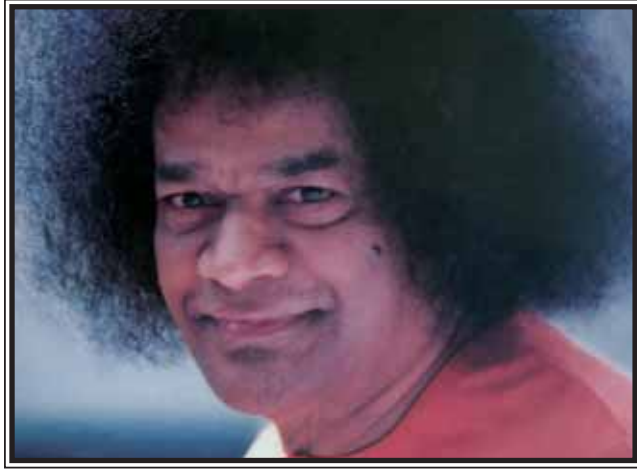


DEDICATED TO THE DIVINE ONE

Shri Satya Sai Baba



I recognize and revere Shri Satya Sai Baba as divinity in human form. To Him I owe all. He has taught me everything about life and living and the purpose of my existence. I am grateful to Him for giving me the opportunity to fulfill my heart's yearning and life's dream, to serve in the most profound ways: teaching, counseling and healing.

There is nothing that I cannot do if He is walking by my side. I have never been afraid of anything since He has come into my life. I feel privileged and grateful of this presence. I believe I am more fulfilled since He came into my life.

Thank you for your unconditional Love, Wisdom and Guidance.

I am one of the countless pebbles that have been swept away with the tide of human errors. O Divine One, make me the wave of love that transports lost stones of humankind, myself included, to your shores forever. Make Our Reality, One with Yours.

Huzan S. Daver





GRATITUDE & LOVE
to my family, patients, students and friends

THERE IS ONLY ONE RELIGION, THE RELIGION OF LOVE
THERE IS ONLY ONE CASTE, THE CASTE OF HUMANITY
THERE IS ONLY ONE LANGUAGE, THE LANGUAGE OF THE HEART;
THERE IS ONLY ONE GOD, HE IS OMNIPRESENT

Shri Satya Sai Baba

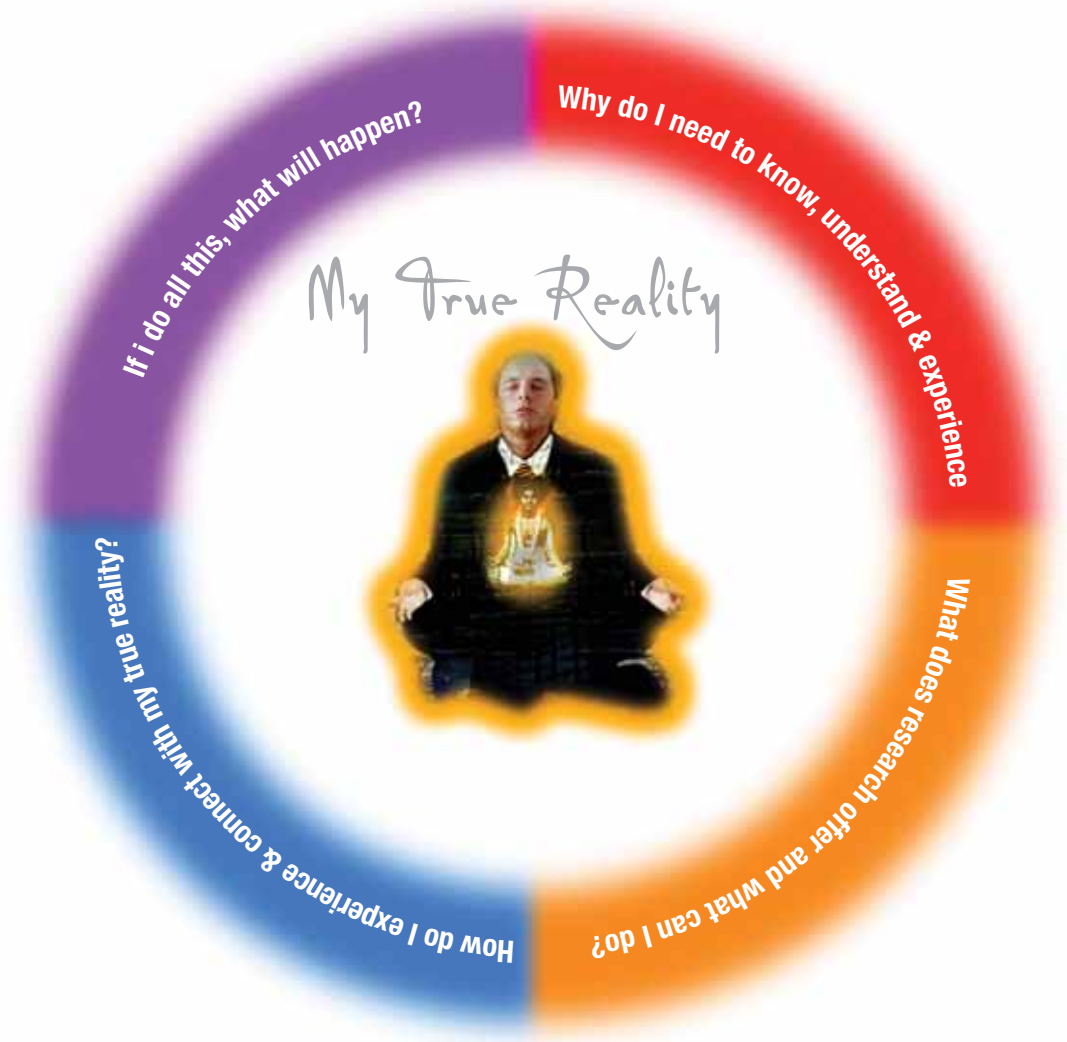


Contents

1. THE HEAT OF THE FIRE
 2. OUR CREATOR
 3. THE REAL WORLD BEYOND
 4. THE PURPOSE OF LIFE
 5. THE SELF- WHO AM I?
 6. WE ARE ENERGY
 7. CLEANSING, CLEARING & PSYCHIC PROTECTION
 8. PRANAYAMA - BREATH AWARENESS
 9. THE FUNDAMENTALS OF MEDITATION
 10. THE HEART- EMOTIONAL MANAGEMENT THROUGH MEDITATION
 11. UNLIMITED POWER
 12. ANGELS AND SPIRIT GUIDES
 13. HEALING IN MEDITATION
 14. DESIRE MANAGEMENT
 15. RELATIONSHIPS
 16. FREE FROM BAD HABITS AND ADDICTION
 17. PEACE WITHIN US
 18. WILL MEDITATION REALLY WORK?
- GLOSSARY

Preface

THIS BOOK IS INTENDED TO “RE-AWAKEN” YOU TO UNDERSTAND, CONNECT AND EXPERIENCE YOUR TRUE REALITY. IT IS A BOOK THAT GUIDES YOU THROUGH A PROGRESSION OF SELF AWARENESS AND INNER SELF TRANSFORMATION THROUGH MEDITATION EXERCISES.



Who are we? We are not just the mind and the body but foremost, we are atma; i.e. energy, spirit or soul. We are spiritual beings experiencing the physical, not physical beings experiencing the spiritual! We have utilized our divine free will and chosen to experience the physical reality, to live on planet earth for growth in consciousness, using free will. Let me explain this with a simple analogy. Imagine you are a young child who requests your parents to experience the adventure of a roller coaster ride at a fair. You make an agreement or contract with your parents to have one ride initially and take all the ups and downs of the ride in your stride. The downs are just as important as the ups because that's what makes the experience fun and an exciting activity. You want the overall joy of the experience. Your parents agree. The roller coaster ride begins. Similar to our life's journey there are many "ups" and many "downs". When you are down you are filled with a sense of fear, panic and perhaps even angry at your parent for allowing you on the roller coaster. When you are going down you may think, say and do something which hurts someone. You do this because at that point in time it is the only thing you can do to cope with the situation. When the roller coaster starts going up again you scream. This time it is with joy and ecstasy. Eventually the ride is over. You had so much fun and so many wonderful experiences you may say to your parent, "Wow that was fun, can I go again?" Your parents being all wise and loving will request you to first apologize to the person who, in a state of fear, you hurt when you were going down the roller coaster ride. Once you have apologized, regretted your bad actions and learnt not to hurt others around you, but take the ups and downs in your stride, your parents allow you to go for another ride.

Our every experience, every thought, word and deed is recorded on a cosmic recorder. The more good thoughts, words and deeds we generate, the more we grow in consciousness. Conversely, we have to accept a "pay-back" for every negative thought, word and deed. We are like an onion - layers and layers of consciousness. Our outer layers have been contaminated through moving away from love to hatred, anger, violence, selfishness, greed, lust, sadness and fear, but our inner core is pure and one with divine consciousness. Unfortunately, the majority of humankind has lost their connection with their true core essence. We are caught up in the rat race of living in a robot like existence, creating material comforts and pleasures for the body and the mind but forgetting the spirit. However, circumstances in life constantly bring challenges, problems, difficulties, crises, illness and suffering. Suffering and pain shakes us up and reminds us to take a deep look at ourselves and who we really are and to re-evaluate the purpose of our existence. At some time or another, all of us make mistakes, but we need to learn, evolve and grow from them. Indeed, it is said that a saint is a sinner who learns from his mistakes. Otherwise, I believe we have to come back lifetime after lifetime to learn from our errors.

The success in meditation is the only answer to the mystery of overcoming the human nature so that the soul can become established in its own state, free from ego-created disturbances of feeling, centered ever in Bliss.

PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA, THE DIVINE ROMANCE

How do we connect, know and experience the atma, pure divine essence? Through a powerful yet exquisite inner journey called meditation. Meditation is a process that connects us to our deepest inner core. It is linking us to our true essence, which is divine love. In this book we will explore many techniques and methods of meditation.

So, how do we meditate? There are as many schools of meditation as there are pathways to God or religions. I believe that there is essential unity in philosophy and thought in all the schools of meditation that can be summed up in two basic pathways: one, path of insight – which is mindfulness, stages of reflection, awareness, realization, effortless insight and nirvana (where consciousness ceases to have an object) and finally total cessation of consciousness (you become one with divinity). When we meditate our beliefs determine how we interpret and perceive the experiences we have in meditation. Two, the path of concentration – this could be with objects, observing nature, or through devotion to human forms of divinity. There are various stages of concentration which lead to one-pointedness. These are verging on absorption but with some distracted thoughts, visions which leads to full absorption and finally deeper one-pointedness which leads to “nothingness”. Many techniques use a combination of the two for an integrated method of both concentration and mindfulness. This book uses a combination of both methods in the numerous exercises provided.

The three basic steps to meditate and thereby move from the conscious mind through the subconscious to the superconscious mind, are firstly, letting go of body awareness - letting go all thoughts and emotions; secondly, by concentrating on one subject, object, thought or person or by being mindful and insightful and thirdly, by moving into a state of “one-pointedness” where you experience “nothingness”, stillness, peace, harmony and sheer bliss and being one with universal consciousness.

A useful analogy of meditation is the following. Imagine you are at a movie theatre intending to see a wonderful movie. You are first in your conscious mind; you enter the theatre and look around you, wondering where you will sit. You see people around you, some eating popcorn, others chatting on their mobile phones. The main attraction appears on the screen. Part of you would love to slip out and buy a bag of popcorn and a soft drink. However, you decide to let go all sensory distractions and concentrate instead on the movie at hand. You settle in a comfortable position in your seat and completely unwind. As you

get drawn into the movie, you are so relaxed that you slowly lose all awareness of the body. Your mind, which is usually a hive of thoughts and activity is strangely still and focused on the movie. As the plot progresses, you get increasingly involved in the movie and your concentration then moves to a state of one-pointedness. That is when you lose all conscious awareness of the body and thoughts and become one with the character in the movie.

According to Daniel Goleman meditation has practical methods for people to apply to discipline their own minds and hearts to attain a more ideal state of being.

The Eastern psychologies also agree that the main means to this transformation of self is meditation.

DANEIL GOLEMAN, (1988) THE MEDITATIVE MIND

CHAPTER I

The heat of the fire





CHAPTER I

The heat of the fire

The most beautiful and most profound emotion we can experience is the sensation of the mystical. It is the sower of all true science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead. To know that which is impenetrable to us really exists, manifesting itself as the highest wisdom and the most radiant beauty which our dull faculties can comprehend only in their most primitive forms – this knowledge, this feeling is at the center of true religiousness.

ALBERT EINSTEIN (BARNETT, 1982, p. 100)

I believe that God transforms us like a goldsmith uses fire to refine gold. Why? Because I have felt the heat of this fire many times in my life and through the years I have learnt that He has His eye on me at all times. As a result, I have come out stronger and more enriched, yet I know I am continually being refined. He is merely waiting for me to completely transmute and convert into His image. He restores me through an array of experiences, some joyous, others difficult; and sends wonderful people into my life, who inspire and influence me and help me grow in so many ways. I know they are but His instruments. He is responsible for making me who I am and I am thankful for all these experiences.

Ever since I can remember, my heart longed to connect with God and be of service to Him. I dared to dream of meeting my heart's desire. And then the inevitable happened, He came into my life in a human form with human wisdom that I could relate to. My maternal grandmother, Jerbanoo Medora, had always told me that an avatar (Divine energy in human form) would walk the earth during my lifetime. I now recognize this to be Shri Satya Sai Baba.

Sai Baba then comes forth from transcendent cosmic spheres born of the God-self and the call of the God-self. He comes forth to show the way and the vast potential inherent in humanity, otherwise he would not have taken a human form... Even though he is incarnated in Indian form and lives in the little village of Puttaparthi, this in no way confines his cosmic mission either to the Hindu tradition or to a specific locality upon the planet... Sai Baba's mission is not only global but cosmic... Sai Baba is no average ascended master. I am not sure if there ever has been an incarnated spiritual master of this magnitude living on Earth. Sai Baba is literally a walking God on Earth.

DR. JOSHUA DAVID STONE, GOLDEN KEYS TO ASCENSION AND HEALING

...I feel Sai Baba's importance to our age cannot be overemphasized in this regard, I am convinced that he not only talks about Universal Consciousness but that he is Universal Consciousness.

DR. SAMUEL SANDWEISS, SPIRIT AND THE MIND

I must make it clear from the start of this book that I am not preaching, proselytizing or promoting any religion or any spiritual master, such as Shri Satya Sai Baba. Shri Satya Sai Baba Himself does not want people to leave their spiritual beliefs and follow Him. My intention is to share Universal wisdom and knowledge about spirituality and meditation. Shri Satya Sai Baba speaks a universal language and it is natural for me to want to share His Wisdom with you, because I have gained so much. Shri Satya Sai Baba declared himself:

I have come to Light the Love in your hearts, to see that it shines day by day with added luster. I have not come on behalf of any exclusive religion. I have not come on a mission of publicity for a sect or creed or cause nor have I come to collect followers for a doctrine. I have no plan to attract disciples or devotees into my fold or any fold. I have come to tell you of this unitary faith, this spiritual principle, this path of Love this virtue of Love, this duty of Love, this obligation of Love.

SHRI SATYA SAI BABA, 4TH JULY 1968

I was born in India in the city of Mumbai into a middle class Zoroastrian family. My grandmother and mother were staunch Zoroastrians and both were important influences in my early life. The Zoroastrians are a group of people, originally from ancient Iran, who profess the religion revealed by the prophet Zarathushtra (also known as Zoroaster by the ancient Greeks). Western scholars tend to agree that Zarathushtra was born between 1500 and 1800 BC near the Aral Sea on the south Russian Steppes. Zoroastrian and other Eastern scholars date the birth of the prophet to 3000-5000 BC. Either way, religious scholars of most persuasions agree that Zoroastrianism is the world's oldest revealed religion and has therefore had a significant influence on religions such as Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

Zoroastrianism was the state religion in ancient Iran for more than a thousand years. Like most empires, the courts of the latter day Zoroastrian kings were decadent, and this coincided with the advent of Islam in nearby Arabia. The last Zoroastrian King was Yazdagrid III, who was deposed by the Islamic Arabs in 936 A.D. The Arab invaders provided the Iranians with a simple choice – submit to Islam or die. During this period, small groups of Zoroastrians fled by boat to Western India and arrived in what is today called the State of Gujarat. The Zoroastrians were granted refuge by the Hindu ruler of that area, King Jadav Rana, who allowed them to freely practise their faith. It was the Hindus who called the Zoroastrians "Parsis" (the people from Pars or Persia). Today, this word Parsi (which actually signifies race, as opposed to religion) is commonly used to denote Zoroastrians residing in India.

Zarathushtra's message has been encapsulated in ancient hymns known as the Gathas. His central message is that there is one God - Ahura Mazda - the Lord of Wisdom. Wisdom and Omniscience are the primary attributes of this loving, kind, and totally good Creator.

When I grasped Thee in a vision to be the Father of the good mind, the real Creator of Truth, (and) the Lord of existence in Thy Actions.

(Y. 31.8) GATHAS

The purpose of humankind is to gain and spread wisdom, that is, Divine consciousness that comes from: self-awareness, knowledge, intuition, intellect, reasoning and discernment. Zarathushtra believed we could forever eradicate evil, by using our minds for the highest good and reaching a state of Divine consciousness.

According to Zarathushtra, evil is manifested in many ways: ignorance, selfishness, egotism, hatred, jealousy, illness, disease and even death (the temporary triumph of evil). Zoroastrians therefore value education and it is hardly surprising that as a race, Zoroastrians have a literacy rate of almost one hundred percent. But wisdom is more than just an academic education; it is connecting with inner Divine consciousness. How does one gain true wisdom? By looking within and understanding: who we really are, our thoughts and our relationship with Divinity and the Universe. Therefore education should also encompass morals and integrity and expand compassion and love. Academic qualifications on their own, without these key components only inflate one's ego. Perhaps this is what our society needs today – greater emphasis on spiritual wisdom.

All knowledge that is in the universe is also in the head of every man. There are many centers of knowledge in the human brain, each pertaining to one field of knowledge. If you learn to focus your mind on any of these centers, all knowledge in that particular field will open up itself for you! That is how the Vedas were revealed to the sages of yore!

B.N. NARASIMHA MURTHY, SRI SATHYA SAI DIVYA KRIPASRAYA,

Zoroastrians are taught to live their religion through good thoughts, good words and good deeds in their day-to-day life. A thought is the most powerful unit of energy. Creation begins with a thought. At any given moment you can change your entire life around by just one creative, positive and God conscious thought. You are your thoughts. Your past has created who you are today. Your present thoughts will create your future. Thoughts generate emotions, words and actions. Negative thinking generates negative emotions such as anger and hate, whilst positive thinking generates positive emotions such as love and happiness, which in turn lead to positive actions.

Unconditional Divine love is the result of good thinking (i.e. wisdom). To love something or someone divinely and unconditionally is to think with wisdom for his or her highest good. Good action results from good thinking. Life is a school and therefore one should always be open to learning and growing. There are no failures, as our mistakes provide us with another opportunity for learning from them.

My maternal grandmother, Jerbanoo Medora, was a devoted Zoroastrian who adhered to many of the orthodox disciplines of Zoroastrian practices. She performed rituals, recited prayers in Avestan and she would visit the atash behram every day and offer sandalwood to the holy fire. Jerbanoo would awaken in the early hours of the morning to do this and believed it was most beneficial to do this between the hours of 4 and 6 am. Whenever my sister and I visited her house for a sleepover, we had to follow her strict rules, which as children caused us some degree of dismay. We also resented the fact that she would arouse us out of bed before sunrise to say our prayers. Human values of truth, honesty, hard work, charity, and cleanliness of thought, word and deed were part of the Zoroastrian tribal beliefs and the socialisation process was inculcated into me, through two significant role models in my life: my mother and grandmother.

As I grew older, I realised the importance of infusing these values in our children by our own example. There is disharmony in our world due to a lack of spiritual understanding and our children have no proper role models and our younger generation are not “anchored”. Therefore some of them choose to escape to or experiment with drugs and alcohol as they have not been given a spiritual discipline to assist them in coping with the inevitable trials and tribulations of life. Having role models is one way of inspiring this discipline in children. I recollect that someone once argued with me that religion and the teaching of spirituality is a crutch for sick and desperate people. I asked him, “Would you rather have drugs and alcohol as a crutch?” Spirituality takes an individual on a path that is away from addictive and destructive behaviours.

I remember my grandmother sitting with a cane when she taught us prayers in Avestan. At times I would be punished by a rap on the knuckles if I disobeyed her. My sister and I would often be tempted to run away from her at prayer time just to get away from the boredom and difficulty of recitation of prayers by rote, in a language we never understood. We questioned why we had to communicate with God in an “alien” language. However, what I didn’t understand at that time, was not this antiquated language, but the significance and power of its ancient mantric vibrations. I also resented the fact that fear and punishment were utilised by my grandmother to make me adhere to a spiritual discipline.

Fear has made people “throw the baby out with the bathwater”. People have moved away from God because some of the older generations, especially the clergy, used (and in many instances continue to use) fear, intimidation and manipulation to “draw” people towards God. For myself, I could not relate to an autocratic and destructive God who inspires fear and punishes and damns some of us for all eternity. I was a shy, quiet child who found it difficult to mix and communicate with people, so instead I would talk to God and He became my best friend. Through this direct, personal and close friendship with my Creator I realised that He was just pure love. I decided that the only way I would ever teach children about God was through love and friendship.

I have experienced many changes in spiritual consciousness through the years, aware of Ahura Mazda’s continual presence and role in moulding my life. As a child I was an



introverted, emotionally fearful and sensitive child and older family members often said I had my “head in the clouds”. Meditation and connecting to the presence of my Divine Mother and Father came very naturally to me. My parents had a tenuous relationship and argued continually. To escape from their quarrels, I often locked myself in the bathroom or went to a quiet space in the house and connected with my Creator. Often with tears rolling down my face I would question Him as to why I had been born? As a child, I perceived the physical world as hostile, violent, angry and sad, and often longed to be back in the spiritual realm.

In later years, I realised it is only by dealing with and conquering the issues and problems of the physical world that one can gain further growth in the spiritual dimension. The physical world is as important as its spiritual counterpart. We are spiritual beings experiencing the physical, not physical beings experiencing the spiritual. I had to face up to my issues and problems, in order to address and deal with them. I feel I am a compassionate and loving person today because of these painful early childhood experiences. I understand people’s depression, anxiety and fears having experienced those emotions myself. In serving others who have depression and anxiety I am also healing my own soul. Buddha is known to have said that depression is self centeredness and obsessive thoughts about self. One can turn away depression by serving others with LOVE. When I look back it was at the time of greatest personal suffering and crisis that I moved to another higher level of spiritual consciousness and growth.

My grandmother often told us Zoroastrian mythological stories from various Persian and Hindu epics such as the Shahnameh, Ramayana and the Mahabharata. She had a guru (spiritual master) called Hansdevji who lived near Rishikesh, a town in Northern India near the Himalayas. Being widowed at an early age, she had developed an independence of her own, which was rare for Indian women of her generation. She had to financially fend for herself and my mother, in an age where most women did not earn a wage. She often travelled on her own from Mumbai to Hansdevji’s ashram – a long and arduous journey by train, bus and finally by bullock cart. As children my sister and I heard many stories about her guru miraculously healing people and “astrally” travelling.

One particular story made a lasting impression. My grandfather suffered from a kidney illness and had large kidney stones, which were removed through surgery. He was in his seventies and was not recovering from the operation. Although in those days Indian women seldom travelled on their own, my grandmother decided to go to Rishikesh to seek help from her spiritual master. When she finally reached Rishikesh after a couple of days, Hansdevji was in a state of samadhi (deep meditation). This lasted for three days and nights and no one was allowed to disturb him. She sat in the meditation room near the master fretting about her sick husband at home. When Hansdevji finally opened his eyes and came out of samadhi he summoned my grandmother and requested her to return home immediately. She never questioned his orders as she had implicit faith in her guru

however, on her way back she was frustrated and annoyed that her long and arduous journey had been in vain. Her master had not given her the opportunity to discuss her husband’s condition nor did he give her any herbal medicine which he sometimes dispensed as a cure to numerous ailments. However, on her return to Mumbai, she was surprised to find

my grandfather sitting up in bed looking quite well. He told her that Hansdevji had appeared by his bedside, had talked to him and in fact had healed him. My grandmother asked my grandfather what time he saw Hansdevji. It transpired that it was the same time she was seated before his physical body when he was in the state of deep meditation. He had astrally travelled to my grandfather in Mumbai. Great masters such as Hansdevji have the ability to be omnipresent and omniscient and can appear in many places at the same time. Later on in the book I have discussed astral travel with other spiritual phenomena. The reality of astral travel was confirmed to me personally much later by Bhagwan Shri Satya Sai Baba and Pramahansa Yogananda.

Hearing these stories from my grandmother, I became exceedingly fascinated with God and spirit from an early age and always dreamt of becoming a nun or monk. However, since Zoroastrian priesthood is hereditary and follows a patrilineal system, my grandmother discouraged the idea. I remember telling her how unfair the system was. Why could Zoroastrian girls not serve God in a similar way to boys? It was only much later when I worked closely with nuns and counselled a few and learnt more about the reality of their existence that I realised the pros and cons of living a life as a nun. Some of them had difficulties living up to the vows of chastity, poverty and obedience. Of course on the positive side, the church as an organisation looks after their basic needs such as food, clothing and shelter and they do not have the daily worries of providing for children and the family. This may perhaps make it easier for them to devote their time in serving others. I also realised that whether you have the title of being a nun or not, spirituality is putting into practice spiritual laws; it is not about preaching and paying lip service to these truths. I am grateful that God has given me the opportunity to be an instrument of His Divine Will as a counsellor, teacher and healer as well as my equally important role as a mother and wife. This balance seems the most challenging, appropriate, and rewarding role for me.

Another pivotal influence on my life has been my mother, Sheroo. The unconditional love, sacrifice and giving that I experienced from her, supported and nurtured my very being. For me she was the nearest being to a Divine Mother. I think without her constant love I might have evolved into a different personality. From my mother, I learnt about giving and the generosity and graciousness of the heart, as opposed to from the lips. She taught me to think with my heart rather than my head. She regularly provided food and money to the poor, often anonymously and when other teenagers and young adults were striving towards successful careers, she supported me in my pursuit of a spiritual pathway. In all the projects and honorary social work that I engaged in, she was in many cases, an active participant, but always quietly and “behind the scenes”. I frequently received appreciation and a degree of fame for the projects I was involved in, but my mother gave happiness to others for the sake of happiness, never expecting anything in return. It was this quality I aspired to and in fact, continue to aspire towards. Initially, on the spiritual pathway there were times when I must admit I felt lonely and different from others, but she always told me that I was never alone - I had my best friend with me at all times and could talk to and call on Him whenever I needed to.

In 1976, my grandmother died. I was devastated. I remember saying my daily prayers with tears running down my face. I would call out to her and ask her, “Prove it to me that you are out there.” She did just that, she came to me in a dream that I vividly remember to this day. I





saw her as a young and vibrant girl and she told me firmly not to cry because she was not “dead”, just on the “other side”. She continued to say, “and who do you think looks after all these plants and forest lands? I do, this is my chosen work here.” She explained to me that the physical world was a replica of the spiritual realm only much more beautiful. I started sensing her presence often and I felt she was communicating with me telepathically, especially in difficult times. It was then that I decided to learn “automatic writing” and started channelling with the other dimension.

People have very distorted opinions about channelling, possibly due to the negative connotations that are often associated with the astral dimension. This could also be attributed to the fact that most people who connect with spirits do so without “protection” and may not be connecting to a good and positive source. Some, especially the younger ones, may have engaged in these activities for entertainment or an ulterior motive. I cannot emphasise how important it is not to jest with the spirit realm. Just as there are “good and kind hearted” and “bad and ignorant” people, there are good and lower energies or bad spirits. Let me illustrate this with a real life case. A young man with psychotic symptoms and features whom I shall call Peter presented himself at my clinic. After a few sessions, Peter revealed to me that the psychotic symptoms started when he was 17 years of age when he and his mates were partying at the local graveyard. They had all consumed considerable quantities of alcohol and other stimulants, and had invited the spirits to “party” with them. Well, the spirits did precisely that and unfortunately decided to never leave them thereafter! Since then, Peter heard voices and received destructive commands and messages. The voice told him nasty things about himself and made him violent and aggressive and as a result of this his subsequent behaviour got him into all sorts of trouble. He sought conventional help and was on medication for psychotic symptoms but the voices never really went away. In my opinion Peter could have avoided this situation if he had not called on negative spirits in the astral. I worked at some length with Peter, clearing his aura of negative spirits and there was a great improvement in his mental health.

When people, out of ignorance, fool around with the spirit realm and unknowingly connect with negative energies, they may have fearful and terrifying experiences. I have often heard of young teenagers entertaining themselves or experimenting with Ouija Boards at parties. Both children and adults need to be educated about the dangerous effects of such behaviour.

I commenced channelling on my own accord, initially by connecting to my grandmother. The first step was to recite a prayer and call on the Divine, asking for protection. A few years later, I was guided by a Zoroastrian lady, who also taught me automatic writing. Prior to each session, I would light candles, burn incense and ask the Divine One for protection, placing myself in a circle of white light.

Within a few years, I had received a lot of information about the spirit realm and did not feel the need to connect with my grandmother regularly. Instead I commenced connecting directly to the Divine Source. My only motive for channelling was and continues to be for the pursuit of knowledge. I would present questions to this Divine Source and my spiritual guides and an answer would come from within or sometimes I would hear a voice or see a vision. My students often ask me how I know that I am communicating with a Divine Source and not my own sub-conscious mind. Well, my thoughts and prayers are only focussed on a Divine energy

or form and that Divine energy would provide confirmations of the message that I intuitively or at “gut level” know is the truth.

For instance, a distraught young woman whom I shall call Sarah came to me for counselling and healing, explaining that her boyfriend of seven years had left her. Sarah was lying on the healing table as I connected to Divinity, asking the Divine Source to make me a channel of healing energy. I asked the source to help me identify what it was that Sarah really needed. What should I be doing? And where should I start? As I asked these questions, I saw a vision of a little brown dog. At a gut level I knew that this dog had some connection with the origin of her pain and loss and grief. I asked Sarah “Can you go back in time and tell me about the first loss you have experienced?” Sarah said that when she was three years of age she had a puppy that died. Her parents buried the dog but she was never told what happened to him. She felt deep pain as she thought she had done something to make the puppy “go away”. In this way Divinity confirmed that I was getting information from a “higher source”.

Synchronicity is one way the spirit realm communicates to us through signs and messages. When you get a message from a Divine Source, and if you are thinking of this message, it is reaffirmed for you through other experiences you may have, that make you “know” the truth; that is, you get a confirmation on the accuracy of the message. This is the way that the world of spirit or light communicates with us. One example of synchronicity: walking into a book store not knowing what to buy, and the book one needs falls from a shelf and practically hits you over the head. The term synchronicity was coined by psychologist Carl Jung to denote “meaningful coincidence” or “a-causal relationship” between two things or events. Note how coincidence contains two parts: “co” and “incidence”. Think of it as one incident occurring “with” another incident. Events bound by synchronicity are connected by similarity, by meaning and by resonance rather than by causality. Synchronicities are also people, places or events that your soul attracts into your life. I believe that there are no accidents, as your soul attracts everything into your life that you need to learn from. Hence what we perceive to be mere co-incidence, could really not be a co-incidence at all!

Working with the Divine is an adventure because, for most of us, it is a leap of faith into the unknown. Each step is an adventure into an unfamiliar and strange realm, and you do this with great trust being aware that there is an unseen hand holding and protecting you for your highest good. When I look back at my life, I now realise that the events that have unfolded themselves have occurred for a reason. For instance, I often consult with my guides or the Divine One when making important decisions. Should I take a particular job? Would it be just because I would be better paid or is it for my highest good? In deep meditation, I would get an answer to my question and this answer would be confirmed by what people say to me or other events and/or experiences in my environment. We need to understand that each person that crosses our pathway is a messenger of the Divine.

Sometimes, the answer may not appear logical, or in many instances, it may not be the one that we wish for at that time. For instance, I once had to choose between two jobs; one paid less than the other. I got a message that I should choose the one paying me less, as this was going to be for my highest good. I did choose the lesser paying job, only to find that six months later

the other position had been made redundant. In life, when we have to make important decisions, we often seek the advice of numerous people. In many instances, the advice is conflicting, as these people provide the advice based on their own experiences, and not necessarily based on your own needs and issues. So, we need to go within and ask the only being that knows everything about us and also works for our highest good: God.

My grandmother and mother, though devoted faithful Zoroastrians, could not satisfy and quench my thirst for spiritual wisdom and the metaphysical. I wanted to know why Zoroastrians performed certain rituals. Why we prayed in an obscure language. Why I should wear my sudreh kusti I wanted to know the reason for human suffering. Was God a female or male energy or both? Was God really all-powerful? If so, why did He allow suffering to occur? If He was not all powerful, why not? What would happen to me after death? Is there reincarnation? The questions kept pouring in and no one in the family could provide adequate explanations. I did have many spiritual discussions with likeminded family members and friends. The two who stand out in my mind who could challenge my intellect and reasoning are my dearest friends Keki Dudhmal and Russe Choksi. I decided to first study my own religion, Zoroastrianism. Although I can justly say that with each life experience my understanding and consciousness about the Universe and spirit has changed, I believe all experiences teach us something.

In 1979, I met up with an individual who professed to be a scholar of the Zoroastrian religion. Many other young people like me enrolled for his classes, where he lectured on religious doctrines. I was so strongly influenced and captivated by this charismatic orator that I was blind to his limitations for an extended period of time. I was naïve and too trusting; unable to discern between a wise teacher and a “pretender” who just happened to be a good orator. Real teachers practise what they preach, are modest about their accomplishments, show equanimity and equality to all and are not swayed by their egos.

Unfortunately, there are many pretenders in our midst. Whether driven by pride, ego, greed, insecurity or other selfish forces they masquerade as teachers or gurus... The key to discerning a real teacher from a pretender is to follow your own intuitional wisdom. Do the teachings feel right to you? Are they loving, compassionate, non-violent and fear-reducing? Do they include all other groups, all other humans as equals, as divine souls on the same path of destiny?

BRIAN WEISS, M.D. MESSAGES FROM THE MASTERS

Under the auspices of an organisation set up by this individual from 1981 to 1987, I worked in an honorary capacity for numerous projects related to the underprivileged and needy in the community. I was enthusiastic and keen to work for the community and was involved in many projects including running children's creative religious classes. Unfortunately even spirituality has become a highly commercial and marketable commodity. Many individuals are attracted to this “profession” not for the highest good of the community but for their commercial profit - make a fast buck by preying on the emotions of vulnerable people. I realise people who offer teaching, counselling and healing need to earn a living for themselves and their families, but this should be achieved openly and honestly by always having the best interest of the person they serve in mind.

In our midst, there are many men of God or holy men and this is particularly the case in India. From my own experience, I believe that for every thousand of these personalities, there is only one amongst them who is genuine. Caution, wisdom and discernment are invaluable attributes in a person who is seeking to follow a spiritual master or guru. However, sometimes by experiencing spurious spiritual teachers we are “made ready” for the genuine. I learnt two important lessons from these experiences: to never blindly sway with the enigmatic influences of others and to discern wisely through meditation and direct communication with the Divine. I believe that if you sincerely ask God a question sitting in meditative silence for twenty minutes or more, an answer will come. It may not be immediate, or necessarily the answer you are seeking, but you will get an indication of which pathway to follow. Furthermore, it is important that a guru or guide should not be a substitute for our direct connection to our Creator or our ascension into higher realms of consciousness. Unfortunately, there are too many people who use their gurus as a crutch and turn to them for every minor question or problem. As a result, they never really learn to walk on their own on the spiritual pathway. Hence, rather, than reaching out for answers from an external source, I suggest that one should commence this journey by looking within; find the Divinity and wisdom that is latent within each one of us. Hence, we really do not need anyone to communicate with the Divine on our behalf; we are His children created in His image and need to strive to establish a direct relationship. One may need human teachers to help us on our pathway but I believe there is no need to confine yourself to one human teacher or to one belief; learn to listen to all with an open mind, be receptive and then follow the truth by looking within and following your own heart and gut; discern and judge with wisdom. This is what meditation teaches you, to go within and follow the Divinity that exists within each one of us.

In 1980, and thereafter for approximately ten years, I researched and studied about my own religion and participated in numerous projects to uplift the underprivileged members of my community. I received great advantage from this labour – an insight into the timeless wisdom of the Gathas and the tenets of my own religion, which would benefit me in later years in finding fundamental truths about all religions. During this period, I taught Zoroastrian children about their religion through entertaining and creative methods, developing songs, puzzles, and stories to ignite their internal passion for learning. I was teaching them to love God and never to be fearful of Him.

This period of my life was one of considerable personal fulfilment; I am indebted to numerous Zoroastrian stalwarts who contributed towards my study of Zoroastrianism. I love my community and believe the prophet’s message is profound. Even today, I am staggered by the profound wealth of wisdom that had been revealed by Zarathushtra several thousand years ago.

However, what saddens me is the fact that Westernisation, materialization and individualisation has brought about a decline of spiritual consciousness amongst a large proportion of the Zoroastrian community. We need to infuse into our practice the values of honesty, truth, charity and love, remembering the central message of our prophet: “think, speak and act with goodness at all times”.



Not being academically minded I am grateful to my mother who encouraged me to further my studies. “Just complete a Bachelor’s degree in anything you like” she urged me. I chose a degree in Psychology and enjoyed it so much that I went on further to do a Masters in Social Work specializing in individual and group therapy. I enjoyed studying the human mind and behaviour but I was more interested in studying the soul. Psychology is the study of the soul not only of the human mind, yet not many professional counsellors and psychologists are brave enough to even consider, let alone acknowledge this aspect. They are focussed on dealing with only the physical and psychological aspects of the person without even acknowledging the soul or spirit. This limited approach results in the psychological intervention being superficial and the root cause of mental illness and disease not being addressed. Traditional allopathic medical sciences look at the chemical and structural components of the physical body. On the other hand, some Eastern and holistic health practitioners deal directly with subtle energies and see humans for what we are – energy! They endeavour to identify and cure the physical body and its chemistry by working energetically through emotions and mental states. We now understand that depression and mental illnesses are major contributors amongst the causes of illness and death – not in their own right, but these conditions lead to other more “mainstream” conditions, such as stroke, cancers and heart diseases.

When I started looking “within”, I discovered the chakra and energy system of our spiritual body and realised that I was more than just a physical body or a mind, I was in fact composed of energy.

After my Bachelors degree, I chose to undertake a Masters degree in counselling and individual and group therapy. I also undertook a research project on the socio-economic conditions of the Zoroastrian priesthood in Mumbai and then later in Western India. I was saddened and outraged to discover the sorry financial, emotional and academic state of the Zoroastrian priesthood. They knew very little about the fundamental truths and Zarathushtra’s message and their primary function was the performance of rites and rituals, in the ancient Avestan language. Like the vast majority of Zoroastrians, very few priests understand the language that they recite their prayers and conduct rituals, as they, like most other Zoroastrians, had learnt these prayers by rote. In a community that is renowned in India for its financial success, many of these priests were in a deplorable financial condition and struggled to earn their daily bread with any sense of dignity. I felt I had a duty to raise awareness in the community about their issues. I did this by conveying my passion for this project to numerous people in our community. However, in order to do this, I had to first overcome a major handicap – my fears of public speaking to large audiences and the inevitable confrontations that would follow these lectures, as the various intellectuals in the community would argue or debate over some of the topics.

I still recollect the anxiety I experienced when I first lectured on the plight of the Zoroastrian priesthood to members of the community. But I gradually learnt to hand over my fears to the Divine and ask for His help. In a matter of time one of the biggest private industrial houses in India, the Godrej group of companies, had heard about my work and offered a large sum of money to start a project for the betterment of the Zoroastrian priesthood. This enabled me to form a trust, the main objective of which was to provide a holistic education to young

Zoroastrian clergymen, and teach them to “fish for their own supper”. The priests were educated not just in Zoroastrian theology but also in other related fields such as Psychology, English etc. It was then that I learnt another important lesson: you take one step towards the Divine and He will take ten thousand steps towards you. When you are honest and sincere about helping others the Universe provides help in abundance. However, along the way, the Universe also tests your sincerity and your commitment.

My wedding date had been set for a few months later. Fifteen days before the actual wedding, when all the invitations had been mailed and the wedding preparations had been finalised, I was given an ultimatum by my fiancée, who stated in a very matter of fact way, “Choose between God and me. I want you to give up all your ‘charity’ work or the marriage is off.” It was made clear that there were to be no further negotiations, let alone compromises; I had to choose one or the other. I never hesitated for one moment. I chose God. Of course there was immense pain and suffering that lasted for many years, but I have never regretted my decision. A large proportion of “society”, including people I thought were my friends, never really understood my decision. Some misjudged me and mocked and scorned me. But for me God is everything, the reason for my existence. I believe all human relationships have the potential to dissolve into impermanence. Life itself as we know it is transitory, but the Divine is permanent. Looking back at this difficult period, I learnt the lessons of love. Love is not about “ownership” nor is it about “dependency”. The purpose of marriage and relationships is soul development and growth. Like Kahlil Gibran says in his book, *The Prophet*,

*Love one another, but make not a bond of love,
Let it rather be a moving sea between the shores of your souls.
Fill each other's cup but drink not from one cup.
Give one another of your bread but eat not from the same loaf.
Sing and dance together and be joyous, but let each one of you be alone...
And stand together yet not too near together:
For the pillars of the temple stand apart, and the oak tree and the cypress grow not
in each other's shadow.*

Even our children do not belong to us; we are merely guardians for their souls As Kahlil Gibran goes on further to say,

*Your children are not your children. They are sons and daughters of Life's longing
for itself. They come through you but not from you, and though they are with you
yet they belong not to you.*

We do not “own” anybody in this physical world. Everyone and everything in our lives is temporary. In the spirit realm for instance, there are no religions, spirits do not have genders; nor are spirits attached to status and socio-economic conditions or environments. Relationships even close personal ones, as we understand them in our own reality, do not exist in the spirit realm. There is equanimity, all being the creative energy of the ONE.



Love is not just a passing phase of passion or attraction. It is nurturing self and another for spiritual growth to move towards the Divine. I learnt this lesson the hard way after the break up of another relationship. Your soul mate or life partner should also make your soul grow, the one that moves you towards self-realisation and the Divine. Your soul mate should nurture you and give you the freedom to grow spiritually. My husband Sorab nurtures and challenges me to grow. He is the one who can press my buttons the most and in doing that he dares me to honestly look at myself constantly and grow and transform.

I have learnt that life keeps bringing the same lessons to you again and again till you finally learn from them and move on. In my two earlier relationships, I had to face the same lesson repeatedly, until I finally learnt not to shoot the messenger but to listen to the message. I learnt about karma. Nothing happens to you in life without a reason, “as you sow so shall you reap”, whether you sow in this life or previous lives you will always reap the consequences of your actions. I am responsible for every suffering, pain and hurt that has come my way. I am sorry for the anguish and hurt I have caused to others. I have learnt that I am responsible for creating my own reality. When the burden of life becomes unbearable, I trust and surrender to Divinity, asking for help in enduring the same. Everyone who has come into my life has been and is my teacher. I have learnt to look at each relationship as an opportunity for growth. I try to reduce the weight of the baggage of the past wounding experiences, through forgiveness and love. I believe I have the power at every moment to transform my reality.

By experiencing these and other crisis situations, I realised the meaning of true friendship. Society and people are quick to gossip, malign, make judgements and label people even though they do not know all the facts. I too used to be affected by what others said or did towards me. But I learnt to follow Shri Satya Sai Baba's teachings of not being affected by praise or by ridicule. He taught me that it is the ego that feels pain, hurt, praise and even pride. The real self is totally unaffected by what others say and do, as it is composed of Divine energy and is therefore indestructible. Real love needs three elements: acceptance, taking responsibility and relinquishing the need to fight or defend self. Acceptance is the ability to accept everything happening as if it is meant to be. It starts with understanding and loving our true reality, that is, we are Atma (spirit) and we have been temporarily placed in this physical realm in order to experience, to learn and to grow. We need to accept that we are together in the relationship not for physical or emotional dependence or attraction, but foremost, to grow spiritually.

In this physical world in our present state of self, I realise that we are like ants on a keyboard. We know so little about others, about the world around us and about the infinite realms of space. What we see are reflections and reactions from our own experiences. If an ant is crawling on the keyboard of a grand piano and it happens to stop on a black key, it could believe the world is black. Another ant, stopped on a white key, could think its entire world is white. We see through the tinted vision of our own experiences and believe it to be the whole truth. I aspired to be an eagle and fly above personal perceptions and see the real world beyond. One of the ways to do this is through detaching our physical beings via meditation and rising in consciousness to see our true reality. It was also my faith, love and commitment to Him that got me through life's many challenges.



When one door closes, God opens many others. It was after 1984 that Swami Paramahansa Yogananda came into my life in a powerful way. Yogananda (author of *Autobiography of a Yogi*) was one of the world's greatest spiritual teachers. By reading his books and meditating on his wisdom I learnt the meaning of true spirituality. Yogananda believed that each of us had the potential to be one with God through our choices and sincere personal exertions. I was inspired and motivated by his autobiography and stopped feeling sorry for myself and began to move forward. Approximately at this time another great teacher, B.K.S. Iyengar also came into my life. He taught me yoga, some pranayama (breath awareness) and a few meditation practises. Another luminous teacher that touched my life was Dadi Billimoria who was a disciple of Swami Satyananda from the Bihar School of Yoga. However, during this time I merely learnt the various physical aspects of yoga and only later did I comprehend and absorb some of the vast wealth of knowledge and wisdom behind these practices. Even today, it is hard to appreciate that this array of knowledge has been in existence in Eastern countries, such as India, for over two thousand years.

Soon afterwards God opened more doors, through what appeared to be a co-incidence. Of course, as we have discussed earlier, what we term co-incidences are events that are destined to occur for a pre-determined reason. I was invited to lecture at the College of Social Work, a small College affiliated to the University of Mumbai. I started lecturing soon after my graduation first as a guest lecturer, then as a part-time and finally a full-time lecturer. I came to realise that I had a love for teaching and somewhat of a natural talent for explaining complicated and intangible concepts by using examples from my own life. I developed a passion for teaching student social workers, as I believed (given the right education) they would be powerful change agents in assisting humanity and transforming people's lives. Besides, every individual I was teaching or working with, caused me to reflect on my own growth and transformation process. I also realised that I was happiest working "hands on" at a grass root level.

The College was affiliated to one of Mother Teresa's many "homes" for the destitute in Mumbai. I got an opportunity to work along side the Missionaries of Charity and felt privileged as it provided an invaluable source of learning via experience. The principal of College of Social Work Dr. Hazel D'Lima and her colleagues and other social workers attached to the College projects were exemplary teachers. They had compassion and equanimity in their hearts and worked ceaselessly for the disadvantaged.

I cannot forget how the entire College would come together in crisis situations. For instance, when there were catastrophic floods or famines in certain parts of India, most of the College would be galvanised into action. Routine academic work and lectures were suspended and staff and students alike, travelled to these remote areas and provided relief to these unfortunate people. We were all involved in collecting funds, food, clothes, medicines etc. Similarly, during one of the summer vacations, when I was a student, the Principal announced that we were all to participate in a government based research study on "pavement dwellers" in the city of Mumbai in order to ameliorate their condition. In the seven years I spent at the College of Social Work, first as a student and then as a faculty member I do not recollect we had any vacations as such, as the College was always involved in numerous projects, many of which could not be ceased due to students' vacations. The faculty and principal of the College were not armchair social workers who resided in ivory tower, but true role models who roll up their sleeves

and work side by side with students during a crisis. They did not give their time and effort in order to secure personal gain; it was because they had deep values and compassion for the human race. This is where I learnt that being a teacher was about being a role model working with humility and compassion to bring about a difference for others.

The two Christian missionaries who had an important influence in my life were Father Macia (from St. Xavier's College) and Rev. Hazel D'lima (Principal of College of Social Work). They both gave me the greatest gift: they taught me the real meaning of "love". They also taught me the quality of equanimity; no matter what socio-economic background, colour, religion or caste a person came from they truly loved and gave all. These qualities I aspired to develop within me. It was at this time that I really started to feel ashamed of the hidden prejudices and stereotypes that I had within me, I guess I realised the falseness of the claim of some Zoroastrian "spiritual" teachers, albeit who happened to be in the minority, that the Zoroastrians were a "superior" race. Instead, I began to appreciate the Divine energy in all of humanity. This fact I fully imbibed when I connected to the teachings of Yogananda and Shri Satya Sai Baba. Today I can comfortably claim to be a Zoroastrian, Christian, Buddhist, Hindu, Jew, Christian, Sikh or any other faith or religion: a spirit encompassing all religions of the world.

In 1985, an internationally acclaimed scholar from the Victoria University of Manchester, U.K., Professor John Hinnells, visited India. He happened to attend a seminar at which I lectured on the findings of my research study on the conditions of Zoroastrian priests. Shortly after this, he offered me a scholarship to visit England and undertake a doctorate in the Faculties of Comparative Religion and Sociology. Once again, I believe this was no mere co-incidence, but Divine intervention. However, it was not until October 1990, that this finally materialised and I left to study in England for the next three years. I received numerous scholarships and support especially from my maternal uncle Phil Medora who lived in the U.K. I am eternally grateful for all the support I received to undertake my doctorate in England. Without the intervention of my Divine father and all His instruments, this would have never been possible. I undertook a research study on the issues of mixed marriages with special reference to Zoroastrian women. The Zoroastrian women that married out of the community and their children are ostracised and ex-communicated by sections of the orthodox clergy. My research work was designed to understand inter-religious and inter-ethnic marriages: what led people to inter-marry, the conflict and adjustment patterns in inter-religious marriages and during this time, I learnt about several religious doctrines, especially Zoroastrianism. I also endeavoured to understand the effects of these marriages on children. The study was intriguing and exhaustive; hence I will not discuss the findings of the research study in this book.

However, to encapsulate, the most important lesson I did learn from the research study was the difference between religious laws that are made by man, and spiritual laws that are universal. For instance, if a Zoroastrian woman was to inter-marry, that is frowned upon by sections of the Zoroastrian clergy but not by God. I do not believe God sent down prophets to divide humankind into different religious groups. Nor does God propagate humans to fight in His name. All prophets and spiritual masters spoke and speak about the same fundamental truths: law of love, giving and receiving, law of karma and so on. Religious dogmas appear on the face of it to be different as each prophet has interpreted them according to the cultural setting and times. I have explained these fundamental truths as universal "spiritual laws" in the

Chapter 3 titled, The Real World Beyond. Humankind has misused and abused these truths to manipulate, control and divide. I do not believe we have these differences in the spiritual realm. As spiritual beings we have no differences in terms of religion, race, colour, gender and sexual orientation.

Life in England was hard, especially since I had left the protective environment of my home and family in India for the first time. I was quite home sick, however I must be thankful for the English weather that ensured that I spent much of my time indoors, putting in long hours of work and completing my doctorate in the comparatively short time of three years. I often wonder what the real purpose of my doctorate studies was. I do not think it was just to get a degree printed on a piece of paper. Rather, I think that living abroad helped me to understand the West, its people, their values and spiritual traditions. I believe my soul purpose is to assist in creating a bridge between the West and the East through spiritual wisdom, mainly through teaching, counselling and healing. I probably would have never decided to emigrate to Australia because I initially thought my services of reaching out to the “materially” poor were of much more value in India. But having had the opportunity to study and live in the U.K. for three years I realised the greatest deficiency humankind endures is spiritual poverty. I believe that in working to spiritually transform people in developed countries, I am changing the economic conditions of people in underdeveloped countries. I believe that if we focus on our spiritual development, we will automatically remove the imbalances, injustices and deficiencies on this planet. If humankind reconnected to their Creator and regained their spiritual core of love and wisdom, they would accept the real purpose of their existence and concede to the brotherhood of humankind. I believe if we are truly loving, giving and sharing there will be no poverty on the planet. The key to our world’s problems is a spiritual renaissance.

I am generalising to some extent, but what attracted me to the Western way of life was the cleanliness, order and discipline. The value people attached to preserving nature and the closeness most people felt to nature, was something I never experienced growing up in the city of Mumbai which is overcrowded and bursting at its seams. For many Indians, finding their next meal is of more importance than dwelling on environmental issues. However, what I did not like about the Western world was the harsh reality of a culture that is increasingly being built on materialism. I realised, though human values were still deeply embedded in the minds of Westerners, a large proportion had distanced themselves from religion and God. Perhaps as a result of some past negative experiences, many people had a deep seated fear or resentment towards the church and its clergy. As a result, they choose to “throw the baby out with the bath water”; that is, they also turned their back on their Creator when they shutout the clergy and the church.

I first visited Australia in 1987, and fell in love with the country. My second visit was in 1994, when I spent a year in Sydney. There was something about it, which made me feel at home. I then moved to Canada to meet up with and marry Sorab, whom I had known in India but got closer to when studying in the U.K. I lived with Sorab for several years in Toronto and then I “convinced” him to emigrate to Australia in 1997. Looking back, it was in Canada, in 1995, that Sri Satya Sai Baba my true spiritual master invited me into His consciousness. It is said that a spiritual master will only come to you when you are ready to receive him. Shri Satya

Sai Baba's devotees often call Him Swami (spiritual master) or Baba (Divine father) for short. I prefer to use the term Baba to address Him. He came to me in a mystical dream when I was extremely sick, suffering from acute morning sickness during my first pregnancy. I was vomiting all through the day and lay in bed for the first four months of the pregnancy and was hospitalised several times during this period as a result of dehydration. I saw Baba in a light blue gown, which is the colour of Divine love and strength. He said nothing but I could see and feel His Divine presence. Thereafter, I met a few people who spoke about His Divinity, about His miracles and supernatural powers but I was not totally convinced having had a bad experience with "God men" in the past. These past experiences had taught me not to blindly follow. I needed to experience more of Him from within to assure myself of His authenticity.

