

The Heart of the Meditator eBook



by Blair Lewis, PA-C

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Forward

In this sequel to **Meditation: the Inward Journey**, I will take you deeper into the world of meditation. You will journey deep into the mind, finally coming to rest at the true home of the meditator: the cave of the heart. I will show you the cave of the heart and explain the concept of the Sacred Heart – found in many the world’s greatest traditions. You will be enthralled with the discoveries you find in the cave. I will attempt to push you, as meditator, still farther. From the deepest, most inner recesses of your mind and heart, I will bring you full circle back into the day-to-day world of men and machines. Here, the words of my teacher, Pandit Rajmani Tigunait, Ph.D., will explain the dynamic living connection with all beings – the Sacred Link.

It was Buddha who taught the world that all life is suffering because of cravings and desires of the mind. According to Buddha, there are valid techniques that can help you cultivate and refine the cravings of your mind. Upon using the techniques, you will obtain moksha (liberation) from the tyranny of your mind and personality.

I will help you learn how to create a bridge between the cave of your heart and the bustling world of today. Using this bridge, or Sacred Link, to join the inner world of refined and cultivated peace with your hectic daily life, full of interruptions and contradictions, you will discover that the world is no longer a frightening place. Panditji and I will leave you with a message and a methodology of hope and joy. You will learn how to take the profound peace of meditation and expand it by living an active life. Panditji’s vision of Sacred Link is an ongoing healing revolution, helping you to live, love, and succeed in life every day. The Heart of the Meditator gives you the missing pieces to live a dynamic life of passion and compassion. Join me for this fascinating conclusion of the **Inward Journey**.

Introduction

We know meditation as the science of self-effort and self-unfoldment – it was not always that way. Approximately 1200 years ago, many meditators got distracted by impractical philosophies. In that era, philosophical meditators loved philosophy more than food. They believed that a guru's blessings would magically solve their problems. Self-effort was removed from the equation. They wanted blessings, not technique, and chose prayer over self-discipline. Their ears were deaf to the pleading of the sages, "Please acknowledge the fact that you are not in very good shape. Your body demands health, and your mind demands happiness. Do not deny this reality. If I eat your food for you, my stomach will not make your stomach feel full."

Today, we do not have much faith in a guru's blessings, but we do believe in self-effort. We want technique. Hiding inside a philosophy that does not acknowledge our needs and worries will never lead us to perennial joy. Becoming passive on the journey of peace is dangerous. We need a personal philosophy that acknowledges our debts, our bank, and our struggle to pay off our debts. You need a personal philosophy that requires self-effort.

Transformative meditation will help you to overcome your slavery to your mind, body, desires, and memories. But you must make an effort to gather the resources to become free from this slavery. You must work at meditation to become free and to understand that which makes you yourself, to be centered and undisturbed by your surroundings. With transformative meditation, you will strive for a balanced relationship with the world around you and the world within you.

Carelessness can become a problem, like letting a tree slowly grow on your roof. Earlier, you could have pulled out the tiny tree and planted it in the soil where it would give you shade and fruit. But, too late, your tiny tree has grown into a massive oak that has destroyed your roof and your home. Thus, misery that has yet to come can be prevented. This is where yoga comes in. You can prevent bad things through skillful action and redirecting your life. Your present life is a logical extension of your past. You have full freedom to trim your present life, cut it, graft it, and transplant it. However, you must always be a wise gardener. Is it time to trim off bad habits? Or will it be better to strengthen other positive aspects of your life instead? Is it time to transplant your present life or to retreat into its shade? The science of meditation can help you establish your own guidelines in which to base these important decisions. While meditation is practiced in stillness, it is not and must not become a passive hideout.

You must not grow into complacency and repeat the follies of the 8th century. If your meditation practice is not fully alive and bearing good fruit, then you should seek guidance from a teacher. And as a bridge between you and your search for further instruction, I offer you this new eBook – **The Heart of the Meditator**.

Chapter One: Meditation that Matters

Many of us today are still confused about our personal meditation practice. Once a day, or once a week, we sit still, attempt to quiet our mind and spend our precious twenty minutes wrestling with our impulses, memories, and unwanted thoughts. Frustrated and uninspired, we come out of our ‘meditation’ and rush into the world of men and machines.

I know this can happen because it was my own meditative experience for many years. Surrounded by inspiring books and teachers, I was convinced that meditation was a great thing, but it seemed like a miserable way to spend my morning.

One day, my teacher, Pandit Rajmani Tigunait, Ph.D., asked me about my experiences in my own inward journey of meditation. I was shocked by my answer. Not only did I not feel inspired and confident about my life after meditating, I was actually more frustrated and disappointed with myself. Thinking that Panditji would be disappointed in my report, I stopped talking. His reaction shocked me more than my answer had:

“Now you are ready for more refined instruction. Your frustrations are a sign of great progress. Only by clearly seeing the trepidations of your own mind can you find the motivation and the courage to polish and refine the mind. Your words are not words of failure, your words are the commencement speech of every meditator, graduating to the next level.

“You probably felt very alone most of the time when you were meditating. Most of us think we are impressing some invisible audience or God by being so faithful to our meditation – even though all we feel is frustration and failure. This is because you are not living your life for you. Instead, you are still trying to please others, even imaginary beings. This is how all of us feel at first. Now, both your life and your meditation practice will become more lively and engaging. The dull, boring times are now ending.”

Panditji taught me a method of living meditation. Over the next several months, I went from being a passive spectator to the owner of my life. As the owner of my life, I started making executive decisions about how I would spend my time and who I would try to please. My life started to become about me, not about others. I was dismayed to see how much time I had spent in the past, worrying about what others might be thinking about me and my life. I had no idea how little notice other people gave me – my imagination had created a huge audience of spectators, judges, and historians that didn’t exist. I remembered how threatened I felt in elementary school when teachers warned me that if I got into trouble at school, the incident would be written on my permanent record. Maybe my paranoia began there, where my fear of failure became a fear of permanent failure.

Having grown up playing little league baseball and cheering for the Cincinnati Reds, I wrote my declaration of independence, see below, couched in baseball lingo. I wrote this declaration in a half hour, and it became my daily guide as I changed my life through yoga and transformative meditation.

Tired of Being Bossed Around?

How We Give Up Our Power to Our Mind, Our Senses, and Our World

I have been getting those emails with subject lines like “Fire Your Boss” or “Be Your Own Boss.” They are schemes to get me to work out of my home selling something door-to-door or online. Yesterday, I got one entitled, “Feel Like You Can’t Take It Anymore?” Well, I couldn’t, so I deleted that one right away.

But, this morning I realized that I have to fire my boss. Not literally my boss, but my ego – the owner and the only player on this team of Blair Lewis. He’s the only guy to step up to the plate, the only one to swing at the pitches. Only thing is, he swings at every pitch! Even though I am the rightful owner of the team and the one who should make decisions about who plays, for some reason, I have sat back passively and decided to let him bat a few...okay, not just a few...okay...every pitch. Every pitch, every day, every year since I can remember. That’s why I have to fire him.

He has a history of acting on every impulse. He never lets a desire just fly by, and even if he misses, he keeps swinging until he has struck out. Man, I hate that! Even the worst baseball player knows that you don’t swing at every pitch! But, he does.

