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SYMMETRY AND BEAUTY

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BE CREATIVE WITH MONEY

Sharing the wealth

EXPERIENCE HEARTFULNESS

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with the help of yogic transmission.
Experience the beauty of the heart.

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BE CREATIVE

Creativity is the essence of Nature and humans partake in this ability par-excellence. At times I wonder if this ability to be creative puts us at odds with Nature. This very creativity, when not utilised for positive human excellence, but for excessive materialism, leads to human creations that are not simple or in tune with Nature. Thus the very creativity that sets humans apart from the rest of the earth's inhabitants begins to undercut the quality of life of humanity. It upsets the balance of Nature and creates problems for all life forms.

We can trace this imbalance outside of ourselves to imbalance inside us. This imbalance inside us is expressed in the form of stress, unhappiness and other severe behaviours. So how do we begin to use our creativity to balance ourselves internally, which in turn will begin to sooth out our balanced expression and manifestation externally?

The basis of this type of creativity is wonder; wondering about ourselves, our purpose, our relationship with others and Nature at large; wondering about what makes us feel alive, feel good, happy, creative, productive, intuitive and content. Where does this seed of wonder lie? It lies in the heart of every creation. If wonder were to permeate every creative act of the human, then it would exemplify a wonderful heart!

Explore the wonders and mysteries of the heart by exploring Heartfulness and experiencing the yogic transmission that is unique to this system of meditation. We invite you with open arms to experience for yourselves the glory of your own heart.

We wish you all a very happy and hearty new year, full of joy and wonder!

Victor Kannan,

Director, Heartfulness Institute



Celebrating Life

Dear readers,

When a potter throws a piece of clay onto the wheel, she zeroes in, Zen-like, to the centre. Her thoughts fade as her body and mind meld into her hands, gently guiding the smooth clay. Or does the clay guide her hands? Is it calling out to shape itself into new forms?

It is in the blending of self and surroundings that we strike the resonant inner chord as human beings. When we become the dance as well as the dancer, the onward flow of the river, is when we feel most alive: acutely present, yet lost in the spontaneity and simple joy.

In these inspired moments we reflect creation. We need not be studio artists to live an artful life. Who doesn't love an "ah ha!" moment – those small internal shifts where something spontaneously clicks into place. As we continue to refine ourselves, such synchronicities show up more frequently on the inner journey. Where do we find those inspiring moments in life? When do we flow with the beauty surrounding us, beckoning us to share in the subtle joy?

The creative process is the manifestation of our very existence. In this issue, we celebrate creativity in all its glory, and hope you will find something in this issue to inspire you to live life as creatively as possible as an expression of life itself.

Wishing you well for the new year ahead,

The Editors



Elizabeth Denley



Emma Hawley



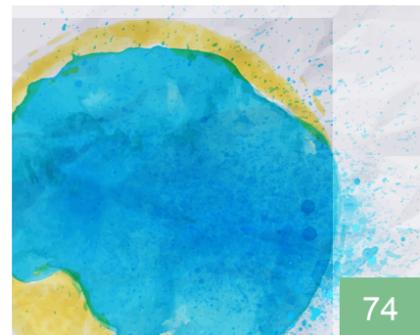
Meghana Anand

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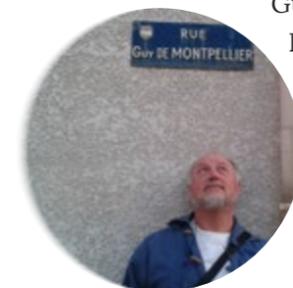
Harpreet Kalra

Based in Dubai, Harpreet Kalra works in marketing and planning in the TV entertainment industry in the Middle East.



For a while he has been interested in understanding the cognitive patterns of the human mind, and the science of meditation in achieving inner balance and harmony.

Guy Lemitres



Guy is from Montpellier, France. He is a retired psychotherapist and trainer, who retains the youthful spirit to learn through the heart. Under the pseudonym of 'Papiji l'escoutaire' he is our storyteller, retelling beautiful tales from different traditions about love, the different shades of love, and the qualities of the heart. This issue has the last of the stories from King Vikram. We can't wait to see what Papiji will share with us next!

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All true artists,
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ECKHART TOLLE

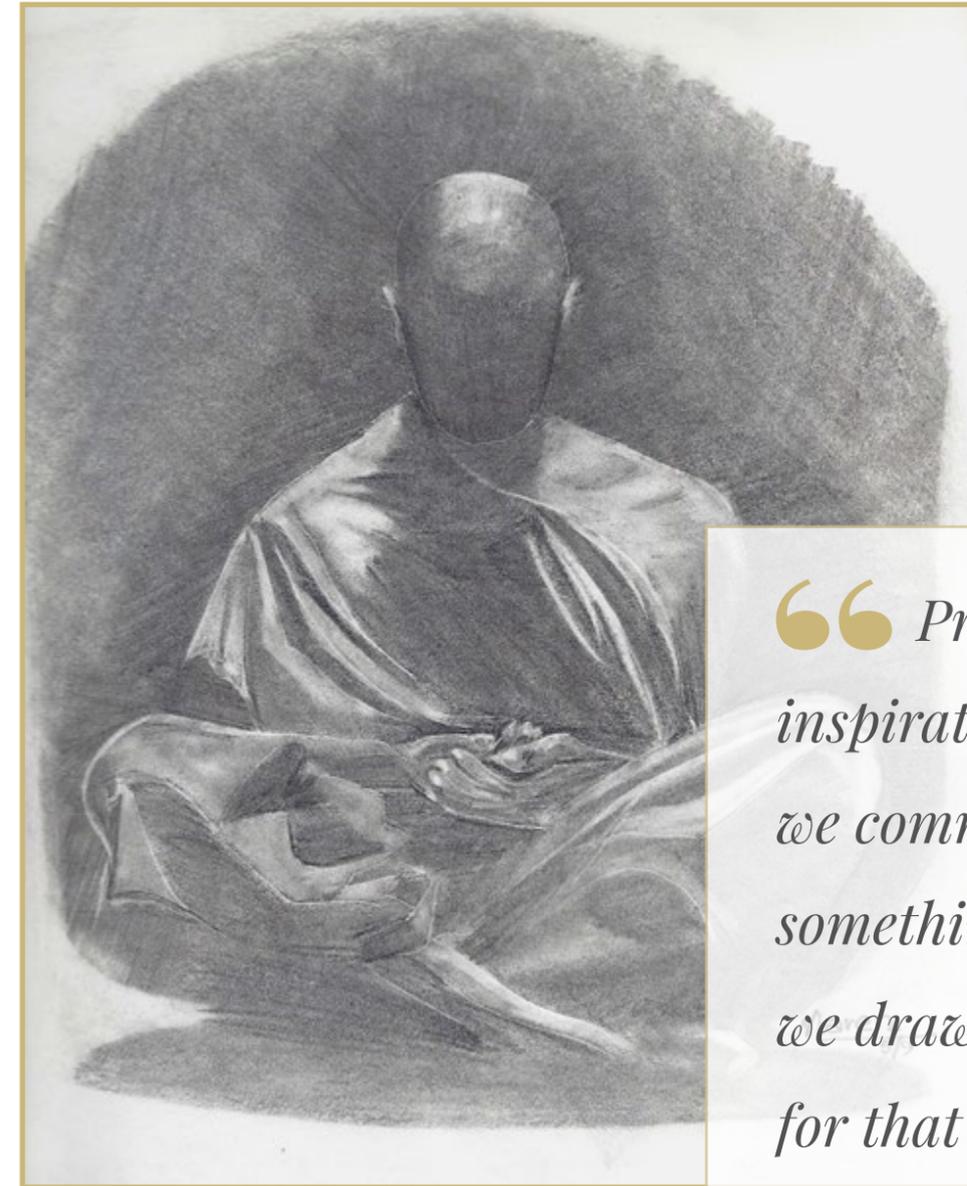
The *Heart* of the Matter

NARENDRA KINI is an artist among other things. He shares with us his own experience of creating, and what helps him most.

What inspires minds?
What triggers creativity?
What persists in a creatively inspired mind?

Several folks have shared their perspectives on some or all of these questions. Among the inspiring minds are novelists, poets, playwrights, painters, philosophers, scientists and mathematicians. They describe how they subtly manoeuvre in order to overcome the obstacles and daily routines so that they can complete the work they love.

It may be by waking early or staying up late; skipping mundane distractions or attending events that motivate them; drinking vast quantities of coffee; taking long daily walks; or just sitting in meditation, like I do. When I divert my attention inward where it probably truly belongs, that which resides inside seems to manifest itself. Surprisingly the manifestation is profound.



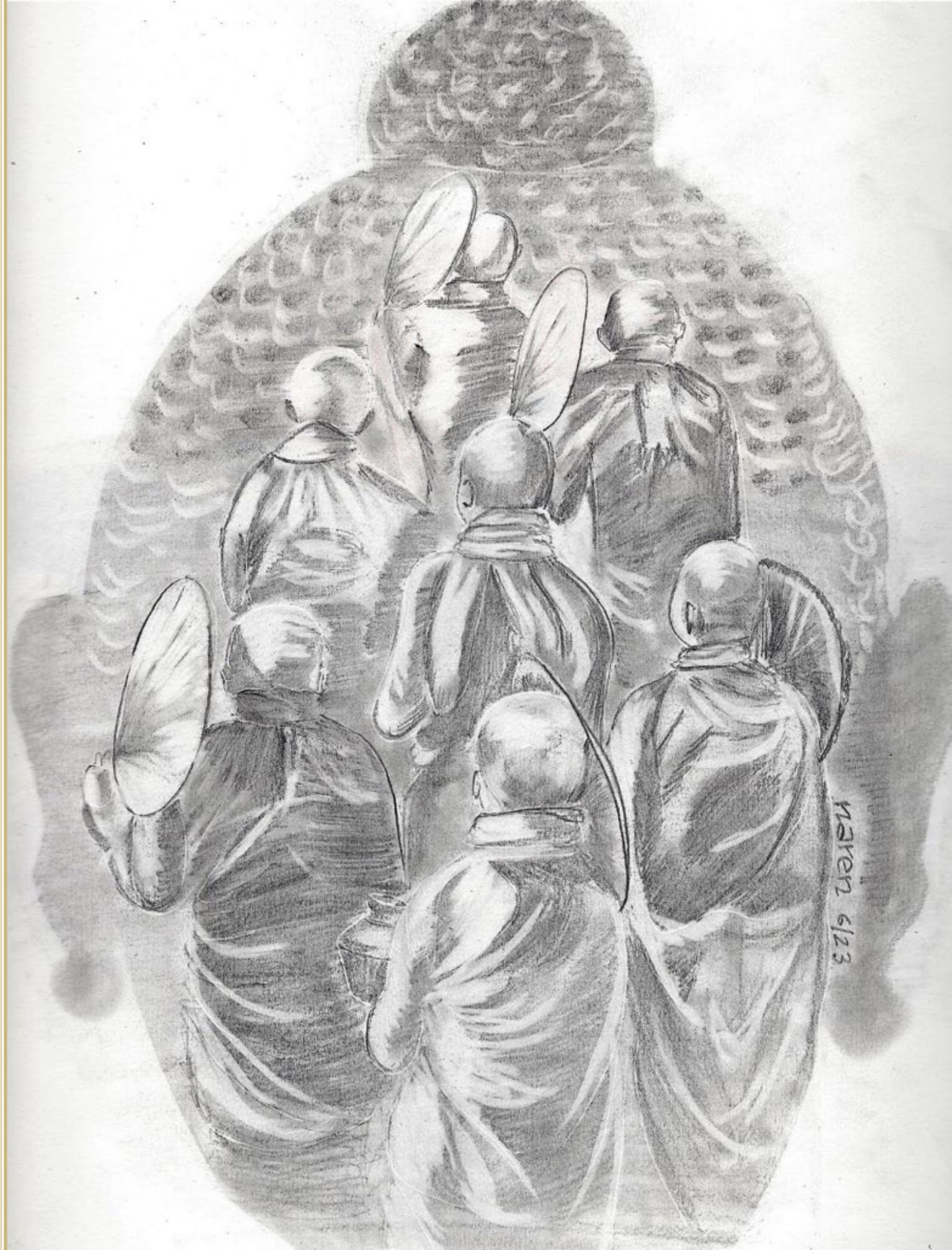
“Practice feeds inspiration. Once we commit to doing something creatively, we draw inspiration for that work from around us. We coach our minds to be aware, conscious and mindful about aspects in the moment that could feed our creativity.”

