above consciousness, and which also is not accompanied with the feeling of egoism. The feeling of egoism is only on the middle plane. When the mind is above or below that line, there is no feeling of 'I', and yet the mind works. When the mind goes beyond this line of self-consciousness, it is called *Samadhi* or superconsciousness.

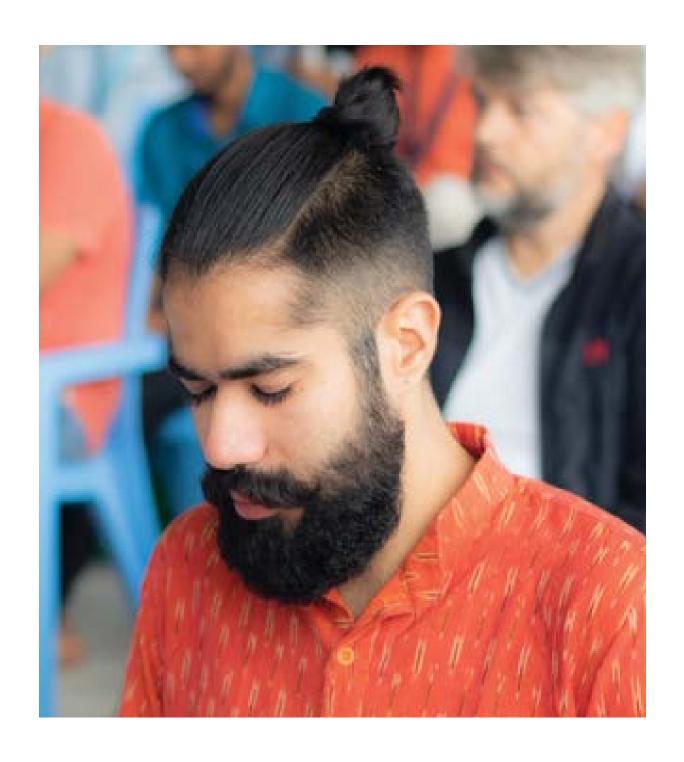
How, for instance, do we know that a man in *Samadhi* has not gone below consciousness, has not degenerated instead of going higher? In both cases the works are unaccompanied with egoism. The answer is, by the effects, by the results of the work, we know that which is below, and that which is above. When a man

goes into deep sleep, he enters a plane beneath consciousness. He works the body all the time, he breathes, he moves the body, perhaps, in his sleep, without any accompanying feeling of ego; he is unconscious, and when he returns from his sleep, he is the same man who went into it. The sum total of the knowledge which he had before he went into the sleep remains the same; it does not increase at all. No enlightenment comes. But when a man goes into *Samadhi*, if he goes into it a fool, he comes out a sage.

What makes the difference? From one state a man comes out the very same man that he went in, and from another state the man comes out enlightened, a sage, a prophet, a saint, his whole character changed, his life changed, illumined. These are the two effects. Now the effects being different, the

causes must be different. As this illumination with which a man comes back from *Samadhi* is much higher than can be got from unconsciousness, or much higher than can be got by reasoning in a conscious state, it must, therefore, be superconsciousness, and *Samadhi* is called the superconscious state.

This, in short, is the idea of *Samadhi*. What is its application? The application is here. The field of reason, or of the conscious workings of the mind, is narrow and limited. There is a little circle within which human reason must move. It cannot go beyond. Every attempt to go beyond is impossible, yet it is beyond this circle of reason that there lies all that humanity holds most dear.



When the mind goes
beyond this line of self-consciousness,
it is called Samadhi or superconsciousness.

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All ethics, all human action and all human thought, hang upon this one idea of unselfishness.

The whole idea of human life can be put into that one word, unselfishness.

All these questions, whether there is an immortal soul, whether there is a God, whether there is any supreme intelligence guiding this universe or not, are beyond the field of reason.

