

MAITRI Anandhita



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articles
stories
poems
spiritual questions
to anahita@maitribodh.org
and
experiences
to experiences@maitribodh.org

We bring to you an opportunity to get answers to your questions from Maitreya Dadashreeji!

Email your questions to anahita@maitribodh.org

Please note that the questions asked should be for the benefit of all and not personal questions. The answers to the selected questions will be published in Maitri Anahita.

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Editorial

Dear Loved Ones,

"Your relationships impact your physical, mental and spiritual body" says Maitreya Dadashreeji. It is imperative that we pay heed to our emotional well-being as much as tend to our physical wellness. Our emotional state is generally influenced by external circumstances, experiences and our relationships. Emotions play an important role in how we think and behave, hence must not be ignored. They have the power to make or break, especially when it comes to relationships. Any ill-feeling or thought for anyone will create a block and cause disharmony in one's life and stop us from growing internally. Expression is the key to any healthy relationship which helps heal one emotionally if done in the right way. Heal yourself and your relationships by understanding your feelings and expressing your emotion to the concerned person and watch yourself grow.

In this issue, under 'Pearls of Wisdom' Maitreya Dadashreeji shares the three important qualities with us that we could attain from Lord Shiv.

Inside, read more and enrich yourselves as we introduce two more columns *Through the Looking -Glass and Tales of Transformation along with – Power of Affirmations, Practice for the Month, Music for the Month, Movies for the Soul, Sacred Rituals around the World, Pots around the World, Sustainability and the MBP Family.*

Happy Reading!

With Love & Light,
Team Maitri Anahita

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Lord Shiva is a friend to us and at our Premgiri Ashram where He is established as Lord Mahakaleshwar. His Grace flows incessantly from our Ashram to everyone. If you see, there are many really auspicious days, important days for spiritual seekers in the entire year; such as Guru Purnima or Buddha Purnima, Diwali, Dussehra and Mahashivratri. A spiritual seeker always looks forward for these days. Whenever you do your sādhanā (spiritual practice) during this time or these days, you move ahead on the spiritual path very quickly.....at least 100 times faster. Suppose you are sitting in a car, in some vehicle and going somewhere and your car is stuck in traffic, you are stuck somewhere; then suddenly you see on Google Map that there is some space, there is a different road, where there is less traffic and you can reach quickly. Many times it happens that suddenly a path opens for a while, the gate opens and you went ahead from there. So, these roads which take you quickly ahead are these days where, with your devotion, with your sādhanā, you can move forward quickly. So, if you see in the whole year, there are many such days and one of these is Mahashivratri.

About Mahashivratri, although 12 Shivaratris occur in the whole year the special one, on which you are very close to Lord Shiva, where you can see Him directly, you can receive His Grace directly, is called 'Mahashivratri'. Amongst the 12 Shivaratris, the greatest, the biggest one is Mahashivratri. when you can progress spiritually really well. When we talk about spiritual growth or what it means to 'be spiritual' or what is the meaning of 'spirituality,' sometimes we just don't understand this thing itself. Does 'spirituality' mean just meditating or chanting or wearing a mala, applying a tilak or wearing some special clothes? By doing this does one become spiritual? Like, "I have been reciting mantras for 20 years. So I am spiritual." It's not like that at all. Firstly, you should understand, what is spirituality?

Spirituality means discovering oneself, understanding your True Self, discovering the Divine. This is spirituality. Your efforts should be consistent. Not binding yourself to those kriyas, sādhanās. You have to keep focusing on that direction, that goal: "I want to understand myself, I want to discover the Divine."

This is why, all of you who are associated with or want to join MaitriBodh Parivaar, have gathered here, to understand - how we can move one step ahead. As you participate tonight, you will get the experience of it instantly during the night or as soon as you wake up in the morning. Today's time is so powerful, so sacred, so beneficial. Why is the night important on Mahashivratri? Could we even do this during the day? Night, because whatever physical activities you do throughout the day stops at night, especially after sunset. At night, when you see that all the activities of the outer world come to a stop, that is the time when your inner world awakens. And it establishes a connection, a bond directly with your Divine, with the Supreme, with this Universe. And tonight, it is especially effective. That is why, we

take complete advantage of Mahashivratri at night.

Now, that we have understood why this Shivaratri is Mahashivratri and why we celebrate it at night, let us also understand Shiv, so that you will understand the complete importance of Mahashivratri.

Who is Shiv?

Like I said, Shiv is our friend who is always with us in this Ashram in the form of Mahakaleshwar. He is in our Premgiri Ashram. In reality, Shiv is an element, a power, an energy. When He takes a physical form, we address Him as Lord Shankar. When He becomes formless, then we see Him in the form of Ling, the Shiv-Ling. And all these are parts of Mahadev. They are not Mahadev, but are parts of Mahadev.

So how can we establish a relationship with Shiv, Who is an element, a form of Truth, Who is beautiful and still? However, before this, we have to understand, what can we learn from Lord Shiv so that we can reach that spiritual state, where we can experience that Truth, that stillness in our lives.

There are three important things that you all can learn from Lord Shiv.

Those are **knowledge, vairāgya and strength**.

These three qualities which Lord Shiv has; are the ones you have to attain. We often hear that Lord Shiv has some secret knowledge - Gupt Gyān. Whenever it comes to Gupt Gyān, the secret knowledge, then we always see Lord Shiva with an intention that He is teaching us something, telling us something. He shares it with Maa Pārvati and His disciples, who are the closest to Him. He shares it with His true devotees (what is the Truth and what is Gupt (secret)). So we should always move towards that direction where we can attain that knowledge, that Supreme Knowledge. Always be ready for it. To attain knowledge, the foremost simple thing is, that you have to become a student. When you become a student yourself, only then will you be able to acquire that knowledge. If you are a guru or you consider yourself to be very knowledgeable and you have everything, then you will never attain this knowledge. Or if your mind is plagued with ego, then you will never get this knowledge because, with ego one cannot attain Swa-Gyān (self-knowledge) and Swa-Gyān never gives rise to ego. So, you have to drop that ego from within you, reach the state of a student so that this knowledge reaches you.

When you acquire this knowledge, vairāgya comes automatically. You don't have to do anything special for that. It's not that you suddenly became an ascetic, took your satchel and went to the forest. It doesn't happen like that. This isn't vairāgya. It is not renunciation of society. It is an internal state. Lord Shiv is also sitting somewhere away from everyone but is with His family. His state of vairāgya (which you also have to experience), is an inner state. It is not an external state. So, all of you also have to understand that whatever you think is mine - you just have to renounce that. Wherever you feel that, "This belongs to me", if you renounce it internally, then you will be able to experience that vairāgya. Knowledge will help you for that. So, after supreme knowledge you experience a state of vairāgya, in which you experience, "Nothing is mine. I have become empty. Nothing belongs to me. I have become completely, totally empty." When you experience this, strength comes automatically.

