

# heartfulness

purity weaves destiny

## OBSERVATION

*The science of spirituality*

## MEDITATION

*As a tool for self-awareness*

## HEART TO HEART

*The practical wisdom of  
non-verbal communication*

## DELIGHT IN GIVING

*An orange flower  
that brings joy*



*International*

# HEARTFULNESS RETREATS



# 7-Day Silent Retreats

24th June- 1st July 2016

18th - 25th September 2016

11th - 18th December 2016

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# Experience Heartfulness

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# Seeing is Not Enough

What made Newton see gravity in apples falling, Galileo see a pendulum for clocks in swinging alter lamps, and Madame Curie discover radiation from shiny stones? They were gifted with wonder and curiosity. They observed. The wonder-filled observation focused their thinking into discoveries.

The most important breakthroughs in science and knowledge have come about through observation. Some observations are directed towards proving or disproving specific hypotheses, while some observations lead to discoveries that are serendipitous. Observation is essential for any scientific mind.

Observation is paying attention to what we see. We pay attention to what we take interest in. What do we get when we take interest, pay attention and observe? We learn and derive knowledge. This in turn accelerates our progress. This is true in any field of study and is no less true in the field of the inner science also known as spirituality.

The skill to observe can be developed by the practice of inner silence or meditation. While observation helps in meditation, meditation also helps in observation. Silencing the mind and keeping away the distractions, when practiced properly enables observation to become second nature.

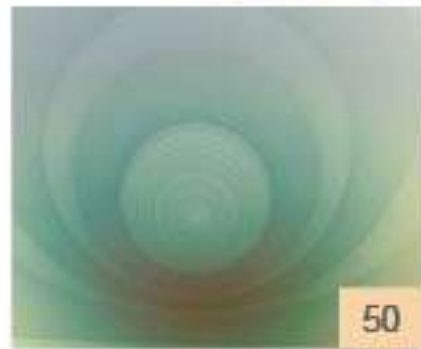
Meditation as the central activity of spirituality is made more dynamic by observation. What do we observe when we meditate? Our feelings, moods, thoughts and revelations. We also observe the existence of energy centers in the body, the spiritual anatomy, and their interrelationships.

The Heartfulness approach to the Sahaj Marg system of Raja Yoga has been on the cutting edge of spiritual science and its evolution for almost one hundred years, and every Guru of the system builds on the accomplishments of his predecessors, like in any field of science.

By having a scientific mind of observation, we can meditate with interest to reveal our potential and our possibilities, not only for one's self but for the entire humanity.

*Victor Kannan,*

Director, Heartfulness Institute, USA



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## Do and Feel

It is a beautiful late summer day and outside is a huge tree, full of life. On it sit kookaburras, those hilarious kingfisher birds known for their infectious laugh. They wait with their sharp eyes for movement below, to swoop and catch their lunch. In the distance, the many birdcalls create a joyous cacophony of sweet sounds creating the ongoing backdrop of life in this street.

At night the possums jump across the branches, mothers carrying babies on their backs, grown since their birth in the spring, but still worthy of mum growling at anyone who threatens them. The tree is old and still generously shares her rich harvest of berries with a vast array of birds, mammals and insects, all using her branches as the thoroughfares of their daily life.

Let's go deeper. Within the trunk and roots of the tree, energy is flowing up and down with a vitality that is vibrantly associated with summer. Touch her trunk gently and you will feel it. Soon, as the weather cools, that flow will start to slow down, and eventually during the cold winter months it will become subtler in its movement and descend deep into the roots in the earth, holding the nourishment until next year when it rises again to produce leaves, new branches, flowers and fruit. The cycles of the seasons are evident everywhere.

And what are our cycles as human beings? How do we change internally with the seasons and the lunar cycles? How do we change with the daily cycles from dawn to dusk and throughout the night? Are we aware that our breathing subtly moves from the left to the right nostril and back again throughout a twenty-four hour cycle? Are we aware that our minds function better at certain times than others, and that eating certain food changes the inner condition of the heart? And what of feelings and inner states of being?