From then on I started to experience the presence of Baba in many ways. He appeared in a number of dreams with messages that eventuated in real life. He was present during the healing sessions and in the meditation classes I taught. People often ask me how I know whether Shri Satya Sai Baba is an authentic avatar and how should one view Him, as some individuals and the press have been extremely critical and negative towards Him. I know He is real because I have experienced His being and His Love, from within. I have also experienced His miracles. I have worked with people presenting with a wide range of illness: depression, anxiety, obsessive compulsive disorders, psychotic symptoms, eating disorders and terminal illness such as cancer, HIV, etc. I see the healing hand of Baba on a daily basis now. Recently I have done a lot of distant healing with people across the planet from Canada to New Zealand. I know that physical distance is no barrier in being of channel of Baba's love and healing energy. People report back positive results to me on a daily basis. I have no doubts that Baba is Divinity walking the planet in human form. You cannot understand Baba through the intellect or through analysis - one knows Him only through love and experience. You do not have to be in India to take advantage of His cosmic powers nor do you have to give up your faith and religion, because He does not encourage you to do that anyway. Often some Zoroastrians have remarked that they feel I am being disloyal to Zarathushtra and his message by following the teachings of Shri Satya Sai Baba. They have stated, "How can you who were such a staunch Zoroastrian shift to become such a passionate Shri Satya Sai Baba follower?" My response is that Baba's teachings are not at all contradictory to Zarathushtra's original message. Shri Satya Sai Baba is a cosmic master and His mission is universal and meant for people of all religions. I do not cease to be a Zoroastrian when I follow Baba's message. In fact I become a better practising Zoroastrian. I experience Shri Satya Sai Baba's Divine presence and His love in every aspect of my life on a daily basis. No words can describe how I feel about Him. When I was first in His physical presence at Puttaparthi in 1999 I knew deep down that my search was over. I had finally come home to my Divine Father and Mother. It is now ten years since His divine consciousness has touched me and everyday my love for Him grows stronger and stronger.

What we have been graced with is a being so utterly pure and divine and God-realized that to try to know him in any other way save the way of the heart is a useless endeavor. Think on love itself. Is not love complete in the act of loving? Does not one demonstrate love through the virtue of its own merit, its own gift? This is

Sai Baba, Sai Ram... Sai Baba is the highest spiritual being living on Earth. The two highest beings living on the planet are Sai Baba and the Lord Maitreya. Lord Maitreya is the planetary Christ and the head of the Spiritual Hierarchy. Sai Baba is the cosmic Christ. Lord Maitreya might be termed as a galactic avatar. Sai Baba is a universal avatar. What I mean by the term is a being who is totally God-realized at birth

DR. JOSHUA DAVID STONE, GOLDEN KEYS TO ASCENSION AND HEALING

There are many wonderful books about Shri Satya Sai Baba. Howard Murphet's two books, *Sai Baba, Man of Miracles* and *Sai Baba, Avatar* and Dr. Samuel Sandweiss' *Spirit and the Mind* and *The Holy Man and the Psychiatrist*, will give you a comprehensive overview of His teachings.

In Canada I also had the opportunity to work with many critically ill people through channelling Divine energy. I learnt Reiki and Hands-on-Healing. This is when I first experienced miracles of Baba, relating to healing illness and disease. A man to whom I was channelling Divine energy was miraculously healed from a terminal illness. His doctors had given him only two months to live. The more healing and counselling work I did, the more I felt connected to His energy. On a few occasions I started seeing visions and hearing messages regarding the well being of a person I was channelling healing energy to. I do not remember having any particular psychic abilities as a young child. I believe they developed more and more as I practised automatic writing, channelling, meditation and other healing modalities. As a child I remember telling my grandmother how unfair it was that I did not have the same "gifts" as the great spiritual Masters. Little did I realise that we all possess these abilities inherently. Some of us are clairvoyant (clear seeing) others are clairsentient (clear feeling) or clairaudent (clear hearing) and still others are claircognizant (clear thinking). I believe meditation brings out our psychic abilities to the forefront. I remember my grandmother saying, "Never get egotistical and carried away when you develop psychic abilities as a result of meditation. This is not the end but merely a by-product or a step along the way of your long journey within". The goal of meditation is becoming one with universal divine consciousness. Psychic and mediumistic abilities are not necessarily concomitant with spiritual evolution. Therefore do not confer unjustifiable spiritual status on someone merely because he or she possesses extraordinary psychic abilities. You set yourself up to be manipulated or victimized. While a psychic may help you to access your inner wisdom, with enough meditation you surmount the need for external guidance.

At first I was exceedingly sceptical and kept wondering if it was my mind; was I hallucinating or imagining things? However, I learnt to trust, and the Universe gave me the proof I needed. For instance, I was working with a young man, I shall call Sam who had attempted suicide by stabbing himself in the stomach and then attempting to hang himself. He was saved in the nick of time. I met him in the psychiatric ward of a prestigious hospital where I was working. I worked with Sam for a couple of weeks. I realised there was deep sadness and trauma in his life. There was a deep family secret of sexual abuse that Sam was too afraid to speak about. Sam kept informing me of his intention to kill himself as soon as the hospital authorities discharged him. I knew the hospital would discharge him sooner rather than later because of scarcity of beds and my worst fear came true when he was discharged from the hospital on the

weekend and went missing soon after. I was not informed of his discharge plans as I was based in the community health centre. I was distressed and I prayed and meditated with great intensity to Baba wishing for Sam's welfare and his highest good. A few days later the police phoned the hospital to say that they had traced Sam. He was in a relatively "good condition" but he had requested to be disconnected from his family and his past. Baba had answered my prayers once again. I was getting more and more convinced of His omnipresence, omnipotence. I was praying and meditating at every opportunity. Being a counsellor helped because I could meditate throughout the day: before and after each patient. I would "cleanse and clear" negative energies that I had picked up and re-connect to Divinity so that I became an instrument of His healing energy. The more I meditated and became an instrument of healing others with love, the more I experienced psychic impressions and developed psychic abilities.

I believe I had more of what I call spiritual intelligence than IQ or book knowledge from an early age. Looking back at my school performance I might say I was average or below average. However I believe not all of the present school education prepares us for life. Spiritual intelligence incorporates what Daniel Goleman refers to as emotional intelligence with other characteristics.

What factors are at play, for example, when people of high IQ flounder and those of modest IQ do surprisingly well? I would argue that the difference quite often lies in the abilities called emotional intelligence, which include self-control, zeal and persistence, and the ability to motivate oneself. And these skills, as we see, can be taught to children, giving them a better chance to use whatever intellectual potential the genetic lottery has given them.

Goleman includes other characteristics such as abilities to motivate oneself, persistence in the face of frustrations; to control impulse and delay gratification; to regulate one's moods and keep distress from swamping the ability to think; to empathize and to hope.

I define spiritual intelligence as the ability to have a deep love for all, intuition, inner wisdom and having insight into spiritual laws. Spiritual intelligence also includes self control of the senses and emotions and the ability to read emotions in others. Spiritual intelligence I believe can help people and prepare them for the turmoils of life. Unfortunately mainstream educational systems today focus on training children for intellectual and academic intelligence but there is very little training given in emotional and spiritual intelligence. This is what I hope this book will achieve – develop people's emotional and spiritual intelligence through meditation.

I was working with a lady I shall call Jane, who suffered from learning disabilities and abuse in her childhood. As I was channelling healing energy and removing her fears relating to academic studies and "not being good enough" I got a profound message. She had chosen to put these limitations on herself as part of her sacred contract so that she could learn to work with her heart and intuition rather than her head in helping other victims of abuse and violence. She was training to become a psychotherapist. Some souls or disincarnates choose to put some limitations on their physical and mental functioning as part of their soul's contract. This forces

them to develop in other areas and enhance their learning in a field they have chosen to experience in this particular lifetime. I was shown another example of a little girl I know who has auditory problems but was exceedingly talented in the creative arts. It was explained to me that she had chosen auditory limitations in this lifetime to enhance her visionary skills. I then saw an image of a dam being created to change the flow of water in the river to another direction. I realised how foolish we were sometimes as parents pushing our children to become someone that society valued rather than what they needed to experience or were talented in. I was reminded of Khalil Gibran's poem, our children come through us but not from us. We have no right in forcing them into a mould that we think they should become because we are only their guardian angels in this physical reality. Our present school system also needs to cater to individual needs, talents and skills rather than putting children through a standard uniform cast.

Baba started shaping and influencing every aspect of my life after my return to Australia in 1997. I was in another crisis situation at work shortly after my arrival in Australia from Canada. I had just started working as a mental health counsellor in the public health system. I was working therapeutically with a group of women who had suffered childhood sexual abuse. A few of them had been horrifically sexually abused at a tender age. I felt that the very souls of these women had been brutally hurt and destroyed. Some of them were experiencing dissociation (a condition where the spirit leaves the body as the pain of sexual abuse is too hard to cope with), severe depression, anxiety and other related mental health issues. I felt limited working only with psychotherapy techniques. I needed divine intervention and healing to work at a deeper level to cleanse their past experiences. I prayed and meditated before the sessions inviting the women to participate in a brief meditation exercise. Furthermore, I invited a friend and healer who was herself a victim of sexual abuse to be a resource person for the group. She had been healed through meditation and healing and I felt her presence would give the women a sense of courage and hopefulness. However, the management of the hospital I worked for got wind of the fact that there was some "spiritual" intervention, and being ignorant about spiritual matters, that is, healing and meditation, without undertaking any investigation or research on the subject or caring to ask me any questions, they summoned me and tried to fire me on the spot. I realise there is a lot of fear in the minds of some medical professionals about "spirituality" and spiritual approaches to intervention because of their ignorance in this area. I would like to address this point by quoting a passage from *Conversations with God: an Uncommon Dialogue* by Neale Donald Walsch:

Doctors in the West deny the healing exsiccates in the East because to accept them would be to admit that certain modalities might just provide some healing. It would be, to tear at the very fabric of the institution as it has structured itself. This is not malevolent yet it is insidious. The profession does not do this because it is evil. It does it because it is scared. An attack is a call for help.

Baba was at my side. I did not eventually get fired and I was able to speak my truth. This experience taught me a lot. I think Baba wanted me to know that, "Bad action comes from ignorance" and I had to struggle in life to lift the veil of ignorance. I cannot force people into good action but I could speak my truth and teach them by being a role model. Baba has always said that all the fruits on a tree will ripen eventually but each one has to ripen at its own pace. I

had to move with the flow of the system but one day I believe the present main stream medical model will fold up to make way for a new spiritual way of healing. I found a lot of resistance to psycho-spiritual therapy in the mainstream medical and psychotherapeutic establishments that I worked in mainly for two reasons: fear and economics. The fear of the unknown and the economic reasons were following from the speediness of results and the long lasting nature of the cures from spiritual interventions. Well known psychiatrist Brian Weiss daringly and truthfully admitted in his book, *Only Love is Real*, that before his books were published he had stopped being a teacher and healer to many long term patients; instead he had become a “habit and a crutch”. Many had become dependent on him.

... instead of challenging them to be independent, I had accepted the old role. I had become dependent on them too. They paid the bills, flattered me, made me feel indispensable to them, and reinforced the stereotype of the physician as demigod in our society. I had to face my ego. One by one I faced my fears.

BRIAN WEISS, *ONLY LOVE IS REAL*.

The profession of psychotherapy is unfortunately not addressing the root cause of people's problems. Often patients have told me that the medication numbs their emotions and pain but it does not address the main cause of their illness. Dr. Brian Weiss admits to this, “love dissolves anger and heals, valium doesn't do it. Prozac doesn't do it.” A majority of psychotherapists do not recognize that we are spiritual beings. I believe the solutions are looking beyond the mind and body to spirit.

Psychoanalysis is essentially unspiritual. It is sterile discipline. It teaches nothing about immortality, the survival of the soul after physical death, about the real values in life. It stops short of real questions and issues... Biological psychiatry often falls short too. The new medicines to treat depression, mood swings and psychotic states are means to an end, not the end itself. Too many psychiatrists prescribe medications and do nothing else. This is a tremendous waste. The medicines can help to make the patient accessible to the psycho-spiritual therapy that must then take place. To leave out the therapy is to leave out the entire essence of the treatment.

BRIAN WEISS, M.D. *MESSAGES FROM THE MASTERS*

I was encouraged to persevere one pointedly in my mission of bringing to people holistic healing interventions through education and establishing a private practise providing both traditional and spiritual psychotherapy by the words of John Quincy Adams, Albert Einstein and Carl Jung :

Courage and perseverance have a magical talisman, before which difficulties disappear and obstacles vanish into air.

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS US DIPLOMAT & POLITICIAN (1767 - 1848)



Great spirits (and pioneers) have always encountered opposition from mediocre minds. The mediocre mind is incapable of understanding the man who refuses to bow blindly to conventional prejudices and chooses instead to express his opinions courageously and honestly.

ALBERT EINSTEIN, QUOTED IN NEW YORK TIMES, MARCH 13, 1940

As far as we can discern, the sole purpose of human existence is to kindle a light in the darkness of mere being.

CARL JUNG, "MEMORIES, DREAMS, REFLECTIONS", 1962

I believe Baba told me in no uncertain words, "To know God, you have to realise self, go within and work more with your self". I was meditating more and trying to incorporate what I had learnt from Baba in my everyday life. According to my interpretation of Baba's teachings there are seven pathways to enlightenment:

1. NAMASMARANA – repeating the name of God continuously in every integrated moment at all times through the day. Baba says that there is no short cut to God's grace. Namasmaraṇa is the safest easiest and the most inexpensive Sadhana (spiritual practise). I start the day with prayer and namasmaraṇa dedicating my day to Him, to become an instrument of His will. I try to be in conscious awareness through the day and move away from being on "automatic pilot". Meditation is the tool that helps me to be in this mindful state of consciousness.

The tragedy is that you refuse to believe in this method because people believe in the efficacy of costly, brightly packaged and widely advertised drugs and not the simple easily available remedy. Truly if only you develop this faith in the Name you need not undergo the trouble to have a chance to put before Me your desires and wants. I will fulfil them even without you telling Me.

GEMS OF WISDOM P. 373

2. MEDITATION AND PRAYER – talking and listening to God and making Him your best friend. I have learnt to meditate on God for everything. I believe if you sit in silence for twenty minutes or more focusing on asking God a question He will reply. Shri Satya Sai Baba says,

Whosoever meditates on Me, worships Me, remembers Me, know that I am always with him ever providing for him. I bear the burdens and guarantee fulfilment of all his needs and security.

3. BHAJANS, SATSANG AND READING GOOD SPIRITUAL LITERATURE – Bhajan is singing devotional songs to God in a group. According to Baba singing devotional songs to God expands your mind and creates a positive energy vibration.



Who are the real devotees? The real devotees are those who sing with real devotion with a pure heart, constantly contemplating on the Divine Name. There are thousands of people taking part in Bhajans. But not all of them are real devotees. Their body may be present in the Hall but their mind is not fixed on God. They participate in Bhajans mechanically. This is not real devotion. Wherever you sit, whether in the prayers hall or elsewhere, if your thoughts are fixed on God, then you are a true devotee and you will attain His grace.

Satsang is a gathering of people around spiritual discussions and learning. Sat in Sanskrit is Sath, which means good, and sang means company. Baba defines it as 'the gathering of God seekers and adds, "it is a must for the sprouting spiritual seeds even the tardy will soon develop a keen enthusiasm for the Spirit through the influence of satsang". Satsangs help people to have discussions and share their points of views about spiritual information hence it is a great tool for soul development and transformation.

4. CEILING ON DESIRES – in this materialistic world we constantly want more and more and more. People in the West have more than 92% of humanity's resources and wealth and yet we are greedy and unsatisfied, always wanting more. Research shows that people in the West have more depression than people in developing countries. Youth suicide has increased worldwide as WHO reports:

In the last 45 years suicide rates have increased by 60% worldwide. Suicide is now among the three leading causes of death among those aged 15-44 (both sexes). Suicide attempts are up to 20 times more frequent than completed suicides.

Why? This is because of the way we think in the West. Buddha said that people who are depressed have self absorbing thoughts. This is true of all of us living in today's rat race. We constantly want more and more, never being satisfied with what we have. Chapter 14 titled Desire Management discusses methods of achieving desire management through meditation practises. Maslow's hierarchy of needs shows that on fulfilment of one set of desires another set grows. We have physical needs (food, shelter and clothing); safety needs (security, employment); social needs (love and sense of belonging); self-esteem; self-actualization. Baba believes when we minimise and are satisfied with what we have in the first order of needs we will quickly reach the point of self-actualization which is moving towards self realisation and enlightenment.

5. CONTROL OF SENSES – we need to control our needs by controlling our senses. There are many meditation practices to help us achieve this. Chapters 5 and 10 deal with mind management and emotional management. Shri Satya Sai Baba says,



It is the mind that assumes all the functions of the senses. The entire world is a projection of the mind. When the mind is properly directed all the senses will be under control. When you water roots of a tree, all the branches and leaves will get the benefit.

GEMS OF WISDOM PAGE 4.

6. SELFLESS SERVICE – selfless service to others holds the maximum benefit. We transform our own lives when we give to others without expecting anything in return. Baba says that service is higher than all other pathways to enlightenment; it is the best form of worship because we are attaining good for others without expecting anything in return. He says: Hands that help are holier than lips that pray.

Service to man will help your Divinity to blossom; for it will gladden your heart and make you feel that life has been worthwhile. Service to man is service to God; for God is in every man in every living being and in every stone and stump.

SATYA SAI SPEAKS, VOL. IV, PAGE 17.

Real education should educate us out of self into something far finer; into a selflessness which links us with all humanity.

NANCY ASTOR, BRITISH POLITICIAN (1879 - 1964)

7. INCORPORATING VALUES – truth (satya), righteousness (dharma), love (prema), peace (shanti) and non-violence (ahimsa). These five values incorporate our true nature. These five values are interrelated. The quickest way to transform is through love. When we have loving thoughts we are calm and peaceful and do that which is right for all of creation incorporating harmony and non-violence.

With love in our thoughts we start to understand the truth that there is only one God. When our action is filled with love our act becomes right conduct, when our understanding is filled with love we learn to live in harmony which leads to non-violence.. Love is God and God is Love. When there is love God is certainly evident. Transform love into service and service into worship. This is the highest sadhana (spiritual practice).

GEMS OF WISDOM PAGE 81, 84

In teaching and healing others I was really teaching and healing myself. Every patient who comes to me for healing mirrors an aspect of my being. In healing them I heal myself. I constantly ask myself and Baba, why I am getting the opportunity to work with this particular patient. What learning is this person bringing to me? I know the healing modalities that I use today in conjunction with traditional methods of psychotherapy such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Gestalt therapy, Client Centered Therapy, Transactional Analysis and so on will become mainstream counselling approaches in the next few generations or perhaps even in a few years to come.

From then on I meditated more than ever and started seeing Baba, speaking to Him and feeling His presence with every individual I worked with. I started experiencing His miracles, small and big in the transformation process and healings of the people I worked with. Working as a mental health counsellor I had to deal with very sick people from the severely depressed and those who have attempted suicide to those who have mild forms of anxiety and depression. Time and time again I have seen His hidden hand in the healing. Not everyone is ready for spiritual intervention and I respect that and work only according to the needs of the people I work with. However, I find more and more people searching for spirituality and wanting spiritual holistic intervention in problem solving.

I owe everything to Shri Satya Sai Baba. I decided that I had to share my experiences, learning with others so in October 1999 I developed a program titled, Inner self transformation through meditation, which I have been teaching in numerous organisations. I always meditate prior to a class and request Baba's assistance. Often, I feel He is speaking through me and I am merely a vehicle or instrument. This book is the result of what He has given me through a period of six years. Often I would ask a certain question and answers would pour in either through telepathy or through subtle messages or "coincidences" that would guide me towards a book to read or program on television to watch. Baba always sends me many enlightened people in my life who keep lit the flame of divine consciousness and love in my heart at all times. Mr. Ketheeswaran is one such humble but luminous soul for his guidance, love and support especially on Sai literature I am truly grateful.

One evening, before the commencement of my class, I was in deep meditation contemplating my own reality: Who am I? What was the purpose of my life? Why did we have pain and suffering in our lives? I knew if I continued meditating on Baba an answer would come and not surprisingly, a clear vision followed...

I saw a brilliant white light and an energy form so beautiful, that words cannot describe it. I intuitively knew that this form was the image of my Creator. I felt a deep love energy filling my heart, my soul, my being. I thought to myself, this must be the state of bliss that the great sages in India have experienced over the ages. As the love energy kept expanding, I saw an etheric form of a beautiful lotus flower developing. With each wave of love energy it kept growing in form and beauty, from the ethereal to the astral and finally the physical form. It kept growing larger and larger, until I saw a rainbow of colours emitting from it. Finally the colour of the flower turned to the colour of deep lilac. I knew intuitively that the lotus flower was representative of my essence and also the energy of all humankind. Just then I experientially realised that the Divine One created humankind and all the other creations with Love energy as a reflection of His Beauty and Wisdom.

I was moved by the immeasurable beauty of the lotus flower blooming, with its infinite petals created in perfection. There was order and system in its form. For a few moments I basked in the love of Divinity and noticed that the more love I absorbed, the more I was growing in consciousness and beauty. The wisdom and consciousness in me had reached a level where I started experiencing a desire to explore independently, the Divine One's Kingdom. I saw myself

asking the Divine Energy for two things: freedom to explore independently and further growth in my consciousness. The Divine One fulfilled my desires and I saw Him gently putting the lotus flower into the river of life.

For an extended period of time I saw the lotus flower floating gently, bobbing up and down the river of life, enjoying the coolness of the water and seeing the wonders in creation. I experienced a state of joy and bliss, as the lotus flower remained in the Divine One's light and love energy. I kept floating gently in the awareness of all Divine creations. I saw creation in all its magnificence - a clear blue sky, tall trees and luscious soil. I saw the splendor of the flora and fauna.

Then the other creations around me started taking notice of me and acknowledging my beauty. I suddenly looked into the water and saw my own reflection. I became aware of my consciousness becoming self-absorbed and grandiose. This was the beginning of ego or human centered consciousness and it caused me to lose sight of the Divine One. His light was still shining on me but I preferred to be in darkness, in the shadows of my own reflection. Now, selfishness, greed, jealousy, envy and hatred were becoming predominantly part of my being.

My thought pattern became so strongly negative, that the vibrations started affecting the water all around me. With every further negative thought, word and action I noticed my petals starting to wilt. The currents in the water kept increasing in intensity until it became a storm and all around me there was turmoil, as the water currents I created with my thoughts commenced the process of slowly destroying the other creations. Before my eyes I saw war, bloodshed, indescribable inhuman atrocities. I saw poverty, famine, floods, and earthquakes. I saw humankind, our planet, the plant and animal world crying in pain and anguish. By this stage I was physically shaking and crying with anguish "Why me"? "Why do I have to suffer"? The pain and suffering kept intensifying and I got no answer to my question. In the deepest depths of my pain I looked within myself. I glimpsed the truth of my true reality.

This vision made me aware that over the centuries of human existence, we have been destroying ourselves and all the other creations, bit by bit. The Divine One has given us two gifts: freedom of choice and growth in consciousness. He has fulfilled His promise to us. Rather than remove us, the lotus flower, from the river of life, He keeps pouring more light, love and wisdom onto us hoping that we, the lotus flower, will "see the light" and ascend to a higher level of consciousness. The Divine One hopes that we will learn with wisdom and continue to enjoy our freedom and return to Him when we so desire. We are faced with a fundamental decision – where do we want to go from here? What do we need to do to stop world and self-destruction??? How do we realign to Divine Love? Carl Jung uses the term individuation to denote the process by which a person becomes a psychological "individual", that is, a "separate indivisible unity or whole". My understanding of that is that we human beings have separated from the Whole, our Creator.



...the individuation process is confused with the coming of the ego into consciousness and that the ego is in consequence identified with the Self, which naturally produces a hopeless conceptual muddle. Individuation is then nothing more than ego-centeredness and auto-eroticism... it is as much one's Self, and all other selves, as the ego. Individuation does not shut one out from the world, but gathers the world into one's Self..."

The purpose of this book is to guide you through an inner journey of exploring the Self that is separate and yet contains the blueprint of the Whole. We as lotus flowers see ourselves as disconnected, yet we have emerged from the one seed (the Divine Source). Each flower, leaf and branch has the blueprint of the source. Meditation helps us to see ourselves as part of the whole. I believe that awareness leads to transformation and finally, leads to us returning to our "True Reality".

As you understand your true nature and your true purpose, your life will be permanently transformed, and then you can begin to transform the world.

DR. BRIAN WEISS



CHAPTER 2

Our Creator



Chapter 2

Our Creator

The cosmos is a projection of the Eternal, Infinite Reality and is not separate from God. The Divine permeates the Universe. When this truth is recognized, it will be obvious that all that one perceives or experiences is the manifestation of the Divine.

SHRI SATYA SAI BABA

In one of the earlier meditation classes I was facilitating, a lady came up to me and said “Could you please refrain from using the words ‘spiritual’ and ‘God’, I came here to learn to meditate and relax, not to learn about God or about my spiritual nature”. I soon became aware of two things: Firstly, that a large number of people in the West sadly have negative associations and experiences with religion and God. Secondly, a large number of people believe that meditation does not go beyond the body “relaxing” and has no connection to either our Creator, spiritual growth, or to self-awareness.

When I spoke at length to this lady in my class, she shared her views, with the group. She thought the church was hypocritical and the clergy never practised what they preached. She had been forced by her parents to follow religious rituals and observances, and taught that if she did not follow the teaching of the “Lord”, she would be condemned to “hell”. She felt the church and its clergy were controlling, manipulative and in her case, filled her with a sense of fear, so she now believed that it was in her best interest to disconnect with everything related to the church, religion or God.

Another student added, “Can you blame us for feeling this way? The church has been hypocritical in its practice of spiritual doctrines and furthermore the practice of religious beliefs has been instilled in us through fear”.

My responses to the sentiments expressed by these individuals were simply this: A knife can be used for surgery as well as for stabbing someone. The knife is intrinsically neither good nor bad. Similarly, religion is neither good nor bad. Religion gives us a framework of Universal principles that we can utilize to achieve happiness and peace in our lives. Over the millennia, mankind has misinterpreted and misused these “religious” principles to manipulate others and fulfill their own selfish needs – to gain power, wealth or fame.

Unfortunately, when we have had a bad experience with “religion” or religious institutions, we equate God, our Creator with all clergy and with all those who preach about Him. There are some clergymen who are good representatives of the Creator too, but the hypocritical ones seem to stand out in people’s minds. So we “throw the baby out with the bath water”. We disown God because some of the people who preach about Him are nothing like Him nor fully follow His teachings.



The perennial philosophy and its ethical corollaries constitute a higher common factor, present in all the major religions of the world... it is only in the act of contemplation, when words and even personality are transcended, that the pure state of the perennial philosophy can actually be known.

ALDOUS HUXLEY

Shri Satya Sai Baba views on religion, God, spirituality and meditation are quite insightful and are provided below in italics.

RELIGION

Shri Satya Sai Baba has said that most people today regard religion and God to be the cause for all the conflict, violence and bitterness in the world.

But neither religion nor God is responsible. Selfish human minds are actually responsible for all conflict. Religion is intended to develop human personality and provide guidelines for right living. It is not a restrictive concept. It provides a link between the individual and Divinity. Love, sacrifice, service and righteousness are the four limbs of religion...

...It is a mark of ignorance to consider one religion as superior and another as inferior. The teachings of all religions are sacred. The basic doctrines are founded on Truth.

I believe that God is only a witness to man's actions. He is above hate and anger. Man gets punished by his own actions, and not by God. This will be discussed later in detail in the next Chapter titled, Real World Beyond. It saddens me when we fight others in the name of religion. I do not believe that the universal teachings of any religion teach humankind to fight or hate in the name of God.

IS THERE A GOD?

In India, some of my college friends, found my faith and connection to God to be amusing. I was often teased and called names such as “fuddy duddy” or Dugdova (Zarathushtra’s mother).

Some laugh at spiritual aspirants and call them “idle visionaries” who are seeking something that is not tangible, that cannot be weighed and valued. The unseen is the basis of the seen. You do not see your breath or weigh it but breath is the very sustenance of life.

I found that in Australia too, many of my meditation students expressed difficulty in accepting the existence of a Creator. They often asked me “Is there a God? And how do you know He exists?”



Is there God or is there no God? The fact is that the word God is contained in the question. If there were no God, then the word "God" would not have come into existence. Can any of you give a name to something, which does not exist?

There are four types of persons: "the dead", who tend to be very independent and self-directed and who deny the Lord and declare they alone exist; "the sick" who call upon the Lord when some calamity befalls them or when they feel temporarily deserted by the usual sources of succor; "the dull", who know that God is the eternal companion and watchman, but who remember it only when the idea is potent and powerful; and lastly, "the healthy" who have steady belief in the Lord and who live in His comforting creative presence always.

I found people all over the world denying the reality of God but more so in some of the Western countries that I had the opportunity to live in.

In Western countries now, God is denied and man is relying on himself. Man exaggerates his own intelligence and sense of adventure and prides himself on the advance he has made through science and technology. But intelligence without equanimity is filling mental hospitals, peace is fleeing from the hearts of men and women; social harmony is becoming a distant dream, international concord is a mirage pursued by a few.

Some of us believe that the Universe was created by accident and while others accept Darwin's evolution theory but are unable to go back to the source of creation. A few of us can see the miracle in the creation around us but cannot accept ourselves to be Divine. For instance, one student argued that he was unable to understand or accept that an entity such as "God" or "universal energy" existed outside and inside of him. My response was: "We are all God. God's energy or essence exists in humankind and in all other creations. We are all fashioned from the same source of energy."

The body has a head above and feet below. Feet are usually despised but the head is honored. Nevertheless, when we invite a person to our home, we cannot welcome the head and dismiss the feet. So too, since the cosmos is permeated with God, we cannot welcome one and dismiss the other.

Let's take an analogy to explain this concept further. A seed can be likened to the absolute total reality i.e. "God". From the one essence of the seed, emerge the roots, branches, leaves, fruits and flowers. A human being can be likened to a flower or a fruit, one part of creation among many others. The flower is potentially in the seed and has the same essence or energy as the seed; however, the flower is only one part of the whole, just as a wave is only a part of the ocean. The wave is the ocean but the ocean is not the wave. The waves belong to the ocean but the ocean does not belong to the wave.

When man gains knowledge, wisdom, love and consciousness of the whole universe and all creations, then he will truly become a co-creator with “God”. It is through humility and breaking down our egos that we can raise our divine universal consciousness and move towards becoming co-creators with God.

WHO IS GOD?

God cannot be realized in the outer objective world; He is in the heart of every being. Many venture to describe God to be such and such, but these are only their own guesses and the reflections of their own predilections and preferences. Who can affirm that God is this or that? Who can affirm that God is not of this form or with this attribute? Each one can acquire from the vast expanse of the ocean only as much as can be contained in the vessel he carries to its shores. From that quantity, they can grasp but little of that immensity.

My experience of divinity has been that:

1. GOD IS LOVE

I believe that God is love, an energy or force that binds the whole universe. God is not vengeful and does not punish humankind at whim. God will be with us in hard times as well as in good times. Real love is nurturing someone for their highest good and I feel God does just that by giving us firm love. We suffer because we need to experience and learn from misery and anguish and eventually, we evolve to become one with God.

God is the very embodiment of Love. Man is a spark of the Divine. You may find a man without anger, without truth or without peace, but you cannot find anyone in the world devoid of love. Love is present equally in all human beings as the one Divine quality. This love may be expressed in different ways, but its nature is the same... God is the embodiment of Love; Love is His Instrument. There is no creature without Love; the lowest at the very least, loves itself. And its self is God. So there are no atheists...

2. GOD HAS MANY NAMES, BUT THE ESSENCE OR ENERGY IS ONE.

We should not be under the impression that God exists somewhere having a special form and vested with special powers. I believe the Divine manifests in many forms. All forms are aspects of the one. One can therefore call Him by many names; in essence the energy is the same.

3. GOD IS OMNIPRESENT, OMNISCIENT AND OMNIPOTENT.

If we look around we can see the presence of our Creator in all of creation. If God is omnipotent that is, all powerful, there could be no one or no thing that is higher or greater than Him, therefore He has no beginning and no end. We are made in the image of God; we are Atma - a formless, infinite, indescribable, immeasurable, unsullied and enlightened, embodiment of sacredness.



God cannot be realized in the outer objective world; He is the very heart of every being. Gemstones have to be sought deep underground. Seek God in the depths of your self.

4. GOD DOES NOT PUNISH US.

I believe God is above hate and anger. Man gets punished, not by God, but by the actions he has committed in this or previous lifetimes. The universe has a set of rules or laws which are discussed in chapter 3, Real World Beyond. When man breaks these rules or laws there are consequences. God does not punish us but we get consequences for our thoughts, words and actions. We have contracted to obey these rules or laws before we choose to come to this physical world.

God is involved in either rewards or punishments. He only reflects, resounds and reacts! He is the Eternal Unaffected Witness! You decide your own fate.

WHERE IS GOD?

I believe God is everywhere in all living things. He is not in any one form but in all forms. Nature is the demonstrable proof of the existence of God. God and nature are one. The foolish person, even while seeing the acts of God, declares he has not seen God. He does not realize that nature is the vesture of God. Consciousness animates matter, it is not matter that gives rise to consciousness.”

Some ask where is God to be found? God can be realized only after a long process of cleansing and at the end of systematic discipline and preparation. Without learning the alphabet how can anyone dare condemn the classic?

Our Relationship with God

I believe that there are two aspects of our relationship to God. One is believing that God and I are one and the other is seeing God as having an extrinsic relationship.

1. I believe that God and I are one. The Divine is a part of me.

The Divine is not separate from you. You are the Divine. This conviction must grow in you. In the beginning you regard yourself as a mere human being. Then, you reach the stage when you recognize your true Divinity. These stages could be noticed in the career of Jesus. At the outset he declared: “I am a messenger of God.” Then he said: “I am the Son of God.” Finally he affirmed: “I and my father are One.”

No society can find its fulfillment, no social ideal can fructify, without the blossoming of the spirit of man. Mankind cannot realize Divinity, whose expression it is, without careful and constant attention being paid to the cultivation of the spirit. How else can this Divinity express itself than in and through individuals? We can apprehend this moving, inconstant fantasia; we cannot see or hear, smell or taste or touch the Director of the Fantasia, God. In the same manner, we can apprehend the individual but not the entity



named “society”. For society is no separate, distinct complex formed out of elemental components. Society is the divine proliferation produced by the Will Supreme.

2. God is a loving parent and a best friend

I have always known and believed that God is my best friend. When I had no one I could turn to in times of difficulties He was always there for me. I communicate with Him at all times in good and bad times. Friendship is a two way process: you have to give as well as receive. We tend to ask for things but forget to give. The only way I believe we can give back to God is by seeing, recognizing Him in all His creations and reaching out to help and serve others.

It should be realized, that there is no greater friend than God. He is beyond the reach of praise and censure. He does not give up on man on the grounds of man's failure to come up to His expectations. That is why God has been given the appellation Suhrid (a supreme friend).

SPIRITUALITY

We witness the emergence and growth of a new “breed” of people, who have rejected formal religion and religious organisations. They are quite accepting of spirituality and the concept of a “higher force”. How does spirituality compare to religion? Simplistically speaking, religions tend to have certain dogmas, whereas spirituality is a generic practice, striving towards a direct experience of a higher power. Meditation practices are the direct means to connect with the Creator and I believe that humankind is moving, albeit slowly, away from dogmatic religion and towards a spirituality which encompasses the fundamental and universal truths that are inherent in all religions.

Spirituality is the resolute pursuit of cosmic consciousness. Spirituality aims at enabling man to manifest in all its fullness, the Divine cosmic consciousness that is present within and outside him.

MEDITATION

Dhyana (meditation) is not merely sitting erect and being silent. Nor is it the absence of any movement. It is the merging of all your thoughts and feelings in God. Without the mind becoming dissolved in God, dhyana cannot succeed. As long as he knows he is meditating, one is not meditating. In the absorption in God, one puts aside every form and merges in God. In the process the mind stops.

My own spiritual quest started when I was very young. My grandmother Jerbanoo and then my mother Sheroo, gave me the first concepts and ideas about God, spirituality and my religion, Zoroastrianism. I spent many years formally studying my own religion. However, religion infuses into your life completely only when you start experiencing the “God” within you. In recent years, two important divine energies permeated my being and they still continue to do so. They are Shri Satya Sai Baba and Prahmansa Yogananda. They crystallized my concepts about “God”, spirituality, and religion and motivated me to explore and experience my true reality.



I know that all forms of God are one and all religions preach the same fundamental truths.
As Shri Satya Sai Baba says,

Whether in Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Christianity, or Islam, Divinity is one and ONLY ONE. Those who profess great love for their particular religion are indulging in make-believe when they assume that their religion is superior to that of others. If you declare that the God of all religions is One, why claim superiority for one particular religion and decry others? No religion should allow decrying of other faiths. It is not a religion at all that cavils at other religions. It is a form of arrogance.

WHY DO WE NEED TO CONNECT TO GOD?

Mahatma Gandhi said, *“politics without principles, wealth without work; pleasure without conscience; knowledge without character; business without morality, science without humanity and worship without sacrifice are things that will destroy us.”*

I sincerely believe that humankind is destroying itself and other creations because we have moved away from God, who we really are and the purpose of our existence. God is love and when we move away from real love we destroy and create destruction all around. When humankind returns to God and love we will move into a golden age of peace and harmony.

MEDITATION EXERCISE 2.1 – TO CONNECT WITH DIVINE ENERGY

Choose any symbolic form of Divinity. Re-create this image in your third eye. See every detail of this form and contemplate on the beauty, wisdom and divine essence of this form. Repeat a divine name (e.g. Christ, Buddha) in conscious awareness and vibrate the sound of this name through every part of your body.

CREATION

Before God we are all equally wise - and equally foolish.

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Each one of us was created by God / Divine Energy long before the material world and universe came into being. The Cayce readings indicate the reason for creation, “God’s desire for companionship and expression of love”. Like many Christian, Hindu and Zoroastrian teachings the Cayce readings tell us that the human soul is made in the image of our Creator. His energy is the same as ours (this is discussed further in the Chapter titled, We are Energy). Most religious teachings tell us that our Creator is within and we can communicate with Him. God is love and our lives were in the beginning expressions of love. God made us co-creators; He gave us freewill and the power to create with our thoughts. God does not force Himself on us because if He did we would cease to be

companions and co-creators - we would be mere automatons. Some of us choose to rebel and act outside of God's plan. The rebellion took place in the form of selfishness, self-gratification and self-enhancement. Our freewill and our power as co-creators with God gave us the ability to partake in universal love for all, or to build our own personal egos. This was reflected in the meditation vision that I got and expressed earlier in Chapter 1 titled, Heat of fire.

*A small drop falling from a big rainy cloud looked down upon the expanse of the great ocean below and sighed 'what am I compared to this mighty ocean?'
A clam touched by the humility of the drop opened itself and took the little drop to turn it into a pearl.*

AUTHOR UNKNOWN



CHAPTER 3

The Real World beyond



Chapter 3

The Real World Beyond

The body, the senses, the mind and the intellect are only instruments for the individual and have no consciousness of their own. The body is inert. It is not the body that is the cause of growth and change. The body is a temporary rest house for the spirit.

We are all equal because we all have the same consciousness within. When the sun rises, not all lotuses in the lake bloom; only the grown buds open their petals. It is the same with men. Differences exist because of unripeness, though all fruits have to ripen and fall someday. Every being has to reach the goal however slow they walk or however curved their road.

SHRI SATYA SAI BABA

In 1976 my grandmother, Jerbanoo Medora, moved back to “the other side”. I was devastated. This was my first real experience of death. I remember praying and asking her where she was and what she was doing. Spiritual beings can communicate to us in dreams by contacting our subconscious mind. In the physical plane we get dreams from the conscious and subconscious mind.

I vividly recall a dream in which she told me not to be sad, as she was free and happy; she had suffered from arthritis and a heart ailment for many years while in the physical plane. In this dream I saw a beautiful meadow, trees and the most exquisite flora. She told me that in the spirit world, her work was to care for the forests and the plant kingdom. And that the physical world in which we live is but a prototype image of the spirit world.

After many visitations that she made to me in my dreams, I decided to explore the “real world” beyond. I researched the subject by reading many books and I developed the art of spiritual automatic writing, a technique of communicating with spirit beings. I communicated with my grandmother over the next few years. I have outlined below what I learnt about the spirit world through her. Many researchers on life after death and authors of books written on the subject of the hereafter have reported the same common facts.

- Death in the physical plane is the wearing down and destruction of the physical body; but the spirit, the real part of our being, moves to another level of consciousness. Therefore, death is a passage, brief and transitory, from one level of consciousness to another. Each time a person dies and returns to the spirit world, their experience of the spirit world is different, as there is a change in their level of consciousness.



- In the physical world we predominantly use the conscious mind, very occasionally dipping into our subconscious mind. A minority are in touch with the super-conscious mind. On the other hand, in the spirit world, spiritual beings are working with their subconscious mind and super-conscious minds and therefore are aware of their true nature. In the spirit world, we are very conscious of who we really are - free spirits who are co-creators with God or the Universal Energy.

- There are no religions in the spirit world: there is ONE God. Spiritual beings know that God is the good force of the Universe, the reason for existence. His/Her total harmony holds the Universe together. God is life itself, without Him/Her there is no life or being. When we move away from the God force into disharmony, there is evil. We are imperfect in our thoughts, words, reactions and behavioural patterns therefore we are reborn repeatedly on the physical plane, so that we learn and achieve perfection to rejoin with God as co-creators.

- Growth and development is the essential to progression in both the spirit and physical worlds. It is the key to happiness. However there are more opportunities for learning in the physical realm because of the experience of duality.

- The spirit world is no different from the physical world except that there are no requirements for physical comforts, there are no man made objects, none of the emotional “baggage” we accumulate in the earthy plane. Therefore, only the beauty of the world remains. The spirit world has a sky, flowers, fruits, trees and sunsets just as we do in the physical. But the experience in the spirit world is more vivid as everything in the spirit world is the result of thought patterns. Thoughts instantaneously project and create whatever is wished for. Think evil and evil comes, think good and good comes, think love and you are surrounded with love.

- The spirit world works energetically. There are no physical bodies; spirits communicate in a universal language based on thought patterns. Astral or spiritual bodies possess all the senses of physical bodies. So they can see, touch and hear family members left on the physical plane.

- Time and space as we understand them, do not exist in the spirit world. In the spirit world there is no past present or future as we understand it. Everything is the NOW.

- Spiritual beings work just as we do in the physical world, except they undertake work that is useful, necessary and congenial. No one is forced to work in the spirit world; therefore progress in the spirit world is slower if spirits do not choose to work. Most spiritual beings think it is a privilege to come to the physical plane as the learning process is enhanced and quickened as there is more experience of duality (good and evil) in the physical world.

- Work and activity in the spirit world involves: quiet introspection, assisting others in the spirit world or beings on the physical plane, thoughtful review of past lives, and meditation to become one with God's energy. Meditation is as important in the spirit world as it is in the physical world, as it links the spirits to God's energy. Not all spirit beings are in the presence of the divine energy, only those that are of the purest essence.



Being in harmony with God's Will is the cardinal principle that governs the spirit world and all spiritual beings of higher consciousness.

Nine spiritual laws govern the spiritual world (these are discussed below). We can use these laws on the physical plane as guidelines to help us lead fulfilling lives. Meditation is an important tool that links us to the spirit realm, spiritual beings and God.

Marionne, a student from my meditation classes, related how she used meditation to get her mother's spirit to the "other side".

HELPING MY MOTHER TO THE OTHER SIDE

On an extremely hot weekend in early February my daughter and I made one of our regular trips to Wagga Wagga to spend time with my mother, now 91 and almost immobile after suffering a stroke.

We had been making this trip to Wagga for many years .Being so far from my mother was a stress, living our fast paced life with so many pressures, a full time career and family. My brother, a farmer lives further away, was not always able to visit our mother. I believe, however, we both tried to make her life as happy as possible.

There were times when I felt stressed and guilty and very sad for my mother who in her last few years became more and more incapacitated and became frustrated and angry, full of regret and bitterness. I have been told this is very normal after a stroke.

I began practising meditation some years ago and had a daily routine of sending Mum white light surrounding her with love. Though meditation I learned techniques, which I believe, have helped me enormously. I learned to trust my own judgment to listen to myself and I hope, to have the wisdom and courage to follow through. I had started this practice as a way of alleviating some of the stress I felt associated with my mother's condition and deflecting some of the anger she felt with herself which sometimes was directed at me.

But this day Mum gave me a look of such pure love and happiness when she saw me, something that I have not been able to discuss with anyone until now. But she also seemed different. I felt my mother's death would be soon, so we cancelled our plans of returning to Sydney after the weekend. We spent the weekend with Mum, she slept most of the time but she was very aware of us being with her when she awoke.



I have had plenty of time to think about my mother's death, all my life in fact. I am the eldest child of older parents. My parents, who married in 1948, did not have children for 5 years. My brother was born 18 months after me. This is common now, but somewhat rare when I was a child. I always believed that it was my responsibility to keep my parents alive for whatever reason. I was terrified that I would come home and find them dead on the floor because, to a child's eye, they were so old.

My father died many years ago of a sudden heart attack and it has always distressed me that he had died alone.

Mum told me in the last weeks of her life that she was frightened of dying. So the child who was terrified of losing her parents is now the grown woman who now must comfort her mother in the last stages of her life enabling her to die surrounded by love.

During my mother's last hour, I spoke out loud the things which I thought she would want to hear. I tried to reassure her telling her I was there and not to be frightened. Some weeks before we had had a wonderful talk and now all of that was behind us. Now I needed to help and reassure her. When it became apparent that my mother's death was imminent I did a deep meditation, communicating soul to soul, repeating things spoken out loud earlier. This was an enormous comfort to me as I believe soul to soul links were created helping my mother let go.

When my mother passed away I was very aware of the finality of it. But she looked so good, so rested as if she had gone somewhere and it was right. One of my mother's brothers and his wife were with Mum as well, my uncle commenting on how peaceful Mum looked

On the day of Mum's funeral I had a sense of calm of being surrounded by a white light. The day was as hot as a February day can be in rural New South Wales but I felt cocooned – surrounded by love and a tranquility that I was able to help a spirit be released.

I am very peaceful about my mother's death. I will miss my mother for the rest of my life but I believe meditation helped me enabling me to help my mother.

MARIONNE

Fiona, another student shared this wonderful story about her father who communicated with her from the “other side” through the computer. It is important to note that the picture of her father was on her computer hard drive. In her own words: “The photo of my dad was on the hard disk of the computer along with hundreds of other photos in different folders. I download digital images from the camera and store most of them this way.”

When my father was living with us he had a separate unit at the back, with a beautiful aspect of the garden and pool area. So we could communicate with each other, my husband installed a phone system with an intercom and features such as music on a loudspeaker by pushing a series of buttons. Well try as he might, as dads dementia progressed, his ability to operate the phone system became increasingly difficult, and often with rather comical results – fortunately no calls to Russia or South America!

I would often come to see him and the music would be coming out of the phone and all the buttons lit up like a Christmas tree. Eventually the phone became something that we operated for him and things were quiet –for a while.

Just after my dad passed away we noticed that music was coming from the speaker on his phone. It was the children who kept saying that “Poppy” was there. For about a week the music would play and the red button for his extension would light up for no reason. A year passed and we were planning a reunion dinner with all the family in remembrance of dad. A week before the planned event we came home one night and –you guessed it- music was playing on the phone! Over the next days it was the same, the red button lighting up on his phone.

After the memorial dinner my printer started to play up. After several investigations I couldn't determine what the problem was. I had cancelled all print orders, turned it off at the power and unplugged it from the port in the computer. Days later in desperation I put in a new cartridge, plugged everything back in, switched on the power and Bingo – things started whirring, lights came on and a piece of paper started to come out of the machine. Thinking it was a test run from the printer I grabbed the paper, grateful that all seemed to in good working order again. Imagine my shock when I looked at the piece of paper and there in front of me was a photo of my dad with a cheeky smile on his face! I could almost hear him saying – “I finally got all this electronic stuff under control”.

One thinks of spiritual contact in the terms of visions, voices, celestial callings or things of a more heavenly nature. Never did I imagine that dad would say Hi through an ‘electronic medium’. I love this picture of dad and whenever I am feeling sad I have a chuckle and think of his love, his wisdom and his sense of humour! Can't wait to see what he sends me next.

FIONA P. McIVER

These and many others have experienced their loved ones on the “other side”. I know that there is life after life.

THE NINE SPIRITUAL LAWS

1. The law of divinity
2. The law of giving and receiving
3. The law of karma
4. The law of love
5. The law of contentment
6. The law of development and growth
7. The law of wisdom
8. The law of detachment
9. The law of purpose and duty

I. THE LAW OF DIVINITY

The source of all creation is the Divine One, who is pure loving energy, consciousness, total goodness and wisdom. We need to realize that our true self has the same pure divine essence. Underlying the infinite diversity of all life is the unity of one all-pervasive Spirit or energy.

Meditation is the pathway to realizing our true nature and potential. Experiencing our true self can only be obtained in silent meditation and an attitude of non-judgment. The experience of self in meditation practice is when we focus on our own pure spirit or divine essence (atma) and not the external objects in our experience, that is, “object referral”. In object referral you are influenced by objects outside the self including the ego, and your self-image, which are masks of the role your real self is playing. The true self will only reveal itself as the internal dialogue quiets and you experience stillness. When you are constantly evaluating, classifying, labelling and analyzing, you create a lot of turbulence. The state of pure awareness is the silent space between thoughts and judgments. This is when you have reached great depths in your meditation practices.

Let me share with you a real life experience of applying the Law of Divinity. I was teaching a class in holistic counselling at one of the esteemed Alternative Health Colleges. Halfway through the course I normally undertake a feedback and evaluation exercise with the students. In the evaluation a student strongly advised me to refrain from teaching or even talking about “spirituality” as she found it irrelevant to the course. Later that night I got a phone call from senior management personnel of the College telling me the student had made an official complaint and therefore would I refrain from teaching about “spirituality”. I knew deep down that the students needed “holistic” training that is, understanding of mind, body and spirit for their highest good if they were to eventually work as holistic counsellors. However I was also gripped with fear at the possibility of losing my position as a lecturer for not complying with the

request. I decided to meditate. I handed over my fears to my Creator and saw myself as atma, divine energy, wise and powerful. I saw the wisdom in my intention of providing “holistic” education and training to students in a holistic counselling course. I used my divine wisdom and decided to address the issue and not get intimidated by fear. I armed myself with handouts and notes about pioneering psychologists such as Jung, Adler, Freud etc. who saw psychology as the study of the soul, for the next class. I also prepared notes about the strong connection between mind, body and spirit. I addressed the class at the next session calmly but firmly answering all students' questions about the relevance of the study of spirit. At the end of the class twenty two students thanked me for an enlightening session, including the girl who had made a complaint. Through meditation I applied the Law of Divinity and empowered myself and faced my fears.

EXERCISE 3.1 MEDITATION PRACTICE FOR CONNECTING WITH ATMA

- Meditate in silence, still all thoughts and disconnect from body awareness for at least 20 minutes.
- Listen and be one with nature and your surroundings.
- Practise non-judgment

2. THE LAW OF GIVING AND RECEIVING

Generosity is giving more than you can, and pride is taking less than you need.

KAHLIL GIBRAN

The universe operates through dynamic continuous exchange. Your body, mind and everything else in the universe are constantly in a state of change and exchange. Giving and receiving are different aspects of the same flow of energy in the universe. Therefore the more you give the more you will receive. The intention behind the giving and receiving has to be without “strings” or conditions and is most important. Our true divine nature is to be affluent and in abundance. When you look at the earth before man started destroying it, nature was able to support every need and desire of humankind. We need to keep in mind not to hoard, be greedy and take too much without giving in return. At the same time we need to learn how to receive. Balance is the key.

In my meditation class I often make the students undertake a group exercise. The group sits in a circle in pairs. The pairs sit in meditation facing each other with their palms facing each other. One student in the pair is asked to send the other loving healing energy with the power of their intention. The other student has to be receptive and receive the energy. Sometimes students report back that it is easier for them to give energy rather than receive energy. My remarks to the students are that we can only give when we learn to receive and vice versa. Life is about “balance”. Sometimes the universe and people in it will be giving us gifts and then at other times when we have plenty we have to be open to giving back something. Giving and receiving are waves of the same ocean.

EXERCISE 3.2 APPLYING THE LAW OF GIVING AND RECEIVING IN OUR MEDITATION

- Giving and receiving starts with a thought. Giving and receiving with good intention can become part of our consciousness. Practise the discipline of giving and receiving good thoughts by tuning in with family members, work colleagues, friends and others sending them positive thoughts. The most precious gifts are the gifts of caring, affection and love.
- Each time you meet someone, silently send them a gift of wishing them joy and happiness.

3. THE LAW OF KARMA

A life spent making mistakes is not only more honorable, but more useful than a life spent doing nothing.

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

What we sow, that we will reap. Karma implies the action of conscious choice making. Life is about learning and it is perfectly alright to make mistakes and learn from them. Everything that is happening to you in this moment is the result of the choices that you have made in the past. Unfortunately, a lot of us make choices unconsciously and therefore we do not think they are choices.

Meditation gives us the tools and the pathway to become tuned to our inner, intuitive self. Our heart knows the correct answer; it taps into the cosmic computer, the field of pure potential. The more you bring your choices into the level of your conscious awareness, the more you will make those choices which are spontaneously correct for you and those around you. Past karma has to be paid. How do we deal with past karma?

