YOGA

Connect. Integrate. Become One.

Heartfulness

Self | Work | Relationships | Inspiration | Vitality | Nature | Children

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF YOGA

Daaji: what Yoga really is

MEDITATION AND MEDICINE

Dr René Descartes: on the physiological effects of meditation

LIVING WITH THE NEW CHILDREN

Terran Daily: on working with problematic behavior

BHAGAVAD GITA

Brigitte Smith: on this timeless text





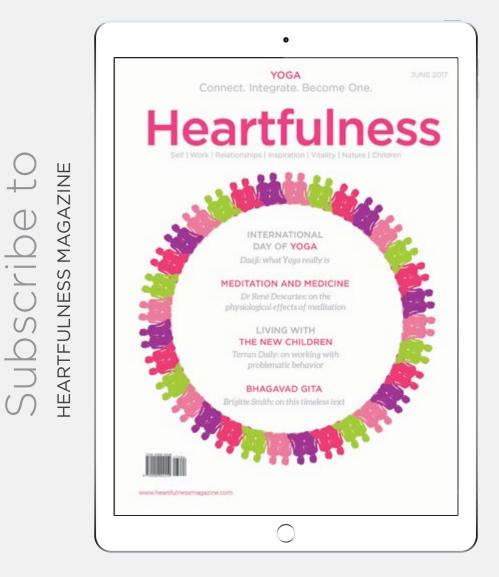
EVERY EDUCATED CHILD IS ANOTHER POSSIBILITY TO CHANGE THE WORLD

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Dear readers,

How often do we find ourselves torn between the demands of the outer world and the call of our inner space? It largely becomes a matter of choice: either this or that. To which do we give priority, and at what point in time?

In Nature, dualities merge into oneness at some point. The times of the day when day and night meet are the hours of dawn or twilight, of perfect balance. The cold of winter blends into the warmth of summer, giving rise to the freshness and joy of spring. A tiny droplet of water merges into the mighty ocean - is the drop contained in the ocean or the ocean in the drop?

We, too, can experience silence in a din. The movement outside can emerge from the stillness within when we give due attention to the heart, the field of our thoughts. When we integrate the material and spiritual wings of our life, there is no question of balance; there is only oneness.

In this issue, a professional athlete shares how her sport and meditation practice reflect each other, and while we conclude our interview with Patrick Fleury on health, Dr René Descartes opens us to the prospects of an integrated development of emotional and spiritual potentialities through meditation. The issue is complete with other articles, photos, recipes and quotations, and especially for the children, we have a very interesting experiment with water in the activity section.

The feature article by Daaji celebrates International Day of Yoga on the 21 June. In this spirit we celebrate the essence of Yoga, which is unity and oneness, and we hope you find ways to integrate the various aspects of your life in response to your heart's longing.

We wish you all a peaceful and fulfilling month!

The Editors





Elizabeth Denley

Emma Ivaturi





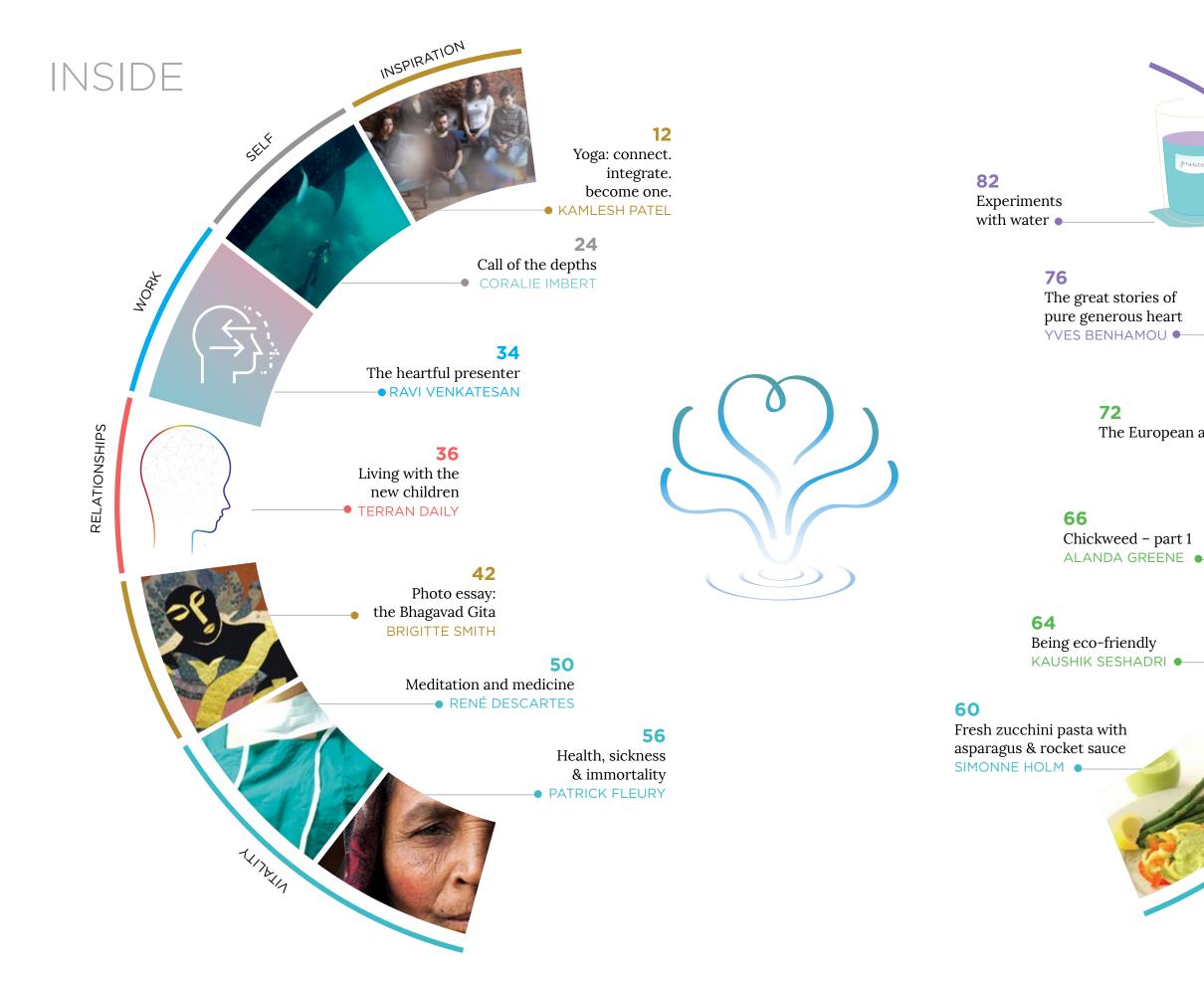




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Terran Daily

Terran is a pediatric occupational therapist and Heartfulness trainer who lives among the giant redwood trees of Northern California. She considers herself very lucky to live in such a beautiful area and to be able to

play with children for a living. When she is not working, you are most likely to find her in the kitchen, whipping up organic meals, a batch of kim chee, some face cream, or homemade fabric softener. Or she might be out walking her dog Tizzy.

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Volume 2 Issue 6, June 2017



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An FMH specialist, René Descartes has been practicing since 1995 as a doctor of integrative medicine, combining internal medicine, unicist homeopathy, acupuncture and auriculotherapy. He teaches nutrition courses, gives lectures and runs training programs for therapists in complementary medicine. He has been a Heartfulness trainer since 1992.

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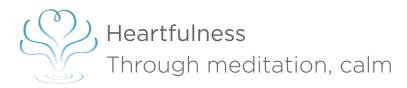
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Heartfulness Relaxation

Sit comfortably and close your eyes very softly and very gently.

Let's begin with the toes. Wiggle your toes. Now feel them relax.

Relax your ankles and feet. Feel energy move up from the earth... up your feet to your knees relaxing the legs.

Relax your thighs. The energy moves up your legs ... relaxing them.

Now, deeply relax your hips ... stomach ... and waist.

Relax your back. From the top to the bottom the entire back is relaxed.

Relax your chest ... and shoulders. Feel your shoulders simply melting away...

Relax your upper arms. Relax each muscle in your forearms ... your hands ... right up to your fingertips.

Relax the neck muscles. Move your awareness up to your face. Relax the jaws ... mouth ... nose ... eyes ... earlobes ... facial muscles ... forehead ... all the way to the top of your head.

Feel how your whole body is now completely relaxed.

Move your attention to your heart. Rest there for a little while. Feel immersed in the love and light in your heart.

Remain still and quiet, and slowly become absorbed in yourself.

Remain absorbed for as long as you want, until you feel ready to come out. Heartfulness GLOW Webinar Series presents

THE IMPORTANCE OF AN ALKALINE DIET

LED BY MS SIMONNE HOLM Alkaline Coach and published author

SATURDAY, JUNE 17TH 2017

7:30 PM IST (India), 10:00 AM EDT (USA), 3:00 PM CET (Europe)

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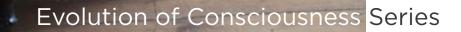


Meditation Webinar

THE SCIENCE OF SPIRITUALITY

YOGA

Connect. Integrate. Become One.



As International Day of Yoga is approaching on the 21 June, KAMLESH PATEL explains to us what Yoga really is, and challenges us all to reflect on whether the practices we are doing really lead us to the state of Yoga.

ARE YOU CONNECTED?

There are so many Yoga schools and classes springing up everywhere around the world these days, and in December 2014 the United Nations proclaimed 21 June as International Day of Yoga, recognizing its universal appeal. International Day of Yoga aims to raise awareness worldwide of the many benefits of practicing Yoga.

Yoga provides a way to nourish and refine our body, mind and soul, the purpose being to expand consciousness to its ultimate potential so that we become one with the source of all existence.

Are our efforts actually leading us to the state of Yoga? When we practice *asanas*, or *pranayama*, or meditation, what are we joining? Will our daily or weekly practice take us to the state of Yoga, of union? Yoga is all about uniting, about connecting. It comes from the Sanskrit '*yadhjyuti ithi yogah*' meaning 'one that joins'. Religion also has the same purpose, as the Latin root word *re-ligare* means 'to re-join'.

So if Yoga means 'one that joins', what is to be joined? Actually so many things are joined and integrated through Yoga – body, mind and soul; worldly and spiritual – but in particular our soul becomes one with its original state of balance.

That is the purpose of yogic practice. And the soul, in its own wisdom, is carrying that memory of its original homeland, which is absolute balance. So unless and until we regain the balance that prevailed before the universe was created, we remain restless. Even in the most luxurious life, the heart will still be yearning for something better. Our soul is the carrier of the original memory of perfect balance. Hence, nothing of this world can satisfy us until we attain that state of *samadhi* that prevailed before creation. And that can happen through a proper practice.

So on this International Day of Yoga, let's reflect for a minute: are our efforts actually leading us to the state of Yoga? When we practice *asanas*, or *pranayama*, or meditation, what are we joining? Will our daily or weekly practice take us to the state of Yoga, of union?

Asanas are designed to take care of the physical body, and have a purpose, but they are just one very small part of the whole field of Yoga. And they cannot refine the subtle bodies or touch the causal body, the soul.

In the last issue we focused on the five koshas – the five layers or sheaths of a human being. Asanas will only affect the outermost koshas – the outermost annamaya kosha and to a limited extent the next pranamaya kosha, and that too only in an ephemeral

KARMA, GYANA AND BHAKTI

way. So by practicing *asanas* how will we refine the mind? How will we touch the soul?

It has to be a combined effort. Ashtanga Yoga is a complete package of *yama*, *niyama*, *asana*, *pranayama*, *pratyahara*, *dharana*, *dhyana and samadhi*. So if we pick and choose just one activity because we like it, then it will satisfy only that one aspect. It will not be Yoga.

It is like going to work and choosing to do only one thing that you like the most. What will your boss think? Likewise, the whole system breaks down when we focus only on *yama* or *asanas* or *dhyana* – nothing will work. We have to find the balance.