Reason can never answer these questions. What does reason say? It says, "I am agnostic; I do not know either yea or nay." Yet these questions are so important to us. Without a proper answer to them, human life will be purposeless. All our ethical theories, all our moral attitudes, all that is good and great in human nature, have been molded upon answers that have come from beyond the circle. It is very important, therefore, that we should have answers to these questions. If life is only a short play, if the universe is only a "fortuitous combination of atoms," then why should I do good to another? Why should there be mercy, justice, or fellow-feeling? The best thing for this world would be to make hay while the sun shines, each man for himself. If there is no hope, why should I love my brother, and not cut his throat? If there is nothing beyond, if there is no freedom, but only rigorous dead laws, I should only try to make myself happy here. You will find people saying nowadays that they have utilitarian grounds as the basis of morality. What is this basis? Procuring the greatest amount of happiness to the greatest number. Why should I do this? Why should I not produce the greatest unhappiness to the greatest number, if that serves my purpose?

How will utilitarians answer this question? How do you know what is right, or what is wrong? I am impelled by my desire for happiness, and I fulfil it, and it is in my nature; I know nothing beyond. I have these desires, and must fulfil them; why should you complain? Whence come all these truths about human life, about morality, about the immortal soul, about God, about love and sympathy, about being good, and, above all, about being unselfish?

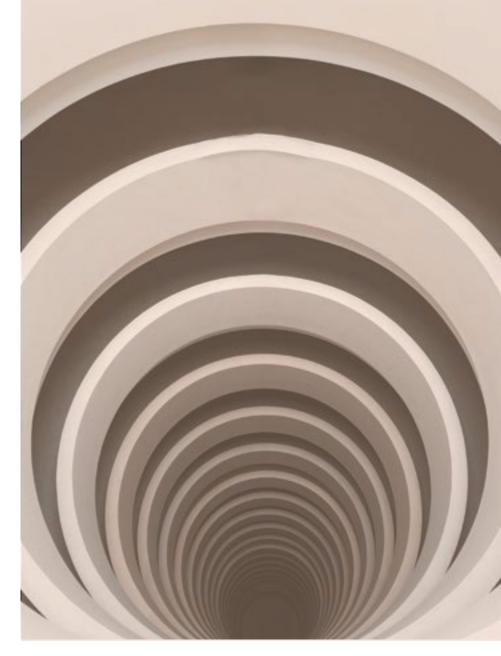
All ethics, all human action and all human thought, hang upon this one idea of unselfishness. The whole idea of human life can be put into that one word, unselfishness. Why should we be unselfish? Where is the necessity, the force, the power, of my being unselfish? You call yourself a rational man, a utilitarian, but if you do not show me a reason for utility, I say you are irrational. Show me the reason why I should not be selfish. To ask one to be unselfish may be good as poetry, but poetry is not reason. Show me a reason. Why shall I be unselfish, and why be good? Because Mr and Mrs soand-so say so does not weigh with me. Where is the utility of my being unselfish? My utility is to be selfish if utility means the greatest amount of happiness. What is the answer? The utilitarian can never give it.

The answer is that this world is only one drop in an infinite ocean, one link in an infinite chain. Where did those that preached unselfishness, and taught it to the human race,

get this idea? We know it is not instinctive; the animals, which have instinct, do not know it. Neither is it reason; reason does not know anything about these ideas. Whence then did they come?

We find, in studying history, one fact held in common by all the great teachers of religion the world ever had. They all claim to have got their truths from beyond, only many of them did not know where they got them from. For instance, one would say that an angel came down in the form of a human being, with wings, and said to him, "Hear, O man, this is the message." Another says that a Deva, a bright being, appeared to him. A third says he dreamed that his ancestor came and told him certain things. He did not know anything beyond that. But this is common that all claim that this knowledge has come to them from beyond, not through their reasoning power. What does the science of Yoga teach? It teaches that they were right in claiming that all this knowledge came to them from beyond reasoning, but that it came from within themselves.