1. Review and reflect about your thoughts, words and deeds. If you have done some harm to others choose to repay your physical or emotional debt to others.
2. If you are in difficulty or have suffering or pain in your life, ask yourself: "What is the message the universe is trying to convey to me? What do I need to learn from this? What did I learn from this experience? How can I learn from this and make myself useful to my fellow human beings?"
3. Transcend karma, become independent of it. Meditation practices help you clearly see your lessons and what karma you need to overcome.

EXERCISE 3.3 APPLYING THE LAW OF KARMA

- Do a meditative introspective exercise and examine the choices you have made through the day. Bring them to your conscious awareness. The best way to prepare for the future is to be fully conscious in the present.
- Every choice you make ask yourself "What are the consequences of this choice that I'm making? And will this choice bring fulfillment and happiness to me and also to those who are affected by this choice?"

I believe very strongly that prayer and meditation help to lessen the burden of karma. Our Creator's grace can transcend the law of karma. Do not adopt a fatalistic attitude by accepting your suffering as bad karma. Let me share a real life example. I have seen and known of a past life experience when I was in a car accident. Ever since I can remember, I have been fearful of sitting behind the wheel of a car and consequently I kept putting off driving. It was only when I moved to Australia and it became necessary for me to learn that I grudgingly started driving a vehicle. I had experienced anxiety in the pit of my stomach whenever I got behind the wheel. One morning I was on my way to my clinic when a vehicle in front of me stopped suddenly to accommodate a pedestrian crossing. In the rear view mirror I noted that the driver of the vehicle behind me was on the mobile and had not noticed that I and the vehicle before me had stopped suddenly. In a moment my car and I were sandwiched between two cars. At that moment I experienced a déjà vu. It was like my past life experience occurring in slow motion again. Only this time, Shri Satya Sai Baba made His presence known to me. A picture of His which I was carrying on the front seat fell and I got a whiff of sandalwood like fragrance peculiar to Baba when He wants to make His presence known to me. I did not even have a scratch nor did the other two drivers although the cars were damaged severely. It did not end there. Baba made His presence known to me again when I went to the mechanic to pick up the car after repairs. After this incident my constant fear and anxiety when driving a car miraculously disappeared. I believe Baba had graced me by wiping out old karma.

4. THE LAW OF LOVE

Shri Satya Sai Baba said, "Love ever, and hurt never". You only need to look at everything around you in nature to understand this law of harmony and balance. When you are in harmony and your thoughts, words and actions are motivated by love and the knowledge of your true spiritual self - the law of love is in function. When you operate from the point of true love, you free the energy attached to your ego and you can be positioned to catch a glimpse of the grandeur of the universe and be one with your true reality. There are three components to applying the law of love:

1. ACCEPTANCE – you should be in acceptance that every moment is as it should be. It is the culmination of all the moments you have experienced in the past. This moment is "as it is" because the entire universe is "as it is". When you struggle against this moment you struggle against the entire universe. You can wish for things to be different in the future but at this moment you have to accept things as they are. When a person or situation upsets you, remember, those are your feelings. You can change the way you feel by the way you think. When you recognize this you are ready to take responsibility for your existence.

Acceptance is not a state of passivity or inaction. I am not saying you can't change the world, right wrongs, or replace evil with good. Acceptance is, in fact, the first step to successful action. If you don't fully accept a situation precisely the way it is, you will have difficulty changing it. Moreover, if you don't fully accept the situation, you will never really know if the situation should be changed.

PETER McWILLIAMS, LIFE 101

Acceptance also applies to being comfortable and content with who we are, our physical body, our identity, our skills and talents given to us in this life time. We need to fully accept ourselves and others to really love. People often compare themselves to others and constantly want something they do not have and as a result are miserable and unhappy. A young patient named Sheila had great difficulty in accepting her background (her father was Sri Lankan and her mother was Chinese), and even hated herself. She did not like the way she looked and she had great difficulty in making and keeping friends. She tried everything from changing her name, her face, her personality but she was still depressed and suicidal. She had to learn to love and accept herself for who she was. She had to recognize her real self, the atma. After acceptance real love for self follows.

2. RESPONSIBILITY - is the ability to have a response to the situation as it is now. All problems contain the seeds of opportunity and this awareness allows you to take the moment and transform it to a better situation or thing. Whatever relationships you have attracted in your life are precisely the ones you needed at that moment. There is a hidden meaning behind all events - serving your own evolution.

The price of greatness is responsibility.

SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL

Couples with marital discord and difficulties come to me for relationship counselling. Often each person blames the other partner for the breakdown in the relationship. Initially I always counsel each person in the relationship separately because I believe that each person needs to take individual responsibility for his or her growth. Only then will it impact on the relationship as a whole. Clients and patients who believe that the counsellor has a magic wand or a magic potion and think that they do not have to take any responsibility seldom shift from their problems.

3. DEFENSELESSNESS - you have relinquished the need to convince or persuade others of your point of view. When you truly love yourself and accept yourself for who you are you do not need to convince and persuade others of your point of view. We are all like ants on a keyboard. We see the world from a narrow perspective. The ant sitting on a black key says the world is black while the ant sitting on a white key sees the world as white. We see the absolute reality only through our experience. All experiences are aspects of the whole. A spiritual aspirant relinquishes the need to convince another of his/her point of view. When you stop fighting and resisting, you will save your energy and enjoy the moment. When you remain open to all points of view and not rigidly attached to one, your dreams and desires will flow in harmony with nature's desires.

Justice does not come from the outside. It comes from inner peace.

BARBARA HALL, A SUMMONS TO NEW ORLEANS, 2000

A patient whom I shall call Emma came to me to learn anger management. She was very sensitive and often would get triggered into angry outbursts by people's remarks. I told her to relinquish the need to defend herself and get "hooked" by people's remarks and giving them the

power to make her feel bad about herself. If someone harshly calls you a “fat cow” does the remark turn you into a cow? I conveyed to her a story about Buddha. Buddha was giving a sermon at a small gathering. One person in the group was vicious, unkind and made sarcastic remarks questioning Buddha’s authenticity. Buddha did not respond and kept delivering his sermon. At the end of his talk a disciple of Buddha came up to him and asked, “Why did you not respond to that angry aggressive man who made discourteous remarks about you?” Buddha replied, “If someone brings a garbage bag to your doorstep and you accept it, the garbage bag becomes yours. If you do not accept it, it remains in the hands of the person who brought it.”

EXERCISE 3.4 APPLYING THE LAW OF LOVE

Practise acceptance with people, situations and circumstances as they occur, knowing this moment is as it should be. Be in a state of joy knowing that all is “as it is meant to be”. Think, speak and act with love, never wanting to hurt another. Then take responsibility for the situation and events that are problematic. Do not blame yourself or anyone else but treat each problem as an opportunity for learning. Relinquish the need to defend your point of view and remain open to all points of view.

5. THE LAW OF DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH

The strongest principle of growth lies in human choice.

GEORGE ELIOT

The purpose of existence is to strive towards perfection and return as co-creators of God. Growth and development is the key to happiness. Energy and information exists everywhere in nature. There is nothing other than energy and information. A flower, leaf, animals, even you and I, when broken down to our essential components are atoms and molecules of energy and information. However, unlike other creations, the human nervous system is capable of becoming aware of this information and energy. We are capable of influencing the energy and informational content in our body, environment and world and cause things to manifest by two qualities: attention and intention.

1. ATTENTION ENERGIZES; whatever you focus and concentrate your attention on will grow stronger and materialize in your reality. Yogananda states that a successful person does everything with the power of attention. The full force of that power can be attained through meditation.

When you use that focusing power of God, you can place it on anything and be a success. Use it to develop body, mind and soul.

YOGANANDA, (1997) JOURNEY TO SELF-REALIZATION

Direct your attention on helping humankind and manifesting goodness in the environment and you will grow and progress towards becoming one with Divinity.



When we talk about understanding, surely it takes place only when the mind listens completely-- the mind being your heart, your nerves, your ears- when you give your whole attention to it.

J. KRISHNAMUTRI

2. **INTENTION** is focusing your energy in thought form to create in the physical realm, hopefully for the benefit of humankind and creation. Intent is desire without an attachment to the outcome. Intention with detachment leads to life- centred, present-moment awareness. When action is performed in present-moment awareness, it is most effective. One-pointed intention means holding your attention to the intended outcome with such unbending purpose that you absolutely refuse to allow obstacles to consume and dissipate the focused quality of your attention.

We learn and grow and are transformed not so much by what we do but by why and how we do it.

SHARON SALZBERG, O MAGAZINE, THE POWER OF INTENTION, JANUARY 2004

EXERCISE 3.5 FULFILLING YOUR LIFE'S MISSION TO FURTHER HUMANKIND TO MOVE TOWARDS GOD.

1. Slip into "the gap", that is the silent space between thoughts.
2. When you come out of the silence, release your intention and wish. If there are a series of goals write them down and have your intention focused on them before you go into silence.
3. Remain in the state of awareness of your true self.
4. Relinquish your attachment to the outcome. Relinquish your attachment to a specific result and live in the wisdom of uncertainty.
5. Let the universe handle details. When things do not seem to go your way, trust that it is due to a valid reason and that the cosmic plan has much grander designs for you. Refuse to allow obstacles to consume and dissipate the quality of your attention in the present moment.

6. THE LAW OF CONTENTMENT

Contentment is not the fulfillment of what you want, but the realization of how much you already have.

ANONYMOUS

When we put a ceiling on desires and stop grasping at things and people, we are following the law of contentment. We cannot really own anything, as everything in this world is impermanent. Enjoy what you have now; rather than crave for what you do not have - that is the key to happiness. Be contented with what you do in your current occupation or personal

exertion, rather than constantly being frustrated with your job. Always look at the glass as half full rather than as half empty. If you do not have a car, be thankful that you have your legs. If you do not have a magnificent house, be grateful that you have a roof over your head. If you do not have huge material treasures in your possession, be grateful for the spiritual treasures you have in the love of family and friends. Do not have expectations, as the more expectations you have the more you will be disappointed. Be grateful to God for everything that comes into your life.

My mother was always sacrificing, saving and putting things away to give her two daughters “when they got married”. A week before her death a glass cupboard where she had stashed away all her expensive China, artifacts and glass ware came crashing down and everything was broken into tiny pieces. That day I learnt an important lesson in my life: not to hoard or live in the future but to live in the NOW. My mother did not enjoy the things she put away nor did her children you never know what tomorrow brings. So why live in the to-morrow? Let’s focus on enjoying the NOW. The law of contentment is about enjoying and living in the NOW.

7. THE LAW OF WISDOM

It is unwise to be too sure of one's own wisdom. It is healthy to be reminded that the strongest might weaken and the wisest might err.

MAHATMA GANDHI

Thoughts are the first step in creation. As we are Divine, we are Wisdom. However, when we think negatively, we exist in a state of disharmony and lose touch with our Divinity and wisdom. We have the potential of pure wisdom if we meditate and expand our consciousness to the Divine One. The superconscious mind is connected to the Wisdom of the Universe. Therefore we have access to the Wisdom of our Creator - we just to have learn how to tap into this source of infinite Wisdom.

Often in meditation I have asked questions about things, even technical information which is normally beyond me. When I ask for guidance from a higher source it always comes. One day I was having great difficulty with the computer that was contaminated with a virus. I needed access to a document urgently. I prayed and asked Archangel Michael to help me and cleanse and clear away the energy. I received help just as I finished my prayer. A student and friend who is good with computers arrived for a surprise visit and willingly sorted out the computer problem. On numerous other occasions I have asked in meditation to be given wisdom and knowledge about how to help certain difficult patients.

8. THE LAW OF DETACHMENT

To become attached to someone or something is to become excessively worried and preoccupied with a person or problem, trying to control the person or the environment. (This is generally, only applicable to adult relationships and not necessarily to young children.) When we are attached to someone or something we become rescuers, emotionally dependent and

reactionaries. We react to the excessive emotions and do not think with wisdom and so we "get blown about by every wind" instead of acting authentically of our own volition.

Who is a co-dependent personality?

If money is your hope for independence you will never have it. The only real security that a man will have in this world is a reserve of knowledge, experience, and ability.

HENRY FORD

We are all co-dependents as we "give and take" and exchange energy with one another. However, co-dependent personalities are people who are spiritually unhealthy, as they become rescuers or rescued and suffocate spiritual growth in others and in themselves.

We all have unhealthy co-dependent relationships when we:

- Do something we really do not want to do. Giving should come from a state of joy/happiness and with "no strings attached", expecting nothing in return.
- Saying "yes" when we actually mean "no".
- Doing something for someone although that person is capable of and should be doing it for themselves and therefore not allowing the person to grow spiritually.
- Meeting people's needs without being asked and before we've agreed to do so.
- Doing people's thinking and speaking for them.
- Suffering people's consequences for them.

We rescue people from their responsibilities, but later get annoyed at them for what we've done (persecuted). Then, we feel used and sorry for ourselves (victimized). This "drama triangle" of rescuing, persecuting and being victimized continues. I believe God wants us to help people. But this has to be done with wisdom. Whose needs are we fulfilling? Is it giving for the other person's and our highest good?

PROBLEMS OF ATTACHMENT

Over-involvement with a person or object keeps us in a state of chaos, characterized by disharmony and emotion, where we often make bad decisions that are not necessarily for the highest good of ourselves or others. If we are focusing all our energies on people and problems, we have little time for ourselves. Worry does not solve problems. When we become attached in this way to someone else, we become detached from ourselves and in fact, lose touch with ourselves.



WHAT IS DETACHMENT?

Maybe the greatest challenge now is to find a way to keep independence while also committing ourselves to the ties that bind people, families, and ultimately societies together.

JANE O'REILLY

Detachment is not a cold, hostile withdrawal, nor is it removal of our love and concern. Detachment is mentally and emotionally disengaging from someone or something as we allow each person to be responsible for themselves. I believe detachment is a state of independence, self sufficiency, wisdom and discernment. Thereby, we are working for the highest good of others and ourselves as we allow spiritual growth to occur. We allow people to face their own “proverbial music”, we allow people to be who they are. We provide them and ourselves with the freedom and responsibility to grow.

We give ourselves that same freedom and live our lives to the best of our ability. We strive to ascertain what it is we can change and what we cannot change and then, we stop trying to change things we cannot.

Detachment involves living in the present moment. We allow life to happen without trying to control it. We relinquish regrets over the past and fears about the future. Detachment also involves accepting reality and accepting our true nature, having faith in others, God and ourselves.

Detachment does not mean that we do not care. Rather it means that we learn to love, care and be involved in such a manner so as to make good decisions without allowing excessive emotions to take charge.

HOW DO WE DETACH?

I believe detachment is a state of independence, wisdom, discernment and self sufficiency. We can learn to detach by being honest, open and have an attitude of a “willingness to try.” Detachment can be learned by practice, similar to worrying or controlling. Always detach in the attitude of love, rather than anger or hatred. Relinquish your attachment to the physical, temporary, material objects and people. Step into the unknown within (into the realm of the Divine One), trusting the Universe and your Creator to guide you through inner wisdom. Do not be compelled to force solutions onto problems. Allow yourself and others the freedom to be as they are. Step into the field of all possibilities and remain open to the infinity of choices and experience the mystery, joy and magic of life.

EXERCISE 3. 6 - DETACHMENT

In a meditative state think of a person or problem that you feel concerned or worried about. How is being attached (worrying, becoming excessively emotional, trying to control) helped so far?



Visualize placing the person and the problem in the hands of the Divine One. Now visualize the Divine One holding you. All is well for the moment. All is as it should be and as it needs to be. In a meditative state keep repeating this positive affirmation and let the words resonate through every cell in your body.

SERENITY PRAYER - God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

9. THE LAW OF PURPOSE AND DUTY

Everyone has a purpose in life, a gift and special talent to give others. When we blend this unique talent in the service to others, we experience the ecstasy and exultation of our own spirit, which is the ultimate goal of all. Ask yourself, why am I here? Focus on doing well in your chosen task or endeavor. Search for your unique talent.

1. Discover your spiritual self
2. Express your unique talent
3. Serve humanity. How can I help all those I come into contact with? Without asking what's in it for me?

COMMITMENTS TO MAKE

1. I am going to seek my higher self, which is beyond my ego, through spiritual practices.
2. I am going to discover my unique talents when I go into timeless awareness.
3. I am going to ask myself how I am going to best serve humanity. I am going to use my unique talents to serve the needs of my fellow human beings.

EXERCISE 3. 7 – PROBING FOR TALENTS

In a meditative state ask yourself, “Who am I? What are my unique talents? If money, commitments and time were not an issue, in what way would I want to serve humanity?” Observe twenty minutes of silence and release your desires when you come out of the gap.

CONDITIONS FOR A SPIRITUAL LIFE IN THE PHYSICAL REALM

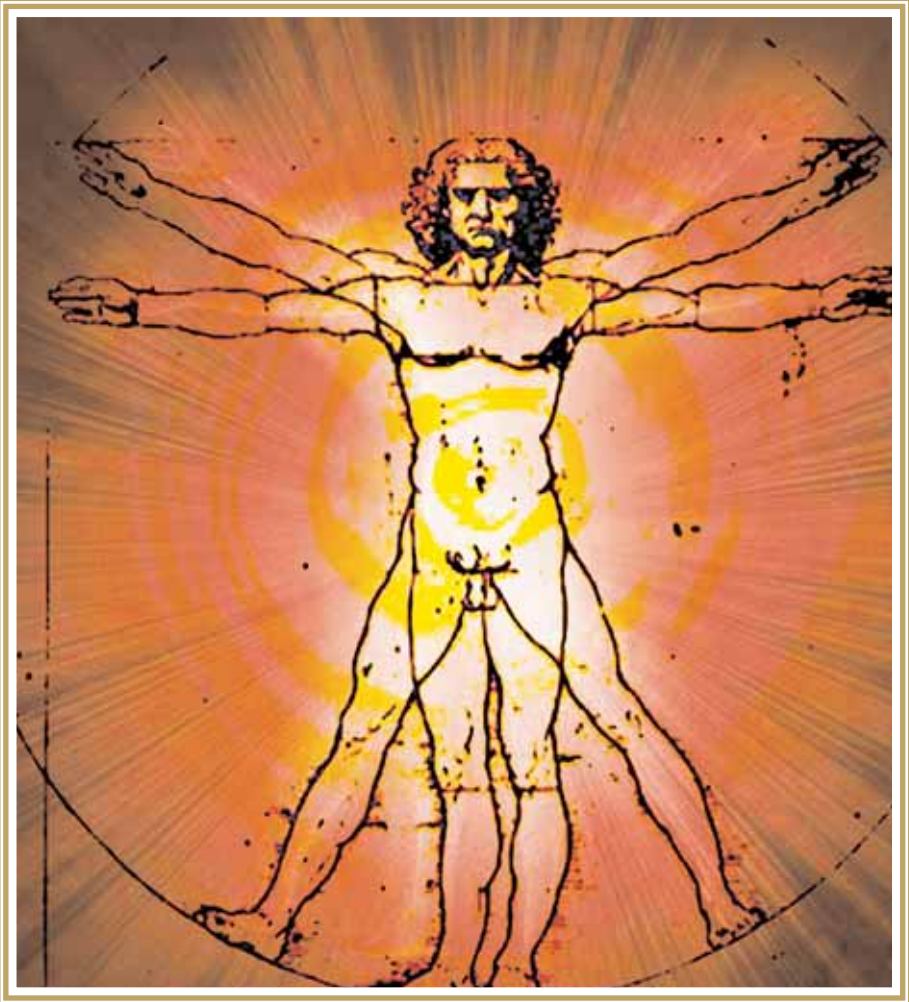
- Faith - Faith in one's ability to realize the true self. We must have faith in our spiritual ideals and goals. Doubt obstructs all progress. Doubt is a lack of faith in self and in the Divine Being.
- Practise purity in thought, word and deed - Purity of thought, word and deed has to become part of your lifestyle. Spiritual discipline and meditation counteract bad thoughts, words and deeds.

- Self-effort - Putting our will in tune with the Divine Will. Developing our will power to take the higher path.
- Look at self as spirit - this will change the way we relate to self and others
- Excessive love for self or egotism needs to be eliminated - Dr. Jung says: "The ego is ill for the very reason that it cuts off from the whole and has lost its connection with mankind and spirit". To be egocentric is to be spiritually ill. What is needed is not just a false humility but rather a dignified modesty based on faith in our potential divinity.
- Develop a cosmic perspective- Think more and more of the Divine Spirit. Repeat His/Her name, meditate on the Divine Spirit and you will rise in consciousness.
- Think clearly - Every choice should be carefully thought through, learn to discriminate, find out what is real from the unreal, what is changing and what is permanent.
- Work to remove disharmony from the physical body - Physical body imperfections are generally symptoms of internal disharmony. Become aware of your bodies defects and work to remove internal disharmony. Eat well, exercise and lead a temperate and moral life, performing selfless work. The "food" we consume through our body, senses and mind should be pure.
- Follow the middle path - excess and deficiencies in anything are to be avoided.
- Energy will be accumulated with meditation practices - these should be channelled and used properly. Work to serve humankind.
- Surrender to divinity - know that all is in divine order.
- Yearn for the Divine One - when one yearns for divinity and the divine pathway, it will be revealed in due course.



CHAPTER 4

The purpose of life and understanding our many lives



Chapter 4

The purpose of life and understanding our many lives

Man is on a long pilgrimage towards God. He moves from one life to another to the glory of His splendour. On his way he has to take shelter in many caravan sites, but however attractive these may be, he cannot strike root but has to remind himself of the journey's end.

SHRI SATYA SAI BABA

Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards.

SOREN KIERKEGAARD, DANISH PHILOSOPHER (1813 - 1855)

THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

I believe that the purpose of life is:

- To learn and grow with wisdom.
- To learn to really love self and others.
- To help other human beings and other creations.
- To understand and return to our true nature.

Human life is beset with ups and downs, joys and sorrows; these experiences are intended to serve as guideposts for man. Life would become stale if there were no trials and difficulties. It is these difficulties, which bring out the human values in man.

SHRI SATYA SAI BABA

All human beings experience some problems in life. Life is like a roller coaster ride; sometimes we face difficulties and feel we are moving downward and sometimes things run smoothly and we feel elated as we move upwards. We have to first accept the truth that life is full of changes - the "ups and downs". Some of us develop tools or techniques to solve life's problems. However, as problem solving is hard work and a painstaking process, most of us try and avoid it. It is through problem solving that we grow spiritually (the purpose of existence). A few of us view problems as opportunities for growth and learn a lot from problem solving and the mistakes we make. However, perhaps the majority of us, go to great lengths to avoid problems, by either sweeping things under the carpet or living in a world of make believe - pretending the problem does not exist. Still others hide from addressing problems by consuming alcohol, drugs and other stimulants or by being pre-occupied with other distractions. The problem does not go away but builds in strength and momentum to hit us with a greater force.

In facing suffering and pain that we cannot escape from we are forced to sit up and pay attention and make the effort to learn from our mistakes and hopefully, to change. A majority of humankind live their life with constant thoughts of the future that is, with worries. Worries are mentally created fear rather than live in the NOW. Meditation teaches us to live in the NOW and be realistic in problem solving. We will discuss this further in the chapter that deals with emotional management titled, The Heart.

We are divine beings choosing this planetary school for learning. I believe we establish a contract with the Creator to enter into our physical bodies and learn the lessons we need to. We come here mainly to learn. We have debts that we must pay (karma) and we have to be re-born and return in many lifetimes, until all these debts are repaid. Karma is about learning and not about punishment. We all have a life plan and agreement which we know about prior to our physical birth and we have free will. Students often ask me how we can have both a plan and contract that we make prior to taking on a physical body and also have free will. Destiny and free will can co-exist. For instance, at work we may choose to work in a project and we may have a contract or larger plan for that work. We would have a framework or outline of the outcomes and tasks we need to do. How we do things and the finer details of the tasks at hand are really left to our free will and discretion. Similarly in choosing our parents we choose the country of our birth, our siblings, our socio-economic background, our education and the circumstances and lessons for our soul. I have done a lot of past life regression work with clients (I will discuss the process and details of this later on this Chapter) and found that souls reserve a particular person to be their vehicle in the physical realm around the time of conception. During the gestation period in the first few months in the womb, the soul of the unborn child visits by entering and then departing from the womb, many times, as it is still mostly connected to the spirit realm. The soul is eternal and cannot be harmed by death, miscarriages or by abortion. When the pregnancy does not come to term usually the soul is returning to the spirit realm as the soul decides not to choose that experience or it comes again as a subsequent child of the same parents.

*We are all spirits...some are in physical state and others are in a period of renewal.
And others are guardians. But we all go there. We have been guardians too.*

WEISS, BRIAN (2000) MESSAGES FROM THE MASTERS

Without darkness, we cannot understand light and so, to understand life and the purpose of it, we need to understand death and the real world beyond the physical realm. When we die, our souls progress to higher dimensions and we take our behaviours, our thoughts, words, deeds and our knowledge and experiences with us. We do not take what we have accumulated materially so it is important to think, speak and act positively with goodness. Death is a period of dissolution and breakdown of our body before our consciousness moves to higher realms. So we do not really die, but merely walk through a door to a higher level of consciousness. In 1977, Belgian physicist Ilya Prigogine won the Nobel Prize for his Theory of Dissipative Structures. The theory suggests that a period of dissolution, chaos, and breakdown is required before a molecule, society or an organization can move to a higher level. We just have to look at nature

to realize that before spring, the growth of new life, comes winter, where leaves and foliage have to fall and die. A seed can grow into a flower only after it has swollen and died. The threads of what may appear to be disaster and random error for us are eventually creating an unseen new tapestry of wholeness and beauty. In our own lives, creative newness comes after periods of crisis, pain and suffering, which force us to change old beliefs, attitudes and behavior patterns.

*Death is no ominous calamity; it is a step into the auspicious brightness beyond.
It is inescapable...once born, death is the inevitable end.*

SHRI SATYA SAI BABA

Raymond Moody wrote on the subject of near-death-experience (NDE), in his book, *Life after Life* (1978). People who have had NDE have reported:

- Leaving their bodies from a hole at the crown of their head or of being lifted out of their bodies.
- People have reported the next phase as being pushed through a tunnel.
- Sometimes people have reported dead relatives, angels, helpers, and guides arriving to assist the soul/spirit on its onward journey.
- Some people have reported encountering a Divine Light, radiating absolute forgiveness and love.
- Some individuals who have experienced NDE as a result of trying to kill themselves have often met with beings of light who have told them to learn to love themselves and that life is a great gift and privilege.
- A third of people who have experienced NDE have spoken about a life review. A supreme being conducts a review where all of life appears at once, like a hologram, where you evaluate your thoughts, words and deeds. You feel joy when you have given joy and pain when you have caused pain to others.
- Most people who have experienced NDE have reported that we take human form in order to learn the most important lesson; that of LOVE. To receive and give love, to become wiser and more creative. We are co-creators with the Divine making the Universe expand and grow.

While you are not able to serve men, how can you serve spirits [of the dead]?... While you do not know life, how can you know about death?

CONFUCIUS, THE CONFUCIAN ANALECTS, BK. II:II

CHINESE PHILOSOPHER & REFORMER (551 BC - 479 BC)

Real development is not leaving things behind, as on a road, but drawing life from them, as from a root.

G.K. CHESTERTON

I know I am deathless. No doubt I have died myself ten thousand times before. I laugh at what you call dissolution and I know the amplitude of time.

WALT WHITMAN

Meditation is a process of moving from your conscious mind to your subconscious mind (the storehouse of all past thoughts, words and deeds) to the super conscious mind. Our subconscious mind exerts far greater control over our life than we realize. It controls our present reality. Our subconscious mind accepts programming from early childhood and past lives. These programs become "glued" to our energy fields. Our entire world is created or manifested by the core beliefs that are embedded in our subconscious mind.

Every past life experience positive or negative is important for you and has brought you where you are now. There are no "victims" or "persecutors" in life, just "volunteers" who are choosing to experience for a higher learning.

It is quite common for individuals to experience some past life experiences in deep meditation. The person experiencing past lives in meditation is the observer as well as the person being observed. It is like watching a movie. The mind retains an awareness and knowledge of the present. Despite the deep subconscious contact, our mind retains the ability to comment, critique and censor. Our soul or spirit is eternal and we return to the earth repeatedly in order to learn and grow. Each lifetime provides us with a wealth of experience that allows us to become more balanced, loving and harmonious till we eventually reunite with God. Sometimes the lessons we learn on the earth plane are simple and obvious, yet we need to learn through direct experience.

Throughout history, great thinkers have spoken about reincarnation. Reincarnation is not just associated with Hinduism and Buddhism – the ancient Egyptians too believed in a form of reincarnation and Rudolf Steiner postulated that in fact, the New Testament contains numerous references and interpretations to reincarnation. It is the fate we create ourselves, as a result of our judgments of our actions in this life and in previous lives.

Karma is the law of cause and effect. The word karma literally means "action". The law states that "as we sow, so shall we reap" In both the Old Testament and the New this is stated: "To him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward. As righteousness tendeth to life: so he that pursueth evil, pursueth it to his own death". (Prov11:18-19). In other words, everything we think, say and do, becomes part of energy or force that we send out into the universe and that energy will then return to us.

Who better to judge our lives than ourselves? Therefore, it is we who are judge and jury of our thoughts, words and actions. We create our reality and our karma. We punish ourselves

EXERCISE 4.1 LEARNING FROM A CRISIS

In a deep meditative state, go back in time and review a crisis situation in your life. Visualize the whole "drama" objectively, as an observer. What did you learn from this experience? What beliefs, attitudes and behaviours changed for you as a result of this experience?

Things to do to achieve and fulfill your life's purpose:

- Live in the present. To live in the past or the future is to worry. Learn from the past and plan the future but live in the moment.
- Be aware of your true nature and self. You are divine, immortal and changeless.
- Do not fear death or get attached to the unreal (physical and material world). Death is like changing your clothes. You change your body and move to the next level of consciousness. Death should be a joyful celebration.
- Do not identify with the body, identify with divine consciousness. Body identification and working to appease our senses brings us suffering and pain. Detach from gratifying your body and material attachment. Shri Satya Sai Baba often says "Less luggage, more comfort, makes travel a pleasure" implying to carry less material baggage.
- Happiness is union with God. Why seek God externally when you can reach him from within?

You are not here merely to make a living. You are here to enable the world to live more amply, with greater vision, and with a finer spirit of hope and achievement. You are here to enrich the world. You impoverish yourself if you forget this errand.

WOODROW WILSON, 28TH PRESIDENT OF US (1856 - 1924)

ASTRAL TRAVEL AND REMOTE VIEWING

Every night when we sleep our spiritual bodies travel naturally into other areas of consciousness. When falling off to sleep you may have experienced a jolt. This is a sign that your astral body has traveled out and then back into your physical body. Another example of astral travel is when we find ourselves flying in our dreams. We soar above treetops and mountains visiting other places and peoples. Sometimes our astral bodies visit other dimensions to continue our lessons. When we are in a "wakeful" state in meditation we can choose to visit certain people and places and therefore astrally travel.

UNDERSTANDING PAST LIVES THROUGH MEDITATION

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting, the soul that rises with us, our life's star hath elsewhere its setting.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH



when we are not at peace with our thoughts, words and deeds. Karma may be manifested symbolically, as a scale balancing or as "gift-giving". A soul contracts with its guides before physical birth to experience pain, illness or certain experiences to repay or learn from its past thoughts, words and actions.

Karma is carried with us from the past. There are many parts of karma: initial thought, the will to put the thought into action and then the union of the thought and will, which transforms it to action. For instance: the initial thought that I do not want to partake, directly or indirectly, in the killing of any animal life and so I choose to be a vegetarian. The second ingredient I need is the will power to put the thought into action. By combining the thought and will, every time I see meat and I choose not to eat it I will be performing the action of not eating meat. Another example: I think I would love to meditate every day, early morning. When it's time to awake, my mind wavers and at that moment, I have two choices of thought: "I want to sleep longer" or "I want to meditate." If I choose "I want to meditate" I then need to give energy to this thought by using my will power to transform the thought into action. Thought, combination of thought and will power and action, all three contain different energy levels. The "action" needs the most amount of energy. So if you think of killing someone you carry less negative karma then if you actually kill someone. Evil is both the result of choosing to follow the spirit of rebellion against God's wishes and the actual act itself. Each of us who are breathing on the earth today, are here because we as individual souls choose to be here. Each soul is experiencing the consequences of its choices and free will – not someone else's. However, God never abandons us and helps us to learn and return to our true nature.

Reincarnation is our way to learn. God is not punishing us but giving us an opportunity to experience the consequence of our unloving choices. We are given as much time, as many lifetimes that we require to return to our true nature. Every individual incarnation has a purpose in God's plan on multidimensional levels that is on a macro level and micro level. For instance a client whom I shall name Amy was of German origin. In her past life she was responsible for the extermination of the Jews, therefore in her present life she had multidimensional lessons of loss and grief: with her partner, in her work situation and being a member of the Palestinian community. No soul enters a physical body by chance or by accident.

When we come to the last moment of this lifetime, and we look back across it, the only thing that's going to matter is "what was the quality of our love?"

RICHARD BACH

THE LEVELS OF CONSCIOUSNESS

1. SUPER CONSCIOUSNESS – the direct awareness of God. Omniscient, limitless and infallible knowledge. All souls are God and therefore have this consciousness at the time of creation.

2. SUBCONSCIOUS –The subconscious came about after the soul entered the physical reality. It has several sublevels. Psychologist Jung and seer Edgar Cayce talk about the collective subconscious mind. All beings are connected and can tap into each other's subconscious minds.

3. CONSCIOUS MIND – the mind we use in the NOW taking information through our five senses.

These levels of consciousness will be discussed in detail again in Chapter nine titled, Fundamentals of Meditation. For now we need to briefly familiarize ourselves with the levels of consciousness and the term akashic records to understand life and its purpose. The akashic record is like a computer that stores all information on all souls in the spiritual and physical worlds. They are like great cosmic recorders that have all the information on every individual soul: every thought, word and deed created through the beginning of time.

We can tap into our subconscious and super conscious minds. There are different techniques to contact the subconscious and superconscious which I explain at length below:

1. SELF-INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS- this involves using the conscious mind to ask questions about the present life and interpret the answers. This can help us discover something about past incarnations, as our subconscious memories affect our conscious attitudes and actions, so looking at how we feel and behave will give us some hint of the type of past experiences that could have produced these characteristics in our present selves. Also our current life gives us clues about our past. It creates life situations in the physical that give us an opportunity to use these strengths we've developed in the past and to learn the spiritual lessons we need to assimilate. Who we are at present has been created by our past choices and experiences.

2. REVERIE – some people confuse this with day dreaming. In fact, it is a method of quieting the conscious mind, so that images can be received from its subconscious counterpart. Consciousness is not lost, but the logical and critical aspects of the mind are temporarily suspended and the imaginative aspect is emphasized.

3. DREAM STUDY – in the dream process the sixth sense brings us material from the subconscious and super conscious levels. The subconscious mind contains soul memories and past life information.

4. MEDITATION – exercises presented in this book in subsequent chapters such as Basics of Meditation.

Let us examine how life works by using past life theories/laws of reincarnation:

- The law of continuation teaches us that life is eternal, purposeful and orderly. We carry on the personalities, traits, talents, interests and attitudes unless something happens and we choose to change.
- The law of consequences teaches us that the purpose of reincarnation is to learn and grow from past mistakes. We bear the consequences of our actions.
- The law of compensation – in order to balance personal traits, we may experience opposite extremes – such as masculinity and femininity.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR KARMA

How can we attribute traits of temperament and personality to past-life experiences? Are we denying the role of heredity and environment in making us who we are? Yes and No. Yes we

are denying that heredity and environment are the absolute moulding agents in our lives, forces which shape us without regard to our own choice. On the other hand, no we are not denying that hereditary and environment has a very real effect on our lives. We should view hereditary and environment as conditions that we're drawn to in order to meet the results of choices we've made in the past. In other words, hereditary and environment interact with karma in such a way that each life is a continuation of patterns good and bad, that we've established in previous lives. Patterns which have taken on concrete form in our physical or environmental circumstances usually cannot be changed instantaneously; the inner form must be changed before a new outer shell can be constructed to conform to it. It is important to note that change is possible. How? Perhaps by incorporating the following:

1. AWARENESS OF OLD PATTERNS – A client whom I shall name Sally presented to the clinic with a breakdown in relationship. Looking at her past relationships a pattern was clear. She had experienced neglect and emotional separation from her parents and these fears led her to attract men in her life that needed only sexual gratification and short term relationships (flings). In becoming aware of her fears she became aware of her thoughts that led her to these men. Eventually after getting rid of her fears she brought into her reality someone who wanted a long term lasting relationship like her.

2. MAKING INNER CHANGES OR SHIFTS IN THOUGHTS AND ATTITUDES – Sally had to work hard to change her old habitual thoughts around relationships.

3. SHIFT WILL EVENTUALLY HAPPEN IN BEHAVIOUR AND HABITS.

EXERCISE 4.2 UNDERSTAND YOUR LIFE'S LESSONS

1. Analyze your life, from your childhood to the present time. Do you have any special physical strengths and abilities? Are any of your senses particularly sharp?
2. List trouble spots in your body, chronic health problems.
3. List any birthmarks, state where they are located and if you have any feelings about them.
4. Analyze your phobias and fears. Why do different people react differently to the same thing? Do your emotional reactions teach you something?

In subsequent chapters I have explained in detail the benefit of meditation in healing the body, mind. Healing happens when we release the past negative energy patterns of past experiences. Past negative experiences could be of our childhood or previous lifetimes. When using certain meditation techniques we can release these negative imprints and therefore enhance healing.

WHY UNDERGO PAST LIFE EXPERIENCES IN MEDITATION?

- Healing occurs when we see visions or experience past memories. These are legitimate expressions of our inner being and can expand the quality of our lives.



- We are not only dealing with symptoms, but get to the source of the problem
- Forgiveness is an essential process in healing. It is much easier to forgive those in your present life when you understand the connection they have had to you in your past lives.
- We create and recreate for ourselves, present-day incidents, which subconsciously remind us of the original incident as a way to heal the original pain. If emotions such as fear, anger or grief are suppressed during traumatic events in a past life, these suppressed emotions stay inside our energy field and form inner conflicts that continue to present lifetime after lifetime.
- It helps us release guilt, forgive the past and heal the present day problem. Each individual creates the experience that is valuable for them and their growth. Guilt is not taking responsibility for your actions. It is important to acknowledge all your actions, without judgment.
- Understanding previous lives can help us understand the mission (what we need to learn) in the present.
- Helps us understand relationships
- Helps us understand our talents and abilities.

Today the planet is reaching the end of a long cycle and many of us are experiencing instant karma, that is, we are learning and evolving much more quickly in the present time. The important point to bear in mind about karma is that you have free will to change your circumstances and karma. Your past, present and future are changeable.

Pramahansa Yogananda writes in *Autobiography of a Yogi*, that with prayer, spiritual practices and right conduct you can convert difficult karma that might have brought the "thrust of a sword" to become only "the thrust of a pin".

EXERCISE 4.3 – CLUES TO PAST LIVES

In the table on the next page, write your preferences, affinities and "gut-feelings" regarding the following:



Food	
Geographical Locations	
Architecture	
Time periods or historical events	
Occupations	
Talents and abilities	
Fears	
Dreams	

CHAPTER 5

The Self – Who am I?



Chapter 5

The Self – Who am I?

When the veil of mind dissolves, the self has the vision of the self.

*Love seeks no reward: love is its own reward. Transform love into service.
Transform service into worship. That is the highest sadhana (spiritual practice).*

Self-confidence is the basis of faith in God. People who do not know who they are and who have no confidence in their own strength and power assert that there is no God. When you have no faith in the wave, how can you get faith in the ocean?

SHRI SATYA SAI BABA

WHO AM I?

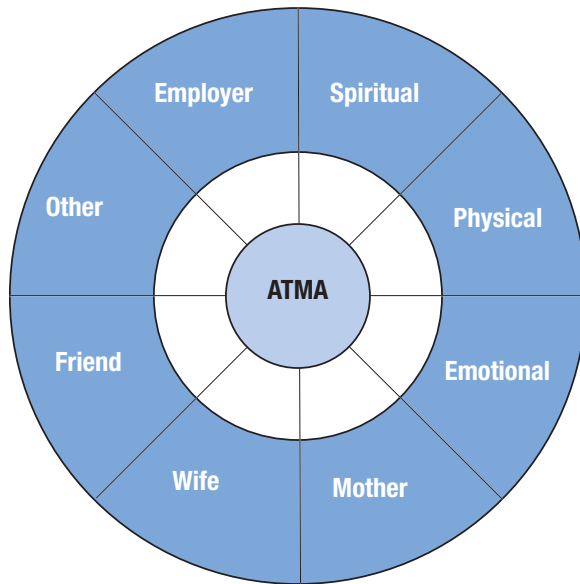
We are not just the body, we are not just the mind, we are body, mind and spirit. We are spiritual beings choosing to come into the physical body. Shortly after our birth, our environments, including the people in it, commence contributing to our "programming" (i.e. socialization, learning and growth). At first a newborn baby behaves instinctively and cries when it is in pain or hungry or uncomfortable.

Soon the baby learns that it can produce a response in others and in turn, the baby learns to respond to different people differently (e.g. the response to its mother is different to that given to a stranger). The baby can also have an effect on the people around him/her by smiling or laughing.

The baby learns about its surroundings through the messages he/she receives from significant others and its belief system and image of self gradually starts emerging. The diagram illustrates the multiple parts of our beings/personalities depending on the input in terms of interactions with people and the roles we assume.



DIAGRAM 5.1 MULTIPLE PARTS OF THE SELF



We have shown 8 possible parts of our beings but there are many more. The centre represents the "real me" – i.e. the Atma or spirit. This part is God essence indestructible, Love, Will, Wisdom. The outer circles represent the mental, emotional and physical parts of the Self. The environment and the people in it contribute in making us who we are. Meditation results in our becoming aware of all the "programmed" selves and teaches us to choose with wisdom rather than helpless automatic responses.

Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself.

LEO TOLSTOY

EXERCISE 5.1 LIFE LINE

Draw a "life line" with milestones of different important people and events in your life. Think and meditate on how they have shaped your being and what important lessons you have learnt in your life.



EXERCISE 5.2 MY SELF IMAGE

I have three images of my being. These self images are developed through:

1. WHAT OTHERS THINK I AM. As discussed earlier we get the first messages about ourselves from significant others in our environment. This makes our self image. then we start connecting with what others have said about us and begin seeing ourselves in a certain way.

2. What I think of myself

3. Who I really am – I am neither the mind, the ego, nor an emotion, I am but Universal Energy. My purpose in this life is to learn about my true nature and detach from other people's judgements and perceptions about me..

1. HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOURSELF?

Physically

Psychologically (personality and traits)

Spiritually

2. WHAT ARE THE NEGATIVE SELF-IMAGES?

Are you aware of their origin? If yes, make a note of them. If no, explore them.

3. WHAT ARE YOUR BELIEF SYSTEMS?

Are there any beliefs you would like to change? How do you envisage doing this?

FROM "I" TO "I"

Your gross body is like the outer leather cover of the football; and your subtle body is like the rubber bladder inside it. When it is inflated with the air of ego, the football of your body receives kicks after kicks in the game of life. If the air of ego is removed, it becomes deflated and therefore receives no more kicks.

BODY AND MIND, BHAGAVAN UVACHA SERIES

To overcome the delusion of "I am the body", brought about by the mind, it is important to consider that if we perceive the body as the Self, the real self will never become apparent. We need to identify with the Atma. How can a droplet of water comprehend the vast ocean? As soon as the droplet loses its own identity and distinction by merging in the ocean, that instant, it becomes the ocean, an integral part of its vastness. From that moment onwards all questions regarding the size and shape of the ocean become meaningless and redundant. Similarly, when our inner vision opens and we lose identity with the body-mind complex and experience and become aware of the Self, the Atma, all doubts will dissolve.

Do not get attached to the evanescent body. Utilize the body as an implement. Consider yourself as separate from the destructible body created out of the conjunction of five elements. Know yourself as the indestructible Atma. As the house in which you dwell is separate from you so also is the body, which surrounds you for a little time. The body is the root cause of this grief, this calamity and all this slavery. Understand this well and make the body obey your will. Never bow down to it or follow its whims. Be prepared to cast it away, resolve to control it and keep it under control.

DHYANA VAHINI PG. 54

DISCUSSION:

- What is the ego?
- How does the identity of the Self with the body come about?

When you look at yourself from a universal standpoint, something inside always reminds or informs you that there are bigger and better things to worry about.

ALBERT EINSTEIN

As mentioned earlier, the human being is made up of the physical, psychological and the spiritual self. The physical is the body. The psychological comprises of mind which generates emotions and the spirit which is the atma. Let us take a deeper look at the nature of the human mind.

The human mind is exceedingly small, but it can comprehend this vast Universe. The mind appears as an insignificant speck in the Universe, but the universe is eminent in this miniscule mind. It would appear as if the universe and the mind are telling each other: "I am that" and "that is Me".

SHRI SATYA SAI BABA

WHAT IS THE HUMAN MIND?

The human mind is made up of a bundle of thoughts. According to Shri Satya Sai Baba, thoughts are the highly potent energies that survive the death of the body. We take nothing with us but our thoughts after death. The whole cosmos is the projection of the mind. The human mind is that part of us that thinks, is involved in inquiry, collecting information, storing information and decision-making. It is the human mind that deceives humankind in believing himself or herself to be separate and limited from Divinity. In comparison to infinite consciousness, the mind is only a drop in a vast ocean. But this drop of the ocean can dissolve back into the ocean and therefore, be the ocean. Do not give all your thoughts immediate expression; select, ponder and then speak out.

There are different subtle forms or elements of the mind. The mind displays these varied forms depending on the roles it assumes. Generally speaking, we associate the mind with the process of thought forms. When it is involved with the process of inquiry we call it the intellect (buddhi). When it is engaged with discernment, choosing right from wrong, we call it the consciousness. When it is storing or collecting information, we call it memory. When the mind identifies itself with the body in action, we call it the ego.

The mind is an instrument that should control and direct the five senses. It is full of thoughts and desires, and assumes the form of objects to which it is attached. If it gets fixed on small things, it becomes small; if it is attached to big things, it becomes grand. Like a camera, it takes a picture of whatever it is pointed at, so take care before you click!

The senses are the prime motivating force for the mind and the illusion it suffers from. We yearn to own what we have become attached to. Most problems we face stem from thwarted desires and this creates a breeding ground for negative emotions such as jealousy, envy, anger etc.

Many people spend a significant portion of their lives escaping from their problems in the present. They mourn the past or are anxious about the future. We endeavor to escape from our reality by consuming excessive alcohol, fantasizing, daydreaming, using hallucinogenic drugs and wishful thinking. We should not run away from problems but take responsibility and address them and in doing so, living in the here and the now.

Psychologists deduce that the mind has three parts: the conscious, the subconscious and the super conscious. (Please refer to Chapter 9, Fundamentals of meditation).

We usually associate the mind with the body. But when we go beyond the conscious mind (the senses experienced through the body) and even the subconscious mind (past experiences), we experience the divine in the super conscious (the spiritual part of humankind).

THE PROCESS NEEDED TO BE IN HIGHER STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Man separates from his true reality of boundless pure Universal Consciousness because of ignorance, fear and bondage to the senses. Therefore to attain higher states of consciousness, we need to have Wisdom of who we really are, eradication of fear which limits us and a control of the senses...

- Attain purity of thoughts in life by training the mind (meditation).
- Still the conscious mind (the manas)
- Control the senses and decrease desires and ego.
- Turn inward until you will find that there is only one real energy - LOVE.
- In silence you will contact the super conscious mind, your Atma.
- You have to peel off the layers of the outer aspects of your Self (Refer to Chapter 5, The Self) to expose your true essence.



THOUGHTS

In the dream state none of the senses are working. The mind assumes all the functions of the senses. The entire world is a projection of the mind. When the mind is properly directed, all the senses will be under control.

The mind creates images or pictures from information previously picked up by the senses, these are automatically translated into words or a language that we are brought up with – this is the process of generating thoughts. Thoughts originate in the mind; they express themselves through words and are materialized through deeds. Thoughts are created from our limited personal experience, early conditioning and current situation. They spring from thought patterns of our past lives, thoughts of parents, significant others, family, people we interact with, or from the books we read, television programs we watch, etc. Thoughts are not necessarily true or factual. There is a vast difference between what we think and the wisdom available within us, which we can access through meditation.

In meditation we seek guidance from our higher consciousness. Thoughts are very powerful and are the first step in creation, because as mentioned earlier, our words and actions originate from thoughts. If we think positive, we can experience positive emotions and positive actions. Likewise, if we think negatively, we generate negative emotions and therefore, negative actions. Everything ever created in the world by human beings started by a thought in someone's mind.

EXERCISE 5.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF OUR MIND

Choose two entirely dissimilar objects to focus on: a spoon and a tea cup. These objects should be imagined. Have the image in your mind's eye. Now hold the image of one of the objects as clearly as possible. Next do the same with the other object. Now try to concentrate on both objects at once.

OBJECTIVE OF EXERCISE

The exercise makes us aware of the quality of our mind. It will be difficult if not impossible to concentrate on both objects at one time. You will find yourself alternating between each object or concentrating on one and losing the other. You may find you have superimposed one on the other. When you demand complete concentration from your mind, it cannot, because of its nature, cope with more than one thing at a time. It can however shift from one thing to the next very quickly, with such speed that the thinker may be under the impression that they are concentrating on several subjects at the same time.

Non-directed thoughts can include:

1. Thoughts initiated by sensory input from the eyes, ears, nose, ears etc.
2. Memories – thoughts stored in the subconscious mind.
3. Anticipations – thoughts about future but picked up from previous experiences in the subconscious mind.
4. Daydreams – thoughts about future desires.



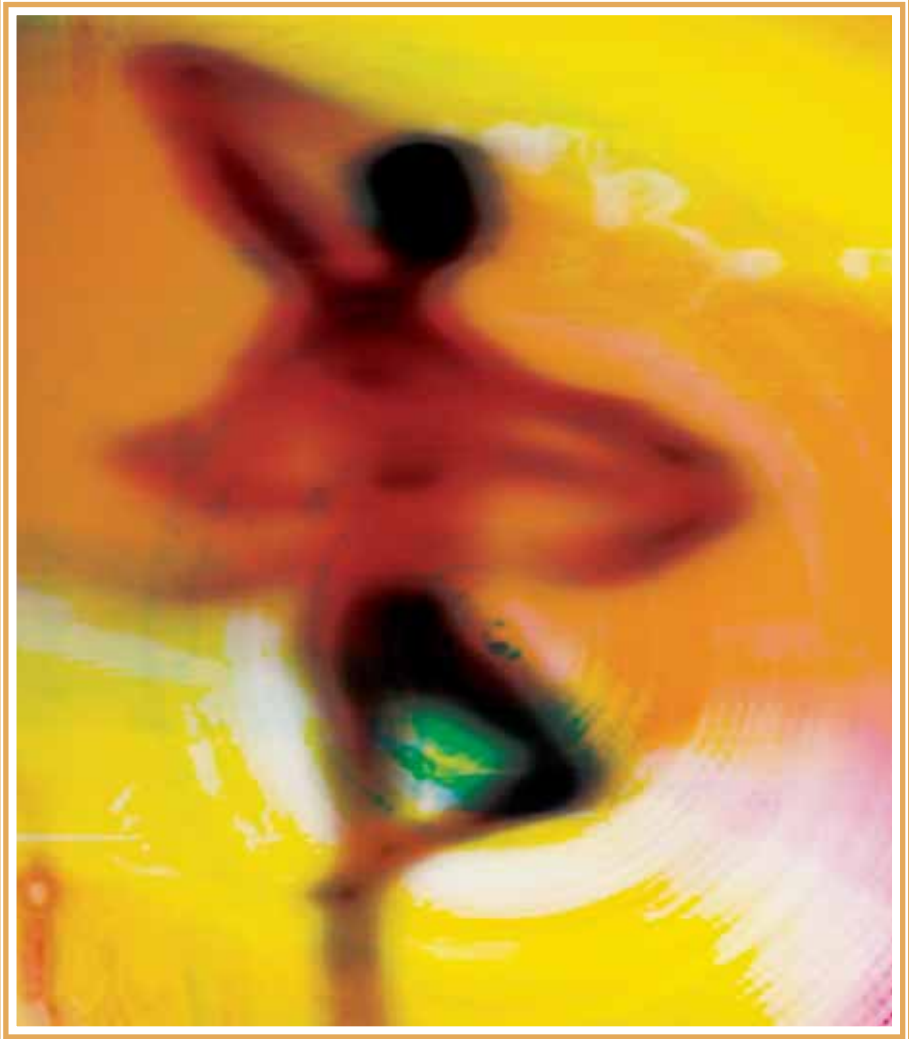
SYMBOLIC THOUGHT

Thoughts are represented in our subconscious and conscious mind as images and symbols. Fundamentally, the whole world is a symbol. We have to rely on the senses to pick up information from the environment and then the brain interprets this information depending on our past experiences and then the information is apprehended by consciousness. Symbols constitute a non-verbal language. Our perception and interpretation of the symbols in the universe can alter our relationship to the universe. The content of our thoughts cannot exceed our understanding, programming and conditioning that we have encountered in our lives. Our brain accepts the data from the optic nerves and due to a learning process we automatically see and understand or recognize the data and project the image in our imagination. We need to be open to the idea that everything we encounter has both the qualities inherent to its nature and the possibility of being a symbol for the one who sees.



CHAPTER 6

We are energy



Chapter 6

We are energy

Scientists can weigh measure and analyse materials that already exist and convert them into different forms. But they cannot create anything new. That can happen only by the Will of God. Scientists are not examining correctly the relationship between matter and energy. They hold the view that matter is convertible into energy and vice-versa. But in fact, the two are not separate. They are inseparably interlinked and are interdependent.

If you wish to understand your true nature, you have to bend the body (not allow ego to develop), mend the senses (restraining the senses), end the mind (stop the constant thoughts). The presence of the unchanging Divinity should be experienced within the changing body.

SHRI SATYA SAI BABA

WHAT IS ENERGY?