After a few years of watching this fellow swing away, I have found that my opinion of his performance varies. Sometimes, I cheer him, and sometimes, I want to fire him. A few decades into this spectator lifestyle of mine has made me realize that, in general, he is doing a lousy job. He’s not a bad guy, just the wrong guy for this team. That’s why I have to fire him.

A long time ago, I was owner and the designated hitter of my one-man team. But, when it came time to step up to the plate, I hesitated, I doubted, and I was replaced by my ego. My replacement was both humble and arrogant. He seemed good-natured but way too eager to show-off. He was driven to please others as if he had no other choice. I never liked that.

He has made great enemies and great friends. He has bowed to applause and has completely ignored the cursing from the stands. He has not been as confident as I thought he should be. Protecting his image is the virtue he adores the most. Everyone has to like him and approve of his actions; if not, he defends them like a valiant fool on a sinking ship. No matter

what has happened in the world, he feels he is responsible for it. It is all him. No wonder he struggles constantly and fears failure so much. That's why I have to fire him.

I have been thinking this over. If I fire him, then it is all up to me. Could I really do a better job? Struggling constantly, hiding my flaws, and praying for success? This will not be an easy thing. If I am no longer the spectator but the guy in charge, what will I do with all that responsibility?

How much longer can I hide up here cheering for the homeruns and jeering at my ego's errors? Maybe I am the 'strike-out' king, but I don't know that because I have never even picked up the bat. Until now, I haven't wanted to get out there in the dirt and mix it up with the other contenders in the field of life. I haven't wanted to take the risk. Instead, I've wanted to just sit back and hide in the stands. Forty some years later, I can't take it anymore.

That's why I have to fire him.

How do I do it? Do I call a lawyer or psychologist? Do I start screaming my guts out at him? Unleashing every memorized flaw and embarrassment that he set me up for? Nah, that's too much. It is not my style. I am just going to quietly walk up to him and gently reach out for the bat. He has kept the game going for years when no one else was willing to do it. He's not so bad after all, but he is doing my job, and it is finally time for me to do my job – that's why I have to fire him.

Tired of being a spectator?

Step up to the plate.

By Blair Lewis (a former spectator of life)

My declaration of independence was a daily read for me. Every morning I had to remind myself that what I was doing, I was doing for me and no one else. No matter how much I wanted to show off and brag about how meditation helped me help others, I stayed quiet. I needed time to discover joy in the brief solitude of meditation. My mind and I were going to have to learn how to get along.

Chapter Two - Is Somebody There?

When I am home alone, sometimes I think I hear someone else in the house – someone who has come back home unannounced. Wanting to know whether I am really alone or not, I yell downstairs, “Is somebody there?”

One day, while sitting for meditation, I felt that same kind of presence. “Is somebody there?” I yelled inside my head. No answer. I yelled again. My mind was like a child, trying to tiptoe past me unnoticed. Caught red-handed, I asked: “What’s up?”

And in this way, I began to learn to dialogue with my mind. It was so full of fears and ambitions that every time I wanted to sit quietly, it turned into a wrestling match that I rarely won. It was time for me to apply the new insights that Panditji was teaching me. I had to set aside my lofty goals of sitting for twenty minutes in heavenly bliss. Twenty minutes was all the time I had for my morning meditation and heavenly bliss was what I thought I should experience.

As a writer, there is an old joke about how you overcome writer’s block so that you can start writing again. You lower your standards. I had meditator’s block. I lowered my standards. Instead of expecting heaven and choruses of angels, I went into meditation with an open mind. After sitting still for a while, I got that feeling again and yelled out: “Is somebody there?” There was. It was me.

As long as you think you are your thoughts and feelings, then whatever thoughts and feelings you are having become your identity. And those thoughts and feelings are always changing. I realized I wasn’t having an identity crisis, I was having a multitude of identities and all of them were in crisis because almost none of them were the identities that I wanted to be. Sometimes I was happy, sometimes sad, other times hurried, and many times confused. Were these feelings and states defining my identity? Or could I be someone or something else?

Once I lowered my expectations, all of this changed. I found an identity that was not subject to change. It was me. Not the thoughts, feelings, and impulses of my mind, but rather that which had the ability to witness all of those attributes of the mind. It was me, just me, glorious me. I spent years looking for me. Now it seems ridiculous, as if I had spent years riding my horse roaming the countryside looking for the horse that I was riding.

From church to church, national park to wilderness safari, hospital to psychotherapy offices, I had searched everywhere for what I found with transformative meditation.

First, I had started with God. Initially, I thought I needed to find God to be happy. But then my honesty changed that idea. I realized I had no idea what God was and neither did the medical literature I was reading. I thought about God as a wise old fellow with a long white beard floating on some clouds in heaven. I was never going to find him inside a church or temple. Then my Christian Bible said God was love and God was truth. But the text began by saying in the beginning was the Word and the Word was God. I was really confused.

God became the trickiest subject to confront. For some, the greatest source of fear is God, and yet God is supposed to grant us freedom from fear. We all have our own attachment to our God as if God were our possession. Many times, people get stuck in the 'my God versus your God' debate. They tell us that we have to believe in their God. When we do not have a clear picture of who and what God is for us, then we get very little relief by surrendering ourselves to God – whether it is 'our God' or 'their God.'

As I studied more, I adopted a definition of God as One being free from all afflictions. I needed a personal God that was free from all conflicts and contradictions and could help me attain freedom from all false identities in my mind. I heard that those who are God-oriented do not believe that they are the owners of the forces of nature. They believe that if they protect and serve nature, then they will be happy and healthy. They warn us not to treat nature like a commodity, instead, to treat nature lovingly. They are service-oriented people who inspire others to serve and protect and be happy.

Having an undergraduate degree in outdoor education, this land-oriented God inspired me to don my backpack. While I roamed in many beautiful lands around the world, God still eluded me. I was serving nature by recycling, conserving water, not littering, etc., but still I was not finding a God that would remove my torments.

Meditation convinced me that my problems were all in my mind. So I read and visited with the mental experts of the day – psychiatrists and psychotherapists. For me, psychics and clairvoyants were going a bit too far. I stayed in the range of choices documented in my medical journals and the best-seller list. Fiercely determined to find my answers, I decided to spend a few years battling it out with a doctorate-level psychologist. He had the credentials of an expert of the mind, and I had Panditji, an expert in the science of meditation, Ayurveda, and Tantra. It was about to get really interesting.

Jousting best described our sessions. I would argue for my convictions, while my psychologist kept trying to frame my understandings in Freudian and Rogerian lingo. We were on the same team, but our approaches were oppositional. In an air of mutual respect, we confronted personal growth issues from a wide variety of viewpoints and interventions.

I was battling for self-sufficiency, while he struggled to constrain my solutions in a vat of social normalcy. I argued that I must know myself first and become my best friend. He agreed, but had witnessed too many people ignoring their need for companionship, thus forcing their biological urges to rebel. These powerful forces must not be left unanswered and unchanneled. I understood the danger of suppression, yet heralded the call of my soul. He knew the mind and all its trepidations. I knew the soul.