The Yogi teaches that the mind itself has a higher state of existence, beyond reason, a superconscious state, and when the mind gets to that higher state, then this knowledge, beyond reasoning, comes to man. Metaphysical and transcendental knowledge comes to that man. This state of going beyond reason, transcending ordinary

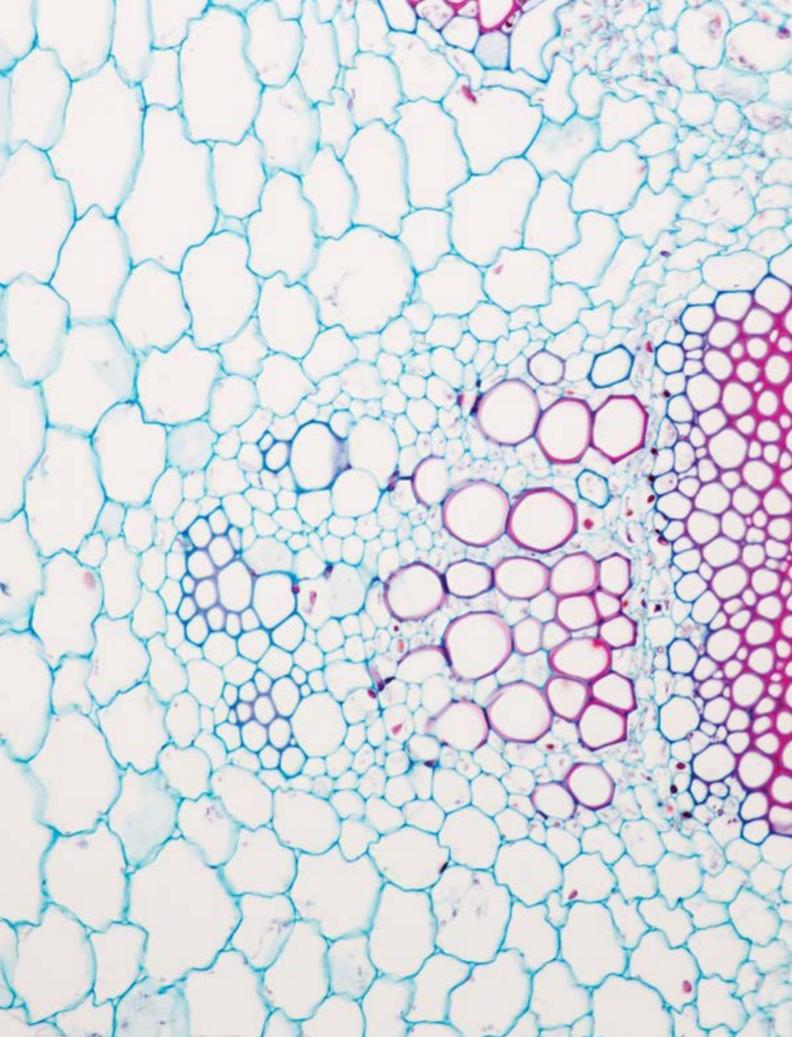


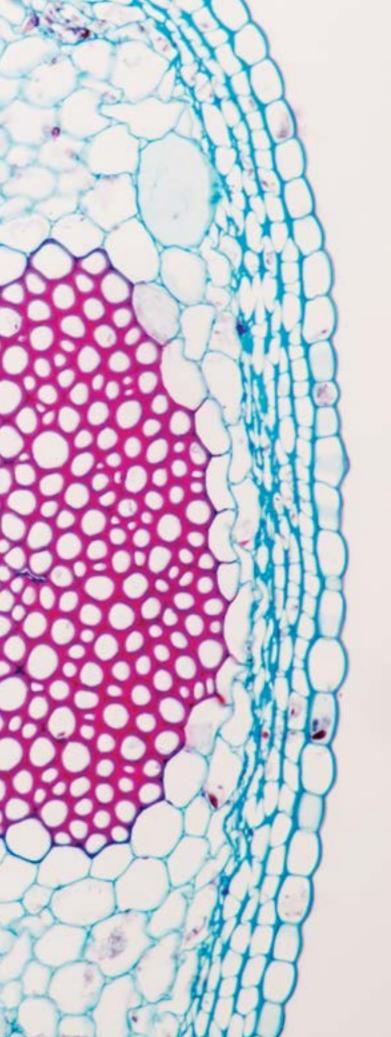
human nature, may sometimes come by chance to a man who does not understand its science; he, as it were, stumbles upon it. When he stumbles upon it, he generally interprets it as coming from outside. So this explains why an inspiration, or transcendental knowledge, may be the same in different countries, but in one country it will seem to come through an angel, and in another through a Deva, and in a third through God. What does it mean?

