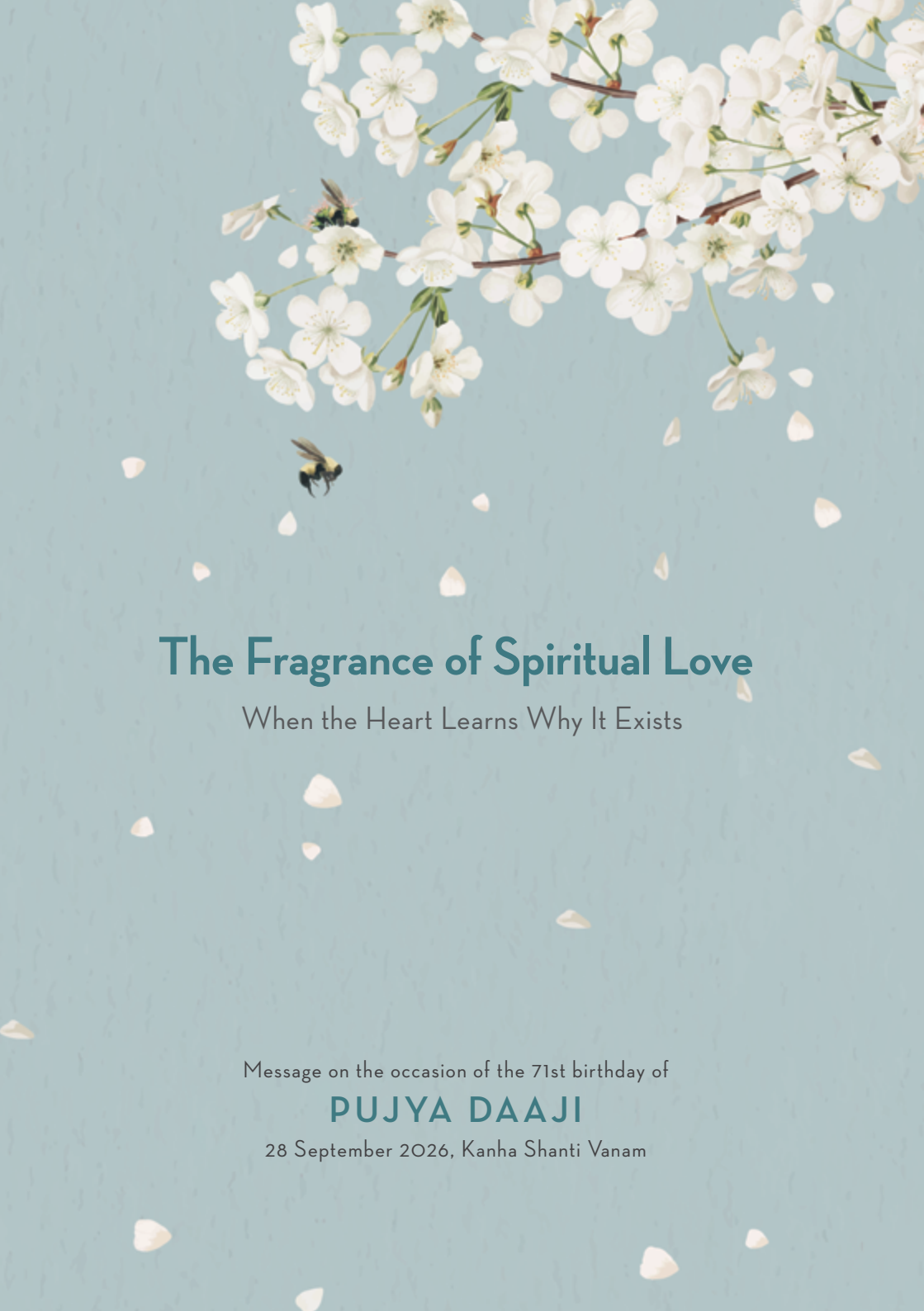




The Fragrance of Spiritual Love

When the Heart Learns Why It Exists

Message on the occasion of the 71st birthday of

PUJYA DAAJI

28 September 2026, Kanha Shanti Vanam



The Fragrance of Spiritual Love

When the Heart Learns Why It Exists

Dear friends,

Every spiritual tradition tells us that love lies at the heart of the journey. We nod and assume we understand, but do we? In this message, we will follow the progression that unfolds as love blossoms and releases its fragrance. But first, what is the nature of fragrance? Does a flower choose to be fragrant? No, fragrance radiates naturally when the flower becomes what it is meant to be. Fragrance is an overflow. Love, in the spiritual sense, is also an overflow.

