

heartfulness

purity weaves destiny

The Inner Fire
without Smoke

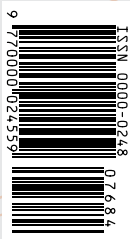
DAAJI

Can Meditation
Change Your
Brain?

**KRISHNAMURTHY
JAYANNA**

Integrative
Wellness:
Bringing Balance
Back to Modern
Living

**DR. RAGHUVeer
S.N.**



Belonging



“

My heart was in a cage. My life was a long struggle to find happiness, to overcome fear, and to find love I had lost. I did not give up, and that is what my story is about.

—ICHAK K. ADIZES

”

Presenting a wonderful life journey written by Dr. Ichak K. Adizes

Seeing every challenge as an opportunity for growth, Dr. Ichak Adizes moved beyond a childhood marked by imprisonment in a Nazi concentration camp and immigration to an unfamiliar country to discover the benefits of opening his heart.

Dr. Adizes's personal story is more than a string of external events that propelled him through adversity after adversity to become the insightful, compassionate person he is today. It is also a map of his journey into a heart which, like the accordion that he played to earn a living and put himself through school, ultimately expanded and opened up to the universal truths that connect us all in our humanity.

The Accordion Player is a compelling account of a remarkable life — an unvarnished view of a man whose decision to recognize the value of change and creative conflict allowed him to love. His story reveals the enduring human ability to turn possibility into reality.

Foreword by Daaji

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FIVE PRESCRIPTIONS FOR THE SOUL
from the
ASHTAVAKRA MAHAGITA



Daaaji,
Kamlesh Patel
Author

Despite years of growth, meditation, or self-improvement, certain emotions—old resentments, past conversations, inner conflicts—continue to resurface. The Five Inner Medicines addresses this persistent challenge with clarity and depth.

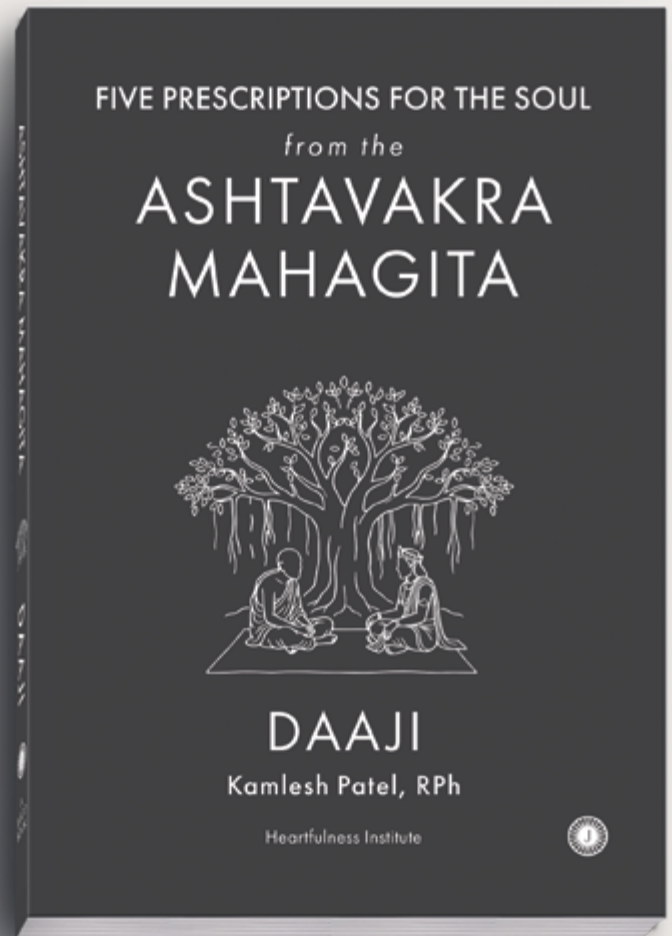
Inspired by an ancient exchange between a king and a sage, this book presents five powerful disciplines—*kshama* [forgiveness], *arjava* [sincerity], *daya* [compassion], *santosha* [contentment], and *satya* [truth]—as remedies for the mind and heart.

Through the wisdom shared by Daaaji, this book goes beyond theory and invites you into a reflective process:

Are you ready to apply these “medicines” in the right way?

A key teaching emphasizes treating worldly attachments (*vishayas*) with caution—like poison (*visham*)—to regain mastery over your thoughts and emotions.

This is not just a book—it is a structured pathway to emotional clarity, inner freedom, and lasting peace.



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Belonging



Dear readers,

We belong to the people and places we care for, and that care for us. That belonging makes us responsible to one another.

In Daaji's "An Inner Fire without Smoke," Babuji's bond with Lalaji rests on a sense of belonging that shaped both his attitude and his actions. When Lalaji eventually placed his work in Babuji's hands, Babuji carried it forward with the devotion and care that had always defined their bond.

That kind of belonging threads through this month's issue. Belonging is not possession. It is a quality that awakens in us a sense of responsibility arising from within rather than being imposed from outside. One of our essay winners writes that a single tree stands alone, while a forest endures through the interweaving of roots and branches. In "Carbon-Neutral Campuses" and "Heartfulness in Schools," that responsibility extends to the world around us and the people who share it.

Alienation says, "Not my problem." Belonging says otherwise. That difference in attitude shapes everything we do.

We welcome your reflections, experiences, and other submissions. Please visit heartfulness.org/magazine/contribute or scan the QR code below.

Happy reading,
The editors





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DAAJI

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“Almost everything will work again
if you unplug it for a few minutes,
including you.”

ANNE LAMOTT

Integrative Wellness

Bringing Balance Back to Modern Living



A whole-person approach to health shows how daily routines, emotional awareness, rest, movement, mindful living, and meditation work together to support lasting well-being.

BY **DR. RAGHUVVEER S.N.**

In today's world, people are surrounded by more health information than ever before.

Every day, there is a new diet trend, fitness challenge, supplement recommendation, or productivity routine promising a "better life." Yet, despite this, many individuals still feel exhausted, mentally overwhelmed, emotionally disconnected, and physically out of rhythm.

Somewhere along the way, wellness became fragmented. One person focuses only on food, another focuses only on exercise, some chase mental peace while ignoring the body, while others care for

the body but silently carry stress, anxiety, or emotional fatigue.

True wellness, however, cannot be built by addressing only one part of life. This is where the need for integrative wellness becomes deeply important. Integrative wellness is not merely a combination of different systems or practices. It is a more complete way of looking at human well-being—one that understands that the body, mind, emotions, lifestyle, relationships, rest, and inner state are all connected.

A person may appear healthy on reports and still feel unhappy.

Someone may eat well but live under constant stress. Another may meditate regularly but ignore sleep, movement, or daily discipline.

Health is not only the absence of disease. It is the *presence of balance*. Today's lifestyle has made imbalance common. Fast routines, screen dependency, irregular food habits, emotional burnout, poor sleep, social isolation, and constant mental stimulation have gradually disconnected people from themselves. Many are searching not just for treatment, but for clarity, stability, peace, and sustainable well-being.



Health is not only
the absence of
disease. It is the
presence of
balance.

People no longer want only temporary solutions; they want to understand how to live better. At Wellness by Heartfulness, this philosophy is not approached as a trend, but as a practical way of living. The focus is not only on addressing health concerns, but on helping individuals reconnect with a healthier rhythm of life—physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.

Rather than overwhelming people with rigid rules, we focus on awareness, consistency, and gradual transformation. Wellness is approached through multiple dimensions together—mindful

living, emotional well-being, healthy routines, inner balance, movement, rest, food awareness, and self-connection.

One of the most beautiful aspects of integrative wellness is that it respects individuality. Not every person requires the same routine. Not every mind responds the same way. Not every body needs the same pace of healing.

Some individuals may need emotional support more than physical correction. Some may need discipline in lifestyle. Others may simply need a space to pause, breathe, and reconnect

with themselves. At Wellness by Heartfulness, this understanding forms the foundation of how we work. We believe wellness cannot be forced. It must be cultivated patiently through awareness, support, and conscious living. Heartfulness practices play an especially meaningful role in this process. In a world where the mind is constantly occupied, learning how to slow down internally has become essential. Meditation, relaxation, introspection, and inner balance are no longer luxuries—they are necessities for sustainable well-being.



Wellness is not built in one day;
it is *built in daily living*.

When the mind becomes calmer, people naturally begin making healthier choices. Sleep improves. Emotional reactivity decreases. Clarity increases. Relationships improve. People begin listening to their own bodies again.

Wellness is not built in one day; it is *built in daily living*. Integrative wellness also reminds us that prevention is more valuable than waiting for a breakdown. Small daily habits, including proper rest, mindful eating, emotional regulation, movement, silence, meaningful connection, and mental balance, can shape long-term well-being more powerfully than occasional corrective efforts.

As the world speeds up, the importance of slowing down with awareness becomes even greater. Integrative wellness is not about rejecting modern life, nor is it about choosing one system over another. It is about creating harmony between different aspects of life in a practical and meaningful way. At its core, wellness is deeply human. It is about feeling connected to oneself, feeling mentally lighter, living with more balance, and finding steadiness amid pressure.

This is the vision we continue to nurture at Wellness by Heartfulness—helping individuals move from mere survival toward

a more balanced, aware, and fulfilling way of living.

FROM WELLNESS BY HEARTFULNESS

Wellness by Heartfulness offers integrative care across Ayurveda, Naturopathy, Yoga, Heartfulness Meditation, and a range of complementary therapies, personalized by qualified physicians and healers.

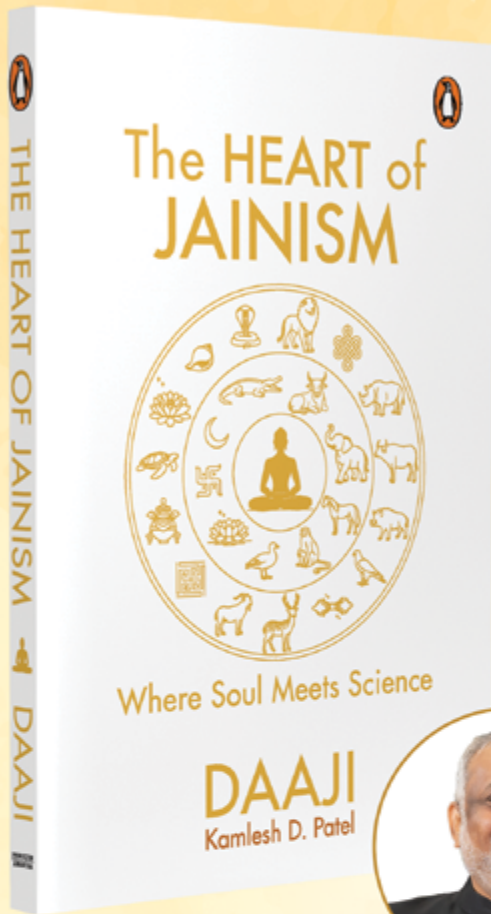
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About Us





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Health, Happiness, and Harmony

THE YOGIC PRESCRIPTION FOR MODERN LIVING

BY BHUSHAN BHUKTE

Health is not the absence of disease, happiness is not the pursuit of pleasure and desire, and harmony is not the absence of conflict and disagreement. Together they form the very essence of Yoga—a conscious way of living that integrates body, mind, emotions, and spirit.

The Yogic Vision of Health

The Ayurvedic sage Sushruta described health in beautifully holistic terms:

समदोषः समाग्निश्च समधातुमलक्रियः ।
प्रसन्नात्मेन्द्रियमनः स्वस्थ इत्यभिधीयते ॥

*samadoṣaḥ samāgniśca samadbātumalakriyaḥ,
prasannātmendriyamaṇaḥ svastha
ityabhidhīyate ॥*

“A healthy person is one whose doshas, digestive fire, tissues, and elimination are in balance, and whose soul, senses, and mind remain cheerful and content.” —Sushruta Samhita, Sutrasthana, Ch. 15, Shloka 10

According to Sushruta, a healthy individual is one in a state of equilibrium—where the doshas [humors], *agni* [digestive fire], *dhatus* [tissues], and *mala*

kriya [excretory functions, including urination and defecation] are all in balance, and whose *atma* [soul], *indriya* [senses], and *manah* [mind] remain cheerful and content.