It means that the mind brought the knowledge by its own nature, and that the finding of the knowledge was interpreted according to the belief and education of the person through whom it came. The real fact is that these various men, as it were, stumbled upon this superconscious state.

Excerpt from Chapter 7 of Raja Yoga by Swami Vivekananda

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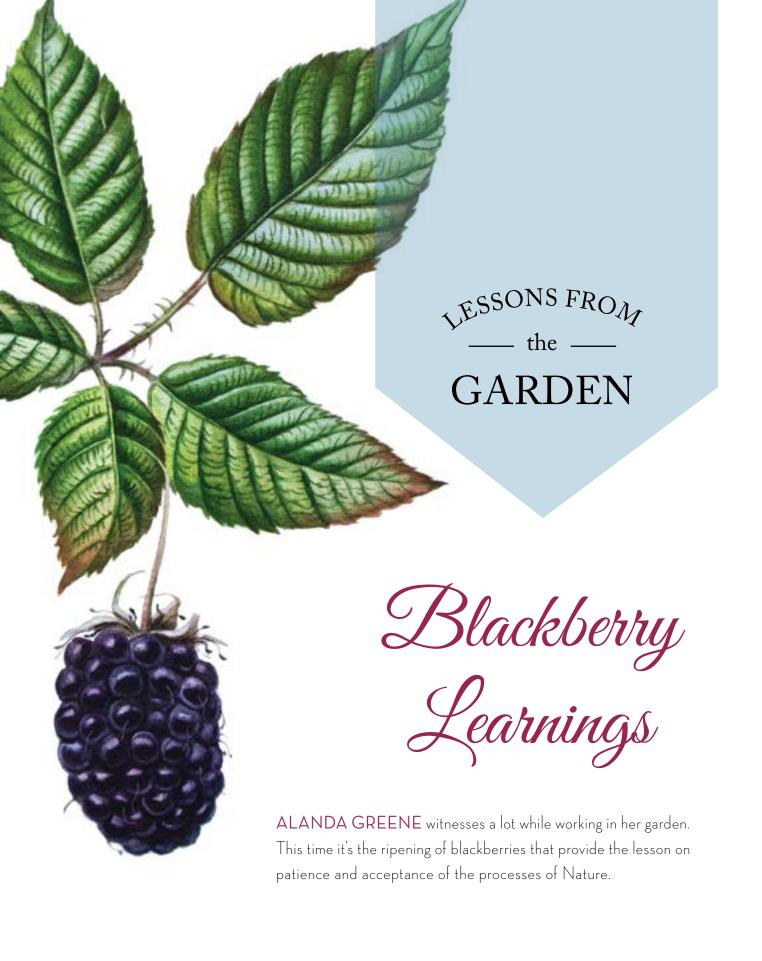




taste ©

Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better.

Albert Einstein



he blackberries are abundant this year and they're ripe for picking. At least they appear to be. They challenge me more than any other berry in the garden, for where black and red currants, gooseberries, blueberries and raspberries reveal their ripeness with color, blackberries don't. They are masterful at appearing ripe when they aren't, their glossy black nubs fooling me over and over. My sense of sight is deceived and I must rely on touch - giving the berry a light tug such that if it comes free into my hand, it's a yes, and if it doesn't, it's not ready.