My experience gives me belief in two things: the 10,000 hours of practice that Malcolm Gladwell writes about in his book, *Outliers*, and disciplining the mind. Interestingly, when you combine both, meditation ensures that my mind is regulated and able to direct itself to perform a committed task within an allocated time, and discipline channels my creative energy to that activity I have committed to.

Unusual as it may seem, everything comes to me – ideas, inspiration, motivation, clarity in thinking – during my committed practice of meditation. I will be the first one to admit that I did not get there overnight. Over twenty years of practice has probably helped. I am yet to reach the proverbial 10,000 hours that Malcolm Gladwell writes about, yet I cannot deny the benefits that are already obvious in most walks of my life: calmness within, filtering the clutter to take a decision, resting well without nightmares or restlessness, responding to situations instead of reacting, etc. These are very natural outcomes of my meditation practice.

To some extent creative work is no different than training in the gym. You can't selectively choose your best moments and decide to only work on the days when you have great ideas. There certainly are those magic moments – which also surface during meditation – but the only way to unveil the great ideas inside is to make a commitment and show up over and over again. Set the time, set the schedule, and preferably set the place and environment.

It is easy to start judging your own work and convince yourself not to share something, not publish something, and not market something because, "it isn't good enough yet," but the alternative is even worse. If we don't have a schedule forcing us to deliver, then it is easy to avoid undertaking the work itself. The only way to be consistent enough to make a masterpiece is to give permission to create something along the way – feed that creative instinct, do not starve it.



Sincere practitioners in any field don't just work harder than everybody else. At some point they fall in love with their practice to the point where they want to do better in less time, more in the same time, and generally excel.

It is true in any profession. The elite football player is the guy who spends all day on the practice field with his teammates, and after practice he goes home to watch game films.

The elite physician listens to medical podcasts during a long commute. The elites are in love with what they do, and it does not feel like work.

This leads to the other benefit of discipline and practice. Practice feeds inspiration. Once we commit to doing something creatively, we draw inspiration for that work from around us. We coach our minds to be aware, conscious and mindful about aspects in the moment that could feed our creativity.

During my initial work, I drew inspiration from the spiritual images and personalities that influenced me greatly in my journey to 'inside-out transformation'. Gradually the canvas widened, and the themes changed. I find subjects in events, happenings, award-winning photographs, life moments and nature. I try to celebrate significant days like birthdays, anniversaries and other events through my sketches and share them. I have realised that it has become a way for me to share love – genuine love – albeit through my art.

So, what is the common denominator for me? In short it is the heart. I can commit, schedule, discipline, channel and nurture my mind, but only when my heart is in the right place does it become the origin and abode of my creativity and inspiration; hence, the source of joy, love and contentment. Once that is okay, any creativity that feeds to that sentiment draws inspiration from within and without ●

Beauty in simplicity

Creativity exists within us all. ELIZABETH DENLEY explores the inherent nature of creativity.

We often think that creativity & innovation are for those special people – the artists and innovators – who choose a creative profession, forgetting that we are all potentially creative and innovative in whatever we do every day.

Creativity is an attitude. A street sweeper can be creative in how she cleans the paths, a builder laying concrete can find new ways for the concrete to set. It is all about attitude, and it requires a sense of wonder and discovery. I remember the first time I visited Bali as a teenager, and watched the local people creating their flower offerings to God at various places on the roadside and near their houses every day. They were done so beautifully, with so much care and love. It was a joyous thing to walk along a path between paddy fields and come upon one of those glorious pieces of natural art.

Where do creativity & innovation come from? Are they learnt? Can we switch them on and suddenly they are there?

It is a necessary topic to explore, because creativity & innovation are critical for anything to be really successful, and for us to contribute our own particular genius to our human community. Every one of us has a genius, and our job is to find ours and excel at whatever that is. We don't have to become famous, rich or ambitious, as genius can be expressed in every little thing we do every day.

There is the old cliché, work is 1% inspiration and 99% perspiration, and that is as true for Michelangelo sculpting David, Jagjit Singh singing ghazals, Joseph Strauss engineering the Golden Gate Bridge, Einstein discovering relativity, a family preparing Christmas dinner together, or an office clerk organising his boss's appointment schedule for the next week.

One of the simplest and most elegant innovations I have seen in any office was back in the early '90s, before personal computers were common, when I visited my Guru in India for the first time. He had retired from his role as a company executive in order to devote his time fully to our spiritual organisation, and ran his office with an order that was inspiring.

One day he showed me his filing cabinets, and I was surprised by the innovative ideas he had used to organise membership cards and other administrative documents. His was a simple creation, unseen by the world and hence unsung, but it was so simple and elegant.

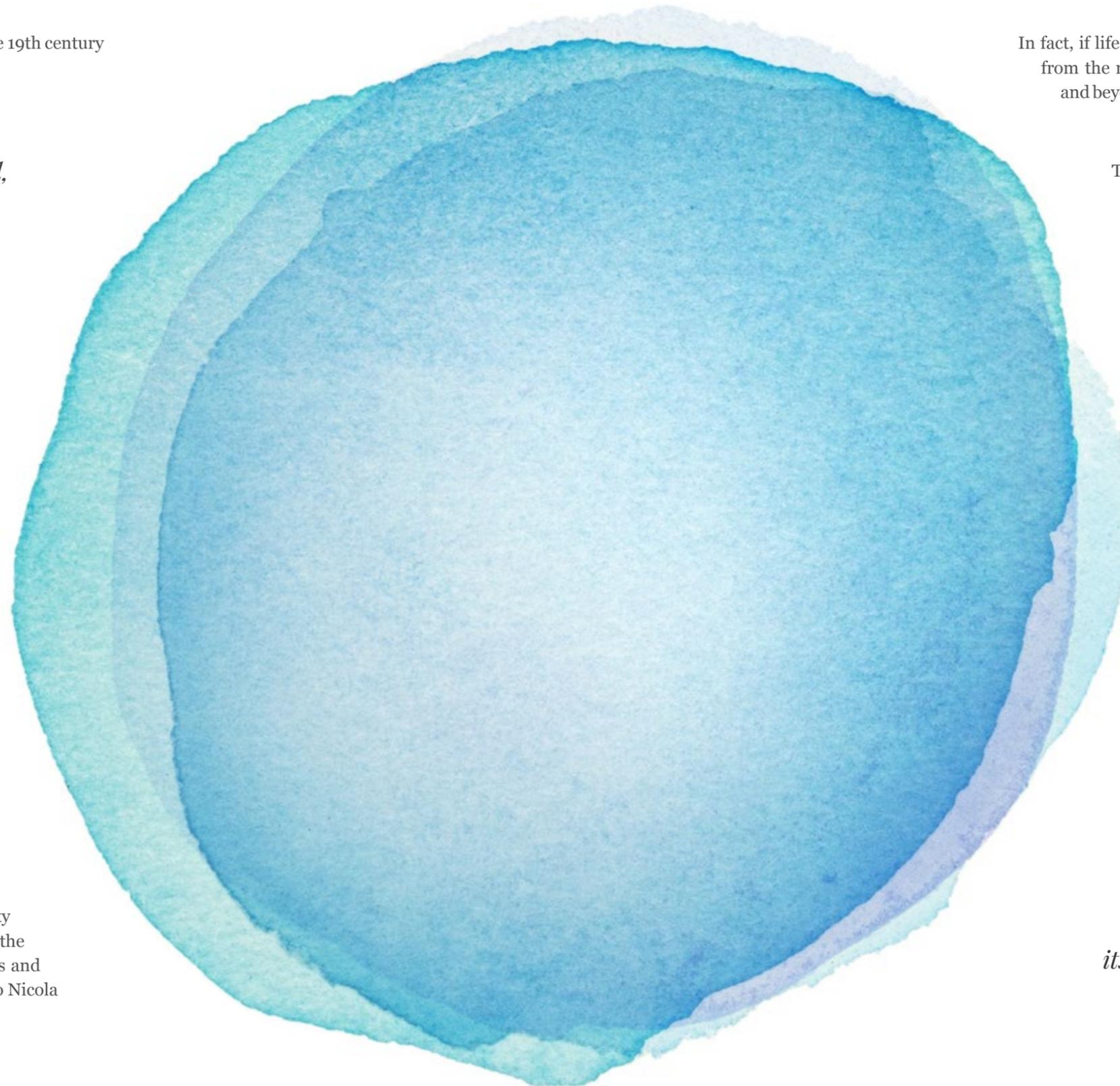
“ Every one of us has a genius, and our job is to find ours and excel at whatever that is. We don't have to become famous, rich or ambitious, as genius can be expressed in every little thing we do every day.”

In fact any really creative innovation is simple. The 19th century composer, Frederic Chopin, once said,

“*Simplicity is the highest goal, achievable when you have overcome all difficulties. After one has played a vast quantity of notes and more notes, it is simplicity that emerges as the crowning reward of art.*”

The same concept applies everywhere. In mathematics, if there is more than one solution to a problem, the simplest and most elegant is considered to be the highest. Why? The answer to this question takes us to the heart of the matter of creativity! Reflect on it for some time, and a whole universe of understanding emerges.

Creativity is natural, as the same creative principle exists throughout the universe. It is one of the three main principles of existence - creation, maintenance and destruction. Creativity is intrinsically linked with our inner essence, the life force that is within us. Great artists, scientists and thinkers recognise this, from Leonardo da Vinci to Nicola Tesla.



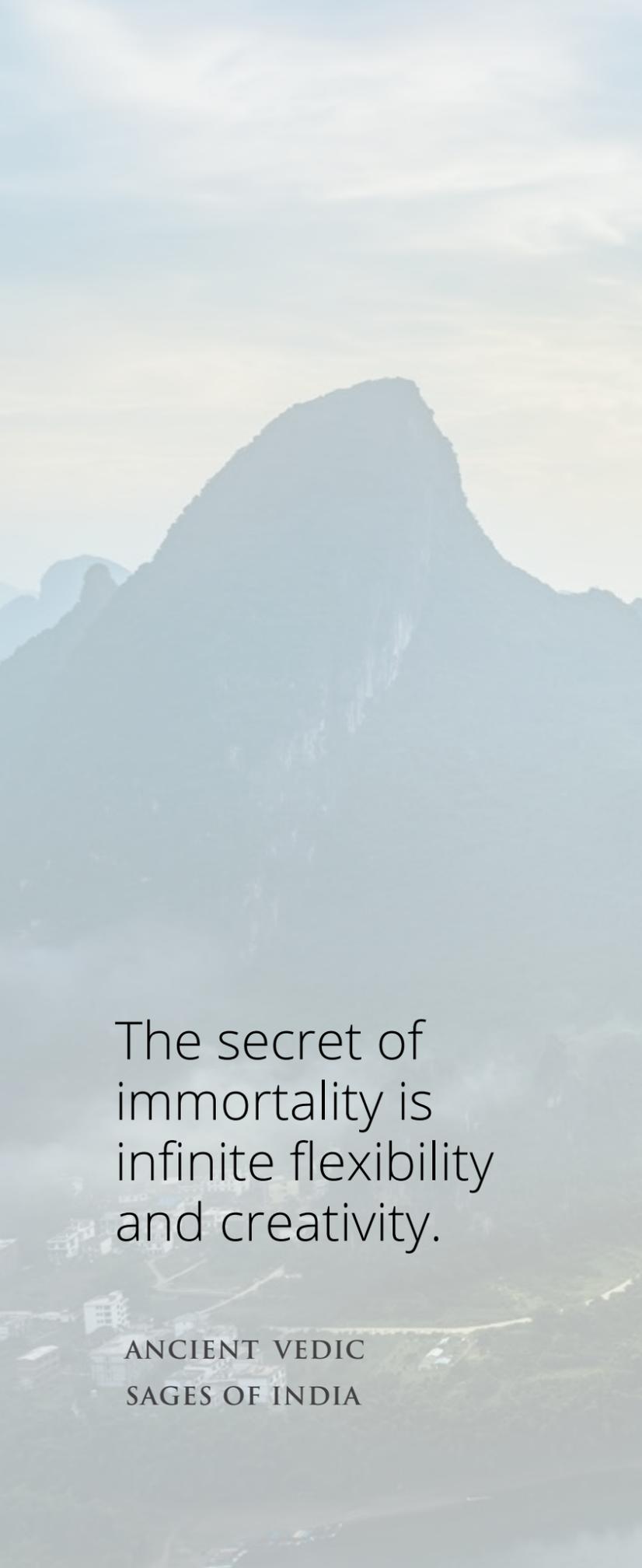
In fact, if life is to be lived well, it is an act of creation in itself, from the moment of conception until the moment of death and beyond. Anything creative is evolving at every moment.