This vision of health as balance across body, senses, and mind finds deeper resonance in the Taṭtīriya Upanishad, which describes the human being as composed of five progressively subtler sheaths, or *pañchakoṣa*—the physical body [*annamaya*], the vital energy body [*pranamaya*], the mental and emotional body [*manomaya*], the intellect and wisdom body [*vijñanamaya*], and the innermost sheath of bliss [*anandamaya*]. True health, in this vision, cannot be sustained by attending to the physical body alone; it requires that all five dimensions be nourished together.

Yoga nurtures this integrated state, cultivating health, happiness, and harmony.

This holistic vision finds resonance in the modern definition offered by the World Health Organization: “Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”



The Eight Limbs of Yoga for Holistic Health

Maharishi Patanjali's Ashtanga Yoga presents a systematic pathway for attaining health, happiness, and harmony. It is a complete science of conscious evolution that transforms every dimension of human existence through disciplined practice. Patanjali names these eight limbs directly:

यमनियमासनप्राणायामप्रत्याहारधारणाध्यान
समाधयोऽष्टावङ्गानि ॥

*yama-niyama-āsana-prāṇāyāma-pratyāhāra-
dhāraṇā-dhyāna-samādhayo'sṭāv aṅgāni ॥*

"Yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, dhyana, and samadhi are the eight limbs of Yoga." —Yoga Sutra II.29

Practiced together, these eight limbs yield a specific transformation, as Patanjali goes on to describe:

योगाङ्गानुष्ठानादशुद्धिक्षये ज्ञानदीप्तिराविवेकख्यातेः ॥

*yogāṅgānuṣṭhānādaśuddhikṣaye
jñānadīptirāvivekakhyāteḥ ॥*

"Through the dedicated practice of the limbs of Yoga, impurities are removed, the light of wisdom shines forth, culminating in discriminative discernment." —Yoga Sutra II.28

Patanjali clearly outlines this transformative process: practice of the eight limbs → removal of impurities [*asuddhi-kṣaya*] → awakening of the light of knowledge [*jñana-dīpti*] → discriminative discernment [*viveka-khyati*].

The eight limbs represent a progressive journey from outer discipline to inner realization, nurturing every aspect of human well-being.

Yama and niyama: social and personal health—the ethical foundations of Yoga cultivate harmonious relationships, self-discipline, and dharmic living.

Asana and pranayama: physical health—conscious movement and regulation of prana build stability, vitality, and physiological balance.

Pratyahara and dharana: mental health—withdrawal of the senses and one-pointed attention restore mastery over the mind.

Dhyana and samadhi: spiritual health—meditation brings expanded awareness, inner peace, and realization of our true nature.



Through asana, pranayama, *shuddhi* kriyas [yogic cleansing practices], relaxation, *ahar* [diet], and appropriate lifestyle choices, Yoga strengthens and rejuvenates this sacred instrument.



Thus, Ashtanga Yoga is far more than a sequence of techniques—it is a complete way of life. As impurities are progressively removed through sincere practice, the practitioner evolves toward dynamic physical well-being, mental equanimity, social harmony, and spiritual awakening. In this lies Yoga’s timeless promise of health, happiness, and harmony.

Yoga as a way of life reflects dynamic well-being—health, happiness, and harmony—and a progressive movement from *bahiranga* [outer limbs] to *antaranga* [inner limbs], rather than presenting the limbs as rigidly compartmentalized.

Health: Cultivating a Strong and Resilient Body

As the popular saying goes, “पहला सुख नरीगी काया” [*pahla sukh nirogi kaya*]—“The first happiness is a healthy body.” This everyday wisdom echoes an older Sanskrit teaching:

शरीरमाद्यं खलु धर्मसाधनम् ॥

śarīramādyam khalu dharmasāadhanam ॥

“The body, indeed, is the foremost instrument for the fulfillment of one’s higher purpose.” — Kalidasa, Kumārasambhava 5.33

The body is the temple through which we experience life and pursue higher aspirations. Through asana, pranayama, *shuddhi kriyas* [yogic cleansing practices], relaxation, *ahar* [diet], and appropriate lifestyle choices, Yoga strengthens and rejuvenates this sacred instrument.

Scientific research increasingly validates what yogic tradition has long affirmed. Regular practice improves cardiovascular function, enhances flexibility and balance, supports immune function,

reduces chronic pain, improves sleep quality, and helps regulate blood pressure and stress hormones.

Pranayama occupies a central place in this process. Techniques such as *nadi shuddhi*, *ujjayi pranayama*, and *bhramari* regulate the autonomic nervous system, promoting a shift from chronic sympathetic overactivity toward parasympathetic relaxation and restoration.

Meditation deepens this restorative effect at a physiological level. Regular meditative practice has been shown to lower cortisol levels, reduce resting heart rate and blood pressure, and improve heart rate variability—a key marker of resilience to stress. Beyond these measurable changes, meditation

cultivates the still, witnessing awareness that allows the body's own intelligence to repair and regenerate. Where pranayama calms the nervous system through the breath, meditation stabilizes it through the mind, and together they create the internal conditions in which lasting physical health can take root.

Happiness: Cultivating a Peaceful Mind

In today's world, happiness is often confused with pleasure or success. Yoga offers a deeper understanding. As a popular saying goes:

संतोषं परमं सुखम् ॥

santoṣaṁ paramaṁ sukham ॥

“Contentment is the supreme happiness.”

Patanjali echoes this same truth in the Yoga Sutras, identifying *santoṣa* [contentment] as one of the *niyamas*, and teaching that lasting happiness arises not from acquiring more, but from appreciating what already is.

संतोषादनुत्तमः सुखलाभः ॥

santoṣādanuttamaḥ sukhālābhaḥ ॥

“From contentment comes supreme happiness.”
—Yoga Sutra II.42

Daaji offers a simple formula that captures this same truth in modern terms: happiness is the ratio of desires fulfilled to desires held. The more desires we accumulate, the harder they become to satisfy, and the further happiness slips away—until, in a state of desirelessness, happiness becomes limitless. Ram Chandra of Shahjahanpur expressed this same wisdom in a phrase often quoted by Daaji—“more and more of less and less”—a gentle call to steadily



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minimize our wants until they dissolve entirely, for it is only in that emptiness, in making peace with oneself, that infinite happiness and bliss are found.

$$\text{Happiness} = \frac{\text{Number of desires fulfilled}}{\text{Total number of desires}}$$

Meditation [dhyana], concentration [dharana], relaxation, and mindful breathing gradually still the restless mind. Modern neuroscience confirms that these practices reduce anxiety, enhance attention, improve emotional regulation, and strengthen resilience. Yoga does not eliminate life's challenges; it transforms our response to them.

Harmony: The Social Dimension of Health

At its core, the greatest contribution of Yoga lies in cultivating harmony—within ourselves, in our relationships with others, and ultimately with the whole of creation. According to Maharishi Patanjali, this journey begins with the yamas, the ethical restraints that form the foundation of yogic living and nurture the social dimension of health.

अहिंसासत्यास्तेयब्रह्मचर्यापरिग्रहा यमाः ॥

*ahimsā-satyāsteya-brahmacaryāparigrahā
yamāḥ* ॥

“Non-violence [ahimsa], truthfulness [satya], non-stealing [asteya], moderation and right use of energy [brahmacharya], and non-possessiveness [aparigraha] are the yamas.” — Yoga Sutra II.30

The five yamas are more than moral rules—they are practical guides for compassion, integrity, moderation, and respect. Living these values brings harmony to our families, our communities, and ourselves.

Patanjali goes further, describing the yamas as universal in scope—binding regardless of birth, place, time, or circumstance:

जातिदेशकालसमयानवच्छिन्नाः सार्वभौमा महाव्रतम् ॥

*jāti-deśa-kāla-samayānavacchinnāḥ
sārvabhaumā mahāvratam ॥*

“These, being universal and not limited by class, place, time, or circumstance, constitute the great vow [*mahāvratā*].” —Yoga Sutra II.31

This ideal of harmonious living finds its fullest expression in the Bhagavad Gita, where Lord Krishna describes the qualities of the true yogi:

अद्वेषा सर्वभूतानां मैत्रः करुण एव च । निर्ममो निरहङ्कारः
समदुःखसुखः क्षमी ॥
संतुष्टः सततं योगी यतात्मा दृढनिश्चयः ।
मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिर्यो मद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः ॥

*adveṣṭā sarva-bhūtānāṃ maitraḥ
karuṇa eva cha,
nirmamo nirahankāraḥ sama-duḥkha-sukhaḥ
kṣamī ॥
santuṣṭaḥ satataṃ yogī yatātmā
dṛḍha-niśchayaḥ,
mayy arpita-mano-buddhir yo mad-bhaktaḥ sa
me priyaḥ ॥*

“One who is free from hatred toward all beings, who is friendly and compassionate, free from possessiveness and ego, balanced in pleasure and pain, forgiving, ever content, self-controlled, steadfast in resolve, with mind and intellect dedicated to the Divine—such a devotee is dear to Me.” —Bhagavad Gita 12.13–14

“One who is free from hatred toward all beings, who is friendly and compassionate, free from possessiveness and ego, balanced in pleasure and pain, forgiving, ever content, self-controlled, steadfast in resolve, with mind and intellect dedicated to the Divine—such a devotee is dear to Me.”

This is not merely a spiritual ideal but a practical blueprint for healthy living. Harmony, therefore, is not passive acceptance—it is an active expression of love, responsibility, self-awareness, and conscious living.

Conclusion

The ancient Vedic prayer expresses this universal aspiration:

ॐ सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः ।
सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु मा कश्चिद्दुःखभाग्भवेत् ॥
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

*om sarve bhavantu sukhinah sarve santu
nirāmayāḥ, sarve bhadraṇi paśyantu mā kaścid
duḥkha bhāg bhavet ॥ om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ ॥*

“May all be happy. May all be free from disease. May all experience auspiciousness. May none suffer. Om, peace, peace, peace.” —Vedic shanti mantra

This timeless blessing reflects the true purpose of Yoga. It is not merely to perfect the body or quiet the mind, but to awaken our innate capacity for compassionate, conscious, and harmonious living.

The world may continue to move at an ever-increasing pace. Yoga reminds us that true peace is not found by escaping the world, but by finding our center within it.

As every conscious breath reconnects us with the present moment, every mindful action becomes an expression of Yoga—and health, happiness, and harmony cease to be distant ideals, becoming the natural fruits of a life lived with awareness. The journey is already underway; it is yours to continue.