Energy is in everything, in us and all the things around us. We are a latticework of energies, emitting an aura or electromagnetic field in common with the rest of matter. In scientific terminology, energy is defined as "the capacity for doing work". We use energy to perform all of our activities, from baking a cake to sending astronauts into space. Energy comes in different forms such as heat (thermal), light (radiant), mechanical, electrical, chemical, and nuclear energy. Energy is either stored (potential) energy or dynamic, that is working (kinetic) energy. For example, the food you eat contains chemical energy, and your body stores this energy until you release it when you work or play. The law of conservation states that energy can neither be created nor destroyed. Energy can merely be transformed into another form of energy. For instance, stored energy in a flashlight's batteries becomes light energy when the flashlight is turned on. Energy has always existed in one form or another.

Thus, energy cannot be extracted from or added to an electromagnetic field without a corresponding change in the field. A thought is a potential or static electromagnetic field pattern. A thinking process represents a continually changing or dynamic electromagnetic field. As a thought changes from a static to a dynamic field, it imparts energy to and receives energy from the thinker, during the course of the thinking process. When the process ends the resultant thought is stored as a static electromagnetic field pattern in the auric field. The mind is not contained within the brain. It exists throughout the body. Clearly the mind, the aura and the electromagnetic chakra system (this will be discussed later) are inseparably related.

Energy sources are divided into two groups: renewable (an energy source that we can use over and over again) and non-renewable (an energy source that cannot be recreated within a reasonable period of time). Renewable energy sources include solar energy, wind energy,

geothermal energy from inside the earth, biomass energy from plants, and hydro-electrical energy from masses of flowing water.

However, we get most of our energy from non-renewable energy sources, which include fossil fuels such as oil, natural gas, and coal. They are called fossil fuels because they were formed over millions and millions of years by the action of heat from the Earth's core and pressure from rock and soil, on the remains (or "fossils") of dead plants and animals. Another non-renewable energy source is the element uranium, whose atoms we split (through a process called nuclear fission) to create heat and ultimately, electricity. We use all these energy sources to generate the electricity we need for our homes, businesses, schools, and factories. Electricity "energizes" our computers, lights, refrigerators, washing machines, and air conditioners, to name only a few uses.

In spiritual terminology energy is understood in three categories:

1. Universal or cosmic energy
2. Earth energy
3. Human energy or auras.

UNIVERSAL OR COSMIC ENERGY

The easiest way to observe Universal energy is to gaze on a sunny day at tree tops against the blue sky. You may see a haze around the trees and you may also observe tiny spots or globules in the blue sky. Inanimate and animate objects both have an aura. Inanimate objects take on the energy of the owner.

The Universal energy (the divine consciousness) permeates all space and connects all objects to one another. Kirelan photography has developed our ability to see energy fields. Investigations in this field have revealed that the Universal energy field is highly organized, constantly flowing and pulsating in geometric patterns. These patterns can be seen by people with expanded consciousness. Krishan Kaul expands on the nature of energy:

Physics teaches us that potential and kinetic energies can co-exist in different proportions. However, the sum total of all the energy remains constant, so that if a hundred percent of the total energy is potential then the kinetic energy must be zero and vice versa. In much the same way, when we experience the world of spirit, the finite world of matter ceases to exist and when we are a hundred per cent engrossed in the material world, we find it difficult to comprehend the eternity of the spirit. Liberation (moksha) is the release from the shackles of the finite into the freedom of the infinite; the process culminating into this release may be called meditation.

The cosmic energy is energy of the highest vibration and of the purest form. It pours down from the cosmos in endless abundance. It can be used for cleansing, healing and re-energizing. The source of this energy is God (or whatever other name you believe to be appropriate). Cosmic energy is constant, everlasting pure white light, which is not influenced by any human or earthly behaviour. Cosmic energy may influence the earth's energy, but the reverse is not possible. According to the Hindu Vedas, the Divine One sends cosmic energy through the planets. Each planet's effect is symbolically represented on our palm. Astrology is the science of understanding the planetary constellations when we were born and how they affect us on numerous levels

EARTH ENERGY

The earth energy emanates from the earth's inner core and resonates through every part of nature. When you see things from a macro perspective cosmic, earth and human energy are part of the ONE. However on a micro level, the earth's energy is needed to act as an equalizing force for grounding a person. An individual needs a balance of cosmic and earth energies. The earth energy is composed of matter, but it is so subtle that most of us do not see it. Those that do, describe it as supremely organized, consisting of spirals and dots. It is everywhere, flowing between every animate and inanimate object on earth; connecting everything together. This is why different locations have a different 'feel' – they have different energy patterns. This explains why some of us feel comfortable in certain rooms or locations. Each individual's make-up, dictates which particular earth energy resonates best for us. Connection with nature is essential for your spiritual growth. Whenever possible make contact with different earth energies. The next time you go for a walk consciously endeavor to experience the energy of the trees around you.

EXERCISE 6.1 COSMIC AND EARTH ENERGY AWARENESS

You need to be seated for this breath awareness training exercise, with your feet flat on the ground and your spine erect. Ensure that your body is relaxed and comfortable and close your eyes.

Start by taking three deep breaths that originate from your abdomen. Expand your abdomen when you breathe in and contract it when you breathe out. With each breath, feel your body slide into a state of total relaxation.

Now start visualizing that you are inhaling the universal or cosmic energy. Visualize the sun and sky above you; imagine you are drawing this energy into you from the top of your head (sahasara chakra) and into your heart center. As you breathe out imagine your breath moving out to the edges of the universe, get a sense of vastness of the cosmos. Continue this for a few minutes.

Now start visualizing that you are inhaling the earth energy. Feel the earth energy beneath your feet. As you inhale, imagine the energy being drawn from your feet and up to your heart. Breathe out a sense of spaciousness as if your breath could move out to the edges of the earth.

Now try the full breath of bridging the earth energy and the cosmic/sky energy. As you inhale, simultaneously draw cosmic and earth energy. Let them meet and mingle in your heart centre. Continue this for a minute or two, until you feel comfortable with it.

This breath connects you to the two energies and clears your aura (human energy field).

EXERCISE 6.2 – EARTH ENERGY

This exercise needs to be done during the day, outdoors. Lie on your back and gaze up at the sky, keep gazing at it, feeling completely relaxed. After some time you will see a pattern in the sky. It may look like squiggles at first, then you may be able to make out little white balls. Study this phenomenon for a few minutes and then you will see the whole expanse above you is actually pulsating with these small balls of energy. Now try and focus on a nearby tree, study the edges of the tree. Can you see a sort of green or pink haze round the perimeter of the tree? If you watch closely enough you will notice the balls of energy outside slip into and disappear into the tree. The tree is absorbing the earth energy.

EXERCISE 6.3 – AWARENESS OF PLANT AURAS

Put a houseplant or a leaf under bright lights against a dark background behind. The aura of the plant may reveal itself to you.

EXERCISE 6.4 – EARTH ENERGY CONSCIOUSNESS

The objective of this exercise is to develop your intuition and consciousness of the earth energy. Take a flower, fruit, twig or pebble in your hand. Feel it all over, examine every part of the object with your fingers. Use your five senses to get more awareness of the object. Take a deep breath and try and suck into your belly the essence of the object. Study the object for as long as you like. You should know this object intimately. Now let your thoughts dwell on the origin of the object.

HUMAN ENERGY OR AURAS

We are more than just our bodies, minds and emotions. We are energy: that is, we are part of Divinity or Universal Energy. We have our own auric field, called the human aura, which is a highly individual band of energy that surrounds us. It is basically a strong electromagnetic field; we radiate electric energy and receive magnetic energy. This field of energy is luminous and extends to six or seven inches around the body. As we go through life, we leave traces and imprints of our energy everywhere we go and everything we touch.

We as human organisms are a series of interacting multidimensional subtle-energy systems. That means the aura itself is generated by the spinning of smaller vortices of energy located within the spiritual body. These subtle energy centers are called chakras. (This is discussed in detail below). Our human auric or electromagnetic field is generated by the spinning of these chakras.

Karl von Reichenbach (1788-1869), a gifted German scientist, spent over 20 years studying human energy. He termed this energy as the "Odic" force after Odin, the Chief Norse God. He investigated two hundred people who had psychic powers, who could see emanations from crystals and magnets, in total darkness. He was never taken seriously during his lifetime.

Walter J. Kilner (1847-1920), a physician, devised a method for making auras visible by making goggles impregnated with the chemical dicyanin. Through his work he was able to perceive three levels of aura and he related illnesses directly to the auras.

Soviet scientists Semyon and Valentina Kirlian discovered a technique whereby they could convert the non-electrical properties of an object into electrical properties. In one of their experiments, they took two leaves, that appeared to be identical, but when photographed using the kirlian camera one appeared having weak energy. This was because one of the leaves was diseased. They too found links between a person's health and their aura.



EXERCISE 6.6– EXPERIENCING HUMAN ENERGY

Holding your palms about two to five inches apart, you can experience the "human energy field". Move your hands back and forth, decreasing and increasing the space between them. Can you feel something?

EXERCISE 6.7 EXPLORING AN AURA

Ask a person to stand in the middle of the room with their hands outstretched, with their eyes open. Start by standing well away from them. Hold out your hands, standing at least 3 feet away from the other person. Be relaxed, gently moving your hands around this field. Move closer, what do you feel? Try this exercise with different partners. Does each person's aura feel different? Some people have nurturing energies and you want to be close to them while others feel like they are intruding and you feel hemmed in, or out of balance.

SEVEN LEVELS OF HUMAN AURAS

The first level tells us about the physical state. Healers use this band of energy to get information about physical illnesses. If you are in excellent health this level would be very strong. Spiritual teachers say this level radiates shades of blue. The second level relates to our emotions or feelings. If you truly love and accept yourself and others, this band would be strong. Most people have emotional issues, which they block, not wanting to address them, and this restricts the natural energy flows within and around you. A mixture of different colours can be seen in this layer. The third level is associated with mental and rational thought. If you are mentally alert and have a clear mind, this band will be strong. It is said the colour of this layer is predominantly yellow. The fourth level is about your relationship with others. Not just people but animals, nature and the whole universe. This level is about love and appreciation of everything. All colours are present in this layer. The fifth level is how you connect to divine will and use it to enrich your life. Cobalt blue is used to describe the colour in this field.

The sixth level is about higher divine love. This level can pulsate with vibrant energy, when you practice meditation and connect with spirituality. Spiritual teachers describe this band as most beautiful, with rainbow colours. When we reach a point of being where we know all our connection with the universe, when we see light and love in everything that exists, when we are immersed in light and feel one with God, we have raised our consciousness to the sixth level.

When we bring our consciousness to the seventh level we are one with the Creator. It appears as gold-silver light. This level is the last auric level containing the life plan directly related to this incarnation.

We can better understand auric levels by grouping them into three areas: the physical, astral and spiritual planes. The physical plane refers to the first three levels and is described as representing the etheric body (first layer), the emotional body (second layer) and the mental body (third layer). In other words, these first three levels are all about how we operate on our earthly body. This balances with our base chakra (physical) our sacral chakra, which is below the navel (emotions) and solar plex chakra (mental attitudes). The astral level is connected to our

heart chakra. Our heart chakra is like a bridge or hinge that connects the physical and spiritual parts of us together. The astral body is our bridge between the physical and spiritual worlds.

The 5th, 6th and 7th layers are templates of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd layers, but in perfect spiritual form.

THE CHAKRAS

Chakra literally means a wheel in Sanskrit. Chakras are wheels of light that spin in our auric field and produce their own electromagnetic field, which combines with the fields generated by other chakras, to produce the auric field for each individual. There are 7 main chakras. The chakras represent the subtle anatomy of human beings and are both a communicative and controlling link connecting the spirit (soul), the personality and the body.

If chakras become imbalanced there may be pathological symptoms that manifest on the physical, emotional, mental planes. Subtle energies are strongly perturbed by the mental and emotional activity of the individual. There is a hierarchy of subtle energetic systems that coordinate electrophysiological and hormonal functions as well as cellular structure within the physical body. These unique energy systems are affected by our emotions and level of spiritual balance as well as by nutritional and environmental factors. These subtle energies influence cellular patterns of growth in both positive and negative directions.

The amount of energy produced by a particular chakra determines the colour that dominates the auric field. One who is in a state of high creativity, for example, utilizes the fifth or throat chakra and therefore the auric field will be predominantly blue. The human aura has at least seven layers. Each layer deals with a certain aspect of our selves. Our auras are constantly changing, expanding and contracting.

Human energy is made up of fine matter, twirling at different speeds. Each level becomes finer and subtler. Generally, with a degree of training, you can see the first layer. Why is it that one can see the first layer of aura but not necessarily the following six? A good analogy to help you grasp this concept is that of an electric fan. Imagine that a large fan with propeller blades is about to be switched on. When the blades sit there, motionless they are easy to see. Switch the fan on to a slow speed, you can still see them but the blades start becoming hazy. Now turn the fan to "medium" speed, the blades turn more quickly and become even more blurred. The blades look paler and lighter because of their speed. Human energy, like all other energy is made up of fine matter, twirling at different speeds.

A major chakra is defined as a point where there are 21 rays of light or energy crossing each other; the minor chakras are positioned in locations where 14 lines cross. Other, still smaller chakras are created where 7 energies cross and so on and so forth. Acupuncture and acupressure utilize this knowledge. Remember the earlier analogy of the electric fan? All energy centers spin at a frequency that we find difficult to actually see, but the experience of opening and closing the energy centers enables us to appreciate that they do exist. As discussed earlier, we are all connected to God/ cosmic energy. We are given cosmic energy from the top of the head (sahasara chakra). The study of the anatomy of Energy is as specific and complex, as the study of Physical

anatomy – it is critical to the well being of our physical, emotional, mental and spiritual bodies. It is important to learn how to evaluate your energy levels and study your energetic body, as various illnesses have different strands of associated energy. Developing inner vision, enables us to see and heal our energy bodies.

THE NADIS

Nadis are energy pathways that connect the chakras. We have many energy lines (nadis) or electrical currents that run through our body. The number of lines of energy that cross that point determines the significance of these chakra centers. They also carry communication and energy throughout the body. The human body is believed to contain approximately 72,000 nadis. Very recently, researchers have verified the existence of these fluids like energy channels with the use of sophisticated radioactive scanning methods. They are considered to be the ethereal counterpart of the body's vast network of peripheral nerves and the nervous system. Three nadis of particular importance are the Ida, pingala and sushmana. They divide the spiritual body into 3 parts as shown in the diagram. See diagram below.

.



Caroline Myss, a renowned psychic, who intuitively diagnoses people's medical conditions through analyzing their auric fields, has a deep understanding of the workings of this energy system. She states that we are given a certain amount of cosmic energy that enters from the chakra at the top of our heads. This energy gets distributed, filling our entire body, maintaining and looking after our cells. At an energy level, the purpose of life could be viewed as the wise distribution of the cosmic energy that we are given.

Myss instructs us to look at ourselves as "energetic bankers". God wants us to experience and learn from life by investing wisely, but often we invest our energies unwisely and develop energy leaks. For instance, you are given a thought that the world is going to end in 2007, the important question we need to ask ourselves is will we finance that thought?

How do we develop energy leaks? We do this when we deplete our energy to negative thoughts, words and actions. It could be in the form of childhood experiences, parental criticism, negative attitudes or worrying about the future. If our investments do not work adequately we borrow energy from others like parasites, so that we cling and draw on other people's energies or we borrow energy from our cells, which causes them to weaken, which leads to ill health and sickness.

Myss looks at the chakras as "data banks". She says each one contains certain type of information for spiritual maturity. Myss goes on to say that healing is the process of returning our energy circuits back to the body. We do this by forgiving and "letting go" through "inner work" and meditation.

LOCATION OF THE SEVEN MAIN CHAKRAS

1. MOOLADHARA (BASE CHAKRA): This is known as the first or root centre. It is associated with the earth element in nature and it is the seat of primal energy. The physical trigger point for this chakra is different for males and females. In males it is the spot on the skin directly between the genitals and anus. In females: it is the point located at the cervix, where the uterus and vagina join. The mooladhara chakra is visualized as a deep red lotus flower. The base chakra is associated with tribal beliefs and our families of origin. This chakra externalizes as the adrenal gland and it governs the functioning of the kidneys and the spinal column.

2. SWADHISTHANA (SACRAL REGION): It is associated with the unconscious mind and is the storehouse of collective energy. The trigger point in the physical body for the swadhisthana is located at the level of the pubic bone or coccyx. It is most generally visualized as being in the front of the body at the pubic bone. The second chakra is related to control, power, money, sex and unilateral relationships. We need to understand our relationship to control, power, money, sex and one to one relationships to understand how we leak energy from this chakra. This chakra is visualized by two orange lotus flowers. One is at the back and the other at the front of the body in this region.

3. MANIPURA (NAVEL CENTRE): It is the seat of all emotional energy and is the third chakra, it ranges from the navel to the solar plexus region. It is visualized as a yellow lotus flower. This chakra is related to your relationship with yourself – How do your emotions, feelings, words and actions affect yourself. Not surprisingly therefore, individuals with energy leaks in this chakra find it difficult to draw on their own strength and abilities to overcome life's problems and issues.

They need to obtain the energy from the outside and in order to obtain this energy from others; they need to resort to manipulative and controlling behavior. People who do have strong energy in their third chakras are intuitive. They rely on inner self (and spiritual guidance which feeds this inner wisdom) to work through problems and situations. Its glandular externalization manifests in the pancreas and it governs the action of liver, stomach, gall bladder, spleen.

4. ANAHATA: This is the heart centre, where love of God and man merge into one. In the physical body, anahata is felt to be located at the level of the heart behind the breastbone. It can be visualized as a pink or light green lotus. Its glandular externalization manifests in the thymus. The fourth chakra governs the heart, blood and circulatory system. It also governs the immune and endocrine systems. People suffering from depression, self absorbing thoughts, low self esteem suffer from blocked heart chakras.

5. VISHUDDHI (THROAT CENTRE): It is visualized in the region of the throat near the Adam's apple. Its glandular externalization is the thyroid gland and it governs the lungs, vocal cords and the bronchial apparatus. It is visualized as a sky blue lotus flower. The throat chakra is connected with Divine Will, Soul purpose and Communication. People who suffer from throat chakra energy leaks have frustration and anger issues.

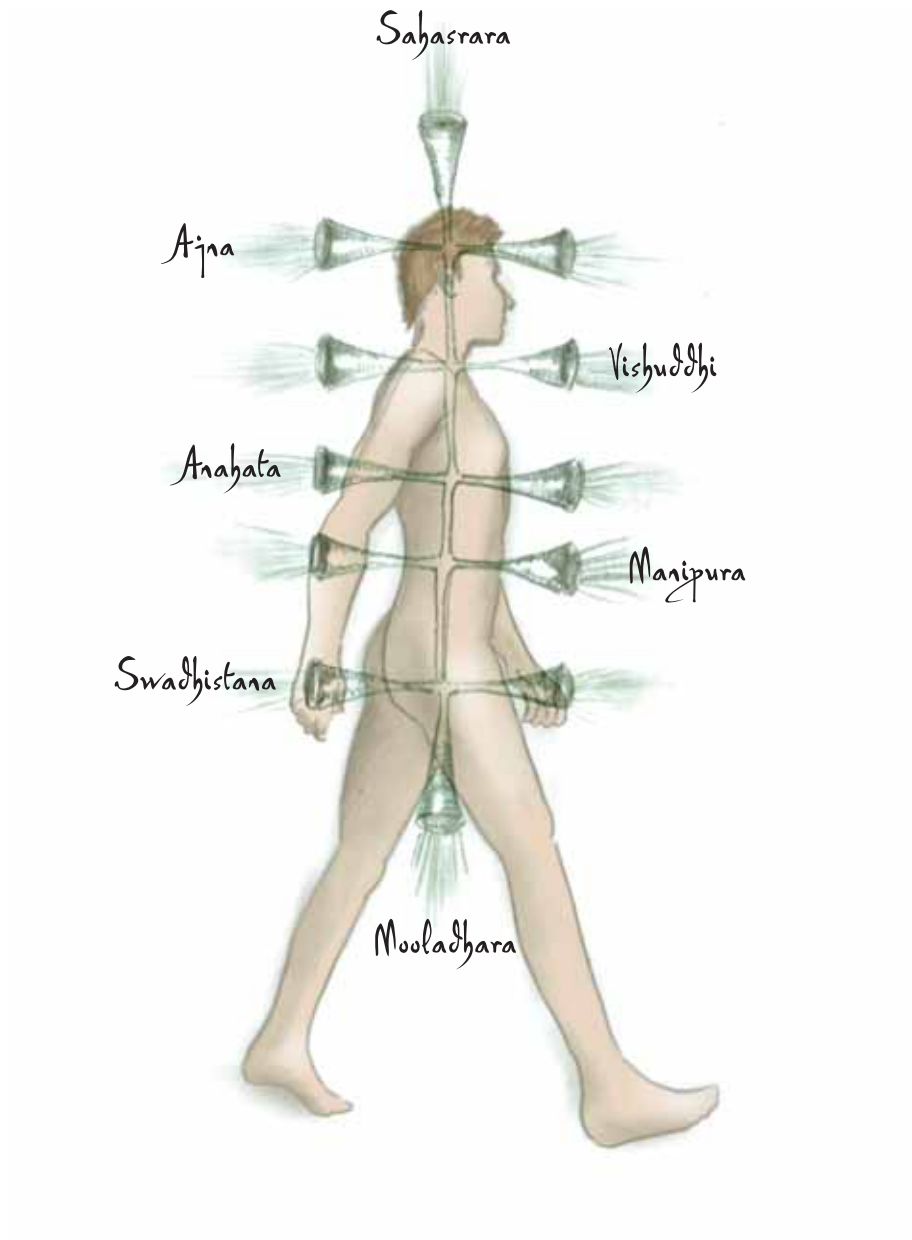
6. AJNA: (THIRD EYE): It is the command centre of the spiritual bodies. It is the point, a psychic centre where information is received. It is visualized as a silver or lilac lotus. The third eye is spoken about in many spiritual traditions. It is believed that meditation and other spiritual practices help "open" the third eye to inner spiritual vision and wisdom. This chakra externalizes as the pituitary gland. It governs the lower brain and the nervous system, the ears, the nose and left eye.

7. SAHASRARA: It is a huge radiant dome inside of the head. It is the highest of the psychic centres. It is visualized as a shining white lotus of infinite petals. It externalizes as the pineal gland and governs the upper brain and right eye.

There are two more chakras located in the human auric field. Approximately seven inches on top of the sahasara chakra is the Universal Energy point. (Some spiritual healers call it the solar star). Seven inches below the feet is another energy point called the earthstar or the earth energy point. Please see the diagram below. There are numerous other smaller chakras, which are used by accupressurists and acupuncturist for healing.



DIAGRAM 6.2 CHAKRA LOCATIONS



EXERCISE 6.8 – EXPLORING YOUR CHAKRAS

Assume shavasana (lying down posture) or padmasana (lotus, sitting) posture. Close your eyes; take deep breaths until you feel your entire body is in a state of relaxation. Focus your awareness on the mooladhara chakra (the root chakra). Explore the inner space in this area. Take your consciousness to every inch in this area. Systematically move upward to explore all the other chakras through the main vertical energy line – swadhisthana, manipura, anahata, vishuddhi, bindu, and sahasara. At the sahasara chakra connect with the universal energy. With each breath feel the universal energy force (prana) moving through the chakras. As you go through observing the chakras, pass them, as you would view distant scenery from a fast moving train.

FUNCTION OF CHAKRAS

- To vitalize and nourish our spiritual bodies (auras/ human energy fields) and therefore our physical bodies. Illnesses in the physical body are caused by an imbalance of energy or a blocking of the flow of energy through the chakras. Meditative introspective exercises assist us to unplug from negative energies and clear the chakras. We can consciously decide to break the old habits and patterns of investing in negative beliefs and visualize where we would want to be 20 years into the future. Now, when you look at your present daily routine, you may see how unwisely you are investing your energy into insignificant, negative or irrelevant thoughts, beliefs and actions that sap your energy.
- To develop our self-consciousness as one with divine consciousness. In meditation we use numerous techniques that "open" our chakras to receive the universal energy of divine consciousness. We become one with divine wisdom, consciousness, and love.
- To transmit energy from one spiritual body/ layer to another. Through our chakras we connect to our different layers of spiritual bodies and more importantly to the energy fields of all of God's creations.

EXERCISE 6.9 – TUNING IN AND OPENING CHAKRAS

Opening our chakras helps us to tune in to the spiritual realm. It makes us psychically more sensitive and develops our intuition or sixth sense. When healing work is being undertaken it is essential that the healer's chakras are open.

Place yourself in a sitting posture; concentrate on your breath moving in and out of your body. Feeling the ebb and flow of breath slowly relax every part of your body. Imagine white light surrounding you. Offer a silent prayer to your guides.

Fill yourself with cosmic and earth energies. Take your consciousness to your root or base chakra. The root chakra is situated at the base of your spine and opens down to the ground. Visualize this cone shaped chakra spinning slowly and opening. If you feel uncomfortable at any point always use white light to cleanse, clear and energize you. Once you feel the chakra is fully open, visualize the colour red. If you have difficulty seeing the colour red, imagine a red apple, or a red fire engine. Draw the colour red in through the base chakra. Fill yourself with its richness and vibrancy and let it filter into every part of you, so that you feel yourself become one with that richness and vitality.

EXERCISE 6.10 – ENERGETICALLY CONNECTING AND TUNING IN WITH ANOTHER PERSON

This exercise develops your intuitive ability and makes you sensitive to tapping and understanding energy. Choose a person in the group, preferably someone you do not know well but have shared something with in the introductory exercise and therefore feel comfortable with. During the next week, retreat everyday to your special protective space and note down the time on a piece of paper. Now do the chakra opening and cleansing exercise and then concentrate on the person you have chosen. Really think about them, see how special and unique they are, inside out. See their image in front of you. What are they wearing today? What are the colours? How do they look? Cheerful? Tired? See their features. Any information about their emotional state or energetic state make note of this information.

EXERCISE 6.11 – EXPANDING YOUR AURA

This exercise can be used to expand your awareness, increase your intuition level and connect with your guides.

Once you have opened your chakras and cleansed your aura concentrate on your energy. Visualize the seven layers of your energy field. Can you feel your energy pulsating around you?

Now decide to spread your energy outward. Your breathing should be deep and regular. See your energy as a puffy cloud, streamers of light moving outward. See your energy expanding to encompass the entire room. This exercise is about discovering your own level of expansion move to a level that feels comfortable for you. If you have expanded to an uncomfortable level feel free to retract your aura to a comfortable space.

EXERCISE 6.12 – LIFTING ENERGIES TO CERTAIN AREAS OR CHAKRAS

The objective of this exercise is to lift energies to certain areas where they are needed most. Make sure you are well grounded and protected before you start this exercise.

Think of your chakras as different levels in a lift. The base chakra is the ground floor. Imagine the energy lifting from your base chakra to the sacral region, to the solar plexus through to the heart center. Visualize it as fast moving lift, feel the energy surge up to the heart center. Practise holding the energy there, eventually it will plummet back down to the base chakra. You need to take the energy only up to the heart or to the third eye level.

THE HOLOGRAM THEORY

A hologram is a flat picture that, when you look at it, projects a three-dimensional image of something that stretches into infinity. As you move the picture slightly you see the image from a different angle, but the whole image still remains. If you cut a hologram picture in half and then looked at each half, the whole image would be visible in each of these two pieces. Cut into smaller pieces; each piece retains the whole picture. The hologram shows that no matter how small a fragment you take from the whole, each tiny bit contains the whole. Try to relate this to human energy. The hologram theory states that each part of our energy contains the whole. Every cell in the human body contains the master DNA library on how to create an entire human being.

In other words, if our fingers touch an object, it doesn't matter that only our fingers touch it, because in that touch is the energy of all we are. A touch of our fingers might make a hazy impression, but this impression would be "complete".

If all our energies are combined properly, then we have the opportunity to vibrate in complete harmony. The hologram represents all of everything, every part of the earth and all its inhabitants, the galaxy and the cosmos. It contains every thought, word, action and energy within the universe. You are therefore everything.

EXERCISE 6.13 – COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR GUIDES

Settle yourself in a comfortable position and begin breathing deeply to induce a sense of relaxation. Do the "tuning-in" and opening chakras exercise.

Visualize yourself in a beautiful garden. It's exactly what you want it to be. Notice the flowers, trees, shrubs, pond, ducks, squirrels, and birds. Create what makes you feel best. As you walk along you see a gate. Open the gate. As you look around the garden seems wonderful and inviting. You see a beautiful building. This is exactly where you want to be. You see a key to the door, open it and enter. See the interior decorated exactly as you want it to be. It's comfortable and welcoming. Seat yourself in the middle of your wonderful abode and close your eyes. Very soon you hear a voice calling out to you. It is the voice of your higher consciousness or your guides. Acknowledge its presence and ask for help, request the voice to help you to get to know it better. Ask any questions you feel are important. The voice will gently reply to your questions. If it is not appropriate for you to hear the answer, the voice will tell you that. When it is time to complete the conversation and return, the voice will let you know. As you leave, close the door and return to the garden. See yourself cleanse and then close each your chakras.

WHAT IS KUNDALINI?

The kundalini is the cosmic energy or chitta (Universal consciousness) that lies dormant in every human being in the mooladhara chakra. Once it is awakened our spiritual evolution is assured. The kundalini is evolutionary energy that leads "fallen" humankind back to the Creator. The kundalini once awakened uncoils and begins a journey towards the sahasara chakra to become one with Divinity.

HOW DOES ONE REAWAKEN THE KUNDALINI?

The kundalini can be awakened through:

- Intensive devotion to God.
 - Yogic and meditative practices.
 - Good karma
 - The grace of a fully realised master. This process is called shaktipat.=
1. A master gives shaktipat and awakens the kundalini through his/her touch. The guru touches the ajna and or the anahata and or the mooladhara chakra. This is called sparsha diksha.
 2. The guru can bring awakening by whispering a mantra. This mantra is extremely powerful and has a consciousness of its own (chaitanya). This process is called mantra diksha.

3. The guru can bring initiation through a look (drik diksha).
4. When a guru just thinks about it the spiritual aspirant can get a spontaneous awakening. This process is called manasa diksha.

WHAT DOES ONE EXPERIENCE WHEN THE KUNDALINI IS AWAKENED?

The intensity of the experience can occur in a mild, moderate or intense form. For some people they experience an intense spontaneous experience of supreme reality. One may experience all the yoga (Siddha or Maha yoga) spontaneously. There are many forms of yoga for instance: hatha yoga (exercises) bhakti yoga (devotion and unconditional love) raja yoga (bliss through meditation) jnana yoga (wisdom and knowledge). For instance one may experience involuntary movements of the body such as shaking of the body, the head may begin to rotate violently. One may spontaneously perform various yogic asanas, bandas or murdras. You may hear inner sounds, experience visions and see your past lives. Natural pranayama begins that is the prana and apana (outgoing and incoming breaths become even and eventually one. This is called kumbaka. When the senses are completely purified and the kundalini reaches the sahasara chakra one can be truly enlightened and experience oneness. Spiritual masters have spoken about seeing a brilliant white light in the centre of which they see a blue pearl – the divine light of consciousness.

CAN ANYONE RECEIVE SHAKTIPAT?

Yes, depending on one's faith and devotion in God and the desire for awakening. If one asks to whom does the sun give sunlight and warmth? The answer is to all who stand before it. If you go indoors and hide from God and your spiritual destiny, you cannot receive shaktipat.

ONCE I RECEIVE SHAKTIPAT CAN I LOSE IT OR CAN IT BECOME INACTIVE AGAIN?

Yes, if you want shakti to work with its full power you have to take care of it.

HOW?

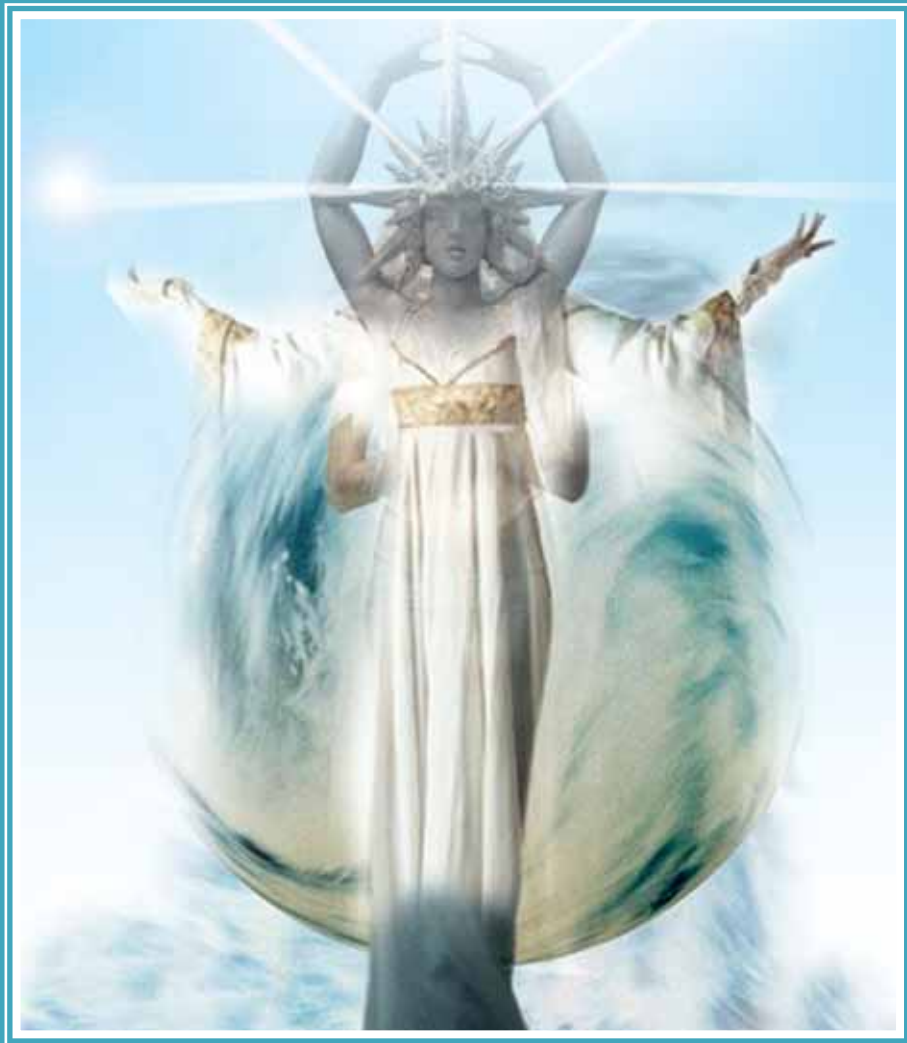
1. Right sadhana (spiritual practice of good thoughts, words and deeds). Many of the great saints are/were people with a family and responsibilities, who lead full lives in the world and attained God realisation while going about their daily activities.
2. Purification and mastering of the 5 senses.
3. Meditation (Goal being active meditation through passive meditative practices).
4. Chanting and recitation of mantras.
5. Faith and love for God.

EXERCISE 6.14 TO RELEASE KUNDALINI ENERGY

The kundalini is the manifested power of consciousness or personal conscious energy. Take the breath up and down the sushumna, which is the main energy line. The awareness of a serpent, arrow or sprouting lotus bud is visualized to move through these passages. This will activate the kundalini energy within you.

CHAPTER 7

Cleansing, clearing & psychic protection



Chapter 7

Cleansing, Clearing & Psychic Protection

The body is cleansed by soap and water, but true cleanliness can be achieved only from within. The cleansing of the body may keep physical illness away, but the disease of the mind requires inner cleanliness. The mind must be subjected to a process of tapas (discipline). The highest discipline is to generate goodness in one's thoughts, words and deeds.

SHRI SATYA SAI BABA

Every thought, word and deed is a vibration that affects our aura. Every interaction with another person also affects our energy. People underestimate the power of negative energy. A patient, whom I shall name Linda, came to see me at my clinic. She was overweight and her knees were swollen and painful. During the course of the assessment process she revealed to me that she had a relationship problem which caused her much pain. She revealed to me that her husband, who was from an Asian background, had "another" woman. She believed it was "common" for men from his country to have more than one partner, due to the disproportionate male to female ratio that was prevalent. A part of her had accepted this arrangement, but another part of her resented this fact. She got some of her acquaintances to perform some black magic rituals to get "rid" of this woman. I was quite shocked by her remarks and made her aware of how wrong her thoughts, words and actions were.

In my opinion, black magic is annihilating or destroying someone through intense negative thoughts and rituals and the karmic consequences to the perpetrator and/or initiator, are colossal. We have man made laws against murdering and even hurting people, which have been in existence for millennia; but even prior to this, we have spiritual laws that encompass these man made laws and in addition, also penalize us for the spiritual damage we do to people spiritually. Just because the spiritual pain appears not to be tangible and the person may be a thousand miles away, does not mean that the damage or destruction has not occurred. Almost all of us are guilty of some negative thoughts, words and deeds against someone at some time and therefore, we need to be cognizant of this, and learn that even a single negative thought can have harmful consequences. We need to move away from evil, anger, revenge and hatred and move to forgiveness, love and teaching people with wisdom. Above all, we need to "stand up and be counted" and speak the truth. We have more positive ways of dealing with people who have hurt us however horrific the crime may have been. Furthermore, two wrongs do not make a right. Mahatma Gandhi said, "An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind".

The laws of the Universe are clear: we all need to take responsibility for our actions or else we will suffer the consequences of our actions. I think we need to learn the lessons from the great Masters: Zarathushtra, Christ, Buddha etc. However atrociously they were treated they never retaliated but stood up to speak their truth, regardless on the consequences. Today, if we stand

up for the truth and speak and act with goodness, we move our spirit to higher levels of consciousness. In order to ascend to a higher level of consciousness we must purify our thoughts, remove any negative emotions and cleanse our spiritual bodies energetically.

I have worked with numerous patients who have experienced psychic attacks. Another patient, whom I shall name Sheila, was a victim of black magic from her "uncle" who also abused her sexually, when she was still a child. In adulthood, she suffered physically with severe pain in the neck and legs and experienced anxiety and psychic attacks as a consequence. By learning psychic protection exercises, Sheila was able to shield herself from dark energies and entities that clung to vulnerable auric fields. Eventually, she was able to free herself from all her anxiety symptoms.

....you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.

JESUS CHRIST

IS PSYCHIC ATTACK REALLY POSSIBLE?

Pre-meditated psychic attacks are uncommon. As thoughts are energy, it is actually the emotional energy and intent behind the thought that does the damage to the other person. You may be thinking "why do I need to protect myself? And do such things really exist? " The answer to that question is YES, you do need to protect yourself if you feel under attack. Just as you would fight with your arms and legs to defend a physical attack, you must use visualization and connect to Divinity for protection, to defend yourself against psychic attack.

Psychic attack can occur at times of vulnerability or when we are physically or mentally run down. Therefore, when focusing on lifting your spiritual self, it is important not to neglect one's physical self.

The physical or emotional symptoms of psychic attack are:

- Unexplainable constant tiredness.
- Violent or threatening nightmares.
- Little ailments that don't seem to get any better.
- Scratches or small cuts that can't be explained
- Unexplainable stress.
- Unexplainable runs of "bad luck".
- Depression for no discernable reason.

God willing, you may never come across random pure evil acts from others in your lifetime, but it is likely that from time to time, you may have to interact with some people that don't like you very much. It is the negative thoughts and feelings of these "ordinary" people that these exercises will help guard you against the most.



WHAT IS PSYCHIC PROTECTION?

We are more than the body - we are energy. We have physical, emotional, mental and spiritual bodies. We are constantly being affected by the energy around us. Psychic protection is a method of protecting your spiritual, ethereal and emotional body from other people's negative thoughts, words and deeds.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN INGREDIENTS NEEDED FOR PROTECTION?

- Connect to Divinity and clearly make your intentions of needing protection known
- Developing and practising a "strategy" that incorporates a ritual or prayer involving cleansing, clearing or protection
- Action: putting energy into the strategy

The simplest method of psychic protection is to ask the Divine One for protection (intention) and then visualize your spiritual Master or Higher Power putting you in a circle of pure white light. Protective exercises can be undertaken to safe guard your treasured possessions, such as your house, car and the people and animals you love.

EXERCISE 7.1 PSYCHIC PROTECTION

- 1) Take slow, deep breaths in awareness, until you feel completely comfortable and relaxed.
- 2) Visualize a strong, beautiful white ray of light flowing from above, from your Creator.
- 3) Feel the light surround your body, covering you, totally enclosing you and protecting you. Now the light forms a bubble, extending to about two feet around your whole body, starting at the top of your head. It is like a strong elastic white bubble that is full of universal energy and the powerful protection of Divinity. Every cell of your body is being bathed by the light. You feel safe.... you feel at peace.
- 4) Take a deep breath and feel the peace and love as your body completely relaxes in its protective bubble of white light. If you have trouble visualising this, imagine and hold that feeling of being immersed in a hot bubble bath.
- 5) Now ask Divinity for protection. Word it as you wish, here's a couple of typical examples:-

"Divine One, please grant me protection, peace, wisdom, truth, love and light, and keep me safe in your power." or "Divine mother, father, God, Creator, put me in your Light. I know no harm can come to me when you are present. Please protect me and my loved ones in your power."

PSYCHIC PROTECTION AT HOME

When sensing a negative atmosphere or energy in your home, perform the same exercises as mentioned above, except, visualize each room of your house being cleansed and cleared and showered with God's Light. Imagine your home, with your family members in it, wrapped or surrounded in brilliant white light. If negative energies are being directed at you or your house or family, ensure that you make your intentions known to have a "spiritual shield of armour" - the bad energy will just bounce off! Never retaliate, just ask the Universe to take over the negative energy. Once this is done, imagine all that you have just protected being covered in a protective reflective mirror which reflects all negative energy away from you and your loved ones.

PSYCHIC PROTECTION AWAY FROM HOME

If you are outdoors, or in a crowded place and feel under attack or aware of someone with negative vibrations, visualize a sphere around your personal space. If there isn't enough room to visualize a sphere without someone stepping into it (e.g. if you are in a queue or a crowded train etc) then you can retract the aura to your physical body. You can shrink your aura back inside your body.

PSYCHIC PROTECTION BEFORE SLEEP

To ensure psychic protection during the night, ask your spirit guardian, and your loved ones in the spirit realm to watch over you while you sleep. Request them to use love to deflect any bad energy away from you. Incorporating this psychic protection exercise into a night-time meditation is ideal, as it is during the night that the average person is most vulnerable. Endeavor to perform these exercises on a regular basis.

EXERCISES TO CLEANSE AND PROTECT YOUR SPIRITUAL BODIES

EXERCISE 7. 2 FLICKING AWAY NEGATIVE ENERGY

Step outside into nature with your bare feet on earth or grass. Physically flick away any negative energy attached to your physical and spiritual body. Be strong in your intention to remove any negative energy from your auric field.

EXERCISE 7.3 – CUTTING AWAY NEGATIVE ENERGY FROM PEOPLE YOU HAVE INTERACTED WITH.

Place your hands in a circular shape above the navel area. Imagine you are "pulling out" your navel chakra (manipura chakra); one by one, bring to mind every person you have interacted with through the day. Imagine yourself cutting the cords that energetically bind you to that person. Make your intention known. After you remove all the negative energy, see yourself replacing your manipura chakra.

7.4 CLEANSING ANGRY ENERGY

If you are angry or upset by someone, call on your guardian angels to send you violet light. Put yourself and the other person within the violet light. To purify your life put yourself and everyone you have wronged or who have wronged you in violet light asking the Divine One for



purification. If you have angry or limiting thoughts you can also put them down on a piece of paper and burn them. Do it with the intention of letting them go.

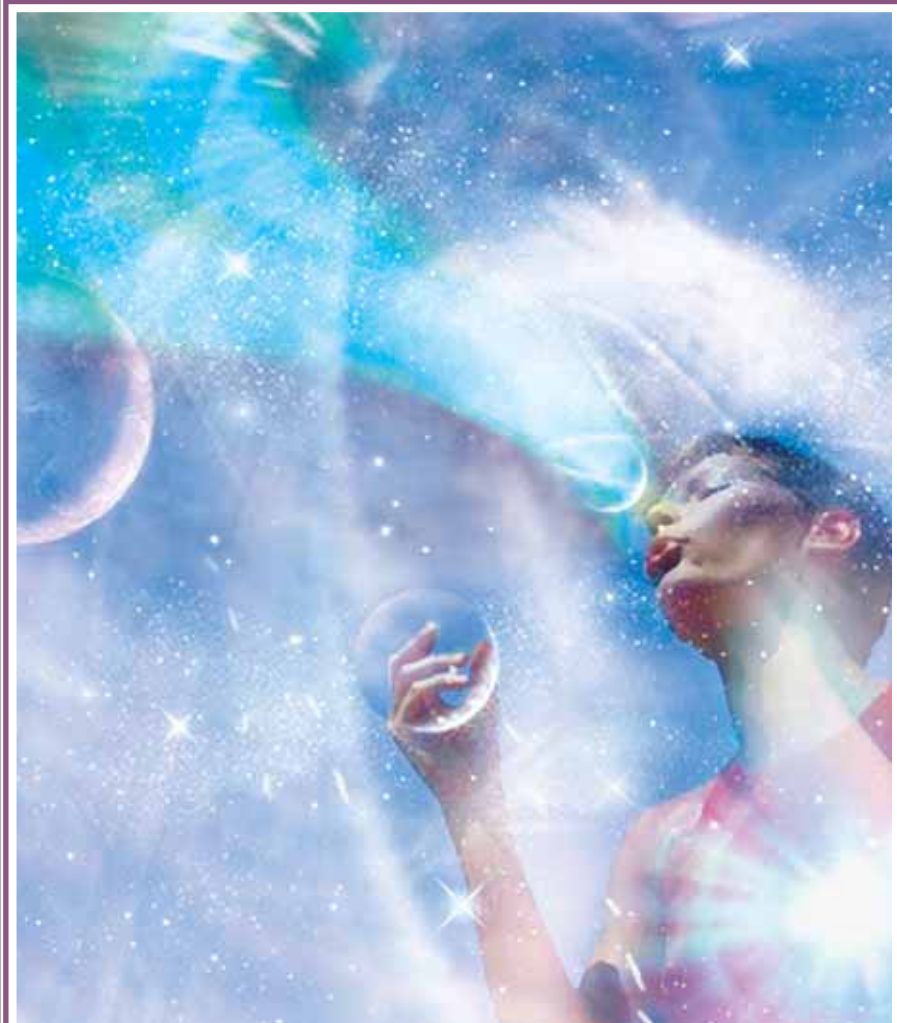
7.5 CLEANSING AND CLEARING ALL CHAKRAS

Cleanse your external environment by burning incense, joss sticks or sage. Play sacred or soothing music and chant OM. Light candles. Go deep into meditation and visualize the space inside your body where the main energy line is. Start with the base chakra and visualize all the negative energy being scooped up in an anticlockwise direction. See the energy spiral up to the next chakra. Work your way upwards till you have cleansed all the chakras. Connect with the divine energy by visualizing a divine form and see this form re-energize your chakras by sending positive energy spiraling downwards in a clockwise direction. Flood your whole body with white light. Cup your hands and imagine them being filled with golden light. Hold your hands over each of the chakras and systematically bathe them with light. Visualize each chakra being cleansed and all the negativity being dissolved in the light.



CHAPTER 8

Pranayama – Breath Awareness



Chapter 8

Pranayama: Breath awareness

Activity is the keynote of the Universe. Constant breath (breathing in prana or universal energy) keeps the body alive. Matter is nothing but condensed energy. Ether, air, fire, land, water – all are the cause as well as the consequence of His incessant movement.

SHRI SATYA SAI BABA

Prana or primal universal energy is everywhere: in the air we breathe, in the food we eat, all creations have prana or "the energy of life". The Japanese and Chinese word to describe a concept that is similar to prana- "Ki" or "Chi". The prana flows through the chakras in our bodies. Controlled breathing is the key to higher consciousness. The Latin word Anima spiritus means "breath" or "spirit". Breath creates life. The majority of our energy should be obtained via correct breathing, yet most of us access only ten to twenty percent of our full breathing capacity, leaving us short of energy and compromising optimum health and well being. Clinical studies prove that wellness and health are dependent on proper breathing. Improper breathing either worsens or causes a vast array of illness and/or disease.

When we inhale, we bring some of the outer world into us; and when we exhale we take some of our being into the outer world. Thus, there is a part of us in the Universe, just as the Universe is a part of us. Yoga masters are experts in channelling, circulating and storing prana. They can expertly utilize prana in different parts of their bodies, transferring it from one chakra to another, to not just heal and maintain good health, but also to gain higher consciousness. Amongst the yogis of India, age is not determined chronologically by the number of years a person has lived but by the number of breaths a person takes. It is believed that each person is granted a specific number of breaths in this physical realm. So if one slows one's breath, one's metabolism tends to slow down, resulting in increased longevity. It is a well documented fact that animals with longer and slower breaths have a longer life span than animals that have shorter and faster breaths.

Breathing is the only act that humans can do consciously or completely unconsciously. It is when we are breathing in conscious awareness that we are controlling prana and directing it to heal our bodies. Slow and deep breathing helps us to relax, but there are other subtle effects of breathing on our physical body. For instance, quick abdominal breaths stimulate the splanchnic nerves and release epinephrine, causing calmness and a heightened sense of awareness. Breathing through the left nostril stimulates activity in the right hemisphere of the brain's cortex, increasing spatial reasoning.



BREATHING AWARENESS TECHNIQUES

The vast majority of us do not breathe "correctly". The optimal breathing technique involves drawing the abdominal wall out when breathing in. Shallow breathing only fills part of the lungs. We have to breath properly to increase pranic intake as well as increase oxygenation of the blood and increased consciousness. The following techniques should be practised before the commencement of meditation practices.

EXERCISE 8.1 - CONSCIOUS BREATHING

Lie on your back; place your hands about half an inch in front of your abdomen. Take a deep slow inhalation and see your hands moving, pushing away from your abdomen, next, exhale, pushing the hands into the abdomen. You should take over a minute for both exhalation and inhalation. When it becomes a habit to breathe like this, you can dispense with the hands. Try the exercise again with your hands on the side of your rib cage and then with folding your arms like wings, raising the elbow as you breathe in. All the movements should blend into one flowing movement.

EXERCISE 8.2 - HEART BREATHING

Now try and synchronize your breath with your heart rate. Inhale a complete breath during 7 or 9 beats of your heart. Retain the breath for 3 heartbeats and exhale for 7 or 9 heartbeats. This exercise trains you to have longer breath span. Scientists and researchers have found a co-relationship between health and longer span of breath.

EXERCISE 8.3 - RHYTHMIC BREATHING

Now try rhythmic breathing, breathe in for 9 seconds hold for 1 second breathe out for 9 seconds. Pranayama techniques are important preparation workouts for meditation.

EXERCISE 8.4 - DIRECTING ENERGY FLOW THROUGH BREATH

Sit in a comfortable position. Start with the conscious breathing exercise given above in exercise 8.1. Imagine that as you inhale, a light blue light is being drawn into your body with each breath. Visualize the light being directed to flow into your right hand. As you exhale, imagine the blue light remaining in your hand as vibrant energy. Repeat for 7 times, what do you experience?

Please note: The conscious direction of energy to certain parts of the body needs skills and considerable knowledge. If such practices are prolonged beyond 10 cycles it can have harmful effects. In particular, avoid directing energy on the genitals, spleen or solarplexus.

Rhythmic breathing can be utilized as a meditation exercise for healing and pain management. Place your hands on the afflicted area and breathe rhythmically. Focus on the mental image of bringing prana to the affected area.



EXERCISE 8.5 - ALIGN YOUR CHAKRAS

To align your chakras with the magnetic axis of the earth, lie down on your back with your head facing North. Take deep breaths. Visualize the inhaled breath rising to a point 7 to 9 inches above your body, called the universal energy point. During the exhalation, direct the flow of energy to an energy point seven inches below your feet called the earth energy point. Keep the breaths traversing between these two energy points, until you feel all the chakras are in harmony.

EXERCISE 8.6 - SENDING ENERGY TO DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE BODY

Scan your body internally and observe your body parts to see if there is any tension or discomfort. Focus on your breath. Make the breath long and slow. Direct prana in the form of breath energy to different parts of the body, especially areas where there is tension. Visualize your body parts relaxing as you do this.

EXERCISE 8.7 CLEARING NEGATIVE ENERGY (EMOTIONAL GARBAGE)

Choose your favourite meditative posture and commence and continue meditation by watching your breath. As you breathe in conscious awareness, visualize your body relaxing. Now focus on the space at the centre of your eyebrows; visualize a peaceful blue lake, spanning the area of your entire forehead. When a thought appears, it sends a ripple through the lake. Keep focused on the task at hand, till you see no ripples, just a peaceful calm lake. Consciously be aware of your breath as you perform this exercise.

EXERCISE 8.8 - CREATE DYNAMIC CREATIVE ENERGY BY QUICK RHYTHMIC BREATHING

Focus on an image of a divine form in the third eye. Inhale and exhale quickly and forcefully through the nostrils, without pausing between inhalation and exhalation, approximately more than one inhalation per second. Continue for 1-2 minutes. The benefits of this exercise are: increased energy and endurance, reduced stress, reduction of addictive impulses, increase of epinephrine and norepinephrine hormones.



Chapter 9

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF MEDITATION



Chapter 2

The fundamentals of meditation

Man bears the whole Universe within himself and comes closest to the mystery of the world by stepping inside of himself.

NOVALIS ,1722-1801

Man seeks joy in far places and peace in quiet spots, but the spirit of joy is in his heart, the heaven of peace is in him.

SHRI SATYA SAI BABA

Meditation practices are a part of yoga, therefore to understand it, we first need to comprehend what yoga is.

WHAT IS YOGA?