To be innovative and creative in any field, be it engineering, carpentry, mechanics, music, art, cooking, writing, gardening or running a business, we have to dive into the core of ourselves, the heart of our being. And for that we need to create the space and time to allow ourselves to listen to the inspiration that comes from within.

Inspiration comes from a place that is beyond our own limitations, and our own mundane existence, in what we call the spiritual heart of existence. Eckhart Tolle puts it in the following way: “All true artists, whether they know it or not, create from a place of no-mind, from inner stillness.”

So it is actually very simple: cultivate this ability. Do whatever takes you straight to the heart of the matter. Swim in the sea, meditate, walk in Nature, sing, play with children ... there are many ways to nurture creativity, and each person must find their own approach.

Let your heart expand. That in itself is a creative act! ●



The secret of
immortality is
infinite flexibility
and creativity.

ANCIENT VEDIC
SAGES OF INDIA



Be Creative with Money

GOPI KALLAYIL is a successful brand marketing executive in one of the largest global companies in the world. Yet it took a group of very ordinary hard-working women to show him how to live a really fulfilling life.

About 7.2 billion people make up our human family. Half of them live on \$3 a day, less than what I pay for one cup of gourmet coffee.

About 7.2 billion people make up our human family. Half of them live on \$3 a day, less than what I pay for one cup of gourmet coffee.

Several of these people live in my home village in India, Chittilancheri. My parents both grew up in Chittilancheri without electricity, running water or a college education. In one generation, the family's fortunes shifted. My parents worked hard and created the opportunity for their four children to earn advanced degrees. My parents were ordinary people.

Later in life, I learned the extraordinary impact that ordinary people can have yet again, this time from Oseola McCarty. Former President of the United States of America, Bill Clinton, had come to Google to speak, and had given out copies of his book, *Giving: How Each of Us Can Change the World*. When I read that Oseola McCarty had created her own scholarship at the University of Southern Mississippi, I thought, “Surely she must be a very wealthy woman.” Well, Oseola dropped out of school when she was twelve to care for her sick aunt, and for the next seventy-five years, the only job she had was washing and ironing other people’s clothes.

She saved her modest income in the bank, and when she turned eighty-seven she asked her bank manager how much money she had in her account. He answered, “Three hundred thousand dollars.” I imagine she must have said something like, “Son, there are no shopping malls on the way to heaven. I want to create a scholarship so that girls from poor families can go to college.”

When news of Oseola’s decision was made public, local leaders funded an endowment in her honour, increasing her gift’s reach still more. Before she died, four years later, the University of Southern Mississippi’s most famous donor received acclaim and honour, including the Presidential Citizens Medal – the highest civilian award of the United States – and honorary doctorates from the University of Southern Mississippi and Harvard. Oseola McCarty was an ordinary person, and her resources at the outset were certainly limited. Yet she made an extraordinary impact on the world.

Have you ever wondered if you could make an impact like that on others? I did, sitting in a coffee shop. The barista yelled out, “Gopi, your grande caramel cinnamon chocolate Frappuccino is ready. And it is fat-free.” I knew that only the fat was ‘free’, and it struck me that the drink was more abundant than anything many of the people I knew back in Chittilancheri would enjoy that entire day.

“Can I, an ordinary person with limited resources, really make an extraordinary impact on someone else’s life?”

Yes, you can, starting today.

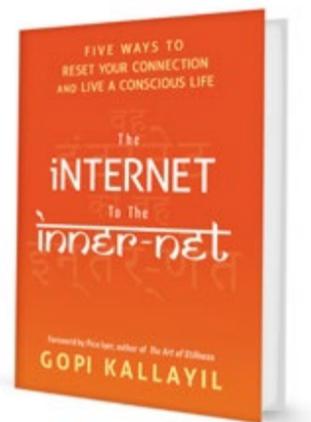
So I wondered, “Could I sacrifice a few cups of coffee and make a big impact?” I found my answer in Kiva, a San Francisco-based organisation that allows ordinary people, like most of us, to give microloans to women in the Third World to start small businesses.

That same day, I made my first loan online, for the princely sum of \$25. The entrepreneur who received it was Ngô Thi Chung, a 54-year-old woman living in Trung Giã village, Vietnam, who was starting a farm supplies business. She needed a loan of \$1,200, and I wondered how my \$25 could help. But never underestimate the power of people working together! In four hours, several others had made modest loans of their own, and she had her \$1,200. Next month, I gave another loan to Esther Laboso, a 46-year-old widow with five children living in Kericho, Kenya, who was starting a grain store. The following month it was a fisherwoman in Peru, and then a tailor in Pakistan. I was hooked. This was much better than a grande caramel cinnamon chocolate Frappuccino.

Recently, I connected with friends from high school. The lovely Lakshmi, voted most likely to succeed in our class, asked, “Gopi, where are you these days? What are you doing?” And I, who was voted most likely to join the circus, replied, “I am an international banker. I finance entrepreneurs around the world.”

Perhaps you are inspired by these stories, but still skeptical that this truth could ever apply to you. “Can I, an ordinary person with limited resources, really make an extraordinary impact on someone else’s life?” Yes, you can, starting today. I learned this from my parents, from Oseola McCarty, and through my work with Esther Laboso and Ngô Thi Chung. As Clinton says in his book, “We all have the capacity to do great things,” and we can do it with whatever resources we have on hand. Ordinary people can make an extraordinary impact ●

EXCERPT ADAPTED FROM *THE INTERNET TO THE INNER-NET: FIVE WAYS TO RESET YOUR CONNECTION AND LIVE A CONSCIOUS LIFE*, AVAILABLE WHERE BOOKS ARE SOLD



Are We Intuitive Enough?

HARPREET KALRA had the job opportunity of a lifetime, but turned it down because his heart said no.

The job offer looked promising – an established brand, a healthy pay packet, a great role profile, and the location base of my favourite city, Mumbai. I should have grabbed the job straight away. It was a golden opportunity, and opportunities should not go begging, I was told. Yet, I was dillydallying in my decision. So, what was stopping me from taking up the job, against all odds of a favourable rationale premise?

I was feeling very deeply to say no. Something within me wanted to let go of this opportunity; inner guidance, the heart's voice, a sixth sense, a gut feeling, whatever you want to call it. I prefer to call it intuition, my heart's voice.

Something within me wanted to let go of this opportunity; inner guidance, the heart's voice, a sixth sense, a gut feeling, whatever you want to call it. I prefer to call it intuition, my heart's voice.

My father always says, "When in doubt, refer to the heart. The heart is always right." For a change, I paid heed to my father's words and refused the job offer. Three months down the line, in a hostile takeover by a competitor, all the company staff was laid off. Backing my intuition had paid off.

I believe that intuition can see what the mind cannot see. This is because the mind's vision is myopic, as it is conditioned by space and time. Also, the mind relies on the five senses, which have their own limitations. For example, as human beings we can hear only those sounds that fall in a particular audio range, which the ears can catch. If the sound is outside that range it is inaudible to our ears. It does not mean, however, that the sound does not exist.

On the other hand, the heart can see through and through. Connected to the infinite Being, it is the seat of Divinity. Neither conditioned by time nor by space, it can see things from a higher ground. The magnificence of the heart's splendour shines through in whatever form it takes.

So, if intuitive decision-making can help us, the question is, "How can we develop intuition?" I believe, through practice. By trusting the heart and listening to it more and more. When we are having a conversation with someone, the more attentively the person listens to us, the happier we are to continue conversing with him. Isn't it? Similarly, if we are willing to listen to the heart, the heart will be more than happy to speak to us. This has been my experience.

Here comes the challenge. Often, however, the heart is not able to be heard, as we have been overpowered by the monkey mind, jumping from one branch of thought to another. It just doesn't stop. It is in overdrive mode. We have become so addicted to the mental chattering and noise that the voice of inner silence scares us.

So, how can we increase the capability to listen to the heart? I believe, by clearing up the mess in the head; washing away the clutter of the mind. How to do that? Through meditation. For thousands of years, meditation has been one of the most effective techniques to help us regulate our minds. No wonder, increasingly, worldwide, meditation is helping people find inner joy, balance and everlasting change in their lives ●

Pierrot la Lune



EMILIE VENTUJOL, the designer behind the elegant Danish children's wear, Pierrot la Lune, speaks with Kirsten Rickert about her clothing brand, meditation and travelling to India. Excerpts of this interview are transcribed here.

Q: Hello Emilie, could you please tell me a little about Pierrot la Lune, your children's clothing.

EV: I have always had a dream to create timeless, sophisticated yet playful children's clothes. Simple, wearable fabrics, with a dreamy magic like old movies from the 50s and 60s. So Pierrot la Lune started as a way to realise that dream. The clothes are made with pure GOTS organic cotton and 100% soft Fairtrade Alpaca wool from Bolivia.

My family background has contributed to my sense of design also. My grandparents were very creative: my grandfather was the furniture architect, Børge Mogensen, and my grandmother inspired me with drawing and sewing.

Q: Can you tell me about your spiritual beliefs?

EV: I grew up in a family where spirituality was always discussed more than politics. For me spirituality is actually not something I believe in, it is something I feel and know exists in me, around me and in others. It is about being aware of an inner Being – the real me. I just read it so clearly the other day:

“We are not human beings having a spiritual experience; we are spiritual beings having a human experience.”

That pretty much covers how I live and think. I know I incarnated to change and to evolve spiritually, and this is something I take more seriously than anything else in my life.

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Q: Meditation is a big part of this, so do you do a certain type of meditation?

EV: I practise Heartfulness meditation, which comes from the Sahaj Marg system of Raja Yoga. This is yoga where we use the mind as our main tool to be in tune with our heart. I sit with eyes closed and focus on 'Light in the heart'. It is super simple and super powerful at the same time. In the evening I practise something called 'cleaning' which is a more active process, where I focus on removing old impressions from the energy body.

Sahaj Marg practice is based on a philosophy of the human being having a soul, a body and also a subtle body (energy body), and it is this energy body we work with and refine during meditation. So it is really all about vibrations, like when an instrument is in tune or not. The idea is for our subtle body to be in tune with the vibration of our soul.

Q: How long do you meditate for on an average day?

EV: I meditate around an hour in the morning, preferably before waking up my children. So it is the first thing I do after brushing my teeth and washing my face. Then I practise my evening cleaning for half an hour before dinner or after putting the children to bed.

Q: How does this help your life? Were there things you did prior to a life with meditation that you do not do now? Was meditation a cure?

EV: It's difficult for me to answer because I grew up in a family where almost everyone meditates daily, so it's a bit like eating and sleeping for me. It's just a part of life, a necessary part.

I can compare periods where I practise less with periods where I practise regularly. The time spent on meditation pays back manifoldly in terms of fewer emotions like fear, anger and sadness. It gives me more energy than sleep does, so I invest very consciously in meditation in order to gain time. As a mother of two kids, running my own company, I can't allow myself to waste time. When people ask me how I find the time for meditation I always answer: "I don't have the time not to do it."



WWW.PIERROTALUNE.DK/

When people ask me how I find the time for meditation I always answer: "I don't have the time not to do it."



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Q: You have just been away on a spiritual retreat, so can you tell me about that?

EV: Yes I just returned from India, where I also do my production of children's clothes; I try to combine work with a retreat in an ashram there. First I went to Tiruppur, in south India, where we were 40,000 people from around the world gathered for a three-day seminar. We meditated together three times daily, listened to talks and ate simple food together.

It was a very intense experience to meditate with so many people. It creates a fantastic atmosphere and a very light vibration in the inner system and around you.

After this seminar I went to an ashram in Hyderabad, and here it was more like a real retreat, as there were very few people gathered. It may have been some of the best days ever in my life. It is difficult to put words to something like this. It is like the inner system gets washed and cared for, and after two days you feel literally transformed in your inner Being.

I wish all humans would try this at least once in their life. So much love and purity can be found in a place where people come for spiritual transformation.

I believe atmosphere is being created by thoughts, so a place where people come for meditation is somehow lighter in vibration as people think less here. It has to be felt. It's a bit like a clear spring day after a rainy day, clear and transparent.