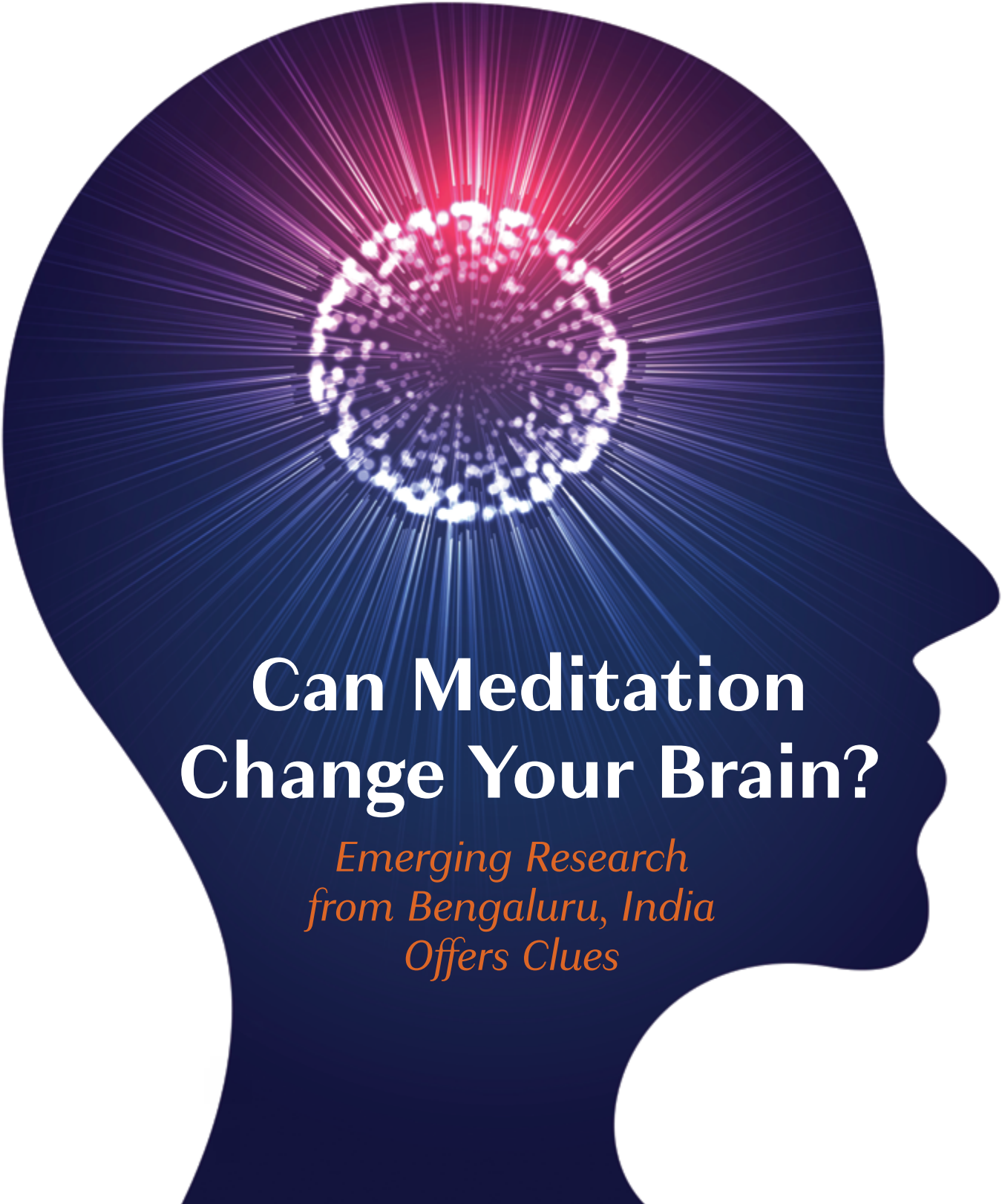
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Can Meditation Change Your Brain?

*Emerging Research
from Bengaluru, India
Offers Clues*

What a study comparing novice, proficient, and non-meditators tells us about well-being, stress, and the neuroscience of inner calm.

BY KRISHNAMURTHY JAYANNA

You've probably heard that meditation is good for you. Maybe a friend swears by it. But is there real science behind the claim?

A team of researchers at the National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS), a premier research institution in Bengaluru, India, decided to find out. They studied practitioners of Heartfulness meditation, a technique with millions of followers worldwide, measuring not just how people *felt* after meditating but also what was happening in their brains. The results, published in *Consciousness and Cognition*, offer fascinating clues and raise questions as intriguing as the answers they provide.¹

What Is Heartfulness Meditation?

In Heartfulness meditation, practitioners gently bring attention to the heart rather than monitoring thoughts, focusing on the breath, or scanning the body for tension. They then do nothing deliberately, assuming a passive, receptive

role and allowing what the Heartfulness tradition calls Yogic Transmission to guide them toward deeper states of awareness. The practice relies on receptivity rather than effortful concentration. This passive quality is unusual among meditation techniques, and as we'll see, it may help explain some of the study's findings.

Who Was Studied?

Three groups of men were recruited: proficient meditators (24 people, with an average of 18 years of experience), novice meditators (24 people, with between 5 and 16 months of practice), and non-meditators (15 people). All were college-educated and of similar socioeconomic backgrounds. NIMHANS researchers were blinded to the meditators' proficiency levels and sociodemographic information during data collection. Participants underwent high-density electroencephalography (EEG) recording using 128 scalp sensors and completed questionnaires assessing stress, life satisfaction, emotional well-being, and mindfulness.

Proficient meditators scored significantly higher on life satisfaction, positive emotions, and general well-being than both novice meditators and non-meditators.

What Did They Find?

Well-Being, Emotions, and Life Satisfaction

Proficient meditators scored significantly higher on life satisfaction, positive emotions, and general well-being than both novice meditators and non-meditators. Interestingly, novice meditators reported significantly more negative emotions than both the proficient meditator group and non-meditating controls, and higher perceived stress than proficient meditators.

The researchers suggested many novice meditators may have started precisely because they were already struggling; higher distress may have been the reason they enrolled. The proficient meditator group reported greater life satisfaction than those who never meditated, suggesting the trajectory is strongly upward. However, this needed to be correlated with other findings to gain a clearer picture.

The Meditating Brain: What EEG Revealed

All three groups showed measurable brain changes during meditation, including non-meditators who simply observed their breath. The EEG recordings revealed one notable group difference: proficient meditators showed higher occipital gamma activity during meditation than controls. This was notable because the occipital region (the back of the head) is primarily associated with visual processing, even though the participants' eyes were closed.

Occipital gamma has been associated with both perceptual binding—the integration of separate streams of experience into a coherent whole—and heightened inner awareness. The researchers note that a similar pattern has been found in long-term Vipassana meditators, with the increase in gamma power strongest in the most advanced practitioners. The Heartfulness tradition also gives the occipital region particular spiritual significance: Ram Chandra of Shahjahanpur [Babuji] describes the occipital prominence at the back of the skull as corresponding to the ultimate spiritual reality toward which the practice leads.²



Meditative State: Novices Meditate Like Experts

Brain activity during meditation showed no statistically significant difference between novice and proficient groups on the measured EEG parameters. Within the Heartfulness framework, one possible interpretation is that Transmission may help beginners enter meditative states without years of practice. The study did not test Transmission independently, so it cannot identify it as the active ingredient. The occipital gamma difference found only in proficient meditators may be associated with long-term practice, although the cross-sectional design cannot show how it developed.

The Meditative State and the Meditative Trait: Two Different Things

The EEG recorded brain activity during meditation, while the questionnaires assessed broader aspects of daily well-being: how a person feels in their daily life—at work, in relationships, and under pressure. That novice meditators showed similar brain patterns to proficient meditators during practice, yet still reported higher everyday stress tells us that the meditative state and meditative trait are distinct from one another. One may be accessible early; the other accumulates slowly. The calm of practice has not yet seeped into the rest of life, but in the proficient meditator group, it seems to have.



Beyond the Mind and Cognition: What Meditation Really Is

All three groups scored similarly on mindfulness—proficient meditators, novice meditators, and non-meditators alike. Heartfulness works on dimensions beyond conventional cognition, such as emotional regulation and deeper states of consciousness. Another insight is that mindfulness is perhaps less a destination than a transitory state, an early accessible state marking the beginning of a longer inward journey.

Heartfulness can be said to begin with the mind, since meditation starts by directing awareness to the heart. However, its stated deeper aspiration is to move beyond the mind, an outcome said to be achieved through the heart. True meditation, in this tradition, is not about managing thoughts or sustaining focus. It is about accessing a deeper sense of being—states of consciousness

beneath and beyond ordinary mental activity. The proficient meditators' unique gamma-wave signature may be a neural whisper of inner states that accumulate over years of going ever deeper.

True meditation, in this tradition, is not about managing thoughts or sustaining focus. It is about accessing a deeper sense of being—states of consciousness beneath and beyond ordinary mental activity.

Study Limitations

This was a cross-sectional pilot study—a snapshot in time—and its findings warrant further research. The authors recommended longitudinal, controlled research following novice meditators over time to distinguish effects associated with practice from preexisting differences between participants. They also called for tools and methods suited to the philosophy of the practice and for lived experience and phenomenology to be integrated with quantitative measurement. Such efforts are underway, including design and testing of a consciousness scale to capture deeper changes that occur over long periods of practice.³

What the Study Suggests

Despite its limitations, this research points in a consistent and meaningful direction. The differences associated with long-term Heartfulness practice are real and measurable: proficient meditators reported significantly greater well-being and showed a distinctive pattern of occipital gamma activity. The absence of significant EEG differences between novice and proficient meditators also suggests that the practice's passive, receptive nature allows even beginners to access genuine meditative states early, while deeper transformations become established over years.

The study also hints at something more fundamental: that profound meditation is not about controlling the mind, sustaining focus, or even achieving calm—but about moving gently beyond, toward the heart and the states of being that lie deep within.

FROM HEARTFULNESS RESEARCH

Heartfulness Research studies the effects of meditation from both neuroscientific and qualitative perspectives.

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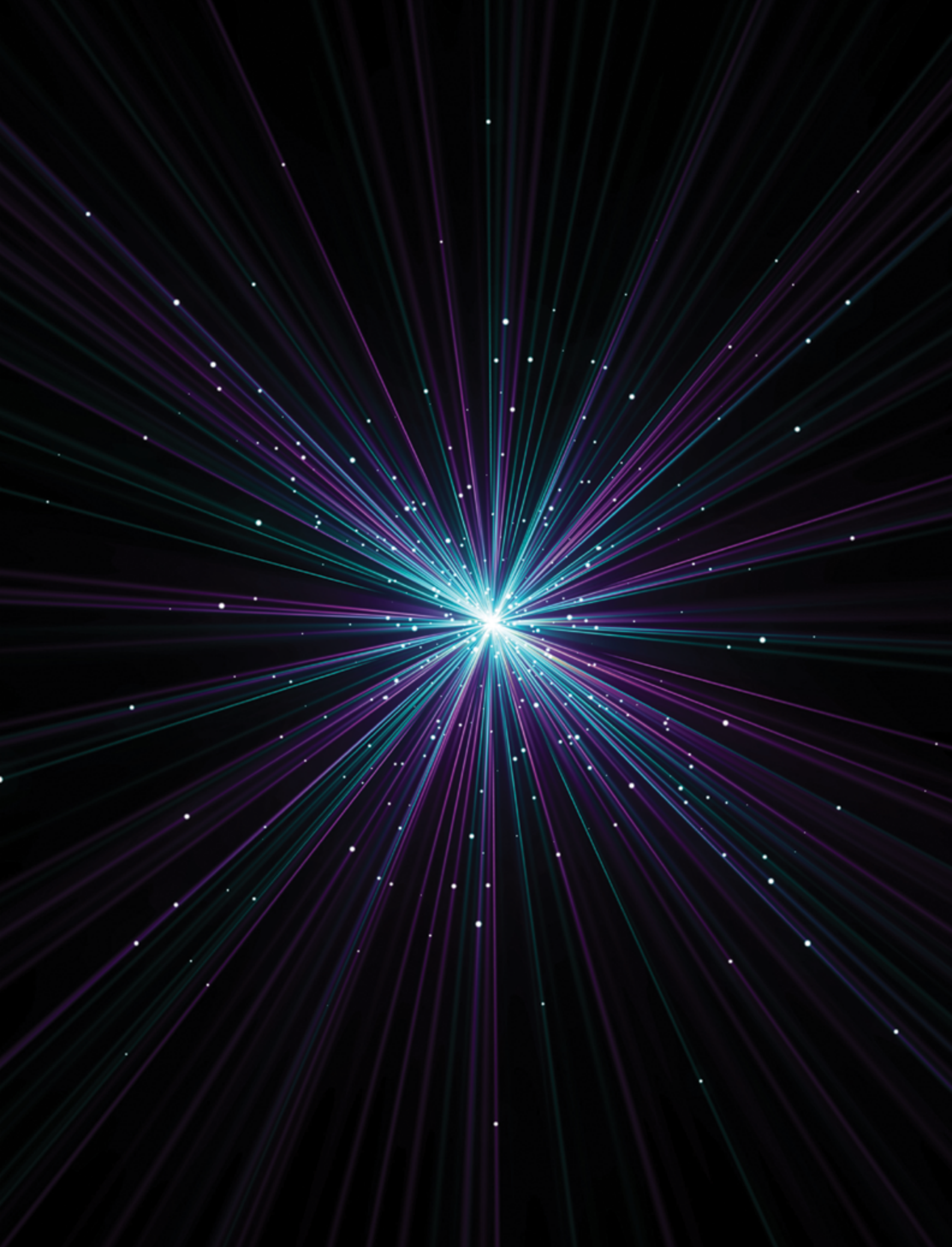
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practice

“The quieter you become,
the more you can hear.”