His teachers were pioneers in modern psychoanalysis and family therapy. My teachers were Pandits and Swamis who knew what lay beyond the mind. His teachers had told him to keep his patients within the confines of what was known and documented. My teachers' literature included the Vedas, Upanishads, and Puranas – the most ancient scriptures on the planet. God, Soul, and Divinity were not in his school's curriculum. My curriculum began with the Agni Sukta of the Riga Veda, the story of creation itself.

But our literature did have common ground. The emphasis of the Vedas was on how to deal with the obstacles in the world and how to train the mind to overcome fear and loneliness. They stated that happiness required self-understanding and time for self-reflection. He agreed.

His teachers knew that medication management could be a valid adjunct to psychotherapy. My teachers taught me the science of meditation as a way of self-management. His teachers taught him how to help people cope in this ever-changing world of strife. My teachers told me to conquer the world within me – for upon doing so, I would have then conquered the entire world.

I knew that the first thing I would need to do would be to paint a picture about what this conquest would look like. I needed to know this for my own understanding. Once I could verbalize and diagram this map of self-unfoldment, then I could also explain it to others. I had my declaration of independence, but I needed something more. I listed all the pairs of opposites – on one side were the signs and symptoms of healing, and on the other, an endless list of obstacles that delayed my progress.

We discussed my list in reference to personal evolution – wanting to abandon fear and doubt, jealousy and greed, for something greater. Under the influence of these four hindrances, I had become distracted and discouraged to the point of completely forgetting my higher purpose of life. Sense pleasure and indulgence had become dominating forces, ones I had left unguided. Likewise, the mysterious spell of laziness, miserliness, drowsiness, and procrastination also blocked my efforts. We both agreed that despite the countless numbers of schools, colleges, teachers, temples, and churches, most people were stuck, lonely, and unfulfilled as I had been.

As a species, we seem to notice the unhealthy part of ourselves much more brilliantly than our strengths and successes. Even religions seem to talk more about sin and devils than they talk about goodness and godliness. Regardless of this seemingly negative approach, all human beings have the desire to be comfortable, to make the best use of everything, and to make qualitative changes in their lives.

Improving our lives is the first step towards self-confidence and self-trust. As I learned to wield my willpower and determination in a positive fashion, new traits appeared. I took my mastery in stubbornness and transformed it into willpower. I became enthusiastic, patient, tolerant, and courageous in my meditations. My strength and stamina started to dominate my degrading thoughts and habits. In time, I focused my worldly life on service.

My search for happiness had first required God. As I tried to define God for myself, I confronted my incomplete understanding of my childhood religion. Then, I thought about the concept of God from a broader perspective than my family's church. This next level of study had sent me to the woods and wilderness, the next piece to my puzzle. Improved, but not yet satisfied, the woods sent me to the world of psychotherapy. But the psychotherapist's office had not satisfied me either...

Chapter 3 - The Inside Job

I told my therapist, “I want to learn the art of living joyfully. I believe that happiness is an inside job. I fully understand that you want to make sure I manage my external affairs properly. But for me, that is Chapter Two. Chapter One is the search for my own soul. Let me fall in love with me. Let me gain my own self-respect.”

Once again, he agreed. He questioned the power of contemplation when pitted against the power of sensory-reinforced habit patterns squirming for expression. I became frightened. He was right. While I wanted to make changes in my life by attaining a clear and higher perspective, believing that from this lofty vantage point, my old desires and shames would vanish in the presence of inner wisdom, I experienced the power he had warned me of, later that same week.

I was alone at night and loneliness crept out of the shadows and started her dance in my head. Soon my vision was so cloudy. All I could see was how sad and forsaken my life had become. I had no place to run, no place to hide. Stuck in this illusion of failure, I started to believe my thoughts and feelings. The more distorted my self-perception became, the more I believed it. I was identifying with my past and with my losses. The sorrow became unbearable. With my last ounce of strength, I hoisted myself onto my treadmill. I pressed the start button. (There are times when exercise -- staying in motion -- can be lifesaving to a confused mind. The root word of emotion is motion. The more motions you make, the larger range of emotions you can experience. I knew that running was the opposite of paralysis.) Before fear could paralyze me, I started running on the treadmill. It worked that night. Almost twenty years ago in Jolly Grant India, I had seen a sign at Swami Rama’s hospital. “Self-esteem is a person’s greatest wealth. Selfless service to humanity is the greatest form of worship.” That night, my treadmill saved me and my self-esteem.

The next week, I confessed my failure to my therapist. My great and lofty intentions had lost the battle against my old self-concepts, even though my past identity was somewhat negative and very useless.

I asked him about God. He used to be religious, Catholic, I think. I was a yogi, and for him that was confusing. His understanding of spirituality was religious and dualistic, the world consisting of only two forces: good and evil. My view of spirituality was scientific and experiential. When I spoke of God, he was flooded with memories of false hopes and failed promises. Over the years, many victims of the church and spiritual cults had filled his waiting room. He thought that anything that wasn’t Catholic was probably Buddhist and was definitely

foreign. Non-dualism and the direct experience of consciousness were slightly off his map. Regardless of these differences, his extreme kindness and thoughtfulness would always keep us on track.

I was the patient. My goal was not his conversion, but rather our fusion. I kept in mind that “confusion” was a lack of “fusion.” We were slowly finding common ground between my inward path of self-transformation and his analytical insights. He was brilliant in his field, and I was stumbling in mine. I fought for the right words to explain my goal and my current location – which simply put, was the contemplative integration of all my life experiences as my first step. As long as I had any sense of good or bad about my past, I would be unable to be whole. The part of mind that functions in the head is the smallest fraction of the mind. The greatest totality of the mind is in the heart, and that is why the logic in the head is not enough to resolve all conflicts. Self-acceptance does not ignore the flaws and errors of the past, it heals them. I could say it right inside my head, but to him, I could not find the words.

Late one Tuesday night, I came back to my laptop. My mind was soaring with new ways to say it right. I had to stop pounding myself with guilt. Never before had I realized that my feelings, exploding with pangs of sorrow and remorse, were only an option, not a destiny written in stone. Until that night, contentment had never felt like an option. My desperation started to recede. No longer flooded with the fear of failure, my mind turned towards how I could best serve others. I knew the world was in bad shape, but through the grace of my teachers, I would have access to strategies that could help.

However, my own inner unrest disqualified me from being taught. My fears of inadequacy were sabotaging my chances for the very role for which I belonged. In my developmental years, guilt and self-condemnation were tools used to prevent me from repeating mistakes. I had over-developed these skills. One of my best friends was a serious sportsman – in a single scrimmage, he could determine whether the team was playing to win or simply trying not to lose. In my mind’s inner coliseum, I had spent years trying not to lose, thus, I had rarely won.

If you are familiar with spiritual renewal (transformation), you know that you have to die to your past in order to be reborn to a higher awareness. In the history of the mystics from all traditions, the level of initiation that gets all the publicity is that of total, instant transformation. Saul and the burning bush, etc. My path was different. Initiation was done gradually over decades, pausing for complete integration before proceeding forward. Over thirty years of yoga and meditation, over 20 years with the same teacher, and I was still learning.

The barrier that separates us from our sacred unconscious looms like a mountain. We dig with bare hands, scraping away the earth in vain, for the mountain remains. Still we go on digging. But in the final truth, this barrier, this mountain is not really there. It never was there.