Using my sense of sight with other berries, I can reach between stems and branches to pick ones that don't deceive; I'm not disappointed. With a blackberry, I find too often that my effort to get to it has been for naught. My slight tug meets resistance.

I notice my impulse to pull it from the stem anyway, to give just a bit more force to my tug so it will release, even though I know it won't be sweet and the taste will be undeveloped. But sometimes I've reached between a lot of branches for just that berry. I don't want to have to come back to the same one tomorrow or maybe again the day after that. Over and over I keep finding berries that are not quite ready.

But I find impatience too, wanting what isn't ready to be so, because I don't want to have to do it again. The willingness to accept a situation that is given, not trying to force my will on the way things are: I value this, I aspire to this. At least I tell myself I do. But in just a simple task like picking blackberries, I meet displeasure with a thin coating of irritation to go along with it, because it's not the way I want it to be.

"It is out of the dailiness of life that one is driven into the deepest recesses of the self." But going into the deep recesses requires a willingness to go there, to value it. For certainly we live in a world that offers a banquet of distractions from the exploration of inner learning.

I could pretend otherwise. No one but the blackberries and I would know. But these are the situations where what I believe about myself and what is revealed through my actions meet. If they don't match, there's something off. My actions tell the truth. Wasn't it Goethe who said, "To know and not to do is not to know at all"? If I'm acting one way and telling myself I value something that doesn't match, well, I guess that's hypocrisy.

It's good to look at it, good to name it. Not to indulge in self-condemnation about being a loser. But also not to ignore what blackberry-picking is teaching me. In this quiet context of garden work, I have the opportunity to catch thought patterns and habitual responses that I don't notice in the busyness of daily life. Blackberries aren't pointing any fingers of blame, but they are giving me an opportunity to learn.

Catching a pattern here in the garden allows me to recognize it when the same one turns up in more emotionally charged or busy situations. When I find myself irritated at the slowness of the driver ahead of me, or at the woman in the checkout line having a leisurely conversation about her kid's preschool when I have a ferry to catch and am about to miss it. If I've already

looked at my behavior in the gentle atmosphere of berries, I can more easily remember: "Hey, I know better choices of what to do with my thoughts. I know how to use my attention when waiting in line."

The poet Stanley Kunitz once said, "It is out of the dailiness of life that one is driven into the deepest recesses of the self." But going into the deep recesses requires a willingness to go there, to value it. For certainly we live in a world that offers a banquet of distractions from the exploration of inner learning.

The question "Why would you want to do this kind of self-reflection?" brings a flurry of voices internalized through the years from who knows where. "Yes, why spend your energy looking at your thoughts like this, questioning your motives, your actions? I mean it's depressing. The more you look, the worse you get. Just get on with your life and do your best and don't get pulled into this endless navel-gazing."

Hearing these voices reveals the point. If I don't do this work, don't determine which voice, which desire, which concept or which attitude is pulling the strings of my choices, then I'm acting out those voices unconsciously, being

"The unexamined life is not worth living," is often attributed to Socrates. For him, understanding motives and making choices based on conscious thought made life worthwhile. I can find these deeper learnings in the quiet of berry-picking.



pulled in a marionette kind of life. "The unexamined life is not worth living," is often attributed to Socrates. For him, understanding motives and making choices based on conscious thought made life worthwhile. I can find these deeper learnings in the quiet of berry-picking.

In Kundalini Yoga for the West: A Foundation for Character Building, Courage and Awareness, Swami Radha questions the aspirant: "What is the purpose of your life? What makes your life worth living?" These questions felt too huge right at the start, when I first met them as a much

younger woman. But really, this examination is foundational for building a life of awareness, of meaning. It's essential to examine deeply. Blackberries too encourage awareness, if I choose to observe and listen.

