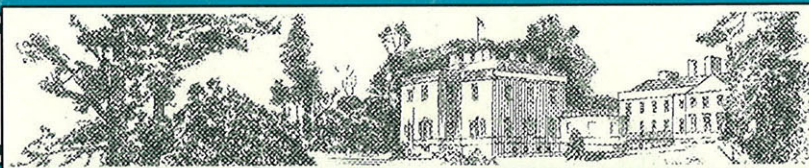


# R·E·T·R·E·A·T

ISSUE No. THREE



MAY - JULY 1994

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**A**STRONAUT'S ECSTASY

**E**XPLORING CONFUCIUS  
COUNTRY

**T**HE QUEST FOR  
QUILTISM

**N**ATURE OF  
CONSCIOUSNESS

**K**ILLER  
MUSIC



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*`Retreat 3`*

# THE MT ABU Dialogue "Charting New Territory"

Lord Ennals  
presents his views  
on leadership  
during the  
opening session.

Pregalaxmi  
Govender of The  
Women's National  
Coalition in South  
Africa moved the  
audience with an  
account of her  
journey to India.

Carolyn  
Lukensmyer,  
consultant for the  
office of Chief of  
Staff of the White  
House, opened the  
Abu Dialogue.



While there was much  
group discussion, often the  
deeper one-on-one  
exchanges led to greater  
personal discovery.

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## RETREAT



ISSUE No. 3  
MAY - JULY 1994

### COVER

Cover photo by Rudolf Zwamborn shows one of many group dialogues during the Mt. Abu Dialogue in India

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## A CUDDLY JUMPER AMONGST THE PACK

*Every weekend in the heart of Sussex in the English countryside, a volunteer runner is given a 25 minute start before 20 baying dogs known as the Cookham Bloodhounds are unleashed in hot pursuit. But there is another eager volunteer who is always straining to get out there with the leaders of the pack. It's Monty the sheep who thinks he is a bloodhound.*

Apparently the ten month old ram has been running with the hounds since he was orphaned at two weeks old. Brought in to get the dogs accustomed to sheep, the dogs accepted him as one of their own. However, deprived of a proper role model, Monty completely lost his sense of identity and started to behave like his canine companions. Each day he insists on joining them in their morning training runs.

"Sadly", says the weekly Hunt Master, "Monty cannot join in the proper hunting. He's desperate to be at the off, but with his physique he wouldn't last more than a field".

So what does Monty's story tell us? At the heart of Monty's behaviour he has lost his true sense of self. As he identifies with the form, behaviour and actions of the hounds around him his own actions are totally inappropriate. Could this also be the case with modern man and woman? Totally fixated on our physical form and the material world around us, our values and consequent behaviour are causing chaos outside and great unhappiness inside.

In the last issue of *Retreat* we looked at this 'mistaken identity' which now afflicts humanity, resulting in the fragmentation of the inner life of the individual and eventually manifesting in the fragmentation of society. In this issue we continue our journey into this basic understanding of ourselves as spiritual beings, exploring our true and original spiritual nature and what happens when we make the same mistake as Monty.

Astronaut **Edgar Mitchell** has been on this journey into inner space for twenty years since returning from outer space. He shares with us the essential discoveries he has made. **Maureen Chen** writes from Hong Kong with some fascinating insights on the influence of culture on personal identity. **Klaas Hindriks** illustrates why he thinks the modern journalist needs to be more spiritual. And watch out for a revelation on love from **Fred Von Son** as he addresses the Freemasons in California.

In the meantime, if you are wondering what happens when the bloodhounds track down the runner, some hours and several green pastures later, they simply 'lick him to death!'



RETREAT



**Treat Yourself  
or a Friend to a  
Great Gift**

Retreat Magazine is dedicated to the voice of spirituality and the exploration of spiritual values as they awaken in those who have chosen to listen and explore for themselves.

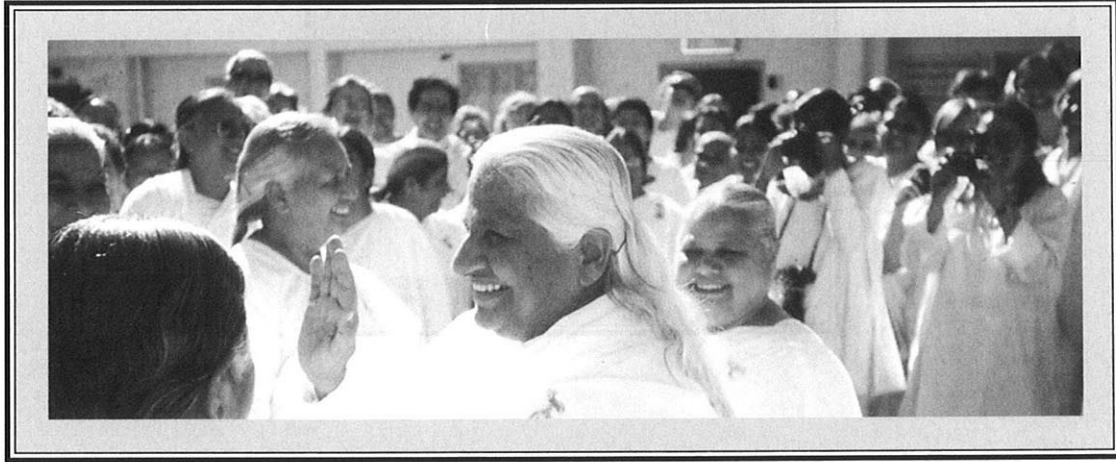
Each issue offers personal perspectives from contributors from many countries who are themselves seeking to understand and integrate spiritual principles into their lives. Their experience is enlightening.

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# LEADERSHIP WITH CHARACTER



Kiran Coyote appreciates the personality and the spirituality of Dadi Prakashmani

*In a far distant garden, on a mountain top in India, amidst lively flowers in bright pots and sculptured beds, one comes across flowers of another sort: slogans and aphorisms inscribed on small signs, planted on short poles. Normally you might expect such signs to warn "Stay on the path" or "Keep off the grass," but here you find yourself confronted with cautions of a different sort. "Ego is the root of all suffering." "Body is visible in a mirror, but character is visible in action."*

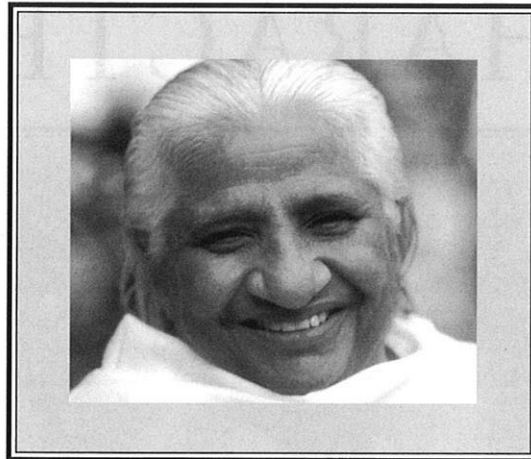
**T**he gardens adorn the main campus of the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University, where students study methods of weeding out negative aspects of personality and planting inner qualities which give off the fragrance of spirituality and higher consciousness. The signs remind the onlooker that a spiritual aspirant must cultivate inner beauty even whilst enjoying the beauty of nature.

An immaculate, but outdated, automobile glides up the stately drive above the garden and stops in front of the entrance to the Universal Peace Hall, the University's main auditorium. Out steps a serene, white-haired woman in a spotless white sari. Character is suddenly visible in action. The woman is Dadi Prakashmani, Chief Administrator of the Brahma Kumaris. Although simply attired, her walk and gestures reflect natural dignity, even royalty. Her eyes shine with an inner light. She smiles - warmth and welcome radiate from her being. She moves with natural grace into the hall and onto the

stage, where a raised seat awaits her. For a while she sits in silent meditation, her gaze falling on the assembled multitude of nearly 800 individuals from all corners of the world. Against a background of uplifting music, there is an atmosphere of absolute silence.

The first words out of her mouth are invariably "Om Shanti", a greeting of peace. Whether the gathering is one of religious leaders, politicians, children, or the University's regular students, she makes everyone feel close to her, as though they are her very dear brothers and sisters.

Today, it is a gathering of Vice-Chancellors from other Universities and she is speaking about character. She speaks naturally from the heart. She reminds them, "There is a proverb amongst us that *"If wealth is lost, nothing is lost. If health is lost, something is lost. But if character is lost, everything is lost"*. Good character can be inculcated by good habits and by controlling negative instincts and tendencies of the mind. That is why ethical



education is a necessity ... yet there is little religious, ethical or spiritual education in our universities. In fact, spiritual education is absolutely crucial now, because we see that young people have been growing up without a basis for character, without a basis for morals, and this is a cause of many of today's problems'.

She goes on to describe the teachers of the Brahma Kumaris University and the importance of meditation, concluding her talk with a brief meditative experience. When she has finished, the mind feels filled and the heart inspired. Her words and phrases continue to resonate in the consciousness for many days afterwards.

#### ***A Natural Leader***

Dadi Prakashmani was born Rana Gopaldas Hathiramani on June 1st, 1922 in Hyderabad, the youngest of 4 daughters. Her father was an

astrologer and a Vedantic scholar who believed in Swami Gangeshwar Anand, one of the 108 Jagadgurus of the day. Her father encouraged her to attend the Swami's spiritual gathering or 'Satsung' which she liked very much. She continued to attend regularly, out of her own interest, from the age of 10. There was a

**“Good character can be inculcated by good habits and by controlling negative instincts and tendencies of the mind. That is why ethical education is a necessity”**

temple in front of her house, looked after by two mothers in the neighbourhood. She would go to the temple in the early morning and help the mothers to bathe the images of the deities. At night she would go back to put the images in their beds.

At the age of 14 she dedicated her

life to God and to the work of the Brahma Kumaris University. The founder gave her the name “Prakashmani”, meaning “Jewel of Light”. Her quality of selflessness made her a natural leader. During the first fourteen years of the organisation's history, during which students and teachers lived in Karachi in relative seclusion, she

was given the responsibility of looking after the youngest children, ages 5 and 6. She taught them Maths and Hindi. In 1950, when the University moved to Mt Abu, she became one of several women responsible for its day to day administration.

In 1954, she made her first trip outside India, heading a delegation to “The Second World Religion Congress” held at Shimizu, Japan. After the congress, she toured Asia for six months, giving talks and conducting courses in Raja Yoga meditation. On her return, she spent nearly two years touring India, establishing branches of the

University in Delhi, Patna, Calcutta and Bombay. In a country characterised by patriarchal religious systems, where until recently women had very few rights and even fewer responsibilities outside of the home, this was not an easy task, especially in the '50's. But her power of spirituality, her purity and divine qualities were so great that they removed darkness from the minds of others and enabled many to form a relationship with God.

From 1956 to 1964 Dadi directed the activities of the Bombay Raja Yoga Centre, and in 1964 was put in charge of all the centres in the state of Maharashtra. In 1965, her administrative authority was further extended over the states of Gujarat and Karnataka. By this time, although only 43 years old, she had already earned the title of 'Dadi' meaning 'elder sister.' In 1969, with the passing of the founder of the Brahma Kumaris, Prajapita Brahma, Dadi was appointed co-administrative head of the University. Didi Manmohini, another of the original members of the organisation, initially shared the responsibility. With Didi's passing in 1983, Dadi became the University's chief administrator.

During her 25 years at its helm, the University has expanded from a few dozen centres in India to more than 3,000 branches now spread across the world. In 1981 it became a non-governmental organisation affiliated to the United Nations, with consultative status on the roster of the Economic and Social Council and UNICEF. It has gained international recognition as a force for constructive change as a result of its global projects, The Million Minutes of Peace (1986) and Global Co-operation for a Better World (1988 - 1990) as well as for its efforts to promote interfaith co-operation.

Today, Dadi is increasingly recognised as one of India's, if not the world's, foremost spiritual leaders. Her achievements are due to her spiritual practices, rather than to any application of feminist approaches. 'Our organisation', she explains, 'teaches equality of women with men, emphasising the great social value of feminine qualities - love, mercy, sacrifice, compassion, service - which men also should be encouraged to acquire. At the same time, it is

**"If we are weak, then we become selfish; if we are empty, we take; but if we are filled, we automatically give to all. That is our nature"**

important for women to acquire what are regarded as "masculine" qualities such as fearlessness, determination and detachment ... after all, it is only this physical body which has a male or female gender, not the spirit.'

#### ***Character in Action***

Dadi's day begins at 4.00am (with an hour of meditation) and rarely finishes before 10.30pm. In between she flows like a river of calm, purposeful activity, looking in on one or another of the University's projects or departments, meeting with guests and students, lecturing, officiating, counselling and seeing to the numerous administrative tasks, much the same as any university chancellor might do. It is not so much what she does, but the wisdom, stability, far-sightedness, simplicity, humility, compassion and selflessness with which she does her work that not only set her apart, but make her a model of elevated character in action. Because she maintains constant

pure feelings for everyone, with patience, peace and love, people naturally come forth to offer their help and co-operation.

Whatever she teaches she embodies. And she teaches that one has to choose between love and selfishness because the two cannot co-exist. 'Only a powerful soul can offer love,' she declares: 'Only a powerful soul can afford to be humble. If we are weak, then we become selfish; if we are empty, we take; but if we are filled, we automatically give to all. That is our nature.'

Dadi's love of God and her constant sense of being His instrument pervade her actions and interactions. When once asked to explain the secret of her achievements, she replied, 'Nothing is in my hands. It's all His work. He is

doing everything. I'm only a tool in His hands. Really, I have no secret. But I owe a lot to the large, loyal band of my fellow workers ...'

The late afternoon sun is slipping down behind the mountain, casting long shadows over the garden. In the courtyard campus, Dadi mingles with 'her fellow workers, both colleagues and students. She is easily accessible and sorts out, with a few moments of friendly chit chat and undivided attention, matters which might take weeks to resolve across the formality of a desk.

Dadi's leadership automatically stimulates a subtle inner desire to become more like she is. But how? In the fading light, two signs planted in the garden are still visible. One reads, "Elevated conduct makes elevated character". The other sums it up simply, "Do good and be good".

®

*Kiran Coyote is Director of the Brahma Kumaris Centre in Vancouver*

# FOUNDATION COURSE IN MEDITATION PART TWO



## Reincarnation and the Faculties of the Soul

**P**art One of the Foundation Course in Meditation, in the previous issue of *Retreat*, looked at the contrasts between “I” the soul and my body! We saw how the body is purely a physical costume which is animated by the soul. We also considered the eternity of the soul; i.e. it doesn’t wear out and die, but when the body dies the soul withdraws and goes on to take a new birth; that is, reincarnation. As your meditation develops you will become aware that this may not be the first body in which you have found expression.

At death, the soul carries all its life’s experience and memories into the next birth. But before being re-born in a womb, the soul commits most of those memories to the subconscious. The personality is shaped by all those subconscious experiences and memories, and that is what makes each one of us unique.

It is scientifically impossible to prove reincarnation, because science demands tangible evidence while the soul is non-physical.

The only valid proof we can have is our own personal experience, which meditation can provide. At the same time, there are many well-documented cases of young children remembering their previous birth in great detail, or of people who have had “out of body” or “near death” experiences who testify to leaving the body, looking down on their body and then returning.