But ultimately the true state of union comes from doing proper meditation or *dhyana*, and not every type of meditation is equal in this regard and will take us there.

Samadhi is the outcome of meditation. There are various stages of samadhi. In fact at every new place on our inner spiritual journey from one *chakra* to another, the states of consciousness we experience will be different. But generally three types of samadhi are described. The first is a totally unconscious stone-like state, where we have no consciousness of the condition given to us in meditation. The second is a semi-conscious dreamlike state, and the most refined, is the light, conscious, natural sahaj samadhi state, which comes after we have traversed the intermediate levels of unconscious or semiconscious stages along the way. Natural samadhi occurs when our consciousness is totally merged in the ultimate state, at one with that state. In the meantime, *samadhi* is a work in progress towards that natural *samadhi*. If we have to understand *samadhi* properly, *sam-adhi*, *adhi* means that which prevailed before the creation. What was the state of our consciousness at that time? We must regain that.

So whatever we do in our daily practice of Yoga needs to help us feel connected with our source, otherwise it is not really Yoga. And just as concentration is the result of meditation, Yoga is the result of doing the proper practices.

And when we connect with that sublime source, anything else that we do will also be permeated with some level of fragrance from the source. That is why Yoga is also called, "Skill in action." When we are connected, everything that we do will have that fragrance. Karma yoga, gyana yoga and bhakti yoga are often considered to be the three different paths to the Ultimate. Karma yoga is all about evolving through service and action. Gyana yoga is all about evolving through knowledge and enlightenment. Bhakti yoga is all about evolving through love, devotion and attachment.

It is wise to be selective in what actions, knowledge and devotional practices we choose. We need to ask ourselves:

- In *karma yoga*, what actions and service will refine us? What sort of *karmas* can connect us to the source?
- In gyana yoga, what sort of knowledge can elevate our consciousness? Gyana which can connect us to the source?
- In *bhakti yoga*, to whom are we devoted? What form of *bhakti* will connect us to the source?



¹ Ram Chandra, 2014. *Towards Infinity*, Shri Ram Chandra Mission, India

In *karma yoga*, any action must elevate the lower self to seek the higher Self. Such actions will ennoble us, and ennoble the very actions themselves, because it is our innate nature to do the best possible.

And what about gyana yoga? In his book, Towards Infinity¹, Ram Chandra of Shahjahanpur describes gyana yoga as the progressive unfolding of wisdom and knowledge from personal experience on the spiritual journey. He says that gyana in the real sense refers to the inner condition of the mind which develops while passing through different spiritual states at the different knots or chakras. Gyana is, in fact, the realization of the conditions prevailing at each knot. As our inner journey takes us through many knots, the knowledge gained will continue to expand as we progress on that journey. This is real gyana yoga.

And what sort of *bhakti* leads us to the state of Yoga? Worship in itself hardly contributes to our success. Love is best expressed through the heart, in all facets of our activities.

For example, at bedtime, when we know we are going to meditate in the morning, are we looking forward to that meditation, to being with the Beloved when we awake? Are we restless to receive Him in our heart? Every *bhakta* must analyze: How must we prepare our heart to receive the Beloved? With such preparations the heart will automatically yield.

If we create such an attitude in our heart that is so inviting, the Lord will have no choice but to descend and be a part of our existence. A beautiful fragrance will then radiate from us. It becomes automatic. Even if a flower is hidden in the crevices of rocks, the bees will find it, so how can God not know about an anonymous being filled with love? We don't really have to go in search of God in *bhakti yoga*. Be where you are, be pure, and be loving, and He will come looking for you.

Now, are these three paths really separate? In fact, *karma* without *gyana* is useless, and *gyana* without *bhakti* is useless. There must be a beautiful amalgamation of all three in our yogic practice. If

we perform *karma* in a loving way, knowing well the consequences of our actions, then *bhakti* will naturally develop. If the essence of *bhakti* is not there, *gyana yoga* will be paralyzed, and *karma yoga* will also be paralyzed. Likewise, *bhakti* without action and without knowledge about what you are going to do is also useless.

We have to integrate these three and continue on with a lot of faith, which comes out of experience. We need not have faith in the beginning.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY JULIA VERESK

SUPERCONSCIOUSNESS

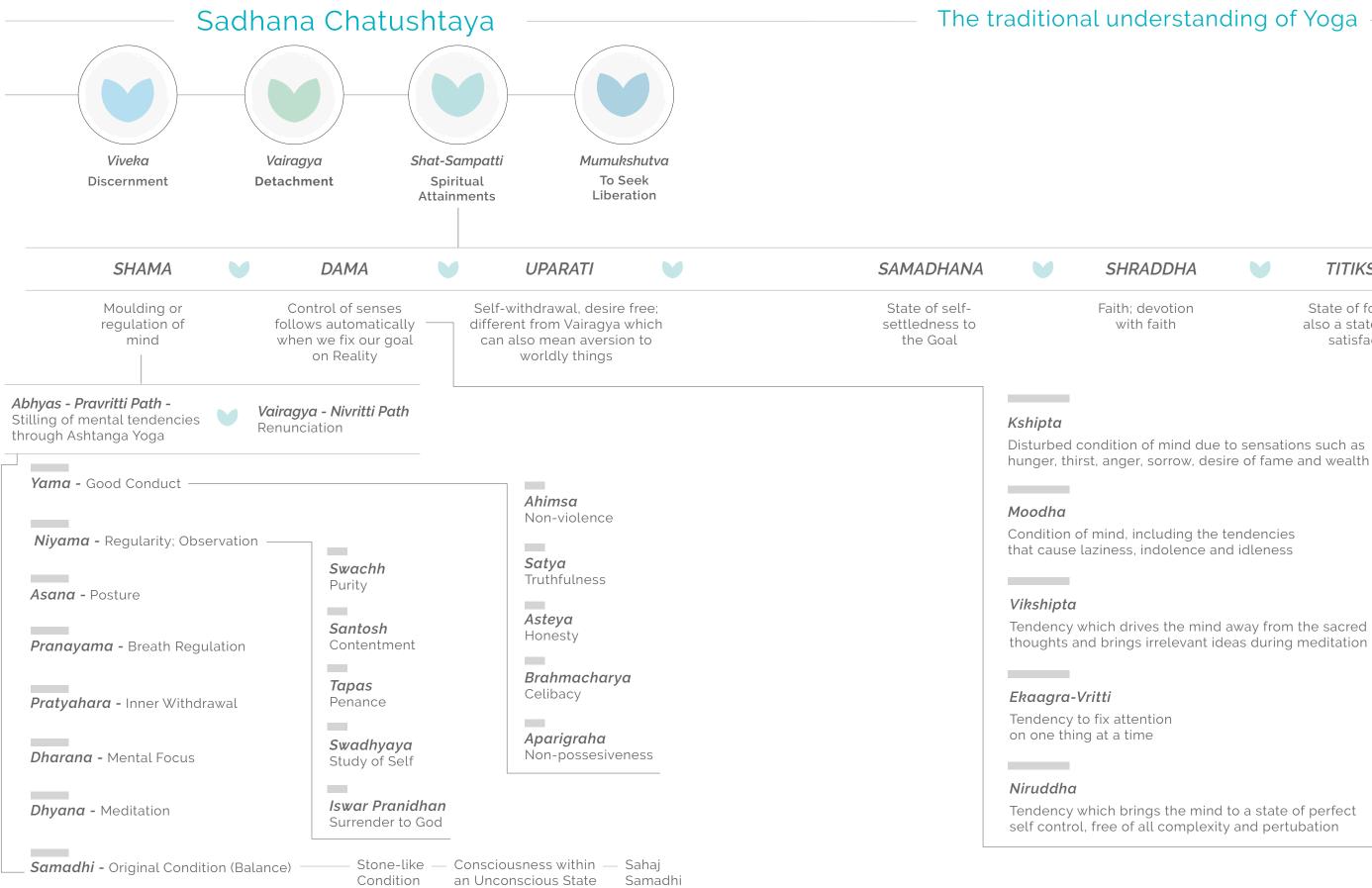
Yoga, when rightly done, will always guide us in the right direction. In the Bhagavad Gita, Arjuna asks Lord Krishna, "How should one lead a life?" Lord Krishna says, "Lead a life in divine consciousness." So consciousness is at play here.

In the words of Swami Vivekananda, through Yoga we are trying to make use of our available consciousness. In meditation with yogic transmission, in no time at all we allow our consciousness to soar higher into superconsciousness, from where we get inspiration. It is a matter of experience. The superconscious is all that is yet to happen – but it tells you ahead of time what to do. It inspires you to do things.

When this same available consciousness dives deep into the subconscious, we receive intuitive wisdom. The subconscious is the storehouse of our past experiences. At nighttime, when we offer prayer with a heart full for love, then the sleep that we enjoy after such a prayer is of a different order, a different nature. Yogis call it *yoga nidra*.

Right from the first day in Heartfulness we are able to experience these two states of superconsciousness and subconsciousness. *Rishis* have died aspiring for this, meditating for hundreds of years yet remaining thirsty for it, because they did not know where to receive transmission. My Adi Guru rediscovered this ancient yogic technique and distributed it to all of us. They trained us and they passed it on freely. That is our Heartfulness tradition – all are welcome. Yoga, when rightly done, will always guide us in the right direction. In the Bhagavad Gita, Arjuna asks Lord Krishna, "How should one lead a life?" Lord Krishna says, "Lead a life in divine consciousness."

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THE ELEMENTS OF YOGA
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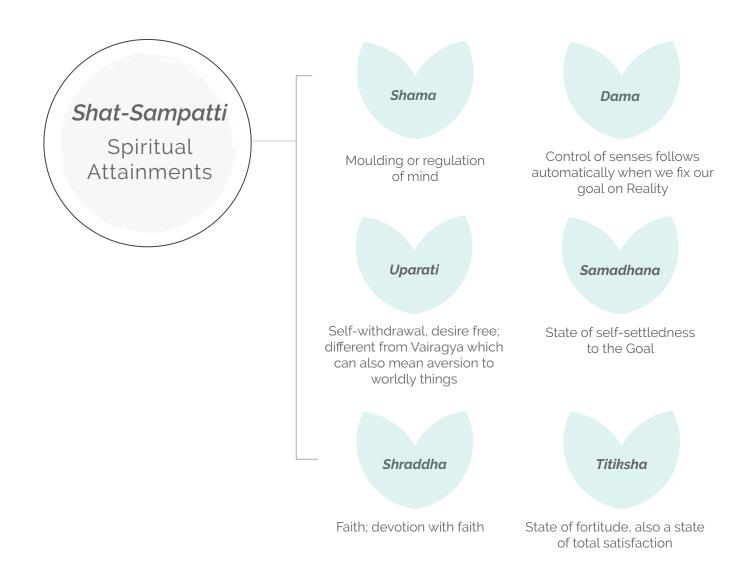
TITIKSHA

State of fortitude. also a state of total satisfaction

THE ELEMENTS OF YOGA

All thirty-five elements of Yoga are meant to be practiced together, even though each one contains a vast field of knowledge within itself. The thirty-five can be summarized within four main elements known as the four *sadhanas*, or *sadhana chatusthaya*.

Of these four *sadhanas*, let's focus on the Shat-Sampatti, or the six virtues. Within the Shat-Sampatti, the aspect of Shama, of molding and regulating the mind, is where all the practices of Yoga are to be found – Ashtanga Yoga practices, Hatha Yoga, Raja Yoga, and the 21st century practices of Heartfulness.



Patanjali presented his eightfold path of Ashtanga Yoga to the world a few thousand years ago, to take care of the physical, subtle and causal bodies of the human being, through *asana* to refine the physical body, *yama* and *niyama* to refine character, and the other five to refine the subtle bodies, in order to unite the soul with the Ultimate.