Q: I believe while in meditation you can have insights, and feel strong connections to other souls. It can expose truths that someone or something feels right for you. Can you expand on this idea from your personal experience?

Thoughts are our most potent and powerful tool to change the world.

EV: Yes, for sure! I believe all humans are brothers and sisters and I pray every evening at nine o'clock for this thought to develop in all people. The concept is that it creates an 'egregore', if everybody does it at nine o'clock in their various time zones. That prayer is then going on all the twenty-four hours.

For me this is the most conscious social work I can do. I strongly believe it will change the world very fast if more people do this. Thoughts are our most potent and powerful tool to change the world.

Back to the question, yes, I have insights in meditation. The more I think less about a certain issue, the faster I take a decision. The intuition knows everything, and when I let go of my ideas, the answer always comes to me in meditation. A good example is the brand name of my children's clothes. It came in meditation and afterwards I found out it was the name my husband was called as a child: a very simple little story but with a profound truth hidden in it. It showed me that my company comes from the right place in my heart, and it was already there before I knew about it.

Q: Do you feel that meditation adds to a peaceful collective conscious?

EV: Absolutely. Some people think meditation is selfish in a world with hunger and war, but I sincerely see meditation as the best social service we can offer the planet. With all the knowledge and science on the power of thought, this should be common sense in 2015. I believe it should be taught in schools, it should be practised in all churches, mosques and synagogues. It should be practised on Wall Street as well as in ashrams, in hospitals as well as banks. It's for everybody, no matter what religion or nation we belong to. A day will come where this is manifested in reality. Let it please be in my children's lifetime!

Q: Do you find meditation helps your creativity?

EV: No doubt. I have to create a lot being a designer and running a company. The more I can clean my subtle body, the less I feel disturbed by fears. The less fear the more freethinking. It's easy and simple. A free mind is essential as an entrepreneur.

Also, I am a very passionate person when it comes to design and aesthetics. This passion needs to be directed always towards something that I believe I can sell. This is something meditation is regulating; I become realistic and able to separate the essential from the less essential ideas.

Sometimes I observe that meditation has the other effect, where I lose interest completely in my work, in the design and the colours. It used to scare me but I have learnt to understand that it is more like the system is being set back to status quo once in a while. It's fantastic, especially working in fashion where we are always searching for the latest trend and the upcoming colours and so on. I love to wipe it all out of my mind and start from scratch. It gives me the opportunity to maintain authentic and genuine creativity.

Q: Do you reach a point of internal quiet through meditation, or do you find your mind is on a journey of self-discovery?

EV: I do reach points of internal peace in meditation, but somehow these points change all the time. One of my spiritual teachers once wrote a book with the title *Towards Infinity*. It pretty much answers this question. Always swimming towards the point inside where eternal peace is still swimming...

**INTERVIEWER: KIRSTEN RICKERT
PHOTOGRAPHER: RASMUS MOGENSEN**

The original interview can be found at <http://www.kirstenrickert.com/2015/09/21/meditation-interview-with-pierrot-la-lune/>
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Q: Thank you Emilie ●



WWW.PIERROTALUNE.DK/

I sincerely see meditation as the best social service we can offer the planet. With all the knowledge and science on the power of thought, this should be common sense in 2015.



Creativity is God's
gift to us. Using our
creativity is our gift
back to God.

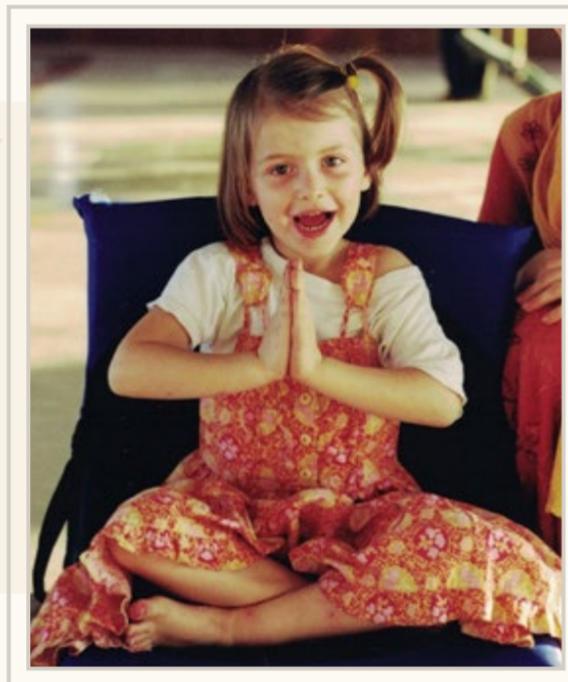
JULIA CAMERON

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHAN SWANEPOEL

A CHILDHOOD *of* LOVE

What is it like to grow up in a household where your parents meditate every day? LAETICIA HERVY shares her experience of a childhood filled with love.

““ *This softness of the heart emanating from them was the sweet lullaby of my childhood.*



I have not known this world without heartfelt meditation. From the time I was in my mother's womb and before that, she and my father were meditating. I was born and raised in this atmosphere and I would say that this is truly the greatest gift I could have had.

I often hear stories about how people have found their way to meditation, after trying various practices. When they write something they can say, "Before I started meditation my life was...", while here I sit thinking, "I have not lived a day without this heart!" But that is the very reason I have something to say.

I witnessed my parents wake up every morning and sit for meditation, creating a soft and pure atmosphere full of love, in which I had the luck to wake up. This softness of the heart emanating from them was the sweet lullaby of my childhood. The day at home always began and ended with meditation and a prayer.

The most important thing my parents taught me during my childhood was to listen to my heart, always. The heart is the guide; it shows us the way. Meditating on the heart brings light on the path we walk upon. Listening to my heart has given me strength, love and a way back Home. It has given me a purpose to wake up every day, a reason to be what I am now, and one to become better everyday, walking further and further on this beautiful path.

I started meditating myself after a few years. I don't think I can explain it in words and I won't allow myself to spoil the beauty of it for you. The only thing I want to say is that it is like an immense thirst that finally receives water. It is like a crying child that finally feels the touch of the mother. It is like a hand that has been waiting to be held and which is finally, softly, but with strength, held with all the love in the world. It is becoming conscious of love, real love, and this gives true meaning to life ●

LOVING THE TEENAGE YEARS

Clinical psychologist, Dr HESTER O CONNOR, offers some insights into keys aspects of having a good relationship with your teenage children.

Did it ever occur to you why flight attendants suggest before take-off, “In the event of an emergency put on your own oxygen mask first before you assist others?” On reflection it is obvious that you will be able to help others in an emergency if your own oxygen supply is stabilised. Similarly, it is important as a parent to try to stay calm during the inevitable turbulence of adolescence when your teenager children assert their autonomy and strive for independence.



“It is important as a parent to try to stay calm during the inevitable turbulence of adolescence when your teenager children assert their autonomy and strive for independence.”

A NARRATIVE: ANNA'S PLAN FOR A SLEEPOVER

It's summer holidays and twelve-year old Anna says she is staying over at Poppy's house tonight. Anna's mum Judy doesn't feel comfortable with Poppy's family, so Judy says, “No”. A row breaks out. Anna finally calls her mum a ‘fat ...’ and leaves the room banging the door. Judy starts feeling very conscious of her weight, and wants to tell Anna exactly what she thinks of her in this very moment.

Anna sits in her room sobbing. She feels confused, misunderstood and totally overwhelmed by life right now. She does not know why she feels so bad, but she just feels like trashing things. Judy calls out to Anna that she is taking Beanie the dog for a short walk. She does this to draw breath. Judy feels sad, wounded and fearful but decides to respond to what it must feel like for Anna right now.

She wants to give them both space, and so she texts Anna: “I know how hard and frustrating it must feel for you when I say no, but maybe later when we have both calmed down we can have a chat.” Judy plans to explain why she is not happy for Anna to go to Poppy's for a sleepover.

“ We are hard wired as humans to have the fight or flight response to protect us when faced with a real threat, such as being chased by a wild animal.

RESPONDING VERSUS REACTING

In this little story there are a few key elements at play. Anna has gone into fight or flight mode. Fight or flight is what happens instantaneously when we have a response of deep fear to any situation. We are hard wired as humans to have the fight or flight response to protect us when faced with a real threat, such as being chased by a wild animal.

Many of us go into fight or flight mode several times a day in the face of minor challenges, such as getting stuck in traffic. We over-respond because our bodies don't know the difference between the traffic and being attacked by a tiger! They gear up to protect us from real danger.

Anna finds herself in a state of heightened awareness, she is fearful and she reacts as if she is under real threat by attacking her mother with strong words. It is very confusing for most of us to know what is going in moments like this.

Initially Judy responds in a similar way to Anna and her own fight or flight response is also triggered by Anna's anger. Judy does something different though: she catches herself and chooses not to react on impulse, as she remembers that this time a new response is needed. Judy pauses and goes for a short walk. This helps bring harmony with her daughter.

BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP OF TRUST

Let's see the simple things in Judy response that help build a relationship of trust with Anna:

By letting Anna know she is going for a short walk, Judy communicates that she will be back soon. This communication is very important for twelve-year-old Anna, who fears the intensity of her own anger.

Although Judy is also feeling fearful, she decides not to retaliate and instead she senses what is needed, calms herself and responds calmly.

If Judy had yelled back or gone out without telling Anna where she was going or when she would come back, Anna would have felt punished by the

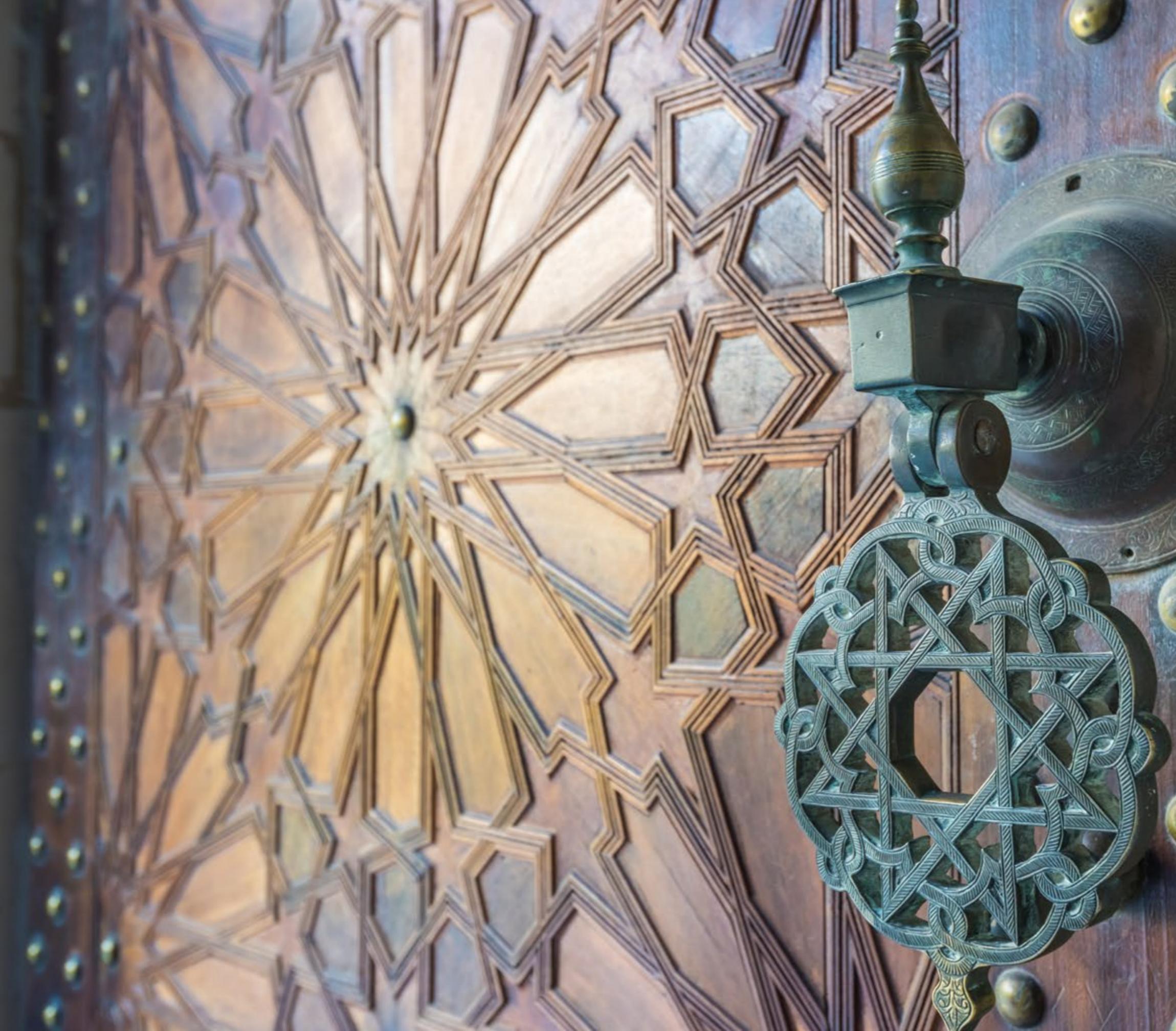


withdrawal of love and kindness. Her confusion would have deepened, creating distance. But she didn't.

