

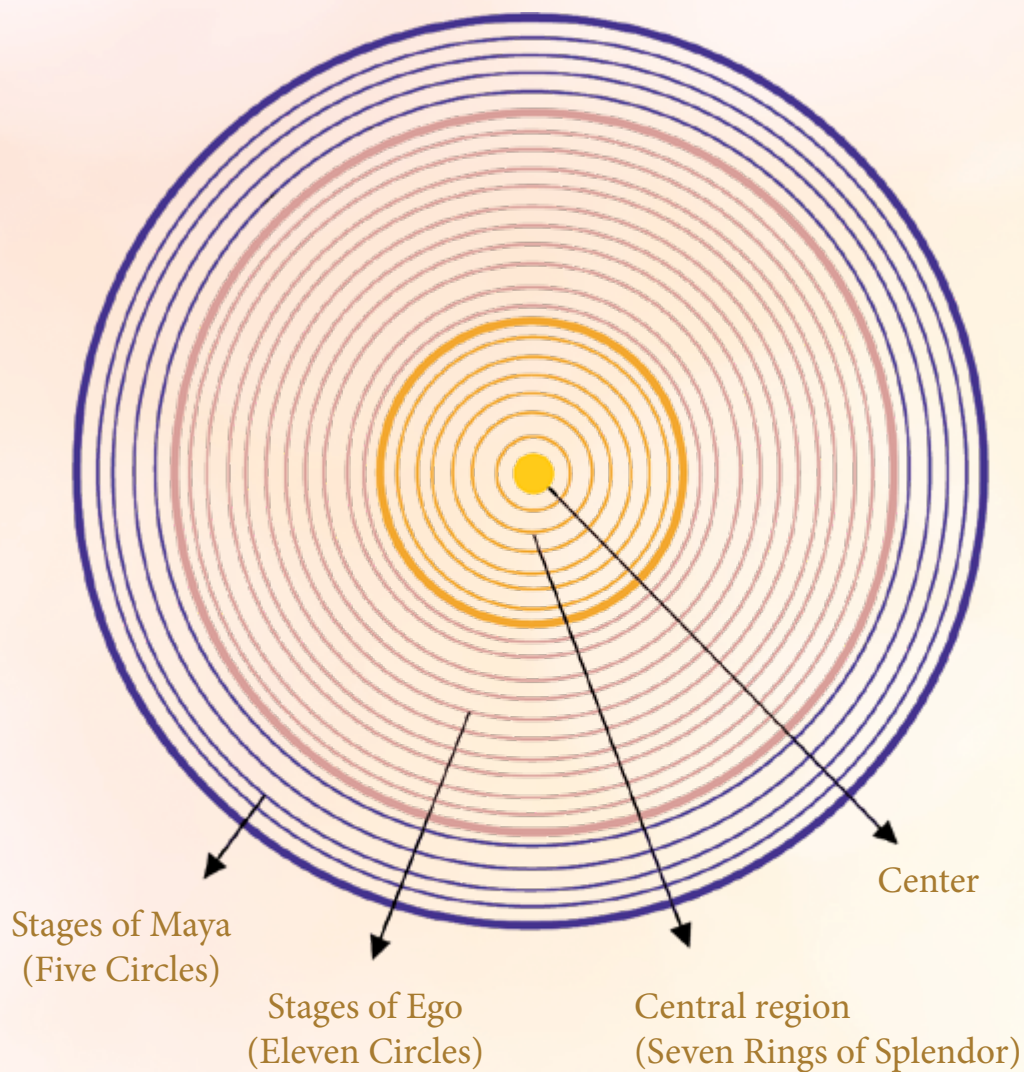


TRANSPORTED ON *a Beam of Love*

Dear friends,

In the 1940s, Babuji Maharaj wrote a series of books in which he described the inner journey of a human being to the Center – the absolute state that existed before the universe came into being and the creative source of everything. He also described the obstacles along the way and offered solutions to those obstacles. Even more amazing was the fact that he told us just how simple it is. He freely gave us the solution, offering himself as a guide, and using simple diagrams to help us understand the journey. The most profound esoteric wisdom was suddenly available to the whole world. Babuji welcomed everyone who came to him from all cultures, age groups and backgrounds, without distinction. His dream was that we would all advance in love toward the Center and discover our highest potential as human beings. He guided us from his personal experience, describing the journey scientifically, and his diagrams and instructions are accurate, clear, and simple.