Today, things have evolved further, so that Heartfulness brings together all thirty-five elements of Yoga without having to take up each step individually. It is a complete package of simple practices for all who want to experiment and experience.

So at this time in human history, we can all experience the pure essence of Yoga, supported by yogic transmission and yogic cleaning. And what is the result? Oneness with the source of all existence

ABOUT KAMLESH PATEL

Kamlesh Patel is the world teacher of Heartfulness, and the fourth spiritual Guide in the Sahaj Marg system of Raja Yoga. He oversees Heartfulness centers and ashrams in over 130 countries, and guides the thousands of certified Heartfulness trainers who are permitted to impart Yogic Transmission under his care.

Known to many as Daaji, he is also an innovator and researcher, equally at home in the inner world of spirituality and the outer world of science, blending the two into transcendental research on the evolution of consciousness. He is expanding our understanding of the purpose of human existence to a new level, so necessary at this pivotal time in human history.





God is betrayed only when you betray an alive master – never otherwise. When I am gone, let it be finished. Then go and find out living masters. Then don't think you will be betraying Rajneesh: when he is gone, he is gone. Then God has chosen some other place to manifest himself – then don't allow me to hinder you, then don't let this idea become a barrier. You will not be betraying me. If you cling to me when I am gone, then you will be betraying me.

OSHO, FROM DIVINE MELODY, CHAPTER 5

PERFORMANCE

her emotions.

I was born by the Mediterranean Sea in the South of France, and was practically brought up on the beach, but the reasons for that call of the depths is difficult to explain. I think it has always been within me, since nobody ever steered me in that direction. When I was a teenager, in class I used to watch the palm trees swaying and I thought only about going back to the sea and the surf, kitesurfing, in order to be still closer to the water.

 $\{Q&A\}$ IN CONVERSATION WITH

CORALIE IMBERT

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Call of the FREEDIVING, MEDITATION AND

CORALIE IMBERT shares her love of both meditation and freediving, and how both have helped her to interiorize and live an inner journey, as well as manage

What attracted you to breath-holding diving, and what led you to attain great depths?

Actually, the relationship I have with the sea has developed in the same direction as my approach to life. To start with, I tried more extreme sports, such as free high jumping and skimming the surface of the water. Over time, it calmed down and I would rather swim, until I decided



when I sit down, I close my eyes, I turn inward and I enter another universe. It is a very vast universe, which I will discover every day, whether it be during meditation or freediving.

to try diving deeper. And that is how I attempted to hold my breath while I dived. In the adventure of my life, when I was younger I was very impulsive, with an explosive temper. As time passed, I started interiorizing, and I learnt how to live an inner journey, through meditation in particular.

In deep water, I can look for sensations, for experiences, but I can also surpass myself since I keep trying to go further down, deeper down. But what really attracts me is that feeling of peace, of wellbeing and the state of total relaxation I can attain while I am diving. What do you feel when you are in deep water?

What I feel is very similar to what I feel while meditating: being absorbed into myself. I am no longer either awake or asleep. Sports people who have that sort of experience call it being in 'the zone' or in a state of 'flow'. It means that we are totally absorbed in our activity, keeping all our senses alert, though at the same time we remain in a hyper-focused state of mind. It is very difficult to describe, and I think that state is different for each and every freediver. The best way to understand it is probably to try it.

How would you compare freediving and meditation?

For me, both practices are very close, as far as inner sensations are concerned, since they both bring about a calm, deeply relaxed state, relating to a profound discovery of the self. When you are free diving, you are cut from all external stimuli and you can see practically nothing. Personally, when I dive I use a nose clip and I close my eyes, so that I cannot see anything. Then, sensations are completely different from what you can feel in the open air.

In a marine environment, I enter a fantastic world, a world that is entirely different. It is the same with meditation: when I sit down, I close my eyes, I turn inward and I enter another universe. It is a very vast universe, which I will discover every day, whether it be during meditation or freediving.

Holding my breath, I am often confronted with emotions I was not aware of, and then I may experience tensions throughout my head or body. I must cross all these barriers in order to go deeper down and bathe in that peaceful and tranquil state I am looking for - but I can't be sure that it will be there. In meditation, too, my mind is not always free and thoughts may come and go, just like waves.



Does meditation help you progress in freediving and vice versa?

I think both practices reflect one another. I have gone through periods when I could not dive for several months, which was very hard for me. Meditation allowed me to recover some calm and an inner peace; it would also lift my spirits and help me keep my balance. Meditation also helps me better understand what prevents me from going deeper, so I can progress. Thanks to meditation, I can put into perspective what happens when I am out of the water. Finally, it helps me recover my strength: a 10-minute meditation is as beneficial as a 2-hour nap. I must say that meditation has greatly improved my ability to concentrate, making it easier for me to channel my thoughts, so that I can now focus on only one thing.



How can holding your breath help you manage your emotions?

For some people it may even be a therapy. For many years, that's what it was for me, even more than meditation. Breath-hold diving was like a breath of fresh air, which gave me peace and calm. If ever I felt bad, I would go in the water. Many people I observed have had the same experience.

My family has noticed it too. They say I am much calmer and more serene when I freedive, compared to moments when I do not. It has



pacified me. It is somewhat like the agitated surface of the ocean in which I previously floated. By diving into the depths I found that an enduring stillness prevails there.

Is the heart dimension important in breath-hold diving and why?

CI I think that the quality of one's heart is important in freediving, first of all physically. When we dive, we develop an instinctive reaction to immersion, a physiological adaptation that sort of trains the heart. We have what is called bradycardia, a slow heart rate, which develops when we dive. Meditation develops the same slowing down in our usual heart rate; therefore, meditating before going into the water allows me to be one step ahead of this instinctive reaction to immersion.

Furthermore, the heart dimension is essential in terms of emotions; the heart is where emotions reside. If I am not in a peaceful condition, my dive cannot possibly go well. So, I have to put all my heart in this activity, which for me has always been what matters most. So sometimes, when getting ready for a dive, I recall memories of love.

Meditation allowed me to recover some calm and an inner peace; it would also life my spirits and help me keep my balance. Meditation also helps me better understand what prevents me from going deeper, so I can progress. Thanks to meditation, I can put into perspective what happens when I am out of water. By evolving through med questions, I was in a p regulate my mind, and t stress and pressure. Toda different: I now live it as a

Can you tell us about the way a high-level apneaist trains?

The training varies from one athlete to another, but we all require a minimum of physical training, fitness and cardiovascular exercises. We often add a lot of breathing exercises, because before any breath-hold training, we must learn how to breathe, become aware of our breathing, and pay attention to it. We train in order to breathe better and thus optimize the body's resources. Then we have dry training exercises, since we can't possibly spend our time in the water, which would be quite exhausting. Deep freedives have to be done once or twice a day, but not at first, as it would be too high a demand for the body. Finally, some stretching and yoga exercises help in that preparation, notably some specific stretching exercises for strengthening the chest cavity and lungs, in order to favour a deep compensatory activation. That is necessary preparation due to the high pressure we have to endure when we are deep freediving; the body has to be prepared for these changes.

Then an important part is up to the mind, which is quite a deal for me, so I integrate meditation with some positive imaging exercises. They are very efficient, as their influence on the brain compares practically with physical exercises. As often as I can, I include meditation in my preparatory training. I

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meditate first thing in the morning, to start my day in the best possible way, and then before I go to the sea I always try to meditate at least for a few minutes, which allows me to be well-centered, keep that necessary heart dimension and being well entrenched in my self. I also include the Heartfulness cleaning practice every evening, which frees me of all the emotions accumulated during the day, so I can eel fresh at every moment.

Does meditation help increase performance?

CI I have been a high-level kite-surf athlete for many years, first without meditation and then with meditation. I can tell you that it really changed my world. I started meditation after realizing that something essential was missing in my approach. During competitions, I had to face stress, pressure and emotions I did not know how to manage at the time.

By evolving through meditation and asking myself questions, I was in a position to channel and regulate my mind, and to much better manage stress and pressure. Today my approach is totally different: I now live it as a competition with myself. I am not here to walk on anybody's head. Whenever I compete in free diving, I consider it as an opportunity to surpass myself, and also to share everything I've discovered. I share the techniques I use for training with everyone who is interested, and particularly with the girls who are going to take part with me in a freediving competition. We never walk alone, do we?

That, too, has come after many years of meditation, together with the philosophy that goes with it.

Do you have you a specific healthy lifestyle?

My lifestyle also came naturally from within. Little by little, I realized that it was much better for me to rise early in the morning and go to bed earlier in the evening, rather than go to parties at night. That is something I don't need or fancy anymore. I don't drink alcohol, I don't smoke, and I am a vegetarian. I live very well with such choices; they make me feel good and fit, and ready to face challenges and records. These choices do not cost me a lot, because they have come gradually, and are my way to be in harmony with myself. Every morning, as soon as I get up, I meditate, and at the end of the day I do my cleaning - in the same way I take a shower, I clean my head and my heart. It helps me sleep well and recover more easily. Such a practice has to be regular, my idea being to develop a meditative inner condition, and to maintain the peace and balance I find during meditation all day long. Eventually, I have seen that other people and the environment also benefit from it.

What did the members of the French freediving team think of Heartfulness meditation?

They were all well motivated. I think they appreciated it. It has not always been very easy for all of them. Many freedivers practice Yoga and are used to positive imaging and other techniques of meditation. Heartfulness meditation, therefore, was quite welcome and I am sure some of them will continue after having tried it here.

What are your plans concerning freediving and meditation?

CI My objective is to make full use of the resources meditation offers in order to go as far as possible into free diving. I also use other classical training techniques, for the body can't be forgotten; it makes the whole. I cannot say that meditation alone will help me reach a depth of 100 meters, but I think it plays its part in it. And obviously, the objective is to have other people, other freedivers benefit from it. And it could also be to have other people discover freediving through the practice of meditation, through a more spiritual approach, by involving the sporting world.

We often speak of the two wings a bird needs to fly; we have to balance our two wings, the material and the spiritual, and that is the approach I'd like to propose to people.

And what is your advice to those who would like to discover freediving?

Go and do it, but be careful you never do it alone. There are teams and clubs everywhere. You may come here to the Philippines, to the Freedive Headquarters, but all over the world there are schools with qualified instructors who are passionate and motivated. They will give you the technical basics for progressing safely while rapidly enjoying the discovery of that wonderful world.



Can you tell us something about th

CI Freediving has many benefits in terms of health and wellbeing. Freedivers generally take things easy and are very peaceful, just as you can feel after a deep meditation. Being immersed into the sea helps the body relax. In a weightless environment your muscles will relax; then it triggers the 'mammalian diving reflex': your heart rate slows down, peripheral capillaries get constricted, forcing the oxygenated blood back toward the vital organs of the body, and the spleen delivers extra oxygen-rich blood. That range of adjustments optimizes metabolism, the objective being minimal input for a maximal output.

The activities and stress responses of the sympathetic nervous system subside to the benefit of the parasympathetic system, promoting rest, energy-conservation and relaxation. Modern life often alters the balance of the nervous system, because it over-activates the sympathetic system, due to a cumulating stress and a lack of rest. This can sometimes go as far as burnout. The practice of freediving will allow you to restore that precious balance, in the same manner meditation does! •

Can you tell us something about the physiological effects of freediving?

INTERVIEWED BY MILES IZQUIERDO

The people who get on in this world are the people who get up and look for the circumstances they want, and, if they can't find them, make them. GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

ne heartful PRESENTER

Influence minds and win hearts

Have you ever walked out of a lecture feeling like you wish you had not attended? How many times have you felt bored, dissatisfied, and underwhelmed with the whole experience? Sometimes, this happens even with seasoned and high profile speakers. In this new series RAVI VENKATESAN starts by sharing his experience of why this happens. Where do the speakers fail?

Here are the key reasons speakers fail:

FEAR

Most people fear public speaking, which is known as glossophobia. In fact, it affects 3 out of 4 people. More people are victims of this fear than fear of death, spiders, darkness and claustrophobia put together. Fear is also the basis for negative emotions like anxiety, nervousness, despondency and even anger.