My first introduction to yoga was in India, whilst still in school and then college. I, like many others, mechanically performed physical exercises and went into yogic postures without understanding the meaning behind what I was doing. Similarly, I found that a large proportion of Westerners think yoga is only exercises but yoga is much more than that. The word "yoga" means to join, unite or fuse with God.

Yoga is so ancient, that it is difficult to accurately state its origins. When we consider that yoga, by most accounts, is at least two to three thousand years old, it is sobering to realize the vast dept of knowledge that the ancient Indian sages possessed. Indeed, even today, we are still coming to grips with some of the wisdom that is contained in these teachings. Meditation is an integral part of yoga. In the yoga sutras (a (ancient Indian scriptures on the subject of yoga), Patanjali, a famous Indian sage, described yoga as the means by which our mind can be made still, quiet and free from all distractions.

Yoga is really a way of life and appeals to people who desire transformation from within. In the Bhagvad Gita (one of Hinduism's holiest scriptures) four main paths are discussed: bhakti yoga; devotion and self-surrender to God or a guru or spiritual master; karma yoga; selfless work for others without attachment; and raja yoga; mental sense control which includes performing asanas (postures) pranayama (breath awareness); and dhyana meditation.

In order to attain self-realization or union with Divinity which is the goal of yoga and meditation, it is obligatory that one follows an eight fold pathway:

YAMA: This requires us to integrate the universal principles of non-violence, truth, peace, self-control, selflessness and love, into our daily living.

NIYAMA: We are required to assimilate personal disciplines such as cleanliness,



contentment, service to others, love to self and others in every thought, word and deed, self-improvement, trust and faith in Divinity.

ASANA: The body is to regularly practise yogic postures which is said to improve physical health.

PRANAYAMA: Breath awareness and control. There is a strong correlation between breath and wellness. Yogis (i.e. people who practice yoga) prolong their breath through pranayama and thus establish wellness. Pranayama are breath awareness exercises that bring about health and well being.

PRATYAHARA: All the great spiritual masters preach to us about controlling the mind, rather than allow the mind to control us. Pratyahara are methods of learning how to control the five senses through use of strong will power. Overindulging our senses leads to unhappiness.

DHAHRAN: Concentration and learning how to focus your mind on creating your reality and thereby learning to meditate which leads us to becoming one with our true reality.

DHYANA: Meditation needs to be undertaken regularly, integrating the principles in your daily life. These principles are explained in this Chapter.

SAMADHI: The final stages of meditation lead to samadhi which is self-realization or union with Divinity.

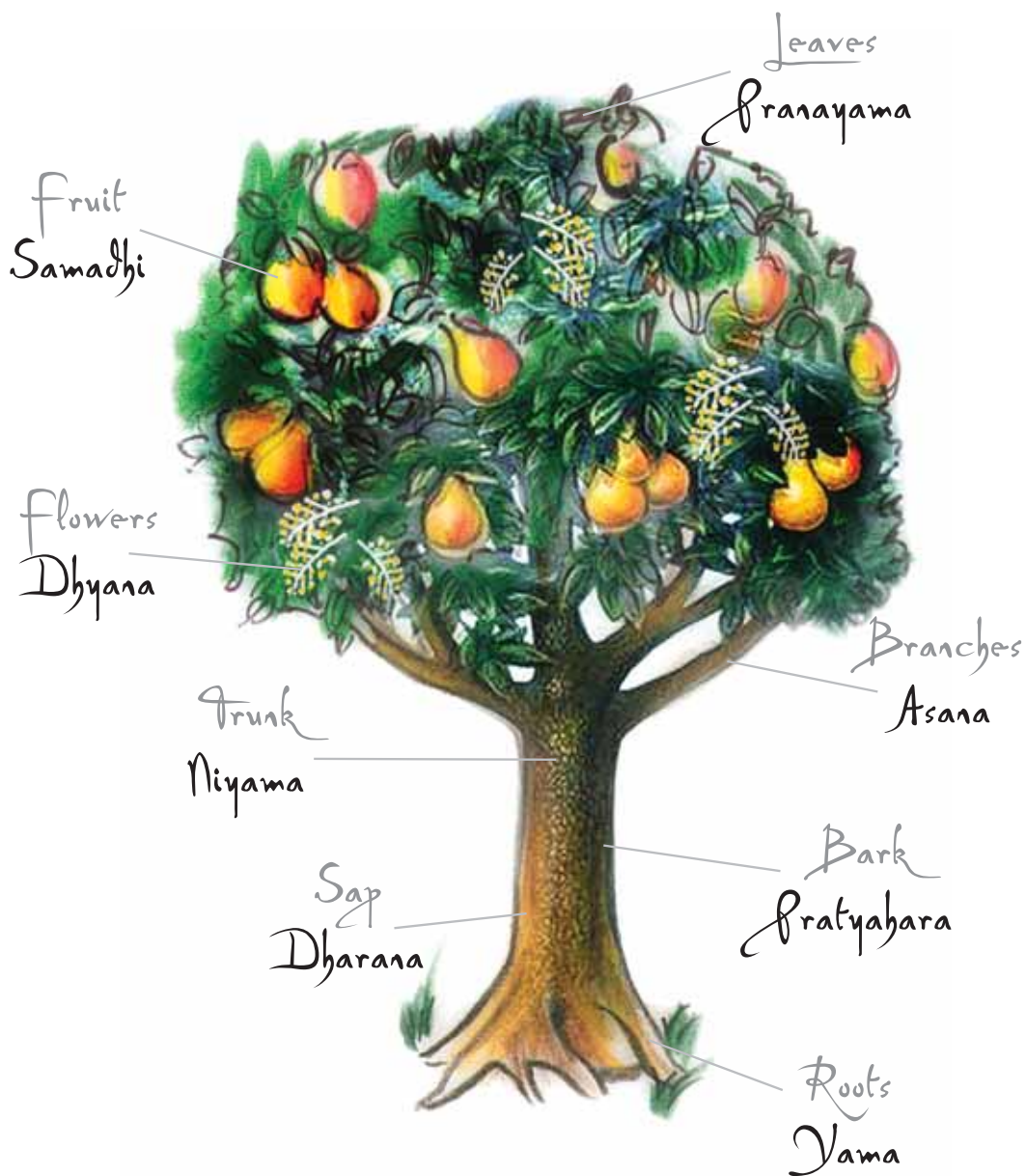
Children need to be taught the first three elements, as a prelude to preparing the child for the higher stages which include meditation and samadhi. In India, children are taught yoga in this manner. Yoga practises are taught as part of some schools curriculums and has great benefit in the holistic development of the child.

The diagram below portrays the links between the eight limbs of yoga. Planting and nurturing a seed eventually leads to a tree which bears fruit.

\WHAT IS MEDITATION?

If the earth were your body, you would be able to feel the many areas where it is suffering. War, political and economic oppression, famine, and pollution wreak havoc in so many places. Every day, children are becoming blind from malnutrition, their hands searching hopelessly through mounds of trash for a few ounces of food.... Many people are aware of the world's suffering; their hearts are filled with compassion. They know what needs to be done, and they engage in political, social, and environmental work to try to change things. But after a period of intense involvement, they may become discouraged if they lack the strength needed to sustain a life of action. Real strength is not in power, money, or weapons, but in deep, inner peace."

THICH NHAT HANH, PEACE IS EVERY STEP: THE PATH OF MINDFULNESS IN EVERYDAY LIFE



Meditation is consciously directing your attention inward to alter your state of consciousness. There's no limit to the things you can direct your attention toward: symbols, sounds, colors, breath, uplifting thoughts, spiritual realms, etc. Meditation is simply about attention and intention. where you direct it, and how it alters your consciousness.

The On line Etymology dictionary defines 'meditation' as having been derived from the Latin word *meditari*, which means, "to heal". In the Western world, meditation is loosely confused with "relaxation". Relaxation is a by-product of meditation but meditation is infinitely more than relaxation. In its truest sense, it is union with Divine Consciousness and self-realization. According to Dr. Dharma Singh Khalsa , currently over 50 million Americans or 19% of the population engage in meditation of one form or another. It would be interesting to ascertain the proportion of people that meditate in other parts of the world. Dr. Khalsa also observes that the Office of Alternative Medicine (OAM) in 1994 reported; over a period of 25 years, Benson and colleagues have developed a large body of research on the benefits of meditation and because of this, meditation in general and the relaxation response in specific, have slowly moved from alternative to main stream, although they are still overlooked by many conventional doctors.

It will not be long before this happens in Australia and other "developed" countries. In India, yoga and correspondingly, meditation, is a way of life for the majority of people.

According to Dr. Krishnan Chopra , there are four levels of consciousness: wakefulness, dreaming, deep sleep and meditation. Meditation is a deliberate way of allowing the mind to transcend, that is, to go beyond its usual limits and attain a higher level of consciousness. Meditation is inner wakefulness without the constant activity of thoughts, feelings and bodily sensations - pure inner calm and bliss (*Sat-chit-ananda*).

Meditation is going within, with the intention of knowing oneself. The goal of meditation is to attain oneness with cosmic and Divine Consciousness. This is achieved by transcending obstacles of the mind and the body. In deep meditation a person can achieve such single mindedness that the senses are withdrawn and oblivious to external interferences. Ancient Indian literatures provide instances of a snake crawling over the body of a meditating sage and the sage being unaware of it.

Yogananda (a revered Indian sage, author of *Autobiography of a Yogi*) stated that prayer is talking to God whilst meditation is listening . Shri Satya Sai Baba expanded on this and explains that man has an erratic "monkey mind" that jumps from one thought to another. It is natural for the mind to wander; we have to train the mind to be one-pointed.

Humankind is the embodiment of the cosmic and divine consciousness. To know God, one has to start by knowing oneself. Meditation is the experience of divine consciousness within self.

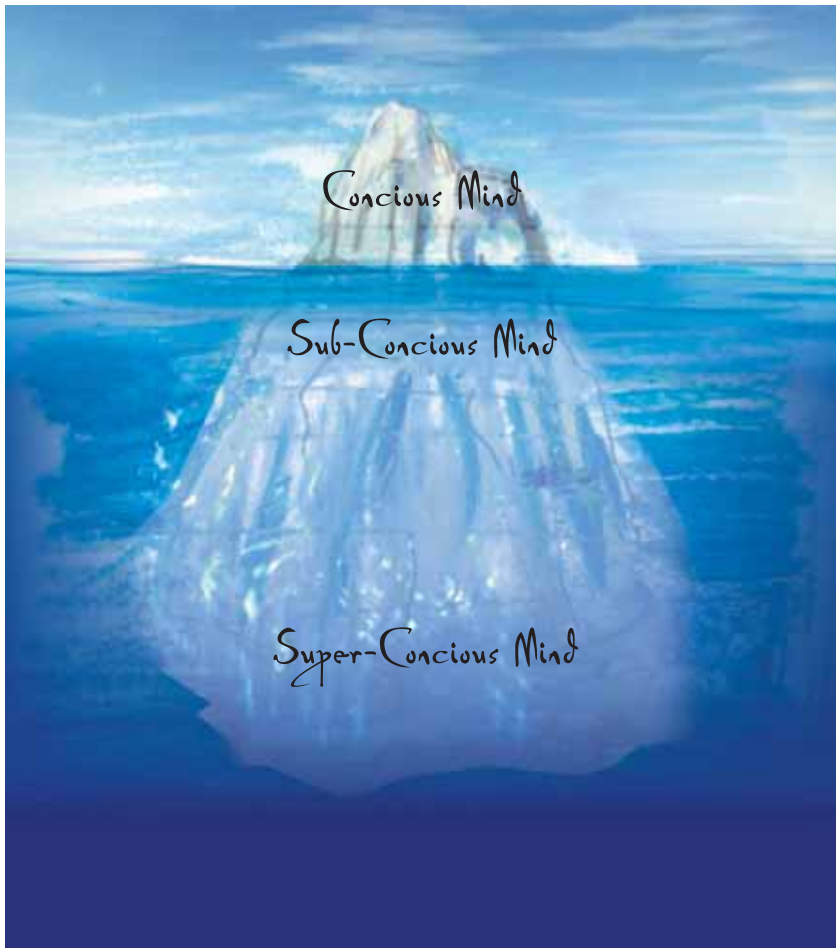
Dhyana (meditation) is not mere sitting erect and being silent. Nor is it the absence of any movement. It is the merging of all your thoughts and feelings in God. Without the mind becoming dissolved in God, Dhyana cannot succeed. As long as he knows he is meditating, one is not meditating. In the absorption in God,

one puts aside every form and merges in God. In the process, the mind stops.

SHRI SATYA SAI BABA

What we "experience" is real, whereas a description of that "experience" is a non-experience; so it is essential not to intellectualise or analyze, but to experience! However, in order to understand meditation further some theoretical aspects of the subject must be first examined. Let us start with different concepts of the "mind".

According to Western psychologists the human being is made up of mind, body and soul (spirit). The mind has different aspects: the conscious mind, the subconscious mind and the superconscious mind. The mind is likened to an iceberg.



The conscious mind is the tip of the iceberg. It is that part of the mind that operates in the present, collecting information from all the senses. The subconscious mind is the broad base of the iceberg. It is the storehouse of all past thoughts, words and deeds from all experiences in this life and previous lives. The super conscious mind IS, everything in the universe. It is pure essence of Divinity.

On the other hand, Hindu Scriptures such as the Vedanta expound that the mind is made up of three main aspects or elements:

1. **MANAS** – is the deductive aspect of the mind. It is the "conscious" mind that collects information from the five senses and is always active. This aspect of the mind dwells on thinking about the past and the future and "thrives" on worries. We rarely see things exactly as they are, but coloured by mental reactions to association of ideas.
2. **CHITTA** – the subconscious mind, also called the "heart of the mind". All past experiences are recorded here.
3. **BUDDHI** – pure wisdom; is the intellectual aspect. It is also the inner voice, conscience or intuition.

The aspect of human personality which is beyond any change, however, is Atma, the real Self. The Atma is the changeless eternal spirit or the Self. It is Divine Consciousness. The mistake lies in confusing the lifeless dwelling, the body (deha) for the immortal dweller, the self (dehi), who is God. The aim of meditation is clearing the other aspects of the mind and become one with the Divine Consciousness within us.

In meditation the conscious mind (manas) is stilled. This helps to clear negative past experiences in the subconscious mind (chitta) and enables one to get in touch with the divine consciousness within our self (Atma) and our highest wisdom (buddhi). To experience the Atma, the surface levels of the mind have to be brought to total stillness. Meditation is integrated total awareness in the present moment, being in harmony and oneness with all around you. The culmination of meditation is self-realization. Consciousness moves beyond exploration of the mind and identifies with the central core of one's existence – the Self.

Meditation must transmute your attitude towards beings and things, else it is a hoax. The signs of success in meditation are when you see in a clearer light, others as endowed with divinity. Your character and your behaviour should authenticate your progress.

SHRI SATYA SAI BABA

The gift of learning to meditate is the greatest gift you can give yourself in this life. For it is only through meditation that you can undertake the journey to discover your true nature and so find the stability and confidence you will need to live and die well. Meditation is the road to enlightenment.

Generally we waste our lives, distracted from our true selves, in endless activity: meditation on the other hand, is the way to bring us back to ourselves, where we can really experience and taste our full being, beyond all habitual patterns.

Meditation... is a state free of all cares and concerns, in which there is no competition, no desire to possess or grasp at anything, no intense and anxious struggle, and no hunger to achieve: an ambitionless state where there is neither acceptance nor rejection, neither hope nor fear...

"Training" the mind does not in any way mean forcibly subjugating or brainwashing the mind. To train the mind is first to see directly and concretely how the mind functions...

SOGYAL RINPOCHE, TIBETAN BOOK OF LIVING AND DYING.



WHAT IS CONSCIOUSNESS?

Lama Govinda described consciousness as follows:

"My consciousness is in the space in which I live. I am aware that my space and consciousness are the same. I am in infinite consciousness. The infinity of space and the infinity of consciousness are identical. In the moment in which a being becomes conscious, he becomes conscious of space. In the moment in which he becomes conscious of the infinity of space, he realizes the infinity of consciousness."

To experience higher consciousness is to experience a different order of space. In the last stages of meditation or "one-pointedness", as your mind is truly focused, your consciousness expands or reaches a higher state. The main difficulty most of us will experience, is our natural tendency to equate physical space with consciousness. If we limit our consciousness to the physical experience in which we live our daily lives, we place a limit on our experience. Higher consciousness does not concern itself with mundane thinking processes but with the "essences of being" . Lama Govinda writes:

"...though root, trunk, branches, leaves, blossoms and fruits are potentially present in the undifferentiated oneness of the seed, it is only when they are unfolded in space and time that they become reality to us". On the other hand, Harris defines awareness as "centering of our beingness" in an awakened state, as a dispassionate observer of all that we are doing, experiencing, thinking and emoting.

GOALS OF MEDITATION

SELF-REALIZATION - Awareness of self. The purpose of meditation is to awaken in us the sky like nature of the mind and to introduce us to that which we really are, our unchanging pure awareness. We are fragmented into so many different aspects. We don't know who we really are, or what aspects of ourselves we should identify with or believe in. Our beings and our thoughts contain so many contradictory voices, feelings, and conflicting emotions, that we find ourselves scattered everywhere in all directions, leaving nobody at "home". Meditation is merging these scattered pieces together and bringing the mind home.

ENLIGHTENMENT – This is beyond awareness of self to a state of being in union with Divinity.

TYPES OF MEDITATION

There are two types of meditation: passive and active.

PASSIVE MEDITATION is sitting in one posture (could be in a "lotus" or a sleeping posture) and performing a meditation practice. The aim of the practice is to still the ever-restless active manas (conscious mind) and make it one pointed.

ACTIVE MEDITATION is when you are in total integrated awareness when performing daily duties such as walking, eating or talking.



When a person achieves sustained successful passive meditation, it will automatically lead to active meditation. That is, the person will become divine consciousness in every moment of his or her existence. This may involve considerable practice and may take lifetimes to achieve.

Eventually, passive meditations become superfluous as the person lives completely according to the deepest inner and spiritual values. The self-realized person is living both a spiritual and a material life without conflict in an integrated state of higher consciousness. In this state there is a continuous and spontaneous experience of active meditation. Meditation goes beyond emotional and intellectual knowledge. It is intuitive knowledge that knows the Whole – Divinity in existence.

BENEFITS OF MEDITATION

There are numerous benefits of meditation: physical, mental, emotional and spiritual levels. In over 1500 separate studies since the early 1930s, meditation has been clearly shown to offer a wide variety of benefits. I have chosen a few documents from recent studies to highlight many of these results:

1. "Companies including Nortel Networks Corp. have recognized the benefits of meditation by building nondenominational meditation rooms for employees. CEOs such as Bill George of Medtronic Inc. have practiced daily meditation for many years... When practiced regularly, meditation can help to lower stress and blood pressure and enhance our state of awareness. [Meditation helps] release stress and fatigue, rest the body, and thus allow it to heal naturally by reducing the toxic chemistries of stress."

LANCE SECRETAN, INDUSTRY WEEK, MARCH 2001

2. "Stress reduction techniques, such as meditation, muscle relaxation training, and yoga should be among the daily activities of older people... [studies] show that chronic stress alters brain structure and can reduce the body's ability to maintain normal physiologic and cognitive function."

JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

3. Meditators were less anxious and neurotic, more spontaneous, independent, self-confident, empathetic, and less fearful of death.

ATLANTIC MONTHLY, MAY, 1991

4. 75% of long-term insomniacs who have been trained in relaxation and meditation can fall asleep within 20 minutes of going to bed.

DR. GREGG JACOBS, PSYCHOLOGIST, HARVARD



5. *"Recent research has looked at precisely what happens during meditation that allows it to cause these positive physical changes...A group of people who had meditated for four months [were found to produce] less of the stress hormone "cortisol". They were therefore better able to adapt to stress in their lives, no matter what their circumstances were."*

PSYCHOLOGY TODAY, MAY 2001

6. *A study showed that plasma cortisol, a stress hormone, decreased during meditation, whereas it did not change significantly in controlled subjects during ordinary relaxation.*

HORMONES AND BEHAVIOR, 1978

7. *"John Kabat-Zinn, PhD, associate professor of medicine at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center in Worcester, has made meditation the centerpiece of the center's Stress Reduction Clinic." It doesn't seem to matter what type of medical condition brings people to the Stress Reduction Clinic," says Kabat-Zinn. "Over the eight-week program, they usually report a reduction in symptoms."*

IDEA HEALTH & FITNESS SOURCE, SEPTEMBER 2000

8. *Meditation significantly controls high blood pressure at levels comparable to widely used prescription drugs, and without the side effects.*

JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

9. *In a recent study, 77% of individuals with high levels of stress were able to lower their blood pressure and cholesterol levels—simply by training themselves to stay calm.*

HEALTH, OCTOBER, 1994

10. *"The three-month study of managers and employees who regularly practiced meditation in [Puritan-Bennett Corporation] showed that meditation practitioners displayed more relaxed physiological functioning, greater reduction in anxiety, and reduced tension on the job, when compared to control subjects with similar job positions in the same companies."*

ANXIETY, STRESS & COPING INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL, 1993

11. *Women with severe PMS showed a 58% improvement in their symptoms after five months of daily meditation.*

HEALTH, SEPTEMBER, 1995

12. Meditators over 6-9 months showed a marked decrease in the thickness of their artery walls, while non-meditators actually showed an increase. This change translates to about an 11% decrease in the risk of heart attack and an 8% to 15% decrease in the risk of stroke.

STROKE JOURNAL, REPORTED IN PSYCHOLOGY TODAY, 2001

13. Relaxation therapies are effective in treating chronic pain, and can markedly ease the pain of low back problems, arthritis, and headaches.

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH, 1996

14. Reducing stress can dramatically reduce heart disease. In a five-year study of heart disease patients, those who learned to manage stress reduced their risk of having another heart attack by 74%, compared with patients receiving medication only. Reducing mental stress also proved more beneficial than getting exercise.

DR. JAMES BLUMENTHAL, DUKE UNIVERSITY, 1997

15. Meditation may slow aging. A study found that people who had been meditating for more than five years were physiologically 12 to 15 years younger than non-meditators.

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF NEUROSCIENCE, 1982

16. Twenty-eight people with high levels of blocked arteries and high risk of heart attack were placed on a program with regular practice of meditation, yoga, a low-fat vegetarian diet, and exercise. Twenty people in the control group received conventional medical care endorsed by the AMA. At the end of a year, most of the experimental group reported that their chest pains had virtually disappeared; for 82% of the patients, arterial clogging had reversed. Those who were sickest at the start showed the most improvement. The control group had an increase in chest pain and arterial blockage worsened. (Follow-up studies suggest that the stress-reduction element may be the most significant factor in achieving these results.)

DR. DEAN ORNISH, SAN FRANCISCO MEDICAL SCHOOL, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LANCET JOURNAL

17. According to Dr. Khalsa, meditators experience 80% less heart disease and 50% less cancer than non-meditators. Besides this, 75% of insomniacs were able to sleep normally when they meditated and 34% of people with chronic pain significantly reduced medication by practising meditating. Premenstrual syndrome symptoms decreased by 57%. Migraine headaches decreased notably as did anxiety and depression.

18. In 1977 Dr. Andrew Newberg, a neurologist from the University of Pennsylvania found meditation produces lasting beneficial changes in immune-system function as well as brain electrical activity.

So let us summarize the benefits of meditation into four categories: physical, emotional, mental and spiritual.

1. PHYSICAL

- A beneficial decrease in heart rate and blood pressure.
- Reduced oxygen consumption, reduced metabolic rate. Breathing rate is reduced. During sleep, oxygen consumption drops by 8% but during meditation it drops by 10 to 20%.
- Meditators secrete a youth-related hormone called DHEA.
- Meditation can be an important complement to conventional medical treatment for depression, anxiety, hypertension, cardiac arrhythmias, migraine headaches, insomnia, and many other conditions. Meditation has been used to reduce side effects of chemotherapy, minimize post-operative pain, alleviate symptoms of premenstrual syndrome, even to treat infertility.

2. EMOTIONAL

- The calming hormones melatonin and serotonin are increased by meditation and the stress hormone cortisol is decreased. Thus it reduces stress, negative thoughts, fear, anger, guilt and grief and induces a state of relaxation.
- Enhances self-esteem and a greater sense of security. Inner strength, courage and confidence are developed so that you address issues and do not become a victim. One becomes more independent and accountable to self when you connect to your inner world.
- Meditation practices connect you to your core which is Love. When you connect to who you really are you flow with compassion. You learn to help yourself and others with love and wisdom. Real love is not rescuing people but guiding them with Wisdom. Meditation practices connect you to truth and teach you to take responsibility for your thoughts, words and deeds.
- Brings you personal happiness. A USA weekend poll stated 47% of Americans say that spirituality was the most important element of their happiness. Meditation helps to bring a greater sense of meaning and purpose to life. It provides opportunities for reflection and self development.
- Clarity of thought – detachment from intense (destructive) emotions and teaches to love yourself and others with wisdom. Helps you to see clearly and thereby delayed gratification of short term needs for long term gain.
- Removes destructive emotions such as anger, sadness and fear. Helps you to be calm and level-headed in crisis thereby issues and problems solved with wisdom.



3. MENTAL

- Improved concentration and memory. Sharpened intuition and creativity. Groundbreaking research shows that when people meditate they alter the biochemistry of their brains.
- Helps planning, setting and achieving goals through one-pointedness. Trains the mind to be one-pointed.
- Helps decision making process.

4. SPIRITUAL

- Perhaps, the most important benefit of all....Meditation makes your soul develop and grow towards the goal of enlightenment.

COMPONENTS OF MEDITATION

There are three components of meditation. Firstly, the meditator or the subject (Dhyaata), is the one who "sees". Then there is the object of meditation (Dhyeya) and last, is the process of meditation (Dhyaana). The process of meditation requires the meditator to establish a relationship with the object of meditation.

The process culminates into meditation when the subject, the object and the process coalesce and merge into a single unified experience.

HOW DO WE MEDITATE?

In the initial stages, any position; sitting, lying down, standing, walking, tubbing (in the bath tub) is acceptable, as long as you observe the following:

- Keep the spine erect or straight.
- Ensure that no strain or tension is present in any part of your body.
- Make sure the right and left sides of the body are in equal balance.
- Be in a state of "conscious awareness". You are taking your consciousness towards stilling your thoughts and emotions and away from yourself.

When meditators assume yoga postures, it makes them conscious of particular areas of their bodies. Holding these postures for a while requires effort and one tends to become self-conscious about the effort. This leads to a more enlightening condition of being unconscious of the self.

Furthermore, yogic postures require discipline and the exercise of discipline builds power. They assist to channel the internal energy (kundalini) within us. The postures of yoga are intended to coax our bodies away from "lethargic" movements and postures, replacing them with more graceful ways. When this occurs, it subtly but fundamentally changes people and in doing so, achieves two requisites essential to healing: flexibility and balance.



Flexibility is of paramount importance in healing the physical body. The ability to be adaptable to change is vital for health as health breaks down when we resist change.

Balance, on the other hand, is derived from flexibility and is integral to holistic health. It is the excesses and deficiencies that create imbalances. Balance is restored through performing yogic asanas in two ways: Purification and tonification. Purification (reduction) actions reduce excesses and they include fasting, emotional catharsis and prescribed physical exertions that lead to sweating. Tonification (addition) actions, add strength and energy to the body parts. For instance, inhalation, back bends and shoulder stands all strengthen and energise the body.

Certain yogic asanas (postures) such as Mudras (hand postures), when used in meditation, enhance healing, as there is a conscious direction in the flow of energy. Furthermore, each position has symbolic identity. For instance, the thumb symbolizes divine energy and the index finger symbolises the energy of self or ego. When the two touch, it is the mudra of Divine consciousness because Divinity joins with the self. In addition each hand position has meaning. For instance, placing the hands open symbolises receiving energy and openness. Placing the hands with palms facing down symbolises giving energy. Hands placed with palms touching, in the traditional prayer position, symbolizes respect and humility.

The meditation posture you choose should allow you to disconnect from the body, mind and emotions, so that you can feel one with the Universe and flow easily into a state of expansiveness.

The direction you choose when assuming your meditation position can enhance your ability to reach a deeper state of consciousness. Magnetic forces flow from the South Pole to the North Pole; the rotation of earth takes place from West to East. Facing North or East therefore relaxes mind and tones up the nerves more easily.

PREPARATION FOR MEDITATION

Preparation for meditation can be undertaken by:

1. **YOGA ASANAS** (yoga postures) – performed before meditation tone up the whole physiology, including the nervous system, and help the mind to be relaxed. Furthermore regular practices of yoga asanas make the body suppler, so that one can sit in a posture for extended periods of time.
2. **PRANYAMA** (breath awareness exercises) – these are described earlier, in Chapter 8.
3. **CLEANSING** – it is highly recommended to physically, psychologically and spiritually cleanse before commencing with meditation practices. This can be done by taking a bath, physically washing body parts, consuming flower essences, "flicking contaminated energy" attached to spiritual bodies, or "grounding oneself". Another method is to cleanse and align each chakra (energy centers). These cleansing processes are discussed further in Chapter 7, "Cleansing, Clearing & Psychic Protection" Internal cleansing should be part of your daily existence through good thoughts, words and deeds.
4. **REPROGRAMMING OUR MINDS** – We are what we think – do not underestimate the power of your thoughts. Be aware of your belief system and reprogram your thoughts

and beliefs positively with truth, peace, harmony, love and non-violence towards all. Keep every thought, word and action in tune with Divine Will. Flow with life rather than fight it. During meditation one experiences no ego, anxiety or fear, sadness or anger. Our consciousness is in the now. We become ONE with cosmic consciousness, with no attachments or desires.

5. **EAT SATTVIC** (natural) food – which is light, fresh and wholesome. Do not eat too much or too little. If we eat too much we will most likely fall asleep and if we eat too little our thoughts will focus on our hunger.
6. **PROTECTION** – it is extremely important to protect your physical and spiritual bodies by affirmations and golden/white circles of light. Ask for protection from your higher self, guardian angels, gurus, sages, saints and avatars. This should be done before the commencement of each meditation practice. These are further described in Chapter 7.
7. **RELAXATION OR CALMING THE MANAS.** There are various techniques of calming the mind and these are discussed in more detail later in the book. The technique one should use in meditation is to allow distracting thoughts, sounds or pain in the body to flow through, without focusing on them.

PROCESSES INVOLVED IN MEDITATION

The process of actual meditation starts after the mind has been relaxed and thoughts and emotions have been eliminated. A majority of individuals cannot progress to this stage. Like most tasks, meditation too needs practice, dedication and commitment. Our minds are like butterflies flitting from one flower to another, overactive with thoughts of the past or the future. Meditation is being in the present.

There are as many schools of meditation as there are pathways to God or religions. I believe that there is essential unity in the philosophy and thought in all the schools of meditation that can be summed up in two basic pathways: one, pathway of insight – which is mindfulness, stages of reflection, awareness, realization, effortless insight and nirvana (where consciousness ceases to have an object) and finally total cessation of consciousness (you become one with divinity). When we meditate our beliefs determine how we interpret and perceive the experiences we have in meditation. Two, the pathway of concentration – this could be with objects, observing nature, or through devotion to human forms of divinity. There are various stages of concentration which lead to one-pointedness. These are verging on absorption but with some distracted thoughts, visions which leads to full absorption and finally deeper one-pointedness which leads to "nothingness". Many techniques use a combination of the two an integrated method of both concentration and mindfulness. The exercises provided in this book are a combination of both awareness and concentration.

But the need for the meditator to retrain his attention, whether through concentration or mindfulness, is the single invariant ingredient in the recipe for altering consciousness of every meditation system.

DANEIL GOLEMAN, 1988, THE MEDITATIVE MIND

HOW DO WE MOVE FROM CONCENTRATION TO ONE-POINTEDNESS?

Meditation is beyond concentration. Concentration is a process of focusing our attention on something or someone. However, the senses are not completely withdrawn. For instance, you may be concentrating on reading a book. Your senses will be still picking up information in the background, such as music, or an insect resting on your body.

One pointedness is being in a state of consciousness by withdrawing the senses (pratyahara), that is, disconnecting from thought, bodily sensations or emotions bringing about a power of Divine intensity.

For instance, when you go to a movie theatre at first you are aware of the people around you. You are aware of the screen, and of the projector sending light forms to the screen. Soon the movie becomes interesting and you get more and more involved in the drama. Your concentration moves to a state of one pointedness when you become one with the character in the movie. You are no longer aware of the people around you. Your senses have withdrawn and you are "one with" the character in the movie. Prayer, reciting mantras, (string of holy words) and japa (continuous recitation of the names of God) are all pathways to achieving one-pointedness.

The following are the stages of progressing to one-pointedness in meditation:

1. We look at ourselves.
2. We turn our attention inward.
3. We practise the art of watching ourselves
4. We become conscious of consciousness
5. We pay close attention to our thoughts and become aware of their origin.
6. We do not identify with our mind.
7. We move towards a higher state of consciousness.
8. Concentration leads to one pointedness.

EXERCISE 9.1 ONE-POINTEDNESS

Place a candle in front of you. Focus on the candle. The senses should pick up all the information and details about this candle. Then, close your eyes and visualize the candle in your ajna (third eye) chakra. If and when the image fades open your eyes and see the candle. Once again close your eyes. See how long you can be one-pointed without any thoughts.

MANDALAS USED IN ONE-POINTEDNESS

The word "mandala" originates from Sanskrit and means holy or spiritual circle. It involves the utilisation of spiritual geometry or design, as the object of concentration to gain one-pointedness in meditation. All religions and cultures depict different mandalas in temples, churches, and paintings. Many cultures also use mandalas as images for meditation purposes.

The three principles of the mandala are the centre, the radiation emanating from the centre and the periphery of the circle. It is the centre which is the spiritual or divine force. In

this, the mandala structure is revealed as the basic pattern of all creation. In the sub- microscopic realm, the mandala pattern is represented in some of the smallest particles of matter such as atoms. In the astronomical realm, our planet the earth as well as the sun and its circling planets represent a mandala. An old Gnostic proverb says, "God is a sphere whose centre is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere."

EXERCISE 9.2 MANDALAS

Look at the mandala illustrated below. Absorb every detail of the form. Close your eyes and on your eyebrow centre, recreate the image. Become one pointed as you allow the image to grow, and you become one with the image.



1. AWAKENING OF PSYCHIC CENTERS – Meditation techniques bring about a controlled awakening of psychic centres (chakras) in our spiritual bodies. Techniques in kriya yoga and kundali yoga, for example, align the chakras and allow energy to flow through the psychic pathways (nadis) to activate the chakras. Healing techniques in meditation also awaken the chakras and other psychic centres and pathways.

2. EXPLORING SUPER-CONSCIOUS REALMS – This is when a deeper level of meditation begins. The limitless storehouse of wisdom and energy starts manifesting during this stage. Psychic phenomena can occur at this stage, although this is not the goal of sadhana (meditation practice). Some individuals are so overwhelmed by psychic phenomena that they cannot move beyond it, thereby missing the ultimate goal of meditation - self-realization.

3. ONENESS WITH DIVINE CONSCIOUSNESS – The goal of self-realization is reached. Any further explanation is superfluous!

Please note: After a meditation session you have been in altered state of consciousness and should therefore not engage in any sudden movements or physical activities or even social conversations. Slowly return to normal duties and take the joy and awareness gained in the practice with you into every situation of your daily living.

BARRIERS TO SUCCESSFUL MEDITATION

1. EMOTIONAL DISTURBANCES – these can be eliminated by practising and observing the following in daily living: SATYA (truth, righteousness); PREMA (unconditional love to all God's creations); AHIMSA (non-violence towards all God's creation); APARIGRAHA (non-possessiveness or non attachment and renunciation, but moving beyond that to detachment); ISHWARA PRANDHANA (your every thought, word and action should be a dedication of worship to Divine Source); and SHANTI (peace and harmony).

2. PHYSICAL DISCOMFORTS – look after your body with good eating habits, regular exercise. Practice yoga asanas, which strengthen the body and thereby prepare you for meditation, by eliminating or minimizing the physical pain and discomfort of sitting in one posture.

3. IRREGULARITIES IN PRANA (ENERGY FLOW) – this can be overcome by practising pranayama (breathing exercises that regulate the flow of energy).

4. OUTSIDE DISTRACTIONS – some meditation techniques train you to allow outside distractions to flow through. That is, you focus and concentrate on internal things such as parts of the body, breathing, chants and music, thereby inducing a state of pratyahara (one-pointedness). You don't force thoughts and external things out but you instead concentrate on one internal object or concept.

ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS TO MEDITATE

- Will, motivation and determination - Routine and regular practice of meditation. Make meditation part of your life- style. In every moment of existence become aware of your thoughts, words and deeds.
- Patience and humility - Accept that all is in Divine order; you do your best and leave the rest to the Divine One. When the time is right for you, Divinity will reveal itself.
- Sincerity - Divinity reaches out when there is sincere effort.
- Attitude of non-grasping- Let go of all the things you are trying to control in your mind - work commitments, stress, anger, fear etc
- Dedication and unconditional love to all of God's creations.

Meditation is your time with Divinity, treat it as such. Give yourself totally to your Creator. Meditation is not to be done for one hour and then forgotten, use its illumination to light the path of the rest of your life.

MEDITATION TECHNIQUES

There are numerous techniques or ways to initiate meditation. Some of these are outlined in detail in various Chapters throughout the book.



- **BREATH AWARENESS** – Using breath to bring about relaxation and focus energy on different parts of the body.
- **RECITING MANTRAS** – For example, recitation of the sound "Om". Hindu scriptures state that this is the first sound ever created. It means literally Divine Energy. Other chants can also be used to still the mind and focus on one pointedness.
- **JAPAM** – Name of Divine energy in a form that is most meaningful to you repeated continuously. The mind simultaneously focuses on the image of God's form in the third eye (that is the space between the eyebrows).
- **CONCENTRATION ON AN OBJECT** – Choose an object, which has deep personal meaning for you. Look at the object and concentrate on its form and deepest meaning, then close your eyes and visualise the object in your third eye.
- **VISUALIZATION** – Visualize forms or creations of the Divine. Objects are often used in visualisations.
- **INTROSPECTION, INSIGHT, AWARENESS** - Looking within and learning about all aspects of self.
- **CLEANSING** -our mind is a storehouse of past memories and thoughts, which need to be removed and cleansed.

EXERCISE 9.3- WATCHING OUR MINDS AT WORK

- Place any small object in the circle above.
- Note the time at which you commence this exercise.
- Look carefully at the object and concentrate on it to the exclusion of all else.
- As soon as a thought occurs, note it down near one of the arrows, return to concentrating on the object. If another thought occurs, note it down near the next arrow.
- Continue this process till you have filled up all the arrow positions.
- Note the time at the end of concluding this exercise.

WHAT HAVE I LEARNT?

The purpose of this exercise is to experience that our conscious minds are erratic "monkey minds" which generate frequent thoughts and further, that the mind jumps from one thought to another like a monkey jumps from tree to tree. This exercise also allows one to experience different types of thoughts: sequential (associated) sensory responses and random thoughts.

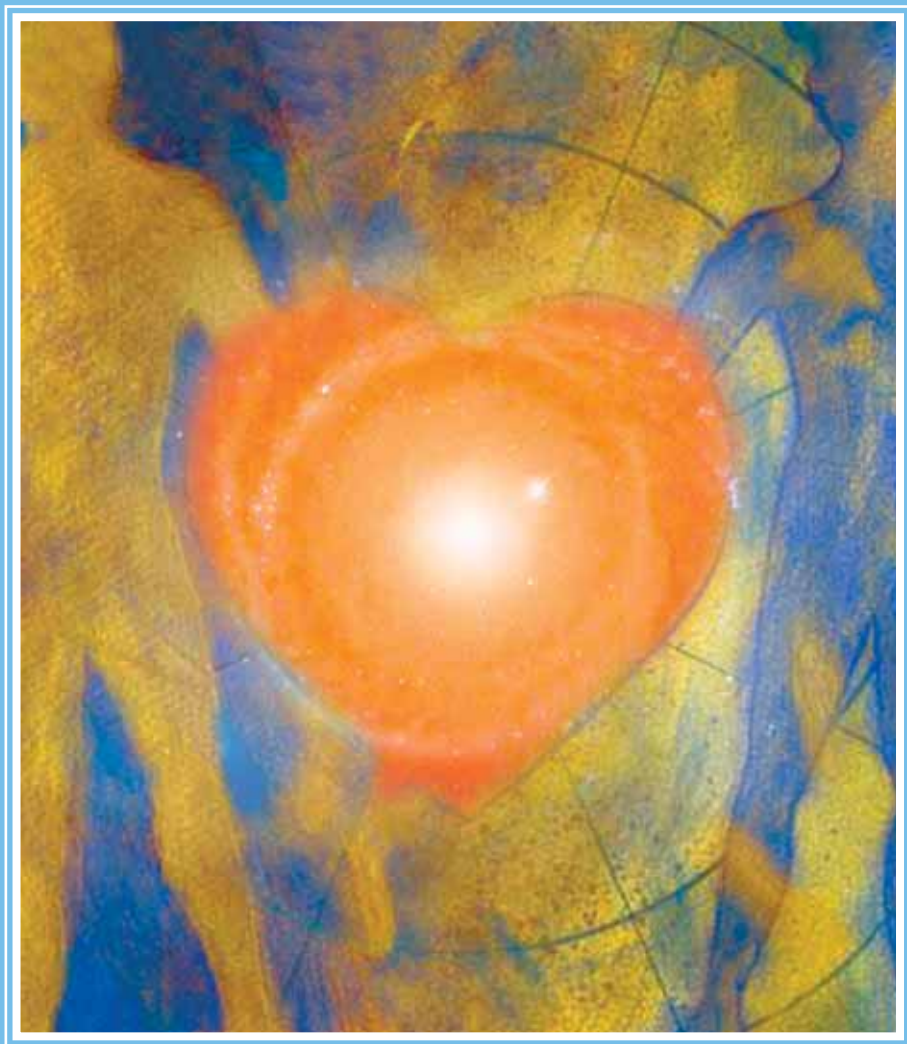
We can appreciate that we are not our minds, but so much more, as we can literally observe our minds at work. This observation leads us to conclude that we have the power to control and direct our minds.

This exercise also makes us experientially understand what meditation really is – it is the "gap between thoughts". It is a state of being where there are no thoughts or emotions - just a state of nothingness.



Chapter 10

THE HEART – EMOTIONAL MANAGEMENT THROUGH MEDITATION



Chapter 10

The heart – emotional management through meditation

Expansion is the essence of love. You can light a million lamps from one; yet the first one will not suffer at all. Share love with a million, it will be as bright as when it was alone.

Love is the most direct means of attaining God.

SHRI SATYA SAI BABA

WHAT IS LOVE?

It is important to note that love is not a feeling or emotion. Love is the primal energy of Divinity and therefore the basis of all creation. If the thoughts, perception and interpretation are negative, then we experience negative emotions, which are fear, anger and sadness.

We have always been conditioned to believe that we cannot do anything about our emotions except: restrain ourselves from drastic action, enjoy them or feel guilty about them. The emotional self may not have constituent cells in the way our physical body has, nevertheless, it is comprised of subtle energy levels. Each of these different levels has a consciousness. Physical disorder is said to have three main causes: genetic defects, trauma, the mind and emotions. The effect of trauma could be the result of our mental and emotional disposition.

UNDERSTANDING LOVE

Love is the difficult realization that something other than oneself is real.

IRIS MURDOCH, BRITISH NOVELIST (1919 - 1999)

The heart is associated with loving. Love is the primal energy force that is responsible for creation. The Divine One is Love. Love is therefore not an emotion or feeling; it is our natural state of being. We have moved away from our natural state of being and therefore the basic ingredient we need to spiritually grow is LOVE.

According to Dr. Scott Peck, real love is not an emotion. He distinguishes it from the "falling in love" syndrome, which is always a temporary phase, as the majority of us fall out of love after the "honeymoon" period is over. Peck also states that the "falling in love" phase always has a sexual component. On the other hand, he defines "real love" as "the will to extend one's self for the purpose of nurturing one's own or another's spiritual growth." I agree with his definition of "love" and believe that genuine love requires:

- **LONG-TERM COMMITMENT** – when you love someone you should be consistent in loving. Giving love to someone should not be attached to what you get from the relationship. Humankind's commitment to the Divine One is often dependent on what we have or do not have in life. For instance, how often do we turn to the Divine One in



times of trouble in comparison to the times we turn to Him in times of joy? On the other hand, Divinity loves us unconditionally.

- **EFFORT AND TIME** - real love requires effort. We need to take that extra step and walk that extra mile. When we love someone, our love has to be demonstrable through our exertion. Parents who really love their kids spend "quality" time and put effort in to their care. To really love the self also requires commitment, time and effort. How much "quality" time and effort do we put towards our own spiritual development? To love Divinity also requires commitment, time and effort.
- **WILL** - real love is an act of will, that is, it is both an intention and an action. We need to have willingness to "learn" and heal. A large proportion of us have good intentions (thoughts), however, we may not follow this in action. This probably is because we lack the discipline, commitment and responsibility.
- **DISCIPLINE AND TAKING RESPONSIBILITY** are the means to human spiritual evolution. Life is difficult and full of problems. How does one solve problems? If your child has a problem with a particular subject at school, what would you do? Teach him to be disciplined, i.e. follow a regular routine (order, system, and method) towards this subject and make him take responsibility to invest time into coming to grips and mastering this subject. A child has to learn to delay gratification of pleasurable activities in order to keep abreast and excel in studies. Often we cannot delay the immediate satisfaction we receive from expressing or having outbursts of anger, giving vent to petty vendetta and ego boosts. For instance, a patient was quick to talk ill about her boss and get vicarious pleasure in doing this without even considering the good points about him. We often do not see the long term repercussions of our thoughts, words and actions. Furthermore, real loving is supplying others with a "fishing rod" and teaching them how to fish, rather than reinforcing an unloving, lazy attitude and constantly providing them the "fish". Where there is love, responsibility follows.
- **INDEPENDENCE AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY** - dependency is not love, it seeks to receive rather than give. It nourishes infantilism rather than growth. Ultimately, it destroys rather than builds relationships and it destroys rather than builds people. Often I have couples who come for relationship counseling with dysfunctional codependency relationships. The partnership works at first but then often leads to one partner feeling emotionally suffocated and opting out of the relationship. Healthy relationships are about partnerships not codependency (I have discussed this topic at length in Chapter 16, Relationships).
- **GENUINE LOVE DOES NOT INVOLVE MAKING SACRIFICES**. When we genuinely love we do so because we want to love. Whenever we think of ourselves as doing something for someone else, we are in some ways denying ourselves and not taking our own responsibility. To genuinely love is to extend oneself rather than sacrifice self. It enlarges rather than diminishes the self. It is important to ask ourselves why we do things for others. What is our motive?
- **GENUINE LOVE IS AN EXERCISE OF WISDOM** - Love is judicious. It requires judgment,

thoughtful and often painful decision making for the spiritual growth or higher good of self and others. For instance, parents have to show "tough" love when their children are addicted to harmful substances.

- Genuine love recognizes and respects the uniqueness of individuality and the separate identity of the person. Each member of our community has something to offer. Rather than be competitive and put others down, and constantly compare each other's worth in material terms, let's value the individuality of ourselves and others, and uniqueness in our inner skills and talents. Genuine love requires one to be a team player.
- Giving and extending ourselves to diminish "ego boundaries" because the goal of real love is spiritual growth. If we are to progress spiritually, we need to diminish the ego boundaries (excessive egotism) that separate our self and others. Real love is a path of enlightenment, becoming one with the other and eventually the whole world. There are no easy shortcuts - in order to lose the self we must first find the self. How do we achieve this? Through discipline and inner awareness by first starting with the self. The present state of malfunction in our world can be largely attributed to the lack of discipline and inner awareness. If spiritual awareness is becoming one with the Divine One and if Divine Energy is Love, then let's start really loving!

MEDITATION EXERCISE -10.1 FOR HEALING A PERSON WITH LOVE ENERGY

Chant OM and pour pure green or pink light from your heart centre and send loving thoughts to someone who needs to be healed. If the person is physically present before you, place your hands on their heart centre.

EMOTIONS -WHAT ARE THEY?

Emotions are feelings that are generated from thoughts. The English word 'emotion' comes from the Latin root *emovere* which means something that sets the mind in motion towards action. This could be harmful, neutral or positive action. There are destructive or negative and constructive or positive emotions. Negative emotions are generated from thoughts that are not in tune with reality, that is, there will be disparity between the way things appear and the way things are. I have often remarked to my students that wisdom and our objective judgement is lost when we are experiencing intense emotions.

MEDITATION EXERCISE 10.2 – OBSERVING EMOTIONS

Sit quietly and think about one event of the day, recall as much as possible. Observe and witness your emotions connected to this event.

If an emotion arises from where did it arise? What was the cause? Did you decide to experience the emotion or was it spontaneous? If you experience a negative emotion trace the triggering factors. Negative emotions usually arise from a need to defend certain aspects of your personality. The three dominants, primitive needs are:

- Security: Was there a threat to your security?
- Power: Was your power, real or imaginary, over something or someone threatened?
- Sensation habits: Were you being deprived of an anticipated pleasure?



WHAT IS THE PROCESS OF GENERATING AN EMOTION?

The senses pick up information from the environment, which we perceive. Our brain encodes, decodes and interprets this information and this produces a feeling. If the thoughts, perception and interpretation are positive, then we experience positive emotions such as joy and happiness. On the other hand, if the thoughts, perception and interpretation are negative then we produce destructive emotions. Destructive emotions bring harm to self and others. Therefore, the motivation or intent and the results or consequences of generating one's emotions should be considered.

According to Buddhist tradition emotions are generated from "ego clinging", which refers to the ingrained grasping of our identity that needs protection and pleasing.

We also feel that this "I" is vulnerable and that we need to protect it and please it. From that come aversion and attraction: aversion to whatever might threaten this "I" and attraction toward whatever pleases or reassures this "I" and makes it feel secure, happy. From these two basic emotions, attraction and repulsion, a host of diverse emotions will come.

Buddhist philosophy like Hinduism and other traditions further believe that destructive or negative emotions are not inherent in the nature of the mind. They are intermittent and arise depending on circumstances, perceptions, habits and tendencies

EMOTIONAL MANAGEMENT THROUGH MEDITATION

Can emotions be managed and controlled? Yes. Our real nature is to be calm as we are spirit. We put on a mask of restlessness, anger, fear and sadness. Feelings and emotions according to the great Indian spiritual masters obscures the soul from its true nature.

Perfect control of feeling makes you king of yourself.

PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA (1893-1952), THE DIVINE ROMANCE

HOW CAN WE REMOVE DESTRUCTIVE NEGATIVE EMOTIONS?

Darkness is the absence of light; so also negative emotions block us from being who we really are. The body, mind, emotions and spirit are interconnected. There is an intimate relationship between the mental, emotional and physical components of our being. If for instance, we recall a traumatic incident (thought) we will emotionally experience the same feelings we felt at the time. Most of the time we tend to identify with our emotions e.g. "I am angry", "I am sad", "I am happy". But are we our emotions? No. For emotions to be experienced, we need to interpret our thoughts. For example, if Mr. Green calls you "scatter brained".

1ST STAGE: You first scan all of the sensory input. Hear Mr. Green's tone of voice, see his body language, and take in the "content" of the communication.

2ND STAGE: Identification with sensory input. Associations with the object happen in the mind. You will think of all the past experiences you have had with Mr. Green including when he has made callous remarks about you.

3RD STAGE: Evaluation of data and discrimination. Was Mr. Green really being offensive?

You will accumulate all past experiences and information related to Mr. Green and then make your decision.

4TH STAGE: Decision-making faculty invoked - to act or not to act. Should I respond to Mr. Green? How should I respond to Mr. Green? All this happens at great speed. It is at the 3rd or 4th stage that emotions are experienced.

As negative emotions enter the mind, they transform into mood or habitual patterns and eventually, as traits of temperament. One can work to remove destructive or negative emotions in three ways:

1. To use antidotes for each emotion and this can be found in meditation. For instance, the antidote or treatment to hatred is love. One has to attend to the positive facets of reality that ignite compassion and loving kindness. One of my colleagues at a place I used to work, had a "hot" temperament, much to the dismay of her peers and my self. When I meditated and looked for and focussed on the positive traits and qualities of her personality, the anger and irritation towards her melted away. In searching out for her positive traits, I utilized reason, taking the other aspects of her reality into account. The Dalai Lama has said,

From the Buddhist point of view, even in dealing with the afflictions (negative emotions), understanding the nature of reality becomes very important because lack of understanding leads to either reification, some kind of nihilism or false denial. For that reason, valid, verifying cognition is very important.

2. To address the "emptiness" or the void nature of the negative emotion, often students have been encouraged to look fear in the face – i.e. to face up to and address the fear. Often, when they do that they find that the fear melts away. Negative emotions are generated because of distorted mental images in the mind. I had a patient who had a phobia of water and the image was so distorted in her mind that she was afraid to go for a bath or shower. After a few therapeutic sessions I discovered the reason for her phobia. She was thrown into the deep end of a swimming pool when she was a child. In her mind the experience was so traumatic that all water was equal to danger. After therapy her mind was able to see the distorted thinking that all water is not dangerous.

3. Transforming negative into positive that is, using the energy of the negative emotion for positive outcomes. One of my students said he used anger when jogging and running up a steep hill.

MEDITATION EXERCISE 10.3 – GENERATING AN EMOTION

Place any object such a pen before you. You are directed to first experience liking, a positive emotion for this object. Then, try to experience intense dislike, negative emotion for this object.

Become conscious of the stages you go through - before you experience the emotion. Are emotions really automatically experienced? Can we make choices?

Deliberately recall a past incident, which caused you to experience strong emotions. Recreate the incident in detail. Try to trace the emotion back to its real cause. Observe the event. Did you decide to experience the emotion or was it spontaneous?



When you experience a negative emotion, try to trace the triggering factor to one of these three needs:

Was there a threat to your security?

Was your power threatened?

Were you being deprived of an anticipated pleasure?

Management of our mind will greatly improve our emotional life.