After all, what is this wanting to pick them before they're ripe? Do I know better than the plant? Tugging at them, trying to force them when it's not their time. Can I surrender to what is, without trying to force my will upon the conditions? I am being shown where I do not accept what is, but rather how I want it, the way I want it. I have all the right

reasons. I'm a busy woman, lots to get done, value efficiency. But justification with words to make the world what I want it to be is a misuse of speech. Arranging my words to justify my actions and thoughts, to tell myself this approach is just fine, is an even greater misuse of speech.

So I come to the blackberries again, bucket hanging from my waist, with the intention to accept them as they are, letting go of ideas of how I want them to be. They are good teachers, like Swami Radha and Socrates, reminding me of my ideals and gently revealing how to align them with my actions.



AWAKENING DYNAMIC IMAGINATION

An interview with Fabienne Verdier – Part 2

FABIENNE VERDIER is a French painter who creates unique and fascinating work. Having received international recognition, her work is exhibited in large public and private museum collections. At the age of 22 she flew to Sichuan, China, a remote region close to Tibet where she met the old Chinese masters and learnt calligraphy, the millenarian art of scholars. And now, with a single brushstroke, she has created a new universal pictorial language. Here we continue with her interview by the passionate art historian and consultant, DÉBORAH FEST KINDLER.

Speaking about your innovation in style and designing brushes, we find this new dimension in the Roland Garros 2018 poster that was recently unveiled.

It's a game of the inner discipling and spontaneity. More mastery comes from In

I tried to catch the ball. It was difficult and I started again and started again. This approach of bringing art and sport together was fascinating.

And your painting evokes the strength of intention in great sports people very well.

It's a game of the mind. A marriage between inner discipline, intellectual understanding and spontaneity. Moreover, this merging of art and mastery comes from India.

So every time you design a new tool, new energy arises on your canvas. And recently your visual research seems to have gone even further into abstraction, notably in the *Walking Paintings*, in which you seem to have a very material relationship with the painting and experience a real melee with the material.

I now work on the very surface of the canvas. I took the leap to be in the chaos of matter, in the great river of the world. For questions of physical constraints, I had to create another lighter tool, in order to handle it better. While doing tests on the ground, as I was moving through space I saw a new energy that materialized in the form of circles. The great masters say that everything is born of the circle, but it is still difficult for me to understand! I realize that when these circles of paint burst onto the canvas, they create forms of the world, like arborescence, lines of lightning.

This way of creating was so spontaneous and so strong that I became scared. It was so much at variance with the teaching I had received and the traditions of the literati. I was afraid of such force. And since I am against force that destroys, I did not know what to do, and so I put this work aside. It was on a winter's day, in front of the frosty branches of an apple tree, feeling a vital boost in the vegetation, that I became aware of the work I had done.

As if the gesture had preceded the thought?

Yes, and I would love to work on this with neuroscientists.

In your book *Passagère du Silence*, you talk about the attitude of the heart in the act of painting.

We never dare to speak of love, but if I am so hard on myself and lock myself in, it is the voice of the heart that speaks.

You also quote a sentence from Kandinsky saying that the artist must be blind to the recognized or unrecognized form, deaf to the demands and desires of his time. His eye must be directed to his inner life and his ear strive towards the voice of inner necessity. Do you still identify with this?

Painting is also an ethic. We defend a principle, and we must feel it on the canvas.

Painting is a whole state of mind, it is the whole being that expresses itself.

Yes, completely. That's what makes art difficult and why I don't relate to any trends of contemporary art. I prefer my small solitary path.

Indeed on the contemporary art scene you may be perceived as a UFO. You are one of the few artists to speak to us about metaphysics, intuition, movement, breath, inner life and what painting can bring to the eye that contemplates.

Yes and intuition is fundamental. There is a lot of work to be done in current teaching on the question of the keenness of intuition. Moreover on the contemporary scene, there is almost no painting. I am very disappointed in what I see, for example, these generations of artists who produce numbered editions for money. Will money and the market destroy everything?