Many times people show up without adequately preparing. This leads to a vicious cycle of making mistakes, trying to cover them up, talking in circles, and leaving the audience feeling cheated.



CONNECTION



We all bring a certain presence to every situation. This is felt subconsciously in the form of vibrations by everyone that interacts with us. Our self-image often dilutes the presence that we could bring to public speaking.

The good news is that everyone can be great at public speaking. It takes understanding and applying the five most important aspects of presenting, and mastering them over a period of time with practice and diligent effort. These five are:

BODY LANGUAGE, VOICE MODULATION, PRESENCE, EMPATHY, AND IMPACT.

There are 27 Cs of communication under these five areas. By practicing these Cs you can also become a heartful presenter, so that whatever you speak will touch the hearts of your audience. You will win minds and influence hearts.

In the next few articles we'll dive deeper into each of these areas

Even the most polished, well-prepared presenters, fail to make an impact if they don't connect with their audience. Intellectualism and lack of vulnerability often prevents such a connection.



"A polished tongue in discourse or

conversation

influences humanity

and reigns supreme."

- Ram Chandra of

Fatehgarh

Children with problem

behaviors often need

some external reward

right direction, but once

to get started in the

they find how much

better they feel, they

are able to maintain the

new behaviors for more

subtle, internal rewards.

My son and daughter-in-law know that as a pediatric occupational therapist, I have experience using Positive Behavior Intervention, so they asked me to see what I could do to change these behavior patterns. I worked with Zoe on this, and we had some good success. I'd like to offer some of our strategies to other parents and grandparents dealing with problem behavior. Here goes ...

HIT THE PAUSE BUTTON AND HAVE SOME FUN TOGETHER

This can be hard when you're tired, frustrated, and in the middle of a difficult time with your child. But it's important. Take some time each day to do something together with your child that you both enjoy - building with Lego, reading stories, flying a kite, doing origami, planting seeds, singing songs, cooking, learning magic tricks, whatever. Let your child lead in choosing the activity, and then have some fun. This will break negative patterns and build a more positive relationship. The activity Zoe and I chose was studying gems and minerals together, something she had been requesting for a long time.

LIVING WITH THE New Children

Changing **Problem Behavior**

TERRAN DAILY shares her own experience of how to work with children to change their behavioral patterns, so that everyone in the family can be happier and more peaceful.

had a visit from my 7-year-old granddaughter Zoe some time back. Zoe is definitely one of the sensitive, strong-willed, electrically alive New Children, and life with her is not always easy. She had been taking up to an hour for simple tasks like eating a meal, brushing her teeth, and getting dressed. She would jump up and down from the table like a yoyo, and spend long periods gazing at herself in the mirror. Her family runs on a tight schedule, and this dawdling had been driving her parents bonkers! For Zoe and her parents, life had become an endless round of scolding, crying, frustration, ignoring, and loss of temper.

CHOOSE SOME **BEHAVIOR GOALS**

What would you most like your child to do differently? Choose 2 to 4 goals that are:

- Doable: aiding growth and challenging, but not so hard as to discourage your child. In occupational therapy we call this finding the 'just right challenge'.
- Positive: what you want rather than what you don't want, if possible.
- Specific and measurable: you both will know when the goal has been met.

The goals Zoe and I chose were:

- Eat each meal within 20 minutes,
- Remain seated during each meal, and
- Brush teeth and get dressed within 15 minutes.

NEGOTIATE THE GOALS AND SOME **INCENTIVES FOR MEETING THEM**

I told Zoe that I had a way she could earn time doing something she loved – playing an educational video game she adores. Her parents are careful about not letting her have too much screen time, so I had to be careful that all her 'prize minutes' would only add up to the 30 minutes screen time her parents allotted her. I offered her the following:

- Eat each meal within 20 minutes: earn 4 minutes for breakfast, 4 for lunch and 4 for dinner.
- Remain seated during each meal: earn 4 minutes for each meal.
- Brush teeth and get dressed within 15 minutes: earn 4 minutes.

She really liked this idea. We went over the goals to be sure each one seemed doable to her. Zoe is a picky eater and she wanted to be sure the meals would not include foods she couldn't stand. We made a list of the foods she liked so that no meal would be too distasteful to her. I did require that each meal contain a protein source and at least one helping of fruit or vegetables.

We approached each meal, and brushing teeth and dressing, with a sense of excitement and fun. In the 10 days she was with me, Zoe met her goals every time but once.

CHOOSING AND USING INCENTIVES

If you think about it, we all need some inspiration for changing habitual behaviors. We may change for some external reward such as extra pay or gaining recognition. We may change to make someone else happy or to avoid upsetting them. Or we may change simply to feel more satisfied or at peace with ourselves.

Children with problem behaviors often need some external reward to get started in the right direction, but once they find how much better they feel, they are able to maintain the new behaviors for more subtle, internal rewards.

When choosing incentives, consider the following:

Be sparing in the use of toys or other physical objects as rewards. Toys and possessions can be very strong motivators, and are sometimes exactly what is needed, but be careful. The house may become cluttered with prizes, and inflation may set in with the child wanting more and more expensive prizes. Also, reflect on what values we are teaching by giving material rewards. Are we encouraging materialism rather than interpersonal and spiritual values?



Focused time with parents or special friends and relatives can also be a strong motivator earning minutes building with Lego, making cookies, playing football, or learning to sew might be just the thing.

Consider 'Golden Time'. Created by English educator Jenny Mosely, Golden Time is a period at the end of the day when the child can choose from a number of favorite activities that are available only at that time. It is a happy and relaxing time that children love.



Be sure you are working with your child on behavior change, listening, respecting their input, and finding ways to make the process interesting and fun. As we know, attempting to dominate or coerce, just doesn't work with children.

Good luck! I hope you find these strategies helpful.

FURTHER EXPLORATION

- 1. Behavior at Home, on the Center for Parent Information and Resources website: http:// www.parentcenterhub.org/repository/behavior-athome/
- 2. Challenging Behavior in Children, on the PBS Kids website: http://www.pbs.org/parents/ inclusivecommunities/challenging_behavior.html
- 3. Glasser, H.N. and J. L. Easley, 2016. Transforming the Difficult Child: The Nurtured Heart Approach, Nurtured Heart Publications, USA

Connect. Integrate. Become One.



International Day Of Yoga 21 June 2017

CELEBRATE WITH US AT



PHOTOGRAPHY BY GABRIELE FONSECA

http://en.heartfulness.org/international-yoga-day/



June 2017 41

The Bhagavad Gita

ART ESSAY Collages and text by BRIGITTE SMITH

ne of the greatest texts for studying Yoga is the Bhagavad Gita. The text consists of 18 chapters and progressively guides us to apply its essence to our lives in order to explore the union between the Self and the Absolute.

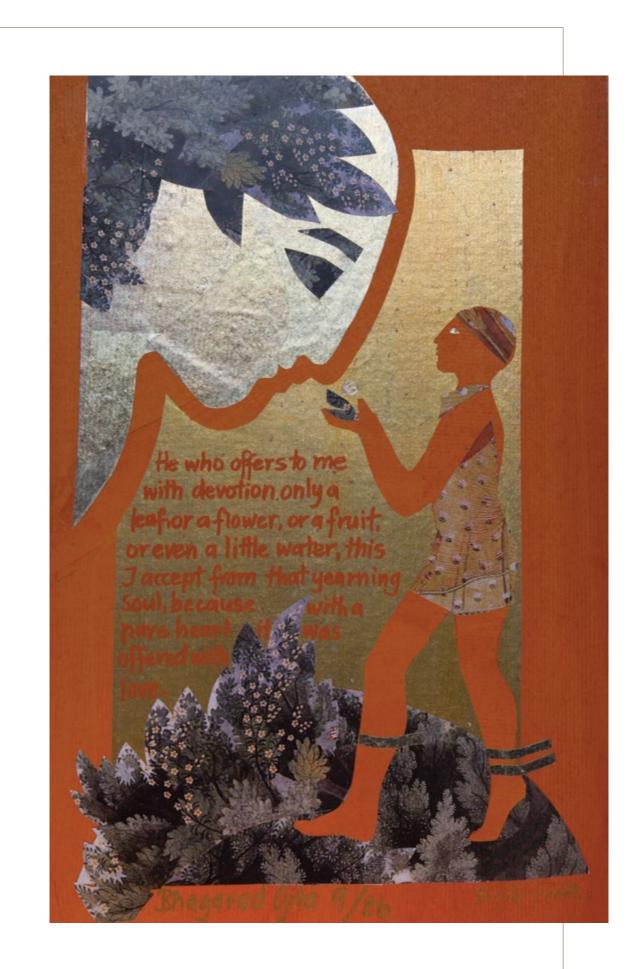
During my forty odd years of spiritual practice, I was guided by my Masters in their remarks countless times towards the Gita. It resulted in me studying it again and again. I also created visualizations, born out of the wish to support and enhance the experience of reading the verses. The work grew into 85 pictures, each trying to translate a verse for the eye and feelings of the reader. After that work, I noticed that I was not finished with the Gita by far.

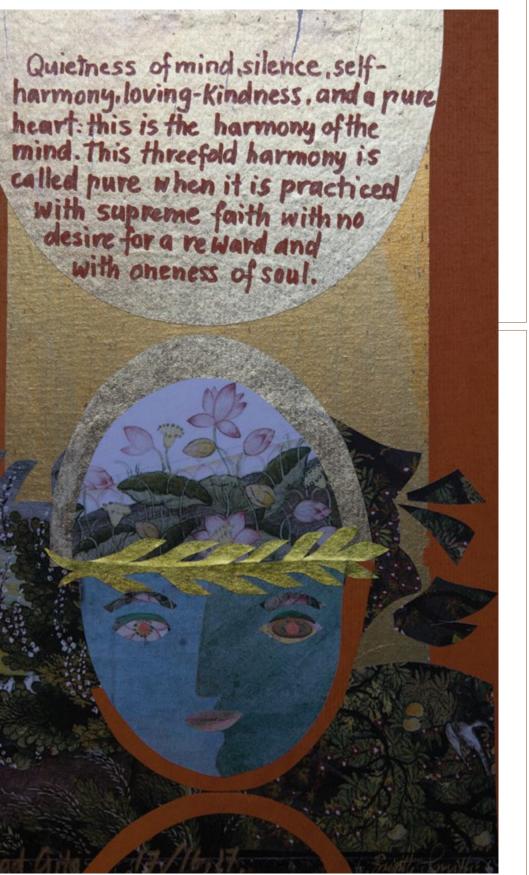
works of Sacrifice.gift. and selfharmony should not be aban doned, built should indeed be performed; for these are works of purification. So I created twenty collages – another visual approach. The content of these collages is intended to be a signal, to call us to face ourselves. I chose excerpts from the Gita that could stand alone as guiding symbols.