DOES ONE DEAL WITH NEGATIVE EMOTIONS BEFORE, DURING OR AFTER THEY OCCUR?

The novice approaches emotional management or intervention only after experiencing them. When one has had some experience in this practice then one can deal with emotions as they arise. The person is freeing themselves of the emotions as they arise. Spiritual masters and realized people might avert a destructive emotion even before it manifests by recognising the triggers and patterns that precede these destructive emotions. Conversely, they might take this one step further and mobilize the negative energy to serve humankind. For example, after the tragedy of Jalianiwala Bagh, where the British massacred many hundreds of unarmed Indian men, women and children Mahatma Gandhi harnessed the anger of the oppressed population to launch his historic satyagraha movement (i.e. non-compliance and non-violent protests). Gandhi used forceful yet non-violent action against to achieve his goal of freedom for his people.

TYPES OF EMOTIONS – FOUR MAIN CATEGORIES

1. Joy or happiness
2. Fear
3. Anger
4. Sadness

HAPPINESS

Happiness and joy are positive emotional states or conditions that we experience, albeit for short periods during our lives. As our mind or thoughts affects the way we feel, happiness is impermanent. On the other hand, bliss is permanent. Bliss is non-dual; it is a spiritual state of consciousness, when we are one with Divinity. It is that state of being when we are: Divine Consciousness – one with Divinity. The goal of meditation is to attain Bliss. Suffering in humanity is caused by ignorance, negative emotions and attachment. However suffering and pain helps us to become better human beings and helps us to grow.

We could never learn to be brave and patient, if there were only joy in the world.

HELEN KELLER, US BLIND & DEAF EDUCATOR, 1880 - 1968



STEPS TO ATTAINING BLISS

- Enjoy what you do and have in the NOW. For example, if you work as an electrician, find meaning and purpose in what you do and enjoy your work. Do not constantly crave to become a teacher. You can always plan and take action to change things that you do not like in your life.
- Positive thinking in every integrated moment of awareness. Always think of the glass as half full rather than as half empty. Thoughts are the first step in creation. Thoughts are extremely powerful. They create your world. If you think positively, you create a positive world.
- Live in the present. Do not regret the past and wallow in past glories nor worry about the future. Worry is unreal mental activity created through fear. A patient wrote this beautiful poem for me which she titled, Huzan's gift:

*Nothing is lost
In fact more is found
When you live in the present
Your feet on the ground
The future still floating
On wings and a prayer
Even angels take shelter from your fears through love and care
So pack up your troubles
Your thinking must shift
Breathe this moment
Feel its presence it's the NOW that's your gift.*

- Make others happy through selflessness. We spend too much time focusing on ourselves, with the "poor me" syndrome. We tend to always compare ourselves with people who have more than us rather than be grateful for what we have as compared to most people. Hence we want more, more and more...

Real joy comes not from ease or riches or from the praise of men, but from doing something worthwhile.

SIR WILFRED GRENFELL, ENGLISH MISSIONARY & PHYSICIAN (1865 - 1940)

- Do not have expectations. We are constantly having expectations. If we do not have expectations we cannot be disappointed.
- Contentment. Become satisfied with what you have. We always compare ourselves with others who have more than us and forget to be grateful for what we do have.
- Healthy body, mind and spirit. Healthy body comes with eating well; fresh vegetarian food is the healthiest. It goes without saying that smoking does severe long term harm and excess alcohol leaves leads to lasting physical damage.

- Replace anger in your heart with Love. Instead of using anger as a weapon to hurt another, look within and harness this force to destroy your own ego and your bad habits that bind you. Love will quickly and effortlessly fill the void.
- Look fear in the face and deal with it. Fear, worry and anxiety are mental irrational beliefs about a future condition. We create worry and fear in our minds. If you live in the present and deal with the reality of what is happening NOW, fear and worry will automatically be removed.
- Grief or sadness is a sign that we have developed "attachment" towards the unreal. For instance death is a temporary condition where the body turns to dust but the real you, your spirit, is permanent and can never be destroyed. So stop grasping at temporary objects but grasp for the only permanent energy in the Universe – the Divine One.

FEAR

Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear - not absence of fear.

MARK TWAIN, 1835 - 1910

Fear can be positive or destructive. Fear can be used positively, for instance, to flee from danger. The definition of fear as a destructive emotion is "False evidence or experience appearing real" – i.e. false thoughts in our mind about something or someone that appear real to us. The greatest fear we have about ourselves is "mortal fear" . Fear about our cessation, fear about bodily pain, hunger and any threat to the body. There are three parts of the Self. Firstly, what others say about us. Secondly, what you say about yourself which is generally based on the messages we get from others and thirdly, your true reality which is Atma. Fear is created when we identify with what others say about us and our thoughts and associations with past negative experiences. If you want to release fear identify with your true reality which is Divine and indestructible. When we perceive ourselves as being destructible, we experience fear. Our perception and interpretation of an object or person as threatening to our well being, security or power, produce fear. We protect ego integration with every possible means including deluding ourselves about the nature of reality. So we resist the fear of facing mortality by getting absorbed in the delusion of duality, that is, life's fleeting superficialities and material pleasures. But the reality is that we are indestructible. Our true essence is Divine. Fear prevents us from being who we really are and rising to Universal Consciousness. The root cause of fear is the absence of pure and sacred thoughts and "separateness from God". When we see ourselves as one with God as divine we see ourselves as indestructible and eternal and have courage to look at fear in the face. One of my meditation students whom I shall name Steve recounted his experience of being held up by a gunman in the bank. At that grave moment he stated that he thought about his three children and said to himself, "I am not ready to die". He prayed to God and found himself with great inner courage and strength. Steve made an effort to talk to the gunman and eventually the gunman did give up his gun. A miracle occurred not only was Steve's life spared but the gunman gave him back his possessions. In that crucial moment Steve had two choices: to think of himself as defeated and "dead" and therefore give in to the gunman or address his fears with courage and challenge the gunman with his wisdom. I am so glad Steve choose the latter. Fear is worry, anxiety and stress related to the future.

Another patient whom I shall call Anne was suffering from anxiety. One day she was in a hurry to get to work and she grabbed a vitamin pill to swallow with some water and found that she was choking. At the moment of crisis her thoughts went back to a childhood experience of choking and all the thoughts she associated with that experience - thinking the worst, that she was going to die from the choking. Because of the choice she made in thinking, she experienced the worst panic attack with heart palpitations, violent shaking and sweating profusely. I later told her that in that crisis moment she still had a choice. To think the worst or to think: let me call out to my guides and angels and ask for help, and trust that she would receive the help she needed. Next time a crisis situation occurred I believe Anne would be better prepared to make the right choices in her thoughts thereby creating a positive outcome. We create our reality by the way we think.

EXERCISE 10.4 STEPS TO ELIMINATE FEAR

Go through these steps in a meditative state:

- Identify the fear(s). What are they? For example: I have fear of water.
- If possible, identify the origin of the fear. Why do I have these fears? Where did these fears originate? Identify the thoughts that trigger these fears. For example: I remember being thrown into a swimming pool when I was three and I almost drowned. This resulted in my lasting fear of water.
- What are the "core beliefs" that have developed as a result of these fears? Core beliefs are fundamental thoughts, attitudes, perceptions you have about yourself and your environment, generally derived from past experiences. These beliefs are so deep seated, that they unconsciously affect your actions. The more traumatic and unsettling our experience, the stronger our beliefs. For example: I am not a good swimmer. I am not a good person etc.
- Prepare to turn off the worry, fear and anxiety by identifying with Divinity. There is nothing or nobody that can hurt your spirit or soul. You are a part of the divine energy. "I am not just the body, mind and intellect. I am Divine". Trust and have faith in Divinity protecting you. Live up to the truth of your being. A fearless person will be detached from all objects of the world and become saturated with the love of God. On the other hand, one who is egoistic about his body and attached to worldly accomplishments will be full of fears.
- Have a practical plan to deal with the fear. Put the plan down in writing. For example: I will go for swimming lessons, I know that one negative experience about the water does not necessarily make the water dangerous.
- Confront the fear by implementing the plan. It does not matter what others think. For example, even at the age of 50, I will take swimming lessons.
- Do deep breathing. Watch and observe your breath. Watch your body and transform all the tense areas to a state of relaxation.
- Reinforce success with positive affirmations. "I am Love, I am Divine"

ANGER

Anyone can become angry – that is easy. But to be angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose, and in the right way – that is not easy.

ARISTOTLE, THE NICOMACHEAN ETHICS.

Aristotle is postulating in the above statement that anger can be an asset as well as detrimental. Some anger is used to compassionately help someone. Buddhists use the term "virtuous anger" to describe this. If someone is about to jump off a cliff and I shout at them angrily to stop, I am using anger for a positive outcome. On the other hand, destructive anger is an emotion or feeling that is generated when the mind interprets that the individual needs are unfulfilled. Fear of losing something or unfulfilled needs brings about anger. Hatred, jealousy, envy and pride stem from the root emotion of anger. For instance, if someone calls me a fool or is rude to me, I perceive that as a threat to my self-image and I generate a feeling of anger, which compels me to fight back.

Anger debilitates. Anger is usually rooted in judgement. People are angry because we have not met their expectations. We hold others to some standards. As Mahatma Gandhi said, "An eye for an eye and the whole world will be blind". If we are in an intense emotional state, we lose touch with our higher consciousness and wisdom.

Holding on to anger, resentment and hurt only gives you tense muscles, a headache and a sore jaw from clenching your teeth. Forgiveness gives you back the laughter and the lightness in your life.

JOAN LUNDEN, IN HEALTHY LIVING MAGAZINE

Anger is responsible for shortening a person's life. How does your body react when you are experiencing anger? The blood pressure rises, the body parts become tense, nerves become weaker. We release chemicals in our body that over the long term, affects us adversely. Anger has many shades and colours: Fury, outrage, resentment, wrath, exasperation, indignation, vexation, acrimony, animosity, annoyance, irritability, hostility, hatred and violence. Guilt is a form of self-anger or anger turned inwards. It also has tinges of fear energy. You are disappointed with self or you did not live up to the expectations of your self. Sometimes anger is a defence against fear. If we let go of the fear, we will let go of anger. A person threatened of losing control of a situation or reputation might go on the attack aggressively to hide his fears.

When anger rises, think of the consequences.

CONFUCIUS, CHINESE PHILOSOPHER & REFORMER, 551 BC - 479 BC

EXERCISE 10.5 MEDITATION EXERCISE TO LET GO OF ANGER

This exercise is done to let go or discard anger in any situation, an attitude, a place, or a negative link to a person, a memory or an illness. When we address our feelings and voice our

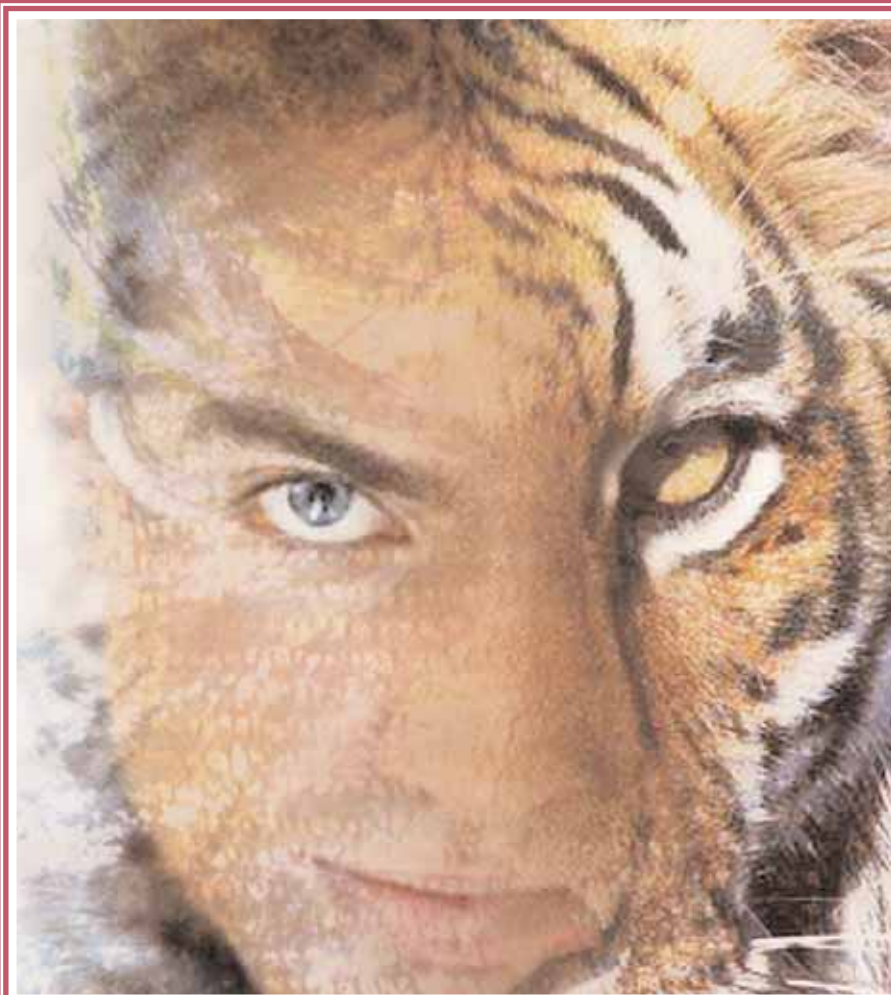
feelings we are acknowledging and confronting them. This is the first step in letting go of our anger. Facing our feelings in this way takes courage and helps us to affirm that we are more powerful than the anger energy.

Chant "Sohum" (I am divine) in the group. The group members should close their eyes, join hands in the circle and imagine breathing in and out of their heart centres as they chant together. Each person begins to send a gold beam of light from his or her heart to the centre of the circle, filling the space with gold energy and creating a beautiful healing pool. Allow everyone to continue the sound softly while each member stops singing in turn and speaks in a clear voice, "I let go of ... (individual to fill in the blanks appropriately) into the pool of healing light". Release negative feelings, negative links, ties, situations, memory, illness etc. After each person has "discarded", they should finish with "So be it" as a cue for the next person to speak. Continue round the circle till there is nothing more to let go. All the group members should chant OM and collectively transform the negative energy into golden light and see the negative energy being drawn away by the Divine One.



Chapter II

UNLIMITED POWER WITHIN YOU



Chapter 11

Unlimited power within you...

There is no difficulty that enough love will not conquer. There is no disease that enough love will not heal. No door that enough love will not open. No gulf that enough love will not bridge. No wall that enough love will not throw down. And no sin that enough love will not redeem. It makes no difference how deeply seated may be the trouble. How hopeless the outlook. How muddled the tangle. How great the mistake. A sufficient realization of love will dissolve it all. And if you could love enough you would be the happiest and most powerful person in the world.

EMMETT FOX

We are Divine, therefore we have access to the Infinite Mind - all knowledge and Wisdom is available to us at any point. Therefore we have unlimited power within us to access this wisdom. Furthermore, there is abundance in the Universe and enough for all of humanity and God's creations. However, we see that there is inequality and uneven distribution of wealth and resources around us. This is largely because of the attitude of some to accumulate, collect and hoard. There is an imbalance in the distribution of resources on the planet; twenty percent of the world's population consumes more than eighty percent of the earth's resources. "The world holds enough to satisfy everyone's need but not everyone's greed," Mahatma Gandhi once observed. In these few words he recognized the main cause of most of the world's social and economic problems. 852 million people across the world are hungry, up from 842 million a year ago.

So we have a system in which 400 of the world's wealthiest people own more wealth than the poorest two-and-a-half billion people. And the proponents of this grossly inequitable system see nothing wrong with it. They would presumably not object if eventually 600 billionaires owned more wealth than 90% of the rest of humankind. That's what a free market is all about, they would remind us. In a system based on the survival of the fittest, the financially unfit don't survive--and don't deserve to.

Marxism, capitalism, or socialism have not and will not succeed in achieving equality. The solution lies in something that has been in existence since mankind itself – Spirituality. People have to change their attitudes by curbing their desires, reducing wastage and living within universal spiritual principles of sharing, loving and giving.

The problem is an unfair distribution of wealth, and the solution--however it may be achieved--is a fair distribution of wealth. Any strategies that ignore that simple truth waste our time, squander our resources, and undermine our efforts to create a better world.

Man is the only creature endowed with the capacity to separate himself from his body, the senses, emotions and the mind. He is the user, owner and master of all these entities. When the mind is controlling the senses, one has lasting joy; however, when the senses are masters, one could be dragged into the quagmire. When the senses start demanding from you, you must use your intelligence and discern, "Will this thought, word or action be in keeping with the divinity in me?"

God is love and if we want to return to our true nature, we need to return to being love. Loving self and others is the greatest lesson we need to learn in this physical realm. We can get in touch with this inner power by taking responsibility for our thoughts, words and actions. When making decisions, ask yourself, is this decision right for others and me? Is it for the highest good?

The power to change your life is in your thinking. If you are unhappy about your present reality, release the old patterns of thinking that have created this present reality. It is your past thoughts that have created your present and your present thoughts will create your future. Become conscious of your thoughts at every integrated moment of existence.

We are talking to our selves all the time. Watch your "self-talk". Do not blame yourself for where you are because you are always doing the best you can with the knowledge and awareness you have at the moment. You are the only person that can think in your mind. No one else has the control over your thoughts and therefore, the only person who is really capable of making a change in your life is you!. We all have dreams – but it is the practice of meditation that channels our thoughts positively and allows us to achieve our dreams.

WHAT IS CREATIVE MEDITATION?

Creative meditation is a process of going within, getting in touch with your true nature and power, and then allowing full expression of your abilities, potentials and talents, thereby making your dreams or goals come true. It involves taking your thoughts to the highest level of consciousness to create and attain goodness for self or others. It is your present thoughts that are creating your future physical reality, so if you consciously take your present thoughts to your desired goals, you can create the reality you want in the future.

WHAT ARE THE KEY STEPS NEEDED FOR CREATIVE MEDITATION?

1. Connection with the divine source.
2. Articulate clearly your intention (state in detail, your aim, desire, will).
3. Have a bigger vision picture and plan of your goals. Break the goals into bite sized pieces and implement a daily plan or "to do" list which is realistic and achievable.
4. Put consistent and persistent continuous energy to make your goal come true. Then have patience and "let go", without focusing on the outcome.

Below is a letter from one of my meditation class students who successfully manifested a job for herself.

Hi there Huzan, I discovered the Universe has a sense of humour. A few weeks ago I was out with a friend driving on to have an adventure. We got to our destination and parked the car. My friend said "Oh, we should have brought a camera along, so we can take snaps of all the places we go to." I said, maybe we could buy one of those disposable cameras.



Anyway, she reached under the seat to get her bag, and instead ...pulled out a disposable camera!! We had absolutely NO idea how it got there, but we decided that someone was trying to send us a message about manifesting. We had a good laugh about it over lunch. I wrote out my intentions on a piece of paper. I wanted a new job. I put down details as you explained: proximity to home, working with like minded people, respect at work, doing what I loved, creative, sales, meeting interesting people etc.. and put it on the pillow next to me and looked at it upon waking and retiring, and in meditation. Nothing much happened for a while (well it's been about 4 weeks) A friend of mine said I should focus on what my passion was, instead of the money, and also to have IMPLICIT faith that my desires would be answered. This was a bit hard for me at times, as I am impatient, however, every time the little voice in my head kept trying to instill fear ... I yelled STOP at it, and made it go away. Anyway, I stopped focusing on the money and instead focused on my passion and the Universe responded pretty swiftly. This tells me that you should always be congruent with your desires, or your truth, otherwise I don't think it will happen...NOW...my NEXT list describes the man I want to meet...so maybe I can have a head on the pillow next to mine instead of a piece of paper with a list on it!!...watch this space...I could have some fun with manifesting stuff.

Love and light

JANET (THE CREATOR!!)

A client whom I shall name Mary, came to see me in a distressed state of mind. She was approximately 40 years of age and had many failed relationships. On assessment and exploring her background it was revealed that she had a lot of fear around relationships, especially intimate ones. There was a lot of illness in her family and male figures such as her father or her brothers had often been sick or died from illness. Deep meditation work revealed that she blamed herself for situations in the family; as a result she was full of fear. Mary was really keen on having a healthy relationship and I guided her through the following steps in creative meditation to make her dreams come true.

THINGS TO DO WITHIN THESE STEPS

I. CLEAR YOUR INNER BELIEFS AND ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR WHAT YOU THINK, SPEAK AND DO.

For instance, after putting all her intentions out for a partner with details of her needs, Mary had to clear all her negative beliefs that were sabotaging her from making her dreams come true. She had negative thought patterns that she was not good enough and that she was too "old" to find a partner. I told her to change her self-talk to the following:

- "I wholeheartedly accept full responsibility for what I think, choose, decide, believe and anticipate. I think of health, harmony and abundance. I decide on right action."

- "Power behind my thought is my belief. The greater my belief the greater the flow of mind power and my creative ability to do and put into action."

2. IDENTIFY YOURSELF WITH THE QUALITIES OF YOUR CREATOR.

The contemporary global economy is based on competition, greed, and hatred, often condemning and putting others down. But one needs to remember the law of karma, what we give out, comes back to us. So instead of competition, we need to operate with spiritual principles by identifying with our Creator. Where I am, God is. I am one with God, therefore His qualities are my qualities. I am creative and I am: love, light, wisdom, peace, power, beauty and joy. These qualities are forever seeking fuller expression through me. In the case of Mary, she did not see herself as divine and therefore her self-esteem was very low. I made her start changing her thought patterns and believe that she was divine and was therefore deserving of a good partner. She was made to believe the following:

- My body is charged with Universal Energy. I have the ability to create.
- My creations are beneficial to me, others and society as a whole.
- Any action that truly benefits me benefits all, so I will choose actions that are for others and my greatest good.

3. THERE IS ABUNDANCE IN THE UNIVERSE AND I NEED TO EXPAND MY THINKING BY BELIEVING THERE IS PLENTY FOR ALL, AND NOT CONTRACT AND LIMIT OTHERS OR MYSELF.

Mary kept thinking she was getting old and therefore her chances of finding a life partner were negligible. She had to expand her thinking by believing that there was abundance and it was more than likely that she would meet her soul mate. Furthermore she had to learn to open her heart centre and give love if she wanted to receive love. There is a law of giving and receiving that states, "The more I give the more I will get."

4. YOU NEED TO UNDERSTAND THAT WHATEVER BECOMES A REAL LIVING BELIEF IN YOUR CONSCIOUSNESS, FLOWS INTO YOUR EXPERIENCE.

There are four laws related to beliefs and they are listed below:

A. LAW OF MIND - it is a natural law which states that the power of the mind is continually pushing the substance of life through you into expression. You are connected to the source. The pattern this takes is the design of the nature of your thoughts and feelings, conscious and subconscious and this then determines your experience. For instance, consider a lawn sprinkler. A hose is connected to a sprinkler; turn it on and water sprays in a pattern determined by the nature and pattern of the holes in the sprinkler. If a different pattern is desired, a different sprinkler is utilized. But the action of the power of pressure forcing the water through the hose and sprinkler remains the same. Affirm to yourself. "I honour this marvelous action of mind by only accepting ideas that are worthy of me".

B. LAW OF BELIEF - whatever takes root becomes a living belief or reality in consciousness and flows into experience. Take a seed, let the thought enter into it and behold the living reality of the mature plant.



C. LAW OF INERTIA - a body remains at rest or in uniform motion in a straight line until a force is applied to it. A desired change of state or direction in experience requires first a corresponding change in consciousness. The only applicable force is thought - applied mind power.

D. LAW OF ATTRACTION - The individual is likewise surrounded by an invisible mental magnetic field that is outlined by his/her surroundings: people, conditions and objects. "Thoughts attract what is like itself and repel what is unlike". The wise man understanding the law of attraction, fills his consciousness with the qualitative thoughts of what he desires to the exclusion of their opposites.

5. SPECIFY THE PARTICULAR GOOD YOU DESIRE.

Know the qualities you want expressed in your goals or desires: Love, peace, health, beauty, power and joy. Eliminate all but those of a life-giving, positive and constructive nature, consistent with the general good of all. You cannot creatively visualize for something if it would bring about disharmony or hurt another individual. It cannot occur at cost to someone else. For instance, it would be wrong for Mary to creatively meditate on finding a partner who happens to be happily married.

Creative meditation works on the fundamental principle that you, "Ask and it shall be given; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you".

(MATTHEW 7:7)

6. WHATSOEVER THINGS OR GOALS YOU DESIRE, BELIEVE THAT YOU HAVE ALREADY RECEIVED THEM AND YOU SHALL HAVE THEM.

SUMMARY OF COMPONENTS NEEDED FOR CREATIVE MEDITATION

Σ The power of the moment: right now is the only time I can think; it is the only time I can turn my thoughts to Divinity within, the only time I can experience its warm inner presence. This moment is the most important in my life!

Faith is a belief that requires unconditional trust and positive feeling, "the substance of things hoped for"

(HEBREWS 11:1)

Σ My divine inheritance includes freedom. No place, no person, no situation can hold me in bondage - unless I accept that bondage. My thoughts are my own and no one can control them...As a spiritual being, I know my birthright, the freedom to choose what I believe and anticipate and thus no one can interfere with my good. I fear none. No condition or circumstance can bind me. The very way in which light and power flow through me is my salvation, for I alone select my thoughts.

- Σ• Belief that what you desire can happen.
- Σ• Realistic acceptance of the fact that life always moves forward and whatever happens is for the best.
- Σ• Courage to face challenges. Challenges are opportunities for growth.
- Σ• Patience to take one step at a time. Patient and persistent visualization of receiving and experiencing your desired good helps you to build confident expectations and acceptance of it.
- Σ• Gratitude - it is essential to have gratitude, focus attention on the good already manifesting in your experience. Give thanks, that the need was already met, the goal already achieved. This establishes the attitude of expectancy and faith that releases the energy of mind into a chosen channel.

It is said that it takes 21 days to change things and bring into physical reality what you have manifested in thought. Therefore, Check for whether you are following the process of creatively meditating by asking yourself the following questions:

QUESTIONS YOURSELF:

- Which of my thoughts, feelings and habit patterns are incompatible with the new idea and must be released?
- If this new idea were to manifest within the next 24 hours would I be ready for the change?
- Do I need to do anything in readiness for the change to happen?
- vWhat will living in the new experience be like?
- Do I fully accept the principle that I am divine?
- Am I convinced that God is all good, infinite Wisdom and so that is my true nature?
- Do I believe in my heart that I am constantly surrounded and infused with this presence?
- Do I recognize the presence of God in all creation?
- Do I thoroughly understand the great Law of Creative Power that acts to produce in my experience what I consciously and subconsciously think and accept?
- Do I understand that everything and anything is possible?
- Is the good I deserve defined clearly enough to be recognizable when it appears?
- Do I feel that this good outcome already belongs to me and have put to the universe how I want it to manifest, so that there are no doubts?
- Am I generous in my praise, appreciation and gratitude that Infinite Wisdom is unfolding my good in orderly sequence according to the Law of the Mind?



HOW TO SOLVE A PROBLEM

- Clarify the problem factually. Detach yourself from the problem and try to remove the emotional and subjective issues from the facts
- Find alternatives to solve the problem.
- Decide what solution to take depending on whether the decision is in tune with Divine Will.
- Affirm what the solution is.
- Activate the power of mind by focusing attention on the desired results, believing that everything is possible.
- Co-operate calmly and unhurriedly as the mind unfolds in perfect sequence the outer elements of the solution and your part in the action becomes clearly evident. Rejoice in each step and affirm, "I can solve problems that I thought I never could."

ANCIENT MEDITATION EXERCISES FOR CREATIVE MANIFESTATION

Yoga Nidra is a meditation technique that helps manifest our dreams (sankalpas). We are in a sleeping yoga posture called shavasana. Lie flat on your back with your arms besides you and in line with the body. Place the palms facing upwards. Move the feet slightly apart to a comfortable position. The head should be in a relaxed position facing downwards. The tongue should make contact with the lower and upper palate. Many beginners tend to drift off to sleep if they attempt to practise meditation in shavasana. Bring your awareness to the present. Shavasana is the best posture for yoga nidra or any other meditation practise that requires complete relaxation; one only has to make a conscious effort not to drift into sleep.

WHAT IS YOGA NIDRA?

Yoga nidra literally means psychic sleep. It is a state of "sleepless sleep" - that is, the body and mind are in a state between sleep and wakefulness, but the consciousness is in a heightened state of awareness. We can use yoga nidra as a regular practice before we sleep (we will experience deep sleep and take our consciousness to heightened levels) as it puts the whole body and mind in a state of relaxation. Most of us have active minds when we are about to sleep and even in our sleep, our thoughts are running from the past (in terms of what has happened) or to worrying thoughts, pertaining to the future. Sri Jyotsana Sumi Jaiswal in his article on yoga nidra in the Indian Link newspaper of October 2000 writes that:

Mahatma Gandhi only slept for a few hours a day, but practised yoga nidra during those two hours. He further adds that when the body and the mind are completely relaxed, the person's receptivity is far greater than when the consciousness is connected to all of the body's senses. Here lies the secret of yoga nidra. This is also the source of the most creative scientific discoveries.

In yoga nidra, the physical senses are withdrawn to focus on the center in a state of deep relaxation. It is the most powerful technique to bring us face to face with our inner selves and

make inner personality changes towards others and ourselves. A sankalpa or resolve is made during the practice. Sankalpas are short affirmative statements that are creating our reality. In the heightened state of yoga nidra the autosuggestion/affirmation has the most powerful results. The practice should be done regularly for it to be effective. (A good way to start is to commit to practise for 21 nights at a stretch). NB: Once the yoga nidra has begun there should be no physical movement.

IMPORTANT STAGES OF YOGA NIDRA:

- A resolve or sankalpa is made
- Rotation of consciousness throughout the 74 parts of the body. The sequence of this should not be changed.
- Recollection or awakening of feelings and physical sensations experienced by the body
- Conceptual awareness of chakras and psychic symbols. At certain centers you may experience psychic phenomena and visions
- Repeat sankalpa
- Return to normal consciousness
- Affirmations in a meditative state

Before you drift to sleep every night make positive affirmations using visualizations. For instance visualize your health being in balance. Make positive affirmations about your relationships with people, or make positive affirmations about your work.

ANCIENT MEDITATION EXERCISE TO ENHANCE CONCENTRATION

The literal translation of *trataka* is "to look at steadily". The practice of *trataka* develops concentration, focus, persistence and one-pointedness, thereby increasing our power to achieve our goals. The power of the mind is great but we dissipate our energies as we are continuously bombarded by sensory data and we get distracted. The mind is kept under control by choosing to concentrate on an object.

Trataka consists of two parts: external and internal (*antar trataka*). The untrained mind finds it easier to concentrate on an external object. In *antar trataka* or inner visualization at the eyebrow center, the mind is trained to introvert at the eyebrow center. The practice automatically leads to meditation.

In *trataka*, the eyes should be steady and not blink, and a sitting posture is most appropriate. The mind should be only on the one object – nothing else. Choose an object that has deep spiritual significance for you. The object should be placed at arm's length at eye level. Do not fight the mind and thoughts. Every time your thoughts wander, gently bring them back to the object of concentration.



EFFECTS OF TRATAKA PRACTICE

- Improves concentration and memory
- Opens up a storehouse of energy

SOME OTHER TECHNIQUES IN CONCENTRATION

ASSOCIATION OF IDEAS – Look at an object, for example your wedding ring. Close your eyes and become aware of all the association of thoughts with that object.

RECALL BY VISUALIZATION – Look at an object such as a flame. Keep watching the object registering all the details you see. Close your eyes and recall the object in your eyebrow center.

- Contraction and expansion – Look at a flame. See all the details of the flame. Recreate the flame in your mind's eye. Now see the flame expand till you become the flame. Then, let the flame contract till it becomes just a dot.
- Visualization of an object at will – take any object, a flower, a ring, or a symbol of Divinity. Focus your eyes on the object. Blink whenever you have to. Think only of the object. Look at its shape, colour, size, and form. See all the details.

OTHER MEDITATION EXERCISES TO IMPROVE MENTAL ATTITUDE AND CONCENTRATION

Mudras are physical and mental conditions or attitudes that play an important role in yoga practice. They bring about psychic states and occurrences. The mudras include numerous hand positions and subtle methods of concentrating the mind. The bandhas is a group of inner locks designed to hold prana or psychic energy within certain areas of the body so that its pressurized force can be directed and utilized. If you experience any pain or difficulty, please stop the practice and seek expert guidance.

GYANA MUDRA

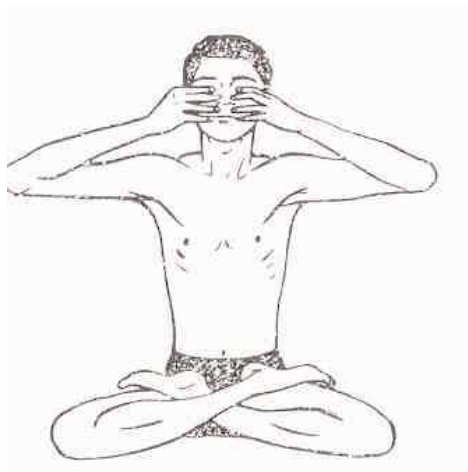


CHIN MUDRA



Gyana and chin mudra are simple but important finger locks which make the meditative postures complete and more powerful by redirecting the nervous impulses from the hands upwards to the body.

YONI MUDRA (an attitude withdrawing from senses towards communing with divinity)



Retain the breath inside and raise your hands to your face. Close the ears with the thumbs, the eyes with the index fingers, the nostrils with the middle fingers and place the ring and small fingers above and below the lips, to seal the mouth. Retain the breath inside for as long as is comfortable while concentrating on the bindu chakra. Then release your middle finger from the nostrils and slowly exhale and inhale.

BENEFITS: This mudra is most useful in inducing the state of pratyahara or sense withdrawal. It helps the mind to turn inward to see within.

KHECHARI MUDRA

Khechari literally means the attitude of moving upward in consciousness. It is one of the basic practices in the advanced techniques of meditation. Close the mouth and roll the tongue backwards so that the normally lower surface of the tongue touches the upper palate. Try to bring the tongue tip as far back as possible without strain. Breathe normally. Later you may practise breath retention and slow inhalation and exhalation. The vital nerve centers in the brain are stimulated by this practice. Yogis buried under the ground for long periods of time perform this mudra as it helps to retain the breath. It awakens the kundalini energy within and also helps to preserve the vital energy of the body.

MOOLA BANDHA

The word moola means root and bandha means to lock. This advanced meditation technique locks the psychic energy in the upper part of the spiritual body. Through mental compression (one-pointedness) you stimulate the mooladhara chakra and awaken the kundalini energy (vital energy latent at the base of the spine).

In the basic practice of moola bandha the spiritual aspirant is instructed to exert muscular contraction in the area associated with the mooladhara chakra. In males this point is located very slightly above the perineum, the spot on the skin directly between the genitals and anus. In females the mooladhara point is located at the cervix where the uterus and vagina join.

Sit in a meditative posture with knees firmly on the ground, best posture being siddhasana and siddha yoni asana (lotus posture), as the pressure exerted by the heel in these poses improves the bandha (lock). Place the hands in gyana or chin mudra. Close your eyes and concentrate on the trigger point in the mooladhara chakra. Try to touch the point with your awareness then contract it, holding the contraction as long as possible. Then slowly release it. Relax for a few seconds and then practise again. Later after the practitioner has become familiar with the area, he/she can exert mental compression in the area with his/her awareness. If mastered, the technique is far more powerful than the physical contraction, however all students should utilize the muscular contraction in the initial stages of practice.



Chapter 12

ANGELS AND SPIRIT GUIDES



Chapter 12

Angels and Spirit guides

Like God, angels are beyond proof, at least in the scientific sense of the term. Once we start arguing about whether or not angels exist, we have already missed the point. An angel is what it says and does, not what it is.

F. FORRESTER CHURCH

All prayers arising from pure love, unselfish eagerness to render service and from the hearts that are all-inclusive, will reach God.

SHRI SATYA SAI BABA

Each one of us has a spirit guide or guardian angel guiding us throughout our physical life. The Hindus and Buddhists call them devis and devas. The Zoroastrians call them fravashi or farohars. The seven Archangels head the spiritual hierarchy. Once, I was undertaking some past life regression work on myself, and I saw myself way back in time as an angel in pure spirit form. I was told that all human beings are sparks of God and in the beginning were angels – pure spirit or essences of God. Some of these angels have chosen to come down to the physical form for experience and those that have not, are still in God's pure energy form. Angels are spiritual beings who have never incarnated into the physical form. They contact us when they need to give human beings a message. We will one day return to being angels: pure Divine energy. In some of the Sai literature I have read about people having reported citing angels around Shri Satya Sai Baba, come to pay homage to this great cosmic master.

In contrast to angels, spirit guides have usually come into physical form (that is they have incarnated several times) and are in between lives taking on the role of guiding a human being. At the spirit realm many of them choose to guide their loved ones who are still in physical form. We may sometimes have more than one spirit guides and or guardian angels. We always have one primary guide that is with us permanently throughout our life. The others come and go depending on our needs, development and interests. People who are uninterested in spiritual matters are often not open to assistance therefore they may be unaware of the guidance or the presence of their guides. It is said that those individuals generally have only one guide throughout their life. The guides are spiritually more evolved than the person but not necessarily of the highest spiritual calibre, that is, they are still not one with God in essence.

As we in the physical realm evolve spiritually we move towards higher vibrations and so we attract guides of higher vibrations, we have to be open and purified in order for them to connect with us. A similar analogy is school, as we become more educated and move to higher grades we have the equivalent caliber of teachers to teach us. We may have a number of teachers each specializing in a certain subject. It is said for instance, that artists and musicians are guided by guides who have been artists or musicians in their previous incarnations. A friend of mine who creates sacred essences for healing has a guide who was a doctor in a previous incarnation.



He gives her a clear insight, knowledge and wisdom about the human body at a deeper level.

Often, we feel afraid because we believe we are alone and vulnerable in a frightening world. But we need to remember that we are surrounded by angels and guides who can help us in countless ways. When we get rid of our fears and instead ask for their help we can see miracles happening in our everyday life. A simple and fast way to create more miraculous coincidences in your life is to connect to your angels, ask and expect the miracles to happen. Hold a firm thought or question in mind then know your angels are at work, creating an occurrence that will fulfill your need.

EXERCISE 12.1 CONNECTING WITH YOUR SPIRIT GUIDES

Relax your body and watch your breath. Visualize that you are in a sacred space. Ask for protection. When you are in a deep meditative state, call out to your guides. Ask first for your primary guide to appear, then any other guides that are present. Ask three times for them to reveal their names and even their identity and then await their reply. Ask that you might see an image or sense their presence. Be silent and trust the images that come to you. Carry out this meditation for the next couple of days and faithfully ask the same questions. Observe what comes through.

Nine fundamental principles to observe when communicating to your spirit guides and guardian angels:

1. Be in a harmonious receptive state and believe that you are worthy of communicating with them.
2. Invoke their presence - unless you invite them they will not come.
3. Ask them for specific help and guidance. Humans have freedom of choice, and angels never interfere unless they are called and asked for help.
4. Be very specific and clear as to what you want. Identify what you need for your (and if applicable for someone else's) growth and highest good. Surround your request with Love. Be sure to never try to manipulate and control someone else's life or interfere with the Laws of karma. Check your motives before you ask for something for yourself and/or for someone else.
5. Listen. Work with your intuition rather than your intellect. Trust and believe what comes through.
6. Follow their guidance and believe that the outcome you desire will happen. Visualize that you have already achieved the outcome.
7. Always be positive, trust them completely; release any doubts and have patience. Believe that there is abundance in the universe.



8. Limitations and doubts stem from our mind. Trust the Universe to work on your problems. God has no limits. Do not limit yourself; believe in God as He believes in you. Miracles are God's Will in action. You do your bit of asking and believing and then "let go" the wanting of the outcome. Trust that whatever happens will happen for your highest good.

9. Thank them for their guidance and presence.

Angels are coming down to earth at this time in great many numbers. They are spirits with a higher vibratory frequency. They are here to help us move towards our Creator. Angels sometimes announce their presence with feathers.

I talk to my guides a lot of the time. In good times and when things are difficult. One day as I was driving to work I was talking to them about a difficulty I was having with a research project at work. I remember calling out to my guides for help. I wanted to know if they had heard my request. I asked them for a sign. I was stalled at the traffic lights in the middle lane when I saw a white feather float towards me. I was amazed as there were no birds or even trees in sight. When you unexpectedly see a feather, know that they are present and looking out for you. There are many out of work angels in the world today, as a large proportion of humankind is not open to receiving their help. We can ask angels to help others and us, but we need to be mindful about our motives. We can also call on the Archangels to help us. There are seven exceptionally evolved spiritual beings that are commonly referred to as Archangels. In the Zoroastrian tradition they are called Amesha Spentas (The Holy Immortals). I asked for guidance from my guides about the Zoroastrian equivalent of the Archangels present in Christian theology. This is the information I have received:

1. Archangel Michael or Khshatra Vairyo (in the Zoroastrian tradition) helps us to strengthen our divine will and gives us strength and courage.
2. Archangel Jophiel or Vohu Mana helps us with wisdom and higher learning.
3. Archangel Chamuel or Spenta Armaiti helps us expand the flame of love.
4. Archangel Gabriel or Asha Vahishta helps us bring about clarity, order and discipline.
5. Archangel Rapael or Ameretat helps us bring health and healing.
6. Archangel Uriel or Haurvetat help us bring about completeness, balance and peace helps people release their fears.
7. Archangel Zadkiel or Spenta Mainyo helps us to forgive and get rid of any negative energy that we may have accumulated.

Archangel Michael is often present at my clinic in healing sessions. A few clients have noted his presence. In a healing session I am his instrument to help patients get rid of negative energies or entities and bring healing, strength and courage to patients especially those that have suffered from trauma, or been victims of substance and sexual abuse or had had severe issues



with anxiety and fear. A patient whom I shall call Joan was experiencing great pain in her neck and abdomen. She had been to a massage therapist who had done deep body work on her and triggered childhood memories of sexual abuse. I requested Archangel Michael to come through. He was there in an instance even Joan felt his presence, a pressure in her third eye. At that particular session he helped her by releasing her pain and then gave her some personal advice with this universal message:

I am an aspect of Divinity. I am Divine Will. I am strength and Divine power. Like divinity I am omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient and can help you at all times, any time. When in crisis, fear or intense pain call out to me and connect with me by concentrating on your “third eye”. You will feel my presence instantly. Hindus call me “Shiva”. I represent the Divine masculine energy of power and strength.

EXERCISE 12.2 MIRACLES FROM ANGELS

Start a journal. On one side of each page, write a specific problem you are encountering. Then, ask your guides and angels for a miracle or solution to your problem. When your problem is resolved through divine intervention, write the results on the other side of the page. You will see how quickly the angels perform miracles. This is also a good way of recording your communication with your guides and angels.

WHAT IS INTUITION?

Intuition is an inner knowingness, a strong gut level feeling that we get when we are in touch with our higher consciousness or when we receive guidance from our spirit guides, guardian angels or Divinity. Intuition is receiving information through pathways other than our traditional five senses. Intuitive faculties vary from person to person and also within the same person at different times. Humankind is moving towards being more intuitive, that is, being capable of direct information that is unlimited by belief, space and time. We are all connected to each other and therefore capable of influencing each other. John Bell, a quantum physicist, reported in 1964 that once two particles have been in contact with one another, they remain connected and are capable of influencing one another, even at great distances. We are from God and connected to each other and therefore, we are still capable of being influenced by divinity.

HOW DO WE DEVELOP OUR INTUITION?

All human beings have intuition or sixth sense and we develop it further, by always looking within for answers. Meditation training is a great way of developing your intuition. By listening and being still, we start seeing, hearing and feeling with our sixth sense. We should learn to trust the guidance of our inner voice.



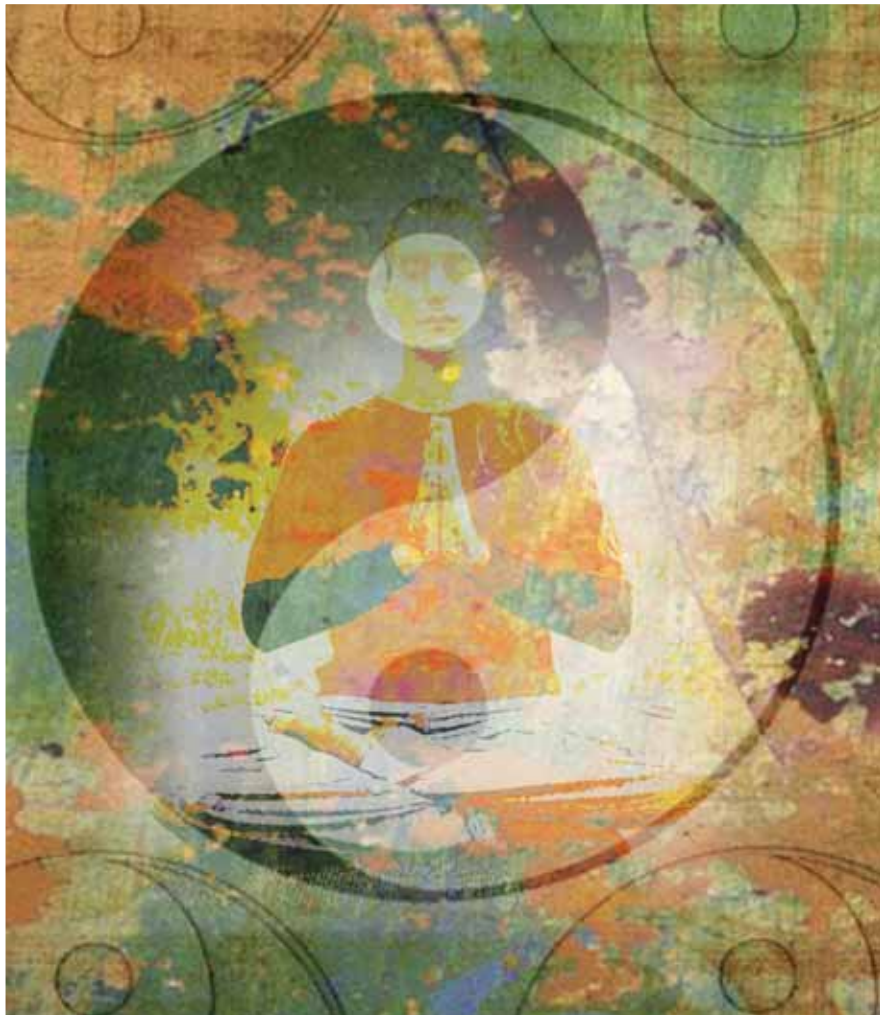
EXERCISE 12.3 DEVELOP YOUR INTUITION

1. In a meditative posture, still the conscious mind.
2. Breathe light into your solar star or Universal energy point (7 inches above the sahasara chakra) and take that light down to your earthstar (7 inches below your feet).
3. Pray: "I invoke the light of God in me, I am light, Love and Wisdom"
4. Ask your spirit guides or guardian angels a question and listen to the guidance.
5. Trust what comes through.
6. Thank your guides.



Chapter 13

HEALING IN MEDITATION



Chapter 13

Healing in Meditation

Just think of this for a while, you have come in this body, in this receptacle, in order to realize the God you really are. This body is the cocoon you have spun around yourselves, by means of your impulses and desires. Use it while it lasts, to grow wings, so that you can escape from it.

The body is a shrine for the eternal spirit inhabiting it. Illness, both physical and mental is a reaction on the body caused by the poison in the mind. An uncontaminated mind alone can ensure continuous health. Illness is caused more by malnutrition of the mind than the body. Doctors speak of vitamin deficiency, I call it deficiency of vitamin G. The unseen is the basis of the seen. If you are caught up in the meshes of the seen, you cannot know the importance of the unseen.

SHRI SATYA SAI BABA

WHAT IS OUR NATURAL STATE?

I believe that we were made perfectly. We were first created in spirit or energy form and then this energy was transformed by increasing its density to create matter. Matter is dense energy, but man's true nature is spirit. Plato said that every soul is immortal:

Everyman's soul has by the law of his birth been a spectator of eternal truth, or it would never have passed into this our mortal frame, yet still it is no easy matter for all to be reminded of their past by their present existence.

Christian scientists use an affirmation called the "The Scientific Statement of Being" in their healing treatments which gives an insight into the true nature of our being.

All is infinite Mind and its infinite manifestation, for God is All-in-all. ...Spirit is real and eternal; matter is unreal and temporal. Spirit is God and man is His image and likeness. Therefore, man is not material; he is spiritual.

WHY DO WE GET ILL?

Illness or "dis-ease" is disharmony in our physical body. There is a strong connection between the physical, emotional and the spiritual. Our outer world is a reflection of our inner world. If we listen carefully to our physical body, it will communicate the state of our inner being. When we are ill, our body is communicating to us that there is an inner emotional and spiritual disharmony. Most illnesses are opportunities for us to change and transform from within. We may undertake to bear some illnesses, for a higher learning for others and/or ourselves. It is part

of our life's mission that we agreed to take on before we came to this physical realm. In actual fact, our illness may be a gift or an act of service to help other people move towards compassionate awareness.

As such, the majority of physical illness or dis-ease in our body may be the result of years and/or lifetimes of:

- Negative thinking,
- Negative beliefs,
- Negative programming or conditioning. Through childhood we are socialized and nurtured by significant adults with certain core beliefs that program and condition us. These thought patterns if negative create negative energy or emotions that lead to illness.
- Negative living: - i.e. bad eating habits, smoking and drinking excessively and living in a physically unhealthy environment.
- A lack of love to self and others, which causes disharmony or imbalance in our spiritual etheric bodies. Illness and dis-ease is the result of us moving away from our true essence, Divinity and being in ego consciousness rather than divine consciousness. This causes the chakras to become over activated or depleted in energy (prana) affecting our spiritual bodies and physical body, causing physical illness.

Sometimes in the spiritual realm, prior to coming into the physical body, a soul could contract to have a major illness for higher learning for itself and other loved ones in their immediate environment. A patient, whom I shall call Sheila, came to see me in 1998 when she was diagnosed with breast cancer. It started with a small lump in her breast. Sheila was not making much progress even after five sessions, so we connected to her guides and asked why she was not shifting from her dis-ease. We were told that Sheila had six years in her physical body. Her soul had "contracted" (intended) to get this illness and die from it even before she came into the physical body. This illness would bring great lessons to her and her husband and two children. At the time Sheila just heard the message without paying much attention to it. She was a scientist by profession and did not have much understanding about spiritual matters. We did not have much contact after that but approximately six years later I got a desperate call from her from the hospital. She told me her illness had progressed and she was very keen to see me as soon as possible. She told me quietly, "I want to go home now, help my soul to move peacefully to the other side". I did just that by praying for her. A day before she moved to the other side I was taken aside by her husband who thanked me for my services, but what he said thereafter amazed me. Her husband who knew nothing about the conversations I had had with Sheila during the healing sessions six years ago, told me that Sheila and he were both genetic scientists and he had all the necessary networks, connections with the right people to help Sheila recover from her illness. In his words, "so many people recover from what she has but unconsciously she kept sabotaging the recovery". He even said that his six year old son remarked to him that, "mummy got the illness when I was in her tummy". I was blown away to know that this child knew (perhaps at birth) that he was coming into a vehicle, his mother who had cancer. What I learnt

from this experience are three important lessons: one that we contract to have certain major illnesses in our lives to learn lessons, two that children are old souls who have all the wisdom and knowledge and also make important choices. Three, healers need to always keep in mind that we are only channels of God's light and love - we have no right to interfere with a person's choices or lessons. The law of karma operates at a Universal level; we cannot impede this law.

IS IT POSSIBLE TO BECOME CHANNELS OF HEALING ENERGY AND HEAL OTHERS AND OURSELVES?

Yes, most of the time if we are not interfering with people's karma or life lessons. Divinity heals. He created us, so there is no reason why He cannot re-create a part of us that is sick or diseased. Furthermore, we are created in His image so we have astounding abilities and power to heal just as He does. We have the power to heal the planet and ourselves, by believing that we can. When we listen to our bodies, and seek divine guidance to change and transform from within, our physical bodies heal automatically. We can become channels of healing for others and ourselves. I have enclosed a letter from a patient who felt the effects of healing and transformation in just one session.

I was so sick of myself. I was so sick of my life. I was so sick of life not "working out" for me. EVERYTHING seemed to be such a struggle.

Why had my life become so hard?? I just couldn't see the point of it at all anymore... (Not that I was about to top myself or anything...I just couldn't see the point in being alive...everything was such a daily grind and struggle)

Oh, I made all the right noises...did all the right things...pretended to the world I was such a positive person... (I had an affirmation for everything!)...And yet I didn't feel it. I was deeply unhappy and didn't know why.

A close friend of mine brought my unhappiness to my attention after a somewhat cathartic episode one evening.

"You have absolutely no self confidence... You are so wound up and uptight...just relax about life...RELAX...and go with the flow...don't have such high expectations of yourself and in turn, of other people...just be Janet (who was that I thought??) You are very, very intense about life and people...you have so much to give and yet you can intimidate people with your intensity...RELAX."

Well. I didn't know how. I didn't really know what she meant. But I knew I had to do something about it. Fast. And then I met Huzan.

I felt like I was in the company of royalty. She emanated calmness and knowingness. I felt deeply relieved to be in her presence. She was a soothing balm on a gaping wound.

I knew that this woman was going to make everything a LOT better.

I told her what my friend had said. The lack of self-confidence was a reoccurring

theme for me, but I didn't know what self-confidence was meant to feel like. And I certainly didn't know what Janet was meant to feel like...to be myself...I didn't have a clue about that one.

She explained that self-confidence and knowing oneself was the same thing as self-love. "What was that meant to feel like?" I wanted to know.

She told me she could fix it in one session and I would be a completely different person in a very short space of time. YES PLEASE!

The healing work began.