***Watch your thoughts, they become your words***

***Watch your words, they become your actions***

***Watch your actions, they become your habits***

***Watch your habits, they become your character***

***Watch your character, for it becomes your destiny!***

In the same way that the body has arms and legs to negotiate the physical world, you the soul also

have certain faculties which you use to negotiate the world of thoughts, feelings and choices.

These three faculties are the mind, the intellect and the sanskaras (impressions). These are an integral part of you, the soul.

(See Diagram on top of page 7)

### ***The Mind***

This is the faculty of creation, where you create all your thoughts, which then stimulate certain feelings.

### ***The Intellect***

This is the faculty of discrimination and decision-making, which you use to assess right from wrong, good from bad and then make a decision.

### ***The Sanskaras***

These are the impressions made on the soul by any action you do.

How these three faculties of the soul work together can be illustrated by looking at how habits

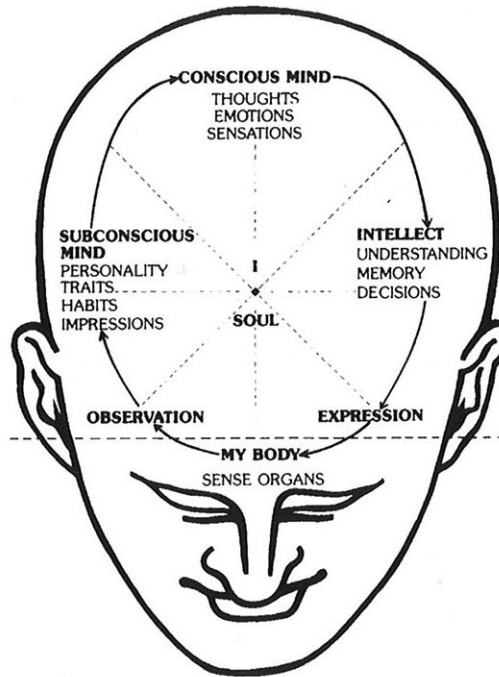


are formed. Take, for example, a first encounter with cigarettes. As you watch others smoking (and surviving) you might have the thought, "I should try a cigarette". Your intellect assesses the rightness of the thought based on the evidence of others surviving and seemingly enjoying smoking. You make a decision to have a cigarette which leads to the action of smoking the cigarette. This creates an impression or memory on the soul, rather like cutting a groove in a piece of wood. This groove is known as a sanskara. Within the groove is contained the memory of a) the action of smoking and b) the feeling of stimulation and relaxation. Whenever you encounter some pressure or tense situation, this sanskara is stimulated and the memory of the action and feelings emerge in the mind triggering the thought (desire) of having another cigarette. The intellect justifies it and the further action of smoking deepens the sanskara. Eventually the intellect is bypassed and you go straight from thought to action. Smoking becomes an automatic response to any tension, and a habit is formed.

However, although the cigarette gives you a temporary feeling of relaxation you are unhappy for three reasons. Firstly, because you have denied your intellectual ability. Secondly, intuitively you know you should not be a slave to any habit. And thirdly, your conscience is telling you that smoking is bad for the health. Consequently you have injured yourself at both the spiritual (soul) and physical (body) levels. You have lost control and feel powerless to change.

**THE BATTERY RUNS DOWN**

The main reason for feeling powerless is loss of energy. Not physical energy, but spiritual



energy which is needed by the intellect for will power. When the soul took its first body it was new and fresh and full of spiritual energy. Using the mind and intellect it could create powerful thoughts and make clear decisions. It could concentrate, or focus the energy of consciousness easily and there were no unanswered questions.

***Meditation is a journey into inner space to explore and discover the nature of your own consciousness***

Then, after many births, we spend that energy of consciousness, the will becomes weak, we cannot concentrate and find it difficult to make clear decisions. This process is like that of a battery illuminating a light bulb. Unless the battery is regularly charged it will run down as the bulb spends the energy in the form of light.

This loss of power is the main reason behind our grave mistake of identifying ourselves as physical beings. The loss of power means the loss of our spiritual or self-

awareness, and then all our attention is drawn into the tangible, physical world. Our values and behaviour are consequently shaped by this limited perspective.

In Part Three we shall discover the source of spiritual power and how to connect to that source, recharge our battery and restore our true awareness.

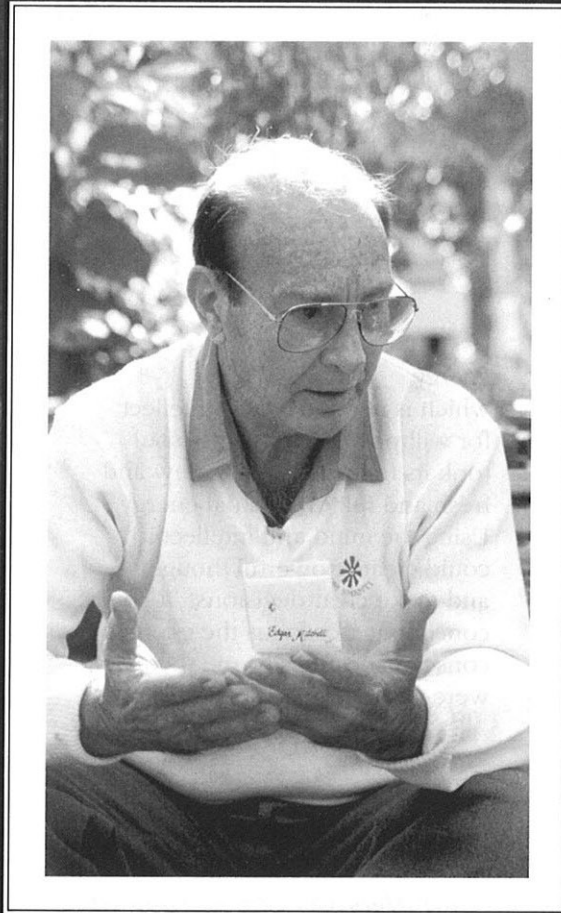
**MEDITATION - THE METHOD TO UNDERSTAND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN YOUR MIND, YOUR INTELLECT AND YOUR SANSKARAS.**

In your meditation bring yourself to the point of self-awareness; once again the centre of the forehead. Now explore the faculties of your consciousness. Create a simple thought in your mind, focus on that thought, concentrate on it, then use your intellect to try and assess the rightness or wrongness of that thought. If you decide it is not a good thought, drop it and create a good thought. In this way you exercise control of your mind and your intellect. This will make them strong. And if thoughts or images come from your memories or from sources outside your own mind, don't give them any energy. Let them go, and bring your attention back on your creation. Once you have mastered this in your meditation try the same process as you carry out your responsibilities and actions throughout the day. ®

*Part One of the Foundation Course in Meditation appeared in issue number two of 'Retreat'. It covers the most important aspect of meditation, that of the difference between soul-consciousness and body-consciousness. If you would like a copy of that article please send a stamped addressed envelope to the nearest address shown on the inside back cover.*

# THE MEANING OF VALUE

*Edgar Mitchell reflects on his experience in outer space and his consequent exploration of consciousness*



*Edgar Mitchell explores in depth some insights shared during his presentation to the Fourth International Symposium on Science and Consciousness in Mexico.*

I am reminded of a statement by the late Buckminster Fuller. He was asked: "Where does one begin to understand the human condition?" His reply was: "With the universe." Others might respond to the same question: "With oneself." The recognition that both answers are identical is what characterised the insight I gained from the Apollo 14 experience of looking at

the universe from deep space. In that experience my personal Self expanded to encompass the universe. It was, and is, an ecstatic experience to perceive unity with all that exists. Mystical literature names such an experience as savikalpa samadhi; wherein Self and the universe are perceived as the One.

The same mystical literature also

describes the state of nirvikalpa samadhi; wherein all objects and dualisms in consciousness vanish and the Self alone is experienced as the One; the state of pure Mind where the Self experiences only Itself. There are no objects in consciousness, no reflections upon Self, just the awareness of Self as the Eternal One, outside space/time, and thus eternal. The experience is accompanied by a

feeling of ecstasy. I shall take this state of fundamental awareness and label it Basic Consciousness, or the “ground state of being”. I propose that this be considered as describing the fundamental and eternal state of the primordial void - with one caveat. The caveat is that we humans experience this state through a physical body capable of sensate experiences; a body which clearly could not and did not exist in the primordial void.

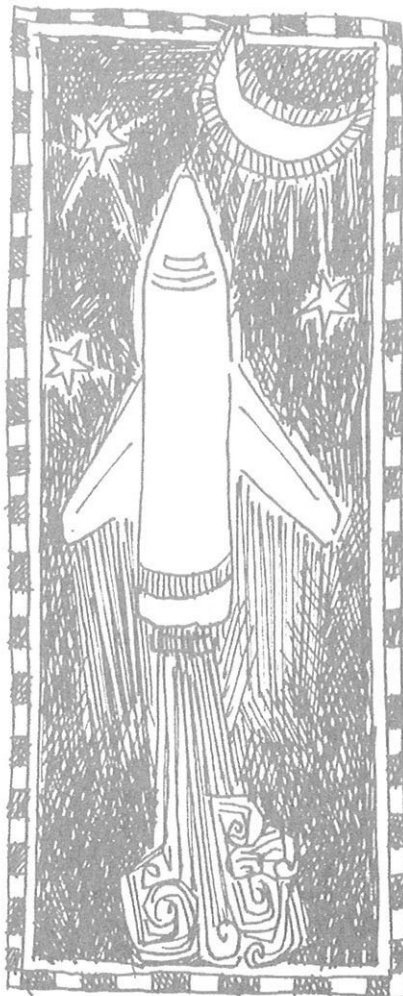
“Awareness” of “Self” only is the fundamental attribute of that state of being: Mind. I suggest that the ecstasy that accompanies the experience is a sensation of the evolved, highly complex physical body that is involved with the experience. Ecstasy is not necessarily an experience which we can associate with the Basic Consciousness itself. The state experienced as nirvikalpa samadhi is indeed the state of consciousness that transcends space, time and all objects physical and ephemeral. Perhaps we can distinguish, in principle, between the samadhi state as humans experience it, and the irreducible state that I propose exists in nature independent of evolved bodies and brains. Let us postulate this was the condition in the primordial void before the initial creative act. If one can imagine that state without form, without thought, without sensation, only ‘Self’ then that is what I label as Basic Consciousness.

Neither the state of nirvikalpa samadhi nor Basic Consciousness, by definition, are states in which thoughts or images arise in the field of Mind. Thoughts can arise, but if thoughts arise, the Self has performed a creative act and thereby departed the level of Mind and arrived at the “existential state”. Thoughts are not perceived as Self, but are experienced as objects in consciousness different from Self. This creative act results in the first dualism, the self/object dualism, that defines the existential

***“It was, and is, an  
ecstatic experience to  
perceive unity with  
all that exists.”***

state and also the existence of the “real” universe that one experiences.

For Self to retain awareness of the nirvikalpa samadhi state, memory must exist. The creation of a thought, and thus arrival at the existential level, also creates space/time and, of necessity, memory. Because the Self is no longer aware of Self only, but of self and objects, objects/space/time/memory are of necessity also created and become “existent” simultaneously.



At this existential level the conscious Self exhibits another attribute: the ability to assign “meaning” to objects in consciousness. Assume that only one object, a thought, resides in consciousness along with the memory of Self only. The “meaning” assigned to that object would of necessity be “truth”, “valid” or “absolute” because there is nothing to contradict the experience. If there were more than one object in consciousness, then each object and the relationship between the objects would require a label or a “meaning”. Therefore we can say that “meaning” is the name or label that Self assigns to the objects It perceives in consciousness. We define “meaning” then precisely as the labels Self assigns to the relationships of objects in consciousness. The “meanings” that Self assigns to the memory of the nirvikalpa samadhi experience include “Self”, “Truth”, “Eternal”.

When the meaning of an object is “valid” or “truth”, one can also say that Self “knows” the object in consciousness. Thus “knowing” requires both experiencing and assigning the meaning “valid” to an object or a memory residing in consciousness, while at the existential level of consciousness.

What the foregoing model tells us is that “thoughts”, “things”, “meaning”, “memory”, “knowing”, plus space and time, are labels for the attributes of objects of consciousness at the existential level. They do not exist on the level of Mind where all is the Eternal Self, the Eternal One.

The Self that each human experiences in daily life is a shadow, an echo, a dualistic fragmentation of that fundamental state of Mind; nirvikalpa samadhi. At any given moment in space/time, at any “now”, of existence, the Self has only the sensory inputs of the moment (information) and the memories of prior experiences (also

information) as the contents of consciousness. And because of this dualism much of the information, the memories of prior human experience, are subconscious; below the level of conscious awareness.

I have defined "knowing" as assigning the label "valid" or "truth" to an experience of the Self. How does "knowing" differ from "believing" in this model? I define "believing" as giving validation to the experience of someone other than the personal Self. Clearly this is activity at or below the existential level. "Belief" might also be the label given to an experience of Self that seems to contradict another experience. This is a case of cognitive dissonance. It does not imply that the experience is not valid, but rather that the label, or meaning, given to one of the experiences may be invalid. The experience which seems the more valid can thus also have the label "belief" to indicate a measure of uncertainty.

What then are "values"? From the model of consciousness that I have sketched, "values" denote the existence of priorities, or an ordering, among the "meanings" that Self holds in consciousness. "Values" are another label that consciousness assigns to experiences, and to memories of experiences, to denote the ones more important, or "valuable".

Let us apply the foregoing to "love" which has been suggested by many as a value of primary importance. In the English language "love" has so many nuances that it tends to be a catch-all for many things. But, within our model we can find what is prior to "love". Accompanying the samadhi states is the experience of ecstasy. The shades and nuances

of ecstasy are bliss, joy, happiness, etc. I suggest that the ecstasy of the samadhi state produces the prototypal and archetypal sensation for all feelings associated with "love". The unity of Self with All-That-Is, and the accompanying ecstatic sensation, sets the pattern for the experience of "love" as it pertains to individual objects in consciousness. "Love" as a "value" is the priority attached to reclaiming and re-experiencing the unity that Self and the objects in consciousness perceived as separate from Self. Thus any experience of "love" is the experience of union or unity with objects in consciousness perceived as separate.

The sensation of joy, bliss, happiness or ecstasy associated with such union, or re-union, varies with the experience of Self and the "meaning" attached to each of the objects in consciousness. But in each case the meaning given to the experience is "love". This approach to understanding "love" seems valid whether the object of love is a thought, a thing, an animal, another human, nature, a conjugal experience. The antecedent sensation derives from a memory of a samadhi experience which each individual initially experiences while yet in the womb unborn. "Love", then, is an experience, or a desired experience, that recreates some aspect of the memory of ecstasy from the samadhi state. Love's essence is joining or reunion. Love's process is releasing dualism and separateness.

Let's try the value "knowing" as an exercise of this model. I have defined "knowing" as giving the label "valid" to an experience. When interpreted as a value, "knowing" is an impulse, labelled "desire" or "intention", to increase

and to validate the experiences or consciousness. The desire to "know" may be construed as the existential, or ego-level equivalent, of reunion of the Self with created objects. The desire is to reassemble or to reunite with all objects in consciousness which are perceived as separate and "unknown" to Self, and to thereby experience the bliss or ecstasy of the union. Technically, to pursue "knowing" in this way is the pursuit of the savikalpa samadhi state. The savikalpa is one wherein the Self and the All are perceived as connected.