At that time, you can do everything, because you have nothing of your own. You become a part of the Universe, you get that strength, that Shakti (energy). Then you can do good for everyone. Therefore, knowledge, vairāgya and strength, these three qualities have to be inculcated.

How should the knowledge be? The knowledge should be such that the spiritual qualities within you are developed. Vairāgya should be such that all your attention is focused on your Divine. And the

strength should be such that you can do public welfare. That is all that you have to know. If you keep doing this, you will become Sampurna (complete). You will become Satya (the Truth). Then the Truth will not be separate from you. You will become the Truth yourself.

The Grace of Lord Shiv will work directly on all of you. If you want His Grace more quickly, then you will have to do two more things. That is **Sat-Karma (good work) and Sādhanā**.

- a) If you do good deeds, you will gain a lot. Good deeds not only make you worthy of Divine Knowledge, but you also attract the Grace of Lord Shiv simply through good deeds. Whether you are His devotee or not, you receive His grace through good deeds.
- b) Sādhanā (spiritual practice): keep doing it continuously; for which He himself helps you.

If you do these two things, then His Grace works very effectively on you. Can you all do this? It is very simple. Just try from your side. You don't have to do much. Do good deeds and do your sādhanā every day.

What is it that we're going to do on Mahashivratri? We saw Shiv ji in the form of Tattva (element), understood him as a Sakha (friend); if we want to get His Grace, then what should we do today, at this time?

That is meditation, chanting, worship and prayer. We have to do these four things. Meditating on Shiv ji, seeing His form or doing the Abhishek of the Shiv-Ling or meditating on the Shiv-Ling, chanting, worship and prayer.

There is only one prayer to offer, either to make life simpler, to ease your life or to move ahead on the spiritual path, to discover the Truth. You have to offer a prayer. So, today at this time, we will chant Lord Shiv's mantra 21 times. After that we will worship and offer the prayer. So, are you all ready?

You just have to sit for some time and chant the mantra - Aum Namah Shivāya. The meaning of this mantra is that - to He who is sacred, pure, we offer our obeisance.

So, while offering this prayer, while chanting, while meditating within, you should not harbour any hatred towards anyone. Have no loathing towards anyone. Do not compete with anyone, keeping the ego away you have to sit and chant this mantra with purity, with a pure mind, experiencing peace.

May you all experience Divine Grace and Love in your life.

To live your life here onwards, you have two paths; either walk with knowledge, or walk with ignorance. Walking with knowledge means love, compassion, selflessness. And to walk with ignorance means hatred, selfishness, ego. If you walk with knowledge, there might be troubles in the beginning. There may be pain but you will gain joy for eternity. And if you walk with ignorance, then there will be happiness in the beginning but sorrow for all eternity. So, this is our suggestion. This is a prayer for all of you, that you walk on this Path of Knowledge, accept Love and Transform your life. The decision is yours as it is your life. Which path do you want to walk on? We are all working together for a world, a community filled with Love, filled with peace and all of you can join us in that. We will always wish that there should be peace in your life, that you may get knowledge and that you bring prosperity to all.

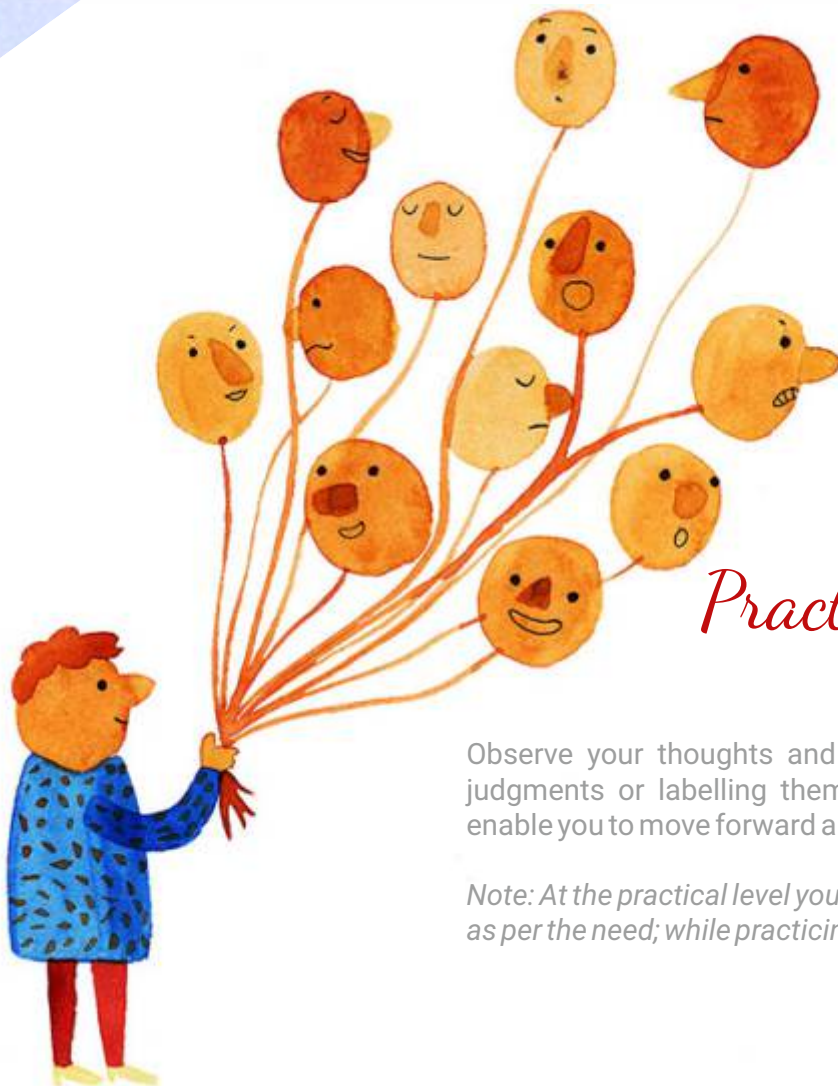
**Lots of Love and Blessings.
Here onwards, Divine Light will guide you further.**

(This is an excerpt from Dadashreeji's message on Mahashivratri 2022 at ShantiKshetra Premgiri Ashram)

Affirmation for the Month

Each month we will be sharing an affirmation. You may repeat this affirmation at least three times daily - first thing in the morning, midday, and just before you go to sleep. Regular repetition will help in its manifestation.

Practice and witness the change!



Practice for the Month

Observe your thoughts and emotions as they come without any judgments or labelling them as good or bad. Practicing this will enable you to move forward and flow easily with your emotions.

Note: At the practical level you may act and take appropriate and action as per the need; while practicing the above internally.

Music for the Soul

“Everything in the universe has a rhythm, everything dances.” **Maya Angelou**
Music is one of the ways to express ourselves and connect with the creation and its Creator. Music is a direct way to connect to the Divine.