– Huston Smith, Unveiling the Sacred Unconscious.

I had become a beggar, wanting someone to fulfill every desire and solve my problems. It was time for me to uncover the source of my own identity. My teacher and my wife could no longer be my crutches. Collapsing into quiet, my heart spoke, “The source that motivates you and stabilizes you is your own conscience. At this stage, your teacher, who has served as your conscience, wants you to establish a firm bond with your own conscience. Inner guidance must now replace the outward habits of begging for answers from others.” It was like being thrown into the deep end of the pool. Knowing that I could swim, the teacher had pitched me into the pool when I had least expect it. My terror in the pool had brought me to the door of my psychologist.

I told him, “I need your help. My powers of observation are sometimes not very clear. I know that everything comes to me in an intermingled form, some parts offer bondage and other parts offer freedom. I need to learn how to use that which is conducive to my growth and how to get rid of that which is not conducive to my growth.” The years of our conversations were very worthwhile, but it was not the end of my journey. From our talks, I had arrived at a new place – a cave.

Before I talk about this amazing cave, I remember an old story about a fellow who went to a very large bookstore. He stopped at the customer service desk and asked where the ‘self-help’ section was. The clerk refused, saying, “That would defeat the purpose, wouldn’t it?” My time in therapy taught me that I was going to have to help myself.

Chapter 4 -The Cave of the Heart

Eventually, I found the God of my understanding residing within me. The place of residence was my heart, not my head, my mind, nor my brain. My search had taken a new direction and a new destination – it was the Cave of the Heart.

I had heard of this cave – in my childhood it was called the Sacred Heart, the Heart of Compassion. Now, it had become my focal point for inner exploration. There was a profound difference at this phase of my journey; it was time for me to feel a true union with truth. The previous phases involved:

First, I had to recognize that there were selfless, kind, and helpful people who did not want anything from me – not my money, not my praise. If they had a “want,” it was for me to be happy and to imitate their behavior in how I treated others. Imitating their kindness and generosity could only be helpful.

The next phase was the scrutiny of their lives and understanding how many times they failed and stumbled in their journey. I stared at their pictures for encouragement. Instead of worshipping their image, their faces reminded me that they too faced great difficulties and eventually became victorious. Gazing at them inspired me, making the goal seem more attainable. When the third phase arrived, it was time to experience a sense of union with them. The process involved bringing my mental awareness to my spiritual heart in the center of my chest and beginning a contemplative process of becoming enjoined with the mind and heart of the great sages. This contemplative process would continue for many years until all forms of resistance resolved. Identifying myself with purity, success, and selfless service was much more difficult than I imagined; overcoming this inner-resistance was painstakingly long. For many of my patients, developing a conviction that the source of goodness resides within their own heart would be a huge change in their self-concept and identity.

In Swami H. Aranya’s book, **Yoga Philosophy of Patanjali**, he describes this journey: “This process has to be practiced inside the heart. It is that inner part of the chest wherein one feels pleasure if there is love or happiness, and sadness, if there is unhappiness or fear, that is called the heart. As a matter of fact, the location of the heart has to be determined by following the feeling. It cannot be located by analyzing the body anatomically. The brain is no doubt the center of mental actions, but if the mental fluctuations are stopped for a time, it can be felt that the sense of ego is going down to the heart.”

In the beginning, some may find it easier to practice this technique with a concept of God as a luminous figure inside their heart. Swami Aranya continued, “As a liberated person is calm in mind and is blissful in face on account of his highest attainment, so should the contemplated holy figure in one’s heart be imagined to be, and it should be contemplated that one is fully associated with that figure.” If you do not associate the highest form of goodness and purity in a personified form, a different icon of transformation is recommended, a flame. Fire is the most global symbol of transformation and the life-sustaining principles. Iron is transformed into steel; muscles are strengthened into power; the core of our planet, like our sun, is heat, fire, radiance, brilliance. Visualizing a sacred flame in the cave of your heart will help your mind stabilize there.

After some practice, my mind became calm and steady. I felt like a carefree boy resting in a feeling of godliness. It was safe. I no longer felt like an alien nor alienated from this world and the people in my life. The sages say the cave of the heart is larger than our known universe. It is the all encompassing home of the manifest and unmanifest worlds. This limitless space inside the chest is the source of comfort and consolation. Even in our language today, we use phrases “our most heartfelt aspirations; the sacred heart, the broken heart, the heart of hearts.”

Swami Aranya continues: “Then knowing that the omnipresent God is pervading that space, the devotee should contemplate that his whole self is in the God who is present in his heart. The next step would be to merge his mind into the mind of God residing in the void-like space within his heart and rest in a state of contentment, without any care or thought. In other words, one should contemplate that one is completely within the God in one’s heart.” My family said this in more simple terms – *learn the prayer, recite the prayer, become the prayer*. Without this third step of becoming (living) the prayer, we could limit our life to that of a beggar pleading for help and never take any actions of our own. This would cripple us all. We must bring our inner world into manifestation in our daily life. Meditating in the cave of the heart gives us the strength and solace to function in this world without fear.

“When the above process of meditation is mastered, the devotee has a sort of blissful feeling in his heart. Then he should recollect that the blissful feeling, arising out of a sense of staying in God, is ‘I’ and he should bring his mind to a state of calmness and blissfulness (modeled) after the mind of God. If this is practiced with ardent devotion, carefully and continuously, the ultimate result of realization of one’s own Self is achieved.”

And that is the end of the beginning. I had to decide that something needed to be done; I had to decide that I was capable of doing what must be done; I had to commit myself that I would get the job done; and then I had to immediately start taking action – massive continuous systematic actions.

I needed to take both responsibility and action in my life. Meditating in the cave of the heart reduces my fears and feelings of being overwhelmed by my duties. Knowing that the highest goodness was inside me and I was inside that was a life-changing realization. One that still has to be repeated until every opposing memory of this fact has been resolved. Continual experience of this union (this yoga – literally ‘union, yoke, joining’) with all will in time free me from my own contradictions and self-sabotage. Such freedom and fearlessness is said to free us from all nine obstacles in life -- sickness, incompetence, doubt, delusion, sloth, greediness for sense-enjoyments, errors in understanding, not being firmly established in inward concentration, and a lack of stability to remain in the state of concentration. This declaration is made by Patanjali, the Codifier of Yoga Science in his Yoga Sutras, Chapter 1, verse 30. I have been quoting Swami Aranya from his book **Yoga Philosophy of Patanjali** by Swami H. Aranya, author’s commentary on Chapter 1, verses 28 – 30; Pages 66-70, SUNY Press.

Experiencing self-transformation in the cave of the heart is like the germination of a seed, we must provide the proper conditions and environment for our innermost joy to sprout. The potential for everyone to attain happiness is also similar to the potential of a seed. Only on fertile soil will the seed take root, and only in an atmosphere of total self-acceptance can we ultimately find the glory of all glories, the joy of all joys. And the abode of this happiness is in the heart of all hearts. The power that resides in the heart of consciousness is the freedom we have sought since birth. That power is activated by your own recognition of its existence. When you recognize it, you will attain both kinds of contentment – enjoyment and liberation. This transformation is instantaneous, as *Abhinavagupta* writes:

“He is united with this Heart as soon as this power has appeared before him. In fact, the state of liberation of one who is still alive is precisely this attainment of the Heart. ... This highest of religious goals is implied by the phrase “conscious realization.” ... The purpose of this text is the attainment of liberation while still living.” [**The Triadic Heart of Shiva** by Paul Eduardo Muller-Ortega; page 185; SUNY Press.]