Judy was also able to stay firm in saying no. By communicating with love rather than automatically falling into defensive mode herself, she kept the relationship open, did not punish Anna, and also was able to explain why she said no, wanting to keep her daughter safe.

WHO CARES FOR THE PARENT?

It is sometimes tough being a parent, and it is vital that you have someone to talk to who will listen to you. Then it is easier to guide your teenager with kindness when challenged by them. Parenting with love and kindness is the base of the security that all children need ●



Good art is a form
of prayer. It's a
way to say what is
not sayable.

FREDERICH BUSCH

RUMI

The Poet of Love

Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī was born in 1207 and was a 13th century Persian poet, jurist, scholar, theologian and mystic. Rumi's influence is global, and he continues to be one of the most celebrated poets in the world today.

He was born to Persian-speaking parents, either in modern-day Tajikistan or Afghanistan. He was strongly influenced by his father, and also by the two Persian poets, Attar and Sanai. His father was a theologian, jurist and mystic from Balkh, who was also known by the followers of Rumi as Sultan al-Ulamam meaning 'Sultan of the Scholars'. His mother's family had been Islamic preachers of the liberal Hanafi rite for several generations, and this family tradition was continued by Rumi.

It was his meeting with the dervish Shams of Tabriz on the 15th of November 1244 that completely changed his life. From an accomplished teacher and jurist, Rumi became a mystic and lover of the Divine.

Shams had travelled throughout the Middle East searching and praying for a person who could endure his company. The story goes that a voice had said to him, "What will you give in return?" and Shams had replied, "My head!" The voice then said, "The one you seek is Jalāl ad-Dīn of Konya."

On the night of the 5th of December 1248, as Rumi and Shams were together, Shams was called outside never to be seen again. It is widely rumoured that he was murdered.

Rumi's love for Shams, and his bereavement at his death were expressed in his lyric poems, *Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi*. He went searching for Shams journeying to Damascus, but there he realised that that there was no more reason to seek him, as they were one, merged in the spiritual sense of *laya avastha*. He wrote, "His essence speaks through me. I have been looking for myself!" ●

The ladder of this world is
'me and mine'.
At last this ladder will fall.

So whoever sits higher on it
Will break more bones.



Transmission

KAMLESH D. PATEL

KAMLESH D. PATEL introduces the most important feature of Heartfulness: transmission. It is not something new, having been around for thousands of years, but like any other transfer of energy, it is the quality and potency that matter.

At this time in human history, we all have the opportunity to experience this life-transforming offering from the Source, wherever we are.

Over the past few decades, meditation has acquired universal recognition for its numerous positive effects. Many methods of meditation are available and it is possible that all of them may be good. The Heartfulness meditation technique is also good, but what makes it unique is the addition of another element known as *pranahuti*, or yogic transmission. Yogic transmission makes meditation truly dynamic, and it is the real specialty of the Heartfulness method offered by **Sahaj Marg**.

What is transmission? Transmission has been defined as the utilisation of divine energy for the transformation of man. Here we are not speaking of physical transformation, as our bodies are limited by our genetic makeup. For example, we might be able to gain or lose a few pounds, but we cannot change our height substantially. On the mental level, there are fewer limitations. We can all learn – some very easily and some with greater difficulty – but it is only

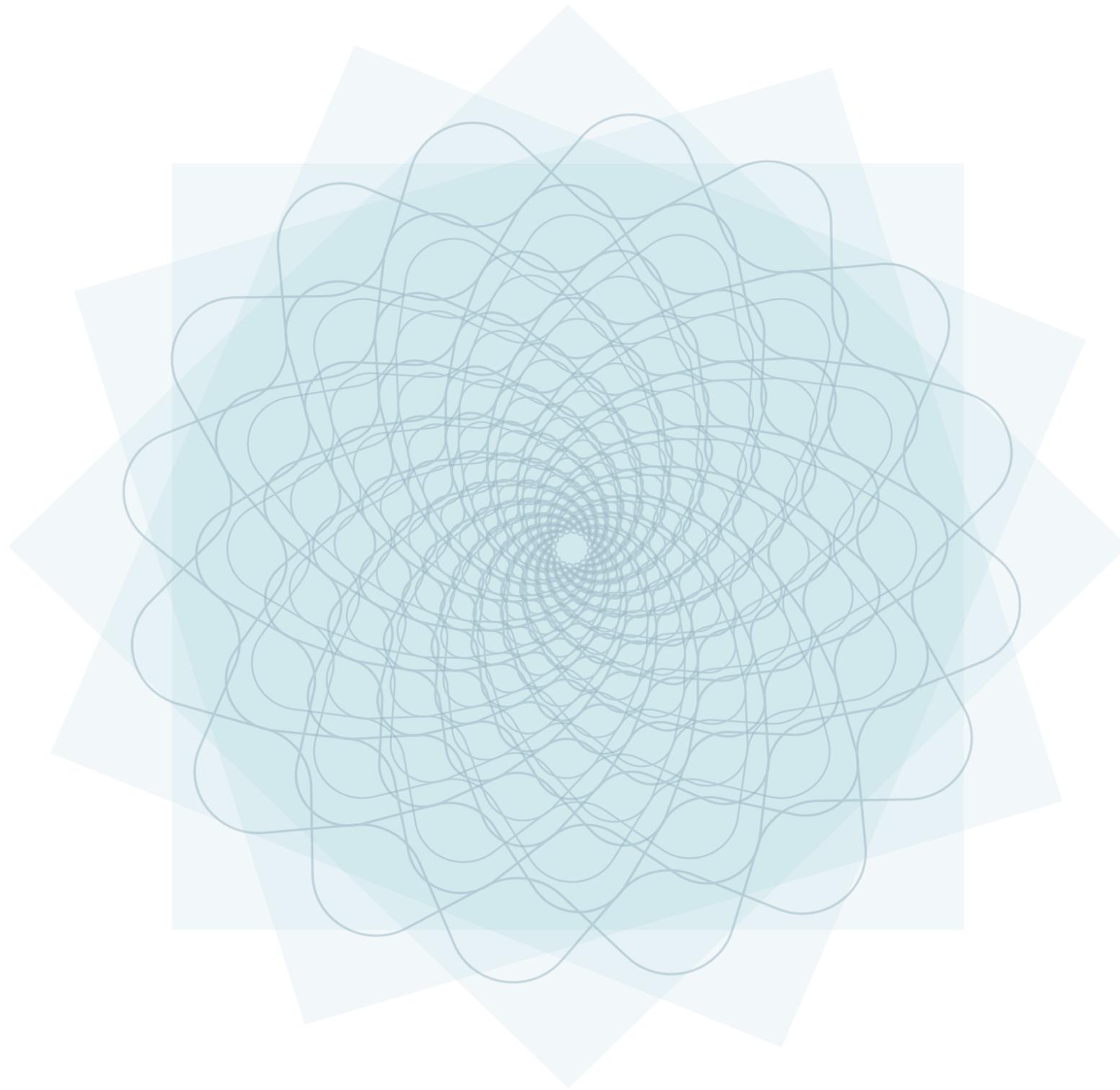
Yogic transmission makes meditation truly dynamic.

on the spiritual level that there is infinite scope for growth. **Transmission** is the nourishment that allows such unlimited growth.

If transmission is an energy that can bring about infinite growth, it must also be infinite. In the physical world, there is no such thing as infinite energy. The sun can blaze for billions of years, but eventually even it will burn itself out. Under Einstein's famous equation, $E=mc^2$, energy is always limited by the velocity of light and the finiteness of mass.

But yogis have never been bound by physical laws. An adept meditator may be seated in one country, while the aspirant is seated in some distant place across oceans and mountains. Yet, the moment the adept triggers the transmission, the aspirant receives it wherever he or she may be. This is the common experience of so many meditators. If we merely think of transmission, it starts to flow instantly.

the best way
to understand
transmission remains
to experience it
practically.



Add transmission to your individual spiritual or religious practice, faith or no faith, and you will experience a quantum shift in your inner experience from day one.

Even light cannot travel instantly. If a distance can be traversed in zero time, the velocity is infinite. Hypothetically, what would happen to Einstein's equation if we were to substitute the speed of light with such infinite velocity? Inserting infinity into the equation means that the energy that comes to us would also be infinite, and its source would also have to be infinite. This is transmission.

While the link between science and spirituality continues to be a source of debate and research, the best way to understand transmission remains to experience it practically. Trying to grasp transmission intellectually is like trying to understand the taste of strawberry ice cream intellectually. Is it possible to convey its taste in words to someone who has never tried it? You can explain all about sucrose, dairy proteins and the temperature at which milk freezes, but it would all be useless. In the end, you would probably say, "Just try it!"

Add transmission to your individual spiritual or religious practice, faith or no faith, and you will experience a quantum shift in your inner experience from day one. I say faith or no faith, because faith is the result of the impact of some esoteric experience. Without such experience, belief remains unproductive and unfulfilling.

You can use scientific experimentation to test the effects of transmission. First, meditate without transmission, using only the prescribed **Heartfulness technique**. Then, after a few minutes, meditate using

the same technique, but with the assistance of an adept who meditates along with you. This expert can either be physically present with you or at a remote location. You can do this as many times as you like, as it will be replicable. This test will allow you to compare the difference between meditation without transmission and meditation then with transmission.

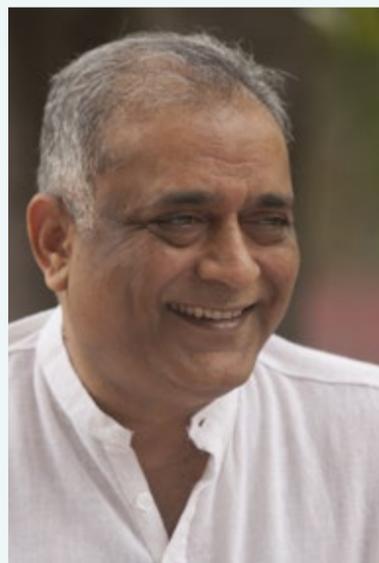
For many people, the experience of receiving transmission is so convincing that no further proof or understanding is necessary. I invite you to experiment and experience it for yourself ●



About Kamlesh Patel

From an early age, Kamlesh Patel was interested in spirituality and meditation, and eventually came to the feet of his Guru in 1976 while still a student. He is now the fourth spiritual guide in the Sahaj Marg system of Raja Yoga meditation.

Kamlesh is married with two sons, and is a role model for students of spirituality who seek that perfect blend of Eastern heart and Western mind. He travels extensively and is at home with people from all backgrounds and walks of life, giving special attention to the youth of today.



Creation is only
the projection
into form of
that which
already exists.

SHRIMAD
BHAGAVATAM

PHOTOGRAPHY BY YURIY KULIK

THE BOATMAN

CHETHAN REDDY

Traipsing along the shores of the Holy Ocean one overcast day, I had come to meet the Boatman; he who had promised me safe voyage across the Endless Sea. As I looked to the great beyond, a wraith of mist hovered over the waters and obscured my vision.

“Surely the Boatman will find me when he is ready,” I surmised.

As I continued to walk, far off in the distance the corroded remains of a sandcastle marred the otherwise undisturbed landscape.

“Must be from the last one who waited for the Boatman,” I thought.

To pass the days, I too began building a sandcastle by the Infinite Sea. No sooner than I finished my castle did the vehement waves engulf my beautiful creation, leaving behind no trace of my labour. Infuriated, I resolved to build another castle, larger and more spectacular than the first.

As the finishing touches were laid on this second edifice, before I could even marvel at my work, another wave, taller and more ferocious than the first, shattered my sandcastle once more. Enraged, I set out to build the most magnificent sandcastle ever seen, which too met with the same fate.