We share below the link to a transformational and soulful track:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qhWZczvjW0Q>
Enjoy!!



Movie of the Month : Inside Out

The truth is out there’ – all we need to do is seek! In this space we will be recommending a movie to you each month; we hope it strikes a chord within you, even as you are entertained. Spirituality is fun!



The Plot

Riley, a happy-go-lucky, hockey loving 11 year old girl, living in the US finds it challenging when she has to move from Minnesota to San Francisco when her dad changes his job. A lot goes on within her at the emotional level post this. The emotional outcome, personified in this movie will help her adjust to the new lifestyle. The experiences created by these emotions are converted into coloured orbs and help in the creation of personality islands. When Sadness accidentally touches a memory, it creates havoc in the ‘control centre’ of Riley’s mind which causes Joy and Sadness in getting lost deep in Riley’s mind, leading to collapse of the multiple personality islands as her emotions are off balance. While Joy and Sadness are trying to find a way back with the help from Riley’s imaginary friend Bing Bong, the rest of the three emotions are trying their very best to keep Riley happy. Since all the three emotions are trying to work in their element and the remaining two are lost, Riley becomes irresponsible to her emotional processes. Watch ‘Inside Out’ to know if Riley finds a way back and the significance of acknowledging all the emotions in our lives.

Takeaway

We are gifted with emotions whether happy or sad, anger or love, are meant to be experienced and expressed. No emotion is right or wrong. Suppressing emotions causes chaos and turmoil within us. Each emotion has its own way of helping us live life and plays a very important role in creating our experiences and personality.

Everything will be Alright!

There is no defined path to the Divine, no defined form of prayer to reach the Divine. He is everywhere and responds to every connect from the heart, writes **Mitra Philip** as he draws on a story from the Hassidic Jewish community

In 18th century Eastern Europe, there arose in Jewish communities a mystical movement called Hassidism. Its founder was known as the Baal Shem Tov.

One day, a calamity threatened the community of the Baal Shem Tov. He called his senior disciple and together they set off into a forest. The Baal Shem Tov told his disciple that they were going to a special place for prayer. On reaching the special place the Baal Shem Tov built a fire in a special way. Then he recited a special prayer. Once all this was done the Master said to his disciple, "It is fine now. Everything will be all right." They returned to the community and the calamity had amazingly been averted.

Years passed, and the Baal Shem Tov passed away as well. Again, a calamity came to threaten the community. The senior disciple was now the Master. He called his senior disciple and they set off into the woods. Alas, the new Master could not find the special place, so he stopped where he felt it right to stop and said, "Though I have forgotten the special place it is all right, for the Divine is everywhere". The Master then lit the special fire and recited the special prayer. After that the Master said to his disciple, "It is fine now. Everything will be all right." They returned to their community to find that the calamity had not happened.

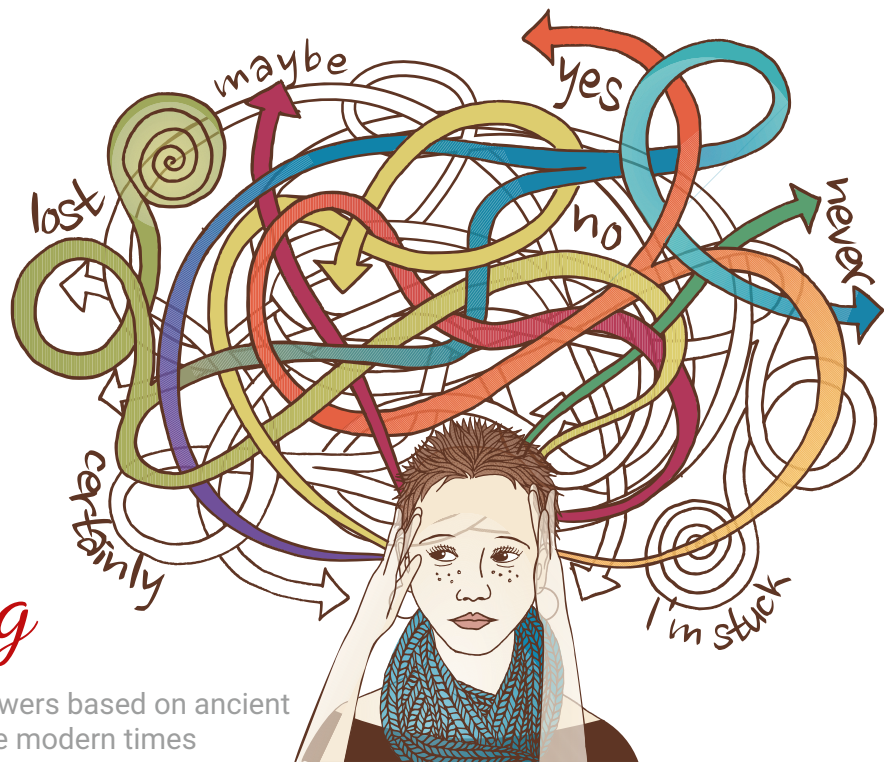
Years passed and the Master passed away as well. His senior disciple was now the Master. Once more a calamity threatened them, and again the Master took his disciple into the woods. The special place had long been forgotten, and the new Master could not remember the ceremony of the special fire. The Master then said that the Divine knows all things that live as the fire in our hearts. The Master did remember the words and intention of the special prayer. He spoke those words from his heart. The Master then said to his disciple, "It is fine now. Everything will be all right." They returned to the community where the threatening calamity had disappeared.

Years passed and the Master passed away as well. His senior disciple was now the Master. Once again a calamity threatened, and once again the new Master took his disciple into the woods to complete their mission. The new Master, of course, did not know where the special place was, nor did he know how to build the special fire, and he discovered that he had forgotten the words of the special prayer as well. He stopped and connected fully to his Divine and said, "You are everywhere, and you know that the fire is in my heart, and you know what I need even if I don't have the right words to ask for it." He thanked his Divine, and said to his disciple, "It is fine now. Everything will be all right." They returned to their community and discovered that no calamity had come and that everything was all right.

The disciple asked the Master, how the calamity had been averted when the Master had forgotten the special place, the special fire, and the special prayer. The Master smiled and said. "The Divine is everywhere and knows all things, and answers all the heart's true needs. We, for our part, need to keep telling this story."

The door to the Divine lies through the heart. Every prayer that pertains to a genuine need and originates from the heart will be answered by the Divine, regardless of the articulated prayer or specific form. The key lies in heartfelt communication with the Divine.





Grow by Asking

In this column **Mitra Sut** brings to you answers based on ancient Vedic knowledge and it's application in the modern times

Question: My Mind is playing tricks I believe, not allowing me to settle, inspite of trying to follow all the spiritual sadhanas. This thought keeps coming "Am I on the right path, am I doing the right thing...". Also please help us understand more on 'mind' and how to use this mind to help us in 'transformation'?