These writings of Abhinavagupta, in the tradition of Kashmir Shaivism, elucidate the qualities and characteristics needed to induce a mental and physical state that is supportive of this highest absorption into peace. Even modern texts, such as **A Course in Miracles**, summarizes this event saying, “I rest in God.”

Once you enter the cave of your heart, illuminated with its own inherent effulgence, you enter into a state that is free from all worries and all grief. Even if you are the happiest, most satisfied person, without knowing the cave of your heart, you will become agitated and lose your temper because you are constantly breathing in the vibrations of fear that are currently permeating this world. You cannot help but be affected by the fears of others around you. Only when you enter the heart and rest yourself are you able to sleep.

We become a fully-grown human being when we gain access to our own heart and can heed its voice. If we have become alienated from ourselves, then we need permission and approval from others that we trust – churches, gurus, ministers. We need this because we are behaving like an alien in our own inner realm, our own heart.

Do not be bothered by the petty details of your life – instead, attend to that resident in your own heart and the space inside your heart that is infinite and boundless. It is not the space of your physical heart, but rather the inside of your physical heart that is a huge infinite space of light. Your heart center is bigger than this entire universe. You are infinite and eternal – thus you start to lose all worries, losses, and grief because you are infinite. At this stage, how could you lose anything?

When you are so clear, your mind and heart become filled with compassion. It is this compassion residing in your heart, and all human hearts, that is your teacher. He is always with you – before birth, during life, after death. Once you find yourself consciously aware of his constant presence, then your love becomes a spontaneous expression of your own soul. Such a transformative experience is crucial to those aspiring to perform humanitarian service. Without complete inner assurance of the safety and security of one's own existence, it is not possible to safely serve the most important needs of humanity.

A servant of the people and the planet must know the nature of the mind and the nature of the world. Such knowledge makes you both fearless and fully compassionate. You strive towards improving every aspect of life without becoming imbalanced and aggressive. It becomes time to build and stroll across the bridge toward your heart and away from the external world of fear and conquest.

Chapter 5 - Discovering the Sacred Link of the Human Race

No matter who you are, no matter which path you follow, one thing is definitely true: a confused mind is not fit to follow any path. Therefore, work with your mind. When you practice Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, or any other religion or philosophy, with a confused mind, you are bound to become a very confused Christian, Buddhist, or Hindu.

Attaining mastery over the modifications of the mind – the source of your confusion – is called yoga. When your mind is calm and tranquil, you will begin to see who you are. With a calm mind, you can easily decide what is right and what is wrong. If the mind is not calm, you can be stranded by your mind or body.

When the mind is not calm, it assumes and identifies with the modifications arising in the mind. If you have a sad thought, you will feel that you are sad. If you have a happy thought, you will feel that you are happy. These fleeting states of mind can create uncertainty and a lack of stability, which can lead you to destroy anything that threatens your security.

“Freedom from fear is the cornerstone of peace, and that peace—both in our inner world and in the world around us—is the keystone of true health and happiness. Peace is the most natural state of mind and the greatest wealth in life. At the core of our being, this precious wealth is always there. We lose it when inner unrest grips our minds, forcing us to act in a confused manner in the external world. This philosophy springs from the experiential knowledge that alienation is the cause of inner unrest, and further, that this alienation arises when we experience ourselves as isolated beings, competing for survival in a world that by and large is run by fear. This isolation is an illusion, a function of a confused and fearful mind—in reality, we are inextricably connected with each other and with the nurturing matrix of the natural world. It is crucial to dispel this crippling illusion.” Pandit Rajmani Tigunait, Ph.D.

Panditji was trying to tell me that we were never really separate nor disconnected from others. In fact, I discovered that the origin of the word ‘alone’ comes from the words ‘all-in-one.’ I would never be able to cure my loneliness by trying to make it more real to me, conjuring it in my solitude, and then recklessly seeking a cure. However, the illusion of loneliness and abandonment was so powerful that this concept took years for me to understand.

You must make an effort to reach where you wish to reach or make an effort to stay where you want to stay. Keep building and expanding your efforts for a long period of time without any interruption, and do this practice with love and respect. Don’t let distractions creep in. When you use your practice of meditation to achieve this inner peace, then do not interrupt your

meditation to answer the telephone. You will be able to do this when you finally realize how important it is to do your practice. This respect will come when you see what a great opportunity it is to practice.

I had to stop letting this world crowd my mind. I disconnected myself from that which I did not wish to be bothered by. Can you be quiet for a few minutes now? Drop your concerns for 5 minutes, and you will get a greater degree of insight and self-confidence to deal with those concerns in the 6th minute. This is my experience and it will work for you.

Eventually, you will find some topics that will not leave you alone – specific, undesirable thoughts that keep coming to you. Even though you made your decision not to be bothered, still, some unwanted thoughts will arise. In many areas of your life, you are doing quite well. But, when you cannot stop certain habits and feelings, it is time to expand your resources.

You have to find a practice that can help you without dismantling your favorite beliefs and habits. Loving God without knowing human love can be crippling. Good food, good thoughts, good shelter and good friends are essential to moving through lonely, tough moments that could leave you momentarily stuck and stranded.

Meditation is a practice because it requires effort – a stress-less effort. You practice it peacefully, not frantically. To reach the center of the lake where there are no waves, you must not make waves while getting there. When you practice meditation, you can manage many things quite well that used to bother you. Yet, some sentiments and desires are really quite strong. Proper training in non-attachment will help you reach a state where you are fully relaxed and able to let go. Non-attachment is not a form of passive surrender. Rather, it is a dynamic field of introspection where you examine the value of your impulses and mental intrusions. Any mental intruder (a thought, feeling, or desire) that is not supportive of your higher virtues can be easily dismissed in a glance. Non-attachment helps you to let go of the “historical trash” in your mind. Such filth never leads anyone up the mountain of success, only to the valley of discarded burdens and bumbles. Many times, you are the one perpetuating your own misery.

Reaching out for help through expert guidance and fellowship can be life-saving. When you are really afraid, you may revert back to childhood beliefs and memories that once gave you solace. Sometimes I hear people say, “I do not know if God exists, but I want him to help me now that I am in trouble. I may be afraid to dissolve myself in God, but it would be fine if God wants to dissolve himself in me. I want God to do things on my terms.” These petitions for help are sincere and display the inherent urge for unity with something great. The folly of asking ‘greatness’ to obey you may be a little arrogant but not unusual in this era. For some, God may not be well-defined, but this does not weaken our desire for help.