Years passed. This toxic cycle continued; each castle, more breathtaking than the last, met in might by an unrelenting wave of Fate.

I lost myself. My hairs grayed and my energy waned, but I would not be outdone. As I used the last ounce of strength I had to gather more sand, to my utter dismay I uncovered a human skeleton.

It was the last man who had walked these shores. The man whose eroding sandcastle I had stumbled upon years earlier. He too had been caught in the futile pursuit of false triumph.

Terrified and confused, I began to run. Remembering my original purpose, I ran frantically into the Ocean, beseeching the Boatman to show Himself to me. From nowhere, a misty light appeared through the fog. I ran towards it. It was the Boatman.

Relieved, I clambered into His craft, and was greeted. Claspng His hands, I cried, “Dear Boatman, I have been waiting all these years to cross the Infinite Ocean, why did you come only now?”

For an instant, His eyes met mine. There was a grizzled sadness in them. As He broke my gaze and turned to face the Ocean of Light, He said, “My child, I was ready at a moment’s notice, but all you wanted was to build sandcastles.”

The boat started to glide gently away from the shore. A stray tear trickled down my now wrinkled visage ●

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID M. SCHRADER



SYMMETRY
SYMMETRY

Beauty

An art essay by
SUSHILA PRAKASH



Mandalas are symmetrical designs that represent the universe. They are used as a tool in meditation by many cultures, and are carefully constructed in form and colour to bring enlightenment to the viewer.

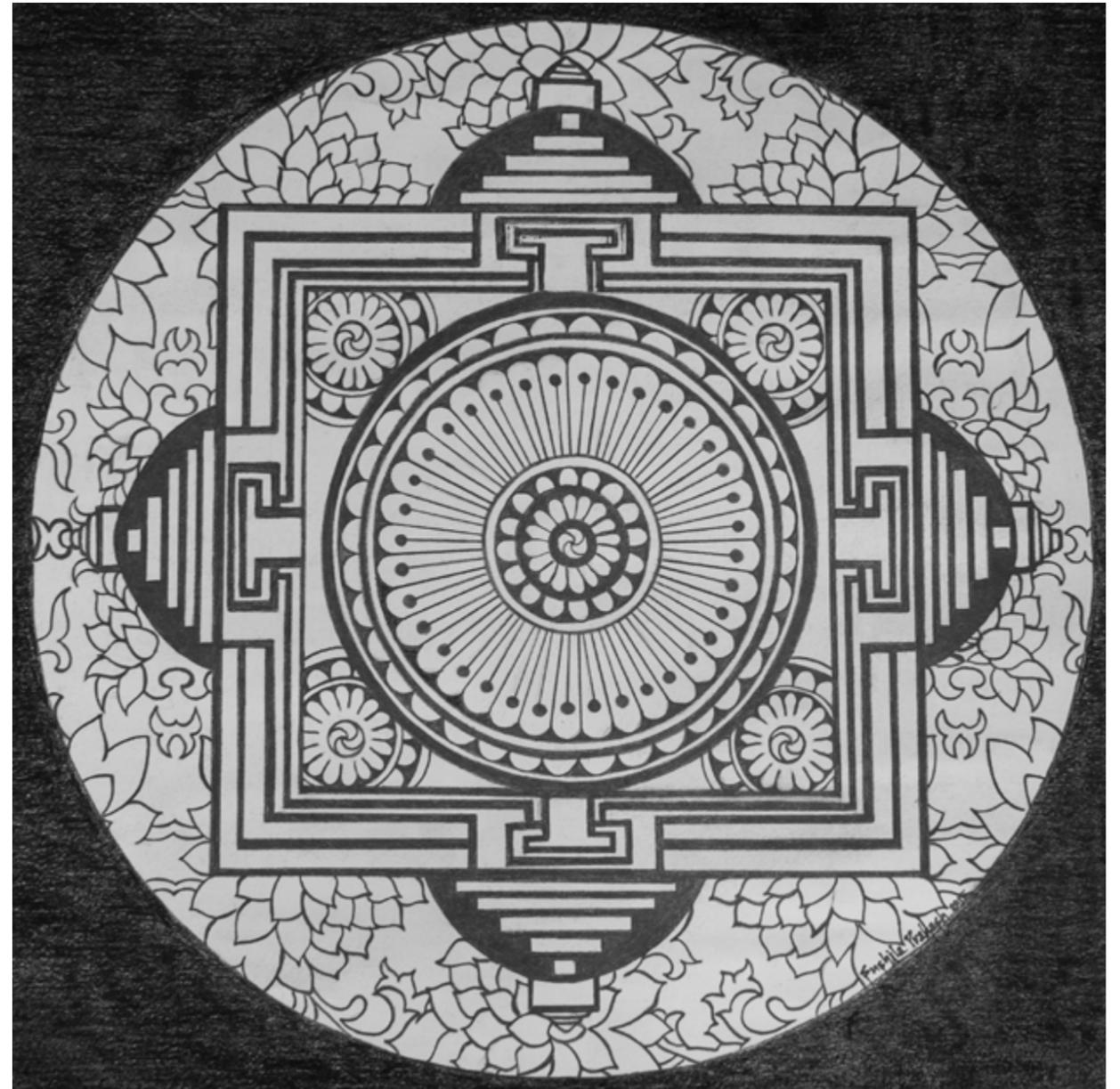
Originally found in the ancient teachings of the Buddhist and Hindu religions, these geometrical patterns are recognised throughout the world for their spiritual content as well as their enchanting beauty.

LILA describes all Reality including the cosmos as the outcome of creative play by the Divine Absolute.

SĀMKHYA is strongly dualist. SĀMAKYA sees the universe as consisting of two realities. Like an illusion, there is always another side to anything. *(previous page)*



PURAYATI means 'complete' or 'to fulfil' maybe a worldly or materialistic desire.



YAGNA means sacrifice, devotion, worship and offering ●



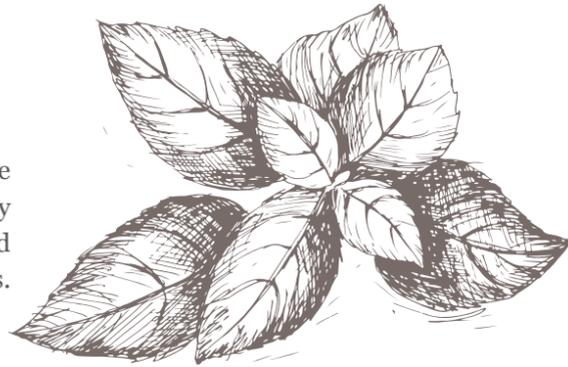
To my
understanding
evolution is the
only truly creative
facet of existence.
That which does
not evolve cannot
be creative.

P. RAJAGOPALACHARI

Common plants that lower blood pressure

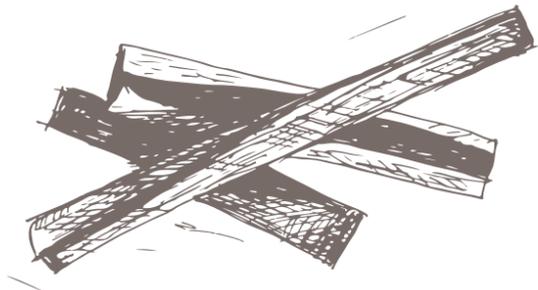
Ocimum basilicum

Basil is a delicious herb that lowers blood pressure temporarily. Adding fresh basil to your diet is easy; simply keep a small pot of the herb in your kitchen garden and add the fresh leaves to pasta, soup, salads, casseroles and stir fries.



Cinnamomum verum

Cinnamon bark was so highly prized in ancient times that it was regarded as a gift for monarchs. Consuming cinnamon every day has been shown to lower blood pressure in people with diabetes. Sprinkle it on your breakfast cereal or oatmeal, add it to a pot of tea, and use it to enhance the flavour of stir fries, curries and stews.



Elettaria cardamomum

Cardamom is a spice that is often used in the foods of South Asia. One study found that people given cardamom daily for several months saw significant reduction in their blood pressure readings. Include cardamom seeds or powder in spice rubs, soups and stews, and even in baked goods.



Crateagus oxycanthus

Hawthorn berries have been a herbal remedy for high blood pressure in traditional Chinese and European medicines for thousands of years. You can take hawthorn as a pill, a liquid extract or as a tea.



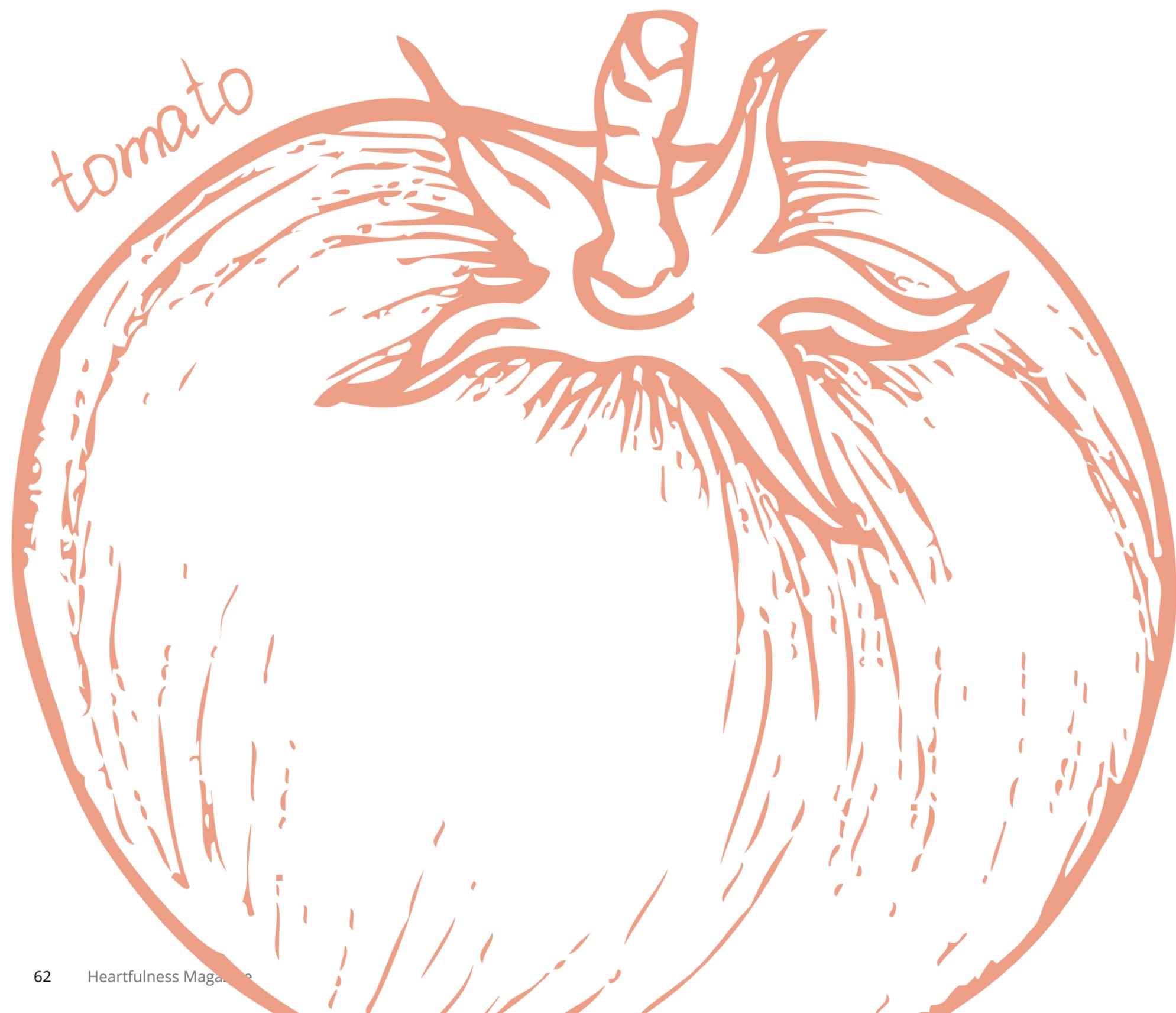
Linum usitatissimum

Flaxseed oil, as well as ground flaxseed, can lower cholesterol, and protect against angina (chest pain) and high blood pressure. It may do so by inhibiting inflammation that causes artery-hardening plaque and poor circulation.

Allium sativum

Garlic has long been used for a variety of cardiovascular conditions and for its hypotensive action. Modern scientific studies have confirmed its ability to reduce blood pressure.