Answer: Dear friend, we thank you for embarking on this journey of self-discovery! This effort is a big leap, showing your inclination and dedication as well . It is quite common and natural for the mind to play tricks.

In the sacred text Bhagwad Gita Lord Krishna says to Arjuna:

श्री भगवानुवाच
असंशयं महाबाहो मनो दुर्निग्रहं चलं ।
अभ्यासेन तु कौन्तेय वैराग्येण च गृह्यते ॥६.३५॥

Meaning

"O Mighty armed one, undoubtedly the mind is fickle and difficult to master; but it can be controlled by diligent practice, O Arjuna and by detachment from sense enjoyment."

The mind has a nature of being stubborn, relentless, restless, unsettling. Hence, we need to first accept it and later just observe it. The more you try to control the mind, the more it will retaliate, just like a little child. It is conditioned from lifetimes together and to suddenly force it to flow as per our wish would be difficult. Seekers perform intense spiritual practices for years together to be able to direct the mind towards goodness, positivity and one's heart.

The mind is a very important component of our entire being (the others being our physical body, intellect, chitta and at the core The Divine). It helps us to practically make decisions and take actions, without which our day-to-day actions would be difficult.

The mind needs to be kept pure, positive, directing us towards the Truth. But the conditioning of the mind over many lifetimes tends it to like gossips, blame game, lethargy, easy way out, etc. all of which take us away from the Truth. However, please note that it is the same mind, which helps us reach our Source and towards Transformation as the mind is part of our being.

Solution

One may practice the following practices to use the mind effectively:

- 1) Practice sadhanas regularly,
- 2) Practicing the 3 Rs as suggested by Dadashreeji in the new year video (available on YouTube and in the January 2022 edition of Maitri Anahita)
- 3) Acts of selfless service will automatically put us on the path of Transformation.

“Mind, being an instrument plays the most vital and key role in your spiritual journey. Its infamous nature of fluctuating high and low all the time has made it difficult to understand and get control over it” says Maitreya Dadashreeji.

So dear friend, don't get too worried. With the above practices, gradually one can witness the role played by the same stubborn mind in helping one grow. As the 'Heart' gets awakened, the mind gets aligned to the heart – this begins the journey of 'Transformation' of the human mind which eventually is preparing each of us for the New Divine Age.





Fasting

Rituals aimed dissociating from the false self-bring us closer to the Divine, says **Maitreyi Meredith**, as she examines the ritual of fasting that is practiced in most religions of the world

Rituals are endemic across religions, many such helping seekers focus inwards to the heart of their Being. When performed with love and devotion they can lead to heightened bonding with one's Inner Divine. They become a practice or sadhana that can be surrendered at the feet of the Divine. Many religious traditions have holy days at the onset of the spring season and associated rituals dedicated to prayer, purification, fasting, repentance, contemplation, and devotion to the Divine. Such rituals are found in many traditions from Islam and Christianity to Hinduism. When done with devotion and love, they attract abundant Grace.

The Symbolism of Rituals

In the spring, Catholics and other sects of Christianity celebrate Lent, which is a time to commemorate Jesus' going to the desert to fast in preparation of initiating His public ministry. Jesus is seen as the best example of self-examination as he fasted for 40 days in the desert. He realized Himself during his time in the desert. He went beyond thoughts to realize His very Being and Self which was the embodiment of Love. The beginning of Lent starts with 'Ash Wednesday', where sacred ash made from palm leaves is smeared by Catholics in the form of a cross across their brow (at the point of the Agneya chakra), between their eye brows. The ash is a reminder of the impermanence of life on Earth. In the Bible, Genesis says, "From dust you are made and to dust you will return." With this reminder initiating Lent proceedings, Christians are invited to go deep within and focus on the eternal/ or light within. This practice is similar to that in some sects of the Hindu tradition where ascetics put ash (vibhuti) on their foreheads as a reminder to remain detached from the external

world, and of impermanence of life on earth. Lent is celebrated for 40 days and is marked by devotion, contemplation, and different forms of fasting.

There are other religious festivals in the spring which incorporate fasting and contemplation, viz. Ramadan. During Ramadan, the month-long celebration of the revelations of the Quran to the Prophet Muhammad, devotees fast from dusk to dawn and purify their thoughts, words, and deeds.

Fast to Purify

When a devotee fasts during 'Navratri' or lets go of a bad habit for 'Lent', it brings awareness to their thoughts. It is easier to examine blocks and impurities within. With the acceptance of these impurities, and devotion, the seeker starts witnessing their thoughts. The same practice was reiterated by Maitreya Dadashreeji for the year 2022, to witness the thoughts without judgment or resistance. One thus becomes a witness to one's thoughts, avoiding the trap of becoming one's thoughts.

Through the process of watching our thoughts, fasting, and self-contemplation we can gain true knowledge. *"True knowledge is the knowing of the Self. It is that Knowledge which helps one realize their true nature... It is that Knowledge which transforms a being", says Maitreya Dadashreeji.*

When we truly bond with the Divine we experience love, silence, and freedom within. The Self is Love and non-changing, eternal, and alive in the heart of each human being and when one operates from the Self or from one's Core all boundaries dissolve. Let us work on ourselves and prepare for ascending to the Divine Age.

Through the Looking-Glass

In this space we share with you insights on transforming the workplace environment and achieving your dreams at work. International Academy of Transformative Leadership (IATL) is a global leadership development organisation created with the aim of transforming the workplace culture by developing Core Consciousness in leaders. The idea of developing Core Consciousness at work is with the aim of creating transformed leaders who are able to steer best-in-class, value-driven and agile organisations. Founded in 2019 under the Grace and Guidance of Founder-Visionary Maitreya Dadashreeji, IATL has presence in India and Europe.

Interpersonal Relationships at Work

How important is it to get along with the people we work with? Does it impact our productivity? What impact do interpersonal relationships at the workplace have on our body, mind, and emotions? How does it affect our inner growth? To answer these questions, let's take a close look at the impact of the work environment on the personal and professional well-being of a worker.

The Three Aspects of Work

Whether we work in teams or as individual contributors, there are three aspects to any work that we undertake:

The first aspect, the *Self* is about the individual who is involved in executing the task. It includes the individual's objective, intent, motivation, competence, physical condition, thoughts, and feelings when engaged in performance. The second aspect is the *Task* itself. It includes, but is not limited to the complexity of the task, time available to complete the task, resource availability, impact of the outcome, the value it adds to the system, etc. The third aspect of work is *Others* who are involved in the Task – the stakeholders who directly or indirectly contribute to the successful completion of the task and those that will be impacted by the outcome. If we are cognizant of each of these three aspects of work, we will be able to function with greater efficacy and speed. Today, we will focus on the third aspect 'Others', in more detail.