She saw that I had a blockage in my heart chakra. It had been there for 36 years, dating back to an episode that had happened to me when I was 11 years old, involving bullying at school, followed up by betrayal and physical abuse at the hands of my mother (who was given to schizophrenic episodes).

It was at that time that I decided I was totally not worth loving and had cut my self off from both giving and receiving love and self worth.

I always knew at the back of my mind that something was not quite right...there had been a black hole around my heart...I had felt it there for a long, long time.

In that one session Huzan healed that blockage with meditating, guidance from her guides and some ancient Indian healing applications.

I am eternally grateful to her. My life turned around very, very quickly, as she promised. I now greet each day as an opportunity. I have a calmness about me that has brought a lot of comment from my friends. They all marvel at the change in me. I no longer see my life as a struggle at all. It has completely opened up for me.

I now have attracted some wonderful people into my life. I love being who I am. I feel totally blessed. I love the people who are now in my life. They are good, solid people with a ton of integrity. We have a lot of fun. I have stopped looking outside of myself for happiness and fulfillment. I have stopped looking at other people for answers. I trust that I am being looked after. I now state my intention then leave it to the universe to deliver. I meditate on my intentions and then drop any attachment to an outcome. I trust that I am where I am supposed to be.

I currently do not have a full time job as yet, and my financial situation is uncertain. Before my healing I would have been paralyzed with fear over this. I would have thought poor me, what am I going to do?" I would have had sleepless nights over this. Not now. Now I trust. Now I know everything is being taken care of for me. I now relish every moment of my life, because I am now living in present time and have stopped worrying about past and anticipated future events.

I now feel complete in myself. I now know the meaning of joy. There is a lot of it in my life.

God bless you, Huzan.

J. Mitchell

WHAT IS PRAYER?

I believe prayer is making our intention known to Divinity. It is communicating to Divinity and plays a pivotal role in healing. It is not so much asking Divinity for healing but declaring and knowing that God is giving it. The New Testament declares, whatsoever you ask in prayer, believe and it shall be given. Prayer's efficacy comes from the law of cause and effect that pronounces, "What you expect and believe is what you experience".

WHAT IS SPIRITUAL HEALING AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Spiritual healing unites us to the fullness of our beings and reconnects us to who we really are. Spiritual healing involves connecting and receiving the loving energy of a higher power beyond our own intelligence. The healing is non-denominational and does not conflict with the religious or spiritual beliefs of patients. Healing is always offered in a context which respects, and is appropriate to a patient's spiritual beliefs or the absence thereof. Quite often, I receive patients who are atheists or do not attach themselves to any religious group.

The healing process links us to the universe and to our very essence which is divine. The basic particles in the universe aren't really particles but described as "loops of strings" that vibrate at a particular level. The vibration frequencies determine the identity of the particle. It is believed that the shape and content of the entire universe and everything in it is determined by vibration frequencies of every single atom, every single particle. All is one – and all is vibration or music. Spiritual healing leads us towards these harmonious vibration frequencies.

Healing energies help people to evolve beyond their material experience. Healing is the restoration of the person to spiritual wholeness. It is the removal of a block or interference on a physical mental and emotional level that has kept us separate from the perfection of the universe. Love is necessary in healing. What is love? It is the all-encompassing love of creation our Creator and consciousness. The channeling of love energy from its divine spiritual source to someone who needs it, is called spiritual healing. The channel is usually a person, whom we call a healer, and the healing energy is usually transferred to the patient through the healer's hands. The healing does not come from the healer, but through her. The word "spiritual" refers to the divine nature of the energy, which healers agree, comes from one external, invisible intelligent source. The healing energy from this source is available to all.

Healers see the mind, body and spirit as one interdependent unit and believe all three must work in harmony to maintain positive health. Any problem - be it physical or mental illness, needs the power of healing to restore the balance of the whole person. It is felt that sickness often starts in the mind, or at the deeper level of the spirit, and it is often here that healing begins.

HOW DOES ONE FEEL WHEN ONE RECEIVES HEALING ENERGY?

When you receive healing, you may feel heat, cold or nothing at all, but the Divine energy is still being channeled to you through the healer. Please also be aware that, very occasionally, patients feel some discomfort during healing. This does not mean that something is wrong; it is invariably caused when "negative" energy is cleansed and cleared, just as we may cleanse and clean an infected wound. Soon the discomfort will cease and you will feel better. Patients often experience different feelings during healing; some people may feel very relaxed or even energized

after a healing session, others could only feel better after a day or more. It is not uncommon to require more than one session, especially if the illness is chronic.

After a healing session, it is advisable to take some time out for yourself. Drink plenty of water and take rest. Please make sure that you are completely ready to travel before you conclude the healing session.

BENEFITS OF SPIRITUAL HEALING

- Experiencing greater peace, love and joy in your life
- Clearing your mental and emotional blockages
- Increased energy
- Balancing the chakras and clearing auric fields
- Eliminating disease in your physical body and improved overall health
- Reconnecting with your higher self and an awakening of your consciousness.

Less confusion, greater clarity - expanded multi-dimensional awareness.

- Finding the answers to those eternal questions.... who am I.... why am I here?
- Personal empowerment
- More self-confidence and a more positive outlook on life.

INPUTS THAT AFFECT THE HEALING PROCESS

1. Our Creator, the Divine One heals. We should always acknowledge this by asking for healing for our highest good. We facilitate the process by channeling divine energy, and by continuously doing inner work to set the balance right and return to our true nature.
2. Imbalance and disharmony in our physical body is the result of forgetting who we really are. This creates thoughts and actions that lead to an unhealthy lifestyle and eventually, to illness. Be aware of your thoughts and emotions at every integrated moment of your existence.
3. We are composed of layer upon layer of energy and consciousness. We all have the divine spark within us that we can tap for supreme wisdom and knowledge. Negative thoughts cause energy blocks that lead to physical disease. We create blockages if we have negative thoughts and beliefs. So be aware of your beliefs!
4. Energy distortions are always related to belief systems, acquired in this lifetime or in other lifetimes and are therefore karmic. Karmic patterns are life experiences created from belief systems that have been carried over from one lifetime to the next, until they are cleared and realigned with the greater reality. Be conscious of your distorted beliefs and change them in alignment with the Divine Consciousness.
5. Illness is therefore a lesson you have given yourself to help you remember who you really are. With meditation and healing your soul will be reawakened to help you remember who you really are and to bring you back to your true essence. Be honest and take responsibility for your healing.

6. Developing self-awareness can make you nurture and love yourself. Awareness is the first step in the healing process. The development of confidence, love and trust of self is a long continuous journey, keep working at it. Commence this journey by accepting and loving the self.

PREPARATION BEFORE HEALING

1. Be receptive and align to the cosmic forces and the divine energy by reciting a prayer or invocation. Personally speaking, I visualize a form of divinity and then I recite: "Divine mother, father grant that I am a channel of Thy light, Love and Wisdom and work for the highest good of (name of person who is being healed).
2. Ask for protection and request that you do not inherit the energy or thought patterns of the person you are working with.
3. Dedicate yourself to the truth and be honest.
4. Maintain a sense of order and discipline in your life. Meditate regularly.
5. Undergo a purification process of the physical body, thoughts, words and deeds.
6. Maintain a healthy diet and exercise regularly.
7. Perform exercises to open cleanse clear and charge the chakras (refer to chapter on chakras and cleansing and clearing).
8. Perform colour-breathing exercises to charge the aura. Inhale all colours of the rainbow.
9. Cleanse the healing space you and your patient are working in.
10. Cleanse your spiritual and physical bodies before and even after healing. Use crystals or rock salt to cleanse chakras.
11. Make time for the self. Healers who do not take care of themselves will eventually burn out.

GENERATING HEALING ENERGY FOR SELF

This practice increases lung capacity, improves functioning of the organs and stimulates circulation raising the kundalini energy through the back chakras up the spine.

Sit on your heel with a straight spine; stretch the arms straight up overhead, hugging the ears. Interlace the fingers with the index fingers pressed together pointing straight up. The eyes are closed and focused at the third eye point. In the third eye see the image of the divine energy.

Chant a name of a divine form, as you contract the root. Release the lock when you chant OM. Inhale when you lock the root and exhale when you unlock the root. Do this 9 times.

Move your consciousness similarly through the three major chakras (mooladhara, manipur and vishudhi that is, the base, solar plex and the throat chakras). Repeat 9 times.

On the last exhalation hold the air out completely and apply the three locks simultaneously focusing on moving the energy upward towards the skull. Imagine you are squeezing the energy upward through the locks, just as you might squeeze tooth paste out of a tube.



IMPORTANT DO'S AND DON'T S FOR BEING A CHANNEL OF GOD'S LOVE

- Always request the prior permission of the recipient of the healing energy. Work for the highest good of the individual. A person may choose not to receive healing, retain the disease or die. That person has the right of free choice.
- Thoughts and intentions and one pointedness of the channel and the receiver in healing are important.
- It is not ethical to state that "I healed this person". The divine energy heals through us, in order to effectively receive energy, we need to use our one pointedness and focus on healing the person for their highest good.
- Healing is a three-way agreement between the divine Source, the healer and the receiver.
- Always be non-judgmental and let the receiver feel "safe" in expressing emotion.
- Always be gentle in your hand movements – come "off body" slowly.
- Do not work with the crown chakra.
- Healing energy flows downwards from the sahasara chakra down the main energy line, to the mooladhara chakra. However, when you begin with the cleansing process, you can take negative energy up to the light. When you move into the process of re-energizing and healing the body, work down the body.
- Do not be alarmed if detoxification or releasing of energy happens as a result of healing. A person may be advised to drink lots of water, be on a liquid diet for a day or so, after the healing process, in order to help or assist with this process.
- The healer is a channel of the divine energy, therefore both the healer and the recipient of the healing process benefit from divine energy. You cannot get someone else's illness through healing (that is, of course if the illness is not contagious). You can get in touch with some contaminated negative energy and therefore you could experience some temporary discomfort, sensations or pain but this will disappear when you perform cleansing exercises. Always remember to perform cleansing exercises before and after the healing process.
- Healing can be used in conjunction with other general medical treatment.
- Numerous healing sessions may be required for chronic and acute illnesses.
- Healing energy can be given to the food, water and medication we consume.
- You may require training in anatomy, physiology, psychology and ethics before you can become a "professional healer". If you do not have this knowledge and skills please do not diagnose and do not prescribe any drugs/medication or any herbal remedy. Encourage the person to seek and continue with professional medical assistance and treatment.



HIGHLIGHTS OF IMPORTANT STEPS IN THE PROCESS OF HEALING

1. **PREPARATION TO HEAL** – accept responsibility, be aware of goals etc.
2. **CONNECTING WITH THE DIVINE ENERGY** – spirit guides, ask for their help
3. **PERMISSION** – from person and divine Source
4. **PROTECTION** – place a force field around self and person you heal
5. **SCANNING** – listening to the body, being aware of the dis-ease
6. **CLEANSING/CLEARING NEGATIVE ENERGY.**

CHAKRAS	ENDOCRINE GLAND	NEGATIVE EMOTION
COCCYX	ADRENAL	FEAR
SACRUM	REPRODUCTIVE	LUST
SOLARPLEX	PANCREAS	ANGER/FEAR
HEART	THYMUS	BITTERNESS/SADNESS
THROAT	THYROID	ANGER/RESENTFUL
EYEBROW	PINEAL	HATE
CROWN	PITUITARY	ANY EXTREME EMOTION

7. **ALIGN (BALANCE) YOUR ENERGY CENTRES** – if working on another person place your left hand on their left shoulder and right hand on their right shoulder. Wash up white or purple light from person's feet. You can also balance – eyebrow chakra with base, heart with solarplex
8. **RE-ENERGISE** – hands-on, use your intuition and be guided
9. **SEALING ENERGY AND CLOSING OFF ENERGY CENTRES**
10. **SILENTLY CONTEMPLATE YOUR FUTURE OBJECTIVES, GOALS AND ACTION PLAN.**
What do you need to do, the changes you need to make in your life so that you do not return to the state of disharmony?
11. **COMMIT TO THE DIVINE ENERGY** – share your plan for life changes.
12. **THANK THE DIVINE ENERGY.**

To heal the physical body we have to realign ourselves to divinity and return to our true essence. This can be done by performing cleansing and re-energising (re-creating positively) on the physical, psychological and spiritual levels. A lot of psychological and spiritual cleansing and re-energising work can be done during meditation. Cleansing and re-energising work in meditation is healing the self by direct contact with the divine source. It is much more powerful to heal yourself, assuming that you are working holistically. Cleanse and re-energise yourself in passive meditation practices and in active meditation, that is, in every moment of integrated awareness. Cleansing and re-energising work in meditation commences by:

1. SELF INTROSPECTION AND AN HONEST ASSESSMENT OF:

- Your thoughts, words and deeds in everyday life. Remember you choose your thoughts, words and deeds.
- Examining and analyzing your self-image and modifying those aspects of your belief system that you deem to be inappropriate. Your self-image is formed by the messages you get very early in your childhood from your parents and significant others.
- Looking at your negative programming and getting in touch with the negative karma you've inherited in this lifetime and other lifetimes and working to remove this.
- Listening to your body. What message is this illness giving you?
- What is your body trying to convey?
- Examining your life, seeing the recurring struggles, pains and problems and asking yourself, what am I suppose to learn from this experience? Recurring patterns show us our needs and areas we need to learn. The Universal power never judges, punishes or criticizes us. It loves us unconditionally. We get what we give, reap what we sow. We are responsible for who we are and what we become.
- Examining your fears, anxieties, anger, jealousy, and hatreds – our lack of love for ourselves and others and recommitting to love ourselves and others through forgiveness.

2. MAKING SANKALPAS (resolutions) to change what we perceive as not being aligned with divine consciousness. Remember you are most powerful in the “present”. Sankalpas have to be constantly affirmed and fed deep into the unconscious mind and worked on through numerous meditation practices such as the yoga nidra exercise.

3. PUTTING THE RESOLUTIONS INTO NEW ACTION by becoming conscious at every moment of existence. Release the past by loving and forgiving yourself and others and do not believe in limitations but trust divinity's role in your future. Be divine in the moment. When the moment of divinity extends to a lifetime, you will achieve bliss and become free.....

THE METHOD OF CLEANSING

- Go into a deep state of meditation
- Invoke the presence of the Divine One. Always remember that it is the Divine One that heals; all the human healers in the world are just instruments and channels that heal. Ask for GRACE and for healing for your highest good.
- Visualize yourself witnessing your physical body, observe the main energy line and all the “longitudinal” / “meridian” energy lines running through your physical and spiritual bodies. (See diagram above).



- Witness, “combing” out all the negative thoughts, beliefs, feelings, and energy patterns from the energy lines starting from the main energy line and moving outward. First visualise the front of the body and then the back of the body. Always send the negative energy out of the physical and spiritual bodies up to the Light. This is done so that no one else inherits your negative energy. Affirm: “I remove all the negative thoughts, beliefs, feelings.... and send it to the Divine One to re-create into positive energy.”
- Systematically go through all the chakras from head (sahasara) to base/root (mooladhara) and scoop out negative energy. Visualize yourself scooping out negative energy just as you may scoop out ice cream from a bowl but ensure that the action is anti-clockwise. You scoop out negative energy and once again send it to the Light to re-create this into positive energy.

RE-ENERGISING PROCESS

- Be aware of your physical illness. What messages is your body trying to convey? Take the Divine One in the form of white light to different physical areas of the body and re-energise and re-create wholeness. Visualize body parts, organs, cells etc. becoming whole and rejuvenated. Love yourself unconditionally. By loving yourself unconditionally you love divinity. Send a flood of white lights through the sahasara chakra down to your toes. This makes contact with Mother Earth continuously.
- What changes do I need to make in my thoughts, words and deeds, in my daily life? Journey within and find divinity. Shed selflessness, desire and greed. Make sankalpas to change.
- Examine the significant relationships in your life. Look at the relationships that give you sadness, pain, anger, and jealousy and ask yourself, what do “I” need to do differently? Am I willing to work to change this relationship? Love others unconditionally. As Satya Sai Baba says,

The ego lives by getting and forgetting while LOVE lives by giving and forgiving...

SEALING

Once cleansing and healing is completed, in a passive meditation state, visualize the body and chakras, and systematically go through from head to base/root chakras and seal or protect the chakras. This is achieved by the visualization of white light moving round in a clockwise direction.

- Norms for group and individual healing
- If you are undertaking healing in a group, it is important to incorporate the following norms:
- Confidentiality: Do not use names or anything that will identify other group members, if you talk about the workshop to friends/partners.
- Respect others without judgment. Try not to rescue others or be patronizing.
- Provide immediate feedback to the facilitator if you feel discomfort or pain.

- Take responsibility for learning and growth through the healing process. Use the “I” word, try not to talk in general terms.
- Try not to compare yourself with others. We are all learning and growing. No one is superior or inferior on the spiritual pathway.
- Be honest and open in your communication.
- No one should feel pushed, move at your own pace.
- Support others in their healing process. When we work for the highest good of others, we are working for the highest good of ourselves.

SCANNING: INNER VISION

The following exercises enhance your inner vision and help you to “scan” your body.

EXERCISE 13.1

Go into a meditative state. Through awareness travel through your body internally making note of how you feel. You can even imagine yourself to be a tiny star like a point of light travelling through various body parts and organs. Make note of any information, feelings that you pick up.

EXERCISE 13.2

Sit opposite a person and without touching them, close your eyes and using your intuition sense and scan through the body of that person. Be aware of a colour, a texture, and a sensation; allow pictures to come through your head. Discuss your observations and switch roles.

EXERCISE 13. 3

Scan the energy centres of the person sitting opposite you by closing your eyes and intuitively picking up information about the auric field of the person you are working with. What chakra needs to be worked on?

EXERCISE 13.4

Go in to a deep meditation and become aware of a physical ailment you might have. Go back in time and remember the history of the ill-ness or dis-ease of the body part, keep going back in time and see the series of thoughts and experiences that have been responsible for the present problem.

EXERCISE 13.5

Answer the following questions to the best of your ability:

- 1) What do you want in life that you do not have?
- 2) What do you want to change in your life?



EXERCISE 13.6 CHILDHOOD ILLNESSES

- 1) Answer the following question as honestly as possible. What do you remember about your childhood illnesses?
- 2) What did you enjoy, if anything, about being ill?
- 3) List your father's and mother's illnesses. Do you see a connection between them and your current ailment?

EXERCISE 13.7 - EVALUATE YOUR BELIEFS

Evaluate your beliefs and attitudes on a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being disagree completely and 10 being agree completely) by going through the following statements:

- Our thoughts make us who we are.
- We are responsible for our experience.
- Thoughts and emotions can be changed.
- The point of power is always in the present moment.
- If I get angry I will lose control.
- I have no right to be angry.
- I'm afraid of being alone and unloved.
- We need to release the past and forgive.
- I have the power to change.
- I deserve good health.

EXERCISE 13.8

What need within me allowed me to create disharmony and illness in my body?
What do I gain from this condition or state of disharmony?

Make a list of affirmations and positive beliefs that you need to incorporate in your life.

EXERCISE 13.9

Make a list of all the ill-nesses and diseases that you suffer from:

- Probable cause
- My inner world issues
- My core beliefs
- Predominant negative emotion affecting you



EXERCISE 13. 10

Use 9 adjectives to describe important people in your life. What can YOU do to change what you do not like about them?

- Mother
- Father
- Sibling
- Spouse
- Boss
- Friend
- Any other

WHAT IS HOLISTIC COUNSELLING?

Holistic counselling training combined with spiritual training is a powerful way of healing others. It recognizes the deep connections between body, mind, emotions and spirit. Holistic counseling incorporates various counseling models and integrates the “energetics” of a person. It draws from Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Gestalt, Person Centred, Patient Centered and broader context of holistic and humanistic theory. Some of the areas of work are: basic counseling skills, grief counseling, addictive process, systems theory, clinical skills, family therapy, relationships, conflict resolution, and group process. Counseling enhances healing, by exploring mental and emotional states, and how they manifest physically. Counseling facilitates patients to work through emotional issues, to release blocked energy and allowing healing to occur. Holistic Counseling, as a counseling philosophy and practice, is based on the following principles: Respect for the individual as a whole person rather than a cluster of symptoms or problems. Understand the individual as a member of a wider familial social and political context. Acknowledge that it is the basic right of every human being to be loved and acknowledged and feel good about themselves. I have used holistic counseling in combination with meditation techniques and had a great success rate in dealing with individuals suffering from:

Depression

General Anxiety Disorder

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

Simple and Complex Phobias

Stress Management

Self-Assertiveness

Low Mood

Sleep problems

Low Self-Esteem

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

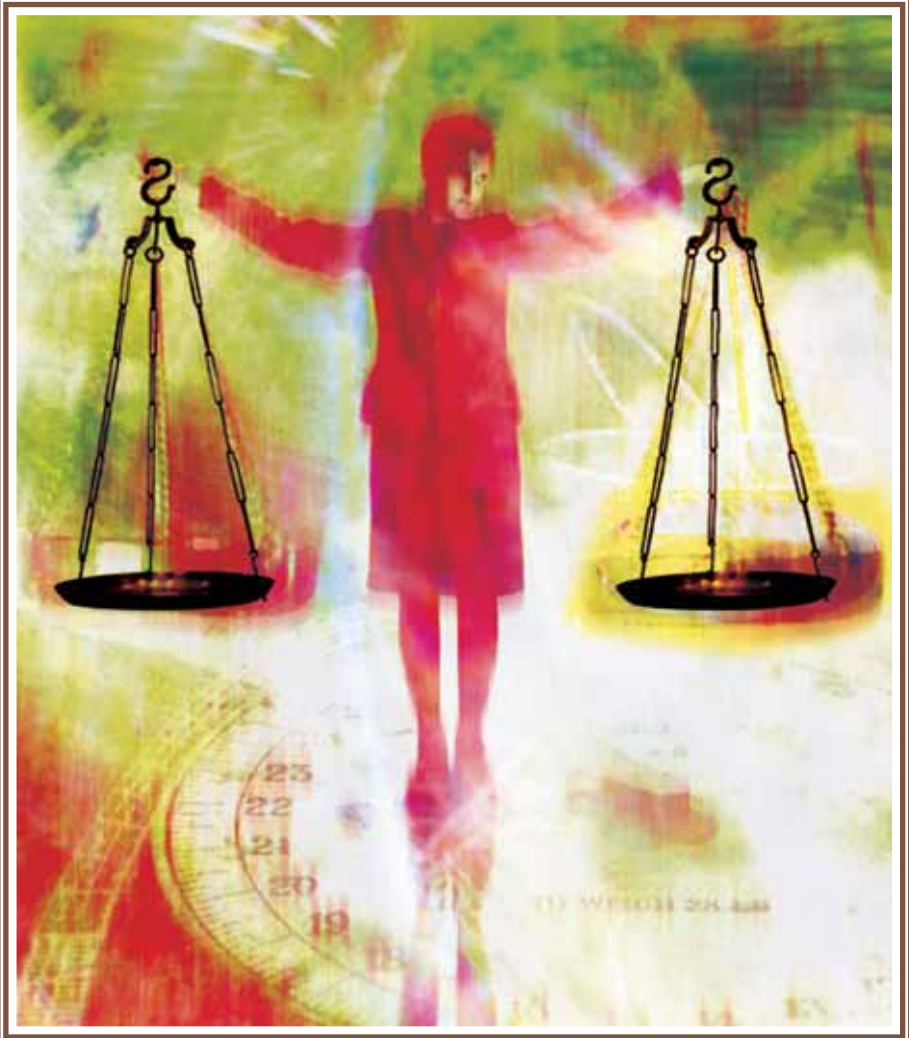
Aftermath of Childhood Abuse

Anger Management

Relationship problems: marital and family

Chapter 14

DESIRE MANAGEMENT



Chapter 14

Desire Management

Desire is the root of all suffering

BUDDHA

Life with desire is Man. Life without desire is God.

Our ego's want us to desire benefit from one's own action. It gives room for one's feeling that one alone is capable of doing the work. This sort of notion leads one to bondage. It is intense attachment that is standing in the way of purity of heart and supreme realization.

SHRI SATYA SAI BABA

IS ABSOLUTE FREEDOM POSSIBLE?

Complete freedom and physical wellness is not possible as we carry around our conditioning and preprogramming. Just like computers, we are programmed in thoughts and beliefs by past experiences, events in our lives and by the messages we are given by our significant others. We are trapped in the chains of repeating thought patterns, habits, rigid mindsets and emotional beliefs. When we are attached to a person or thing or thought form that is unhealthy for us, we are spiritually imprisoned. On the spiritual pathway, the aspirants who are convinced that their way is the only way and refuse to even consider the merits of alternatives are almost totally bonded. The aspirant who responds automatically through habit, without wisdom and love, to an external sensory stimulus is not free. Only fully enlightened people experience complete freedom. This is a long way for most of us, but we have the power and potential to achieve true freedom. The key to freedom lies within us.

A wonderful lady whom I shall call Liz, contacted me from the USA via e-mail to do distant healing for her. She was 34 years old suffering from a car accident and arthritis pain. She had certain issues and difficulties with her mother and past boyfriend and was unable to forgive them and “let go”. She was holding on to past resentment in her mind at a deep subconscious level. She was trapped with the repeated chain of thoughts of anger and bitterness. She had to train her mind to substitute negative thoughts with positive ones through meditation exercises and also needed to reset her old thought patterns (habits) and core beliefs. A core belief is a thought form that we repeat through habit and conditioning, constantly in our “self talk” (talking to ourselves in our minds). When she finally was able to release all thoughts of anger and resentment, the pain and illness subsided and eventually disappeared.



WHAT IS A DESIRE?

Desire brings grief, desire brings fear – to the one who is devoid of desire, what grief is there? What fear?

GAUTAMA BUDDHA

Desires are thoughts connected to cravings, wishes, needs and expectations that we have, related to the future. Desires are necessary for creating and manifesting our dreams and goals. However, when there are negative emotions (such as fear, anger and sadness) attached to a desire, it does not generally manifest into reality. For instance, a client whom I shall name John, came to be for “soul coaching”. He had a great desire to succeed in his business venture. He came to me saying that for the last 3 years his business was not “taking off” in spite of all the efforts and resources he had put in. His desire to succeed was fed with his thoughts of fear of failure. In the past he was cheated in business ideas and money by a business associate whom he believed to be a “good friend”. Hence John was sabotaging himself with his fearful thoughts of failure and resentment.

Some desires are excessive attachment to objects or things or persons we want, where we cannot see a balance between the pleasant and the unpleasant, constructive and destructive qualities in someone or something. This causes us to become desperate in wanting the object or person. Aversion is the opposite of desire, making us negative making us repel, destroy or run away from the object or person. Desires are like pebbles thrown in calm waters, as they create waves of agitation and rob us of peace. Unsatiated desires lead to grief and suffering.

Short sighted people of the world are the real renunciants, not I. I left only a few paltry dollars and temporary pleasures to gain an empire of endless bliss, and the greatest prize of all – God.

PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA, THE DIVINE ROMANCE.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs shows that on fulfilment of one set of desires another set grows. We have physical needs (food, shelter and clothing); safety needs (security, job); social needs (love and sense of belonging); self-esteem; self-actualization. Shri Satya Sai Baba, believes when we minimise and are satisfied with what we have in the first order of needs, we will quickly reach the point of self-actualization which is moving towards self realisation and enlightenment.

WHAT ARE ATTACHMENTS?

Attachments are thoughts related to a possessive feeling we have about someone or something that we already have in the present. However, we feel strongly about having to give that somebody or something up. Most of us confuse attachment with love. Attachments are associated with thoughts of the fear of losing something or someone. A patient whom I shall call Jane was exceedingly attached to her partner, Peter. His every move was monitored and she became jealous when he even spoke to someone of the opposite sex. She mistakenly believed this

to be as a result of the deep love she felt for her partner. However, her behavior was as result of the fear of losing him and it stemmed from her past experience with her parents. He mother had left her father when she was 11 years of age.

We are rigidly preprogrammed about most things in our experience and desire and attachment generally become matters of habit. However, we need to remind ourselves that we have been given freedom of thought and action. We can choose not just our actions, but also our thoughts. Often “silence” that is, what you may think is not choosing, is also a choice. Each choice we make has a consequence and we have to take responsibility for the choices we make. Please refer to the laws of the universe in the Chapter titled, Real World Beyond for details on the Law of effect and consequence.

Desires and attachments come alive during the wakeful state and dream state. However, in deep sleep we are in a state of desirelessness. Desires or attachments are the basis of and the cause for the body-mind system. If we did not have a body or mind we would not have desires or attachments. Desires are realized only through the medium of the body. The Atma or the spiritual part of man does not have desires or attachments.

WHAT ACTIVATES A TRAIL OF DESIRES?

Happiness or bliss that we have experienced directly in the past or indirectly (that is our perception and knowledge of others having happiness or bliss) activates us to have cravings, wishes and expectations. For instance, my desire for my personal spiritual development comes from knowing (personally and through reading autobiographies of the great spiritual masters) the joys others have experienced and gained in their spiritual journeys - hence my desire to similarly progress.

MEDITATION EXERCISE 14.1 ANALYSE YOUR DESIRES

Make yourself comfortable and go into a deep meditative state. Remember that you must participate in the exercise with a tolerant, uninvolved attitude benignly and humorously. Focus your mind on the subject of desire. Visualize something that you desire intensely. Picture it clearly. Observe the emotion that arises. Is it positive or negative? Does the body or your emotional state desire the object? Is it the mind that desires?

Now shift your thoughts to a spiritual symbol or object such as a cross or candle. Focus on this image for a few seconds. Open your eyes. Are desires thoughts?

What conditioning and pre-programming made you having cravings or desires for the object? Was there any habitual thinking?

SEQUENCE OF ACQUIRING A DESIRED OBJECT

- Scan your memory for a recollection of something you desired. For example you thought of a car, house, gold watch etc.
- You pictured the object.
- You pictured being happy with object.



- You realize you do not have this object at the present time and that you “need” this object to be happy in the future.
- The image of not having triggered an emotional response in you – irritation or anger about the unfulfilled need.

When you substituted the desired object with a spiritual symbol such as a cross or a candle, the desire leaves the center of your consciousness, although it still lies in your memory bank waiting to be reactivated.

Success doesn't come from outside; it is in your brain. As soon as you think right thought, work it.

PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA (1893-1952), THE DIVINE ROMANCE

EXERCISE 14.2 ANALYSIS OF ATTACHMENT

In a meditative state recall to mind the image of something to which you are very attached. Once that is firmly established imagine you have lost it. Ask yourself who is bereft? Is it the body, the emotional self or the mind?

If you effectively carry out these meditation exercises numerous times in everyday life, especially in desire-and-attachment situations, you will have more awareness and spiritual growth. You will progress along the path to being “free” – free of the conditioning that has been enslaving you for so long.

PROCESSES THAT PRODUCE ATTACHMENT

- Potential perception of the desired object or event; that is, we need to have it latent in our memory, ready for recall e.g. smoking.
- An established habit about the object or event. The habit can often be a complex pattern of thinking along a certain line.
- Triggers and associations that activate and reinforce memory conditioning. E.g. going to a restaurant or bar triggers the memory of inhaling smoke and activates the attachment to cigarettes.
- In going back to the triggers and associations of the attachment you trace the mental process back to its source, and as you become aware of conditioning and preprogramming, this awareness should weaken the attachment.
- We cannot be free of memory conditioning unless we can distance ourselves from the operation of the mind. For this we require consciousness at a higher level, where we are free from the constraints and reactive patterns imposed on us by our everyday mind.

WHAT IS THE KEY TO “ABSOLUTE FREEDOM”?

Awareness is freedom. If you ask a mite on an elephant's back to describe an elephant it will say that an elephant is a grey, flat creature. To a flea that can hop a few feet higher, it is a grey creature covered in giant hairs, the size of trees and pores, the size of craters. To a bird in

the sky; it is one creature in a herd of similar animals. From a plane, it is a dot on a landscape and from a spaceship; the elephant and the landscape merge into the landmass of the continents. Those of us who are limited by the five senses of touch, smell, taste, hearing and sight are like mites on the elephant's back. Anyone whose world is limited to the material and physical, is restricted in vision and beliefs to a plane of illusion (maya). When we become aware of our true reality that we are spirit and that we are responsible for creating our reality, we can unlock our prison doors and fly free.

The difference between a spiritual master and a human being is that human beings have desires and attachments. We are attached and seek acceptance, approval, acknowledgement and love from others, and we subjugate ourselves to the will of others. Every time we seek external validation, we are giving someone else the power over our soul.

When we keep seeking advice from others instead of listening to the divinity within, we relinquish our power. Freedom is about being able to listen to our intuition and act on it, no matter what. It is approving, loving and acknowledging the self. You can make a start by just keeping a close watch on all your activities for a day.

IN SUMMARY, THE KEYS TO ABSOLUTE FREEDOM ARE:

- Releasing negative emotions brings freedom.
- Chains of anger, lust, greed, pride, jealousy, sadness and fear anchor and bind most of us.
- Live in the world but not of it. Give unconditionally, expecting nothing in return.
- Make a personal effort for achieving what you desire.
- Forgive yourself and others; sends out the intention of “letting go”.
- Believe you cannot possibly fail at anything you do.
- Be serene, detached and independent.
- Place yourself and others in a win-win situation.
- Creatively imagine yourself as free, joyous, loved and successful.
- Feel contentment. Contentment is commonly spoken of in material terms as being satisfied with little or nothing. However, contentment is a state of our Atma (spirit).



Chapter 15

RELATIONSHIPS



Chapter 15

Relationships

Treasure your relationships, not your possessions.

ANTHONY J. D'ANGELO, THE COLLEGE BLUE BOOK

Friendship makes prosperity more shining and lessens adversity by dividing and sharing it.

CICERO (106 BC - 43 BC),

THE PURPOSE OF RELATIONSHIPS

The Divine One first created us in perfect spirit form. We choose freedom to explore the physical reality and growth in consciousness and therefore, we were also given a physical form. We choose and contract to learn the lessons we need and then enter the physical realm. This physical realm is characterized by networks of relationships. Hence we can only learn and grow in relationships.

The goal of life is the acquisition of knowledge and wisdom of SELF. The people we are in relationships with are a mirror of ourselves and simultaneously, we are a mirror of them. Therefore a relationship is one of the most powerful tools for growth. If we look honestly at our relationships, we can see so much about ourselves, our belief systems, our self-image and who we really are.

We attract into our lives those people and experiences we need to teach us whatever it is we need to learn. Negative experiences and relationships where there is conflict and turmoil are therefore necessary for our learning and growth. We learn wisdom from failure and pain much more than what we learn from success and pleasure and therefore difficult relationships are powerful tools for learning and evolution.

Every issue, belief and attitude that you have is responsible for the quality of your relationship to yourself and to another human being. If you are unhappy about a relationship, examine it and ask yourself what aspect of this relationship mirrors your thoughts and beliefs. When you change those thoughts, beliefs and let go of old patterns -you will let go of relationships that do not nourish or support you.

If you want to learn the secret to establishing good relationships, it is to become conscious of every thought, belief and attitude you have in that relationship (about self and each other) and make sure they come from Divine Love and Wisdom. Divine Love is giving love without conditions, judgments, expectations and boundaries and accepting people as they are.



A good marriage is one which allows for change and growth in the individuals and in the way they express their love.

PEARL BUCK ,1892 - 1973

WHAT IS A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP?

A healthy relationship is a partnership where there is no ownership, control, or manipulation and where each partner can be their natural selves without fear or judgment. It is one which creates an environment where each partner can grow individually and through individual growth the partnership develops. A healthy relationship is one in which both people have equal rights, opportunities and responsibilities. Kahlil Gibran from The Prophet stated:

*But let there be spaces in your togetherness,
And let the winds of the heavens dance between you
Love one another, but make not a bond of love:
Let it rather be a moving sea between the shores of your souls.
Fill each other's cup but eat not from the same loaf
Sing and dance together and be joyous, but let each of you be alone,
Even as the strings of a lute are alone though they quiver with the same music
Give your hearts, but not into each other's keeping.
For only the hand of life can contain your hearts.
And stand together yet not too near together:
For the pillars of the temple stand apart,
And the oak tree and the cypress grow not in each other's shadow.*

If the purpose of life is growth and development, then all relationships exist for a purpose - to enhance spiritual growth of yourself and your partner. Life is full of problems and therefore it is inevitable that all marriages and intimate relationships will also experience problems. We have to first accept this truth. We have to learn to listen to the message and not shoot the messenger. That is, each relationship brings lessons and we must not get angry with the messenger and blame him/her for the problem, but ask yourself why is this happening to me? What can I do to stop inviting this pattern of events into my life? The purpose of a close relationship is to enhance each other's growth. All relationships will inevitably experience problems. We need to accept this truth. I have found that most couples expect to experience most if not all of the following in their relationship: love, companionship, personal sacrifice, compatibility, communication, commitment and intimacy.

WHAT IS AN UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIP?

An unhealthy relationship is one where there is no mutual learning and growth. There is inequality in rights, opportunities and responsibilities. Either one partner is suffocating and restricting growth in the other, or both partners are growing separately in different directions.



An unhealthy relationship is about codependence. Codependence and interdependence are two very different dynamics. Codependence is about giving away our personal “power” and self-esteem. Interdependence is about forging relationships and forming partnerships. Interdependence means that we share power for common welfare.

Unhealthy relationships can be abusive. Abuse is any attempt to force someone to do what you want them to through the use of fear or intimidation. Abuse can be physical, mental, sexual, psychological, economic, or emotional.

WHAT ARE THE WARNING SIGNS OF AN UNHEALTHY MARITAL RELATIONSHIP?

When couples notice these warning signs they can take steps to address them and/or seek professional assistance. The signs could be:

1. Living separate lives - Each person is doing their “own thing” and there is very little or no common activities.
2. Continued feelings of dissatisfaction and unhappiness by one or both partners.
3. Constant arguments, most of which remain unresolved.
4. Abuse and control from one partner towards another or towards each other.
5. Partners feeling neglected as a result of one or both people living separate lives.
6. An affair.
7. On-going and unresolved issues related to parenting.
8. Increase fatigue and unwillingness to take individual responsibilities.

One of the false beliefs that it is important to let go of, is the belief that we need another person in our lives to make us whole. As long as we believe that someone else has the power to make us happy then we are setting ourselves up to be victims.

CODEPENDENCE: THE DANCE OF WOUNDED SOULS BY ROBERT BURNEY

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS V/S UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

PARTNERSHIPS

Joint Decisions.

Shared Responsibilities

ECONOMIC EQUALITY

Freedom in issues of career,
parenting & money

UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

OWNERSHIP AND DOMINATION

Abuser decides.

Slave and master relationship

ECONOMIC CONTROL

Denies job freedom,
control parenting issues and withholds money.

EMOTIONAL EQUALITY

Freedom to express emotions

SEXUAL RESPECT

Accepts that no means no.

Caring of needs and wants.

PHYSICAL SAFETY

Respects partner's space.

Expresses issues without violence.

SUPPORTIVE, TRUSTING

Listens & understands.

Values partner's opinion.

RESPECTFUL.

A safe, comfortable relationship.

Sensitive to each other's needs

Spiritual support, respect

Feel safe and comfortable to
practice spiritual beliefs

EMOTIONAL MANIPULATION

Uses jealousy, passion, and stress to justify actions.

SEXUAL ABUSE

Treats partner as sex object.

Forces partner to do things. Humiliates partner
or withholds affection altogether.

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Utilizes physical abuse to get one's
way with the other partner.

CONTROLLING

Name-calling, mind games. Belittles and isolates
partner from friends and colleagues.

INTIMIDATING

Charming in public, menacing in private.

Threatens or actually damages or destroys
property or objects in the house.

Disrespectful to spiritual practices and beliefs.

HOW CAN WE ESTABLISH HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS?

1. Seek Divine Intervention: Ask the Divine One for help and guidance. Intend to resolve the conflict and work for the highest good of both. Take a realistic approach to problem solving and have a plan. Put consistent and persistent energy into planning and implementing a solution to the problem. Be flexible, as the plan could need to be changed or re-written.

Relationships of trust depend on our willingness to look not only to our own interests, but also the interests of others.

PETER FARQUHARSON

2. Communication - Within a relationship, effective problem solving in the long run involves having a game plan for how problems will be handled when they arise – i.e. how you will work together to make it happen! Effective communication is an essential building block to a healthy, satisfying relationship. Listen, Listen, and Listen some

more! Ask your partner for clarification and say what you mean. Choose the right time to communicate, Fight fair

Assumptions are the termites of relationships.

HENRY WINKLER (1945 -)

3. Keep those loving experiences alive - In the honeymoon stage of a relationship, it seems the closeness, fun, and romance will last forever. However, loving connections can fall by the wayside as we turn our attention to work, family, and other concerns. Again, loving connections don't just happen; we have to make them happen.

AWARENESS ABOUT CONFLICT SITUATIONS IN RELATIONSHIPS

These are the questions you need to ask yourself when you and your partner are in conflict:

1. How comfortable or uncomfortable do you and your partner feel about conflict?
2. At that moment, how do you perceive your partner and how does your partner perceive you?
3. What assumptions do you make about your partner and your partner make about you?
Do you believe these be rational or irrational?
4. Do you and your partner trust each other?
5. How important is winning an argument or conflict to you and your partner?
6. In what ways do you and your partner avoid problem solving?
7. On a scale of 1 to 10 how much does each of you like or dislike one another?
8. How important is it for you not to not look foolish in your partner's eyes?

HOW DO I MANAGE CONFLICT IN A RELATIONSHIP?

Conflict occurs in most relationships at some time as there will always be differences in values, beliefs and expectations between two people. For both our physical and mental well being, it pays to learn the basics of effective conflict management. Regardless of the setting, there are some common processes which you can put to work, thereby reducing the risk of differences escalating into conflict.

1. GET CLEAR ABOUT YOUR VIEWPOINT

How you think about a situation will affect how you feel. It is not only external circumstances that determine whether you are happy in life or not, but rather how you interpret and perceive the situation.

2. BECOME PROACTIVE

Prevention is better than cure, so invest in the health of your relationship, i.e. recognize and eliminate the damage- before it ever manifests. Now, should problems arise; they are less likely to escalate into conflict.



3. CHECK OUT YOUR "HOT BUTTONS" OR ISSUES THAT BOTHER YOUR PARTNER

Everyone has their own triggers or "hot buttons" that set off feelings of anger, unfairness, injury, insult or hurt. Become familiar with your and your partner's "hot buttons" so you are less bothered and slow down your physiological response to your anger or anxiety. Keep alternative responses ready to use in case you find your hot buttons are being pushed. That is, reflect and do not react, take the time to think through a situation instead of succumbing to a knee jerk reaction.

4. EMPATHISE WITHOUT JUDGEMENT

Understanding is promoted by empathy with respect. When both parties engage in this process, there is often a noticeable and immediate reduction in tension and quicker discovery of solutions.

5. SEPARATE THE PROBLEM FROM THE PERSON

This means that you talk about the problem, but not about the other person's personality and or qualities or traits. We all are unique and different with differences in personality - it is better to focus on the problem rather than the person.

6. AVOID NAME CALLING, SARCASM AND ACCUSATIONS

Sarcasm may feel good in the moment, and name calling may also offer a base form of momentary satisfaction but they do a lot of damage to the situation and make it harder to come to a solution.

7. CALL TIME OUTS IF NEEDED

If you find that the situation is escalating, it can be useful to call a "time out" to allow all parties to "cool off". This is fine, so long as calling a time out is not just an excuse to forget the discussion. Rather, it is a way for you to catch your breaths, re-focus your thoughts and prevent an escalation of the problem..

8. BRAINSTORMING AS A PART OF PROBLEM SOLVING

Remarkably, the process of brainstorming yields solutions that neither party may have initially thought of. In many instances, the new solutions they find are even preferable to what each had originally envisioned as being the ideal solution.

If we look honestly at our relationships, we can see and learn so much about ourselves... our belief systems, our self-image ... who we really are... If you want to learn the secret to establishing good relationships, it is to become conscious of every thought, belief and attitude you have in that relationship.



OUTCOMES IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION

1. COMPETITIVE, WIN-LOSE.

- In this outcome, one side "wins" and one side "loses."
- Usually there are fixed possessions, assets or resources to be divided, so that the more one gets, the less the other gets.
- In this outcome, one person's interests and opinions directly oppose the other's.
- The main focus in this type of bargaining is usually maximizing one's own interests.
- The overriding strategies in this mode include manipulation, forcing, and withholding information.

2. COLLABORATIVE, WIN-WIN OR CREATING VALUE.

- There is a variable amount of possessions, assets and resources to be divided so that both sides get something equally and each of the members can "win."
- The main focus is to maximize both parties' outcomes.
- The overriding strategies include co-operation, sharing information, and mutual problem solving. This type is also called "creating value" since the goal here is to have both sides leave the negotiating table feeling they have greater value than before.

KEYS TO ESTABLISHING A POSITIVE COLLABORATIVE OUTCOME

- Change your attitude to a win-win approach. Have your intention clear: both parties need to win.
- Have a clear plan and strategy; ask yourself: what is important to you and why is it important.
- Be aware of your choices or alternatives.
- Generate a variety of possibilities before choosing.
- Separate people from the problem
- Focus on interests, not positions; consider the other person's situation:
- Create options for mutual gain.
- Communicate carefully and clearly taking intangibles into account
- Use active listening skills; rephrase, ask questions and then ask some more.

HOW CAN I CHANGE A WIN-LOSE SITUATION TO A WIN-WIN SITUATION?

- It is not always easy to alter difficult situations to a win-win but the following lists some techniques that you might utilize:



- Reduce tension through humor, let the other person "vent," and express themselves. Acknowledge their views, listen actively, make a small concession as a signal of good faith
- Increase the accuracy of communication; listen hard in the middle of conflict; rephrase the other's comments to make sure you hear them; mirror the other's views
- Manage issues: search for ways to slice the large issue into smaller pieces; depersonalize the conflict--separate the issues from the people
- Establish commonalities: since conflict tends to magnify perceived differences and minimize similarities, look for greater common goals (we are in this together); find a common problem; focus on what you have in common
- Focus less on your position and more on a clear understanding of the other's needs and develop to move toward them
- Make a "workable" proposal for both; support the person's demand; reformulate; repackage; sweeten the offer; emphasize the positives of outcomes.
- Find a legitimate value in proposed solution for the person to consider.

EXAMINE A DISAGREEABLE RELATIONSHIP AND YOUR INTENDED OUTCOME

Sit in quiet contemplation and bring to mind the person you are in conflict with. Examine your thoughts and feelings and your body's reactions to this person. Ask yourself the questions mentioned above, visualize succeeding and achieving your intended collaborated outcome. Now move into action and implementation.

EXERCISE 15.1 GOALS IN SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIPS

Answer the following questions with your partner:

1. What do we want from this relationship?
2. Where does each of us "want to go" individually, goals of life, goals we want to achieve together?
3. What are my weaknesses? What are your weaknesses?
4. What can I do to improve? What can you do to improve?
5. How can we make this relationship work better?

EXERCISE 15.2 THE MYTHS AND TRUTHS ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS

Explore the following myths and truths about relationships by sharing your experiences about the same with your partner:



Myth:

"If I am involved with you, I will lose me."

TRUTH:

Healthy relationships enhance the self and do not absorb it.

Myth:

"If you knew all about me you would not like me. If you found out that I am not perfect you would leave me."

TRUTH:

None of us is perfect. In a healthy relationship you accept and love the person as he/she is. You learn and grow from each other's limitations and mistakes.

Myth:

"We are as one".

TRUTH:

You are you and I am me and then there is us. We may have different needs, but communication is the key.

Myth:

"We will never argue and fight and we will trust each other totally."

TRUTH:

In this physical reality all loved ones fight and argue, and it takes time to trust someone totally. The important lesson is to learn how to deal with anger appropriately by communicating and working together to resolve things with understanding, giving, tolerance and love.

Myth:

"You will instinctively anticipate my every need, desire and wish".

TRUTH:

Many people aim towards loving others unconditionally and being sensitive to others but you cannot expect to achieve this in the absence of clear communication. If you have expectations you may be disappointed. Healthy relationships may involve expectations but they should involve a shared commitment to fulfil them.



Myth:

"If I am not in control there will be chaos"

TRUTH:

There will be times when you are in control and times when the other loved one is in control and times where you will share control. Healthy relationships are not power struggles. They involve give and take and shared responsibility.

Myth:

"If we love each other, we will stay together forever."

TRUTH:

Nothing in the physical world is permanent. Our network of relationships is constantly changing. Only the Divine One is permanent and He is the only one that is your permanent relation. If you anchor your self around Him, the changes in relationships in your physical world will not shake you or unbalance you. We are in this physical world to learn and grow. In this physical world you can love someone and still be physically at a distance.

EXERCISE 15.3 CONFLICTS IN RELATIONSHIPS

Go into a deep meditative state, visualize you are walking up a flight of steps and you enter a crystal cave. Deep inside the cave there is an altar. Near the altar you see a divine form. Bow to the form and ask for wisdom and understanding about yourself and the person you have a conflict with.

Invite that person to approach that altar, in the presence of the divine form. See the person clearly, physical traits, then, character, emotional traits and lastly his/her spiritual being (God essence).

- What aspects of his/her physical traits do you like?
- What aspects of his/her character/emotional traits do you like?
- What do you dislike about his/her physical and emotional being?
- What aspects of their being mirror you, your thoughts, your attitudes and your belief system?
- Why did you attract this person in to your life?
- What do you need to learn from this relationship and its associated unpleasant experiences?
- Ask yourself am I growing spiritually in this relationship?
- What do I need to do to make this relationship healthy?



Now visualize this person as a spiritual being. Visualize sending this being love and light, with a commitment from your heart to improve the relationship. Visualize yourself removing any negative energy attached to you and this person. Send them love and light. Thank the person for coming into your life and for the lessons you have learnt.

EXERCISE 15.4- CLEARING NEGATIVITY FROM PAST RELATIONSHIPS

Enter into a deep meditative state; cleanse all the chakras from root to crown. Ask the Divine One for guidance. Ask your guardian angel to stand behind you. Visualize before you, standing in one line, people whom you need to clear energy with. Align their heart centres with yours. Ask another guardian angel to stand behind the last person in the queue. Chant OM continuously and from your heart centre send pure green light to the first person standing in front of you. See the sound and colour linking your hearts. Clear the pain and problems of the past. Continue with the sound and colour cleansing until all blocks are removed from all people in the queue. Send golden light from the two angels to form a circle of light to empower all the people in the queue. Now let everyone file past you one by one. Bless them and thank them for the many gifts of learning you have received.

Now see yourself in a new golden aura ready to attract new relationships and new lessons in to your life. Thank the angels and the Divine One; open your eyes in joy.

EXERCISE 15.5 - WHO AM I?

When we criticize others, it is generally due to a projection of our own faults and the qualities we lack.

Look at a close network of relationships, for example your family of origin, that is, your parents and sibling. What aspects of them mirror you? What aspects of them do you admire and what aspects of them do you not accept? What does this network of relationships tell you about yourself: your thoughts about yourself, your self-image, your belief system, and your attitudes?

EXERCISE 15.6 - EXAMINE YOUR RELATIONSHIPS

Visualize three individuals.

- 1) One who has harmed you in this life, “an adversary”.
- 2) One who has assisted or supported you directly; “a friend”.
- 3) One who has neither assisted you nor harmed us; “a stranger”.

Examine your thoughts and feelings and your body's reactions to these three people. Next, look at the whole issue of “attachment”. We are attached to friends and relatives because of the temporary benefit they have brought us in this life. Through prolonged meditation, gradually equalize your feelings towards the three individuals and then extend this feeling to your fellow human beings.

EXERCISE 15.7 – CONNECT WITH YOUR HIGHER CONSCIOUSNESS

Through the guided meditation connect with your Higher Self/Consciousness (HC), your guides and your spiritual counterparts. Visualize a golden triangle; at the apex of the triangle is your HC, you and your loved ones are at the base of the triangle. Connect to your HC, ask for protection and listen for guidance and understanding of your self in relationship with others.

EXERCISE 15.8 – YOUR INHERITANCE

Choose one parental relationship that has impacted on your life. List the traits, characteristics, attributes and core beliefs of the parent (some of these could be positive, others negative). List your positive and negative attributes, characteristics and core beliefs. You have unconsciously inherited (been programmed/conditioned) some of these traits/characteristics and core beliefs. Focus and identify them.

EXERCISE 15.9 – CUTTING NEGATIVE ENERGIES FROM RELATIONSHIPS

Psychotherapist Phyllis Crystal has developed a unique method of “cutting the ties that bind” that involves removing the negative energy from unhealthy relationships. In a meditative process through visualization she makes the client or patient detach and remove the negative energy absorbed from an unhealthy relationship. Do you feel an unhealthy attachment in relationships? Do you feel drained and constrained by old relationship issues that hinder your spiritual progress?

Do you find difficulty in letting go of emotional issues that occurred in the past? Detach from negative programming, past life and old attachments that bind and hold you back from progressing. Cut the ties that bind and hinder your spiritual growth! How?

THE PROCESS OF CUTTING THE NEGATIVE ENERGIES FROM RELATIONSHIPS

I have simplified the process developed by psychotherapist Phyllis Crystal in her book *Cutting the ties that bind*.

1. Go into a meditative state and ask divinity for cleansing and clearing the negative energy in a particular relationship. Ask the divine source to protect you as you are undertaking this exercise.
2. Ask for permission from the person you want to work with either at a soul level or in person. Invite the person you wish to cut the ties with, to be part of the process for his/her and your highest good. Remember you are cutting from the negative issues and the energy, the programming and conditioning and not from the person as such. A soul is indestructible so you can never harm someone's soul.
3. Reflect and review the relationship especially the negative areas where you need to learn from. You will notice disharmony energetically in the physical body as past negative memories about this relationship come up. Cleanse and clear the energy from those body parts and from the chakras affected.