Panditji further justifies our desire for a better life by revealing the inner source of our motive: “Life has only one goal—living joyfully here and now and not letting life go in vain. To be born as a human is the greatest gift. And to die without knowing what this great gift is all about is the greatest loss. We are blessed with a beautiful body—a body fitted with a highly evolved nervous system, sensory perception, and a brain. And yet, we depend on the power of commercialism to set a standard for our beauty, and we depend on drugs to set the direction of our pleasures. We are blessed with a sensitive heart that supersedes the power and charisma of an ordinary mind, and yet, we fail to sense and honor the feelings of our loved ones. We are blessed with a mind equipped with linear thinking, logical calculation, and rational predictions, and yet, we suffer from indecisiveness and anxiety. Within this body and mind lies the infinite potential to become whatever we wish, and yet so often, we find ourselves powerless and suffer from worthlessness and despondency.

Lacking access to our own heart, we know little or nothing about our inner and eternal friend, thus we become a victim of loneliness. We go on reading passages that proclaim, ‘God created humans in His own image,’ and yet we fail to see our beauty and grandeur that mirrors our creator. We continue reading, ‘Be still and know that I am God,’ and yet instead of turning our attention inward, we fight over God’s houses that we erected on the foundation of our sheer human impulse. We are blessed with infinite insight and yet, lacking access to it, we waste our life gathering others’ opinions. We are blessed with indomitable will, and yet we seek inspiration from the outside world. Therefore, if you wish to experience the fullness of life, you must gain access to your core being and discover the sacred bond – the Sacred Link – between your core self and the endless layers of reality within and without.”

I needed Panditji to remind me about the inherent power that every human being has in their possession. In the medical profession, it becomes easy to see clients as being as helpless as they proclaim to be. Using clients’ human frailties to gain control over them has never been a goal of doctors nor priests nor parents. However, it happens because of our wish to be rescued and because of others who are eager to save us. In time, the truth becomes known – we have to help ourselves and we have to feel empowered to do so.

Panditji continues, “The discovery of this Sacred Link will enable you to see and adore a beauty beyond the fleeting standards imposed by the fashion industry. It will transport you to a world of joy far more profound than the pleasures induced by drugs. Discovering your personal Sacred Link will enable you to hear the pulsation of endless hearts in your soul, and vice versa, taking you to a new level of sensitivity to your own feelings, and the feelings of others. This discovery will charge your mind with decisiveness and your speech and actions with purpose and meaning.”

Sacred Link[™] is about instilling our minds and hearts with our innate wisdom that we are an integral part of one living entity: humanity. Endless diversity that we see in the world springs from one common pool called humanity. Making sure that this common pool remains healthy and continues supplying nourishment to all diversity is Sacred Link. Ancient wisdom reminds us that humanity is a part of an even larger entity—the world in which we live; the entire planet. Our health and happiness, and the health and happiness of others, goes hand-in-hand. When we, as individuals or as a society, separate ourselves from our larger counterpart, all forms of sickness and social unrest follow.

It is not just world leaders that create problems and solutions of social unrest. Life is much more of a grass-roots organization, and it is this organization that creates and dissolves the issues of the day. Everyone has issues that feel urgently strong, and our thirst for possessiveness seems unquenchable. We will strain and sacrifice the entire wealth of our mind, body, and relationships only to gain that which will fail to satisfy us the following day. We need something to give us pause.

When one of my patients has been thrown into tragic circumstances without warning or time for preparation, he behaves like a drowning man. Frantic and furious, he fights to get out of his whirlpool of pain. If, by accident, his flailing drowns others in his panic to escape, he brings that tragedy into the lives of others. At times, this is how many people seem to act. To help my devastated patient, I must first get him to stop fighting and start swimming. My assistance may be necessary to lift him out of the current, but usually not. To subside the panic for only a moment can provide him with the opportunity for insight. Meditation commonly provides that opportunity. When insight is coordinated with action, a person becomes their own savior.

To build a platform that can serve as both a place for rest and repose, as well as a spring board for action, Panditji has devised a five point plan in his vision of the Sacred Link[™] project. His format is very systematic, starting with attaining freedom from fear. Next comes a very personal history lesson as you enhance your knowledge of ancient traditions. This allows you to see the value of creating a bridge between East to West (his third step). Like anyone who regularly crosses the bridge between two cultures, you will discover Panditji's fourth step, acknowledging the underlying unity that holds all diversities in place. This discovery infuses your work with a healing vision (the fifth and final step) that nurtures and multiplies the truth of our own unity.

I grew up listening to earth-day music of the 1970's filled with pleas for unity and wisdom. John Denver sang to world leaders and global audiences about a world that works. He clearly saw the folly of fear and the importance of attaining freedom from fear. Most of our ears did not recognize the urgency of our planet. Panditji finally put it into words that caught the attention of my mind and heart. Here, he speaks of letting go of fear, step one:

“Evidently, we are a fear-run society. Just imagine today how much energy we pour into securing the relationships with our spouse and children, how much energy we spend on securing our streets, schools, jobs, and our investments. How preoccupied we are with homeland security and foreign land security. Fear haunts at home; fear haunts abroad.

“We have constructed a myriad of firewalls to secure our interests and rights, and yet, we are haunted by the fear of losing what we have and the fear of not being able to get what we want. The virtues of love and affection, compassion, and selfless-giving, naturally pulsating in our hearts, compel us to be open, kind, and generous, but the fear of being exploited forces us to close our heart’s door and live in isolation. Our minds are filled with endless thoughts, but the seat of our soul – the heart – is empty. We may be surrounded by friends and family, and objects of all sorts to occupy our minds, but deep down, we suffer from loneliness. How many of us are free from inner unrest, and how many of us realize that fear is the main force behind this turbulence? Therefore, before we move on discovering peace within or without, we must gain freedom from fear. This demon – fear – must be vanquished. As long as this demon is allowed to run loose, living joyfully is just a fantasy.”

I remember two powerful phrases from my endless hours of reading spiritual text from many traditions. “Freedom from fear is essential. Knowledge alone liberates.” While I believed what I was reading, I did not know what to do. What is that knowledge that liberates? And to make matters more complicated for myself, I knew that I should only trust knowledge that comes from experience and is then validated by my conscience. So, what experience brings knowledge that liberates us from fear?

Knowing that this task is regarded as the most important accomplishment on the path of self-transformation, a light went on in my mind. A very bright light. My heart beckoned, “If freedom from fear is a task everyone must attain, go to the history books.” Panditji has commonly said that the knowledge of ancient traditions can help the blight of modern man. Years ago, the world of nature was more prominent than the world of concrete and emails. Nature is our mother and yet we have abandoned Her for the prize of the day. Ignored and exploited daily, nature continues to support us. However, there is a cost to our exploitation Panditji reminds us:

“As industrialization sweeps across the globe, we are becoming more and more disconnected from nature. It’s no longer an assumption, but a proven fact that there is a direct correlation between moving away from nature and the declining of our strength, stamina, vitality, and virility. Therefore, we have to make a conscious effort to draw on the wisdom of the great thinkers and adepts from all cultures and traditions and learn from

them the art of communicating with nature. Splicing genes and mapping out the vast abyss of DNA is indeed one of the greatest marvels of human ingenuity. However, staying connected with the nurturing matrix of the natural world and insuring that we maintain a healthy balance of every aspect of our lives – body, mind, and consciousness on one hand, and family, community, country, and the entire web of life on the other – is an absolute necessity.”