During the previous nine messages, we began with ‘The Divided Heart’, then described the obstacles that prevented wholeness and flowering, and how to rise above them. Those obstacles were inertia that numbed purpose, doubt that weakened the foundation, pride that built a ceiling, jealousy that turned our gaze sideways, prejudice that coloured our perception and fear that locked the door from within. When the door opened in

‘The River Learns Its Name’, fear turned to trust. Then, in ‘The Soil Before the Seed’, faith prepared the inner ground. This tenth message is the next natural movement. Here we explore how a heart made receptive by faith allows Grace to enter. Whatever Grace fills becomes love. And love that recognizes its Source becomes bhakti.

‘Love’ is among the most used and misunderstood words. It describes a mother’s feeling when she lifts her newborn, a young person’s feeling in the excitement of first attraction, a patriot’s feeling for a country, a devotee’s feeling for the Divine, and even our enjoyment of a good cup of coffee. We have stretched the word so widely that it covers almost everything.

So, what does love mean in the spiritual field? A simple test of spiritual love is how we regard those who do not share our faith, our path or even our idea of God. When we exclude them because they worship differently, love has not yet flowered within us. When we truly love God, we cannot dismiss any of God’s creatures. To tolerate others is a beginning. To accept others is deeper. To recognize the same sacred essence within everyone is the movement of love.

Spiritual love emerges when the heart undergoes a profound transformation. That transformation unfolds through the beautiful progression of

*Longing, to Shraddha, to Receptivity,
to Grace, to Love, to Bhakti.*

Each step prepares the next. Each is hidden within the one before it, just as the flower is hidden within the seed and the fragrance within the flower.

Longing, the first movement

Before meditation and the conscious search for God begin, an uneasiness often arises. Something is missing. We may have comfort, achievement, family, recognition, knowledge and everything that brings contentment, yet an unanswered ache remains within.

Some of us try to fill it by becoming busier, acquiring more, travelling and entertaining ourselves. We seek relationships, accomplishments and experiences, including spiritual experiences. Yet the ache returns. Now, what if the ache is not a problem? What if it is an invitation?

A seed planted in soil responds to a sun it has never seen. An invisible intelligence knows to move upwards, drawing it towards growth and completion. Longing is that movement within us. We don't know the destination, but something is pulling. We



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sense that life contains a depth we have not touched. There is a truth we have not embodied, a home we have not reached. Our spiritual journey begins with this longing. And when longing recognizes a direction it becomes shraddha.

Shraddha, where the heart is placed

We spoke of shraddha in ‘The Soil Before the Seed’. It is usually translated as ‘faith’, although faith hardly conveys its richness. Shraddha is more than believing in the impossible. It is also more than passive acceptance, blind obedience or the suspension of intelligence. It is a movement of the whole being. It carries the suggestion of *placing or establishing the heart*.

‘Where do I place my heart?’ is more meaningful than ‘What do I believe?’ We may believe in God while placing the heart in status. We may speak a lot about spirituality while placing the heart in recognition. We may praise simplicity while placing the heart in possessions. We may speak of love while investing our attention in resentment.

The Bhagavad Gita expresses this as¹:

*śraddhā-mayo ’yaṁ puruṣo
yo yac-chraddhaḥ sa eva saḥ*

A person is fashioned by shraddha;
as is the quality of their shraddha, so they become.

¹ Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 17, Verse 3.

In other words, *shraddha shapes us*. Whatever repeatedly receives the heart gradually moulds us. We become what we honour with our attention, trust, aspiration and love.

Shraddha may first appear as interest, reverence, aspiration or the simple willingness to sit each morning and turn within. When nourished, it deepens. What begins as an orientation becomes attraction. Attraction becomes intimacy. Intimacy prepares the way for love.

Shraddha is the heart learning where to rest. Love is what flows when it finds its home. We could even say that shraddha is love before it recognizes itself as love. Longing asks, 'Where is That which I seek?' Shraddha responds by placing the heart in that direction. And when the heart is placed there again and again, it opens. Shraddha becomes receptivity.

Receptivity, the courage to open

A closed heart, like a closed fist, cannot receive anything. We may ask for Grace, pray for transformation, seek the highest and sit in meditation every morning, yet inwardly remain wedded



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to our preferences. As an exercise, ask yourself, 'Do I want transformation without disturbance, surrender while retaining control, the Infinite without rearranging the furniture? In other words, do I want the Divine on my terms?'