Finally the value "Justice" I find most interestingly positioned by an allegory from the Tao Te Ching.

Remember the "Tao" is synonymous with "the way" or the "Ultimate Self".

***"When the Tao is lost***

***there is goodness,***

***When goodness is lost***

***there is kindness,***

***When kindness is lost***

***there is justice,***

***When justice is lost***

***there is ritual.***

***Ritual is the husk of***

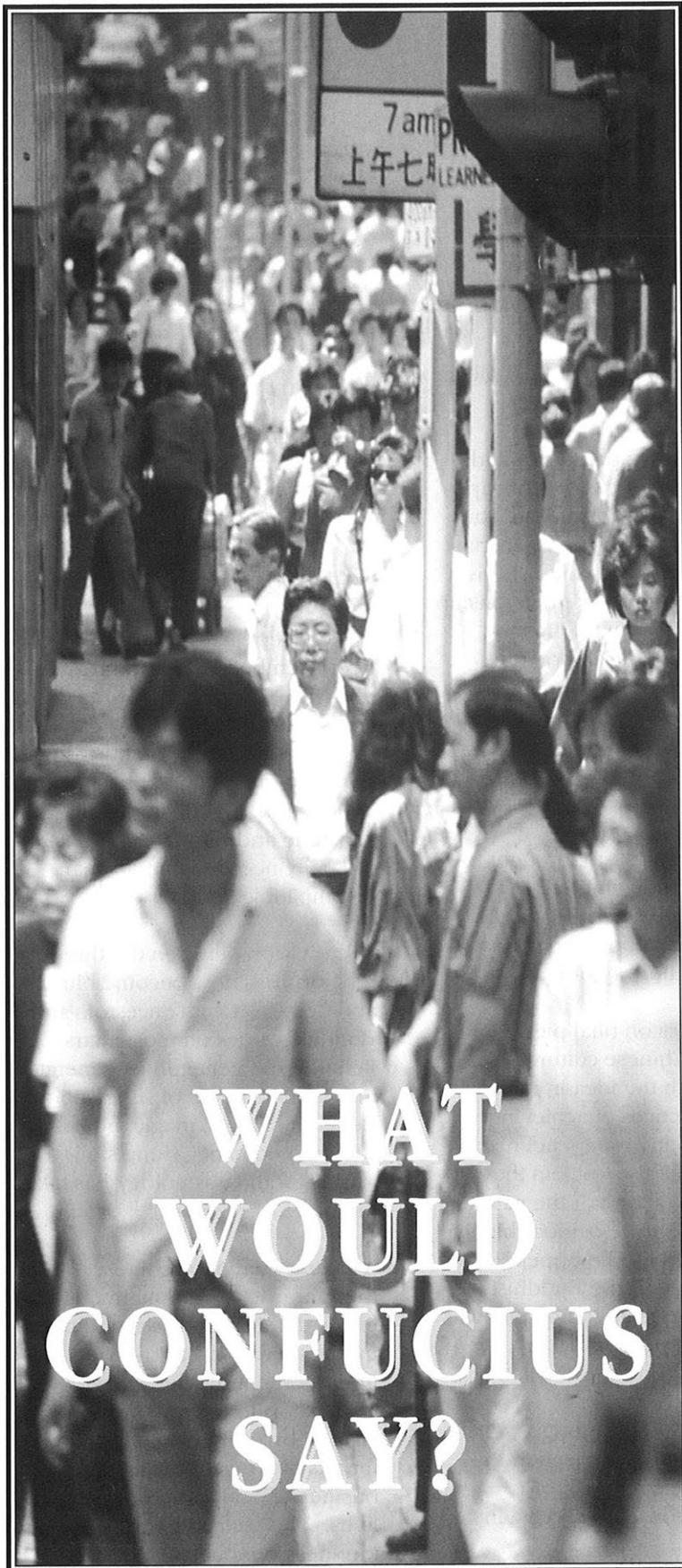
***faith and hope,***

***And the beginning***

***of chaos."***

*This article is an extract from a paper presented to the fourth International Symposium on Science and Consciousness held in Mexico earlier this year.*

*Edgar Mitchell is a former Astronaut and sixth man on the moon. He is founder of the Institute of Noetic Sciences, writer/lecturer on the nature of consciousness.* ®



Maureen Chen, a teacher of meditation in Hong Kong for twelve years, describes the unique cultural and religious mix in the fusion of East and West

*A recent survey found that Hong Kong's stress level was second only to any place at war. You might therefore think that people would feel a need to meditate and to learn how to relax. But even in one of the world's noisiest, fastest and busiest cities people will generally only make time when there is an impending personal crisis.*

**T**hey soon discover, however, that meditation cannot provide a quick fix. It can only be developed by one's own efforts and, as in many other fast moving cities, Hong Kong's residents don't know how to stop. One curious expression of this dilemma can be found in some young people in Hong Kong who on adopting Buddhist practices pay someone to do their praying for them.

One of the first questions meditation students ask is: "Do I have to believe in God?" In general, Chinese do not have a background of understanding or a belief in God. It is not that they are not open to the idea of a supreme being, but often they have never really thought about it and never really had to. God is not a word in their language. Chinese ideology is often referred to as the three strands: Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism, none of which refer to a supreme personality.

Confucius who lived between 551 BC to 479 BC has had the greatest impact on Chinese character. Confucianism was the state ideology for 2,000 years until it was formally abolished at the beginning of this century. Confucius focused on the way of man (rondo) and emphasised loving kindness (ren), righteousness (yi), wisdom (zhi), propriety (li) and trustworthiness (xin). Great importance was attached to the five cardinal relationships (wulun); namely,



太上老君



*"If one learns from others, but does not think, one will be bewildered. If, on the other hand, one thinks, but does not learn from others, one will be in peril"*

CONFUCIUS

sovereign and subject, husband and wife, father and son, elder brother and younger brother and friend and friend. There are clear instructions as to how each should relate to the other. The object of Confucianism was to create an

orderly society through filial piety and loyalty.

This does not stop at death and carries on into ancestor worship. The founder of Taoism, Lao Tsu, was a contemporary of Confucius yet quite contrary to him. Taoism emphasises humanity's relationship with nature, not man. In great contrast to Confucian doctrine, Taoism teaches that man need not concern himself with the artificial constructs of society or its government. It emphasises intuition, spontaneity and vitality.

Mahayana Buddhism, brought to China from India in the first century AD, teaches the middle path relating to both the way of nature and the way of man.

The emphasis on filial piety, stressed in Chinese culture, conflicts with the idea in many spiritual practices of achieving detachment and independence. Chinese Buddhists esteem the authority of "dharma", the natural law of righteousness, more highly than filial piety. The upper classes at first reacted to the Buddhist principle of equality. Equality was revolutionary to Confucian doctrine and Buddhism was criticised for destroying relationships. As a foreign influence Buddhism needed to adopt Confucian and Taoist doctrines in order to survive in China.

The main principle of traditional Chinese thinking is the concept of yin yang; the merging of elements that are extremely opposed into a unified harmony. Although often seen to be the icon for Taoism,

*"Shall I tell you what it is to know: to say you know when you know and to say you do not know when you do not. That is knowledge."*

CONFUCIUS

this concept actually has its roots deeply embedded in Confucian doctrine. The two opposing concepts are seen as interdependent - man and woman, darkness and light, expansion and contraction, night and day, sunshine and rain. They are mutually necessary rather than incompatible.

The division between the three religions has now become blurred and deities sit with ancestors and Buddha statues on most altars. Religion has generally degenerated into various forms of superstition. Belief in charms, magic, horoscopes, geomancy (fung shui), astrology and cosmology has taken the place of religion.

A salient quality of Chinese thought is its ethical nature. These ethics differ from western thinking in that there is no acknowledgement of the individual. The Chinese collective culture is shaped by Confucian ethics and morals and this influences business, society and personal lives. The concept of 'ren' (loving kindness) emphasises that man does not exist in isolation but is indistinguishable from his clan, his ruler and his family. Everyone looks after group interests and opinions are usually of the group belief. Inequality of clan is a fundamental principle of social

relations and forms the hierarchical society. Status differences are important too and accepted by Chinese as they are in most other Asian cultures. The positive side of this lack of individuality is that people have similar values and an understanding of what is expected.

Chinese do not have the sense of guilt that Christians have been indoctrinated with. They adopt the principles of a spiritual path at their own level and in their own way, whereas generally for a Westerner it is all or nothing, and if they do not do everything perfectly they feel a sense of guilt and are unable to continue.

For the Chinese, in place of guilt is shame. There is not so much concern for the view of oneself but great concern for the view of others and "losing face". To a Chinese this can be as painful as physical abuse and in its extreme can even lead to suicide or murder. To avoid anyone's loss of face there is a tremendous amount of effort to maintain harmony, and issues of conflict are seldom discussed or, if necessary, are resolved through an intermediary.

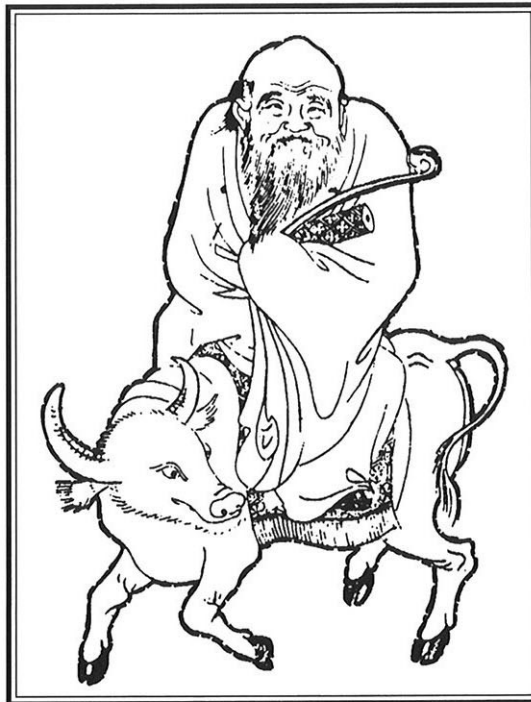
There is a great fear of ghosts amongst the Chinese. There are many movies about people leaving their bodies, asking someone to look after their body until they come back and the adventures that follow.

There is one such story about one of the Eight Immortals of Taoism who left his body and asked someone to guard it. The guard did not take proper care of his body and someone, thinking he was dead, burnt his body. The spirit had to rush back into another body before a certain time - a little like Cinderella getting back before the clock strikes midnight. When he returned, the only body he could find in time was that of an old cripple and therefore he is always depicted as

a cripple. In meditation practitioners are asked to detach from the consciousness of their body and this stimulates a lot of fear. But without detaching from the body and physical sensation, one cannot experience real peace and so this becomes an obstacle in meditation for many Chinese.

We often take it for granted that no matter what others see and do and feel that ours is the correct way, or perhaps the only way. Yet it opens up the mind to see another culture do things differently, and in no way can their way be called wrong. For example what English readers would call the front of a book a Chinese would call the back.

There is great subtlety in their communication. There is a



sensitivity and gentleness between friends and families. This may not be evident on Nathan Road ... en masse it's a different story entirely! Non-Chinese are referred to as foreign devils and westernised Chinese may also be called ang mo khoan, which means to be foreign or barbarian in manner. However one can never cease to be Chinese... nor become Chinese

*"Guide them by edicts, keep them in line with punishments, and common people will stay out of trouble, but will have no sense of shame. Guide them by virtue, keep them in line with rights and they will, besides having a sense of shame, reform themselves."*

CONFUCIUS

whether you try through language proficiency, adopting a Chinese religion or through marriage. On one side the Chinese look up to Westerners, but on the other side, because they respect their own rich and ancient culture, they also feel themselves superior. This creates an inner conflict and mixed messages in communication. However, for the most part the communication is respectful and courteous as long as the Westerner does not appear arrogant.

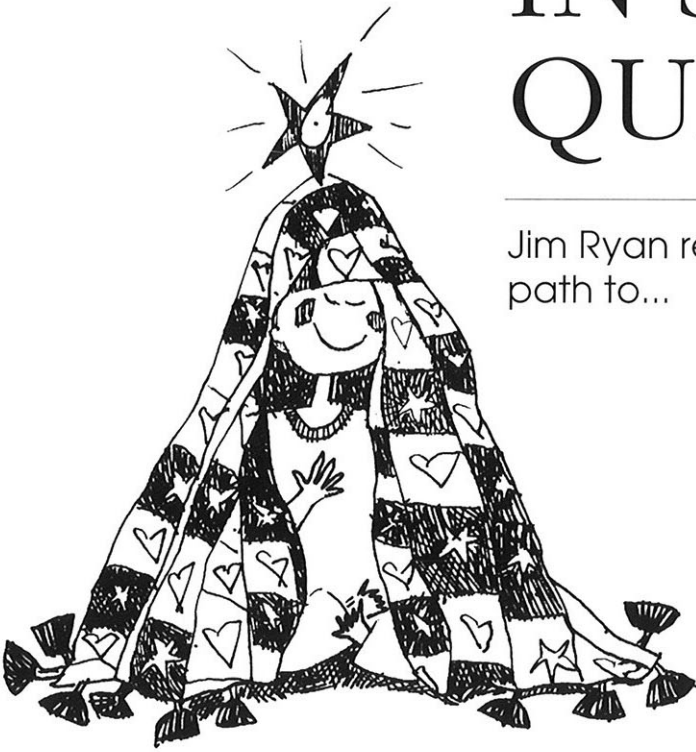
With the impending changeover in just three years there is increased stress in Hong Kong. Everyone has their own ideas on what they think might happen - from totally optimistic to its absolute extreme - but in reality no one really knows. There have been many different responses: get rich quick while you can, get out as soon as possible, fight for democracy, resignation to the inevitable or a few who are taking a philosophical approach. Hopefully the Confucian concept of interdependence will help steer Hong Kong through these delicate years.

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*Maureen Chen is Director of the Brahma Kumaris centres in Hong Kong.*

# IN SEARCH OF QUILTISM

Jim Ryan retraces his footsteps on the spiritual path to...



*My spiritual search started one evening at my local hostelry (bar); an apt place you might think for things of the spirit. With a dart and drink in either hand I realised there must certainly be more to life than just quaffing and throwing darts into a piece of wood. I suppose you could say the spirit moved me. Anyhow, vowing to abandon for all time these nasty liquids of oblivion, I was now determined to search out and find the nectar of eternal consolation.*

**M**y first venture into self-discovery and into the meaning of life was at my local spiritualist church. The audience was mainly composed of large ladies clutching black shiny handbags. I squeezed in amongst them awaiting revelation. The medium, well-named I thought, whose entertainment and wisdom rating was certainly medium, brought forth messages with the voluminous ladies nodding and accepting their Freds and Doris's from the other side. Eventually, I was given an Arthur and a Frank who seemed to think that I needed to look after myself, and for me to give their love to Mabel (Mabel???). Well I thanked Arthur and Frank, whoever they were; and just as I was leaving, and wondering whether I was on the brink of a nervous breakdown, an elderly matron speared me in the ribs and invited me to her private meeting the following week. The next few days passed rapidly in eager anticipation of the possible wisdom and experiences to come.