When I heard him use catch-phrases from my youth, especially “web-of-life,” I faded into a sea of memories at Indiana University. My major was outdoor education through the School of Recreation. It was 1974 and our student body was brainstorming on how to relate the web of life to a group of fifth grade students. How could we get a ten-year-old mind to embrace the sanctity of our planet in a forty-five minute presentation? We did not have gene-splicing and the internet, but the competition against a land-ethic seemed just as tough. We found our solution. Bloomington, Indiana is the home of the university and is an ocean of diversity. We had the students share their ancestry with one another as they tossed a ball of string to each successive speaker. Soon the entire class and instructors were joined in a web of string – everybody was connected. Now we could discuss the myth of separateness in stories and games that ten-year-olds and college students could enjoy together. We created a bridge between all corners of the world by acknowledging the ancestors and the wisdom their cultures held.

A zillion years later, Panditji expands what we thought was “our” cleverness and ingenuity of the 1970’s in southern Indiana:

“The current trend of commerce gives no room to the East and West to operate independently. And yet, people in both hemispheres are stuck with a mindset that ‘East is east, and West is west.’ The result is that so far, we have not been able to fill the gap between East and West. Driven by economic forces, globalization has brought nations and communities together, but human hearts are still far apart. The spirit of the human race is urging us to ‘mind the gap,’ but the ‘we vs. they’ mindset refuses to hear and heed this timely and priceless warning.

“Today, we must learn the art of narrowing the East-West divide. People in both hemispheres have to open their hearts to each other, embrace the best from each culture, and prepare the present to secure a healthy and peaceful future. In the past few centuries, the West has invested enormous energy to dominate and subdue the physical world. From the steam engine to the worldwide web, the West has given a new shape to the world. This mind-boggling success in the external world, however, has yet to find a meaningful direction. Without a clear understanding of the purpose behind this success, the desire for dominance could lead humanity to an abrupt destruction, even taking with it the ones blessed with such success.

“This is where eastern philosophy can compliment the West. For millennia, the East yoked its intelligentsia in discovering the inner dimensions of life, and as a result, gave the world a lasting gift of the philosophy of non-dualism, proclaiming that everything and everyone in the world ensues from one single reality, ‘In truth, we are one. It’s the breath of one single reality that animates us all. We are the limbs and organs of one living being.’ This lofty understanding of the inner dimensions of life, too, has to find a meaningful application in the external world. Without a clear understanding of the thrust behind its spiritual discoveries, the East will continue to humiliate its spirit as it pays no attention to poverty, oppression of women, corruption, and other forms of social ills.

“This is where the utilitarian philosophy of the West can compliment the East. To climb the next ladder of civilization, therefore, we have to extract the best of the East and the best of the West, the best of spirituality and the best of science, and use it to make ourselves healthier, happier, kinder and more loving.”

I was raised in my spiritual youth by the books and stories of Panditji’s teacher, Swami Rama. I was a malleable college student. Swamiji said, “We should love all and exclude none.” I was there. I was up to speed. I did not need to be convinced; I saw no conflict in his words. I had no idea how odd my words would sound to others. It took a park ranger to show me how to put these words into practice.

It happened decades ago at Brown County State Park, we outdoor-education students were observing a day in the life of a park ranger. On that day, a few frantic campers ran up to the ranger station. Upon catching their breath, they explained, “We have a snake problem!!! Snakes are everywhere!” Eager to be the heroes, we all rushed to the scene of the crime.

No snakes in sight. But the vivid descriptions from the campers made the diagnosis easy. King snakes. Black, big, non-poisonous snakes. But it was the park ranger’s comment that changed me that day. Pointing out that they were not camping in a designated area, he said, “You do not have a snake problem. The snakes have a people problem. Please move your tents.”

The ranger knew about the underlying unity (step 4) that holds everyone and everything in its proper place. Disrupting or ignoring this delicate balance is both karmic and tragic. His wisdom to the campers was simple and clear. He was not an eloquent speaker, but he knew and loved nature.

Returning to Panditji's words, he spoke about the underlying unity this way:

“Cultural diversity is at the root of enriching the life of a society or a nation. The evolution of a society and the prosperity of a nation largely depends on how skillfully it attracts ‘outsiders’ and how wisely it absorbs them and the cultural diversity they bring. Ancient India and Egypt are living examples of how embracing cultural diversity contributes to the longevity of a civilization and how rejecting this influx results in the declining of a civilization. Intolerance to diversity causes religious and social unrest. That in turn necessitates political upheaval. Changes brought by invasions and other forms of political maneuvering not only cost lives, but also destroy a civilization – a priceless wealth that numerous diverse groups together gathered, cross-bred, and continually refined for generations. Losing such wealth on account of a simple and yet potent subhuman impulse – intolerance – is an irreparable loss.

“Cultivating tolerance, therefore, is crucial to preserving our inheritance and passing it on to the successive generations. Cultivating tolerance comes easy when we see the underlying unity that holds all the diversities in place. The vision of unity takes away the fear of losing our identity. This vision spontaneously opens our hearts to diversity, for we then know that diversity makes us richer and more complete.”

We all see the lack of tolerance increasing in our world. We think that shutting our gates will make us safer. If it does, it will be a short-lived success. Did everybody grow up as a single child, except me? I thought everything we needed to know we learned in kindergarten. The lessons of sharing and respecting different lifestyles was taught to me. I guess some people missed that day when the lesson was called “How to get along with your neighbor – be nice, play fair.”

Panditji's fifth and final step in his plan is the encouragement for all of us to infuse our work with a healing vision.

“Ultimately, the goal of Sacred Link is to bring about a healing revolution – a revolution that aims at healing our distraught minds, broken hearts, and estranged families. It is about healing our communities and societies; it is about toning down and eventually eliminating communal and religious conflicts. It is about healing our rivers and mountains, clouds, and wind. It is about healing our planet and all forms of life living on it. The healing revolution is possible when our thoughts, speech, and actions are infused with a healing vision. A healing vision means to love all, and hate none; embrace all, and exclude none. To receive and sustain a healing vision, we must not give any room to guilt and self-condemnation, and we must give up our biases, prejudices and pre-conditionings. At the end of the day, look back and see whether you entertained a thought, spoke a word, or

involved yourself in an action that was against your conscience. If that was the case, then determine not to repeat it, for the pain from killing your conscience eventually shuts your heart, clouds your mind, and blocks your healing vision. You are totally cut off from your source of true nourishment. You are starved. Only after you overcome this inner starvation can you think of bringing a healing revolution to the world.”

Sacred Link is a philosophy that nurtures internal virtues leading to the purification and expansion of the mind. It makes you become broadminded and very clear. It helps you grow up. Sacred Link makes you expand your boundaries.

That kind of attitude makes sure you are living with an expanded worldview and does not let your mind fall in the filth pit. It helps you remain free from sadness and negativity. Expansion and clarity of mind is called shraddha (faith). Your faith determines how big you are, how clean you are, how small you are, how dirty you are. Pay attention to your mind.

With a calm and tranquil mind, you will have no desire to harm others. Thus, Sacred Link offers the freedom to figure out what you want to do. From the high level of transformation you went through in order to attain a tranquil mind, you will no longer have an appetite for useless things. Your hunger for power is lost in the transformation process. Compassion, courage, endurance, and enthusiasm become your defining marks.