Shraddha gradually changes this. Trust deepens, so the need to defend ourselves weakens. We are less controlling of what happens next. This is receptivity, *inner availability*, a willingness to receive what the heart cannot produce for itself. We become available to the divine current. We prepare the inner field so that the offering of Grace can be received. This is the purpose of spiritual practice.

Preparing for the invader

Babuji used a striking image for what is offered. He spoke of preparing the ground for the 'invader'. Ordinarily, an invader is unwelcome, but here the meaning is entirely different. Love enters and takes possession when conditions become favourable. And Grace is the driver of this invasion once the inner ground is receptive. To prepare for receptivity, deep roots are pulled out so that new life can establish itself. Those roots are our expectations, prejudices, fears, likes and dislikes, accumulated impressions, insistence upon ourselves and our demand that spiritual life unfolds according to our wishes.

Grace is always there waiting. We need to make ourselves available. Shraddha prepares the place within us where Grace no longer meets resistance. We then entrust ourselves to love. At first we say, 'I believe.' Later we say, 'I trust.' Still later, trust

is unnecessary, because the distance between the one who trusts and That which we trust disappears. Love enters as an invader only to reveal itself as the rightful occupant of the heart.

Love and transaction

But the common type of love often has an element of transaction. We give while expecting something in return, even if that expectation is unconscious. Affection seeks affection. Attention seeks attention. Sacrifice seeks acknowledgement. Care seeks gratitude.

When the exchange proceeds as expected, we feel loved. When it doesn't, we are disappointed. This is love mixed with need. Wherever need exists, fear is nearby. It could be the fear of losing what we have, the fear of not receiving what we desire, or the fear of being forgotten, replaced, rejected or left alone.

Fear contracts while love expands. Fear asks, 'What will happen to me?' while love does not need to ask. Fear builds boundaries, love dissolves boundaries. And shraddha is the bridge between the two. Fear says, 'Protect yourself,' while shraddha whispers, 'Trust yourself.' The movement from self-protection towards



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self-entrustment is one of the great transitions of spiritual life. It clears the way for the heart to become receptive to Grace.

True love is a subtle state, the result of intensive inner work carried out slowly, in silence and anonymity. In contrast, love displayed is often love diminished. The moment it seeks a response, it carries the fragrance of ego. A rose does not turn towards a passer-by and ask, 'Did you notice my fragrance?' It gives because giving is what it is.

The fence that dissolves

The deepest roots in the inner ground are those of the ego, the separate 'I' that takes the vast, borderless field of existence, fences off a plot, then spends a lifetime defending its perimeter. Everything within the fence is 'mine' and everything outside becomes desirable, threatening, useful or irrelevant. Ego dominates when consciousness is contracted to stay within that fenced plot. Love blossoms when the fence no longer exists. And for this to happen, love does not destroy the fence, it simply makes it unnecessary.



Fear builds boundaries, love dissolves boundaries. And shraddha is the bridge between the two. Fear says, 'Protect yourself,' while shraddha whispers, 'Trust yourself.' The movement from self-protection towards self-entrustment is one of the great transitions of spiritual life. It clears the way for the heart to become receptive to Grace.

When consciousness expands beyond the fence, it moves from 'I' to 'we'. In the process, it discovers that it was protecting itself from what it was seeking. The fence of ego is ultimately a fence built by fear. And what dissolves the fence from within? Warmth. Love warms the heart until the ego melts away, just as frost disappears from a window when the sun shines.

The window and the light

The four Heartfulness practices help us cultivate receptivity.

Meditation opens the window to the Light.

In meditation, we gently turn our attention towards the presence of divine Light within the heart. We do not force an experience or manufacture an image. We become inwardly available.

Cleaning removes the dirt from the pane.

Over time, impressions, tendencies, emotional burdens and complexities cloud our perception. Cleaning removes them so the Light can pass through more freely.

Prayer opens the window completely, with humility, to Grace.

Prayer acknowledges that the Light is not ours. It softens the illusion of self-sufficiency and places us before the Source with humility, openness and a willingness to be guided by wisdom greater than our own.

Constant Remembrance keeps the window turned towards the Source of Light throughout the day.

Even while we work, speak, serve, create and care for others, the heart retains its inward direction. Remembrance preserves the orientation established by shraddha.

Meditation invites the Light.

Cleaning removes the obstructions.