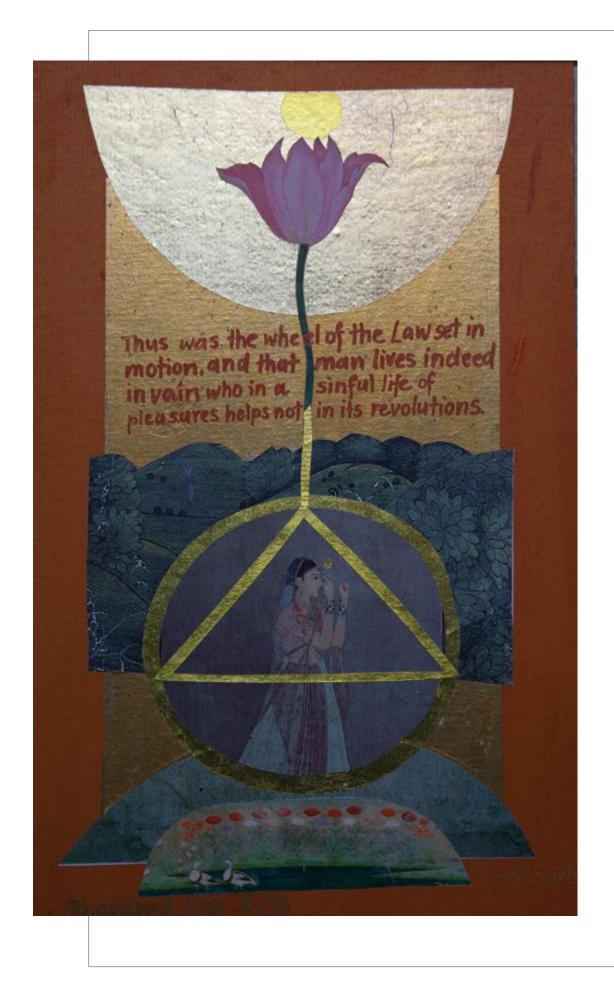
The prints on the paper used in these collages come from Indian miniatures in order to set the mood for the eye.

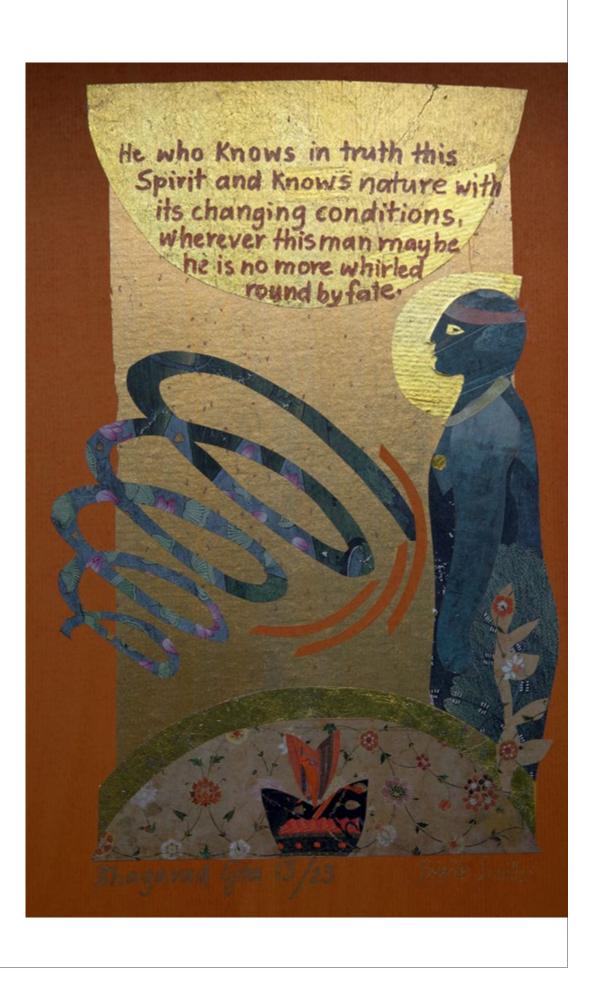
Now I am planning yet another exhibition on the Gita using a new approach, with a contemplative flow.

The truth is timelessly modern and the longing in us to reach beyond our limits is eternal ${\ensuremath{\bullet}}$











To feel overflowing love and almost unbearable compassion for all living creatures is the best way to fulfil the wishes of all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Even if for the moment you cannot actually help a sentient being in an external way, meditate on love and compassion constantly over the months and years until compassion is knit inseparably into the very fabric of your mind.

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For more than fifty years now, scientists have become more and more interested in meditation and its effects on the brain, about which 3,000 scientific studies have been published so far. DR RENÉ DESCARTES summarizes this research and the techniques used, in order to measure the physiological changes meditation brings and to explore its clinical benefits.

n recent years, many scientific publications have emphasized the benefits of meditation. Though meditation is traditionally associated with spiritual growth, it is often used as a relaxation technique and a stress management strategy. Many advantages have been described, in fact they are so promising that meditation is apparently a panacea, an activity that requires no equipment, has no side effects, and can be practiced by anyone after a short initial instruction, without any constraints of time or place. In spite of the thousands of publications since the 1970s, some of which are very interesting, considerable research work remains to be done to explore and verify these positive results. We often don't realize the extreme constraints imposed by high-quality scientific research. In particular, sufficient numbers of subjects are required in any study before we can generalize the findings to an entire population.

Also, meditation cannot be reduced to something objective. Moreover, between the subjective experience and outside observations performed with measuring equipment there is a philosophical discrepancy that should be given some thought. Spiritual seekers could refuse to be locked up in MRI equipment, and purely materialistic scientists could claim that meditating merely consists in getting embroiled in one's illusions and projections.

Despite all these challenges, it is exciting to elaborate on the contributions of science in this rapidly expanding domain. In recent years, many publications have been covered in popular media, The attention we pay to our inner world can be purely receptive and passive, or well focused on a particular object (a part of the body, breathing, an image, a *mantra*) or even based on developing a particular feeling such as empathy, benevolence, love, a non-judgemental attitude, etc. so much so that the general public now knows that meditation and science can come together.

Let's define meditation, and identify the part it currently and potentially plays in the medical sector, after briefly reviewing the current scientific research. Finally, we shall try to answer a few practical issues, particularly with regard to a method tailor-made for everyone.

MEDITATION

Dozens of technical processes for meditating have been identified, but they all have a common denominator: looking inward. Newcomers will often pay attention to the external environment. Through meditation, the participant turns inwards, trying to ignore any outside stimulus. The meditator will develop the attitude of a neutral observer, thus becoming both the subject and the object of the experiment.

Underneath this apparent simplicity, we are dealing here with a complete change in attitude. As a matter of fact, beginners often rate meditation as being extremely difficult. There is actually no moment in our lives when we are asked to adopt apparent 'non-activity' while being utterly aware, which is the difference between sleep and meditation.

The attention we pay to our inner world can be purely receptive and passive, or well focused on a particular object (a part of the body, breathing, an image, a *mantra*) or even based on developing a particular feeling such as empathy, benevolence, love, a non-judgmental attitude, etc.

These elements define three main families of meditation. Some types of meditation propose mixed approaches.

MEDICINE

It took only a few dozen years for medicine to move from insufficient means to technological superabundance. Diagnostic capacities have developed so much that it is now possible to dramatically change the course of events, particularly as far as acute diseases are concerned. Think of our current approach to heart disease and the emergency interventions that now allow an interventional cardiologist to save the heart muscle, a muscle that could not regenerate by itself after having suffered from a lack of oxygen. Not such a long time ago, for want of means, we treated the pain and let the disease take its destructive course. Nowadays, the number of deaths prevented and the reduction of disease-specific mortality have been impressive, as stents and other techniques make it possible to dissolve blood clots and have proper blood flow restored.

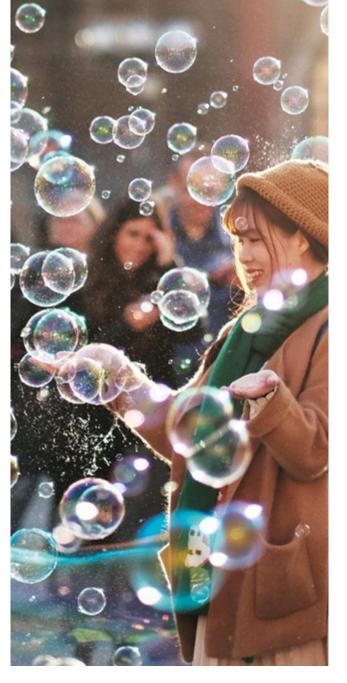
Yet, along with such remarkable improvements in the domain of emergency medicine, multiple complex and chronic diseases exist for which therapies are scarce and often quite inadequate.

For instance, treating pain has not changed much. Although analgesic medication is better known and prescribed, it is unsatisfactory as it is fraught with very adverse effects.

Therefore, as regards chronic diseases, there is obviously a major need for new therapeutic tools, and not necessarily medicinal ones.

BASIC RESEARCH ON MEDITATION

Research has mainly focused on answering the question: is meditation a unique practice, which allows us to reach a particular condition different



from other common states of consciousness, or is it a mere sleep-like state of relaxation? We know that some meditators, after having practiced regularly, have felt they were reaching very specific conditions, sometimes extremely pleasant ones, such as distortions of time and space, the feeling that they were floating, etc. Some neuroscientists questioned the possibility to ensure such states are fully objective. Wouldn't they be mere ordinary subjective experiences, like those you can have during sleeping and wake phases? What can be really measured and objectified in a person who is meditating?

EEG (ELECTROENCEPHALOGRAM):

It measures the electrical activity in the brain. It was first used in the 1920s by Hans Berger, and gave the possibility to differentiate brain waves types and therefore to understand and define brain electrical activity within healthy subjects. It allowed researchers to establish what abnormal electrical brain activity was like and better understand the wide range of epilepsy. The question that naturally arose was: does meditation trigger any particular electrical activity that is different from other states? In a healthy subject, four basic states were roughly differentiated: the state of anxious wakefulness with a predominance of beta waves (13-30 Hz), the deep relaxation state, with a predominance of alpha waves (8-13 Hz), the state of paradoxical sleep (REM sleep), with a predominance of theta waves (4-8 Hz), and a deep-sleep state with a predominance of delta waves (0.1-4 Hz).

Now, for people who meditate, significant modifications may already be observed after a few weeks, though they are hardly specific and rather akin to relaxation and hypnosis states. For example, a larger frequency band of alpha waves and a slowing down of the waves are noticeable, and after a few weeks practice, there is a significant onset of theta waves during meditative states. Such modifications make sense: a downturn in thoughts, which become less intrusive, less obsessional, will entail a slowdown in the brain waves influx. Recently, however, improvements in measurement have enabled us to bring to light the presence in meditators' brains of large amplitude waves, faster than beta waves and known as gamma waves (>30 Hz). Any normal individual will have some range of frequency of gamma waves, generally from 30 to 40 Hz, with low amplitude of ongoing oscillatory activity. These waves are thought to be a convergence of neural networks. Such electrical activity is thought to indicate neural plasticity, and usefully allow a long-term storage of information in memory circuits. This would happen during training, for instance. The gamma waves found in highly experienced meditators, however, have a faster frequency, between 60 and 110 Hz, and larger amplitudes. They are deemed to be the signature of unique and very specific changes due to a longterm meditative practice. We don't precisely know yet what these high frequency waves really mean, but their location makes us think they indicate an intensified capacity to focus.¹

NEUROIMAGING THROUGH CT (COMPUTERIZED TOMOGRAPHY) SCANNING:

This technique allowed the first exploration into the brain. But it is mainly through functional magnetic resonance imaging that we have been able to study not only the brain structure but also the way it all functions, by analyzing some located minute changes in the blood flow within the brain. These various methods have made many modifications easy to spot and describe, which we cannot cover here. Meditation activates some areas of the brain and deactivates others. Some of the changes are associated with certain types of meditation and not others. Certain zones in the brain may show a slightly increased size due to meditation, but it is only with experienced meditators that the effects of meditation become really significant.

¹ Increased Gamma Brainwave Amplitude compared to Control in Three Different Meditation Traditions, C. Braboszcz et al., Toulouse University, Research Center on Brain and Cognition.

These include measuring the electrical resistance of the skin, respiratory rhythm detection, magneto-encephalography, oxygen consumption, and cardiac coherence through a study of heart rate variability. Such measurements have helped shed light on further effects of meditation. Meditation has a calming effect on the nervous system, and it also calms many other physiological systems: heart, blood circulation and the activity of the autonomic nervous system. Thanks to such methods, it has been possible to show the difference between a meditative state and the state of a hypnotic trance.