RAM DASS





Sankalpa

THE MIND'S HIGHER FUNCTION

How sankalpa works within Heartfulness practice, becomes a natural mode of thought in the meditative mind, and joins our action to Nature's larger work of transformation.

BY **N.S. NAGARAJA** AND **JOSHUA POLLOCK**

In this article, the third and final part of our series on *sankalpa*, we review the method of forming sankalpa, look at some of its applications, and finally suggest that sankalpa is not really a method at all, but an action of Nature to bring forth change—an action in which we are mere participants.

Activity always brings about change of one kind or another. By our actions we impact the world around us. We move our limbs and communicate through speech. The role of the mind, we believe, is to control the actions of the body. The mind does not act directly on the world, but indirectly, via the body. Even to interact with another mind, it must first activate the body it controls to produce effects upon the other person's senses to reach that person's mind. Mind, then, requires a bodily vehicle to effect any change on its behalf.

The entire working of sankalpa contradicts this commonly held notion. After all, sankalpa creates

change directly, without depending on a body to execute it. It is, therefore, a highly efficient means of producing work.

The practices of Heartfulness, including meditation, cleaning, and prayer, all turn on this principle of sankalpa.

At the beginning of meditation, we silently suggest to ourselves that the source of light within the heart is drawing us inward. This, of course, is a sankalpa.

The cleaning is a little more complex because it involves a few sankalpas, offered in a particular order. The first sankalpa is the suggestion that all impurities and complexities are leaving from the back side of our bodies as smoke or vapor. The second sankalpa is the suggestion that the process is intensifying and accelerating. Third, when we suggest that a current of divine energy is entering into our hearts and illuminating every particle of

our system. Finally, when we suggest that we are now pure and simple, and that the cleaning has been completed effectively.

Similarly, the bedtime prayer consists of three sankalpas—one for every line. That is why we cannot rush through the prayer. If it consisted of mere words, perhaps then we could complete it quickly and be satisfied. But since it is constructed from three sankalpas, we hold on to each one for some time—long enough for its effect to blossom within us and for us to observe how our condition changes.

Sankalpa is also the method we use to stay spiritually connected between these three practices. When, as advised by Daaji, we suggest in the midst of our daily activities that “everything surrounding us is drenched or absorbed in divine remembrance, godly remembrance—the trees, the sky, the birds, persons, the ceiling, the fan, the floor and every particle around us is absorbed in godly remembrance,” we are again taking the help of sankalpa.

When the Master (or a trainer) transmits to us, the Transmission is triggered by sankalpa. The person transmitting forms a sankalpa that *pranabuti* [Yogic Transmission] is flowing.

Sankalpa is therefore the key that unlocks every spiritual condition and the catalyst behind every transformation.

Depending on the capacity of the mind forming that sankalpa, Transmission can occur.

Sankalpa is therefore the key that unlocks every spiritual condition and the catalyst behind every transformation. That is why, in the first part of this series, we called it “the method within the method.” So, let us review the method:

Sankalpa can be formed for our own inner development or for another’s; the principle of formation is the same. As an example, we may offer the simple suggestion, “May love develop in this person’s heart.” The words give shape to the suggestion, and the heart offers it prayerfully.

After offering a sankalpa to God, we should remain sensitive to the heart’s response. At times, the sankalpa we have formed may not feel quite right, or the heart may feel pulled toward a different suggestion. In such cases, we should follow the heart. The first sankalpa may have reflected our own limited perspective, while the heart receives a hint from above that the work needs to proceed in another direction... remain open to such correction. When this happens, it is perfectly all right to revise the sankalpa and offer it to God.

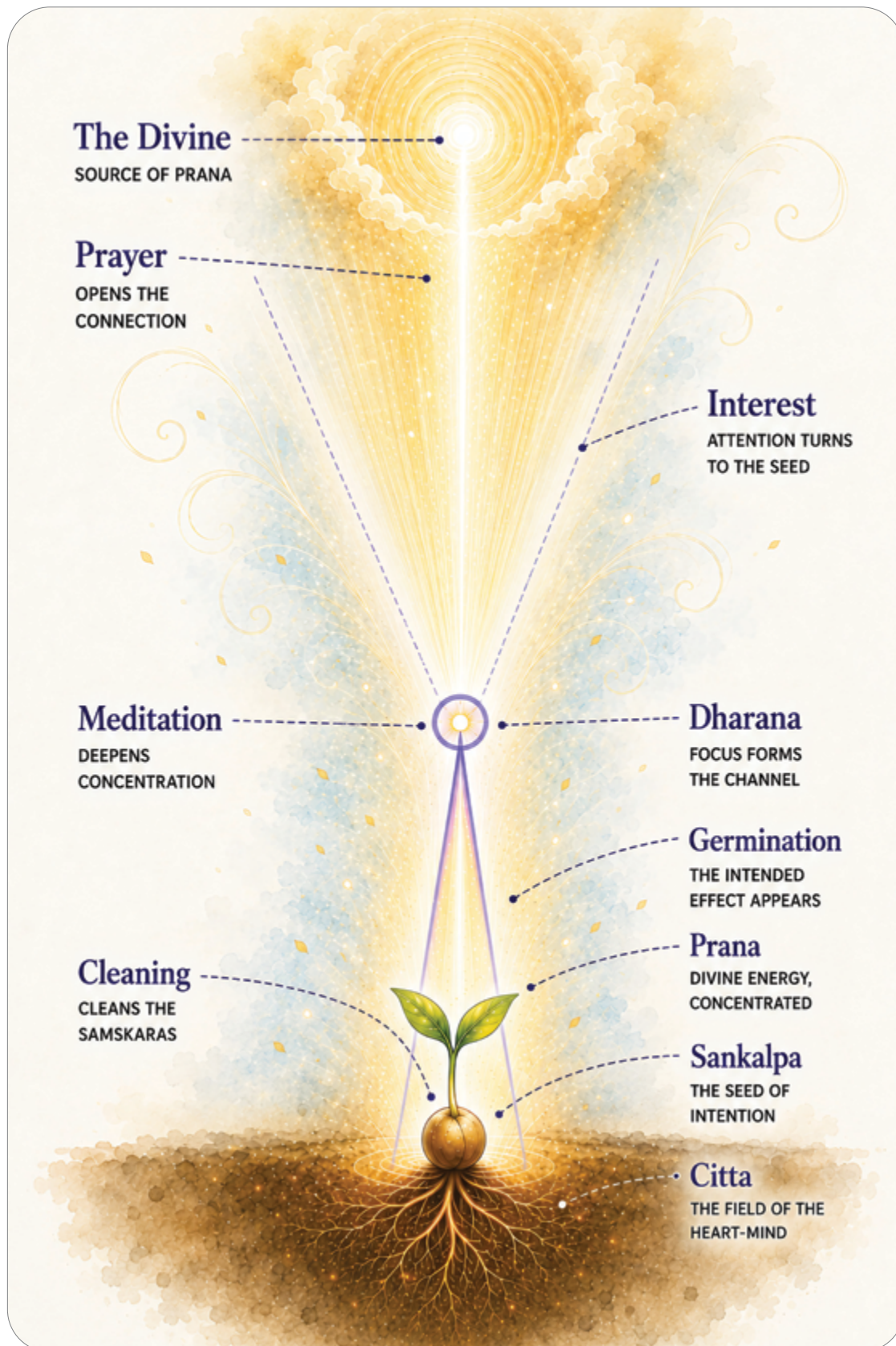
Once we form the sankalpa, we then continue to rest our attention upon it... It means patiently waiting for the intended effect to emerge. In forming the sankalpa, we knocked upon the door. Now we wait for an answer. We do not keep knocking by repeating the words like a mantra, forcing a visualization, or mentally checking for progress. Patient waiting means remaining receptive until the intended effect becomes



perceptible. At first, nothing may be felt. Still, the heart remains open and receptive. We simply wait.

If our attention drifts, we do not form the sankalpa again and again. The sankalpa is already active. Instead, we simply reconnect with it at the level of feeling, with the heart, and resume our patient waiting. Gradually, the intended effect takes form, and we begin to sense the effect. Sankalpa can now be understood in practical terms: a suggestion formed, offered prayerfully, and held through patient waiting.

When, as advised by Daaji, we suggest in the midst of our daily activities that “everything surrounding us is drenched or absorbed in divine remembrance, godly remembrance—the trees, the sky, the birds, persons, the ceiling, the fan, the floor and every particle around us is absorbed in godly remembrance,” we are again taking the help of sankalpa.



The working of sankalpa may be pictured as the growth of a seed. The field is *citta*, the heart-mind. Clear, open, and receptive, it is like fertile soil. Into this field we sow the seed of sankalpa: the intended condition held in potential, waiting to take form. Practicing Heartfulness cleaning helps keep this soil from becoming crowded with unwanted seeds of intention—the *samskaras* [impressions].

Taking interest in the sankalpa directs our attention toward the seed. As interest intensifies, it develops into *dharana* [concentration], forming a steady channel of attention toward the sankalpa. Meditation develops our capacity to form and sustain this channel.

Through this channel, our attention concentrates *prana* [divine energy] upon the seed. Prana activates and nourishes the seed, and gradually the sankalpa germinates and its intended effect becomes perceptible. The connection established through prayer facilitates the invocation of divine support in the form of prana.

Though we speak of sankalpa as a technique to be performed, as a method to be mastered, it is truly a disposition of mind. As we regulate the mind through meditative practice, we naturally become comfortable with the quality of thought that is used in sankalpa. It is a unique quality, as it involves a particular kind of focused attention that is relaxed and nearly effortless. These are qualities of a meditative mind. And for a meditative mind, sankalpa becomes a natural mode of thought. Hence, the meditative mind becomes useful for special kinds of work.

Do you remember from Part I that the prefix *san* means “with”? This prefix indicates that two forces are in action. It is a joining of our will to the Divine Will and our thought to the Cosmic Mind, and a surrender of our action to divine action. Ultimately, the technique of sankalpa

is an aspect of Nature’s work that involves our participation.

In our everyday experience, it may seem that the mind belongs to us alone, and that the mind is for us alone. But a human mind, regulated through steady practice and oriented toward the highest, divine principle, becomes transformed. No longer a merely personal instrument, it becomes an unfailing tool of Nature. Nature’s impulses descend, spontaneously and unimpeded, into the receptive heart, taking shape as sankalpas and blossoming in natural fulfillment.

Within this grand dynamic of Nature, forming a sankalpa is our small yet critical part to play. It is a simple offering, a duty, and perhaps, a human privilege. The main point, though, is that sankalpa is natural to us. It is innate. Yes, we may struggle with sankalpa at first. And this is to be expected. We are not accustomed to using the mind that way.

Furthermore, the mind has been misdirected, mistrained, and overindulged, day after day and year after year. But with even a little practice, it soon starts to click. It just happens, like a baby who suddenly knows how to roll over. We soon begin to discover the mind’s natural, higher function: a universal agent of action and change. A new journey unfolds, and we gradually find our footing on the path to our deepest purpose.

FROM HEARTFULNESS INSTITUTE

The Heartfulness Institute is a global not-for-profit offering heart-based meditation, a yogic practice for inner well-being and collective harmony.

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FEAR VERSUS FAITH

Can old wounds be met with trust instead of force, opening a way toward coexistence and lasting peace?

BY **DR. ICHAK ADIZES**

A lot of destructive conflicts stem from fear. In personal life, many decisions about career, partnerships, where to live, or even what to eat are based on fear.

In marriage, fear can become a major source of destructive conflict. I already discussed in previous articles how much conflict stems from fears that we are not loved, that expressions of love are self-serving or manipulative, or that they are offered only to get something in return.

In international relations, much foreign policy and many security decisions are also based on fear.

Take the Middle East, for instance. The Jewish people are a traumatized people. Two thousand years of persecution, inquisitions, pogroms, and finally the Holocaust left deep scars. I do not know a single Jewish family that has not suffered casualties from

antisemitism. In my own family, over 100 relatives—grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins—were murdered in the Holocaust, and two relatives were killed in the Arab-Israeli wars.

Traumatized people live in fear. If one analyzes many Israeli security and foreign policy decisions, fear is often a major driving force behind them.