On the fated day I found myself again sitting in a circle of mature ladies. After a few incantations

everything went quiet. I opened my eyes to discover they had all drifted off into some kind of trance. I closed my eyes thinking I'd better do the same, but, alas to no avail. Suddenly, one of the group spluttered into a funny high-pitched whine, informing me basically that I was a mess and that I needed to do something about it. (Well, I thought, that's rich. That's as much help as saying you're wet after being out in the rain.) Shortly after, another squeaky voice, sounding very much like one of my long-gone teachers, chimed in, advising me to learn meditation and develop my potential. Since that meeting it's my firm belief that it's only the shades of hard-done-by teachers that haunt the nether regions, coming back to wreak revenge on former miscreant pupils. Anyhow, despite all the advice and feeling rather peeked and bullied, I resisted the temptation to ask these know-it-alls, if they knew so much, what about a bit of practical benevolence and give me a few winners for the races.

Still, the die was cast from that time onwards. To develop my potential I was bound!



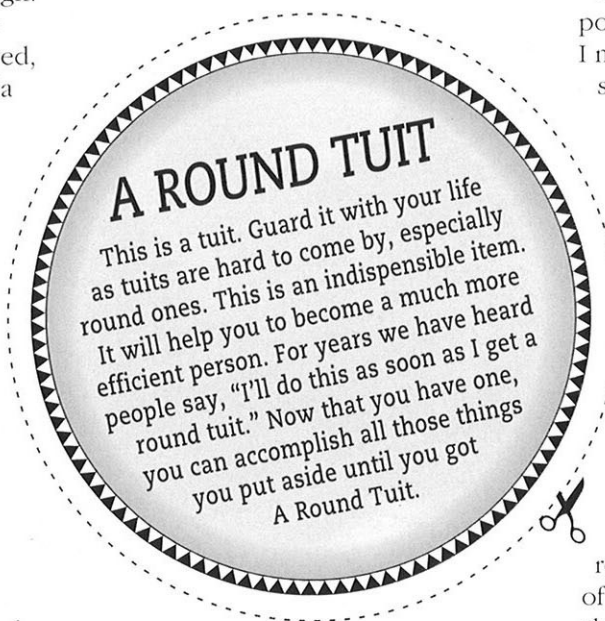
A small smudgy poster at my local library informed me of the great benefits of "Quiltism ... a not to be missed experience ... A Chance to Develop the Powers Within." And so totally sold, and not too heavily influenced by a first free lesson, I enrolled. Quiltism, an ancient Aztec practice, I was informed, consisted of being rolled and covered completely in a long calico cloth or quilt, the aim of which was to return the meditator to an original stage of consciousness and thus achieving an inner harmony and peacefulness unsurpassed. That's for me, I thought! It all started well enough. I was covered in a quilt and felt quite comfy. As soft music played, my teacher, Thanos, alias Brenda Goodbody, told me to continually repeat the ancient words of Urduck ... Urduck ... until I was being shaken and told to wake up, which I did with a splitting headache. Well, I wasn't very impressed, especially after being told the course of lessons would cost quite a bit, plus £100 for a quilt! What's more, I thought, what's wrong with my own jolly bed and quilt. No, I was off!

Undeterred, appetite whetted and curiosity aroused, I was keener than ever to renew my search for enlightenment, to discover the path to true quiltism. I began reading avidly, gobbling up all that my local library had on self-development, self-this and self-that, becoming, unfolding, unfurling, transcending and lots more un's and ism's. But to tell the truth, I couldn't understand a word of it. It looked good, sounded good, great titles with authors who seemed incredibly enlightened, masters of this and that, yet I was left bemused and what you might call up a gum tree without a clue!

So I decided what I needed was a teacher. Yes, a spiritual master to guide me through the valleys and over the hills to the plains of

fulfilment. Scanning the local ads I soon came upon Swami Swoshinanda, Sri Sri World Master of Meditational Practices and Allied Subjects. That's for me, I thought! I was slightly disappointed to discover that His Holiness was really Jake Smithers from Croydon, who had qualified to do all his stuff after a course in India, but soon cheered up on discovering that my first lessons were free, as I claimed I was a student (of life of course!).

It began fairly predictably: respect yourself...



*During first level initiation to Quiltism, students receive the all important Round Tuit!*

the need to discover our hidden qualities... illusion is our great enemy... virtue our strength. I could buy all this. However, when we came to the God bit, things started to come apart. Certainly, I could accept to some degree that Sri Sri was some sort of god, well he did know more than I did. Jokingly, I asked if he knew the winning horse of the two o'clock race at Ascot. He told me he had no idea. Now that seemed mighty strange to me, and it occurred to me in a flash (progress at last!), if all are God, that meant me, then I should know the winners! If I was the Almighty, why did I wake up on Sunday mornings with pains

in my head, neck and back and want to kick the cat around the room? Something was seriously wrong. So I decided to say farewell to God for a while and seek illumination elsewhere. Tree-hugging, circle-dancing and a whole gamut of focusing, visualising, chanting and breathing followed. I grew a pony tail, wore what I thought were the obligatory rainbow coloured sweaters; even went to Glastonbury and sat on the Tor; but God, or whoever I was, was still lost and quite confused.

"What about Yoga?" said the poster. Now yoga, there's a thing, I mused. Lots of people do it and seem to get a great deal of benefit. So I got my kit, and set out for a session of twisting and bending and what I hoped would be the way to some sort of enlightenment. I was met at the door by a diminutive lady called Sally. On inquiring where I should change for the exercise, she politely informed me that the only exercise they did here was for the mind. Frankly I wasn't really looking forward to an hour of self-inflicted torture, so happily I slumped into an inviting armchair.

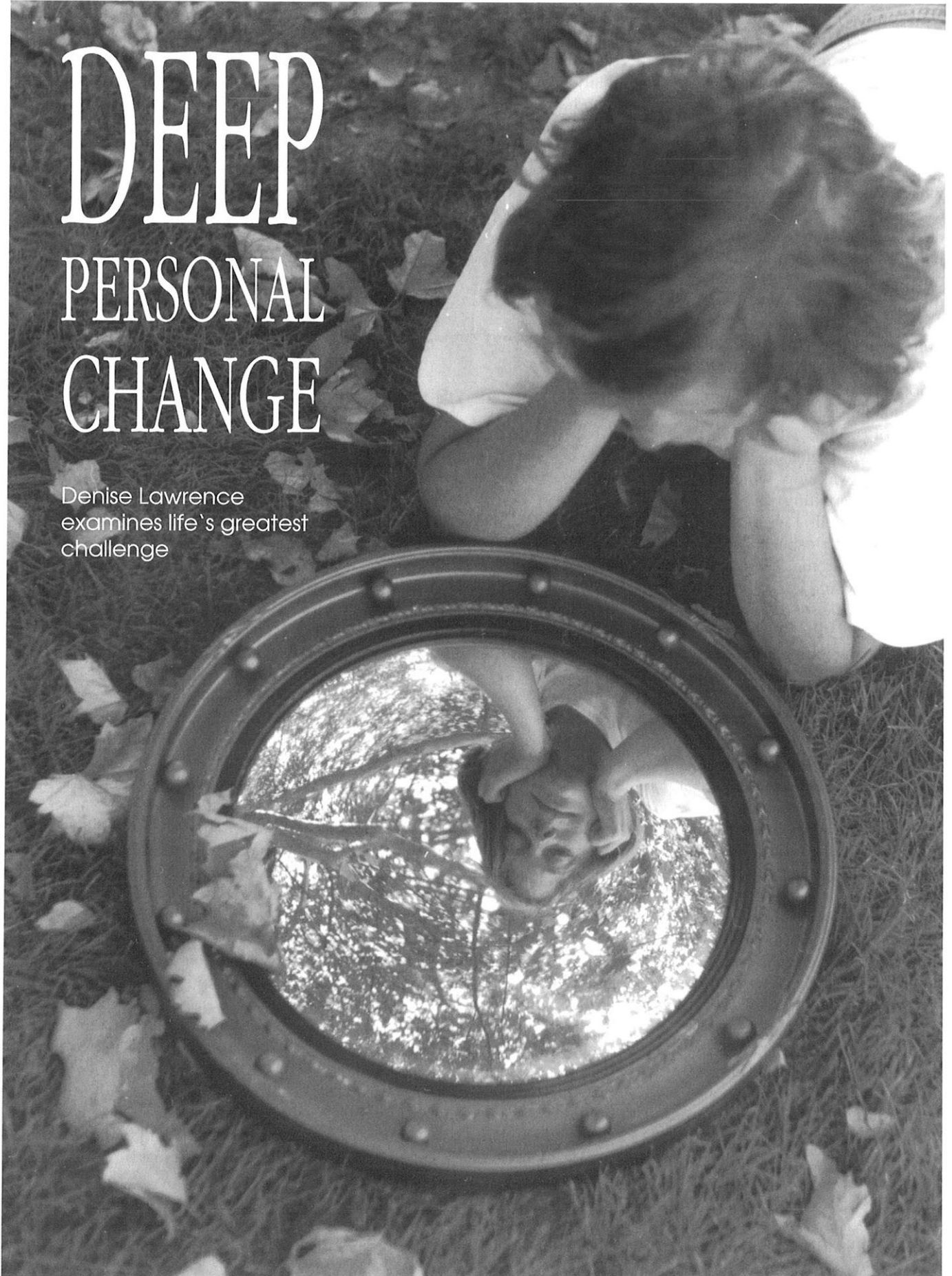
Things made sense, and the course was free not just for the first lesson! The subtle meditations certainly did exercise my mind and imagination and, most surely, I felt an expanding awareness developing, which was 100% improvement on my dead slow, stop-and-going-backwards-fast state through books and tapes. I felt I was coming nearer to that pure state of quiltism without the quilt. So I'm glad to tell you I'm sticking it out; giving it a good throw of the dice. So, if you see an angel with boots on flying past your window, why not give a wave, it might just be yours truly.

*Jim Ryan is a former Headmaster based in Bristol, England*

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# DEEP PERSONAL CHANGE

Denise Lawrence  
examines life's greatest  
challenge



***Change is very stressful and most people, consciously or unconsciously, avoid it as far as they can. Usually we get forced into it by traumatic circumstances such as life-threatening illness, accident, arrest and imprisonment, natural calamity or war. We can change temporarily during times of crisis which can bring out the best, but sometimes the worst in us.***

**F**or a person, of their own free will, to undertake the internal journey towards deep personal change, it requires courage and commitment. We really don't know what we are getting into, and if we did at the onset, we probably would not do it because the journey can be quite rough at times.

Deep personal change means we have to face many things about ourselves. Our "Stuff" comes bubbling to the surface and our egos rally to strengthen our denial and stop the process. Breaking the denial is a big job. I don't know if there is anyone who can break their own denial. Maybe some very great souls can do this, but for most of us, certain people around us and certain circumstances combine to attack our denial and ego defence systems. Our total cooperation and willingness is essential also.

Our false pride will not allow us to see our own faults. This blindness is such a powerful structure, invisible and fog-like in nature, that it has us in its power. We behave inappropriately without realising it. If anyone is courageous enough to draw it to our attention we retaliate with anger and vengeance, attacking them and vigorously denying that we did anything wrong. Only a very powerful, skillful and loving friend would be willing to face the barrage of negativity we hurl towards them in response to their concern.

The journey of deep personal change requires us to take an

honest look at ourselves, which is difficult if we are not that honest with ourselves in the first place. I believe we need people around us who have done the work themselves, as well as access to information about the processes of deeply changing ourselves. Fortunately in this day and age the information is available and there is a growing number of courageous warrior-pioneers who have taken out their machetes and cut a path through the jungle of obstacles to this goal.

The inner work of deep personal change is spiritual. Deep personal change means a change of heart, a change of attitude, and change of consciousness; a change within

**“Deep personal change means a change of heart, a change of attitude and change of consciousness; a change within one’s very soul”**

one's very soul. These are levels where we do not often or easily go, so we can use as much information as we can get about the inner workings of the soul. A regular spiritual practice provides an anchor while we allow every thing that has

been our support system and source of all the influences which have shaped our character to be scrutinised and re-evaluated.

What has to change? Take for example the habit of lying. How can a person know very well that it is wrong, still do it and yet not know they are doing it? How does lying work? We tell a lie and then conveniently forget about it. When we are confronted with it, we vigorously deny we ever said it. We are convinced and do our best to convince everyone else. We become good lawyers. Even in the face of all varieties of evidence we will deny it. More insidiously,

something terrible happens to us at an early age and we forget it. Not out of dishonesty, but in order to survive. Sometimes a whole series of terrible things happen, the environment is unhealthy for our emotional and psychological development and we create various ways to cope with the stress and confusion. These then become our habits and dictate our ways of behaviour for the rest of our lives. When later on the situation is no longer the same, even so, the habits remain and we react in similar situations in the old way.

How we grow up, our relationships with our parents, immediate family, culture and traditions of society, our education and surroundings are the most pervasive and powerful influences on us. Yet, we can detach from them as an exercise, superficially using our creative imaginations to invent a more utopian dream, but this in fact barely scratches the surface. It is nice while it lasts, but it does not do the job of creating deep personal change.

Deep personal change can begin to occur when we separate ourselves from those influences. First we must see exactly what those influences have been. A good influence leaves a good impression so change is not required. Only the bad influences have to be discovered, identified, seen clearly and faced. How do we recognise a bad influence? One way would be to locate incidents which happened during early childhood, particularly with those who were closest; who acted with violence, hatred, greed, unkindness, insult, humiliation, deception, cheating, lying and so on. A child has a natural sense of justice. A child needs to be loved and validated. A child loves his or her parents and when that love is

not reciprocated, many negative traits develop. That child then feels it deserves to be mistreated and learns to mistreat others, considering it normal and appropriate. Low self-esteem and high levels of self-doubt become that child's foundation in life, upon which layers of anger, violation of others, egoism, etc. are laid.

A person might also ask why or how did I get born into such a family where this kind of treatment was experienced? We can say that is "karma". In a previous life a person would have had those

**“...the love and friendship of positive people around us melts the ice around our broken damaged heart and the true self can emerge like a beautiful rose after the winter storms and snow.”**

experiences which created those habits which motivated those actions which resulted in that situation. “What goes around comes around”, goes the saying. The work of deep personal change therefore takes into consideration elements that are outside the range of conscious memory. However, we can only act upon aspects of ourselves that we can perceive. Intellectually, we can understand there are deeper causes, but the work of deep personal change is furthered by seeing clearly what the bad influences were and how we personally took them as our own heritage perpetuating them in our lives and actions.

How do we undo those bad influences? Perhaps even before undoing the bad influences it is also good to quantify the good influences and add to those the

good qualities a person has innately. Add to these the ancient original qualities of the soul, the goodness, light, peace, love and happiness that we are all endowed with eternally, and there is a good solid foundation. The work involves remembering who one really is and separating off or resolving those parts of the self or values that were absorbed through bad influence.

Most of us learned our values based on our race, colour, gender, physical age, looks, bank balance, success rating in the “real world”.