Prayer opens us humbly to its Source.

Constant Remembrance keeps the heart turned towards the Source.

Meditation and cleaning work upon the condition of the heart. Prayer establishes our relationship with the Source. Constant Remembrance preserves the direction of the heart. And Grace offers what none of these practices can manufacture.

Grace cannot be produced by effort

We do not create Grace, just as a farmer does not create the rain. We prepare ourselves to receive it, just as the farmer prepares the soil. He removes the stones, loosens the earth, plants seeds and waits with vigilance. When the rain comes, the field is ready. Spiritual practice is our preparation.

This distinction protects us from two errors. The first is pride, the belief that our spiritual condition is our personal achievement. The second is passivity, the belief that because Grace is given

no preparation is required. Both are incomplete. We prepare with sincerity and Grace completes what effort alone can never accomplish.

Pranahuti and the overflowing cup

Water cannot be poured from an empty cup. Similarly, in human relationships, we cannot give what we don't have. Yet much of life is spent loving from emptiness, trying to give what we ourselves are desperately seeking. This is why human love often becomes exhausting. Giving is an effort because somewhere beneath the giving remains the hope of receiving. Lovers become beggars, seeking alms of love from each other!

Spiritual love begins with receiving. In the Heartfulness tradition, we sit in meditation and become receptive to *Pranahuti*, yogic Transmission. Meditation after meditation, something changes almost imperceptibly. The cup fills. As it fills, love begins to overflow naturally and effortlessly. *Fullness expresses itself*. This is the transforming power of love. It embellishes everything and brings life to the most arid heart. Its vibratory power is not something we create; rather, we become a channel for the love we receive.



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Let's revisit the progression.

Longing awakens the search.
Shraddha gives the search direction.
Shraddha deepens into receptivity.
Receptivity welcomes Grace.
Grace fills the heart.
The filled heart overflows as love.
Love recognizes its Source and becomes bhakti.

Bhakti, when love finds its Source

Once love is awakened, it overflows into our relationships, work, speech, service and way of looking at the world. It softens judgement and weakens the walls of separation. Then, an even deeper movement begins. Love remembers where it came from. It turns towards its Source as naturally as a river turns towards the sea. This turning is bhakti. Bhakti is love recognizing its origin and turning wholly towards it.

Shraddha is the heart placing itself in the direction of the Beloved. Love is the heart filling with the Beloved. Bhakti is the heart wishing to exist only in the Beloved.

Longing, shraddha, receptivity, Grace, love and bhakti are not separate. They are the sequence of life unfolding, just as a plant unfolds through a seed, root, stem, flower, fragrance and fragrance returning to its Source.



Shraddha is the heart placing itself in the direction of the Beloved. Love is the heart filling with the Beloved. Bhakti is the heart wishing to exist only in the Beloved.

The law of return

Nature teaches us another quality of love. A mango tree requires soil, sunlight, water and a little cow dung. From these ordinary offerings it returns juicy sweetness, fragrance, nourishment, shade and countless possibilities for new life. A coconut palm draws from soil, rain, sunlight and air, transforming them into something far richer than it receives. A cow needs grass, fodder, water, sunlight, care and affection. In return, she gives nutritious milk.

Nature receives the simple and returns the sublime.

What about us? We receive the finest things. We receive sunlight, air, water, an extraordinary body, the affection of others, the wisdom of those who came before us, the sacrifice of parents and teachers, the bounty of the Earth and, above all, the possibility of Grace.

What can we give in return? We cannot return sunlight to the sun or water to the clouds. We need not repay Grace at its Source. There is nothing the Divine lacks that we need to replenish. There is only one gift worthy of our attention, and that is to *transform what we have received*.

If the mango tree transforms manure into sweetness, the coconut palm transforms ordinary water into nourishing coconut water and the cow transforms grass into milk, we must also possess this sacred capacity for transformation.

When we receive hurt, can we give forgiveness?
When we receive anger, can we give understanding?
When we receive hatred, can we give compassion?
When we receive knowledge, can we give wisdom?
When we receive abundance, can we give generosity?
When we receive Grace, *can we give love?*

This is the dignity of being human. Our greatness is in *what life becomes by passing through us*. A tree radiates the quality of its inner work through its fruit. So do we. The Divine awaits what we allow Him to make of us.

When love becomes our nature, there will be no concern about who recognizes it, who reciprocates and who appreciates it. True love needs no witness. Its fragrance is its testimony.

Heartfully yours,

Kamlesh



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