One of these diagrams is the 23 Rings, showing the various stages or levels we pass through on the way inward to the Center. We start from the outer circumference and pass through the chakras that define the anatomy of our subtle body. Babuji also described three regions in which these chakras are to be found – the Heart Region, the Mind Region, and the Central Region. These are all stages along the way to the Center. If you are not familiar with Babuji's descriptions, you may like to read his books on the subject – *Reality at Dawn*, *Efficacy of Raja Yoga*, and *Towards Infinity*. Even better, you may experience the journey for yourself. Of course, the 23 Rings are not real, just as lines of latitude and longitude on a world map are not real. They are simply reference points.



The March to Freedom

How are we propelled on this inner voyage? We are transported on a beam of love. But there are obstacles on the way. What are these obstacles? How to overcome them?

Just as a beam of light is deflected by even the most transparent glass, creating distorted vision, the beam of love is also deflected by even the most subtle filter. If there were no filters, we would all experience the pure love flowing directly from the Center, and we would not need this inner journey. But the nature of our human existence is that we do have filters, and as a result we must journey step by step through these 23 Rings, expanding our capacity and potential as we move toward the Center.


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Between the circumference and the Center are many filters. At the periphery, our love tends to be outward-focused, fulfilling the pulls and pushes of our desires. For example, a child's love is pulled by parents and toys, a teenager by romance and friendship, an adult by family life, career, sports, hobbies, possessions, and digital gadgets. Sometimes greed, jealousy, envy, competition, and resentment take over. Love then becomes possessive and self-seeking. When this happens, our love is trapped, the same way a beam of light is unable to escape the black holes in intergalactic space. Gradually, through our practice, we learn to master these emotions and focus on a higher perspective, with better understanding and correct thinking. While we continue to love our families, our work, etc., we also develop higher awareness. The mastery of emotions gets us to first base. Then, we must face ourselves at the various junctures as we continue along the way.

We begin our journey in the Heart, with the five rings of the Heart Region. Each juncture is associated with an emotional filter, starting with our desires. The progressive transformation we undergo is all about letting go of the filters.

The filters we experience are actually things we know well. For example, in a relationship with a spouse or partner we often imprison each other. Out of hundreds of couples, rarely are three or four blessed with authentic love. Most are possessive. Other filters include our belief systems, like our religious beliefs. These lead to prejudice against those who have different beliefs, whether it is about religion, politics, or ideology. Then there are our principles, which we generally hold very dear, for example, the need for honesty and justice. While many of these principles are very noble, if we are dogmatic in our affinities, we will not be able to forgive and let go, instead always fighting for what we believe to be right. This creates a distortion – we may even end up hating people – and it deflects the beam of love away from its trajectory toward the Center.



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A good example in popular culture is Anakin Skywalker from Star Wars. Anakin had the potential to become one of the chosen Jedi who would restore balance to the Force, and he was a caring and compassionate youth. But he later developed an affinity for deep resentment over the deaths of his beloved mother and his beloved Padme, and this eventually led to him morphing into Darth Vader.

Ego is the dark side of existence. The farther we are from the source of Light at the Center of our being, the longer the dark shadow feels. What or who is satisfied by ego? When someone agrees with us in the face of strong opposition

from others, that person becomes our best buddy! Why? At the other extreme, when someone who is really close to us strongly disagrees with us, we often lose our balance.

Desires are much simpler to deal with than ego, because once fulfilled they will not arise after satiation. They might repeat themselves, but the time duration is respectful. Also, the desire for food and the fulfillment of other senses are natural to a large extent. With the ego, it is a continuum with no respite. The ego thrives on power and position ... rather on anything that will promote its survival. This trait differentiates us from the rest of the animal kingdom. The very thing that is meant for growth seems to work against our expansion of consciousness.

The danger of such a fall is not there for animals and trees, but the advantage of further conscious evolution is also absent. Behaving like plants and animals does not grant us evolution, though their ego remains non-existent. We can only free ourselves from the incessant demands and weight of the ego by becoming buoyant, by becoming one with the infinite Ocean, by identifying with the invisible Divinity. When we identify with the external world, we remain ever engaged with it, with no limit in sight. This is akin to creating a web and getting stuck in it.