• SINGING • TO • TOMATOES •

Modern physics has shown us that everything is vibration, something that yogis and shamans have known for thousands of years. ALANDA GREENE explores the way this theory of vibrations allows her to communicate with the tomatoes in her garden in British Columbia.

I visited the tomato house this morning: a shelter constructed of arched white plumbing rods covered in plastic. It keeps them warm in a mountain area where spring can stay cool until late June and nights stay cool most of the time.

Right now the tomatoes are strong and full of large green fruit between deep green abundant leaves. The fruit is just beginning to tinge towards red and I'm excited at the prospect of eating delicious vine-ripened tomatoes, grown from the tiny seeds begun indoors in March.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARIJANA PETROVIC

Every morning I visit the garden and relish what is growing. Today when I step into the tomato house, I feel a sense of welcome. I feel like the tomatoes are as happy to see me as I am to see them. I suddenly feel the urge to stay awhile, hang out with them, communicate and enjoy their presence. I sit down and begin to sing, having the distinct sense they will like it. First I sing *The Garden Song*, much loved by preschoolers: “Inch by inch, row by row, gonna make this garden grow.” I recall good old Pete Seeger who sang it so well. But it wasn’t the right song for today so I changed to a *bhajan*, a devotional song, and the tomatoes liked it, and I liked it. We celebrated the abundance, creativity, productivity and joy of creation.

I have never sung to tomatoes before. Sometimes I sing while pruning or weeding or watering, or hum while staking and twining. But to deliberately sing to the tomatoes, to pick a piece I thought they would like, is a new way for me to be with the garden. It’s a keeper.

Many indigenous peoples hold that every plant has its own song. When a healer or shaman has the right to use the song of a particular plant, it is because the plant has given permission. Why is this idea so foreign for most people in our culture? Why can’t we hear the songs of plants? Why can’t I hear the song of the tomatoes?

It doesn’t seem so strange that each plant has its song when I remember that everything is vibration. Modern physics and ancient teachings have moved together in that understanding. Penetrate an atom to its smallest known parts and there are no parts there, just oscillating waves or particles that manifest in form as they vibrate. Sound is vibration. Our ear is tuned to perceive a certain range of vibration and understand it as sound. Humans manufacture instruments that perceive a range of vibration higher and lower than the human ear can perceive and suddenly we can hear the song of distant space, of electrons, of stars.

“*Everything is vibration. Everything creates sound. Hafiz wrote, ‘Listen to the music. I am the concert that flows from the mouth of every creature, singing with the myriad chords.’*”

Everything is vibration. Everything creates sound. Hafiz wrote, “Listen to the music. I am the concert that flows from the mouth of every creature, singing with the myriad chords. “

Many indigenous people claim that it is by listening with the heart that our capacity for hearing the song of other beings like plants occurs. What sensitivity has to develop in order to be receptive, to hear the song emanating from every creature? My own heart sings in the garden, leaps with joy when I meet various plants emerging, blossoming, fruiting or just being. I feel that the tomatoes perceive my affection, that they appreciate my singing to them. I wish I could hear them sing back, or with me. Maybe I do, but it is in a different way from the kids at school who sing with me.

Modern biological science has developed highly sensitive tools that perceive the continuous movement of living cells, including plant cells; movement that creates a fluctuating rhythm. This knowledge seems to match the insights of indigenous science, these ancient ways of knowing that also perceive the vibration of plants, their song. But they perceive it through other states of consciousness, through the heart’s perception rather than the senses we usually employ in the world of matter.

The cells of the heart oscillate also, and all oscillating patterns demonstrate the capacity for entrainment, for their rhythms to synchronise, whether it is the pendulums of clocks or individual cells. When entrained, the rhythm or song of one cell matches that of another. On this day, is it my heart’s response to tomatoes that allows me to perceive their song? Is my impulse to sing to the tomatoes because they are singing to me? Are they always singing? Is this the day I perceive the sensitivity and delicateness of their song?

Something today allows me to respond in song to them. Maybe indeed we are singing to each other – they in their tomato song way and me in my human way ●

MAGNIFICENT MOTHER NATURE

VIJI BALASUBRAMANIAN takes us, along with her family, on a journey of discovery and bonding in a tiger reserve in Kerala India.

The plan was to take a trip with our extended family during the school holidays. We remembered a talk given by Ms Srilekha Venkateswar from The Wild Walk (www.thewildwalk.com) at our school's annual day function. She said that today's parents think they are bonding with their children in front of the TV or in the shopping mall, but that's not bonding. Real bonding is when we are together in Nature, one with our natures, one with each other – our humble selves with magnificent Mother Nature. So, off we went, young, old, all in tow, to the Parambikulam Forest Tiger Preserve in Kerala, southern India.

Those four days were filled with so much serenity. I found myself going down on my knees to my children's height while we chatted and it seemed so much more connected. We drank tea from the hut of an 80-year old man who was not a tribal native, but had come there as a young man to help build the dams. He had so many stories. His self-sufficiency and ability to walk effortlessly through the slopes of the forest were amazing. We slept in tents that were so simple yet very modern and convenient. Peacocks climbed on the roofs of the tents and all night long they kept 'talking' to each other.



PHOTOGRAPH BY ARANGAN ANANTH

All zipped up in a tent ...
Excited to be in the jungle ...
Alligators basking in the sun ...
Peacocks by the dozen, dancing
in their colours ...
Elephants in plenty caring for
one baby calf ...
Spotted and Samba deers with
their beautiful eyes ...
The majestic Indian Gaur ...
I think I almost saw the flower
fairies ... maybe in my heart.
Magical,
magical,
magical.





The morning walk by the river was gorgeous. “Look mom, elephant poop. Wow it is huge!” My daughter had her binoculars and was able to see the Malabar kingfisher and the hornbills. So many peacocks graced our morning walks with their pretty dances. The astonishing thing was that these safari rides, boat rides and walks filled us inside out in a strange way. We would come back for food and respite and everybody would be silent.

Just as I thought, “Maybe they are getting bored,” somebody would pipe up, “Did you see that Malabar squirrel and the way it was moving from branch to branch?” or “Did you see the Langoor black monkey that was hanging upside down?” And there would be a glow on everyone’s faces again.

Treasures ...

Memories ...

I did not know how my five-year-old would fare. Taking him along was a good lesson for me as a parent. Never underestimate them – their love for nature, their curiosity, and their enthusiasm for the wild.

On the second day he commented, “If we are going to journey through the forest to see the ‘same’ animals again I am not coming. I’m going to stay in the tent with *thatta* and *patti* and speak with the peacocks.”

Come time to explore again, however, he was the first one to roll out, and after a five-hour safari he put his head to rest sleepily on me. But every time the bus slowed down to let a deer or bison pass, he would wake up to look and tell me if it was a Samba deer or a spotted deer. The child behind so excitedly remarked, “Bison! Look! Bison!” My son sleepily said, “No amma, that’s a Gaur. Bisons don’t live in India.’

Wow! I wish all learning was this practical, straight into the head and heart. Some day ●



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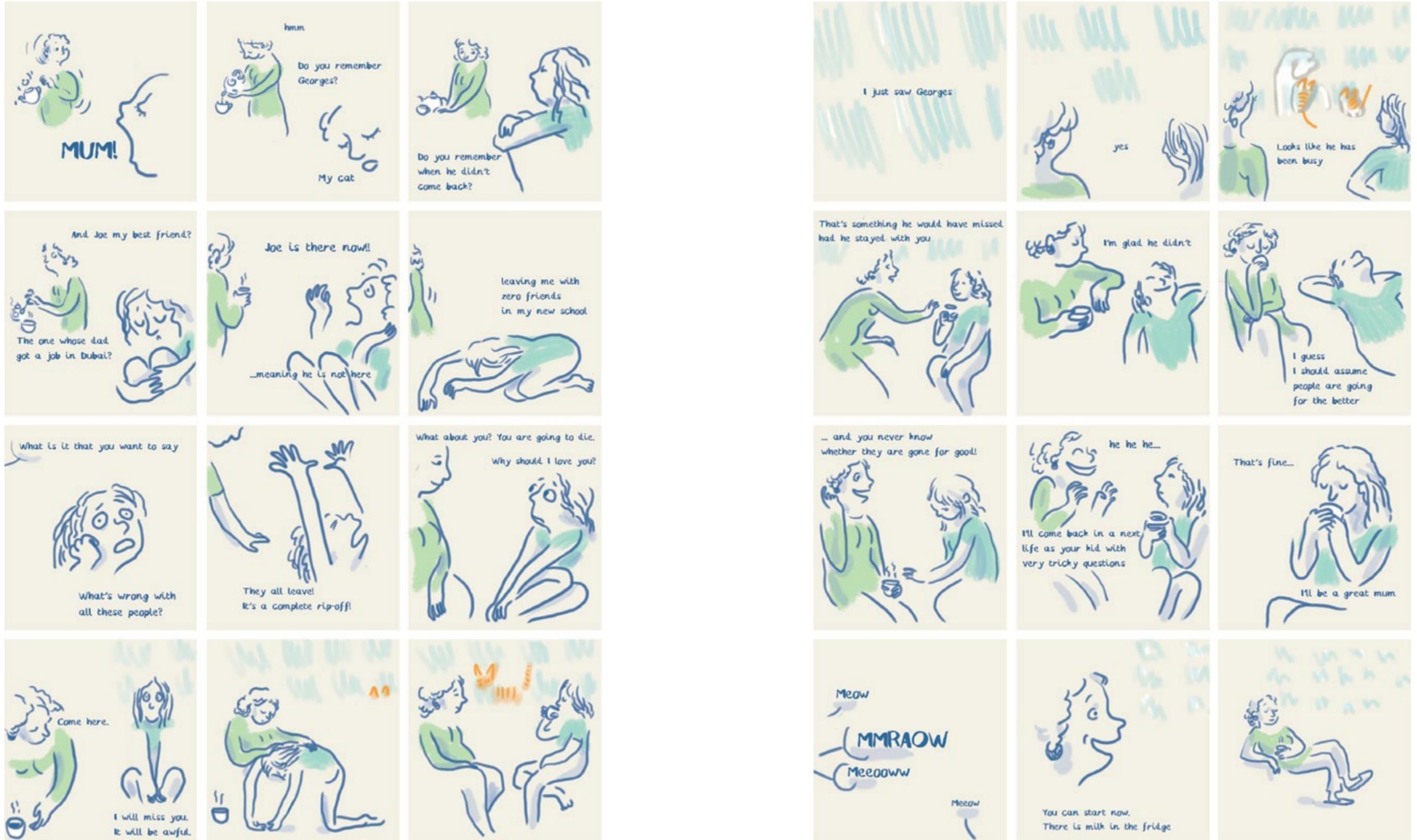
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Going and Coming



CREATE A WORLD:

Our Blue Planet



Materials Needed:

- 1 large round plate around 120 cm in diameter.
- 2 or 3 paper or wooden plates, as large as you can find.
- Blue, white and green acrylic paint and brushes.
- Natural materials of all kinds: small and large stones, gravel, soil, straw, grass, moss, pieces of wood, plants, branches, sea shells, bones, clay etc

Our planet is called the blue planet. Do you know why?

From space, it looks like a blue ball. This is due to the oceans that you find on our planet.

What else can you see when you look at our blue planet?

Do you see different continents, cold and warm regions, virgin forests, deserts, mountains, rivers and cities?

Can you also imagine another blue planet: a dream planet that only you know about? Imagine what that world is like.

Now, close your eyes and visualise our mother earth or your dream blue planet. What is the thing that you like most about it? What would you like to see on your planet?

Choose a friend or two to build your planet. First spend some time sharing what you would each like to build and how you see the planet.



Start by painting the large plate blue. Then build up a world together on that blue plate.

Put a sacred place in the centre of the world.

Place stones of all size as mountains and hills. They can be decorated with white paint for snow and green for grass. Place moss, gravel and earth, and trees. The sea can be a blue painted bowl with water in it.

You can make small animals, humans or any kind of creature for your world, and choose where they should be placed.

THINK ABOUT:

How can we take care of our earth?

How would we like our world to be?

IDEA & TEXT: ANNE-GRETHE KOUSGAARD

The King Who Removed the Veils of Illusion

PART IV The Final Chapter

Dear Readers,

Do you remember last month's gruesome story? Dear King Madhukar and his adviser both lost their heads in Parvati's temple, and Queen Kumudini revived them but matched the wrong heads with the bodies. King Vikram asked, "Tell me, little bracelets, to whom is Queen Kumudini rightly married?"