Painting is also an ethic. We defend a principle, and we must feel it on the canvas. Painting is a whole state of mind, it is the whole being that expresses itself. And unfortunately, a lot of the painting that is expressed today is of great violence.



You often speak of asceticism. Can painting be compared to a spiritual process for you?

I dare not say it because I will be unfairly accused of being esoteric. I suffer a lot from this label.

Is it a taboo to speak about art and spirituality, the heart and metaphysics?

In our conceptual culture, yes. These issues are disturbing. It's very sad.

This is even more surprising when it is clear that your approach is so close to that of a scientist, a researcher, who does not hesitate to question all paths of knowledge.

Yes, so I continue with my little stance, because art is spirit.

Do artists have a role in our society? What is their place?

What I can say is that in my opinion, they bring an experience of what humans can understand as the vibrations of the world, when they are in a state of receptivity. There is nothing more fascinating than sharing these experiences.

When we listen to great musicians, we are totally transported by the inner songs that they transmit. It is a very special place between the world, the interiorization of the world, and the interiorization of their beings. It's an inner journey. We artists may be trying to transcend

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what we've learned, to go beyond knowledge, to go beyond the boundaries.

More and more, I go outside the studio. After 40 years of work in a terrible solitude, I feel that I have to come face to face with other realities. We have so much to learn from each other. My approach through my work on the American abstract expressionists, the Flemish Masters, the musicians of the Juilliard School in New York, and also the meeting with the great linguist Alain Rey, who gave us an extraordinary experience on the energy of the word and of the world, all flow in this direction.

You are constantly experimenting and seem to be always expanding your comfort zone. And when we observe your works, we discover a

great unity, a kind of universality. There is also the fullness and emptiness you are talking about.

Yes, these are paradoxes. The further I go, the more I realize that the void is the infinite form.

There is silence too ...

Yes, I have spent my life digging silence and realizing that it is full of the activity of a thousand and one forms of whispering. I am stunned after all these years of work to see everything that can emerge from silence, just as everything emerges from the void. It is difficult to convey.



Is it receptivity?

Yes, by being open and receptive things come to you. Like a magnet. I am looking for this: that the life force that animates us connects with the living world. We are disconnected from nature. But we have an infinite field of possibilities in front of us and we limit ourselves.

You are a very humble person. Is it your humility that allows you to be in this state of openness all the time?

Painting makes us grumpy and idiotic, but contact with Nature frees us. When we free

ourselves from the T, from what we believe to be, we are much more connected to the world and to others. And life becomes simplicity, emotion, poetry. We are so afraid of complexity that we have created rituals to sustain and protect ourselves, to reassure ourselves. And we need that! But sometimes we have to jump into the void too.

Tell us about breath in painting.

The more I progress, across totally different disciplines and aspects of life, the more I come back to breath; to the breath of the world that animates everything. The single brushstroke that is the matrix of my work speaks of this infinity. It is not necessary to paint forms as seen in the figurative and narrative tradition, but to grasp the forces at work, those forces that naturally create the forms. It is a complete reversal that opens us to that poetry. We are in the suggestion.

So, is it no longer necessary to express everything? Is it the brain that establishes the connections?

That's what is beautiful, what create puzzles. It creates elation, joyousness, and I try to offer small moments of joy.

What advice would you give us to help us improve our relationship to the world and to our planet?

Open up to others. Open to the light, open to silence, open to the song of the bird in the early morning, so you can sing like him too. It seems important to me to work on oneself, to reconnect with the world and to be in contemplation.

https://fabienneverdier.com/ Interviewed by Déborah Fest Kindler Photography by Inès Dieleman

Heartfulness Jogasanas PURNA TITALI ASANA SERIES Butterfly Posture

Stage I

Sthithi

Come to Dandasana

Sit erect with your legs stretched forward and heels together.
Keep the spine, neck and head erect.
Place the palms on the floor by the sides of the thighs.
Gently close your eyes.