People who fear tend to use power to solve problems. And the greater the fear, the more concentrated and intense the use of power becomes.

But Palestinians also live in fear. Many fear that Israel will not stop with the territory proposed for a Jewish state under the United Nations' 1947 partition plan, that Palestinians will continue losing homes and land, that even if peace comes Israeli Jews will dominate the economy, and that Palestinians will permanently remain economically and politically subordinate.

Fear. Fear. Fear.

And fear invites the use of power.

The problem with power is that it rarely solves anything permanently. It may temporarily suppress a problem, but over the long run, the greater the use of power, the stronger the reaction against it eventually becomes.

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How do we move from decision making based on fear to decision making based on faith? That is the real question.

And by faith I do not necessarily mean religious faith. I mean faith that human beings can find ways to live together constructively.

This probably requires some form of therapy—not only at the individual level, but at the social level.

For years I have been telling leaders in Israel that a strategy based solely on defeating Hamas militarily will not work in the long run. History shows how difficult it is to permanently defeat a people driven by national aspiration.

The Serbs fought the Ottoman Empire for centuries from the

mountains. The United States left Vietnam. The Soviet Union and later the United States both left Afghanistan after prolonged wars.

Some friends in Israel tell me: "But the United States defeated Germany and Japan in World War II."

Is that all? Or did something else happen afterward that mattered even more?

After the war, Germany and Japan were rebuilt economically and socially. The Marshall Plan greatly contributed to rebuilding Germany. Japan was reconstructed and reintegrated into the global economy.

If Israel wants long-term peace, perhaps the strategy should focus not only on military security, but also on helping rebuild a viable Palestinian society and economy.

Look at Vietnam today. After a terrible war, Americans are welcomed there. Why? Because eventually the relationship moved beyond power alone.

The challenge is whether human beings can make decisions based not only on fear, but also on faith—faith that coexistence is possible, and that solutions can be found that are not win-lose but win-win.



Dharma:

Purpose, Awareness, and Surrender

How do we recognize our own dharma, live it with awareness, and understand the passage from personal purpose to surrender?

BY NEGIN M. KHORASANI

What is the purpose of this human life? Why are we here? Across the Vedic tradition, one answer echoes through the scriptures: discover and live your dharma.

Dharma is often translated as duty, righteousness, moral order, or one's sacred responsibility (Flood 1996; Radhakrishnan 1993). Yet these translations only begin to capture its depth. Dharma is the principle that aligns us with the truth of our being and with the greater harmony of life. It is our highest purpose, our unique vocation, and the fullest expression of our deepest nature in service to the whole.

To live one's dharma requires more than knowledge; it requires awareness.

The Vedic tradition repeatedly emphasizes the importance of wakefulness, not merely physical alertness, but an awakened state of consciousness. One of the clearest expressions appears in the Katha Upanishad:

uttiṣṭhata jāgrata prāpya varān nibodhata

“Arise! Awake! Approach the wise and realize the Truth” (Olivelle 1996, Katha Upanishad 1.3.14).

This call to awaken is not simply an invitation to acquire more knowledge. It is a call to become conscious. Human beings can move through life on autopilot, driven by habits, fears, desires, and conditioning, or they can cultivate an awakened awareness that illuminates every thought, feeling, intention, and action. Only through such awareness can we discern between what is merely pleasant and what is truly beneficial, between actions born of the ego and those arising from our highest nature.

The Mahabharata beautifully illustrates this principle in the story of the Yaksha Prashna. During the Pandavas' exile, Yudhishtira's four brothers each approach a mysterious lake. Ignoring the Yaksha's warning to answer his questions before drinking, each drinks the water



... the essence of dharma cannot be fully grasped through intellectual reasoning alone. It is realized in the “cave of the heart”—the innermost seat of consciousness.

and falls unconscious. Yudhishtira, however, pauses. Rather than acting impulsively, he listens, reflects, and responds with humility and discernment. His awareness—not merely his intelligence—allows him to answer the Yaksha’s questions wisely, and his brothers are restored to life.

Among the Yaksha’s questions is a direct one: What is the path? Yudhishtira replies:

*tarko 'pratiṣṭhaḥ śrutayo vibhinnāḥ
nāsāv ṛṣir yasya matam na bhinnam
dharmasya tattvaṁ nibitaṁ gubāyām
mahājano yena gataḥ sa panthāḥ.*

“Reasoning alone is inconclusive; the scriptures differ; every sage has a different opinion. The truth of dharma lies hidden in the cave of the heart. Therefore, the path is that which the great ones have walked” (Debroy 2011, Mahabharata, Vana Parva, Yaksha Prashna).

This remarkable teaching suggests that the essence of dharma cannot be fully grasped through intellectual reasoning alone. It is realized in the “cave of the heart”—the innermost seat of consciousness. Dharma is not merely a concept to understand but a reality to awaken to.

For this reason, while no major Vedic scripture explicitly defines dharma as “awareness,” one may reasonably understand awareness as the indispensable inner condition through which dharma is recognized and lived (Radhakrishnan 1993; Olivelle 1996). Awareness does not replace dharma; rather, it reveals it. Without awareness, our actions are governed by unconscious conditioning. With awareness, our lives gradually come into alignment with our deepest purpose.

This understanding also resonates with Krishna’s repeated emphasis on *svadharma*—one’s own authentic path or calling. He teaches that it is better to perform one’s own dharma imperfectly

than another's perfectly, even if one's own path appears less successful or more difficult (Flood and Martin 2015, Bhagavad Gita 3.35, 18.47). The teaching reinforces that spiritual growth does not come from imitating another's path, but from faithfully living the purpose that arises from one's own deepest nature.

The Bhagavad Gita further deepens this understanding. Throughout the dialogue, Krishna encourages Arjuna to act with unwavering remembrance, equanimity, and inner clarity. He tells him:

*tasmāt sarveṣu kālēṣu
mām anusmara yudhya ca*

"Therefore, remember Me at all times and fight" (Flood and Martin 2015, Bhagavad Gita 8.7).

And elsewhere:

yogaḥ karmasu kauśulam

"Yoga is skill in action" (Flood and Martin 2015, Bhagavad Gita 2.50).

These teachings point toward a way of living in which every action becomes an expression of conscious awareness united with the Divine.

These teachings point toward a way of living in which every action becomes an expression of conscious awareness united with the Divine.

The culmination of the Bhagavad Gita, however, presents one of its most profound paradoxes. After teaching Arjuna about various dimensions of dharma throughout 18 chapters, Krishna concludes:

*sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇam
vraja.*

"Abandon all dharmas and take refuge in Me alone" (Flood and Martin 2015, Bhagavad Gita 18.66).

At first glance, this appears contradictory. Why teach dharma only to ask that it be abandoned?

The great commentators offer different interpretations. Shankaracharya understands this verse as relinquishing all limited identifications and relying entirely on the knowledge of Brahman (Śaṅkara 1998). Ramanujacharya emphasizes *prapatti* [complete surrender to God] (Rāmānuja 2003). Madhvacharya understands it as wholehearted devotion while continuing righteous action according to one's nature (Sharma 1986).

Another contemplative interpretation is that Krishna is inviting Arjuna beyond the limitations of the analytical mind. The intellect is an invaluable instrument for discernment, yet it cannot by itself realize the highest truth. There comes a point where discernment matures into surrender.

From this perspective, "abandoning all dharmas" does not mean abandoning ethics, purpose, or responsibility. Rather, it means relinquishing

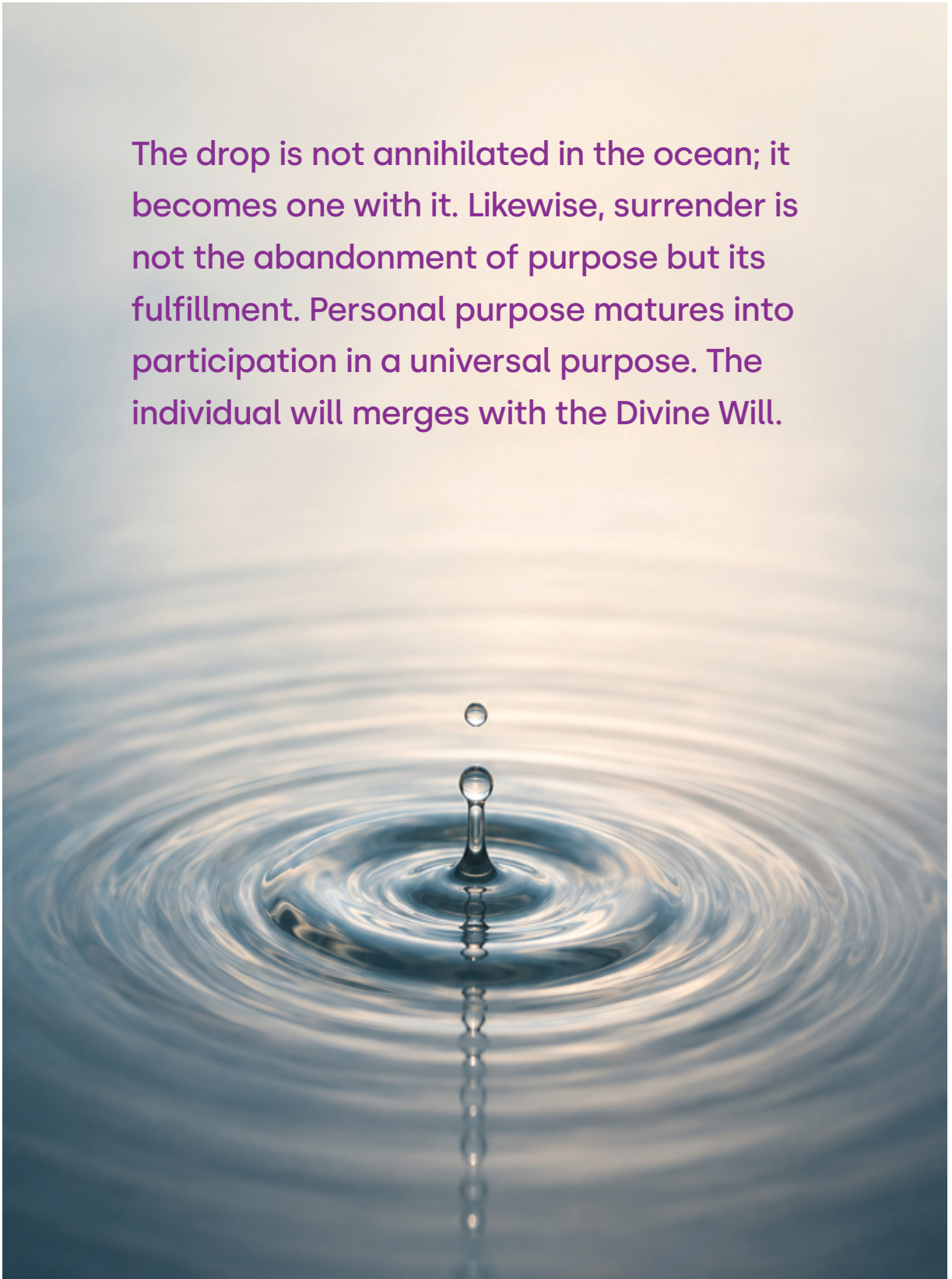
attachment to the ego's limited understanding of one's duty. It is an invitation to transcend identification with the separate self and to allow the individual will to merge into the Divine Will. Action continues, but its source changes. Instead of arising from fear, ambition, or personal preference, it flows naturally from a higher wisdom.

This is not unconsciousness but a higher consciousness. It is a state in which awareness is no longer fragmented by the constant activity of the egoic mind. One does not lose consciousness; one loses the illusion of separateness. In surrender, awareness expands. The finite mind yields to an intelligence greater than itself, and action becomes effortless because it is no longer driven by the separate "I."

In surrender, awareness expands. The finite mind yields to an intelligence greater than itself, and action becomes effortless because it is no longer driven by the separate "I."



The drop is not annihilated in the ocean; it becomes one with it. Likewise, surrender is not the abandonment of purpose but its fulfillment. Personal purpose matures into participation in a universal purpose. The individual will merges with the Divine Will.