We find, much to our consternation, that we are severely affronted if someone suggests we are showing signs of ageing. Which woman likes to be told she has wrinkles and is losing her looks? Hidden vestiges of vanity flare up and we react with anger. How do you feel when you, who used to consider yourself as the affluent, white majority suddenly find you are no longer top dog? You get afraid. How is it when you lose your position, prestige, and don't have money to live as you used to? It hurts. Your pride kicks in and you have to quickly create some fine speeches to prevent people from seeing you as you really are. The lying starts. How do you feel when you have lived by a certain set of values and created your position in life? You think you are just fine, you are in charge, you are the authority, and suddenly everything about you is called into question. A new generation of people is around you with new ways of thinking. They confront you on your old ways and challenge the validity of the old system you so carefully built your identity around and which is represented in all aspects of your personal, professional and social being. How secure do you feel when the ground beneath your

feet is moving? You feel like a tiny boat on the high seas in a big storm and you can do nothing about it. It is a rude awakening to the fact that our sense of security was based on insecure foundations.

Deep personal change happens when we start being honest about these things. First I have to be honest that I want everyone to love me and think well of me. I have to be honest that I have doubts about myself, and look deeply at the habits and actions that have

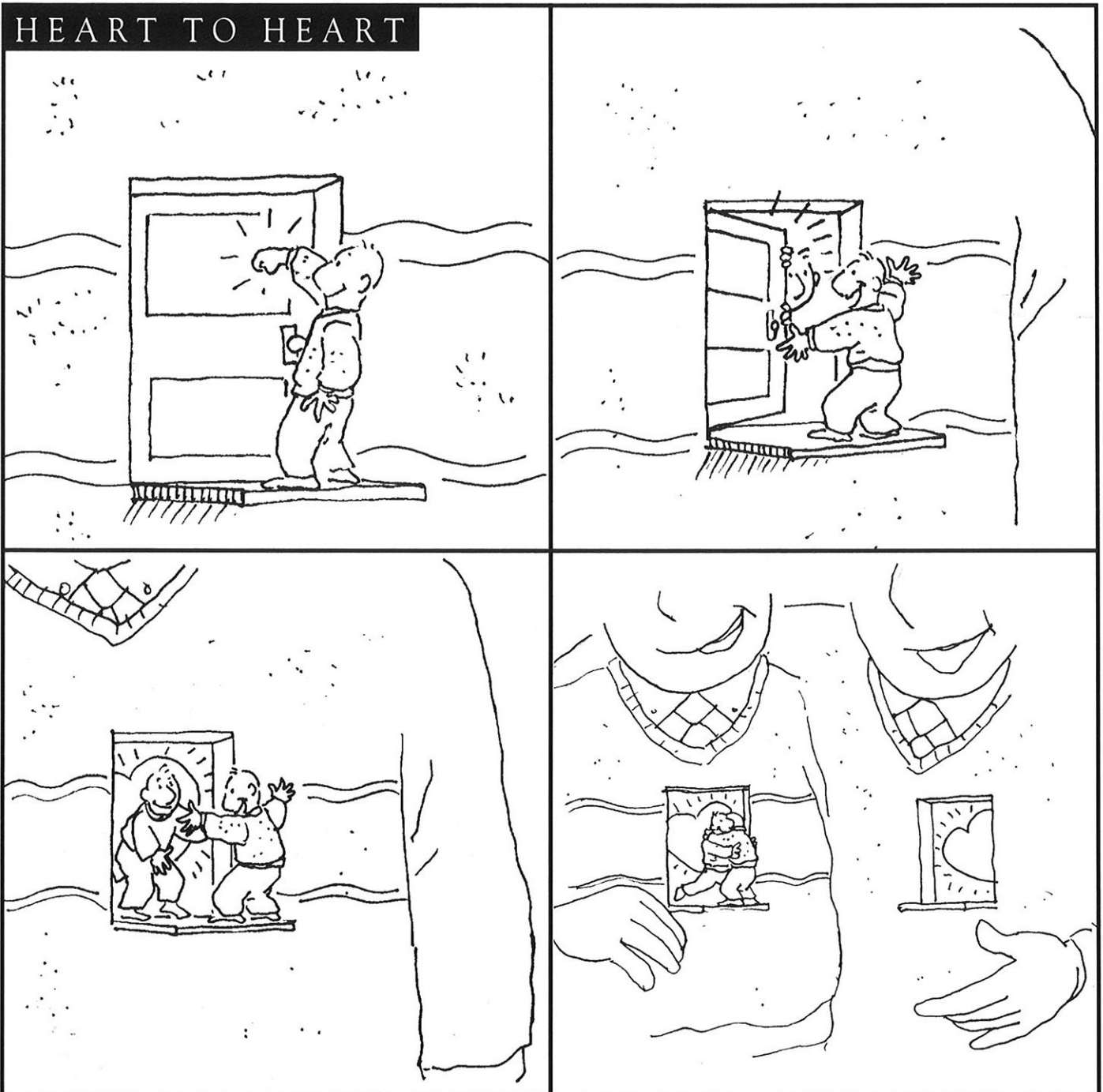
come out of my life experience. I recognise that both have been bad and have robbed me of my self-worth. To protect myself I have created a complex ego defence structure. Deep personal change involves seeing this clearly within myself and systematically dismantling it. Each negative character trait that is discovered has to be renounced and replaced by a characteristic that is true to one's innate and beautiful self. I must recognise that the experiences and negative habits have damaged me and I need time

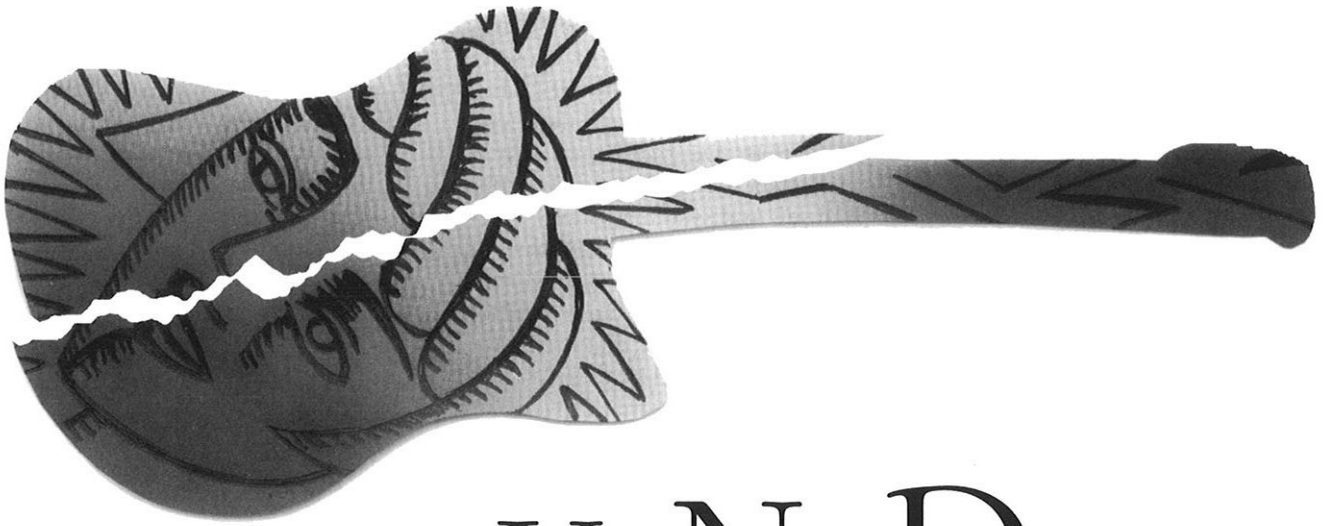
and space to repair, to heal. Inner silence, meditation, opening oneself up to the love of the higher energy of the Supreme Being, accepting the love and friendship of positive people around us melts the ice around our broken, damaged heart and the true self can emerge like a beautiful rose after the winter storms and snow.

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*Denise Lawrence is Director of the Brahma Kumaris Centre in Los Angeles*

HEART TO HEART





# THE SOUND OF MUSIC

Music has amazing powers. It can heal, excite, relax or exhaust. Dutch composer Tijn Touber takes a look at the world of modern music

*Music has a very special attraction and is used for many different purposes: relaxation, stimulation, inspiration. It can calm you down or pick you up, make you happy or make you sad. Music can communicate feelings that no other medium can.*

**I** still remember my father playing Mozart for me when I was a child. Here was an otherwise reserved man swaying to the music as he closed his eyes and directing the orchestra with his hands. When the music stopped he would look at me with tears in his eyes: "Wasn't that great?"

I guess it didn't come as a surprise to him that only a few years later I was making a living writing songs and performing in one of the most popular rock bands in Holland. Rock 'n Roll had become my life. Leather jacket, pointed shoes, ripped pants, drugs, alcohol, you name it. For me, as for many young people, music was much more than just enjoying myself. It was a way of life.

#### ***Behind the image***

Six years ago, as if I suddenly awoke from a dream, - or was it a nightmare? - I vividly remember sitting in front of the TV watching a late night movie, when all of a

sudden I observed myself and the life I was leading as if I were looking through someone else's eyes. It was as though I were seeing myself for the first time. I switched off the TV and pondered: "What am I doing with my life? Do I really want this?" It wasn't long before I took up meditation. I wanted to look inward to find out who I really was behind that image of a Rock 'n Roll star. Then I started realising what an enormous effect music had on my life and on the lives of others. The first thing I discovered was that I couldn't meditate. My mind was totally absorbed in music; there was always a beat, melody or catch-line, it was never quiet. I began to read about music and came across an interview with conductor/pianist Leonard Bernstein. He would have conversations with people whilst a complete symphony of Brückner was playing inside his mind. If the conversation took fifteen minutes, the symphony progressed fifteen minutes.

### **Addiction**

Most modern music triggers emotions such as aggression and hyperactivity. Its pounding beat, tempo and melody (or lack of it) deliberately give us that feeling of 'WOW!'. That's why radios, walkmans and cassette recorders are omnipresent. They give us the same kind of fast (but false) energy that coffee does. And, like coffee, this kind of music always leaves us depleted and longing for more. This is why music in discotheques is getting louder and louder. People need more and more to satisfy their deadened senses. Of course, like any addiction, you only notice how serious it is when you stop. It was only when I experienced some fleeting moments of peace, and tried to stop being a Rock 'n Roll junkie, that I was aware of how much stress and anxiety modern music caused. It had damaged my mental and physical health.

### **Jumping up and down**

The new trend in modern music is called 'house music'. It's loud, exciting, completely computerised and non-stop. The keyword is IMPACT. Through digital recording systems ('sampling') it is possible to make up a composition of barking dogs, flushing toilets, slamming car doors... anything goes, as long as it has impact. I once witnessed the recording of a house record. The main concern of the producer was to make the beat as aggressive as possible. The bass drum had so many low frequencies in it that, even if I were completely deaf it would not have been a problem because I could feel it in my whole body. I could even see it... by looking down at my trouser-legs which fluttered like flags. The higher frequencies hurt my ears so much that I wanted to leave. So-called 'house parties' are very popular. They attract thousands of people a night and many spend their week just longing for the week-end. A good disc-jockey will play one

house record after the other at 120 decibels (painful if you're not used to it) without ever allowing a second of silence. He will usually start with a tempo of about 120 beats per minute (twice the speed of the human heart) and gradually increase the speed. He might end at a tempo of 180, a tempo at which it is impossible to dance. It's so fast that one can only jump up and down. And that's exactly what youngsters do. Most boys only wear a pair of jogging trousers, most girls wear lingerie. Without the help of some stimulating drug, it is almost impossible to withstand the enormous attack on the senses and to keep up the deadly pace.

### **A new reality**

Does this sound like madness? Then why do so many young people voluntarily put their physical and mental health at risk? House parties are an easy way to forget about yourself and the world for a while. The constant beat, the lighting effects and smoke machines combine with drugs and alcohol to create a whole new reality; a reality that is probably much nicer than the reality of every day.

Another reason for voluntarily opening oneself up to this kind of torment could be that many young people, because of a lack of positive alternatives and goals, don't know what to do with their energy. I do support that getting rid of your energy in a discotheque, fighting against 120 decibels, smoke machines and laserbeams is preferable to fighting in the street.

### **Permanent stress**

Perhaps, unwittingly, it is a spiritual experience people are after. In every ancient religious tradition, experiencing the spiritual is about going beyond the body and experiencing the soul. Exhausting the body to such an extent that a natural high is created

is nothing new. Ritual dances were created to induce trance. Long distance runners have the same experience. Doctors can tell you that our bodies, when exposed to extreme or stressful situations, produce adrenaline.

This triggers the production of endorphins, a morphine-like substance that produces a high. Many members of a not so ancient tribe, 'businessmen', are addicted to this adrenaline-endorphin way of living. So, in order to feel the adrenaline flowing through our veins, we look for extreme situations. A discotheque is an extreme situation. People in discotheques are under constant pressure, in a permanent state of stress. In an odd way, meditation and house music have something in common. They both create an altered state of mind, a different reality. Meditation is all about sitting quietly, relaxing the body, looking inward and creating peaceful, healing vibrations (slow frequencies). House music is about moving wildly, looking at others and absorbing extremely low (slow) and high (fast) frequencies.

It's a matter of choice, really.

®

*Tijn Touber is a freelance journalist based in Amsterdam*



# OF FROGS, CAPTAINS and ICEBERGS .... and EAGLES



Marc Fourcade reflects on what you need to change the course of your life

*The world is moving ~ either we move with it, or we move against it, in which case, we may not be strong enough! The forces on the move are enormous and uncontrollable, they are the forces of nature, the forces of life. The power to change is the power to live.*

**T**he Creation is in permanent re-creation. It dies and is reborn at every instant. It becomes ugly and makes itself beautiful again at each breath. It does not stop undoing what it had started so well; as it chases away the spring it puts summer in its place, it languishes in autumn and then hits you in winter. Nature, day by day, gives us the tempo of life, but it is hard for us to follow, being weighed down by the baggage we carry from the past, containing the weight of our memories and our

nostalgia. For many of us, changing implies losing. It is not always related to the conscious area of ourselves. Entangled in our habits, our routines, we are seldom willing to leave safe areas of inner comfort. Every time we do move away from our comfort zones, it is synonymous with danger. Coming out of the shell of our apparent certainty is like entering a jungle of ignorance, anguish, and maybe death. As Woody Allen once said, "As long as a man will consider himself mortal, he will never really feel relaxed", and we could probably add "and never really be ready for change".

Very often, in order to obtain something new, one has to renounce something old. This often goes against the grain as



our tendency is to both have our cake and eat it. We always wish to have more but nevertheless don't want to renounce our attainments. For that reason, we have invented a wonderful quality: adaptability. It allows us to attain new things without getting rid of the old things. It is called the patrimonial instinct.



about ourselves or our surroundings.