Let us look at this equation suggested by behavioral scientists, Dr. Robert Blake and Dr. Jane Mouton:

$$R1 \times R2 = R3$$

Here, R1 represents the Resources available to do the job, for example – finances, raw material,



human resources, etc. R2 represents Relationships while R3 represents Results or outcome. In the words of Blake and Mouton, "The sounder the relationships, the better the results, given the same resources (as the equation above shows)." In a world where resources are steadily decreasing, the only way to yield incremental results is to leverage interpersonal relationships.

The Cost of Discord

Let us now examine the cost of discord and incivility at the workplace. In organizations where leaders are completely focused on results with little or no regard for people, the culture is that of perform or perish. Non-performance is met with contempt and humiliation by leaders, the atmosphere vitiated with expressions of anger and rudeness. Research conducted by Christine Porath, a Management researcher, has shown that incivility saps motivation at work:

- 66% employees cut back on their efforts
- 80% lost work time worrying about what happened
- 12% left their job

Through the Looking-Glass

From this research, Cisco estimated conservatively, that incivility was costing organizations 12 million dollars a year, for example. The impact of incivility is not limited to only those who are at the receiving end. There is an impact also on those who witness it. Another study conducted on a small group, tested the effects of a peer insulting a group member. The results were significant – a 25% reduction in performance and 45% decrease in generation of creative ideas. “Incivility is a bug. It is contagious. We become carriers of it just by being around it”, says Porath.

Creating a Cohesive Work Culture

When we have a work environment that fosters harmony and mutual respect, we are more productive, creative, helpful, happy, and healthy. Perhaps today’s leaders are more cognizant of this fact in the pandemic driven, work-from-home era where employees are experiencing burnout, disengagement, increased stress and anxiety and are falling prey to a host of life-style diseases, all from a lack of social connect. As such, the Gallup Employee Engagement survey question – Do you have a best friend at work? – is perhaps finding more acceptance among discerning leaders.

We are spending more waking hours with our team members than with the family, and it's only natural that we want to build connections with our team members. We want work to feel worthwhile and having trusted confidants and supporters helps foster that feeling. When employees possess a deep sense of affiliation with their team members, they are driven to take positive actions that benefit the business.

The first step to fostering friendship and trust among co-workers is Open Communication. Employees need to be able to initiate conversations among themselves where they can share common goals and objectives, set common guidelines for working together and

When we are led by the Core, we are able to work with meaning and purpose, experience seamless collaboration, fulfillment and joy at work

hold each other accountable. In case of differences of opinion, disconnect and hurt, both parties need to be able to express themselves completely, listen to each other with openness and realign towards the higher purpose of the work.

When we practice accessing our Core – the deepest dimension of our being – we are able to draw upon the inherent positive energy and wisdom allowing us to experience and radiate the compassion essential in Accepting Others as they are. We become non-judgmental and open our hearts and minds to others, work with them, help them and guide them despite the foibles that make us human!

When we are led by the Core, we are able to work with meaning and purpose, experience seamless collaboration, fulfillment and joy at work.

As Maitreya Dadashreeji says, *“The revolutionary rising time will be of a new heart-driven world order.”* Let us work collectively towards it by connecting with our Core Consciousness.



Pots around the World

Easy Hummus

The delicious dip, Hummus, may be a labour of love but its rich, creamy taste with earthy flavours bursting through is ample reward says **Rahul Nagvekar**

Originating in the Middle East, hummus is a delicious dip used as an accompaniment to dishes of the region. Packed with a wide variety of nutrients, antioxidants and having a low glycemic index, it is a source of plant protein, fibre and natural gluten. It is a favourite with vegans, vegetarians and those affected by conditions like celiac disease, nut allergies and lactose intolerance.

The health benefits of hummus are enhanced by the olive oil and sesame seeds used in making the paste making it rich in powerful antioxidants that have anti-inflammatory benefits. The chickpea fiber used in hummus paste promotes growth of healthy gut bacteria, which produce butyrate – a type of fatty acid that helps nourish cells in the gut.

And the best part is, it is easy to make, with just a few ingredients.

Ingredients

- Chick peas /Kabuli Chana – 400 gm
- Sesame seeds – 100 gm
- Virgin olive oil for Tahini paste – 100ml
- Virgin olive oil while serving Hummus – 3tbsp
- Garlic – 10 small cloves (can add more for enhanced sharpness)
- Lemon juice – 20 ml / 4tsp
- Salt and black pepper to taste

Pre-preparation

- Soak chick peas for at least 12-14 hrs (change the water once in between)
- Boil the soaked chick peas on a low flame till they are soft. Discard the scum / froth and save the boiled water to make the paste.

Tahini paste

- Dry roast unpolished sesame seeds till they start to splutter.
 - Let them cool down.
 - Grind them into a fine paste by adding olive oil.
- Tip : The remaining tahini paste may be used to make another interesting Lebanese dip, Babaganaoush.

A good tahini is the key to a delicious hummus.

Preparing Hummus

- Blend the boiled chick peas, add 75 ml of water from the boiled chick peas, garlic, two tbsp virgin olive oil and 1tsp salt, into a smooth paste.

For a creamier hummus, discard the chick pea skins before blending.

- Divide this chick pea paste into two portions.

Black Pepper Hummus: To one portion of chick pea paste, add,

- 1tbsp- Tahini paste,
- 10 ml/ 2tsp – lemon juice
- ¼ tsp – salt
- ½ tsp or as per your taste – Black pepper powder
- When serving, spread the hummus in a bowl.
- Make a swirl with a spoon and pour a generous amount of olive oil on top.
- Sprinkle black pepper powder on it.

Red Chilli Hummus: To the other portion of chick pea paste, add,

- 1tbsp- Tahini paste,
- 10 ml/ 2tsp – lemon juice
- ¼ tsp – salt
- ¼ tsp or as per your taste – Black pepper powder
- When serving, spread the hummus in a bowl.
- Make a swirl with a spoon and pour a generous amount of olive oil on top.
- Sprinkle red chilli powder on it.

Enjoy with pita bread or any other bread of your choice

Storing Hummus

Cover the Hummus with cling wrap touching the surface, put a lid on the container, and refrigerate it till further use.

Oral Health - The Ayurvedic Way

The benefits of having good oral health go beyond having a dazzling smile, says **Dr. Sreelatha Shetty**. She turns to Ayurveda for a safe and healthy alternative to maintaining ideal oral health

Ayurveda recommends certain daily regimens to keep the mind and the body in ideal health. Cleaning teeth (danta parimarjana) and tongue scraping (jihva nirlekhana) is a regimen which helps in maintaining oral health. It can prevent dental caries, bad breath, and improve oral health.

Teeth are essential in the digestion process as food has to be chewed for proper digestion. This is not possible without healthy and strong teeth, so maintaining cleanliness of teeth is vital. Oral ailments are expensive to treat and if left untreated can hark your overall well-being as well.

When to brush teeth?