Thus, the journey of dharma unfolds in three movements. It begins by asking one of life's most fundamental questions: *Why am I here?* It calls us to discover our unique purpose, our vocation, and the contribution only we can make. Awareness illuminates this path, allowing us to discern our deepest calling amid the noise of conditioning and ego.

Yet this discovery is not the destination.

It is the beginning.

The realization of one's personal dharma is like a drop of water discovering its own form, direction, and purpose. It has individuality, meaning, and a unique role to play. But Krishna's final teaching invites us one step further. "Abandon all dharmas" is an invitation for the drop not to disappear into nothingness, but to dissolve into the ocean from which it has always arisen.

The drop is not annihilated in the ocean; it becomes one with it. Likewise, surrender is not the abandonment of purpose but its fulfillment. Personal purpose matures into participation in a universal purpose. The individual will merges with the Divine Will. The limited mind gives way to a wisdom beyond thought. One's svadharma is no longer experienced as separate but as an expression of the eternal dharma that sustains all existence.

Perhaps this is the deepest paradox of the spiritual journey. We begin by seeking our purpose. We continue by cultivating awareness so that purpose may be lived consciously. Ultimately, we surrender even the sense of "my purpose" into the Infinite. The journey starts as a drop seeking its course and culminates as the ocean expressing itself through the drop.

In that state, one no longer asks, "What is my dharma?" Life itself becomes the expression of dharma. Awareness, purpose, and surrender are no longer separate stages but one continuous movement of consciousness—a life lived in complete alignment with the Divine.

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education

“Children are not things to be molded,
but are people to be unfolded.”

JESS LAIR

Heartfulness in Schools:

Education for Human Flourishing

How education can be reimagined to nurture values, emotional balance, and character alongside academic knowledge and skills.

BY **GYANESHWAR SARIN**

With the coming of the Industrial Revolution in the 18th century and consequent globalization, formal education systems increasingly started to play an active role in personality development, slowly overriding the deeper process of character formation. Generally speaking, there was greater stress on producing a job-ready young generation than on broader aspects of values and human development. Over two and a half centuries after the first Industrial Revolution, the results of this approach have started to manifest in the shaping of individuals who are highly skilled but not always well prepared to handle the vagaries of life. Rising emotional distress among school-going children and young adults has also raised concerns regarding who should take responsibility for the inculcation of values, especially with the gradual decline of the family as the primary agent of character formation. The aspect of character formation is now increasingly perceived as

development of life skills and social-emotional learning (SEL).

The commercial world, which has largely determined the nature of education for the past two centuries, has itself started to realize that professional competence is not merely the ability to be part of a production chain, but also requires leadership skills, part of which is the ability to manage people.

The World Economic Forum's *Future of Jobs Report* series has over the past several years consistently identified personal qualities like resilience, flexibility, motivation, self-awareness, empathy, active listening, and lifelong learning as essential skills for the future. These capacities are closely associated with the primary ability to manage one's own emotions, aspirations, and attitudes.





It is now increasingly understood that the acquisition of these capacities requires a process of social-emotional learning. Both life skills and SEL are fortunately becoming well-established parts of educational vocabulary and of formal education policy in countries such as India.

Developing and sustaining individual wellness is central to the Heartfulness movement. This goal is being furthered through several initiatives in education and well-being by organizations such as the Heartfulness Institute and the Heartfulness Education Trust (HET).

At HET, dedicated individuals from around the world have been working for over two decades to raise awareness of the importance of values education within mainstream academic curricula. Various pedagogical approaches have been

developed and tested with the understanding that both individual and social excellence cannot be achieved without inner wellness. Such wellness depends on the ability to live in harmony with oneself, with others, and with nature, creating a balanced lifestyle in which intuitive and cognitive faculties support decision-making.

Values make children mature into confident adults and responsible citizens of society. When imparted in childhood, these values become deeply rooted and continue to strengthen as children mature into adults. Values shape the inner character of children and make them strong and dynamic enough to face all circumstances in life with equanimity.

Human societies naturally encourage their members to aspire to excellence. This aspiration,

when given the right direction, can lead to individual excellence and social upliftment. When misdirected, however, it can result in ethically harmful behavior. What determines the direction of aspiration are the attitudes individuals acquire through life. Refinement of attitudes is therefore one of the major objectives of education.

Individual awareness starts to expand from the day a child is born. This expanding awareness shapes attitudes and intentions, which in turn determine aspirations. Education systems are therefore expected not only to impart professional skills but also to ensure that the pursuit of excellence remains aligned with core human values.

Inculcation of values in children has always been the responsibility of multiple stakeholders, primarily the family and the school. In India, the *gurukulam* tradition integrated learning with character formation through the close teacher–student relationship of students living and studying with the guru. Modern institutions once

Values make children mature into confident adults and responsible citizens of society. When imparted in childhood, these values become deeply rooted and continue to strengthen as children mature into adults.



again need to integrate character formation as part of mainstream curricula.

Preaching alone may not serve the purpose of imparting values to children or creating a lasting effect. Children learn more naturally through interesting, active-learning, age-appropriate activities, engaging stories, reflection, collaboration, and fun games that encourage participation and self-discovery.

To support schools in this task, HET developed The Heartfulness Way curriculum for grades 1–9 and the HELP program (Heartfulness—Experience Life’s Potential) for grades 10–12. Through simple lesson plans filled with engaging stories, activities, and experiential learning processes, the programs help children understand and assimilate values in a natural way. The objective is not merely behavioral conditioning but helping children grow into balanced individuals who uphold strong values and contribute to social harmony and global evolution.

The Heartfulness approach recognizes that emotional well-being and academic success are deeply interconnected. A balanced inner state strengthens the foundation upon which meaningful learning and sustainable achievement are built.

In its endeavor to make *The Heartfulness Way* effective for children, the Heartfulness Education Trust looks forward to the cooperation of school management, faculty, and parents. Teachers today are not merely instructors of subjects; they are facilitators of human development. When schools and families work together, children receive the support needed to grow into compassionate, responsible, and value-enriched human beings.

As societies navigate rapid technological advancement, artificial intelligence, environmental uncertainty, and increasing social complexity, the future will demand far more than cognitive intelligence alone. The world will increasingly need individuals who can think clearly, feel deeply, collaborate harmoniously, and act responsibly.

The outcomes of such interventions by individuals and organizations worldwide may well determine the future course of human society. Education, ultimately, is not merely about preparing children to make a living, but about preparing them to live wisely, compassionately, and meaningfully.

The Heartfulness approach recognizes that emotional well-being and academic success are deeply interconnected. A balanced inner state strengthens the foundation upon which meaningful learning and sustainable achievement are built.

FROM THE HEARTFULNESS PROGRAM FOR SCHOOLS

The Heartfulness Program for Schools cultivates lifelong skills for emotional well-being, self-awareness, resilience, empathy, and compassionate leadership through evidence-based practices, educator support, and whole-school implementation that enables students and school communities to flourish.

North America: heartfulschools.org

All other regions: heartfulness.org/education/training-and-curriculum/





HEARTFULNESS ESSAY EVENT

Voices of a New Generation: Two Winning Essays from the 2025 Heartfulness Essay Event

Each year, the Heartfulness Essay Event invites young people to reflect on questions that touch their lives and express their discoveries in their own words. In the following pages, we share two of the winning entries from 2025. As the 2026 event gets underway, we hope their voices will inspire others to take part. Entries for this year's event are open to young people aged 14–25, with submissions due by September 30, 2026.



HEARTFULNESS ESSAY EVENT 2025

CATEGORY 1 WINNER | AGES 14–18

Individual Evolution Is Not Possible without the Support of Others

BINEET DWIVEDY

Delhi Public School, Nalco Nagar, Angul, Odisha

A lone tree, no matter how magnificent its trunk or expansive its canopy, is ultimately vulnerable. It stands against the relentless winds and scorching sun, its roots battling alone for sustenance in the unforgiving soil. But a forest, a collective of trees, thrives. Their roots intertwine, sharing nutrients and water. Their canopies form a protective shield, tempering the harshness of the elements. In this profound image lies the unshakeable truth: individual growth is not possible without the collective support of the community. This truth is woven into the very fabric of our being, a spiritual law as real as gravity. We are not designed to be isolated islands, but rather integral threads in a vast, vibrant tapestry. To believe we can ascend to greatness alone is a delusion born of ego. True greatness, the kind that resonates with the soul, is always a product of shared journeys and communal embraces.



I am reminded of my youth as an aspiring dancer. I had a gift: my legs could conjure up moves that could stir the depths of the audience's heart. But I was plagued by a crippling fear of failure. I would practice graceful moves, only to crumble into a ruin of self-doubt. My talent was a bird in a cage of my own making. Then, I found my tribe. I joined a local dance group, a motley crew of dancers and dreamers, just like me. They didn't just see my grooves; they saw my soul. They became my appreciation board, my critics, and my most fervent cheerleaders. When I faltered, they didn't just offer platitudes; they shared their own stories of rejection and perseverance. When I finally performed on a small stage, shaking and pale, it wasn't just my dance that filled the room. It was the collective energy of my community, a silent chorus of encouragement that lifted me, step by step, into my own power.

Today, my performances are not just my own; they're a testament to the love and support that nurtured my genius.

This spiritual truth extends beyond creative pursuits. Think of the solitary student burning the midnight oil, wrestling with a complex problem. How often has a simple explanation from a peer, a shared cup of coffee in a library, or the quiet presence of a study group unlocked a door that felt impossibly locked? We are all interconnected. Our joys are amplified when shared; our sorrows are halved when borne by others. The individual spirit, when nourished by the collective heart, blossoms into a force of unimaginable beauty and strength. The lone tree may stand, but the forest endures. The collective provides the fertile soil, the shared sunlight, the protective canopy, allowing each individual tree to grow taller, stronger, and more beautiful than it ever could have alone. Our growth, our healing, our very becoming, is not an isolated act, but a sacred, communal dance. It is in the loving embrace of our community that we truly find ourselves.



HEARTFULNESS ESSAY EVENT 2025

CATEGORY 2 WINNER | AGES 19–25

Being in Tune with Nature Is a Prerequisite for Human Evolution

ANAND M.

Vasavi Jnana Peetha First Grade College, Bengaluru, Karnataka

When we think of human evolution, we often imagine the past—our ancestors gradually rising from primitive beings to the intelligent, complex species we are today. But evolution isn't something that ended thousands of years ago; it is an ongoing process. The real question is: in which direction are we evolving now? Is it enough to develop faster technology, stronger economies, and smarter machines? Or is there something deeper required: a shift in our consciousness, values, and way of life? I strongly believe that being in tune with nature is not just desirable but a prerequisite for true human evolution.

This belief is not just theoretical for me. It's rooted in personal experience.

I spent most of my life in a fast-paced urban environment, surrounded by concrete, pollution, and noise. Nature was something distant, a place we went to for vacation or a background for social media pictures. But that changed during a two-week stay at an eco-village nestled in the Western Ghats. What started as a volunteering trip ended up transforming the way I viewed life.

There, I saw people living in harmony with the Earth. They grew their own food, used solar energy, harvested rainwater, and minimized waste. Life was simple but full of meaning. Every small act—watering a plant, composting kitchen scraps, watching the sunset was done with mindfulness and respect for the natural world. For the first time, I felt a deep sense of peace and connection. I wasn't escaping from the world; I was reconnecting with it.

That experience made me realize how disconnected modern society has become from nature, and how that disconnection is harming not only the planet but also our inner lives. We chase success, speed, and convenience, but in the process, we've forgotten something essential: that we are not separate from nature; we are nature.

Human evolution is not only about intelligence or innovation; it is about growing in awareness, compassion, and harmony, and nature is our greatest teacher in that journey.

Look around: everything in nature works in balance. Trees give more than they take. Rivers flow without greed. Animals live without destroying their environment. Nature operates through cooperation, regeneration, and cycles—principles we must relearn if we are to evolve consciously. When we live in tune with nature, we absorb these values intuitively.

Scientific studies have shown that being in nature improves our mental health, reduces stress, and boosts creativity. Even a walk in a park can reset our nervous system. This isn't just coincidence; it's a sign that we are biologically and psychologically designed to coexist with the natural world. To ignore this connection is to ignore a fundamental part of who we are.