Quite recently a study published by two French writers, Regis and Brigitte Dutheil, a physicist and a philosopher, in their book called "The Super Light Man", revealed to what extent the role of information is essential in the development of our awareness of events, and beyond that, the shaping of our behaviour. They tell us how our awareness of our environment is limited to the quite weak capacity of our sense organs. Our eyes, for instance, are only able to perceive a spectrum of colours between 0.3



Adaptability is of itself a beautiful quality, but it also presents a few dangers if we don't know what we are adapting to. The human organism, for example, adapts very successfully to tobacco, alcohol, fats and even to arsenic in small doses, but each one can eventually make the body sick and even kill it. The frog is legendary for its capacity to adjust its body temperature to the surrounding temperature. However, when it is submerged in a pan of water that is gradually heated up, it adapts

where we adapt instead of jumping, until it is too late? An individual does change when his major interests are at stake. When he realises his emotional and mental balance, his health, his life, are threatened, he suddenly realises he has the means to change. Change obeys at least three criteria: need, awareness and the power to act. In this trilogy, information plays an essential role; in other words, how can one apprehend, understand and act without any information, without knowing. The essential need for right information is illustrated in the story of a certain ship's captain of the Norwegian navy who was caught one night in the fog in the Galapagos. His ship was the flag ship of the fleet. Faced with a flickering light headed straight towards his ship, he sent three signals requesting the ship bearing the light to change its course by twenty degrees to avoid collision. At the very last moment, he furiously had to change his own course to avoid collision with that unrelenting light, which turned out to be a very stable lighthouse.

*It is not enough to know that one has to change, one also needs to have the know-how, in which case information is power.*

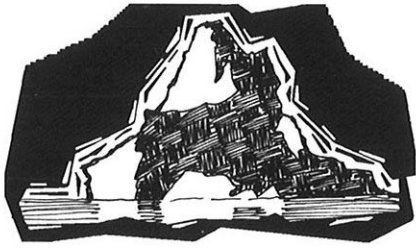
and 0.8 angstrom, that is, from pale blue to dark red, and therefore we are totally unable to perceive ultra violet or infra red rays. The same applies to our ears, which cannot hear very low or very high frequencies, and to our nose, the olfactory cells of which are unable to compete with those of a dog! This type of information about our environment is always incomplete, and yet we continue to interpret the way the world works and the nature of life from this very limited input.

*When he realises his emotional and mental balance, his health, his life are threatened, he suddenly realises he has the means to change.*

Information is the pivotal point in any process of change. It is not enough to know that one has to change, one also needs to have the know-how, in which case information is power. Information is not only at the heart of the challenge of change, but it is also the reason why there is so much resistance to change. Despite living in the information age we are not really that well informed, at least in terms of quality, either

If we only have very little information about our surroundings, we have even less about our inner world; the way we function psychologically, the mechanism of our thoughts, our emotions and our personal resources. We have integrated over the course of years, through our education, our experiences,

and adapts and is eventually boiled as it lacks the energy to jump out of the pot. Are we not also trapped at times in situations



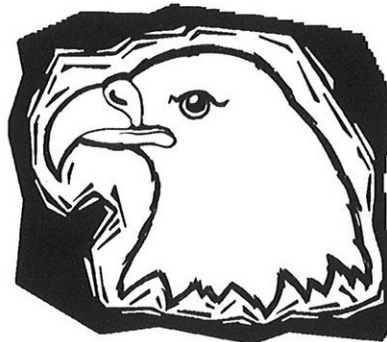
our discoveries, our realisations, an incredible quantity of memories which today constitute our internal reference system.

These memories, linked to one another at the heart of a complex internal network, are the mother earth of our thoughts and also of our behaviour. The quality and strength of these memories and the way in which we use them determine our emotions, our reactions, our desires and our state of mind. Our ability to change ourselves lies in our potential to manage this bank of information. But first we have to find out what exactly is in the bank, that is to say, we have to get to know ourselves. There is scarcely any other method than to plunge deeply inwards and go through the indescribable morass of memories to try to find ourselves, and know where we are at.

The human being is like an iceberg. We only know the emerged visible part of it, that is, scarcely ten per cent of the personality. The merged ninety per cent is under the surface, and constitutes its essential reality. Nevertheless, with what little information we have, we try to anticipate its reactions, to foresee its changes, to act on its behaviour. If the wind is blowing north to south you would expect the iceberg to move south, but contrary to expectations it moves north, because the current is pushing ninety per cent of its mass under the surface in the opposite direction.

In the case of an individual, the conscious ten per cent is not

strong enough to fight against the ninety per cent of the subconscious; of buried memories and forgotten emotions, hidden in the shadows of our past, incognito, but active and representing a very powerful, invisible current. This is one of the key reasons why we have so many problems whether in terms of organisational management or in terms of self-management. We are over-informed and submerged with excessive, irrelevant and bad quality information about the ten per cent of reality accessible by our five senses, and under-informed in quantity and quality about the ninety per cent of our reality. What a pity, because we all possess unsuspected resources, but our narrow vision of ourselves and our mental limits prevent us from drawing on them and expressing them.



This is illustrated by the story of the eagle's egg which was hatched by a hen. Since its birth, the baby eagle's only environment was the world of chickens. He grew up as a chicken, ate like a chicken, ran like a chicken, communicated like a chicken and lived like a chicken. Then one day near the end of his life he looked up into the infinity of the sky and admired the majestic gliding of the large royal eagle overhead, and he began to dream of flying like him!

This story enlightens us about the incredible impact information has on our stages of consciousness and beyond this on our behaviour and quality of life. An excess of

*Beyond what our five senses perceive, there is an unlimited dimension to explore.*

information about the superficial in our external environment drowns out awareness of our internal environment which is essential if we are to capture subtle signals which require a great deal of sensitivity as well as intuition to be perceived. Beyond what our five senses perceive, there is an unlimited dimension to explore.

There is an unsuspected field of vibrations rich in quality information capable of radically transforming our vision of the world and of ourselves. For this, we have to stop being surfers and become divers and discover the treasures of the soul in the silence of the depths of our own being.

Meditation is the royal path for this travel to the centre of the self, the search for the Holy Grail, the search for perfection, for the pure beauty of the original being. Michelangelo had one good argument to convince the sceptics that many of us have become. One day, tired of the praise of an admirer about an enormous sculpture that he had just finished, he replied to her; "Madam, I only took off the stone that was not necessary, the perfection lay inside."

Is there not, in that awareness, a good reason to start the voyage towards the centre of the self?

®

*Marc Fourcade is a Management Consultant in the field of Human Resource Development based in Paris*

# THE CHALLENGES OF THE MODERN JOURNALIST



Klaas Jan Hindriks  
reflects on  
a lifetime in journalism

**I** have over 30 years in journalism. During those times I have seen evil and goodness - destruction and progress.

I have covered many wars and I have seen tremendous misery in this world. I have also had many beautiful experiences - examples of true altruism, dedication, inspiration, love and affection. I learned to believe that if you want to rove the world and become a dedicated journalist, which means to hold up a mirror of what life is all about, you take up an enormous responsibility. You have to report on failing summit conferences, on the work of politicians who very often work

out of sincerity, but finally discover that they have been misled by other forces. You have to report on those processes which form the essence of our lives. If you believe you want to do that, you have to become spiritual. You have to learn to do your own soul searching, because you have a very lonely job. Out in the world, I have experienced rejection many times because people don't always like you to hold up a mirror.

But still, you have to possess an inner strength and a capacity to continue, otherwise you cannot fulfil your job and you will not be able to inspire others in your profession to work with the same intensity. You cannot guide and

lead editorial meetings and set the tone or paint a clear picture of what your newspaper, your radio station or your television should represent.

That brings me to a very personal question. What is a journalist? How to define the role of a journalist? In various parts of the world the journalist is very often a messenger. A messenger for religious movements, or for his government, for a political system or conviction.

In my opinion, he shouldn't be a messenger. In my opinion, a journalist has the power to act as the conscience of society. Like I said, he can hold up the mirror,

but he should remain an independent source of knowledge, a source of sincerity. I know it sounds idealistic but we all have to set certain goals and ethics in our lives and certainly in our profession. When you are ill, you do trust a doctor or a surgeon, because you know he will give you the best advice he can, and prescribe you the right medicines or operate on you with all the wisdom and technical knowledge he has.

The same professional standard should go for the journalist. The journalist can provide valuable information to an audience or to his readers.

But it is now that we face our great dilemma. How many people can judge or understand the impact the news has on our lives today? The world scene becomes so complex that even with all the technical gadgets that are available to us, we cannot make an audience or readership understand the significance of events anymore. We cannot reach out to the readers any more, let alone the listeners or the viewers because I believe they cannot listen any more.

It is a very big dilemma for every professional. Techniques we possess. In television we can edit down hours of pictures into a sequence of seconds and present to you a sensational news flash. We can make beautiful documentaries, with electronic paintings, maps and charts. We are able to witness live, and in living colour, how the power centre in Moscow is shot to pieces. We are not even amazed anymore.

Remember the Vietnam war? The turning point in the Vietnam war was the journalist's conscience, his spiritual feelings. All of a sudden it was no longer a war of the people any more. It was no longer justified to talk of the domino effect with Asia falling into the hands of communism. We

revealed other things, human things, and this brought an end to the war. Many of us would recall all those intense protests on the White House lawn, and what they came to.

Then there was the Watergate Hearing which changed the outlook of the journalists involved. It was not about the fall of an American President. It was to see if the American Constitution could protect the people against irregularities of a President who they saw in those days as their King, their Head, their Supreme Idol of Government. We all learned a lot. Years later we saw the fall of Berlin, we saw what happened to the people of Eastern Europe. And then came the war in the Gulf and the world watched it live on television every night.

What did we see? Was it a movie? Was it reality? Or indeed another film on crime? When we see the death and destruction, the pain on faces of other people, in our own living rooms, we are the examples of how life goes on. While other people suffer on the screens in our living rooms, someone in our home will say "would you like another coffee or would you like a cookie". Who feels or recognises at that moment the realities of the pictures?

So what should we as journalists do about such a development. I believe, that we, journalists, today should do a little soul searching. We have to create other formulas. We have to become more human in our approaches to the news. I believe that we have to present a very accurate and humane picture for everyone who watches television or reads newspapers or listens to the radio, providing solid and basic information. Helping people to understand the importance of "What happens in your life today and what will happen in the lives of your children tomorrow!" It is the only reason for "why should we be

informed on what happens on this planet". It also provides us with an answer to the question "why should we be more spiritual in our actions?" It is my belief that we should prove that there is more to 'life' than the routine of the day.

It is at this point that I would like to mention the growing international network known as JFT or Journalists for Tomorrow. This initiative aims to bring together journalists, writers and all those who want to take responsibility in the media, to dialogue and discuss the important questions which I have briefly touched on here. I am honoured to be associated with such an initiative and I hope you will give it your support as well.

Journalism can be seen as a difficult profession. In many ways it compares with politics. Both professions, at this time call for development of inner strength. You have to believe in it. You have to work for the well being of others. You have to use all your capabilities in order to be recognised as a sincere and knowledgeable professional. In this context I feel it is important that you are able to develop your own personal credo in which you can check your motives that will guide your actions. This is mine. I hope it comes across clearly. A dutch saying, which translated into English is this:

"You will succeed in creating great inner strength, if you succeed in understanding your own wild powers and desires, and succeed in balancing them"

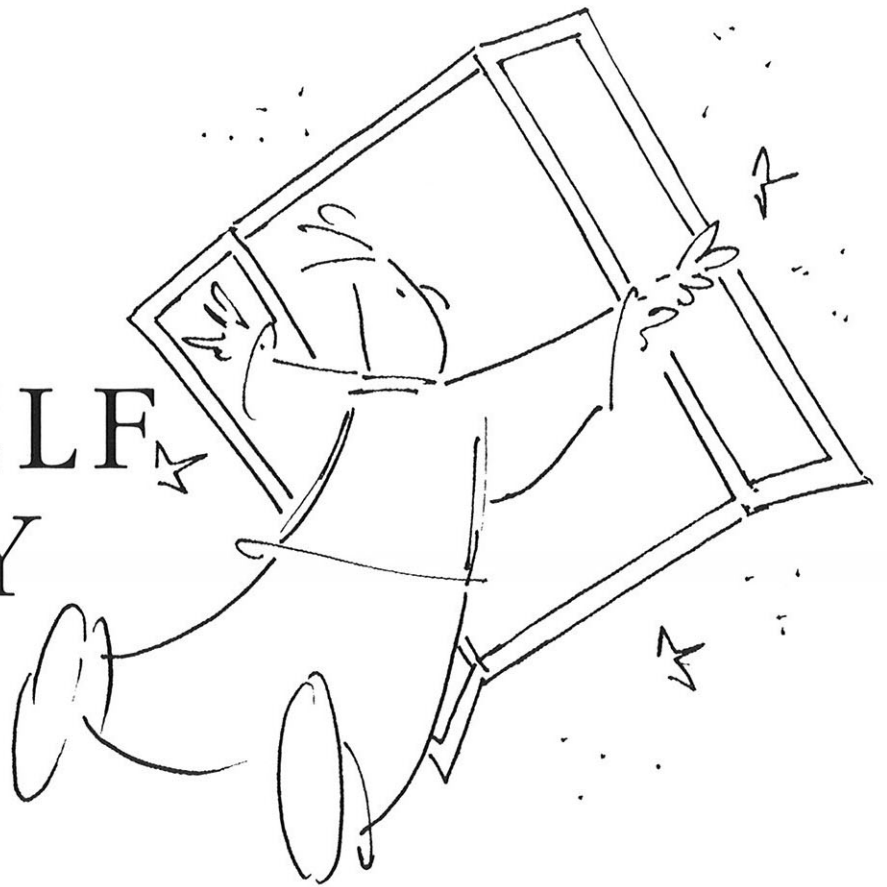
That's my goal in this life. I'd like to think it could be true for all of us and for all those we love and care for.

Thank you. ®

*Klaas Jan Hindriks is a foreign correspondent in the Netherlands. This is an extract from his presentation to the Mt Abu Dialogue.*

# HOW TO TAKE YOURSELF LIGHTLY

Brijmohan takes a closer look at the difference between body and soul



*A burdened mind may snatch some fleeting, short-lived moments of pleasure, but it cannot experience true happiness. Remaining always light is the key to happiness. In today's conditions, the ability to take yourself and everything around you lightly is perhaps the number one capability to cultivate. There is a vital need to develop the inner powers to 'take it easy', come what may.*

It is widely understood that the state of a person's mind depends upon his attitude to people and objects present and to the events occurring around him. There is also a well-known saying: "you cannot change events, but you can change your attitude towards them". Yet when actual situations arise, attitudinal change is difficult because of the mind-set already formed.

Attitude is determined by prides and prejudices, desires and ambitions, priorities and preferences, needs and compulsions. These, in turn, are influenced by habits and addictions, learnings and dependencies, beliefs and outlook, whims and fancies and a host of other factors. Pre-dispositions thus formed produce certain mental pulls and pushes which determine responses and reactions to external situations. That's why attitudes towards the same event varies from person to person. New paradigms are called for to break

the old mind-set and create such inner capabilities which can automatically take care of anything that comes your way.

The first fundamental attitudinal change for remaining 'light' always is to make a firm resolve to do so. As you think, so you become. The word 'light' in the spiritual sense, also means enlightenment that dispels the inner darkness of ignorance, illusion, doubt and confusion. This enables you to visualise things in their true form. As a result, deception is eliminated. Confidence and clarity change conditions of fear and anxiety into those of joy and happiness. From this follows the second attitudinal change: Consider life as a celebration and not as a struggle or war zone. Greetings and good wishes exchanged at celebrations are always a source of great joy and happiness. Likewise, to become a well-wisher of all is the easiest way to make your life a celebration.