Ayurveda recommends brushing teeth twice a day i.e., early morning after waking up and at night before going to sleep. It is advisable to brush the teeth after every meal even though difficult practically. The least we should follow is to gargle with lukewarm water after a meal to remove food particles wedged between the teeth.

How to brush teeth?

Ayurveda recommends usage of twigs of plants or trees which have a bitter, pungent, astringent taste for brushing teeth. Twigs should be straight, devoid of knots, and should be fresh. The thickness of the twig should be approximately equal to the tip of one's little finger (this is just to ensure that the twig isn't too thin or too thick). The edge of the twig is chewed to form spikes and this is used for brushing the teeth without harming the gums, i.e., adequate

care must be taken while brushing. These plants hold anti-microbial properties. Chewing releases their anti-bacterial agents which mix with saliva and this prevents buildup of bacteria on the teeth. The medicinal qualities of the herbs contained in the twigs are adequate to prevent caries, plaque forming, and maintaining oral hygiene. With their usage neither tooth paste, nor tooth powder is required for cleaning teeth, as the twig itself has the essential medicinal qualities.

Earlier, people used twigs of herbs as toothbrush. Even nowadays in some parts of India, we still see people using twigs of certain plants and trees for brushing the teeth.

Most frequently used twigs are from the Neem tree (*Azadirachta indica*), Mango tree (*Mangifera indica*), and the Peepal tree (*Ficus religiosa*). Other plants/trees which are used are Karanja (Indian beech), Karavira (Indian Oleander), Arjuna (Arjun tree), Asana (Indian Kino tree), Khadira (Cutch tree), etc.



In southern India, mango leaves are frequently used for cleaning teeth. A fresh mango leaf is washed, and the midrib removed. The leaf is folded along its length with the shiny surfaces facing each other. It is rolled into a tube-shaped pack. One end of this is bitten off by 3mm to create a rough surface which is brushed on the teeth. The midrib which was removed is used as a tongue cleaner.

As usage of fresh twigs may not be convenient to those living in urban areas, one may use tooth powders or paste prepared with medicinal herbs for brushing teeth. Such twigs are available in the market and if fresh, may be used for the said purpose. Toothbrushes made of bamboo are also available in the market.

Benefits of the Ayurvedic way of brushing your teeth

Improved taste, removal of bad breath, prevention of caries and removal of waste accumulated on the teeth are some of the benefits of maintaining oral hygiene the Ayurvedic way.

Nowadays, toothpastes that are salty and some that are sweet are freely available but as per Ayurveda such products are of no benefit in maintaining oral health. For cleaning the teeth, Ayurveda suggests mediums that are pungent, astringent, and bitter in taste.

For cleaning the teeth, Ayurveda suggests mediums that are pungent, astringent, and bitter in taste

Tongue scraping

The tongue performs the function of taste, speech, chewing and swallowing, hence maintaining tongue hygiene is essential. The state of the tongue, i.e., its shape, color, and coating indicates the state of our overall health. Tongue scraping is done immediately after brushing teeth. Toxins or dirt which accumulate on the tongue should be scraped using a tongue scraper, if not these toxins are absorbed by the body. In the ancient time, tongue scrapers were made of metals like gold, silver, copper, tin, and brass though today stainless-steel tongue scrapers may be used. A tongue scraper should not be sharp edged and should be curved. Tongue scraping should begin from the root of the tongue to the tip

with seven to ten repetitions after brushing of the teeth.

Benefits of tongue scraping

- Improves oral hygiene.
- Removes unwanted coating from the tongue.
- Promotes fresh breath.
- Improves sense of taste as the surface of tongue is cleaned.
- A healthy mouth is a precursor to a healthy body!



Conscious and Slow

Maitreyi Suman extols the positive spin-off of the pandemic; we have learnt to sift needs from wants, going slow and going less. Adapting a conscious and slow approach, will ensure a win-win for everyone

When life gives you lemons, you make lemonade. During the pandemic we appreciated all that we had. We became mindful. Mindfulness expands our consciousness and as the consciousness expands, the truth becomes apparent. A clearing emerges in the vast jungle of thoughts and attendant processes. For many of us, the lockdown opened a new chapter, turned a new leaf in life outside and within as we became aware of the difference between wants and needs. Where does a need descend into a want? We tend to accumulate, acquire and hold on to the same. There is a fear of the future and there is a tendency to bankroll ourselves against that by accumulating material possessions. Cupboards overflowing with clothes, shoes, groceries and what not. Staying at home during the pandemic, most people came down to comfort clothing. The term comfort had been, till now, relegated to sleep-wear or yoga-wear only.

Finding Balance

As the lockdown restrictions are being lifted, we are gradually coming back to our earlier routine. And here is the conundrum. Should we go back to pre-pandemic lifestyle, what we had been doing all this while or we are better served by being conscious of our actions and where need is superseded by want? The truth is in finding the right balance by becoming a conscious consumer. Not being a slave to fashion and buying consciously are steps towards a Satvic life style as practised by the previous

generations. These may be new terms but the practices are age old. Remember the old, worn cotton sarees turned into summer quilts, baby clothes, baby sheets, kitchen napkins? I smile as the memories surface.

Conscious Buying

'Conscious Buying' is buying consciously, with complete awareness of the reason behind it. Do I need it or do I want it to gratify the senses? Gratification is not all bad if we don't get carried away in the act. Asking ourselves the following questions each time will help us make the right decision and choice. Why am I buying? Is my purchase helping somebody's livelihood? Is it impacting our eco system? How long am I going to use this? Will I pass it on or share it with my family and friends? How long will I use it? With conscious buying, comes 'Slow Fashion'.

Slow Fashion

Slow fashion is a conscious effort on your part to reduce the load on Mother Nature. Less to process, less to recycle and more for everyone to fulfil their needs. Mother Nature has so much to offer us besides cotton, silk and wool. Think banana, bamboo, flax, hemp, calotropis gigantea. It's about exploring options and not just exploiting a particular finite resource. Slow fashion is a conscious effort on your part to acknowledge, appreciate and aid somebody's fruit of labour. A patterned saree takes a minimum of four days to get off the loom. Add pre-loom dyeing and post-loom finishing

Natural fibers are
breathable, non-
allergic, soothing, easy
to maintain and
biodegradable

processes to it and you have a sense of the resources utilised in the making of this piece of clothing. Slow fashion is a conscious effort on your part to check and reduce hoarding, be it garments or other fashion accessory. You can apply this to any aspect of your life. It is a conscious effort on your part to wear what is not only naturally good for your skin but also to upcycle and recycle what you have and make it last longer. Upcycling is another way of staying creative by weaving memories with it and

making it an heirloom for the next generation! A story to tell even after your transition!

We are a part of an ecosystem that is intelligent and beautiful. Natural fibers are breathable, non-allergic, soothing, easy to maintain and biodegradable. From the soil to the soil, without causing harm to anyone. We are interdependent and interconnected with Mother Nature. Let's offer Her love and respect by going slow, easy and by making the right choices.