The external is always required to fulfill our *prakritik* or sensual desires; dependency is on the outer. Such a dependency makes us slaves of wishes. A tiger kills a buffalo or a deer by instinct to survive. A male lion has his pride of six females for procreation. This is nature. To put it precisely, external nature. We may be free from rasgulla, biriyani, or pizza, but never from the need for food. What about the fulfilling of the ego of a person? Is ego God given? It is self-created. It stems from the inner, invisible world.

We can easily understand the need for quenching thirst and hunger, and fulfilling libido – they are essential and part of nature's plan. Is ego also nature's gift? When the stomach starts to feel heavy and painful, it is a signal from within that any more food is going to create trouble. There is usually a warning for the non-essential. The ego is also non-essential, and fulfilling the

non-essential is against individual health, be it physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual.

Every time, I receive a mail based on need, I either reply or file it. When I don't respond, often the sender writes back asking, "Daaji, are you upset with me?" They somehow force me to respond, expecting me to say, "No, no, I am not upset with you." Such exchanges are meaningless and a waste of time for all concerned. Those who thrive on such coddling and pampering of the ego will hardly ever go deeper within. The ego always demands attentive pampering from outside, preferably from someone similar, the same type, or someone you venerate so much.

Why the same type? What is the use of wearing a suit and tie in the Indian parliament? Who will envy you? What is the use of wearing a diamond necklace and a blouse made from gold thread in front of Swami Vivekananda or Ramakrishna Paramahansa? Will they feel envy? Instead, your ego will fall flat because of their lack of admiration. Ego is the outermost boundary taking you away from your Center. From that outermost frontier, it becomes difficult to listen to your own heart. Instead, you are closer to others and their opinions. Such a tendency is toxic for a spiritual person.

The ego often identifies with collectives: For example, you may develop national pride, believing that your country is the best at the expense of others. Scientists and spiritual people may also become narrow-minded, believing their views to be the only correct ones. The disease of "I know. I am right," is perhaps the biggest pandemics we all face. It is a critical filter that deflects the beam of love.

The more we attach to our beliefs, our principles, and our prejudices, the bigger the obstacles blocking the beam of love, preventing it from transporting us to the destination. Our collective ego is especially dangerous because it leads to a mob mentality. We see this in religious bigotry and when societies become polarized politically, and these prejudices lead to hatred, violence, and sometimes war. In such environments, the people around us often reinforce our own beliefs instead of helping us to see other perspectives. We become even more narrow-minded.

But affinity can also be our friend, taking us in the opposite direction toward inclusivity. This happens when affinity is truly loving. Then our awareness expands, and that is the spiritual journey. How do we learn about affinity? We start experiencing it from the very beginning in the womb with our mother. As we grow, we meet other people with whom we feel affinity. We develop affection towards children, and love for our equals. We feel love, trust, and faith in our elders, including the Master who guides us. This is all a by-product of affinity, and it waxes and wanes as we continue on our inner journey. We experience all these things, asking ourselves, “Whom to love?” “With whom to associate?” “Whom to trust?” etc. Affection deepens into love, and eventually dissolves into a state of surrender. That’s when affinity matures into devotion.


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The speed at which the beam of love moves is faster than the speed of light, so if we could remove all the filters, we would reach the Center in no time at all. When the obstacles created by these filters deflect the beam of love away from the Center, we suffer so much. Some filters, like prejudice, jealousy, envy, greed, and anger are so effective that they function like an underground nuclear bunker – they don’t allow anything to penetrate. They prevent the beam of love from working its magic.

In recent times, I have become more and more aware that the ancient Indian traditions have so much to teach us in this regard, especially the Bhakti Sutras. We usually translate Bhakti as “love and devotion,” but it is more fundamental than that. It is the feeling of connectedness with everything through the heart – the link of our individual consciousness with the universal divine consciousness.

Without Bhakti, everything we think and do is missing the vital element of enthusiasm and joy, so it lacks purpose. Bhakti is our lifeline on the inner journey; it keeps us connected with the beam of love. It would be precise to say that Bhakti fuels the beam of love.