REPORTS OF EXPERIENCES, OR APPLICATION OF A PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH

Qualitative research is becoming better recognized and utilized, allowing a crosschecking of quantitative data and the creation of a real spiritual science. If we apply the sociologists' methods, for example, we could compare the reports of a considerable number of practicing meditators and find commonalities between the different subjective moments they lived. Such an approach would also have the advantage of not presenting meditation only as an experience measurable by devices, however sophisticated those devices may be.

THE CLINICAL BENEFITS OF MEDITATION

Beyond the measurable effects of meditation on our system and brain function, great attention has been paid to its tangible clinical benefits. Several dozen have been assessed and considered for further investigation, and the resulting studies show the potential benefits of a meditative practice on almost all branches of medicine. The benefits are multifold: improved sleep quality, decreased depression, reduced attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), anxiety, addiction, chronic pain, blood pressure, etc.

Among other studies, I would like to mention the research published in 2012 in the American Heart Association Journal, which tried to establish the benefits of meditation in preventing a recurrence of myocardial infarction. On the basis of two daily sessions of 20 minutes each, after 5 years of follow-up, a decrease of 48% in the number of accidents was determined in the group practicing meditation versus a control group.²

Note that some publications indicate unwanted side effects linked with a meditative practice, for example, an eerie feeling of depersonalization. Fortunately, these effects seem to be very rare and appear to be related to insufficient training.

IS THERE AN IDEAL METHOD FOR MEDITATING?

The first clinical studies carried out in the seventies focused on Transcendental Meditation. Certain members of worldwide successful rock bands such as the Beatles and the Beach Boys practiced TM and meditation came to benefit from a first and significant wave of notoriety, attracting in its wake its first researchers. But since the period was characterized by a great number of excesses, meditation also developed an ambiguous reputation in the eyes of the general public. A lot of research has shown that the various families of meditation have different effects on the brain. But these results mainly concern beginners. Many researchers now accept that the changes observed in experienced people are similar no matter what the method of meditation practice.³ Here, the term 'experienced' means that the person has been practicing meditation regularly for a dozen years or more. The changes seen endure and are considered as being very specific.

Many meditation methods have been laboratory tested, but most of the clinical studies done concern the Mindfulness method. Though its structured protocol has made it very popular in academic and medical circles, the effects obtained from the Mindfulness method did not particularly stand out from those of other types of meditation.

Heartfulness yogic practice, which is beginning to arouse interest amongst researchers, though very simple, comes forward as a synthesis of the three groups of meditation. Its attention is focused on the source of light in the heart, and it has the advantage of very rapidly creating a steady state in those who meditate. The early investigations carried out by scientists have opened up a bright future for further research.

Moreover, hundreds of thousands of meditators all over the world have confirmed the capacity to rapidly attain a very deep meditative condition thanks to yogic transmission, sometimes from the very first session, or at least after only a few weeks or months of regular practice. The benefits are multifold: improved sleep quality, decreased depression, reduced attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), anxiety, addiction, chronic pain, blood pressure, etc.

It may also be stressed that a meditative practice could have multiple benefits for caregivers and during intervention. The quality of decisions taken is greatly enhanced by a centered and relaxed attitude. Meditation is not only a safeguard against many evils, it is also much more than a simple therapeutic process, according to several studies, and it can also improve academic performance.

But is that really why we meditate? Is there any question of improving performance or is meditation something more? What about an integrated development of emotional and spiritual potentialities? •

² Schneider, R.H. et al. 2012. Stress Reduction in the Secondary Prevention of Cardiovascular Disease Randomized, Controlled Trial of Transcendental Meditation and Health Education in Blacks. *American Heart Association Journal*, USA.

³ Fell, J, et al. 2010. From Alpha to Gamma: Electrophysiological Correlates of Meditation-Related States of Consciousness. *Medical Hypotheses* (75), pp. 218-224.

⁴ Thimmapuram, J. et al. 2017. Effect of Heartfulness meditation on burnout, emotional wellness, and telomere length in health care professionals. *Journal of Community Hospital Internal Medicine Perspectives*, USA.

Health, Sickness & Immortality

 $\{Q&A\}$

IN CONVERSATION WITH PATRICK FLEURY

In part 1 of this interview, PATRICK FLEURY explored the question, "What is health?" and how we can flow with the cycles of Nature. In part 2, he looks at life, illness and death, and our immortal nature. **Q** What happens with someone who is chronically ill? As a healer, how do you work with them to optimize their health?

PF If someone has a chronic disease, a bad disease, it is an opportunity to observe what is permanent and what is impermanent. We know that everyone is going to die one day, but what is going to die? Only the body, the energy that comes with the body, some aspects of the personality, but the real identity will not die. So for me what is important is to work with a person to help them be in connection with their real identity first. And to show them that they are not going to die because there is something permanent there, whether in a form or without form.

If they are connected with this aspect, they are more relaxed, they are no more afraid of death, because the main problem for health is the fear – there are many emotions, but the worst one is fear. If they are rid of the fear, health can come more easily. If they cannot survive an illness, it is not such a big problem, because they know that the soul has already programmed it.

It may be difficult to accept that when a soul comes into a body at the time of conception it has already decided where it is going to be born, which family, which country, which situation, and has its own destiny, deciding also when it is going to die. So when I take care of my patients, and there are some I cannot cure, I am able to say, "Relax. You have already decided when you are going to die. Whether it happens because of illness or an accident, you will die because your soul will withdraw itself from your body, from your personality. So now, have an intense life! Take every minute of this life, this opportunity, to be really present, to be there. Also to live, to do what you have not been able to do before." When my patients are able to feel it, then many things can change with health also.

But what is most important is that the doctor, the physician or the healer has to be in that state him or herself' not just to convey it, but to share it. When we do not have fear, patients feel it. When we are convinced about what we say, they feel it.

So again we come back to meditation – we have to feel it, we have to experience it. If we feel that something in us is immortal, where is the problem? It is just a change of form.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY: NATALIA YANKELEVICH / SHUTTERSTOCK.COM



What about working with people you know have an opportunity to recover?

PF There are always possibilities to recover if the soul decides it can continue in this if the soul decides it can continue in this particular life for its evolution; but sometimes people are stuck. In India, they know very well about reincarnation. In early Christianity and Judaism, they also knew about reincarnation. Our evolution takes many, many lives. So sometimes a person finishes a certain program and has to change form, like changing a suit of clothing, takes another body, so that they have the possibility to go ahead. But having said that, we have to make the most of the present opportunity, so when I treat a person I try to cure them the best possible way. I do not go into a fatalistic approach to the philosophy of karma. This kind of philosophy is helpful when it comes to simply accepting events, accepting ourselves, relaxing and taking some distance from the fear of death, which is the main fear people have.

When a patient is really relaxed, the energy in the body is working very well, and so it is much easier for them to regenerate their whole system. So sometimes I have seen miracles. For example, I remember one old lady for whom the doctors had said after opening her up in surgery, "There is nothing we can do." She was told that she would die within three months. Her daughter brought her to me just to help her, to accompany her, and of course I was praying for her. A few months later she was still there, and the doctors could not find the sickness anymore. I did not do anything, but she had another opportunity to continue. Beforehand she was very religious, but very strict and rigid in her beliefs, and then she started meditation and made a lot of progress in her relationship with God. She passed away four-and-a-half years later from a stroke.

I went to the hospital to see her before she died, and she was in a coma, so her daughter said, "Maybe we should stop all the machines she is on to keep her alive." But I was looking at her, and still her being was transforming in front of my eyes, her life force was there, and she was preparing herself to leave that body. I can tell you it was wonderful.

It is about the way we have of looking at people and sickness. Sickness can help us to understand who we are, to overcome many things, and to be more ourselves. And there is another aspect: today many people are not living in tune with Nature, so they are eating artificial food and they have lost harmony in their daily cycles of life. There is a lot of stress and ambition, which we see in politics and in countries fighting for oil, for water, for this and that. They want to be richer and richer, and this is for me the major sickness of human beings. Look at how we train our children; we want them to be elite and sadly we don't let them be in contact with who they really are. And then we want the elite to be at the best level of their performance, and if they are not there we say they are past it, they are over, and we throw them away. There is a difference between being the best and being excellent. We have to be excellent.

If we are really trying to be the best we can be, at our level, to continue to excel, we need not compete with others. When we compete with others, it produces a lot of sickness. If we are to understand the base of any sickness, it is because of our way of life. In fact many doctors and healers only treat the symptoms that appear after an illness manifests, but if we want to be healthy we have to change our way of life. First, we have to eat good food, balanced food, local fresh seasonal food. Why? It gives us the energy of the season so that we can be in tune with Nature in that season. The food gives the correct message to our body. We also need to exercise. There are options like Pilates, Yoga, Tai Chi, to walk, to run, to breathe. It is very important.

We also have to go to the next stage and deal with emotions. These emotions are coming from feelings, from real feelings, and so we have to be in contact with our inner feelings. And the best one is love; and compassion, to do good for others, to be benevolent. If you are like that, you are sure to be healthy, but it cannot be artificial. It has to come from inside, to be in contact. Ram Chandra used to say that emotions are the smoke of real feelings. So to be in contact with these real feelings is what matters.

The problem in the Occident is that we want to 'know' ourselves, and to develop the 'self', and it is a jail. It is better to try to be free of this jail, and this freedom is known as liberation. So if we truly want to be healthy, we have to be in contact with the real inner being, the one who is permanent. Here in France we speak of the soul, in India the *atma*, and the Chinese speak of *shen*. The words don't matter – that is not important – but if we exclude or refuse that spiritual level of existence, that major aspect of who we are, it is like being handicapped.

Then above that is the level of Reality, in which we are in contact with everything in this world, and every aspect of life. So we come back to this statement that, "The whole of creation, the whole universe is within us." •

INTERVIEWED BY ELIZABETH DENLEY

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Fresh Zucchini Pasta with Asparagus & Rocket Sauce



Photos & recipes by Simonne Holm Alkaline-Institute.com



Rocket (Arugula) Nut Sauce

	Dilu you
rocket/	Vari 1 ha
	1 cu 1/2 a ¼ te
the water	
(optional)	* Ca mac over
ouillion	Add and
	The fats

Prepare and wash all the vegetables

1. Spiralize the courgettes (zucchinis) into a bowl and set aside with a little salt to drain for water and make them soft.

2. Thinly slice the red pepper with the spiralize and set aside on a separate plate.

Season with salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste.

Tools: Use a spiralizer (as I did) or a mandoline or the julienne peeler to make your pasta.

In a blender mix and all ingredients.

Taste with Himalayan salt and pepper.

ute with water to get the consistency u like.

riation of sauce: andful of parsley and basil up of cashews* avocado ceaspoon cayenne

ashew soaked max 6 hours. Soak cadamia nuts for at least 7 hours or ernight.

d a little unrefined salt to the soaking d rinse before use.

e nut sauce contains a lot of healthy s and minerals.

Steamed Asparagus

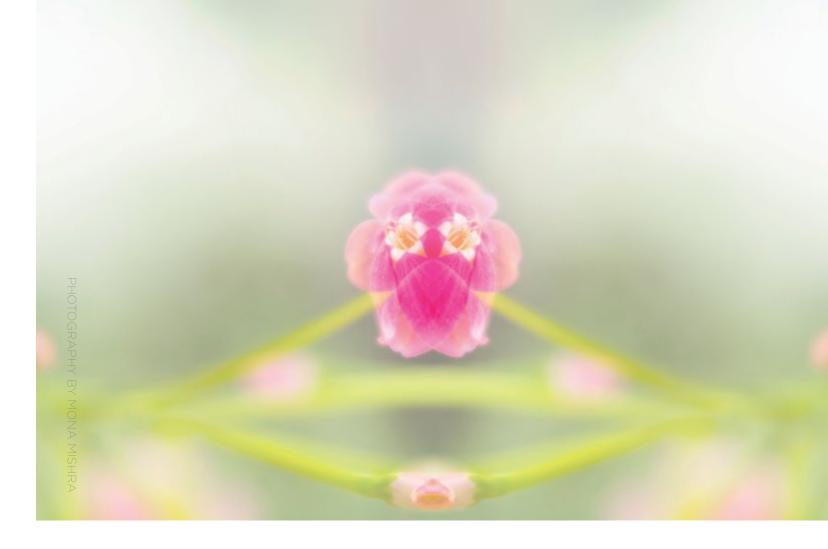
1. Place the spears in a steaming basket or pot with a little water underneath.