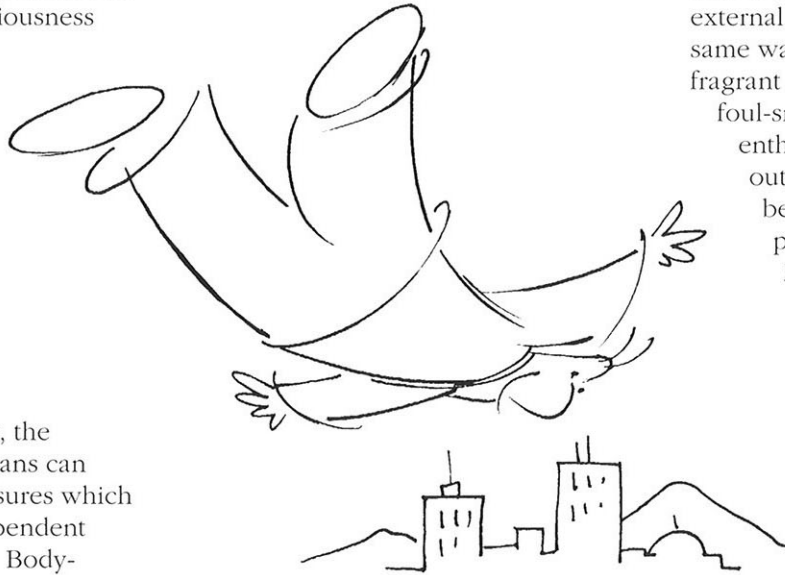
At the root of your attitude lies your belief systems. The greatest common basic flaw in today's belief-system is body-consciousness, i.e. identifying yourself with the mortal body instead of the immortal entity called 'soul' that you truly are. This identity-crisis is the mother of all other crises. The eternal you - the soul - is a sentient entity, an imperishable point of light. Your original innate qualities are love, peace, happiness and bliss. As long as you remain established in the state of soul-consciousness and use your body as an instrument, you will remain light because, firstly, your very existence is that of being sentient light and, secondly, your thoughts, words and actions will be in conformity with your innate qualities.

As it is made of matter, the body and its sense organs can only give sensual pleasures which are short-lived and dependent upon external factors. Body-consciousness leads to adoption of material values which affect the mind, destroying the pristine purity of your innate qualities and, in fact, of the entire thought process. As a result, jealousy, hatred, anger and other types of negativity lead to unrighteous thoughts and wrongful actions. Negativity produces waste thoughts and increases the number and speed of your thoughts. This dilutes the quality of thoughts and, consequently, the quality of life. Waste thoughts produce attitudinal maladies like doubts, apprehensions, fear, etc. and take away from all the zest and zeal of life. This results in lethargy and laziness. In this way, negativity weakens the mind and it becomes prone to external influences.

Self-realisation or soul-

consciousness on the other hand brings home the truth that the soul's original qualities of love, peace, happiness and bliss are all non-material, like the soul itself. Even the negative traits or perversions like ego, anger, hatred, jealousy, or the stresses and strains produced by these vices are non-material in nature. Hence, the required corrective action in this respect has essentially to be taken at the level of your basic beliefs.

An inner



journey is therefore an essential pre-requisite for enjoying a happy external journey through this life and beyond.

Self-realisation enables you to easily let go of the past. Instead of regretting, it enables you to gain valuable experience from past mistakes and increase your powers of tolerance, patience. When one begins to learn from mistakes, the meaning of the saying 'everything happens for the best' becomes clear. Mistakes are not repeated. Attention helps avoid tension. Reduction in waste thoughts improves the quality of thoughts. Will power is the aggregate of all your inner powers like tolerance, discrimination, judgement, concentration, co-operation. The

will of a person with a good reservoir of inner powers will always prevail. Hence, the saying 'where there is a will, there is a way.' Strong will power enables you to transform a situation of possible failure into that of success; just as, in a game of cricket, a good batsman converts a dangerous looking ball into a fourer or sixer by a mere flick of his bat. Strong will power not only protects you from adverse outside influences, it empowers you to exert influence on the external environment; much in the same way as rose seed produces fragrant roses even from a heap of foul-smelling rubbish. Zeal and enthusiasm is a natural outcome of success and becomes, in turn, the motive power for further success. Moving from success to success will always keep you in good spirits. This is the formula to remain light and happy under all conditions and circumstances.

How to increase will power? It is not a physical power to be acquired by any material means. Wasteful and negative thinking have to be eliminated to increase will power. The dilemma, however, is that they arise when will power is weakened, whereas it takes strong will power to destroy them. So, how to go about it? Just as negativity reduces will-power, it is positive thinking that generates it. Inculcation of virtues like humility, contentment, detachment and compassion, a simple life-style, good company, purity of food and becoming a well-wisher of all will help you do that.

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*Brijmohan is the Editor of Purity and Secretary of the Rajayoga Educational Research Foundation.*

# THAT FOUR-LETTER WORD



Grand Orator Frederick Von Son's recent address to the Freemason's York Grand Lodge of Mexico describes his encounter with the Brahma Kumaris

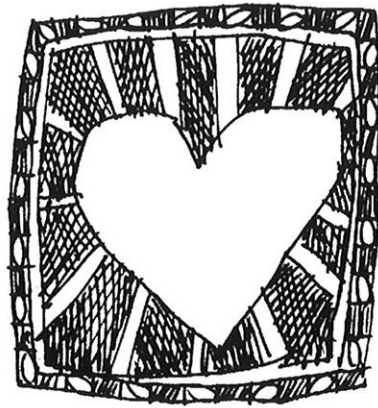


*The Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University sits high on Mount Abu in the India State of Rajasthan. The campus is known as Madhuban or "Forest of Honey". There, and in 3,700 additional centres established in 65 countries, the Brahma Kumaris share with the world their Raja Yoga art of meditation and their education in spiritual and moral values.*



**D**uring the last half century the University has grown with the explosive speed of gas in a vacuum. We can sense that the world has become just such a vacuum, gasping for change, for peace, for a serene and tranquil island in space. You and I know the four-letter word that can provide this. The Brahma Kumaris know the word and use it well. I will tell you more about it anon.

Let me tell you how I learned of this University. My daughter started attending meditation classes while earning her Master's Degree at the University of London. A year ago she invited us to go to Madhuban, India, to attend the yearly guest retreat. She was so enthusiastic that we went. It was worthwhile. We received an education in human relations. We learned to greet each other by saying Om Shanti, the usual salutation. It announces that "I am a peaceful soul", and this is not very different from the Hebrew Shalom Aleichem or the Moslem Salaam Aleikum. Both greetings wish that "Peace be with you", a welcome expression of hope indeed. However, the Brahma Kumaris go a step beyond hope. They assert the present fact that they are, each one, a peaceful soul, today. The hope that "peace



be with you” lies in the uncertain future.

The Brahma Kumari motto is: “When we change, the world changes”. Their goals are similar to those of Freemasons. As masons we learn to construct our inner person, brick by brick, and transform that inner symbolic building into a better self. The image of such a superior being, a man of peace and truth and charity, must needs transmit the aura of a man who loves. Let the world see him and learn from him and emulate the improved man. By divine contagion make the world love; and make itself into a better world.

Our subject today is The Four-Letter Word. No word is more universally used, nor more frequently abused. It is the very foundation of our Masonic Craft. Without it, our Fraternity is an empty shell. In the profane world, without love, nothing is born, nothing grows, nothing lives. Love creates and sustains life.

With the passing years, I am expected to be less foolish. Perhaps even a little wiser. Once in a while I can understand love and the power of love. Even practise it. Not, I am afraid, constantly, completely. It is not I but the Raja Yogis from Madhuban who know it - and do it. It works. By gentle, persistent use of love, they do change - and are changing the world. However, I shall study LOVE and improve in my use of it. My work in the courts makes me

witness the consequences of violence, greed, hatred, deceit. The laws enacted to tell us what we may or may not do are contained in a million volumes with millions of words. The myriad courts are peopled by judges, clerks and assistant clerks. Police officers capture and guard felons and ensure order in the courts. Recorders, jurors, lawyers,

**“In the profane world, without love, nothing is born, nothing grows, nothing lives. Love creates and sustains life.”**

and interpreters too, must learn, interpret and do their share to enforce the cloudy contents of complicated mountains of verbosity. Could we improve the system?

Of course. Easy. Obey the Ten Commandments:

Thou shalt have none other gods before me. Thou shalt not make thee any graven image. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain. Keep the Sabbath day to sanctify it. Honour thy father and thy mother. Thou shalt not kill. Neither shalt thou bear false witness against thy neighbour. Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbour’s wife. Neither shalt thou covet thy neighbour’s house, his field, or his manservant, or his maidservant, his ox, or his ass, or anything that is

thy neighbour’s.

Teach and obey these laws and you will eliminate from the face of the earth the evils with which humans have beset humankind. Apply them and consign to the forgotten past all violence, corruption and deceit. Let hatred be no more. Let LOVE prevail. Let us bask in the peace and harmony of a righteous world.

Are even the ninety-seven words of Moses’ Law too many for us? Rabbi Jesus condensed them to only five. He said, “Love one another as thyself”. Still too many words? Just use one key four-letter word, LOVE. It is enough. Forget the rest. Just live by that one little, four-letter word. Love.

This is not the love in the “sphere of passions” but “love as an act of will”. Aquinas distinguishes between them and assigns the former to the “concupiscible faculty” of the sensual appetite; the latter to the “rational or intellectual appetite”. He makes another basic distinction between love as a natural tendency and as a supernatural habit. Natural love is that “whereby things seek what is suitable to them according to their nature”. When love exceeds the inclinations of nature, it does so by “some habitual form added to the natural power”, and this habit of love is the virtue of charity. It allows us to love those who may reject us. It is the real love. To return love to those who may reject us. It is the real love. To return love to those who love us is good, but it is easy, is it not? Is it



not a greater virtue to love those who do not love us? Might not our love generously spread, gently force them, the rejecters, to return perhaps just a little love to us?

As Freemasons we are reminded of Jacob's dreams of Faith, Hope, and Charity, and we affirm that of these Charity has the greatest worth. Charity is but a seven-letter synonym of the four-letter LOVE. Aristotle said that such love is a virtue and is besides most necessary with a view to living. About friendship, he said, "for without friends no one would choose to live though he had all other goods". He added that when men are friends they have no need for justice. Which reminds us of what we have said about the laws. Let all humanity learn to use love in law's stead.

Why did I start my talk mentioning the Brahma Kumaris? Because they practise what we preach. On the woeful occasions when we hear arguments among Brethren, or when personal ambitions or opinions become more important than LOVE, the four-letter word seems to lose its magic. It need not. It is within our power, yours and mine, to make it prevail.

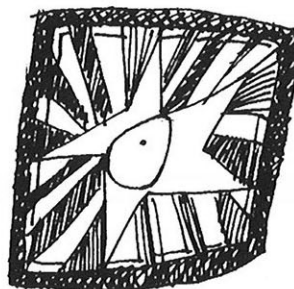
You may get the idea that I mean to admonish you today. Nothing is farther from the truth. My only purpose in making this long trip from California so soon after major surgery was to visit you again. Much thought and many hours of thinking and writing have gone into this. The only reason for making this effort must be my love for you. As I look around this hall I know that I am right for I feel that my Brethren love me too. I wish all men and women on this earth could feel this love, for surely our message would be heeded and emulated. Freemasonry would recall its ancient reason to exist. Our Craft

could again become a pattern for the world to follow. We could have a share in the creation of a world in which peace and harmony will in truth and in eternity prevail. We would have recreated Eden. We would have done so with the proper use of that one simple little four-letter word.

Believe me. The more you give of your love, the more you will receive. Only those that love can see the love that is within others. Those that give love generously, indiscriminately, enjoy love most. Remember that it is not easy to love those that reject you, but that this love is the more rewarding.

I can see today that brotherly love prevails and that my brethren do love each other. The great German poet Friedrich Schiller wrote a Masonic poem; he called it Die Kette, "The Chain". In this Masonic philosopher's mind all Brethren are links in a spiritual chain. Let us form one here today. This idea is not my invention. We see it in some churches and in other Masonic Degrees. Please arise, my Brethren. Take your neighbours by the hand and form a chain. Look into each others' eyes to show your love for one another. Thank you. ®

*Frederick Von Son is a Post Grand Master of the Freemasons. He is currently acting as Deputy General Grand High Priest to the Latin American Region.*



## THE BIRTH OF THE SOUL

*The distant thunder sounds  
Rolling ominous over the desert  
There's a stillness in the air  
You can almost touch.  
Everything is waiting  
Everything is waiting*

*And the sheets of rain  
Begin to fall  
The land is silent  
And still and receiving*

*And far away I remember  
The day the thought finally dawns  
That after all  
My life's in my hands  
And I know where it's going  
And nothing and no one can stop me*

*And as the sheets of rain  
Continue to fall  
I seem to see through them  
As if they were a window  
A window in my mind.*

*And later  
Maybe a day  
Or may be a lifetime*

*After the rain has gone  
The red gold sunlight shines on  
Like flames on the skyline.*

Paul Desmond  
*Meditations and Dreams*

# THE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

## The Mt. Abu Dialogue

Following the Mt. Abu Dialogue many participants stayed on to continue their own personal dialogue during the Meditation Retreat- seen here meditating on the setting sun across the plains of Rajasthan.

*Depending on where in the world you start, it can take more than two days to reach Mount Abu. Modes of transport on the way can include a combination of plane, taxi, train and bus. For all 170 people from over fifty countries who made the pilgrimage to India and the world headquarters of the Brahma Kumaris the destination was sweet rest and relaxation.*

**A**ll had come for the first Mt Abu Dialogue on *Charting New Territory*. The three day dialogue attracted leaders from the Arts, Business, Community, Education, Health, Media, Politics and Science. The aim? To exchange new approaches towards leadership and effectiveness in the 1990's.

Many eminent personalities were invited to stimulate the Dialogue with short presentations. Carolyn Lukensmyer, Deputy Director of the National Performance Review in the United States, captured many hearts and minds as the opening speaker, "We are all both leaders and followers and we have to be highly skilled in both to know when to make the choice to be which. Don't give away your power or self-esteem by waiting for someone else to give a vision. We are all visionaries." Lord Ennals followed with wisdom in his simplicity as he said, "Have respect that you are alive. Don't

scold or moralise, but bow in reverence." In her vision of leadership Dadi Prakashmani offered sound advice: "The first quality in leadership is humility. Be honest with yourself then inspire that in others and always be happy to put others in front."

The tone of the Dialogue was set by short reflections to stimulate each of the sessions. This first reflection articulated the dilemma facing many leaders of today's organisations:

*These days, leadership is largely about managing the good ship Enterprise in a turbulent sea of change - unrelenting crisis - inducing change driven by external forces that include technology, the economy and social and environmental pressures. An increasingly popular response to these assaults on the status quo is to learn to see the enterprise as only a part of a larger reality, supported and nurtured by sustainable relationships within the*

*larger system which it serves and on which it depends. The dilemma in implementing this approach is how to find the courage and will to break from the old tradition of life as a competitive and largely self-serving pursuit and develop a new vision in which individuals recognise their place in and responsibility to the whole. When it plays its part correctly, the enterprise earns and receives the nourishment it deserves and needs. Faced with the choice of not changing and being crushed by external forces, or accepting the challenge to change and deal with the enmity of all who are protective of the status quo, the leader inevitably faces a profound inner battle, requiring personal resources such as steadfast self-respect, discrimination of right*

*from wrong and a readiness to accept, work with and be an example to others. But the dilemma faced by today's leader is not new, and spiritual traditions and wisdom can help us in the search for strategy, meaning and self-identity, and give an insight into how these changing times play a pivotal role in the greater scheme of things.*

The Dialogue was not, however, about listening to keynote speakers, as much revolved around group discussions. These mini-dialogues within multinational and multi-cultural groups stimulated many personal spiritual insights. These are just a few of hundreds gathered during the event.