Here is what some of you had to say about this:

"Queen Kumudini is rightly married to the person that had the head of the the adviser and the body of her husband. Although her husband's head had been replaced, his heart remained the same."

"The one with the head of the king is the one she married. His brain is there, what he thinks and his eyes. She will recognise him. The body is not important. But wait! It will be the opposite of what seems logical. It will be the other way, but I don't know why!"

Now let's move on with the story.



The bracelets clinked softly and said, "In truth, the husband of the queen was the one who had the king's body because the body is stronger than the head!"

At these words, Queen Abol-Rani uttered an exclamation of rage and said, "This is wrong and stupid!" She tore her bracelets and threw them to the ground. "You are not worthy of me, bracelets! The queen belonged to him who had the king's head. The head is the most important and noble part of the body, it is what distinguishes a being from another and it is the seat of reason!"

King Vikram replied, "There you are very sure of yourself, O Queen. Are these your last words? I will tell you the rest of the story."

Queen Kumudini was mortified, and she did not know whom or what to trust. Her hands recognised the body of her beloved, her ears heard his voice, and yet he had the head of the adviser. On the other body, her eyes recognised the face of her king, but even his voice was not his.

Then she gazed deeply into the eyes of both in order to recognise the deepest being she knew so well; the soul of the husband she felt so close to. To her surprise the eyes of the king's face did not shine with the brightness that she knew so well. This light she found in the eyes of the head of the advisor.

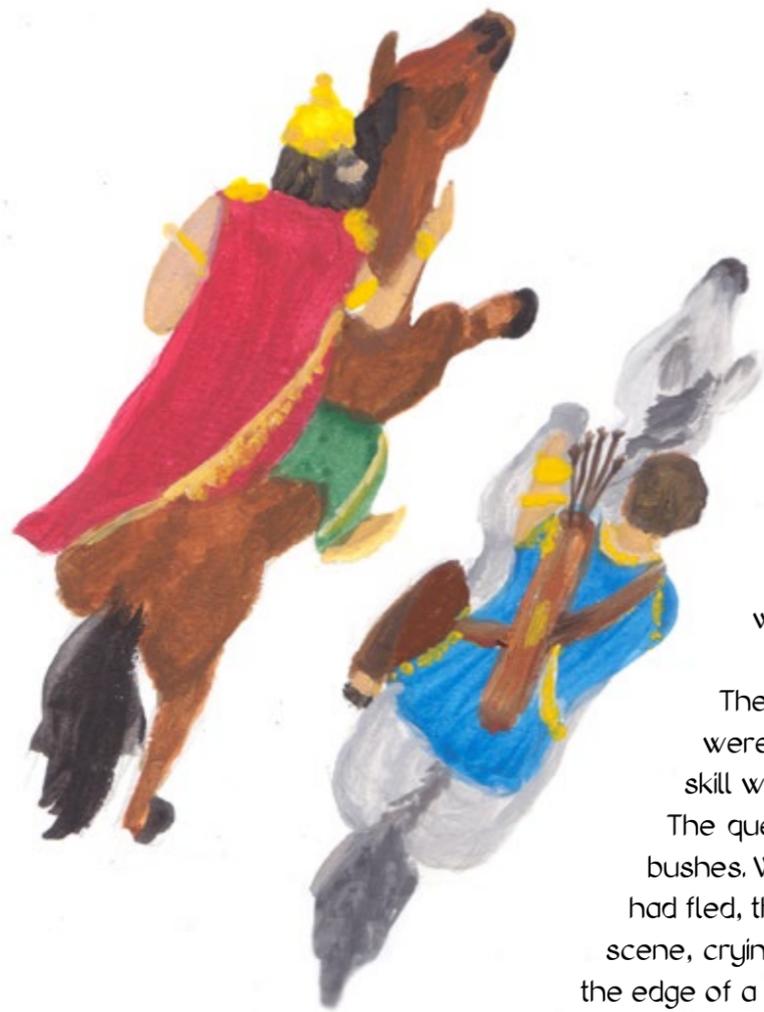
So she chose the body of her husband, not because of his strong physical body, but because it held his heart, the seat of his soul. She saw it in his eyes and in his presence. If the brain is the seat of reason, the heart is the seat of wisdom. It is the wisdom that guides our steps more than reason.

Vikram had barely uttered these words than the third veil fell by itself, and the queen was hidden from the eyes of the king only by the very last one.

"I will now tell my fourth and final story," said King Vikram. "If you do not answer me, O my Queen, probably your emerald ring shall in your place."

This time the young girls did not laugh, as they had come to know King Vikram and they were well aware that if he wanted the ring to reply, it would reply. And indeed, the emerald ring produced a dark green flash and answered, "I am listening, King Vikram and I will answer you!"

King Vikram began his story:



In a kingdom far to the south, there reigned a good and righteous king. But in the country, a revolt broke out led by treacherous courtiers. The king, queen and princess had to flee their country at night. They reached the neighbouring kingdom and were continuing their journey in the middle of a dark forest when they were surrounded by a savage tribe of hunters who haunted the border regions.

The king fought like a lion, but his opponents were so many that, despite his valour and skill with a sword, he was defeated and killed. The queen and the princess had hidden in the bushes. When the fight was over and the hunters had fled, they walked away from that inauspicious scene, crying. They did not stop until they reached the edge of a charming little lake where thousands of lotus flowers grew, far away.

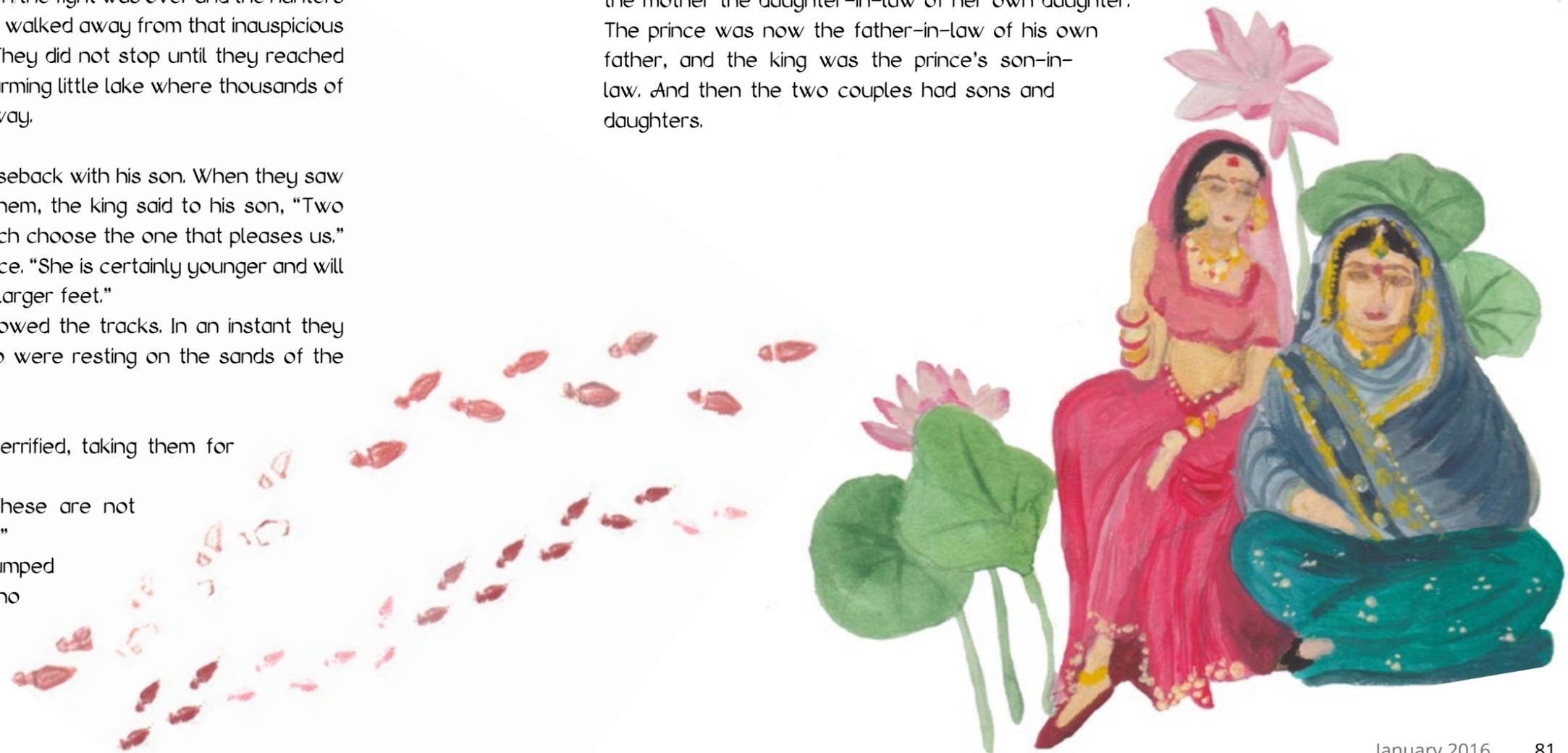
At that moment, the king of the land was hunting on horseback with his son. When they saw two sets of light footsteps on the ground in front of them, the king said to his son, "Two women have been here. Let us find them and we will each choose the one that pleases us." "I will take the one whose feet are smaller," said the prince. "She is certainly younger and will be better suited for me. You can take the one who has larger feet." The king agreed, they spurred their horses on and followed the tracks. In an instant they reached the lake and saw the queen and princess who were resting on the sands of the shore.

When the queen saw the two riders, she stood up, terrified, taking them for robbers: "My daughter, quickly, flee, flee!" "No, mother, be reasonable," replied the Princess. "These are not thieves, but two hunters, and we can ask them for help." Meanwhile, the king and his son had arrived near them, jumped from their horses, and the king said, "Who are you who rest near the lake with no one to protect you? Where do you come from and where are you going?"

The unfortunate queen told him their terrible misfortune. "I understand," replied the king. "My son and I would like to take you as wives, as my wife is long dead and my son is still single. What do you think? Would this have your approval?" The queen and the princess remained silent and contented themselves by bowing their heads modestly. The prince hastened to add, "My father wants as his wife the one who has the biggest feet. I will take the one who has little feet. We decided while we were following your footsteps." "Perfect," laughed the princess. "Only, my mother has smaller feet than me." "That's good, indeed!" laughed the king. "A word is a word and a man never denies a commitment." He was delighted to marry the young girl while his son had to content himself with the mother.

The queen and the princess were quite happy with the idea of finding a home again and, after some thought, they agreed. The prince did not say another word. Some time later, the double wedding was celebrated with great pomp and ceremony. Life went on.

The girl had become the mother-in-law of her mother, and the mother the daughter-in-law of her own daughter. The prince was now the father-in-law of his own father, and the king was the prince's son-in-law. And then the two couples had sons and daughters.



Having finished his story, King Vikram asked, “Tell me, emerald ring, what were the degrees of relationship between these children?”

”The emerald ring again produced a dark green flash and replied, “Really, I cannot answer you, King Vikram. I do not know.”

At these words, Queen Abol-Rani gave an exclamation of satisfaction and declared, “Good! You, my emerald ring, are worthy of my wearing you! You were not ashamed to say that you did not know when you did not. It is not possible to give a sensible answer to this question. The intellect will lose us by wanting to create complicated mental constructions. To such question one should not reply.”

Hardly had she uttered these words than the fourth and final veil fell by itself and Queen Abol-Rani appeared before King Vikram’s eyes in all her unearthly beauty.

And so, Vikram saw Abol-Rani and Abol-Rani saw Vikram. Their eyes melted into each other. There were only two souls contemplating each other. Vikram knew that Abol-Rani was the one that he had been waiting for his whole existence. Everything also became so clear and simple for Abol-Rani’s heart, submerged by gentle waves of love.

She bowed before him and said, “You are welcome in my palace, King Vikram. You are the first man who has cast eyes upon me. In truth, you even showed me that my attitude was haughty and could cloud my judgment. It was covering my heart with a veil of illusory certainties. Be welcome, King Vikram!”

She rose from her silk sofa, advanced towards the king and offered him her hand. Vikram took her to his palace and married her there ●



ARTWORK BY VERONIQUE NICOLAI

THE END

Come, relax...

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Feel how your whole body is now completely relaxed.

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

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

Remain absorbed for as long as you want, until you feel ready to come out.

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