My Favorite Place

At His Lotus Feet

His favourite place is at His Lotus feet, says **Bikram S Boparai**, as he finds the magnificence of Creation there

**The Desert**

In the whole of Creation, my favourite place is at His Lotus feet. I find the vast expanse of the desert there, the stillness of the land and the ear-ringing silence captivating. At sunrise, the midnight blue of the sky transitions to a golden hue as the sun's rays kiss the horizon and the pinks and blues start colouring the sky. The taller dunes catch the rays of the morning sun, the sand glistening as the dark shadows yield to the creeping light of the sun's rays. Life stirs, the desert wakes up. When it comes to sunsets, not all are created equal. The sunsets in the desert are magical as the sky resembles a palette of an artist experimenting with the VIBGYOR spectrum of colours. As the sun comes down from its lofty perch and descends towards the horizon, for moments it seems tantalizingly suspended just above the horizon, framing the dunes and sending cascades of fire into the sky before yielding gracefully to the ever-deepening sky of the dusk. Yes, my favourite place is at His Lotus feet as I find the desert there.

The Beach

My favourite place is His Lotus feet because I find the coastline there, where the land meets the ceaseless waves of the seas as they caress the shore and gracefully retreat before repeating this ceaseless motion over and over again. The palms respond to the water lapping the shore with their own dance, swaying as they catch the breeze. To walk along the beach, your feet gently sinking into

the wet sand as the waves bathe Your feet, yes, I think my soul is cleansed. Yes, my favourite place is at His Lotus feet as I find the beach there.

The Mountains

My favourite place is His Lotus feet because I find the lofty mountain ranges there, clad in thick forest cover, the summit of the mountain breaking free in splendid isolation as it reaches skyward. Life flows at the base of the mountain range, based around the gushing torrent of a river as it forges its way over the rocks and boulders in an inexorable march to its destination. Village settlements dot the side of the mountain as your gaze start moving up, with smoke from chimneys hanging in the air before lazily curling up the slope of the mountain. Further up the mountain turns green with the forest cover, teeming with wildlife scurrying about their daily business. Wildflowers grow in gay abandon, often carpeting the mountain slope in startling shades of a multitude of colours. Beyond, the vegetation thins out as the gaze settles on the licks of snow snaking through the crevices of the mountain. The summit shimmers against the deep blue of the sky, the snow catching and reflecting the dazzling rays of the sun. Yes, my favourite place is at His Lotus feet as I find the mountains there.

It is no surprise, then, that my favourite place is at His Lotus feet as He is the Creator, the architect of the many-splendored beauty of this planet. I think I will curl up there, for I am home.

Tales Of Transformation

Anecdotes of how Maitreya Dadashreeji transforms and guides us in our everyday life

Dadashreeji is a force that awakens us to the experience of Divine Love, deep acceptance, joy and peace within us. We begin to feel more whole and complete in His Presence and our soul blooms. Often these experiences feel 'unreal' or mystical, when viewed by the practical mind. His teachings are by way of personal experiences that help us deal with life's challenges. When the Divine awakens within us, it becomes more than just a moving spiritual experience. It touches all aspects of our life and transforms us as we move closer to our Inner Divine. In this column, we will feature transformative stories from the members of our ever-growing family – moments from the ordinary and practical part of our life and how The Grace of Maitreya Dadashreeji shapes us in new ways.

This month we dwell on the metamorphosis of Mitra Marzin as he shares his journey with Maitreyi Jagruti.

Mitra Marzin is from Mumbai in India and his journey with Maitreya Dadashreeji began in 2014 when his wife was seeking closure after her father passed away. In the quest to find closure, they came across someone who introduced them to Dadashreeji. Mitra Marzin recounts that he had always experienced himself as 'different' and would often share with his aunt that he was bored with this life, and he was seeking something greater. His aunt would reassure him that 'his moment will come'. When Marzin ji met Maitreya Dadashreeji, he felt his moment had come and there has been no looking back.

Share a little about your search with us and how has being with Dadashreeji impacted you?

I was always different from others, removed from the materialistic world, and I found myself to be sensitive, caring, and interested more in giving than taking. I would ask myself if I was a misfit because I was unlike most other people; I tried to gel in with the daily mundane life but that did not give me the inner happiness I sought. I turned to my aunt for guidance as she was on the spiritual path. And just as she had predicted that my time would come, I was blessed to finally meet Dadashreeji in 2016. I was called to the ShantiKshetra Premgiri Ashram for a long stay. It did not seem possible that I would be able to do that since I was finicky about food, my TV and newspaper, etc. My wife was sure that I would not last beyond a week but I stayed for three weeks, and that changed the game for me. That experience was priceless, it made me disciplined, and it gave me a chance to know Dada better.

Upon my return from the ashram, I tendered my resignation at my place of work since I was clear that I had found my path and my Guide, my Maker and I only wanted to work in that direction!

What stood out for you in the earlier part of your journey?

Listening to Dada for the first time was amazing. In fact, there is something He said that has stayed with me, it is deeply embedded within. I remember that Dada said, 'If you do not implement my teachings when you go out into the world then there is no use.' I absorbed His guidance completely. You need to make a difference to yourself and to others, there is no point in listening and not implementing.

Let me share something from an early session when Dadashreeji was training a bunch of mitras and maitreyis. He would share His teachings in the morning and in the evening, it was our turn to present those in front of the others. That made me very nervous, to stand in front of the Maitreya and attempt to share His words and teachings. So, I asked for His permission and I read out directly from my notepad whatever I had written in the morning. My delivery was a mess! At that time Dadashreeji told me, 'Faith in the unseen will give you courage.' That meant a lot to me, for what He was saying was that if I had the true Faith in Him, in the Divine, I would not need to read out from my notes, I will find my own language if it comes from a heart that loves Dada. That night, before going to bed, I flung my notes in anger and I told myself that I loved Dada so much that I would listen carefully to what He taught and then flow without referring to notes. True to the words of the Maitreya, I became an example of how a

Tales Of Transformation

good conductor should speak. My confidence grew from then onwards.

I can feel such strong energy even as you speak!

Yes, sometimes even talking about Dada is enough to make my tears flow. The Love I experience is so strong. I am a diabetic with a sweet tooth, and it was a big challenge in my transformation to give up sweets. Somewhere in my heart was the belief that only if Dadashreeji personally tells me to give up sweets would I do that. Once, at a meeting of many people, I had enjoyed the spread of sweets and desserts at lunch and then was busy listening intently to Dada. He suddenly stopped and looked at me as if there was only Him and me in the room, and out of the blue asked me about my sugar levels! Just imagine, in an important meeting Dada stopping everything to ask me that! I understood that it was an answer to my prayers that if Dada personally asked me to stop taking sweets I would. It was clear as daylight to me and I stopped taking sweets from that day on.

Any precious lessons of Dada that you have implemented in your life?