Sithila Dandasana:

Sitting Relaxation Posture Sit with your legs stretched forward and feet apart.

Slightly incline the trunk backward, and support the body by placing your hands behind and fingers pointing backward.

Let the head hang freely behind or rest on one of your shoulders. Gently close your eyes.

Stage II

toes.

Purna Titali Asana

Sit in Dandasana.

Fold both the legs, join the soles and keep the heels and toes together. Pull the legs inward by drawing the heels closer to the body. Interlock the fingers to hold the

Keep the trunk and head straight. Gently push the knees of both legs towards the ground until they touch the ground. Release the legs and move the knees upwards.

Repeat this movement of the knees up and down as if flapping wings. Accelerate the movement, flap higher and try to touch the ground with the thighs.

Keep the eyes closed and do the practice with normal breath for a minute.

BENEFITS

This *Asana* is very good for bringing mobility to the hip joints.

Prepares the legs for *Padmasana* and other meditative *Asanas*.

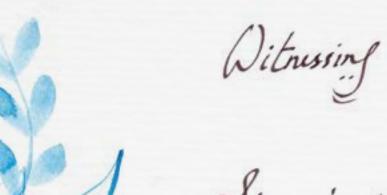
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Removes tiredness from long hours of standing and walking.





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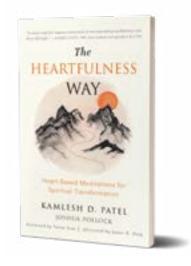
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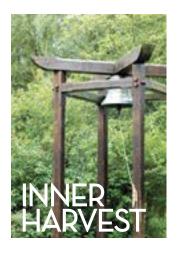


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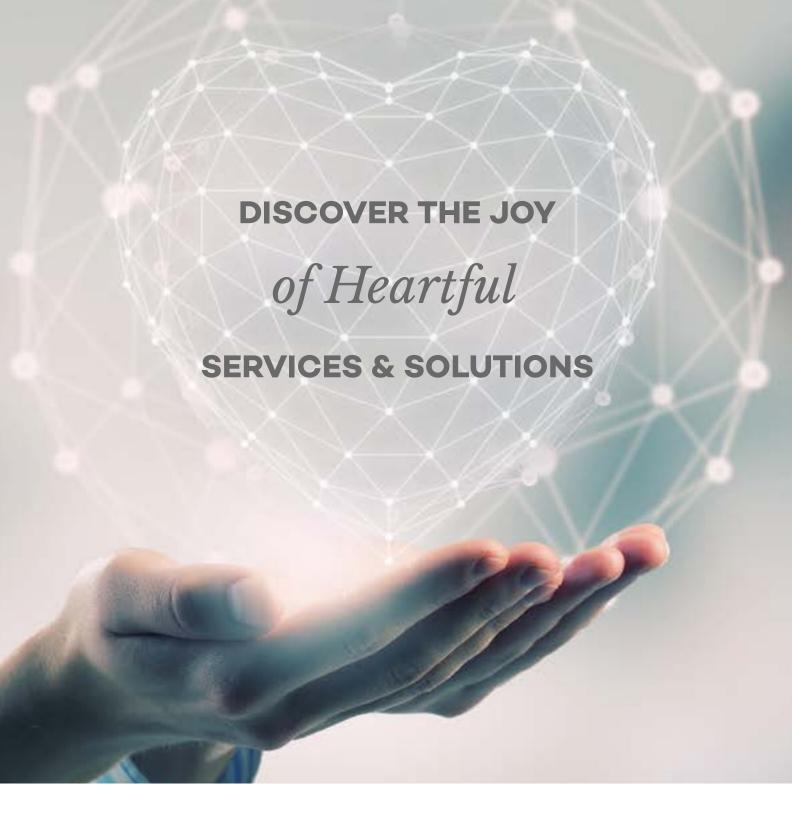


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