2. Cover and cook for 3-4 minute Drain them for water and place them on a plate.

Sprinkle Virgin Olive Oil, Himalayan salt, juice of 1/2 lemon over the asparagus.

3. Decorate your plate

4. Serve with the asparagus (you can also cut the asparagus in 4 pieces and mix together with the pasta) Grated nuts on top (cashew, almonds or any nuts you prefer) and serve immediately.



Eventually you will come to understand that love heals everything, and love is all there is.

GARY ZUKAV

BEING Eco-friendly

KAUSHIK SESHADRI shares his views as a consumer and a student of spirituality on what we all need to do as individuals to keep our home, Mother Earth, clean and healthy. Let's make use of World Environment Day, on the 5 June, to take stock of our own part in caring for our home.

he Earth is our home. Nature offers us its bounty generously, without any protest, but how do we return the favour? We all know that there is a pressing need to change our outlook, and the ability to discriminate between our wants and needs is a huge step in this regard. It is long overdue that we realize the harm we are causing our mother Earth with our un-mindful actions.

Even the toothbrushes we use are thrown into garbage dumps without any option to recycle. Imagine the number of toothbrushes we use in one lifetime, and multiply that by the population. Can you visualize the quantity of plastic we are disposing? Given the amount of plastic we use in our day-to-day life, recycling is not viable, either by a government-backed entity or private enterprise. This non-degradable matter will resurface in the near future. What do we do then?

Proponents of natural living have long been exploring the opportunities untapped, unheard, and unthinkable to a sophisticated mind. Have you ever thought of having luminescent bulbs without electricity? Or cool air blowing onto your face without an electrical appliance, like an AC or fan? These are some of the initiatives that social activists in places like Vietnam, The Philippines, etc. are giving people who have no electricity. Just a PET bottle full of water with a drop of chlorine in it will make use of the refraction of light to shine as a luminescent bulb. Likewise having a small windmill on top of houses reduces the consumption of power to a large extent.

The world now is collectively waking up to the need for new possibilities. Countries have finally accepted the ill-effects of fossil fuels and alternative sources are being explored. Universities have for a long time been funding research in bio fuels, solar power and wind energy for retail and industrial use.



While organizations are taking cognizance of the urgency to switch to an eco-friendly way of living, much needs to be done at the individual level, starting in households. How can we all contribute to lowering the carbon footprint on this Earth we call home? How do we enable a smooth transition from the research phase to the consumption phase without much resistance?

We now have organizations that support the promotion of integrated townships, well-equipped with organic waste disposal, leveraging wind and solar power, in-house treatment of sewage and having a self-sufficient structure to cater to the daily needs of households. But does it do much to convince the consumers who have the power to make a difference?

A RADICAL SHIFT IN THE CONSUMER MINDSET

The need of the hour is that as consumers we are made aware of the environmental impact of the choices we make. The thought of contributing to the economy is already ingrained in us, but now the impact of caring for our environment and resources must also be ingrained. When we become aware of the ill effects of plastic, we grow averse to using plastic and will definitely choose a substitute for it. This happens collectively over a period of time and as our behavior becomes more mature and thoughtful we will herald a better world.

As consumers, can we be mindful while making a purchase, asking ourselves:

WAS THE PRODUCT MANUFACTURED ETHICALLY?

WAS IT MADE USING RESOURCES OPTIMALLY?

CAN THE PRODUCT BE RECYCLED OR REUSED?

IS IT CHEMICAL FREE?

IS THE PRODUCT CAUSING ANY HARM TO THE ENVIRONMENT DURING ITS USE, AND WAS IT CAUSING HARM WHILE IT WAS PRODUCED?

WAS THE PRODUCT MADE LOCALLY?

These questions will help in finding the right products so that we become responsible consumers.

When we become sensible in our purchases we actually bring a change in our economy. By practicing eco-friendliness, we support a green economy. That will benefit any nation working to follow the Kyoto Protocol to bring down the carbon footprint. Being eco-friendly is not just profitable for businesses in the long run; it is also good for our homes, our societies and the world in general. Let's start thinking of the world that we are to gift to our children. After all, for any student of spirituality the whole world is home, and its inhabitants are all family •

LESSONS FROM THE GARDEN -

Chickweed - part 1

ALANDA GREENE shares her experiences of weeding her garden and her inner garden of tendencies and character traits, and makes peace with herself in the process.

t's late spring – the time of year when garden growth is prolific, determined, persistent. Sometimes overwhelming. Especially the weeds. They require attention that is also determined and persistent, but in spite of my efforts there are always weeds that escape my notice and grow too big, too much. Removing them now causes disturbance or harm to the other plants.

The behavior of weeds is no different from that of humans and other creatures. The weeds want to survive and have evolved ways to maximize that chance. My own ways of being in the world are the same. Those tendencies, habits and attitudes I try to eradicate are no different. They have developed skills for endurance. It's their nature, like the weeds.

I recognize tendencies in me that want to survive, ideas about who I am and who I should be, and how I need to be in order to lead an effective life. Some of those ideas are like the healthy plants I have planted and some are like the weeds that arrived from who knows where. But in dealing with weeds, I learn about me.

Chickweed, for example, has developed clever ways to thrive and survive. When it shows only two tiny leaves above the ground, hardly visible at all and apparently posing no threat, it has already grown a substantial long root. It's easy to remove at this point, if it is noticed, but it is often overlooked. I pull one tiny plant and see the fine rootlets already branching from the long white central root stem. When I miss removing the plants when they are small the roots spread wide and gain a firm hold in the soil. They seem to grip each other and become stronger, like those school games where everyone holds hands





and becomes invincible against the charging big kids who try to break our chain.

Above ground the chickweed is quite weak. Trying to remove the roots by pulling the stem rarely succeeds. It breaks off. The roots sprout more green and life goes on. Removing the chickweed early is the most effective way but it seems so inconsequential at this stage. I recognize how I can ignore what seems to be a small thing. Maybe I think that particular thought or attitude is too small to bother with; maybe I think that I'm dealing with big ideas and can't be focusing on every little thing. Maybe it seems too small to matter, that it won't have any consequence. But when I catch those things early – just a couple of teeny leaves poking out of the ground – then it doesn't grow into something problematic. The way chickweed breaks off where it emerges above the soil – I've seen that same strategy in myself. I feel like I've pulled out a troublesome behavior, removed the wayward thought pattern and can metaphorically brush my hands free of it. Gone. Like the chickweed pulled away above ground. But in neither case is it so. It is gone from visibility only, but the weed still thrives underground, just out of reach of my fingers or my attention. No worry – it will emerge quickly again.

Above ground, chickweed displays the same branching pattern as the roots do as it grows. It threads and winds among the lettuce, carrots, petunias, onions, and almost anything it can seize in its growth process. When I try to remove it now, it grabs leaves and stems. It's hard to trace back to where it emerges from the ground. It appears in one place but its roots are somewhere quite distant and What are weeds really? They are plants in the garden that interfere or choke out what has been planted there. I respect their living energy. In the case of chickweed, I've developed a fondness for the flavor of its leaves in salads. But the potential of the garden is limited if the weeds are left to grow wild. apparently not connected to this visible portion. I see similar patterns when examining character traits I want to weed out.

What are weeds really? They are plants in the garden that interfere or choke out what has been planted there. I respect their living energy. In the case of chickweed, I've developed a fondness for the flavor of its leaves in salads. But the potential of the garden is limited if the weeds are left to grow wild. My own potential is also hindered if I don't make effort to remove the weeds. They are obstacles to my own evolution.

Sometimes I don't notice the weeds in the garden, and sometimes I don't want to deal with them. Then, suddenly, all I seem to see is weeds. Everywhere I look, they are there and I feel like a bad garden mom. In my daily life, sometimes I avoid examining my speech and actions. The results catch up with me. As with the weeds, I feel inundated with flaws, faults, weaknesses, the parts of me I don't want to exist. I end up in an emotional puddle of "What's wrong with me?"

This approach, the polarity of avoidance and overwhelm, is not an effective strategy. If I don't use loaded words like 'flaws', 'failures', and 'faults', and insert in their place the ideas of 'obstacles', 'hindrances', 'transformation' and 'choice', I make an effective step in meeting the inner weeding task with awareness and consistency. My focus then shifts to questions like: What am I choosing to express in my life? What qualities do I want to strengthen? What values do I choose to live by? How can I manifest these? Then, the things that get in the way of these choices can be faced, transformed, and left behind. And faced again and again. Like the garden weeds. I can release the emotional drama of focusing on what's wrong, to what the situation is and what needs to be done. There are weeds: remove them. There are obstacles: transform them.

Viewed from this perspective allows me to release my concepts of right and wrong, a good garden mom or a bad garden mom, how I might be or should be, how my garden should be, how I should be a better weeder, and how I should be as a person. It's easy to slip back into, "By now I should be free from these character traits that I don't want! I thought they would be gone by now. I don't like still seeing these in myself." Viewed dispassionately, being free of these patterns is about as reasonable as my garden being free of weeds.

My garden will never be weed free. It's big and fertile and organic and it grows a lot. I can accept (but sometimes forget) that the work of weeding, inside and out, will never end. It's an ongoing process. No big deal. Just do it! ●



Prejudices, it is well known, are most difficult to eradicate from the heart whose soil has never been loosened or fertilized by education; they grow firm there, firm as weeds among stones.



CHARLOTTE BRONTE

some amazing medicinal plants

In this series, we present medicinal plants from all the continents on Earth starting with the European Ash.

the european ash

botanical name: Genus: Oleaceae. Species: Fraxinus excelsior

COMMON NAMES: Ash, common ash, weeping ash, bird's tongue.

habitat:

Found in most parts of Europe from the Mediterranean in the south to the Arctic in the north and to the Caucasus and western Russia in the east.

mythology:

The Vikings considered the ash to be sacred. They called it the 'Tree of Life'. Even today it is known as the 'Venus of the Woods'. In Norse mythology, the Ash Ydrasil was an immense tree growing out of the Well of Urd ('Urd' meaning destiny). It was in the middle of Asgard, where the gods and goddesses lived, at the center of the world. The ash spread its crown and branches across the nine worlds. In European shamanism of ancient times, trees were often seen as the means of transportation between the worlds. It is important to understand that the Ash Ydrasil and the Well of Urd were symbolic of the Norse spiritual worldview – they were thought to exist in the invisible heart of everything, including humans. The Well of Urd symbolized the past, and the accumulation of impressions in the subconscious – the reservoir of completed or ongoing actions that nourish the tree and influence its growth. The Ash Ydrasil represented the present – how we live our life in the here and now. There was no real thought of the future, only the interaction between the past and what we do in the present.

The water symbolized intention, flowing up from the well into the tree and then as dew dripping back down into the well. This represented the fact that time was thought to be cyclical rather than linear. The present returns to the past, changing the past, and the past is reabsorbed into a new present.

All beings were thought to have some say in designing their own destiny, and the destiny of others, expressed as the dew that dripped back into the well, changing the effect of the past. But it was not an active, conscious process in most people –

only in those who were thought to be magicians – those who could work with destiny. There was no absolute free will, and no absolute fate. Life was lived between these two extreme views.

The sacred wood of the European ash has been burned for as long as we know to ward off evil spirits.

description:

A large tree that grows up to 40 meters. It reaches a normal age of 200 years, but there are some trees older than 500 years.

The leaves appear late in the spring and fall in the early autumn. The small flowers appear before the leaves and are purple to black, lacking normal petals. The ash starts flowering when it has reached 30 years. Trees have female flowers or male flowers, and occasionally both. The ash is also known to change its sex from year to year.