### **Personal Discoveries from the Mt Abu Dialogue**

- ◆ **I**t's easy to play our strengths but authentic leadership often comes from addressing our weaknesses.
- ◆ **M**y honesty has to cut a path through the world of lies.
- ◆ **U**nless there is reflection what we do has no meaning.
- ◆ **C**ommitment to your own self. It does not matter how much and what you do in society, unless you work on yourself, it doesn't work.
- ◆ **R**ead leaders are not those who are doers, or even those who lead by example, but those who bring out in others their best potential to be leaders themselves.
- ◆ **M**ercy, as an ethic of professional responsibility, brings happiness.
- ◆ **F**or the sake of quality, one has to be a tyrant in order to destroy mediocrity.
- ◆ **P**ain may be a necessary part of growth, but the root of suffering is ego.
- ◆ **W**ork with inner guidance. The more it works, the more you trust it. The more you trust it, the more it works.
- ◆ **T**hought is an action in rehearsal.
- ◆ **V**alues originate in the individual, not the cultural context.
- ◆ **I**f I do not act in accordance with my values I lose them.
- ◆ **A** calm mind is like the eye of the spirit - a place of refuge.
- ◆ **E**stablish yourself in being and then come into action.
- ◆ **A**s a leader I must generate knowledge of the self, in myself and others, beyond competitiveness and self-seeking social approval.
- ◆ **S**tillness is a matter of quality of thought, it's a creative act and that empowers me.
- ◆ **I** have to ask myself the right questions about what is going on and give it its true value. i.e. at the end of my life, how will I evaluate this event and what will be its relevance to my life as a whole.
- ◆ **P**ower without vision is dangerous.
- ◆ **A** crucial value for every leader in this age is conscious awareness of the oneness of humankind and creative discovery of processes by which we live in accordance with this understanding.

# THE NATURE OF CONSCIOUSNESS



Eduardo Mejia reports on the Fourth International Symposium of Science and Consciousness, Uxmal, Yucatan, Mexico

*After three successful years in Greece, the Fourth International Symposium on Science and Consciousness changed venues to the ancient land of the Mayans.*

From 4-8 January, 1994, 104 scientists and spiritual teachers from 23 countries came together in Uxmal, Mexico in the Yucatan to identify areas of consensus on the nature and scope of consciousness studies.

The IV International Symposium was building on the three previous symposia, which had as its underlying theme, the "examination of science in service of humanity". This idea required

that scientists look "inside" science to see the personal motives and conditioning of the scientists themselves. The Uxmal Symposium explored two new horizons of understanding: the nature of consciousness and the formation and application of values. Through a series of keynote speeches in short plenary sessions, roundtable discussions and parallel presentations, participants of the Symposium

attempted to establish how values are created within consciousness and what their relation is to the external context of science.

The Symposium was inaugurated on the 4th January within the Nun's Quadrangle at the ancient Mayan ruins of Uxmal. Among the dignitaries present were: Fausto Alzati, National Director of CONACYT, the National Council of Science and Technology and the official representative of Carlos Salinas de Gortari, President of Mexico; Avidis Aznavurian, Rector of the University Autonoma Metropolitana de Xochimilco; Ricardo Avila Herdia, Secretary General of the Government and representing the Governor of Yucatan; Jorge Esma, Director of the Cultural Institute of Yucatan and BK Jagdish Chander, Spokesman for the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University. At the end of this historic inauguration, the scientists were treated to recreation of the ancient Mayan sacrificial dance ceremony.

The Symposium's aim was to harness a clearer vision of the values which underlie transformation and to examine practical methods which allow those values to emerge within scientific endeavour.

The following main areas were addressed:

- \* *The Nature of Consciousness*
- \* *The Authentic Self as the Creator of Authentic Values*
- \* *Transformation: Methods and Insights into Creation, Sustenance and Application of Authentic Values*

Personal presentations were varied and touched different areas of awareness and investigations into what values are and their interconnectedness with our true nature. From the biological point of view to the spiritual, the presentations covered a wide spectrum of analysis, such as: Consciousness and Measurement in Quantum Mechanics, Prof. Arthur G. Zajonc; The Nature of



*The opening ceremonies for the symposium on Science and Consciousness took place in the Nuns Quadrangle in one of the ancient Mayan sites in Uxmal, Yucatan, Mexico.*

Consciousness in a Philosophical Perspective, Prof. Francisco Galan; A Science of Inner Transformation, Dr Ravi Ravindra; Brain to Brain Interactions and the Interpretation of Reality, Dr Jacobo Grinberg-Zylberbaum; Are Brain Molecules Related to Consciousness? Dr Gloria Benitez King; The Origin of Mystical Experience, Pathology or Transcendental; Prof. Peter Fenwick; Human Science and Language, Dr Cecilia Balcazar de Bucher; and, Values as Meaning in the Collective Experience, Dr. Edgar Mitchell, to name a few.

Throughout the conference there was a feeling of respect and genuine brotherhood. It seems that science is awakening to a new paradigm shift in the academic world. One key point that emerged in some of the roundtables was the primary need to have a personal, inner focus if any valid insight is to be gained in understanding the formation and application of values in science. Some participants regarded such questions as "Why am I doing the work that I do?" and "Where am I going with this work?" as essential questions in formulating clear

workable values. "The reason being that values influence motives and attitudes, which in turn, influence the level of quality and humanness in science and the usefulness of its results," said Anthony Strano, one of the original organisers from Greece.

Dr Humberto Maturana, eminent biologist from the University of Chile observed: "The experience of consciousness is one of self-awareness that results from the living in a language of recursive ness that results in self-distinction. It is not a transcendental independently-existing entity to which we have

to resort to explain the different kinds of human experiences." In his deeply moving and touching presentation, "The Biology of Love", Dr. Maturana explained: "The human concern for well-being is a concern in the domain of social responsibility that results in our human existence as animals that live in language immersed in the biology of love. It is because the biology of love is basic to our living that we are aware of our responsibility for the consequences of our actions. As conscious beings, the problems we generate must be solved through actions that entail that awareness and not through any reference to some external transcendental entity that takes our responsibility away from us. To do so in our present culture, relating science to consciousness becomes fundamental."

Professor David Fontana from the Department of Psychology, University of Wales, College of Cardiff explained "What we often do in our life is just inventing new concepts to understand the changes occurring along time outside and inside us. Thus, our

own identity is a continuous process of feelings experiencing time, depending on which physical senses have anything to do with it. But sometimes we create in ourselves an inhibition process which prevents us from experiencing. Therefore in the learning process, we can develop the time within ourselves when we can be child-like and when not to be."

In what appeared to be the beginning of a search for the higher self, Dr John A. Mayer, Professor of Philosophy from Brock University, Ontario, Canada said: "We begin by asking what would we mean by claiming that someone has a 'highly developed' or 'fully realised' consciousness. This may not be exemplified in any actual being, but it may be what each of us, perhaps in our own specific way, seeks to develop, and believes one sees developing in those for whom one feels an exceptional spontaneous respect and in whom one detects a kind of authority which commands admiration." Dr Mayer continued, "Could one be considered to have a highly developed consciousness, if one's character were flawed? I think not. Consciousness is linked to the development of character."

Could it be that science is going through an inner revolution, one that cannot control everything? As the

exploration of consciousness proceeds, increasing numbers of scientists will undergo significant shifts in internalised assumptions and modes of perceptions. These changes will open up levels of awareness and insight. Willis W. Harman, President of the Institute of Noetic Sciences in California offered this observation: "The prestige of science is sufficiently impressive that the 'new paradigm' people often seek to authenticate their inner truth by reference to 'the new physics, quantum healing, holographic theory,' and the 'chaos or complexity theory'. However, the present culture shift goes far more deeply into underlying metaphysical assumptions than do these 'revolutions' within science.

The emerging view implies a revolution of science, or at least of the way we think about science. It in no way denies the power of Western science for the purpose for which it was devised - prediction, control or manipulation of the physical environment. It

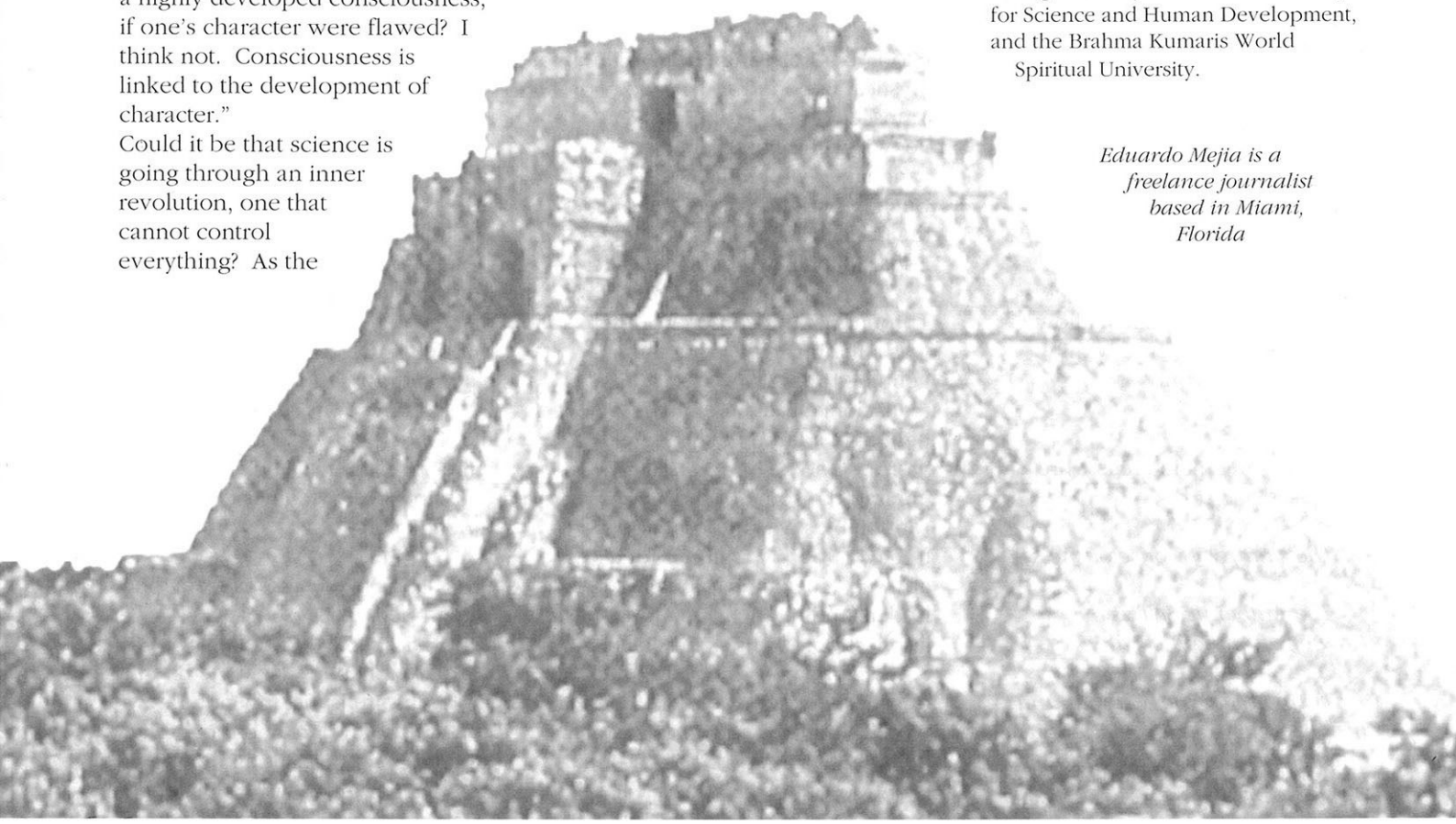
does hold in question the modern tendency to yield authority to the reductionistic scientific world view as the reality by which we should guide our lives, individually and collectively."

Sometimes a simple word like silence can take on a whole new meaning. Dadi Janki, Additional Administrative head of the Brahma Kumaris, shared her insights on the final day, "To go into silence means to merge the expansion in all. The essence in that ability is merged in silence: I am the ruler of my mind and senses. I plant the seeds for a better world. In that experience of silence the original qualities of the soul are developed and it becomes a way to resolve all difficulties. Keep silent. It is the secret way to link with God. Until now the search has taken place outside, and now it's time to look inside."

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This year's Symposium was organised by the Universidad Autonoma Metropolitana, Unidad Xochimilco and co-organised by the Athenian Society for Science and Human Development, and the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University.

*Eduardo Mejia is a  
freelance journalist  
based in Miami,  
Florida*





*Arthur Zajonc, David Fontana and Jacobo Grinberg - Zylberbaum absorbed in the front row during the presentations at the symposium.*



*David Lorimer, Director of the Scientific and Medical Network, reflects on discussions with Willis Harman, Director of Noetic Sciences.*

## FOURTH INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM on SCIENCE & CONSCIOUSNESS in Uxmal, Mexico

*The open air "auditorium" was the location for the presentation of this year's insights into the nature of consciousness.*



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# Inner Space

## *Great Escape or Return to Reality?*

*When was the last time you spent time with yourself?*

In our modern, hi-tech, high pressure world it is easy to forget ourselves and our own essential need to relax and replenish body, mind and soul. Holidays and pills, diets and physical exercises have become the traditional ways of attempting to restore well being. What they seldom treat however are the feelings in our hearts, the thoughts in our minds and the thirst of the soul for silence.

Going on retreat is not running away from life - the opposite is true. It is a time to turn your attention to focus inwards, become re-acquainted with yourself and to the reality of your own experience. The most effective way to do this is through self observation. This is the process in which you can gather knowledge about yourself.

Self-knowledge is seeing the thoughts and feelings which you are automatically creating during the course of the day, when you are on auto pilot! You will see negative thoughts, positive thoughts, waste thoughts and superfluous thoughts. In this way you will see how well you are using your energy.

Self-knowledge is seeing how the way you see yourself influences the way you see the world.

Self-knowledge is becoming conscious of the distinction between body and soul, human and being, form and content.

In the outer silence of a spiritual retreat the inner space of your own mind will create its own quietness as your thoughts become slow and deep.

In the silence of your inner journey you will become aware of your original and true nature as a being of peace - at peace with yourself and the world around you.

Going on retreat is therefore not an escape from life and its pressures, but a brief respite allowing you to return to the reality of your inner peace, your inner joy and your inner love. These are the spiritual qualities eternally at the heart of your personality. Then, when you have to advance towards your relationships and responsibilities at home and at work, you can draw on those qualities of your being which you have strengthened during your journey into inner space.

Retire from the moving surfaces of life and take advantage, for a few days at least, of the stillness, the silence and the serenity which only a spiritual retreat can provide.

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