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The ego knows only the language of dominance and personal victory, not of love. The language of humility, anonymity and openhearted flexibility is foreign to an egotist, who simply cannot understand. The journey to the Center takes us progressively from one ring to the next, one dimension to another, and if we don't adjust then we struggle to adapt to each new environment. That's why sages speak of the need for character refinement, *akhlaq*. They know from experience that we need to adjust our behavior to the changing inner environment of the spiritual topography, and love allows that adjustment to happen. For example, when we reach chakra 2 of the Heart Region, a godly place of peace, calm and freedom from the world of matter, is it appropriate to shout at a loved one? That sort of forceful behavior does not match the inner dimension of chakra 2.

In *Towards Infinity*, Babuji describes the progression from chakra to chakra. At the first chakra of the Heart, he asks us to get into full consciousness of the condition that has been enlivened in us by the Master during meditation, then to imbibe it, so that we become one with it. Through this process we naturally develop greater and greater affinity. At the second chakra, he reminds us that it is our intense Bhakti that has propelled us to this next dimension.

We can say that the intensity of Bhakti is proportional to the access granted into the second chakra. This is a deeper level of affinity – Bhakti. At the third chakra, we experience the fire of true love, which in turn attracts the divine Grace, propelling us further on the journey. This deeper experience of affinity is so potent that it attracts a response from the Center itself. In this way, each dimension builds upon the previous one, while we are transported on the beam of love.

We learn about love through relationships. They are our training ground for love. Affinity expresses as affection with young ones and family members, and affection deepens into love among equals, but this is also where the ego comes in the way. The discipline of self-study is vital if we are to avoid the disintegration that would otherwise set in. This is what happens when we fall out of love.

While affinity is a necessary step in developing love, it can also be a trap. If we become attached at any particular level, we remain stuck. For example, when we focus only on the family, we cannot expand our love to the community, or to the next level of humanity at large, or to all of creation. When the channel of love is narrow, we are unable to love all. We need to keep expanding our capacity to love and let it engulf the world in order to have true Bhakti. This true generosity of heart is a consequence of spiritual practice.


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Generally, the progression goes like this: From affinity to affection to love to *shraddha*. *Shraddha* is a very high attainment where true faith develops into surrender. We go through all these progressive stages. But what happens next?

Where do we end up? The purpose of Bhakti is only to help us travel smoothly and effortlessly on the beam of love, so that we can merge with the Absolute. In mergence, the filters of our desires, our emotions, and our ego have been cleared so that the trajectory is smooth. You may think that by now we have reached the Center, but there is more. Only now, having reached this state of mergence, does the real journey truly begin! Simply put, once you drop your desires, liberation is guaranteed; once ego is dropped, merger happens instantaneously.

Now we enter the Central Region, and within it there are seven circles, known as the Rings of Splendor. We continue to move forward, experiencing superconsciousness of the finest type. In this region, consciousness assumes its original form. This is the realm of Reality, beyond the rings of desire, emotion, and ego. Here we move through various levels of subtle identity toward non-being. The Central Region starts with the stage of automatism – the subtle awareness that everything is being done automatically. There is no longer a sense of “doership” in any activity. This automatism is effortless and in tune with Nature.



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At the next stage, the sense of automatism disappears. The easiest way to understand this is to imagine being in a state of deep sleep while going about daily life. In this state of unknowing, actions leave no impressions. There is no involvement in thought or action at the mental level.

Further on, as the beam of love carries us still closer to the Center, the state of unknowing is further refined to become pure identity. All limitations are gone, but it is not the end. There is still latent motion.

We then keep swimming toward the Center. Babuji describes the Center as motionless and “Infinite within itself,” where pure wonder and amazement of the highest type are found. It is this motionless Center that maintains the latent motion that is responsible for the whole Universe.

Babuji also describes the Light that emanates from the Center, which travels to the outer edge of the Central Region, creating a “ring.” He uses the word “Light,” but says that there is really no word to describe it. Perhaps it is that Light that gives the seven circles of the Central Region their name, the “Rings of Splendor.” What do you think? What we do know is that the only way we can cross that ring to enter the Central Region is on the beam of love, and that requires total dependence on the Master.

With heartfelt prayers,

Kamlesh

Kanha Shanti Vanam

On the occasion of the 66th birthday of

Shri Kamlesh Patel

28 SEPTEMBER 2021

heartfulness
advancing in love