Sadly, modern development often moves in the opposite direction. Forests are cleared for cities, rivers are polluted for industries, and the air we breathe is filled with toxins. We call this progress, but at what cost? Climate change, species extinction, natural disasters: these are not just environmental issues; they are signals that our way of life is out of balance.

If we continue to live against nature, we may survive technologically, but we will regress spiritually and emotionally. True evolution requires more than survival. It calls for wisdom. And wisdom comes from recognizing that the Earth is not a resource to exploit but a living system to honor and protect.

Being in tune with nature does not mean we have to abandon modern life. It means changing our relationship with the planet. It means designing cities with green spaces, developing clean energy, supporting sustainable agriculture, and adopting lifestyles that tread lightly on the Earth. It means listening, really listening to the rhythms of the natural world and aligning ourselves with them.

Since my time at the eco-village, I've made small but meaningful changes in my own life. I started composting, reduced plastic use, grew herbs on my balcony, and spent more time outdoors. More importantly, I began to slow down and pay attention to the sound of birds, the feeling of wind, the changing colors of the sky. These are simple things, but they have brought a sense of grounding and clarity that no screen or gadget ever could.

In the end, evolution is not just about where we go next as a species. It's about how we go there. Will we become more mindful, compassionate, and wise? Or will we drift further from the very source that sustains us?

The answer, I believe, lies in nature.

Being in tune with nature is not a romantic ideal; it is a biological, emotional, and spiritual necessity. If humanity is to evolve meaningfully, not just in technology but in consciousness, we must return to the Earth, not as masters, but as humble students. Only by reconnecting with nature can we rediscover our true potential and take the next step in our evolutionary journey.



HEARTFULNESS ESSAY EVENT

2026



CATEGORY 1

Ages 14–18 | 500 words

THEME:

**No one can hurt me
without my permission.**



CATEGORY 2

Ages 19–25 | 750 words

THEME:

**Acceptance is a sign
of evolution.**



SUBMISSION DEADLINE:

SEPTEMBER 30, 2026



For guidelines and
submission details, visit
hfn.link/essayevent



For questions, write to
essayevent@heartfulness.org



the
**HEARTFUL
MIND**
with **Daaji**



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- Daaji

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heartfulness
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UR
L I F E



experience

ecology

“But in every walk with Nature one receives
far more than he seeks.”

JOHN MUIR





Carbon-Neutral Campuses, Lifelong Lessons

How Forests by Heartfulness is helping campuses across Andhra Pradesh become living classrooms for sustainability.

BY VIJAYAKUMAR KIDAMBI

On World Environment Day 2026, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu planted a sapling at Andhra University in Visakhapatnam, marking the launch of a partnership between the Government of Andhra Pradesh and Forests by Heartfulness. The initiative aims to transform 1,047 welfare residential schools and junior colleges into carbon-neutral, biodiversity-rich campuses, while offering students the opportunity to experience sustainability as part of daily school life.

Central to the greening of these campuses is a high-density afforestation model intended to establish thriving, layered ecosystems more quickly, transforming bare or underused land into biodiverse spaces with measurably cooler microclimates.

Established first through a signed memorandum of understanding with the Social Welfare Department, Government of Andhra Pradesh, in May 2026, the project is a step forward for both the Government of Andhra Pradesh and Heartfulness in their

shared goal of a greener, more sustainable home for humanity. The project aligns with United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 13: Climate Action, India's commitment to reach net zero by 2070, and Andhra Pradesh's Swarnandhra vision of net-zero emissions by 2047. The project's end-to-end framework—covering energy, water, waste, green cover, and sustainability—was developed by the Forests by Heartfulness team.



1,047

SCHOOLS & COLLEGES



28

DISTRICTS



300,000

STUDENTS

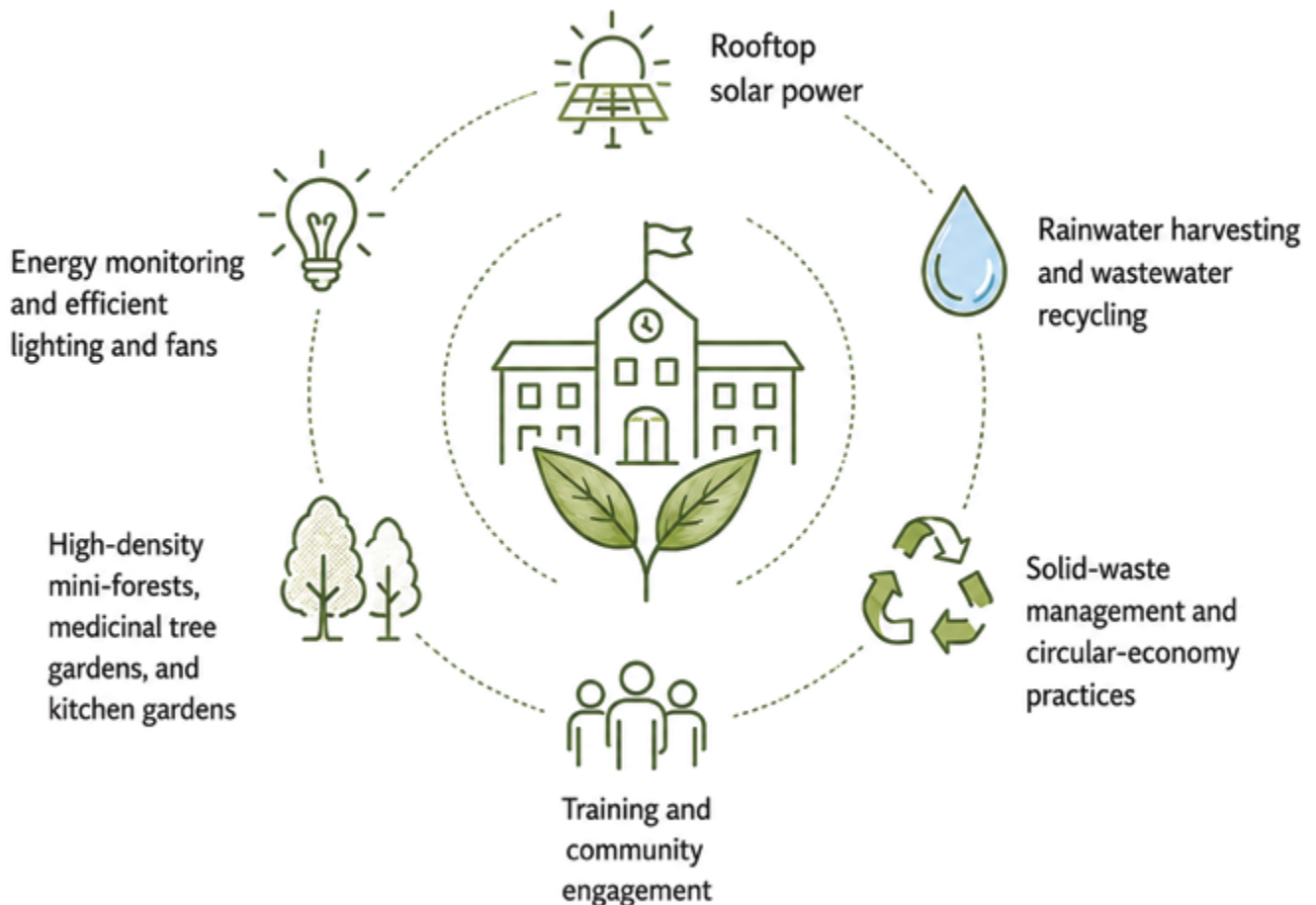
The commitment to net-zero campuses spans 1,047 institutions across 28 districts of Andhra Pradesh in the first phase and will reach more than 300,000 students across the state's welfare residential system. Together, these institutions generate an estimated 47,500 metric tons of Scope 1 and 2 carbon dioxide equivalent emissions each year. The project's six planned interventions have a projected offset potential of roughly 48,000 metric tons annually and include:

- rooftop solar power
- rainwater harvesting and wastewater recycling
- solid-waste management and circular-economy practices
- energy monitoring and more efficient lighting and fans
- high-density mini-forests, medicinal tree gardens, and kitchen gardens
- training and community engagement

The project also preserves the decades-old trees already on campus, whose carbon-absorbing work has largely gone unnoticed.

Data and progress are tracked using AI to derive insights automatically from drone survey data.

SIX INTERVENTIONS. ONE VISION.





Alongside its environmental goals, the project has an educational purpose. Students will encounter solar energy, water conservation, waste reduction, and biodiversity in daily campus life. The campus itself can therefore become a place where environmental responsibility is practiced as well as taught.

Daaji, the global guide of Heartfulness, teaches that care for the environment follows naturally from care for oneself: as the heart expands, care extends from the self to all creation.

Students are central to the project's long-term value.

Through experiential learning, participation, and institutional support, the campuses can become active centers of environmental awareness and climate action.

By taking part in these initiatives while in school, students can develop habits of environmental stewardship that extend into their communities and future work. Lower emissions and richer biodiversity will change the campuses; the experience of helping to create those changes may remain with students long after graduation.

FROM FORESTS BY HEARTFULNESS

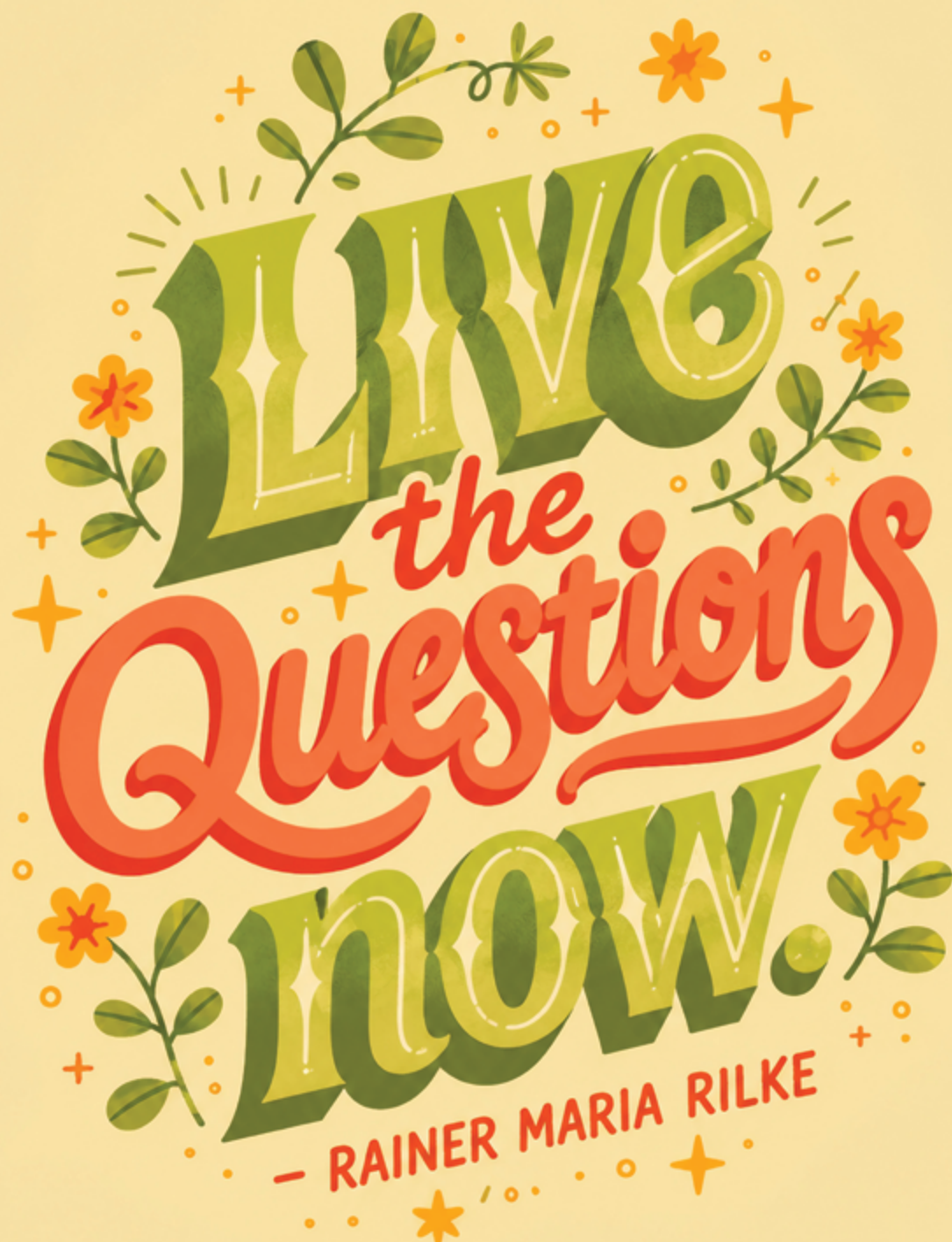
Forests by Heartfulness nurtures and protects native, endemic, and endangered plant species through expert-guided nurseries, plantation drives, long-term monitoring, and community participation.

heartfulness.org/forests



guidance







An Inner Fire without Smoke

A reflection on Babuji's timeless devotion to Lalaji
and what their relationship reveals about belonging,
surrender, and the living continuity of the master-
disciple relationship.