Being selfless, doing good and leaving the results to Him. Dada says life consists of situations, people and the Divine. We usually give preference to situations and people; we make them our priority. However, when we make the Divine our first preference, He helps us in taking care of everything else. That was a very powerful

message for me, and it has become my foundation. In recent times I been very ill thrice, suffered two strokes and a heart attack. One of the strokes impacted my vision. At that moment I surrendered to Dada and asked Him to take care of everything, even my life was in His Hands I was at peace and with Dada's Grace I recovered very well. I am a work in progress, and each day I get encouragement from my Divine Light about where I need to work.

How is your day-to-day relationship with Dadashreeji?

I experience Dada within me, I hear His voice and I can recognise Him. I hear His guidance and when I close my eyes, I can see Him. I won't go into the mystical parts as they are also fantastic, but whenever I want to get in touch with Him, I know I can do it quickly. I am here with His Grace to do seva.

How has it been to share the spiritual journey with your spouse?

It has been beautiful and filled with many things to learn. We have more tolerance, patience, and acceptance of each other with all our flaws. I am blessed to find Dada, associate, and bond with Him and experience His Grace. I had no clue that the Divine would be so kind. Being with Dada I've experienced the depth of the Divine's kindness. I encourage everyone to connect with your Divine and form a bond, it is the most wonderful experience one can have!

Devotees' Experiences

My Divine Friend – The Bestie who never leaves my side

I lost my mother in 2017. She had nurtured me single handedly, and was everything to me – my mother, father, mentor, teacher and my best friend too! We shared a great bond and shared literally everything with each other – our day, goals, dreams, and just about everything under the sun.

Even when Mom transitioned beyond the material in 2017, I felt that she never left my side.

I attended Bodh I in October 2019. As I entered the venue, I felt a wave of peace enveloping me as I listened to the Dadashreeji Mantra which was playing in the background.

In some time, I opened my bag for a pen, only to find the packet of mouth freshener strewn inside my bag. I was astonished to see it as I don't eat it and certainly didn't remember putting it there. My mom was very fond of mouth fresheners, and I guessed she was happy to see me attending Bodh – 1.

There were numerous occasions over time where I felt being taken care of, yet I dismissed them as mere mind games.

Despite feeling peace with Dada Mantra and being connected to Dada, I was not following any sadhana. All I was doing was communicating with the Divine Light and my Mom, whose picture I had placed next to the Divine Light, at the altar. I was overwhelmed with grief at her absence and was missing her guidance when I needed it the most:

As I was complaining, I felt as if the Divine Light gave me a stern look. Taking it as just a thought, I did not attach much meaning to it and finished my prayers. As I headed to the kitchen feeling alone and distraught, my phone rang. It was a call from one of the Maitreyis with whom I had briefly interacted some time ago. As I answered the call, she, addressing me by my name, asked me in the most loving voice ever, "Aap humse baat nahin karte aajkal?" ("you don't talk to us nowadays?") Her voice, filled with love and affection, felt like a soothing balm to my wounds.

And I suddenly realized that Dada was communicating and looking after me all this while even when I was unaware and ignorant of His presence. It was Him, who through that Maitreyi spoke with so much love, affection and sense of security that I needed so much that day. I finally realized that I was never alone.

Thus, began my journey of communicating with the Divine Light. I have not met Maitreya Dadashreeji and yet I know in my heart, that He is my best friend and an elder brother that I never had.

Meghna Sunder

Request a Prayer

“Your prayers work magic in others’ lives. Your prayers give them hope to cope up with this challenging world. When you pray for others, it brings a smile on the face of the Divine and you earn merit and His blessings without asking for them. These blessings would manifest in your life in myriad ways or forms” – Maitreya Dadashreeji

Heartfelt prayers give Divinity the reason to act or intervene. You may now send in your prayer requests to the following email id: invokedivinegrace@gmail.com

Following details of the person for whom the prayer needs to be offered are required:

- Full name
- Location
- Concern (for which the prayer needs to be offered)

The team will coordinate via email the suitable day, date and time for the same.

Events like Bodh, Spiritual Triangle, Maitri Prayer, 21 days Maitri Sambodh Dhyān and follow-up sessions are taking place online on Zoom and through live Facebook sessions.

For those seeking spiritual counseling/guidance from Mitra Shankh, please send an email to: meeting.mitrshankh@gmail.com requesting an appointment for the same.

*Practice two things to
resolve conflict and keep
harmony in a close
relationship:
Patience and
Open Communication*

Maitreya Dadashreeji

Contributors

Through the years, **Mitra Philip Zemke** has served as a nurse, teacher, minister of a church, and an art therapist. His name Philip means love given freely to friends and surname Zemke means - in service to the beings of Earth. True to his name, his life has focused on narrating motivational stories of the wonders of life thereby encouraging and spreading positivity in one and all. Maitreya Dadashreeji's Love, Grace and guidance has further awakened him to the guiding presence of his Inner Divine for which he is ever grateful to the Maitreya.

A doctor by profession, (currently working as a Consultant Radiologist in P.D. Hinduja Hospital, Mumbai) **Mitra Sut** - as he is fondly called also teaches and conducts spiritual sessions and shares the insights gained from his Master Dadashreeji.

Growing up **Maitreyi Meredith** loved seeing the unity and connection in all religious traditions to one truth: Love and has longed to help others. Meredith has experienced Maitreya Dadashreeji as 'Love' and felt her life complete in that moment. She is a student and seeker of truth, simplicity, love and is passionate to help Mother Earth. She has a doctorate in physical therapy and currently works as a physical therapist and teaches yoga. She also has a degree in Dramatic Arts and was professionally trained as an actress, director and in dramaturgy.

Maitreyi Sebanti is a Leadership Development professional with over 25 years of experience across various industries, specializing in designing and delivering Transformational Learning programs for corporate audiences. She has been associated with IATL for over 7 years with the sole purpose of designing learning interventions for corporates that revolutionizes personal growth and corporate culture.

A home baker from Navi Mumbai **Rahul Nagvekar** has been following his passion for baking since the past seven years. A merchant navy officer by profession, he was also into corporate tourism before he dropped it all to follow his heart. He enjoys every moment of this journey with the Grace of God.

Dr.Sreelatha Shetty, is a B.A.M.S and M.D.(Kayachikitsa). She has practiced ayurvedic medicine along with panchkarma treatment for 8 yrs. Sreelatha currently works as a research fellow for an AYUSH project in an Ayurvedic hospital.

Maitreyi Suman is in love with the beautiful journey that is Dada. In her free time, she reads, writes, occasionally paints and grows greenery wherever possible. She is also an entrepreneur with the purpose of promoting handloom weaving and supporting artisans.

Bikram Singh Boparai is passionate about motorcycling and believes in the adage, 'Live to ride, ride to live'. Finds himself, his true nature, on his beloved motorcycle. Is blessed to receive an unparalleled love and be in His Grace.

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