The ash trees are usually pollinated by wind, and the seeds are dispersed by wind.

plant parts used:

The bark, leaves and sometimes the seeds.

therapeutic uses:

There's a very long history of using the European ash as medicine. The Greek physician Hippocrates (460-377 B.C.) used it to treat patients.

St Hildegard von Bingen (1098 – 1179), the German writer, composer and philosopher, writes of using the ash as a treatment for gout and rheumatism.

The leaves, bark and young twigs contain hydorxycoumarins that inhibit the growth of bacteria and fungi. These properties could make the ash beneficial as a treatment for healing wounds and sores and reducing swelling. They also contain phenolic acids, tannins and triterpenes, which are all used in traditional herbal medicine.

The bark is used to reduce fever and as a substitute for quinine. The bark and leaves have traditionally been used as a remedy for diarrhea.

The coumarin called fraxin that is found in the bark and the leaves has diuretic properties that may increase the excretion of uric acid. Due to these properties the bark may help treat gout and rheumatic disorders, such as osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis.

Bladder and kidney problems are also treated with the bark, including the removal of stones in the urinary tract.

current ecology:

Sadly, it looks like this sacred tree will be wiped out in Europe due to a fungal disease, ash die-back, and a beetle called the emerald ash-borer. Both have migrated from Asia. This will change the landscape of Europe, and also affect the biodiversity of other wildlife that depend on the ash trees, including birds, mammals and invertebrates, as well as fungi, mosses and lichens.

And what does it mean, that the sacred tree that existed at the center of the world in the Norse psyche, is disappearing? •



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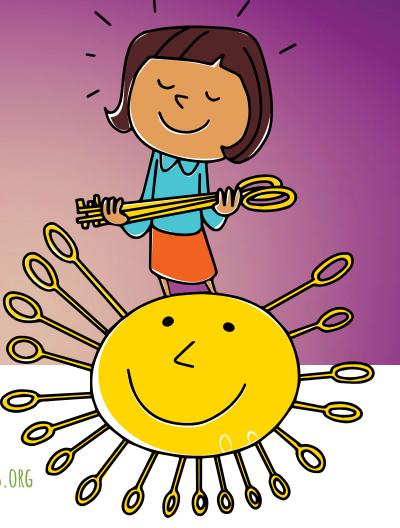
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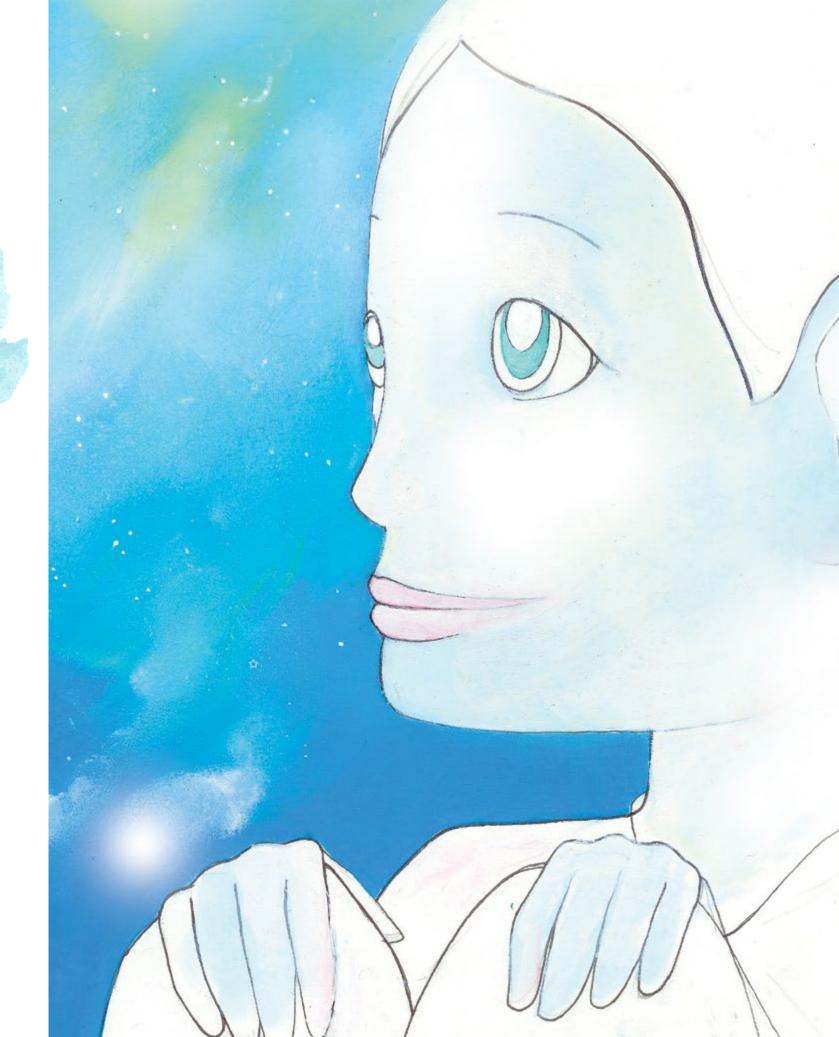
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THE HIDDEN POTENTIAL OF YOUR MIND A GIFT FOR A LIFETIME

The Great Stories of Pure Generous Heart

ure Generous Heart. You may be thinking, "Now that's an odd name." Well, I must admit it is, but in these stories you will see his big heart, which is beautiful, pristine, generous, compassionate, loving ... Ah! The list never ends.

It is our heart that is our best friend. In times of sorrow it comforts us, in times of joy it radiates love, and when it comes to making a decision it guides us in the right direction. The stories of Pure Generous Heart resonate with our deepest feelings of love, compassion and purity. The adventures of Pure Generous Heart are never boring, as you will soon find out yourself. Happy reading!



SHEER BRUTE STRENGTH WINS THE DAY

"Hi, Pure Generous Heart." "Why, hello there Sheer Brute Strength."

You see, one fine day, Sheer Brute Strength set off on to find his colleague Pure Generous Heart. Now, Sheer Brute Strength was very strong; you could tell that just from his name. His muscles rippled with pure energy as he moved, and his Herculean strength was the talk of the town.

So, Sheer Brute Strength approached Pure Generous Heart inquiringly and said, "I was told you could help me. After all you are generous, no?"

Pure Generous Heart smiled, "Go ahead and tell. I will definitely help you."

"Well," said Sheer Brute Strength, "I have signed up for this big sporting event next week. The challenge is to swim down the great river in the valley. The first to reach the finish line will win many wonderful prizes, especially a magnificent state-of-the-art racing bike. What a bike! It beggars description in terms of performance, and when you ride it, it practically flies. I am telling you ... "

"And what do you want me to do for you Sheer Brute Strength?" interrupted Pure Generous Heart gently, for he knew that once perched firmly on his favorite hobby horse, Sheer Brute Strength would continue for hours! "I want you to help me win the bike."

Pure Generous Heart paused for a minute and then said, "All right. I will help you win. But first you must show me this river you have to conquer."

Pure Generous Heart and Sheer Brute Strength arrived where the river was at its stillest and widest. The banks of the river were lush green, reeds grew in large clumps where glittering dragonflies hovered, and tiny green frogs leaped about in joy. The willows along the banks of the river bent low and caressed the serene waters.

Indeed it was a beautiful sight.



for Pure Generous Heart, he refrained from questioning the strange request and closed his eyes and sat still. "Take your time. Sit very still, relax, and let the feeling come to you. Be patient. Wait. Feel," whispered Pure Generous Heart.

feeling, it's not quite the same as looking and describing: I feel very nice things. I feel the soft wind, the smell of damp earth, I hear the music of the water flowing, the song of the birds – they sound really happy these birds. I feel a little warm under the sun, but it's pleasant thanks to the cool breeze flowing feel so many things! I feel I can see even more than with my

"Okay, now you can open your eyes and tell me how you intend to train for the swimming race." "It is a tough training, Pure Generous Heart, as this is a very hard race! I will be pitted against some very strong swimmers. And if I have to win this race, I have to be the strongest. So I run, I swim, I workout, and I train every day," said Sheer Brute Strength flexing his sinewy biceps.

The corners of Pure Generous Heart's lips twitched, "Ah yes, I see your muscles! But do you think you can become stronger than this great river?"

"Well, I never thought of that. Now that you ask, I'm not so sure. The river too is very strong; there are passages with rapids and the undercurrents beneath the surface are deceptively strong."

"Listen, if you want me to help you, here is what I suggest. I do not think you can be stronger than the river, and for the sake of humility let us say that you may not even be even stronger than the other swimmers. Rather than viewing the river as a foe to be conquered, what you need to do is to feel this river, perceive it, fathom how it seems so serene on the surface whilst flowing strongly underneath. You must be able to move in its water without losing a single ounce of your energy. Rather than swim fast, against the current, you must be able to flow, like the water itself. Be the water, be the flow, be the river."

"That sounds amazing! It's a cool idea, but how can I do it?"

"Well, we are going to do what we did earlier. We will close our eyes and try to feel what the river does to flow so effortlessly. Descend into your heart, inside the deepest depths of yourself and gradually, you will understand the river better. And soon you will be able to be one with the river, swim without strain and with feeling. Come let us sit together."



Pure Generous Heart and Sheer Brute Strength reaching your goal that matters, how you reach closed their eyes in deep contemplation. They the goal also matters. Today, you have already earned something more precious, a treasure that delved deep into their hearts and meditated you have deep within you, a wealth you can tap for what seemed a long time. When they had into any time you wish. You just have to close your finished, Sheer Brute Strength said, "It was eyes, meditate in the space of your innermost core wonderful, I think I have unraveled the secret and you will find there a magnificent friend who of the river. She knows she will reach her goal will help you every day - your very own heart!" simply by letting herself flow along her riverbed. Nature is her ally. In Nature, she is confident and trusting."

Pure Generous Heart was radiating joy at the wise words of Sheer Brute Strength: "My friend, you too can trust Nature. Even in your everyday life, you can trust Her. Well, as regards winning the bike, even if you don't, how does it matter? It is not incorrect to be focused on your goal, but if your desire is solely the result you will miss out on all the learning of the journey. It is not only

Sheer Brute Strength felt light and content; he was already starting to become as tranquil as the river. And the bike? Ah, well I don't think the bike mattered any more to him. If you were Sheer Brute Strength would it matter to you so much after such a beautiful experience? •

> STORY BY YVES BENHAMOU ILLUSTRATIONS BY THOMAS KLEIN

Experiments with Under



ater is important for us to stay alive. Did you know that 60 to 70% of our bodies are water? If we go even for a few days without water, we risk our survival. Also every cell in our body needs to water to feel good. So let's explore a bit more how we affect the water we need for life.

Here is an experiment you can do at home or at school. It is based on the scientific work of Dr Masaru Emoto from Japan, who investigated the effect of feelings and thoughts on water.

- Fill a jug or water bottle with drinking water and put it on a table in front of you.
- Close your eyes and send loving feelings to the water. When you have finished doing this, sip a little of the water.
- How does it feel to appreciate and love the water and then drink it? How will it change your body if the water you drink is full of love?
- If you want to be scientific, you can compare the taste to water that has not received your loving feelings. You can also do this experiment multiple times to check if the results are repeated every time. You could also do this with your friends and use blindfolds so that the tasters don't know which bottle has been used.



Words and images also have an effect on the water. Dr Emoto found that when water is placed on a picture of a dolphin, the frozen crystals of that water change into a beautiful pattern. If a positive word, such as 'gratitude', is put against the water the same thing happens.

Take some small pieces of paper and write different words on them, e.g.

You can put the paper writing-side-up and place water bottles on the words. You can also try with different images, and with different types of music •

Have fun with these experiments and let us know what you discover by writing to:

contributions@heartfulnessmagazine.com.

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