BY DAAJI

Some kinds of love arrive with a bang. There's a dramatic awakening, a thunderbolt that makes it impossible not to notice that something has happened inside you. Others come in so quietly that only later do you realize how completely your life has rearranged itself around it, and how your idea of belonging has shifted.

Babuji's love for his Master, Lalaji, was the quiet kind. An inner fire without smoke, no display or show or gesture that could make it cheap.

When he first met Lalaji, nothing dramatic happened. There was no sudden declaration, no inner fireworks announcing, "This is my guru." Instead, something simpler and deeper took place. It was as if something within him settled and wordlessly confirmed to him that this was where he belonged. True

love has no quarrel within itself. It asks for no proof, no reasons. A river does not decide to seek the ocean; it follows the course that leads it there.

When Babuji found his Master, the pull toward Lalaji left no possibility of his being drawn elsewhere. In Lalaji, he recognized a belonging that transcended time and place.

Love without Display

When one is busy declaring to one and all how devoted they are, there is hardly any room left inside to know what needs to be done. One of Babuji's most striking qualities was how little he tried to stand out. When he visited Lalaji, Babuji chose to sit in the last row, even as most devotees clamored to sit in the front. While many people feel an urge to move to the front, Babuji understood something

subtler: closeness to the Master does not depend on physical proximity or outward signs of devotion.

Many disciples, consciously or not, make an effort to appear more spiritual or devoted in front of the Master. Sitting motionlessly, speaking more gently than they do with anyone else, appearing a little more evolved than they really feel. All these unnecessary performances effectively detract from the genuine connection that can be made in such moments.

Babuji served without display. He listened fully and followed instructions without drama. When he returned to his regular life, he would carry the Master inwardly rather than wear his devotion on the surface. That kind of love neither looks for witnesses nor makes any self-declarations.

Babuji's love for his Master, Lalaji, was
the quiet kind. An inner fire without
smoke, no display or show or gesture
that could make it cheap.



Knowing Where to Stand

There is an underrated wisdom in knowing your place.

When you know where your place is, there's no inner thirst to prove yourself as special. Babuji never competed for attention. Rather, he made room for others to go forward, knowing that his place was secure, not because of his position but because of his unshakeable sense of purpose.

There was a real, unforced humility inside him: the kind that arises when your love is so fearless you don't mind disappearing from view. The paradox is that it cannot be practiced as a virtue since, for it to be real, it must come naturally.

It is easy to love a master when grace flows freely, when the heart is lifted and the path feels luminous. But a love of another order reveals itself only when responsibility arrives at the door.

Accepting Responsibility without Claim

It is easy to love a master when grace flows freely, when the heart is lifted and the path feels luminous. But a love of another order reveals itself only when responsibility arrives at the door.

Lalaji carried within him a powerful spiritual trust, living and luminous, that was never meant to end with him but to continue, to be passed on, and to go forward into the world through another pair of hands. He did not declare, "I am the last one, and hereafter no one will work the way I do." And Babuji sensed this long before a single word was ever exchanged. He did not set about preparing



Babuji felt the pain of separation,
but without the hollowness of
loss that most people experience.
For him, Lalaji had not gone
anywhere. He had not lost him.

himself to inherit authority or to step into a role of greatness. What he prepared for, in his unassuming way, was something far more sacred: to become worthy of safeguarding what had been so lovingly entrusted.

So when the moment came, and Lalaji placed the full weight of the work on his shoulders, Babuji received his duty not with excitement or a swell of pride, but wholly and without ceremony.

Real love never says, "I have earned this." It says, "I will take care of this."

When the Master Moves Within

On August 14, 1931, Lalaji attained *mahasamadhi* [the final state of spiritual absorption when a saint renounces their body and enters the Brighter World]. It was after he left his physical body that the nature of his relationship with Babuji became apparent.

Babuji felt the pain of separation, but without the hollowness of loss that most people experience. For him, Lalaji had not gone anywhere. He had not lost him.

Long before that moment of Lalaji's departure, the relationship had already begun its evolution. The Master had shifted from someone Babuji met in the world,

a physical presence, a face, a voice, to something far more profound: an inner companion, a guiding light that shone in silence, through intuition, and a clarity that arose from a place deeper than thought. So, Babuji listened to that inner voice with the same reverence and obedience he had always offered outwardly. In that sense, nothing had changed apart from the form through which love flowed.

At a certain depth of devotion, the sense of belongingness no longer depends on sight.

Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of Babuji's devotion was what he never did. Even as he grew into a Master of great spiritual stature, he never imagined that succession meant taking his guru's place—not outwardly, and not even in the privacy of his inner life. That simplicity of character radiated from him. Within him, Lalaji remained not a cherished memory to be visited but an enduring, living presence. Babuji always worked from within that relationship—never beyond it, never over it. The Source remained the Source, and because of this, the lineage remained luminous and unbroken.

A love that tries to displace its source eventually distorts, but a love that stays rooted in its origin becomes a clean channel.

A love that tries to displace its source eventually distorts, but a love that stays rooted to its origin becomes a clean channel.

From Love to Transmission

People often marveled at the quality of Babuji's Transmission: its gentleness, its depth, the way it could reach into the deepest corners of a heart and dissolve fears. They wondered at its subtlety, at the way it seemed to carry no weight of ego, no trace of effort. How does something so powerful move so softly? The answer, when you sit with it, is quite simple.

What flows through a person is determined entirely by what fills their heart. A vessel is bound to carry the nature of what it contains, just as an emptied perfume bottle retains the perfume's fragrance.

Babuji's heart was empty of personal ambition. There was no desire to be seen, to be credited, or remembered as great. And into that space, his Master had settled, fully and permanently. So, what moved through Babuji when he worked was not technique or accumulated spiritual knowledge, nor even the force of a remarkable personality. It was a love so free of personal claim that it left no imprint of self on what was transmitted.

Constant Belonging

The relationship between Lalaji and Babuji leaves behind a subtle but potent lesson. Sincere devotion that leads to oneness does not shrink a person—it clarifies them. While most people believe that surrender is a weakness to be avoided at all costs, it is actually an alignment: a coming into truer proportion with something greater than ourselves.

Babuji loved so completely that nothing personal remained to stand in the way. No ambition to filter the Transmission, no self-importance to color what passed through. This was the fullest possible expression of a life: a soundless arrival at the Self's eternal nature.



What flows through a person is determined entirely by what fills their heart. A vessel is bound to carry the nature of what it contains, just as an emptied perfume bottle retains the perfume's fragrance.

And that love is still at work. You can feel it in the moments when fear loosens its hold without explanation. When something simple suddenly opens into unexpected depth. When effort that once felt like labor silently gives way to effortlessness. In those moments, something is moving—something that did not originate with us and does not end with us.

The deepest love holds what it cherishes so lightly that it becomes an act of service, of protection, and finally, of release. And so, the silent dialogue between Lalaji and Babuji has never closed. It continues through Transmission itself, through the living current that passes from heart to heart, generation to generation, whenever a sincere seeker turns inward.

Because love, when it knows where it belongs, does not merely touch the people around it; it shapes the generations yet to come.

FROM DAAJI

Daaji is the Heartfulness Guide and president of Shri Ram Chandra Mission.

daaji.org



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All Knowledge Stems From the Heart



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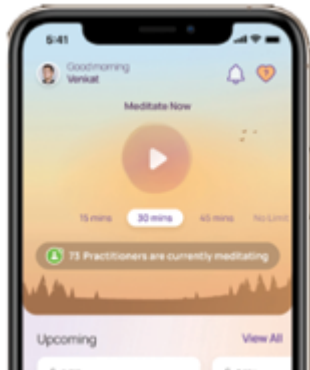
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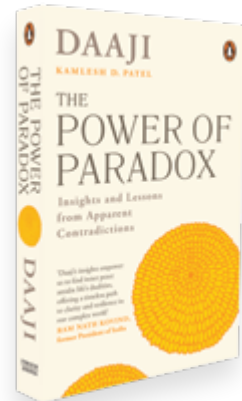


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We are planting millions of trees across India

An initiative of Heartfulness Institute to nurture, protect and conserve native, endemic and endangered tree species of India.



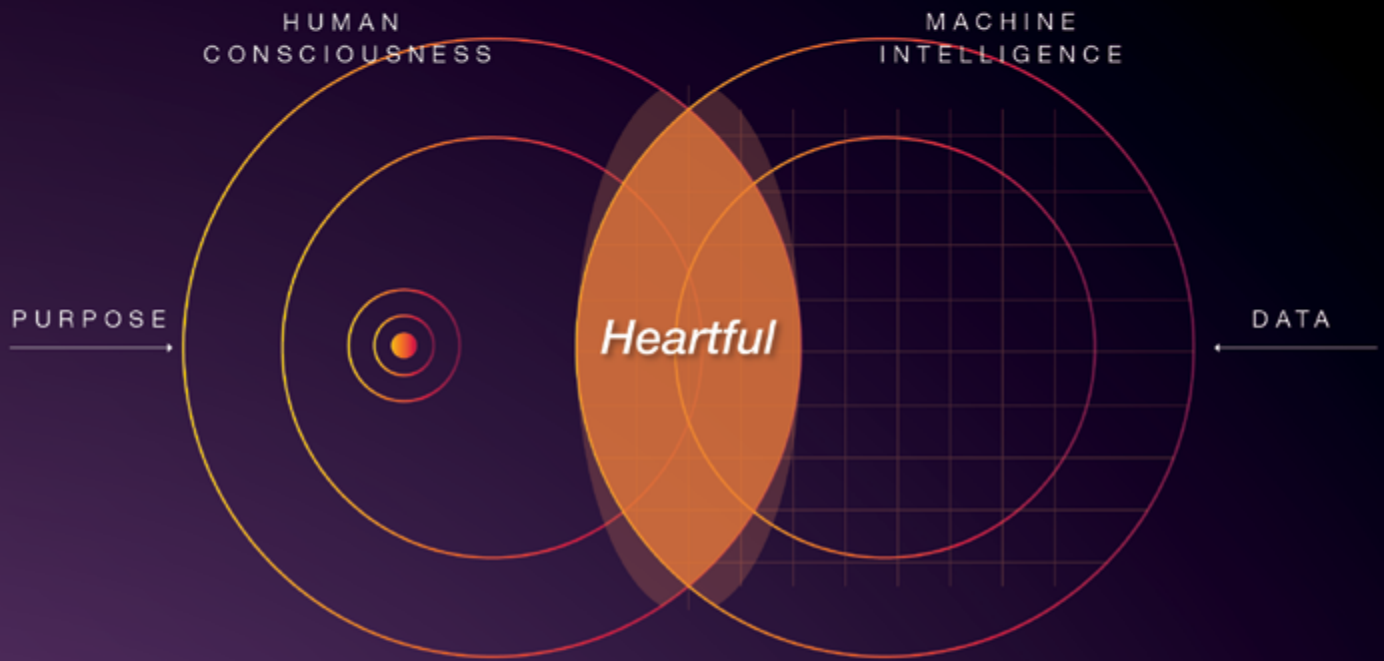
Participate in this movement by volunteering locally, gifting trees and partnerships, more details at:

Website: <https://heartfulness.org/forests/>

Gift or Contribute to loved ones at:

<https://heartfulness.org/forests/donations-gifting>

Write to us: fbh@heartfulness.org



AI that doesn't just think,
it understands.