There are so many things to observe in every little detail of life. Take the time this month to observe yourself, and how you change from moment to moment. It is a magnificent experiment that will change your life. Become observant, become aware and introspect. Meditation is a magical way to do this, going deeper and deeper within, to the feeling level of existence and beyond.

Enjoy the ride!

*The Editors*



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Remember yourself. Deep inside you have an observer, a constant neutral witness to your posture, gesture, facial expression, breathing, taste, impressions of light and sound. Don't leap to interpret. Just be there and observe.

JONATHAN PRICE

PHOTOGRAPHY BY FRANCESCO CHIESA



# *The Power of Observation*

Swati Kannan



Often I wonder if meditation can change people's personalities and behaviors. Does the fundamental act of meditation make us better human beings? After much deliberation, I would like to respond, "Yes". Meditation can advance us as individuals, but not without self-observation and a will to change.

Observation is a skill we innately possess and intuitively use. For example, infants and children learn behaviors and develop personalities by observing their parents. Even important breakthroughs in science arise from the simple power of observation of nature, events and people around us. Novels about Sherlock Holmes rest on his acute ability to notice the details around him in deducing certain conclusions, and Isaac Newton is said to have surmised the concept of gravity by witnessing an apple fall from a tree. Of course, many people saw apples fall to the ground but only Newton discovered gravity. This means that

simply looking is not enough – we need to observe. By examining the world around us with curiosity, we develop an understanding of our environment.

But these are external observations. What of internal or self-observation? In psychology, self-observation is termed 'introspection', and introspection is defined as "The examination of one's own conscious thoughts and feelings."<sup>3</sup> The process of introspection in psychology involves reflecting on one's own mental state, but in the spiritual context it also refers to examination of one's own spirit or soul.

Like any other skill, the art of observation or introspection can be polished and used to improve our behaviors, emotional reactions and responses to unplanned events in life.


These ideas give rise to an important question: How do we refine our ability to introspect both mentally and spiritually? Meditation? Most of the current research on the effects of meditation focuses on Mindfulness. The practice of mindful meditation has become mainstream now in many parts of the globe, and it has been studied in psychology to assess its effects on both physical and mental health.

When searching for how to practice Mindfulness, we find that most websites have the following protocol in common:

Sit down quietly, with eyes closed.

Focus on the breath, and accept all sensations filtering through, without judgment. The goal is to achieve awareness of the present experience.

Instead of becoming overwhelmed by thoughts, feelings and body sensations, the person is better able to manage them, with practice.



Physiologically, practitioners of Mindfulness meditation show similar changes in the brain after just a few weeks of meditation:

- The gray matter in the brain's frontal cortex, which processes attention, focus and sensory processing, enlarges, thus increasing the skills necessary for observation, and
- The pre-frontal cortex, which is associated with positive emotion, also demonstrates higher activity levels in meditators.<sup>9</sup> The brain surprisingly becomes more active during meditation, which has been linked to improved emotional regulation, especially in people who have meditated consistently for five years or more.

Psychologically, Mindfulness meditation provides:

- Insight into emotions,
- Boosts concentration, and
- Can help with relationships.

Mindfulness meditation has been integrated with other stress reduction techniques and with cognitive behavioral therapy to help with anxiety and recurring depression, respectively.

If such contemplation leads to changes in the brain that increase attentiveness and result in mental well-being, how does that translate into improved introspection?

Through the art of meditation, our awareness of our surroundings and of our own internal situation increases. Mingyur Ripoché, a young Tibetan monk and co-author of the bestseller, *The Joy of Living*, describes awareness as “the mind that knows”<sup>10</sup>. Awareness is already a characteristic of the mind. Mindfulness and awareness complement each other. And if you can train the mind with meditation, awareness is naturally improved.



Meditation allows space for observation of self without judgment. "It's the act of paying attention... that gradually slows the rushing river [of thoughts and emotions] that would allow me to experience a bit of space between what I was looking at and the simple awareness of looking."<sup>1</sup> Most of us lose awareness or control during an angry outburst. After the outburst is over and we have had time to deliberate, we may apologize for our reaction. We may promise not to react so negatively again, however, if the mind could be self-aware during outraged behavior, the stormy response could be changed to a calmer reaction in that instant. If responses to situations can be altered, these actions can then lead to personality changes.