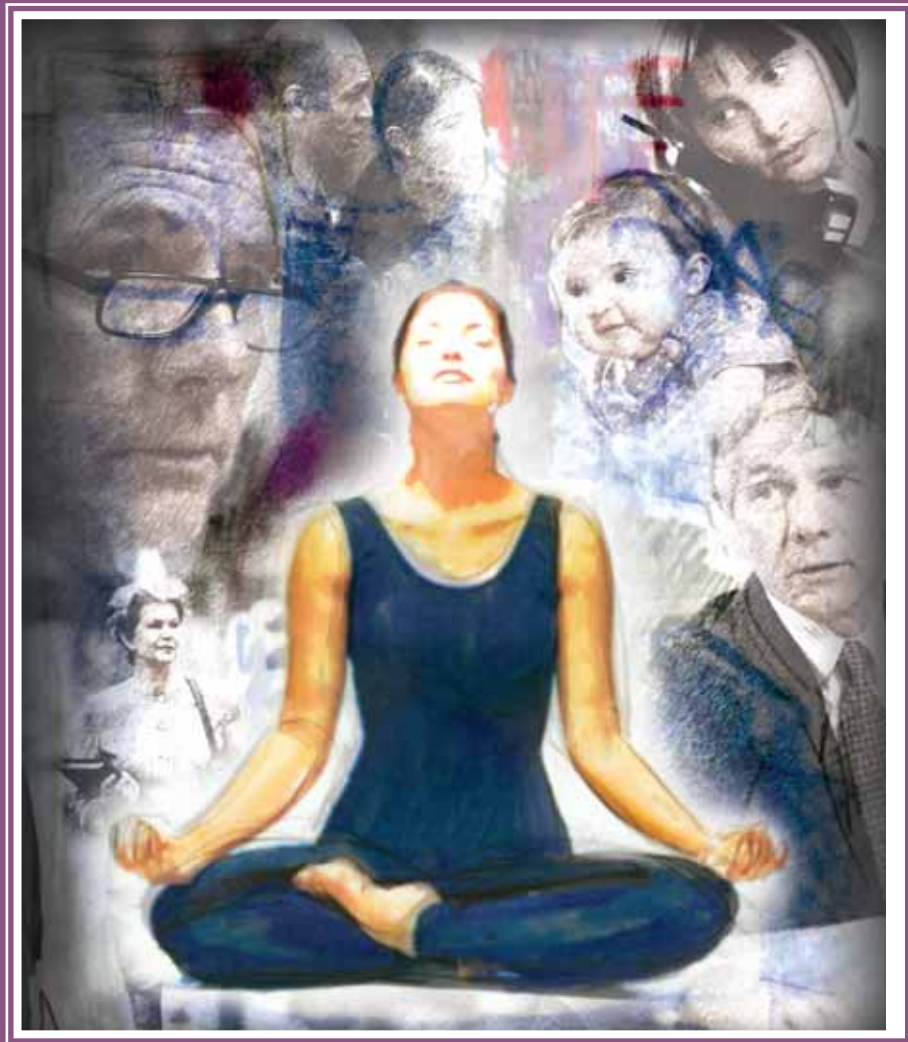


4. Cut and remove the negative energies or cords that are binding you to the other person that has created disharmony within you through visualization and breathe out the negative energy. Hand over the negative energies to Archangel Michael and ask that he may convert the negative energy into positive energy.
5. Ask Archangel Michael to heal the wounds in the parts of the body that have been affected by the negative energies.
6. Make sure your body and the chakras are back in harmony.
7. Ask for forgiveness to self and the other person.
8. Thank the guides, Archangel Michael and the Divine One.
9. Write a letter detailing your thoughts and address it to the person concerned. This is to ensure that all residual negative energy is removed. Let go of all your negative emotions through the writing. Forgive yourself and the person and then symbolically burn or destroy the letter.
10. Work to reconnect to your cosmic divine parents.
11. Work towards achieving balance and harmony in all other existing relationships.



Chapter 16

FREE FROM BAD HABITS AND ADDICTIONS



Chapter 16

Free from bad habits and addictions.

A bad habit never disappears miraculously; it's an undo-it-yourself project.

ABIGAIL VAN BUREN (1918 -)

Bad habits are like a comfortable bed, easy to get into, but hard to get out of.

ANONYMOUS

WHAT IS A HABIT?

A habit is an acquired learning of a particular action instilled by repetition of thought and the action. For instance, you learn to drive a car by repeating the skill in thought and action. All actions begin with a thought. The brain thoughts and repeated thoughts form core beliefs which translate into a particular action. Often, we are rewarded for particular actions and these become reinforced. Habits become automated and automatic. This is called conditioning or programming. Habits are necessary in learning new skills. For example a “habit” of playing the piano or doing homework regularly: when our parents reward us we learn this skill and it becomes part of our routine.

Bad habits originate in thoughts that lead to actions which are harmful to us and/or others for example, smoking, overeating, and excessive consumption of alcohol. In actual fact, there is no obvious or real reward for the bad habit, in fact, quite the contrary. However, the rewarding happens in terms of our thoughts. We associate bad habits with pleasure rather than pain. For instance, smoking is associated with positive self image and relaxation, as opposed to its real association, which is a very real co-relation with cancer. The habit starts in the mind as a thought. “I’ll have a cigarette to make me feel relaxed and remove my stress”. These thoughts and actions, when repeated again and again, become reinforced, conditioned or programmed into us. Habits are formed gradually over a period of time by repetition of an action. In childhood, because the mind is more pliable, it is easier to develop habits. If we associate with people with bad habits it will lead to a much greater probability that we also pick up these habits, as we move towards a mindset of thinking that “this action is really not so bad, as John does it and he seems to be a nice guy”. People who support your bad habits are not your real friends. A young 21 year old presented himself at my clinic with drug related psychosis. He remarked that he knew drugs were causing him to have distorted thinking and hallucinations but ninety per cent of his friends were involved in drugs so “if it is O.K. for them it is O.K. for me -everybody is doing it.” A frighteningly large percentage of our youth are using drugs without knowing the facts about the long term ill effects of drugs on the brain and also the emotional damage drug usage causes.

Smoking is one of the worst addictions. The chemicals found in just one cigarette cause serious damage to our bodies. For example, smoking replaces the oxygen in our lungs with a poisonous gas called carbon monoxide, the same gas found in car exhausts. This reduces the amount of oxygen available to the body. Another toxic substance found in a cigarette is nicotine. Nicotine places greater stress on the body by increasing heart rate, raising blood pressure, and shrinking the blood vessels of the body. These changes place considerable pressure on the heart. A cigarette can restrict you from performing at work, in the classroom, and especially when playing sport. It is also found that if adults smoke in a family, there is a much higher likelihood that children will also smoke. If they take up smoking in school, there is once again a high likelihood of them then moving on to experiment with drugs. It's rare to find some one who habitually indulges in drugs and who is a non-smoker.

A young girl I shall name Sarah wrote this poem about how she developed a core belief of "I am unworthy" which led her to drugs and smoking.

One time, when I was a little girl, I made the decision to think of myself as unworthy.

Many situations caused me to think this as true. Even though, the reality is, no one ever said those words to me out loud. So, as I grew - this remained true for me. I created more situations where I felt unworthy, unloved & a "let down" to those closest. Not once did I ever reconsider my outlook.

As I grew, I found my eyes become less ignorant of things and people and more open to life being so beautiful in all of its complexity. Yet, when I tried to apply this theory to myself, all I saw was someone who deserved to slowly destroy herself as PROOF that I was still unworthy!

I wanted to be right - even though, I knew deep down I was wrong. So, I broke the pact. This pact that I made with myself as a child It was outdated - out grown - childish and not a little selfish. I surrendered it to God last night. I've decided to view myself as infinitely worthy and lovable That I DO make a difference to others, especially myself.

There's no shame in being told your views have never truly worked for you! It's a relief to realise that loving yourself is as easy as appreciating each breath you take and thanking God that you have the body, mind and soul to live on this planet. To work towards the highest good for yourself and in turn, others. The freedom that comes from realising that your old thoughts are just not working is amazing and continual work.

I will keep myself in check from this day forth. For I have made myself a new promise and I intend to keep it.

A 24 year old woman whom I shall call Josephine was referred to me by a colleague. She came to me with great anxiety and fear. She was brought up by a dysfunctional mother who had severe depression, anxiety, who would often would explode with anger and rage. Her mother used alcohol to suppress her feelings. Her father was emotionally detached and distant and would leave Josephine and her sister to fend for themselves. It was not surprising that Josephine had little experience of love and as a result, hated herself and life in general. Her primary thought was “I need to punish myself”. Her thought patterns became so destructive that she frequently had panic attacks. She eventually developed an eating disorder and punished herself and starved for days on end and then would have periods of binge eating. Then her destructive thought patterns would make her vomit. Her body was so weak, that she could not stand up and experienced black outs. Her negative thoughts were so strong that she developed “Obsessive Compulsive Disorders” (thoughts that were forcing her to indulge in recurring actions such as changing her clothes a dozen times or more in a single day) and other symptoms of anxiety disorder. Her thinking became completely distorted and she also developed a personality disorder. She moved from angry violent fits to excessive sobbing and hysteria. Her nutrition and bloods had to be constantly monitored by medical specialists. Josephine had to be hospitalised. Once her body was nourished and she was in certain balance then I was able to teach her meditation techniques to manage and let go of her negative thoughts.

This case illustrates how negative childhood experiences develop negative thoughts and core beliefs. A core belief is a significant thought that occurs persistently and consistently in our minds (self talk) which lead to habits and behavioural patterns that are destructive. Negative thoughts have to be nipped in the bud or else they will accumulate and programme and condition us and affect our behaviour and personality. I would like to reiterate: however “small” a negative thought is, do not give it any attention and energy or else it can grow into a snowball and then an avalanche to destroy you and everything else around you. The fear that we cling on to because of past negative experiences, destroys our present. Trust Divinity, ask for help and let the negative thought go!

BREAKING OLD HABITS AND PROGRAMS

Self-control is not suppression. Suppression is harmful – holding the thought that you want something, but doing nothing constructive to get it. Self-control is patiently replacing wrong thoughts by right ones, changing reprehensible actions to helpful ones.

PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA

Is it possible to break negative core beliefs and our habits and programmes that are so entrenched within us? Yes it is. One requires to be consistently and persistently watching one’s “self talk” that is one’s thoughts, words and deeds. A patient I shall name Mary felt unloved with very low self esteem and used cocaine and other drugs to ease her pain. Working with her was quite a challenge, as she struggled to change her thoughts but with her will power, constant

support from me and healing “water essences” that I made up for her through prayer and my positive thoughts and intentions, we eventually succeeded in breaking the old habits. She had to take small steps towards her final goal, but with persistent and consistent effort, she finally let go of her past negative thoughts that had created the dependence on drugs. Below mentioned is her first communication with me after she was on the road to recovery.

Hello Huzan,

I have not been disciplined enough to do and think what you suggested and so this is the first email of what was suppose to be a daily thing. Better late than never! However I can see that it is really I who am missing out on the benefits of it all. Now I am ready to become more committed to myself, to really think positive and believe in my true self. I am sure it could be beautiful.

I have been drinking the (prayed on) water without fail. I feel this alone has been having an interesting effect. I am having trouble wording what I am trying to say next. I have had Bach flower remedies before and noticed that when old negative thought patterns arose another thought would occur, like another possibility but a more positive alternative. It is I would suppose, this "occurrence of alternative positive thought" that I have been noticing again with the water you have prayed on and that I take. Also, although I haven't been writing my affirmations down on a piece of paper as you suggested, I have been conscious of saying to myself "I honour and love my true self in every thought action and deed". I am seeing there is great potential and benefit, it's up to me to do it if I want it. So anyway I will continue to email you my progress report tomorrow as well.

Thank you

Forget the past. Human conduct is ever unreliable until man is anchored in the Divine. Everything in the future will improve if you are making spiritual effort Now.

SRI YUKTESWARJI.

CAN WE INHERIT BAD HABITS FROM PAST LIVES?

Yes, this explains why some people get addicted to smoking and drinking sooner or more easily than others. Some habits could be inherited from karmic patterns of previous lives. For instance, I was working with a client whom I shall call Tom. He had an obsessive compulsive behaviour disorder and kept washing his hands (every hour or so) the fear of “contamination”. During the course of therapy I discovered that he had an autocratic, strict father with very strong “Christian” values of right and wrong. Tom often received “belting” from his father for any wrong behaviour. Tom as a young adolescent felt exceedingly guilty about masturbation. It was

at this time the behaviour of washing his hands started frequently. He believed he was going to “hell” for masturbation, this was an intense fear that continued long after his father’s death. The washing of hands provided him with some psychological relief even when he was not masturbating or doing anything “wrong”. I had to make Tom realise that he had developed wrong obsessive behaviour from his distorted thinking pattern. It was interesting to note that in his past life, he was a rebellious religious crusader who was crucified for his religious beliefs. Once he realised the origin of his fear and accepted his beliefs were irrational and distorted, his healing started. He subsequently learned to challenge and change his old beliefs and his behaviour automatically was transformed. A learned habit (whether in the mind or overt in behaviour) is difficult to change but with persistence, consistent, determination and the re-conditioning of old programs, new behaviour manifests. Some of us inherit bad habits from watching our parents at an unconscious level or from past lives. I have often done past life regression work to heal some of those patterns from previous lives.

WHEN YOU SAY NO, MEAN IT

A saint is a sinner who never gave up. A sin is anything that keeps man oblivious of God.

PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA

Be who you are and say what you feel, because those who mind don't matter and those who matter don't mind.

DR. SEUSS, US AUTHOR & ILLUSTRATOR (1904 - 1991)

When you really love yourself, you honour yourself and do that which is for your highest good. We are spineless weaklings when we say “yes” even though we know it is not good for us. People walk over and trample on the weak-willed. I used to think it was a good thing to be sensitive and submissive. But I learnt that being too sensitive or weak willed is detrimental to your being. Look at the great spiritual masters - they stand erect and tall and speak their truth, in spite of persecution. It takes courage and divine will to say “NO” and mean it. The spiritual aspirant has to be strong willed. Bad habits bring short term pleasure or gratification but this occurs at the cost of long term soul benefit. Your body is the temple of your soul and so it is important to look after your body. Your senses will try and tempt you but do not let the mind control you. You are divine, made in the image of God, so train your will and mind to be liberated from being enslaved to bad habits. Never admit defeat and keep trying and you will succeed in breaking away from these habits. Do not associate with friends who weaken your will and encourage you to do that which is bad for you. Those friends that protect and inspire you to think, speak and act positively are your true friends. My grandmother always said, associate with likeminded people. Love yourself and mix with those who really love you and have your highest interests at heart.



Every night introspect whether you have been swept away by the tide of bad habits or whether you are developing will power. By keeping a diary of your good and bad habits you are better prepared to deal with them. I have included a letter from a young girl who used drugs and smoking as a way of coping with her lack of self love.

Thanks for last night's healing. It really means a lot to me that you believe I am worthy of this. I am beginning to believe it too. As I drove home last night, the thought of stopping at the petrol station for cigarettes crossed my mind but another thought came through VERY LOUD and CLEAR and it was that I PROMISED myself that I would love myself and that I am indeed worthy of all good things. I don't want to smoke because that would mean I am destroying myself and I surrendered that old belief system to God last night. So, without any fanfare, I have just stopped smoking. I deserve to breathe and be on this earth and live out my life's purpose with clear lungs and an open heart. I'm not saying there won't be times when I'll be tempted but when those times arise, I will visualize Arch Angel Michael next to me, giving me courage and strength to move through it.

Thanks again, Huzan.

MEDITATION AND ITS ROLE IN INSTALLING GOOD HABITS

When you want to create a good habit or destroy a bad one, concentrate on the brain cells. Constantly in meditation and conscious awareness, watch your thoughts. Ask God the Archangels and your guides to help you. When you want to instil a good habit, meditate on the eyebrow centre and deeply affirm the good habit you want to install. Imagine the divine light going through your brains and body. When you want to destroy a bad habit, concentrate on the eyebrow centre and deeply affirm that all the grooves that hold the bad habits in your brain cells are being erased.

SPIRITUAL HABITS

Why be upset because God hasn't shown himself to you? Think of the long time you ignored Him!

If I tell you a fruit has a certain colour and that it is sweet you still only understand the non-essentials about it. To know its distinctive flavour, you yourself must eat it. Similarly, to realize truth you must experience it. I can only arouse your appetite for divine fruit, why don't you get busy and take a bite?

PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA

Yogananda said it may take eight years to break deep entrenched bad habits and form good habits. He says, "Procrastination fosters more bad habits until the will is a prisoner and you think you cannot change." Therefore start now and do not give up, but instead, try harder. Meditation is the best spiritual habit to inculcate. It is your special time with your Creator. Never miss your appointment with Him.

MIND POWER

God remembers us, though we remember Him not. If He forgot creation for a second, everything would disappear traceless. Who but He holds in the sky this mud ball of earth? Who impels the growth of trees and flowers? Yet how few of His children give Him a thought!

PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA

Everything is a thought force. This world is a world of delusion, maya, and man is kept hypnotized with that delusion. The body is mind in action. The body is a grosser manifestation and the mind is a finer manifestation and spirit is still finer. Consider H₂O. In its invisible form it is water vapour, in liquid form it is water and in solid form it is ice. Likewise, the elements of spirit or energy, mind and body are one, but at different densities. With the power of your mind you can work changes in the life and in the body itself. Never discredit the effects of the mind on the body, but instead, train the mind gradually to know its power. In the mind lies the omnipresent healing power of God. Think positive thoughts even in the face of struggles and difficulties.

WAYS TO DEVELOP MIND POWER

ΣWalk with God through prayer and meditation and know that nothing can bring you down when you are with Him.

ΣDevelop intense desire for results. Focus on the present and visualise the results happening NOW.

Evolution is a suggestion of God in the human mind, and is true in the world of relativity. Actually everything is taking place in the present. In spirit there is no evolution, just as there is no change in the beam of light through which all the developing scenes of cinema pictures are manifested. The Lord can turn the motion picture of creation backward or forward, but everything is really happening in an eternal Now.

PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA



- Dedication, commitment and persistence to your intention are the keys.
- Ask yourself: what is preventing me from getting what I want?
- Think of past successes in other areas and believe in yourself.
- Make yourself feel good by watching the emotions you are generating.
- On a daily basis, put power into your intention. It is our beliefs that are the power behind creation and manifestation.
- We can turn any idea to a belief if we look and associate with positive experiences that support the same. Beliefs drive all our behaviours. Make your beliefs into convictions.
- Remember that our destiny is shaped through our decisions not the conditions in our lives. Every decision we make impacts on our life – making no decisions is also a decision in itself!
- We all have the resources to achieve our dreams. We just do not realise this.
- Associate the bad habits with pain rather than pleasure. (For instance associate smoking with lung cancer and a painful and premature death, as opposed to relaxation and pleasure).
- Feel the excitement of your goal – being without the bad habit which brings you closer to achieving your dreams.
- Think positive thoughts and practise equanimity in times of difficulties and suffering
- Resist temptation by giving power to the mind rather than the senses.

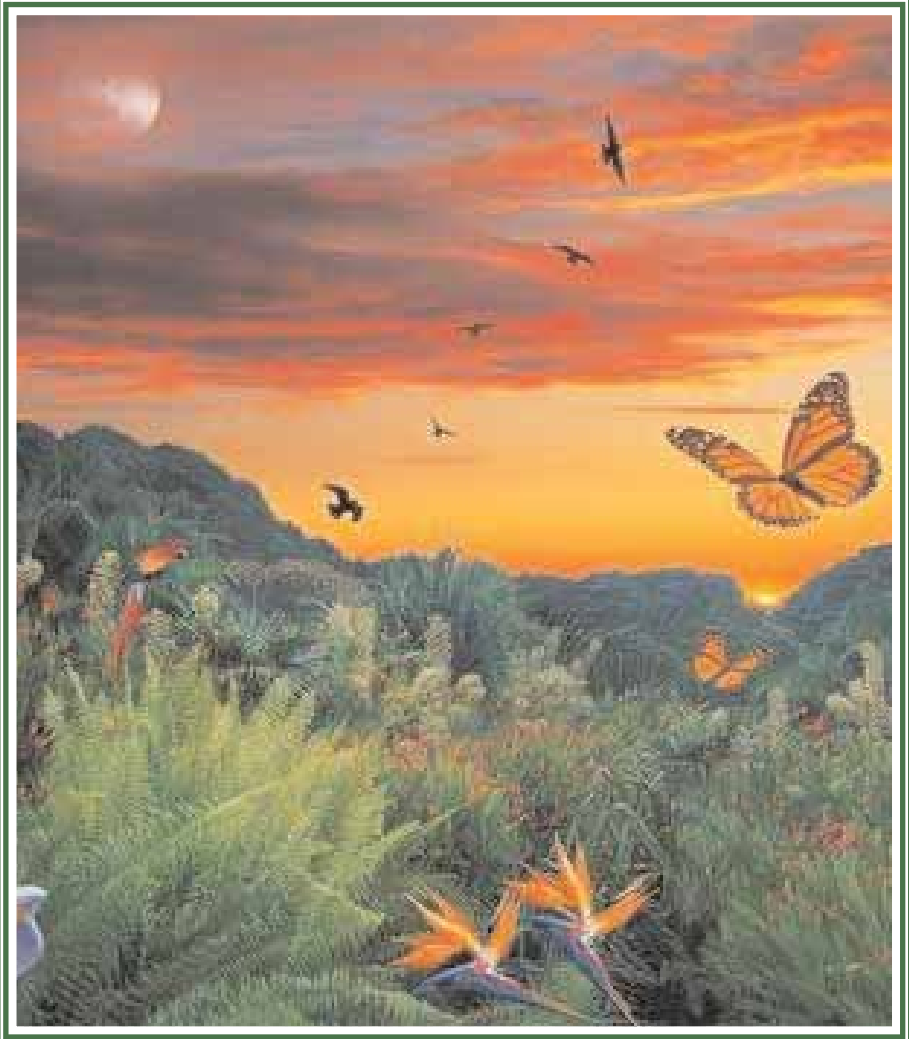
This life is a master novel, written by God and man would go crazy if he tried to understand it by reason alone. That is why I tell you to meditate more. Enlarge the magic cup of your intuition and then alone you will be able to hold the ocean of infinite wisdom.

PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA



Chapter 19

THE GOLDEN AGE – PEACE AND HARMONY



Chapter 17

The Golden Age - Peace and Harmony

Man derives all the peace and joy that he needs from within himself.

Everything I do and say to anyone makes a difference to the world. You must act ever in the consciousness of your divinity and recognize in each being a brother, a child of God. The whole world is one family.

SHRI SATYA SAI BABA

Numerous seers, prophets, scientists have made prophecies regarding our planet in the new century. It seems to clearly indicate a major catastrophe, if humankind does not shift in consciousness, awareness and to goodness. A few examples of their predictions are:

NOSTRADAMUS: French seer of the sixteenth century predicted the burning of two towers - this could be extrapolated to the collapse of the twin towers in New York that is September 11, 2003.

MOTHER SHIPTON : mother Shipton who lived before Nostradamus also predicted:

When women dress like men and trousers wear,
And cut off all their locks of hair,
When pictures look alive with movements free
When ships like fishes swim beneath the sea
When men out-stripping birds can soar the sky
Then half the world, deep drenched in the blood shall die.

The Mahabharata describes the “kaliyuga” : Unscrupulous people will rule the nations, fruits, vegetables will not taste good. Government will levy tax on people to such an extent that even honest men will maintain two accounts. People will get greedy, selfish. Business people will adulterate and cheat and feel it is impossible to do business without cheating. Extramarital affairs will be common. Nations will be rocked by violence and unrest will prevail everywhere. When the Sun, moon and the Jupiter converge in the same house of an astrological horoscope then “Krutayuga” will be born. This golden age will bring back prosperity and right living.

RICHARD NOON



On the 5th of May 2000 AD, Mercury, Venus, Jupiter, Mars, Uranus and Saturn will be aligned with the earth for the first time in 6000 years and on that day the ice will build up at the south pole, which will be of the order of 6 trillion tons of ice and water sweeping over the planet. This will alter the earth's axis bringing about a catastrophe the likes of which mankind has not experienced in thousands of years.

There is great disharmony, inequality and injustice on the planet even at this time, mostly created by man himself. Even the Tsunami of 2004, I believe, is a natural disaster but one which has been created by the culminated negative energy of humankind through the years. There is a deep wound at the heart of humanity. Tribal warfare has been going on for several thousand years on the planet and now this has been magnified globally with wars in Iraq, the Middle East and other regions. Nationalism and patriotism are another form of tribal warfare. We fight each other because of differences in nationality, race and religion. Unfortunately humankind does not see itself as ONE. There is something terribly wrong if we are forever fighting and killing each other in the name of the divine energy (God).

The truth is the divine energy does not instruct or want us to fight or kill. We manipulate the truth and misuse and abuse it in the name of divine energy. All religions tell us not to hurt one another, that humankind is ONE created by ONE loving Creator. All religions tell us to be responsible towards other creations yet we, each one of us, are directly or indirectly selfishly destroying the planet. The reason for decline in the world is the deterioration in human character and the growth of violence and hatred. We have moved away from our true self. We have moved away from the divine energy.

Flowers have petals and each petal is an individual.

Trees have leaves and each leaf is an individual.

Humanity has people and each person is an individual.

The petal and leaf separate from the rest of the flower or tree wither and die.

We do not stand alone.

We individuals are a part of the whole.

The tree needs the sun and the rain and the earth.

It responds to wind and fire.

It gives shelter and food to other living things.

It is not a tree alone,

It is part of the ecosystem

That is part of the world

That is part of the universe.

The sun and the tree are one.

The tree and the squirrel are one.

The tree and the boy carving his initials in its bark are one.

*We can go through life feeling separate.
We build our ego defences and protect our toys and territories.
We make a name for ourselves.
We expound our truths.
And what we get for it is loneliness, alienation, conflict and disagreement.
When I claim this toy as mine, I invite you to take it.
When I stake out my territory, I invite you to step over the line.
When I claim to be leader of the pack, I invite challengers to test me.
Big ego invites conflict and disagreement.
Little ego gives nothing to fight against.
When we speak the truth, others listen.
When we claim to own the truth, others observe the lie.*

*Each of us is precious.
Each of us is unique.
Each has strengths and talents to develop.
We have our gifts and our flaws, and we each contribute to the whole.
We are individual and we are one.*

*Seek awareness of your connections.
Think about what makes you uniquely you
And what makes you like others.
Think of what makes your life possible.
Consider what you contribute to the whole.
Sit quietly and appreciate your oneness with all that is.
Leave behind words, judgments, categories and boundaries.
Be one.*

TOM BARRETT, 2004

The new century brings us many challenges and difficulties but also presents us with opportunities for growth. With the present world situation many people are crying out for peace and harmony on the planet.

CAN WE DO SOMETHING TO AVERT THESE TRAGEDIES?

I like to believe that people in the long run are going to do more to promote peace than our governments. Indeed, I think that people want peace so much that one of these days governments had better get out of the way and let them have it.

DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER (1890 - 1969)



Yes, to some extent we can through positively expanding human consciousness by working on transforming our self. I believe that these major catastrophes have already been diverted with the emergence of a cosmic and planetary spiritual master such as Shri Satya Sai Baba walking the planet. Many other great Ascended Masters are present here today including a multitude of angels and spiritual guides assisting humankind. We are born in very exciting times as humankind has been given the greatest opportunity to rise in consciousness. We have the power to shake off the past negative karma of many lifetimes in this one lifetime. Look around and you will see that more and more people are turning towards spirituality and transforming themselves.

WHAT IS PEACE?

Peace is divine love, harmony, order and well-being. Peace is our natural state of being; it is we who have moved away from peace and harmony by separating from Divinity in thought, word and deed. Peace is about returning to God within ourselves. Each one of us has to move to peace and harmony within ourselves for the peace to manifest in our outer reality. Each one of us has to look at our own anger, hatred, fear, sadness, envy, jealousy, prejudices, judgments of others and transform to harmony and peace. It can only start with the SELF.

Peace is not a relationship of nations. It is a condition of mind brought about by a serenity of soul. Peace is not merely the absence of war. It is also a state of mind. Lasting peace can come only to peaceful people.

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU (1889 - 1964)

HOW CAN WE ATTAIN THE GOLDEN AGE AND PEACE?

Will punishment and military action towards anyone heal their wound or aggravate it? In five thousand years of recorded human history there have been as many as fifteen thousand wars. The external world is a reflection of our inner world. If we want world peace, we have to start with ourselves. If you and I have a single thought of violence or hatred against anyone in the world at this moment, we are contributing towards the wounding of the world. Let us first begin with the self.

Until you make peace with who you are, you'll never be content with what you have.

DORIS MORTMAN

We cannot give in to knee-jerk reactions to attaining peace. When the cry for war and patriotism is ringing around us, we should steal ourselves not to be swept away by rhetoric. People have to look for root causes for violence, destruction, hatred, anger, injustices and work to set things right. Look at how a cyclone originates. There is high pressure at one point and low pressure somewhere else. Winds blow from the high to the low-pressure region and when this process is magnified, a

cyclone is born. This natural phenomenon teaches us a lesson. When there is a big difference and inequality in energy, it leads to turbulence. Alan Greenspan, America's leading central banker once said, "We cannot have islands of prosperity surrounded by oceans of poverty." We have to think of our fellow human beings globally. There is no reason for poverty in this world. We all should take responsibility to remove poverty, hatred, anger by thinking of others first. If the developed countries of the world bestowed just a few days worth of their defense budget, world poverty would be eliminated. We cannot just blame our politicians – it's said we get the government we deserve.

America's present need is not heroics, but healing; not nostrums but normalcy; not revolution, but restoration.

WARREN G. HARDING (1865 - 1923),

Let us all take one step towards giving and loving others. The divine energy gives us everything free: food, water, and natural resources such as oil, gas, gold, coal, and iron ore etc for our use. We exploit each other, claiming things for ourselves and creating shortages for others, so that we benefit. We are responsible for world poverty, not the divine energy.

Poverty is the parent of revolution and crime.

ARISTOTLE, GREEK PHILOSOPHER (384 BC - 322 BC)

We spend billions of dollars on warfare and weapons. Why do we not feed the world poor instead? We create inequalities so grave that then the suppressed underdog revolts. If there were more justice and equality and giving there would be peace. Frederick Douglass, in his speech in April 1886 stated:

Where justice is denied, where poverty is enforced, where ignorance prevails, and where any one class is made to feel that society is in an organized conspiracy to oppress, rob, and degrade them, neither persons nor property will be safe.

FREDERICK DOUGLASS, US ABOLITIONIST (1817 - 1895)

We get everything from God, we are divine and have God essence within us but we forget who we really are. A Yiddish proverb rightly says, "True poverty does not come from God." I believe it comes from humanity. We are all trustees for our Creator and have responsibilities towards all of His creations. Money must be held in trust for divine energy and used wisely for the highest good of all. The Pentagon may go after "terrorists" with multi billion dollar equipment and manpower but the real enemies are within each one of us: lust, anger, greed, desire, pride, jealousy, ego and the sense of ME and MINE.

It is meaningless to aspire for peace and tolerance in the streets and villages without peace and tolerance at home. It has become fashionable today to pray for peace. We keep the atom bomb in hand and then shout for peace. We talk about the right to sell arms; we do not want

to have any code restricting violence and sex in the name of “freedom”. But with freedom comes responsibility and this is what the divine energy expects from us.

The fight against terrorism commences with a fight against violence. We frequently see violent movies, on television or the cinema. We are bombarded with images of violence and these images have now become mainstream and acceptable. Listen to your inner self- take a stand against violence – even if the argument is that it is for entertainment purpose only. If there is no demand to see violence there will be less violence created. The media is very powerful and markets violence very successfully. Young and impressionable minds are constantly being exposed to violence. Think of how we are influencing the next generation. Evaluate the cartoons children see today. How much violence is there in them and what are we teaching our kids?

7What are we doing to stop this? Why do the media focus on 99% of bad news? We often talk of freedom and rights but what about responsibility? Yogananda, a great Indian spiritual master has stated, “With every breath of air I take, I must make me resolve not to pollute the air”. Each one of us can take responsibility to change the violent thinking of one or more individuals in our world. Are you ready to take the challenge? Are you ready to make this world a better place? We can make a difference. Even by journeying to the moon, man cannot get peace. Peace is within you. It is better to travel half an inch into the heart than to journey millions of miles to the distant worlds. We can get internal harmony by working on ourselves to remove anger, hatred, jealousy, fear and sadness. Peace and harmony can be restored in our being by connecting to Divinity. Divinity has the power to remove all evil from this world.

One may well ask why the divine energy can't remove all this evil from our world. But who created evil? Man or divine energy? Why should the divine energy wave a magic wand and remove all the troubles when we have not learnt from the evil we have created and continue to create? If you were a teacher and examiner, would you pass a student without a proper test, knowing that the student has not learnt his lessons? Today humankind wants to take it easy and let divine energy do all the work. We want peace and harmony without working for it. Man has to fight for dharma (truth in action) and the divine energy will be by man's side helping him all the way.

We have forgotten the primordial wisdom that all creations on our planet are connected. We are connected with a living pulsating universe. The universe is just as much alive as our human body. When we suffer injury to one part of ourselves, the entire body responds by sending healing energy. The human body is a microcosm of the universe.

Our planet can be likened to one cell in the body of the universe and right now our planet is injured. The universe is sending healing energy to the wounded planet in the same way that the human immune system becomes activated when there is injury to one part of the body. A purification of the planet is beginning to take place. Aristotle (384 BC - 322 BC) stated that, nature does nothing uselessly. Humanity has wounded the planet hence the tsunami occurred in December 2004, I believe we have to sit up and take note that it is high time that we change our ways.

The veil between our personal inner universes and the outer universe is thinning. We have the opportunity to step within ourselves and become aware of the inner truths. Each of us has been given the opportunity to look within, to cast aside our shadow. It is the shadow that separates us from Spirit.

There are many shadows that present themselves in our lives – fear, pain, depression, sadness, self-limiting beliefs, disease and deaths. The shadows usually have their source in the past.

CONDITIONING AND PROGRAMMING IN SOCIETY THAT DISTORTS OUR PERCEPTIONS

Awareness is the perception or realization of something. We have already learnt how powerful thoughts and perceptions are in creating our reality. On the spiritual pathway, self-awareness implies a condition in which the individual is alert to all the reactive responses and able to dispassionately observe subjective and objective processes that have an inter-relationship.

The primary purpose of traditional meditation is to produce this result or condition. In order to do this, we need to recognize how we are conditioned and programmed in society and how we function in relation to that conditioning. In our world, the principal characteristics that result from conditioning, programming and socialisation are:

ÿ **Competitiveness versus compassion:** Fostered within the family, school, university, sports and work environment. In our world in the West, we are programmed from childhood to compete at all costs. Look at the way some of our children go from music classes to dance classes to sports activities – the recurring message from this early age, is that it is winning that is important. This is different to some Buddhist and Hindu traditions, where one is taught that there is abundance in the universe and “one gets if one gives”.

1 EMOTIONAL EXPRESSIVENESS VERSUS SUPPRESSION: There are considerable differences in the way different people and indeed, different cultures, express emotions. In addition, men express emotions differently to women. Whilst most Westerners identify with their emotions, they do not tend to objectify them, as they have not been taught and conditioned to do so. For instance: “I am hot tempered and I cannot change that”. On the other hand, Eastern cultures such as the Balinese, tend to be accustomed to meditating and teaching their children to utilize these skills to withdraw and deal with their intense emotions within themselves, rather than outwardly display their negative emotions.

2 VIOLENCE VERSUS NON-VIOLENCE : In the West our children watch a considerable amount of television videos and unfortunately as a result, tend to view lots of violence. These mediums condition us from childhood that it is O.K. to be violent. Study our traditional nursery rhymes and Grimms fairy tales - what do they teach our children? The TV and media have strong mental influences, and the frequency and intensity of the impact of these vary from family to family.

3 RESPECT TO ELDERS AND ATTITUDE TO AUTHORITY: in some cultures children are taught to respect elders, teachers and authority in general. Today in our culture, the media sometimes portray that it is “cool” to be rebellious and break the law. The conditioning suggests that honesty does not pay.

4 ATTITUDE TO MATERIALISM: Money is everything versus spirituality is everything. We overindulge our children in the West without teaching them due responsibility, whilst in the lesser developed world, a large number of children on the other side of the planet do not have adequate food, clothing and shelter. We need to teach our children to give and share and lead by example.



5 ATTITUDE TO FREEDOM: We think that freedom is doing whatever we want without taking responsibility for our actions and thinking about consequences. However, as we have discussed, the law of karma teaches us that there are consequences for every action. “What we sow we shall reap”. We need to teach this to our children at an early age

6 MOVING AWAY FROM ILLEGAL DRUGS: I was shocked to find one young patient tell me that 90% of his friends used illegal drugs such as ecstasy, speed etc., and if he had to stop using them he would be isolated and alone. This was in spite of him having drug induced psychosis. Hence, this youngster thought it was the norm because the “majority did it” and therefore it made it alright to use drugs. We need to teach our kids the reality of drug taking.

7 HEALTHY FOOD: “Fast food is fun and good”. Our kids have been given and marketed McDonalds in a way that has conditioned and addicted them. McDonalds have recently focused on more disclosure of the fats and calories in each of their foods and even made changes to introduce healthy eating. Whether this is genuine concern on the part of McDonalds, or just a way of ensuring the survival of their long term business profitability, is another question.

Please extend this list further and continue to look at the conditioning, programming patterns in our society. Who is responsible for the destruction of our planet? We are. Think of differences in conditioning and programming that occur in your family and that have strongly influenced you during your childhood.

MEDITATION EXERCISE 17.1 – BRINGING PEACE WITHIN

Let us look within. After deep relaxation, call to mind a relationship where you are experiencing anger, hatred, jealousy, guilt or any violence. To look inward is to know that everything that you have ever experienced was necessary for your growth and understanding. As uncomfortable as those memories are, it is important to observe and release. See a person you are experiencing difficulties with from a state of detachment and wisdom.

Every experience that you have ever had, everything that has been done to you and everything that you have done to others, has been important for your learning and growth. Even people who have done cruel or unjust things to you, have helped you to become who you are. These experiences, in their totality, enable you to become compassionate, whole and loving.

All individuals create the experience that is valuable for them and their growth. Use the wisdom inherent in you and release the anger, hatred and guilt. Guilt occurs when we do not take responsibility for our actions. It is important to acknowledge all your actions, without judgment - if you have hurt somebody, make it right. You can spiritually turn back the clock, as there is no time and space in the spiritual realm, and use visualization to send LOVE to the people you have hurt. Go deep within your being and spread Love and Forgiveness. When you come out of meditation make a note of your feelings. After writing down what you felt, burn the paper and chant: “I release now and forevermore my anger, hatred, guilt, violence... So be it.”



Denise Linn states:

It is now after eons of evolutionary cycles that each of us can come full circle into the blueprint of our soul. The time is now! Denial of pain and suffering in this life, as well as in previous lives is coming into the light now. Many people are struggling to overcome their barriers to wholeness. All the suffering, fear and pain of separation that have accrued lifetime after lifetime are now passionately yearning for absolution. This accumulation of thousands of years of lifetimes which exist inside us as suppressed memories are now crying for release. It is only now that we have the opportunity to let go of old limitations from the past.

The quality of one's feelings in the past and the now determines one's future.

Anything that helps you maintain unruffled equanimity is right action.

Divine energy if you think, divine energy you are

Dust if you think, dust you are. As you think so you become

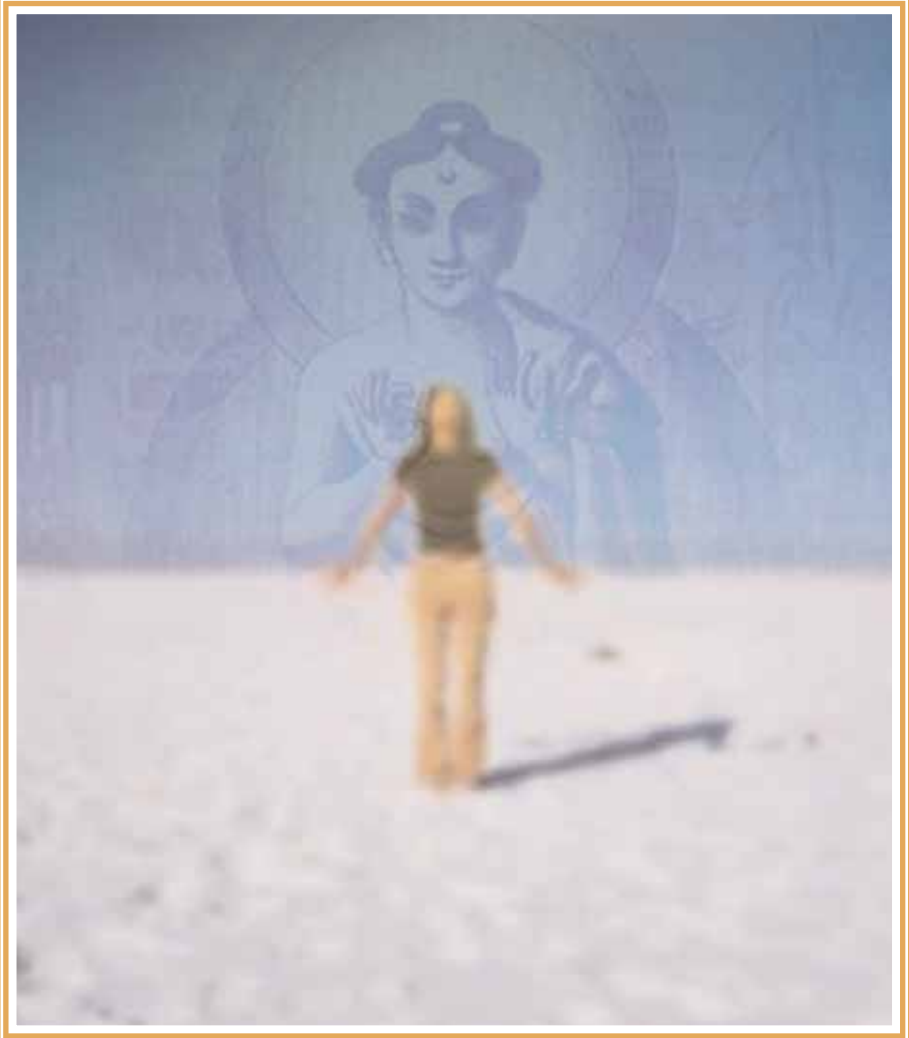
Think divine energy, be divine energy.

SHRI SATYA SAI BABA



Chapter 18

WILL MEDITATION REALLY WORK?



CHAPTER 18

Will meditation really work?

CONCLUSION

You may ask yourself what the purpose is of transformation of the “self” through meditation. I believe the purpose in doing meditation and all this “inner journey work” is to attain permanent happiness. Permanent happiness is not short-lived excitement from material success and gratification of bodily needs through the senses but it is found in the soul’s attunement with God. All things are made of pure consciousness. . Thought is the first unit of consciousness. Therefore, if you want to change anything in yourself you must change the process of thought as your actions are generated by your thoughts. Meditation can train your mind to generate positive thoughts and evolve in consciousness. Remoulding your consciousness means exercising free will guided by discrimination and energized by will power.

The purpose and aim of life is becoming one with the ultimate Truth: God. Truth is a very ambiguous word and a difficult concept to define as truth is relative to our perception. However, absolute Truth is God and He exists in everything in the Universe. How do we arrive at the “Truth”? We know about truth in three ways: through our senses, through inference by the processes of the mind and through our intuition. Intuition is direct perception of the soul and is developed through meditation. The ultimate proof of all existence will come through your own experience in meditation. Once you have found God in the depths of your soul you will find him everywhere.

The only way to know and to live in truth is to develop the power of intuition. Then you will see that life has meaning and that no matter what you are doing the inner voice is guiding you. That voice has long been drowned in the mire of untrue thoughts. The surest way to liberate the expression of intuition is by meditation, early in the morning and before going to bed at night.

SRI PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA, (1997) JOURNEY TO SELF-REALIZATION

Meditation is connecting directly with God and when you do that your intuitive perception of Truth will guide you in everything you do. Why are some people not successful in achieving well-being or health and wealth even though they try so hard? The majority of humankind uses only one-tenth of their minds. How can we increase our wisdom and receptivity and therefore quicken our evolution and growth in consciousness? We can do this through meditation by consciously condensing all our learning and experiences through the power of concentration. Concentration is to gather our attention, focusing to one point. When concentration is directed within by divine power we can manifest and attain wisdom about anything. In us lies the infinite seat of all knowledge. Humankind is the only creation on this planet capable of advanced levels of consciousness, discrimination and ultimately of God-

realization. Hence attaining wisdom and acting on that knowledge makes us succeed in anything we want in life. Both wisdom and will power are necessary for successful creation and meditation teaches us to harness both. We may have karmic limitations but we have the power to rise above karma by coming together with God. Shri Satya Sai Baba and all the great spiritual masters clearly state that when we commune with God we change our position and our power from a mortal to an immortal being and all limitations can be overcome, even our karma. The avenue through which you can communicate and become one with God is meditation.

When a problem thwarts you – when you find no solution and no one helps you – go into meditation. Meditate until you find the solution. It will come. I have tested this hundreds of times, and I know the focusing power of attention never fails. It is the secret of success. Concentrate and don't stop until your concentration is perfect. Then go after what you want. As a mortal being you are limited, but as a child of God you are unlimited. Connect your concentration with God. Concentration is everything. First go within; learn to focus your mind and to feel the power of God... To get response from God, you must meditate deeply.

SRI PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA, (1997) JOURNEY TO SELF-REALIZATION

As the saying goes, the proof of the pudding is in the eating..... Unless you try meditation and the exercises presented in this book and make an effort how will you know whether it works? I have undertaken meditation classes and holistic counseling sessions with people in Australia and other parts of the world for over a decade. These are excerpts from some of the letters I have received. In my opinion, a majority of my students who have made an effort to meditate have seen major life changes for the better. I am truly indebted to my divine father and mother Shri Satya Sai Baba for giving me the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of others. I am grateful for the love and joy I have received from my students and patients.

MEDITATION CLASSES

Huzan, opened up another world for me, guided me, let me see my inner self!

LOVE AND LIGHT, MARJO

I had been trying to 'get into' meditation for a while and started with a basic meditation course which turned into my lifeline and something I couldn't wait to get to each week. Not only was I broadening my horizons on life, we also met some wonderful friends and formed a support group which we still have today. I can honestly say meeting Huzan changed my life for ever for the better. The answers are all within us. We just have to be shown the way. Huzan has helped us to do this but we are all still learning and hope that I continue to do this until the day I depart this life forever more.

Thankyou Huzan

LOVE, DEE

Huzan has a special gift of getting people in touch with the spiritual sides of their personalities and her energy and goodness is the hook on which her lessons hang.

SUSAN BUTLER

You helped me in many aspects. I learnt more about myself; I got to understand myself through meditation and the workshops you held. I learnt to trust, to trust my feelings...to believe in myself and not to fear. Thank you, dear friend for making a difference.

LOVE NADIA...

Huzan's meditation sessions usually take me to inner places where I have not been before and stretch my capacity to explore and experience my emotions and my spiritual side. I know that universal powers are her guiding forces.

I.K.

Dear Huzan,

At 70 years of age I had expected to have learnt enough about life to have come to a stage of self-realization and contentment, having endeavored to be the perfect daughter, wife, mother, grandmother with a belief in an all-knowing God.

My belief had always been that we put the past behind and get on with life ignoring what could not be changed, but I have proved that in a very short space of time with the right insight and guidance life can be turned around giving health and deep spiritual growth.

Meditation has been the key to my transformation, particularly undergoing past life experiences. The results have left me amazed as you have led me to review my past at a level that brought to the surface so much in my life I had no idea had had such an influence on me. Once I recognized the great truths that were presented, you gave me the tools to deal with all these experiences and to feel health and positive strength to go forward to deal with my life.

I will be eternally grateful to you, dear Huzan, and think of you with much love and light.

PAT

HOLISTIC COUNSELLING

My experiences with Huzan have allowed me to “let go” of the issues and problems that were affecting both my health and general well being in life. She has helped me to have the courage to overcome, what at times seemed insurmountable problems and provided me with the insight to assess myself and the world around me. I have changed the direction of my life, to one where I am now at peace and harmony with the world and myself. I would recommend participation in meditation and healing with Huzan for anyone who wishes to improve their general well being, or to tackle specific personal issues.

KIND REGARDS, M. FOWLER

Huzan Daver knows people, knows their pain and how to lead them to deeper spiritual understanding of themselves and the world. Huzan has a solid academic grounding but it is her strong belief in the potential of her fellow beings that shimmers. Huzan's ability to connect others with their inner selves and a more compassionate world is genuine and consistent. My own understanding has been fostered and continues to flourish thanks to my connection to Huzan.

SUSAN JARNASON RN BScN

Dr Daver's holistic counselling approach was a breath of fresh air for me as the medical profession was only interested in putting me on drugs and sending me on my way. Dr Daver's meditation has been an experience that I will never forget. The skills I have learnt through her meditation classes I am now passing onto my two children, in order to empower and let them know that they are never alone and always have a higher source that can be called upon to help and guide them through life, skills I wished I had as a child.

I will be forever grateful to Dr Daver for her knowledge, compassion and assistance in teaching me that there is another way.

KIRSTIE



POSITIVE THOUGHTS TO MEDITATE ON – BY SHRI SATYA SAI BABA

One cannot discover new oceans until one has the courage to lose sight of the shore.

The difference between a flower and a weed is in your judgment.

An open mind and a closed mouth are a winning combination.

The measure of mental health is the disposition to find good everywhere.

The snow goose need not bathe to make itself white. Neither need you do anything but be your self.

We can be successful leaders, only if we are disciplined followers, who do no issue commands to others but rather set an example of service in our actions.

A coincidence is simply a miracle for which God prefers to remain anonymous.

Swallowed pride is non-fattening.

A smile costs less than electricity and gives more light.



GLOSSARY

Aanand: Bliss not the same as pleasure or happiness which is temporary.

Aham: "I", in its purest sense, it represents the self.

Adwaita: Non-dual.

Ahimsa: non-violence.

Aikyam: oneness with God.

Ajapa: without deliberate repetition; repetition on its own without external or deliberate effort.

Ajna: Frontal refers to the eye brow chakra.

Anaahata: ever-new, incessant, the heart chakra is named.

Asti: Is; being.

Atma: Divine essence; soul; real self; spirit; energy.

Atma-bodh: knowledge of self.

Avataar: Appearance of God on earth.

Bandh: Control.

Bhaava: feeling, emotion.

Bhagavad: Divine; of God.

Bhagwan: God.

Bhakti: Devotion.

Bindu: Dot; refers to a chakra on the highest part of the head.

Brahma: The Creator aspect of God.

Buddhi: Intellect, reason, faculty with discriminates.

Chakra: wheel, circle; refers to an energy center.

Chin-mudra: hand posture which represents giving wisdom.

Chit: Awareness.

Chitta: aspect of the mind when it deliberates.

Daiva: Of God.

Dharma: Righteous action; moral duty, code of conduct in thought, word and deed based on truth.

Dwaita: Duality.

Ghyana: knowledge, wisdom.

Guna: attribute, characteristic.

Ida: Ethereal canal to the left of the sushumna (main energy line) connected to the left nostril.

Japa: silent continual repetition of the name.

Jeevana: life.

Jiva; individual; embodied soul.

Kaama: lust, desire.

Karmic: action or inaction which causes a reaction or consequence; refers to the law of cause and effect.

Krodha: Anger.

Kundalini: Power or latent energy contained at the base of the spine.



Mahabharata: An ancient Indian epic, encompassing the Bhagvad Gita.
Mahabhutas: Primordial elements: earth, fire, water, air, ether.
Maya: Illusion, unreal.
Mana: Mind.
Manipur: City of jewels; refers to the navel center, seat of all emotions.
Moha: Attachment, infatuation, delusion.
Moksha: Liberation from cycle of birth and death.
Moola: Root.
Mudra: Gesture, symbol, posture.
Mukti: Liberation.
Naada: Sound.
Naadi: Chord, pathway.
Padma: Lotus.
Pingala: Ethereal canal to the right of the sushumna canal connected to the right nostril.
Prana: Vital energy.
Prakriti: Creation.
Pralaya: Dissolution.
Prasad: Gift.
Prashanti: Supreme peace.
Preeti: Love.
Prema: Love unconditional and unconditioned.
Sadhana: Disciplined spiritual practice.
Sahasara: Thousand; refers to the ethereal thousand petalled lotus on the top of the head.
Sama: mind control.
Samaadhi: State of equal mindedness; equanimity; state of oneness with God.
Sat: Truth.
Shakti: Power.
Shanti: Peace.
Shastra: C scripture, discipline, science.
Sharanagati : Surrender.
Shiva : The destroyer aspect of God.
Sohum: Unity of He and I.
Sushumna: Ethereal cord of the subtle body.
Vichar: Deep thought.
Vishnu: The preserver aspect of God.
Yoga: Union with God.
Zarathushtra: A prophet of ancient Iran who is said to have revealed the world's first religion.



For further information regarding holistic counseling or meditation classes please contact:

SOHAM SAI SOLUTIONS

Dr Huzan Daver

sohumsai@optusnet.com.au

Contact: 9440 1794 or 0411 436586

About the author ¶

DR. HUZAN S. DAVER

SPIRITUAL PSYCHOTHERAPIST AND HOLISTIC COUNSELLOR

Huzan has worked professionally as a counselor in the public health system and now has a private practice. She also teaches meditation at Hornsby Kuring-gai Community College and Classical Ballet School of Tanya Pearson and holistic counseling at Nature Care College. She has taught counseling, holistic healing and meditation at numerous universities and organisations. She has a Bachelor's degree in Psychology and a Masters and Doctorate degree in Social Work and Social Sciences respectively. Huzan has training in different modalities of spiritual healing such as Reiki, hands-on-healing, Chiron, Atomic; yoga and meditation. Dr. Daver utilizes a blend of psychotherapy, CBT with ancient spiritual techniques of meditation. She has over 20 years of experience in the profession.