Since Mindfulness helps with awareness of our mental state, it requires no stretch of the imagination to understand that Heartfulness makes us aware of our feelings and our divine state. A divine state is characterized by inner beauty, strength and wisdom.


The practice of Heartfulness is not new, and has been taught in various ways in India, China and other Eastern countries. It emphasizes feeling divine love in the heart instead of just contemplating it. It goes beyond the thoughts and feelings of the mind. This technique increases perception of the higher Self, also known as the spirit or soul. By introspecting on our inner condition after meditation, we become aware of our spiritual progress, and subsequently transform our hearts to openly accept divine grace.

Observation is possible of the external world, the mind and the inner Self. They are all interconnected but, as stated before, simply looking is not enough. Simply meditating is not enough. In order to change our thoughts, our emotional reactions and our personality, we must meditate and introspect with curiosity about our true divine nature. Becoming aware of the higher Self can change our thoughts, our emotional reactions and our personality. And through self-observation, if we learn that we are all spiritually equal, the world will be divinely impacted ●

#### (ENDNOTES)

- 1 SELF-REFLECTION. [HTTP://WWW.MEMINDEX.COM/SELF-REFLECTION](http://www.memindex.com/self-reflection)
- 2 HOLZEL BK, ET AL. *MINDFULNESS PRACTICE LEADS TO INCREASES IN REGIONAL BRAIN GRAY MATTER DENSITY*. PSYCH RES. 2011 JAN 30; 191(1): 36-43
- 3 MINGYUR RINPOCHE & SWANSON. *JOYFUL WISDOM: EMBRACING CHANGE AND FINDING FREEDOM*. 2009

# BACKGROUND Chatter



P.R. KRISHNA shares his observations on the background chatter in the mind, the quantum field of realities we create for ourselves, and what is beyond both in the realm of pure universal consciousness.





Recently, while sitting in meditation I was troubled because of some events that had taken place. As a result, it was difficult to center myself and go deep into meditation. I tried to apply my will to control the flow of thoughts and after a while my mind became more or less still. Even after this, though, I observed that a sort of background chatter persisted. It was not very strong, but it was noticeable.

I thought about why it was there, and it occurred to me that this background chatter is like the background radio waves that are prevalent throughout the universe. All of us know of SETI, the search for extra-terrestrial intelligence. The scientists at SETI listen to and filter radio waves that form the background chatter of the universe. They apply algorithms to see if any of these waves are intelligible. The theory is that if they have a coherent structure then there is a good probability that someone with intelligence is out there trying to communicate with us.

The other idea of relevance is that of the quantum field of physics. The quantum field is the field of un-manifested probability. Physicists tell us that as observers we cause certain realities to manifest from out of the vast sea of probabilities that exists, just by the mere fact of observing them. This is the essence of the Special Theory of Relativity proposed by Einstein.

What is this quantum field? Think of it as a wok full of oil. A cook tests the oil's heat by sprinkling a few drops of water on it. If the oil is hot enough, the water droplets make a loud spluttering noise and dance on the surface of the oil as soon as they hit the surface. The quantum field is similar. In the beginning, before we have regulated and trained our minds through meditation and rid our minds of the unnecessary complexities that exist, the surface of the oil is covered with a scum made up of our *samskaras* (complexities). Thus, every time we observe the quantum field of probable realities for the future, we see stuff that is from our past. This is visible to us because it is what we have created and therefore what we see.

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What is the nature of this background chatter? I have observed that this chatter is our baggage, largely composed of our *samskaras*, which determine our desires and attitudes and beliefs.

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We create our own reality and our own future, We observe what we want to see with our colored vision, and think that there is no other reality other than the one we create for ourselves, without even being aware we are doing so.

Until we are ready to accept that our reality is not the real one, there can be no change in us nor in the world around us. At the beginning of a spiritual journey our consciousness is very narrow, so our field of view is limited and often very negative as well. In a sense, we are running our own version of SETI every day, trying to make sense of our personal background chatter. The problem is that our algorithm is governed by our state of being, often full of desires, fears and insecurities, all compounded by our attitudes and beliefs.

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