Chapter 6 - Conclusion

To attain happiness, both practice and non-attachment are required. In the first chapter of the Yoga Sutras, *practice* is defined in the 13th verse as “the exertion required to attain a tranquil mind that is devoid of fluctuations.” This tranquility is seen as the fruit of one’s practice.

Therefore, to practice means to not just practice meditation alone, but rather live a comprehensive lifestyle and have a belief system that will eventually culminate in self-realization.

These practices and philosophies are a lifesaver when you find yourself completely stuck or when all known remedies fail, or when you are not motivated to help yourself. That is the time to let your unshakable conviction in the safety and guidance within you to come forward.

The conviction that you are a living source of intelligence protects and guides, and lives and resides in your heart. It is your conviction that you are not helpless, that your inner guide is present, and this is called God-realization. Once you reach this level, you can clearly see that no obstacle can stay in your way. That conviction and that inner light that is in you, is with you from eternity to eternity. Meditation in the cave of the heart helps you gain this conviction, and automatically, your mind will turn inward and the obstacles in your life will begin to vanish.

When drowning in grief or confusion, apply the known means and tools to help you cope. Be practical, take medicines, leave that place that reminds you of your past, and talk to those that can help you regain your equilibrium. There are many systems that can help you restore your peace of mind.

As a further aid, Panditji gave me three questions to help me clarify my actions when I was riddled with what to do. He told me that when evaluating powerful impulses, confusions, and fears, ask myself these questions:

1. *Do I really have to do this?*
2. *Is it really just a waste of energy?*
3. *Does it lead me closer to my goal?*

I hope you will continue to strive for happiness and wholeness. Have gratitude to the forces that help you. Do not pollute your mind and heart or create troubles for others. Use your meditation practice skillfully – use the nasal wash every day (we discussed that in my previous book, **Meditation: the Inward Journey**), watch your diet, do not eat food that is more than 8 hours old. Do this for a few weeks and observe the benefits of these simple changes. Keep your heart and lungs in good condition, and stretch your body. Keep working with your mind to become one-pointed. And when the time is right, start to meditate in the cave of your heart and become one with the benevolent forces of nature and humanity. It is that bridge, that yoga, that Sacred Link that will reestablish the highest virtues and the greatest joys.

About the Author

Blair Lewis is the founder of the Alive and Healthy Foundation in Madison, Wisconsin. Author, teacher, and health-care practitioner, Blair offers his students and patients a variety of time-tested options in health and healing. As a Physician Assistant, he specializes in preventative medicine and the holistic treatment of chronic disease from a wellness perspective. His more than 20-year holistic practice consists of classic homeopathy, ayurveda, neuromuscular therapy and craniosacral therapy.

A graduate of both the National Center for Homeopathy and the International Foundation for Homeopathy, Blair is the co-author of text *Homeopathic Remedies for Health Professionals and Laypeople*. A graduate of Indiana University and the Physicians Assistant Program at Lake Erie College and the Cleveland Clinic Foundation, he has also studied in Europe, Greece, India, and the United States. Blair completed his training in osteopathic manipulation at Michigan State University.

His Alive and Healthy Audio Series offers the public and health-care professionals books and tapes aimed at providing holistic therapies and options to people with mild to very serious chronic ailments. An enthusiastic teacher, Blair lectures nationally and abroad.

As co-founder of the Blue Sky Educational Foundation, Inc., (www.BlueSkyMassage.com), Blair helped to provide a non-profit massage and holistic health education center for over eighteen years, which now has branches in three Wisconsin cities -- Grafton, Green Bay, and Madison.

Alive and Healthy Foundation

Alive and Healthy is a non-profit, tax-exempt foundation and a *Sacred Link Affiliate of the Himalayan International Institute*. Located in Madison, Wisconsin, USA, the Foundation provides educational and health-related classes and services.

Please feel welcome to visit our web-site, www.AliveandHealthy.com, for free books and free reports. The Foundation produces audio tapes, CD's and soon, DVD's on holistic health, meditation, homeopathy and ayurveda. Visit our web-site for full details.

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While self-effort is indeed required on the path of spirituality, without proper guidance the journey could lengthen for life times. Thank you Panditji.

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And to you the reader of these words, thank you for your interest in our world and the amazing possibilities that self-transformation offers all of us. I hope this little book will further inspire you to gain freedom from fear and find the eternal source of love in your heart. If you downloaded this book from the Alive and Healthy web-site, then you will automatically be receiving some future emails from me over the next few weeks as I expand the concepts mentioned here in **The Heart of the Meditator**. I will write you soon.

Blair Lewis

A Special Note

This text is dedicated to the Sacred Link Project, a visionary effort of Pandit Rajmani Tigunait, Ph.D. and the Himalayan Institute. Alive and Healthy is proud to be a Sacred Link Affiliate of the Himalayan Institute and a corporate participant in this project.

I encourage all of my readers to help make this world work again and I invite all of you to join me at the Sacred Link conference in September 2004 and again in September 2007. At these conferences you will get to meet world leaders of politics, theology, medicine, ecology and spirituality. A refreshing blend of experts who want to share and interact with you. I, too, have the honor of speaking at this conference. In the following pages I will tell you more about Sacred Link™. Please join us.

*This book was completed on June 8th, 2004, the morning Venus went into transit for the first time in 122 years.
An event known for world unity and improved global communication.*

What is Sacred Link™?

Sacred Link™ is a project the Himalayan Institute has undertaken to help people understand that inner unrest is at the root of all of our problems—personal, interpersonal, religious, political, and spiritual. The Himalayan Institute has been joined in this effort by individuals and organizations throughout the world who share this understanding and who are committed to removing the causes of unrest in both the inner and outer world.

Sacred Link™ proclaims that freedom from all fears is the cornerstone of peace, and that peace—both in our inner world and in the world around us—is the keystone of health and happiness. The Sacred Link project springs from the understanding that alienation is the cause of inner unrest and further, that this alienation arises when we experience ourselves as isolated beings competing for survival in a hostile world. Sacred Link embraces all the world's great traditions, which tell us that this isolation is an illusion—that in reality we are inextricably connected with each other and with the nurturing matrix of the natural world. The need to dispel this crippling illusion is the motive force behind Sacred Link.

The Goals of the Sacred Link Project

1. To help people gain freedom from all fears and master the art of living joyfully.
2. To draw on wisdom from the great thinkers and adepts of all cultures and traditions; to begin healing every aspect of our lives—body, mind, and consciousness on one hand and family, community, country, and the entire web of life on the other.
3. To extract the best of the East and the best of the West, the best of spirituality and the best of science, and use it to make ourselves healthier, happier, kinder, and more loving.
4. At the practical level, to help people learn and practice the techniques that enable each of us to experience for ourselves the underlying unity that holds all diversities in place.
5. To inspire people to bring about a healing revolution, both as a gift to ourselves and as a means of bequeathing a world free of fear and violence to future generations.

Sacred Link™ The Healing Revolution
1st Annual Conference
Freedom From Fear
September 16-19, 2004

Experience the wisdom and teachings of world-renowned speakers at the Himalayan Institute in the Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania.

Topics ranging from personal growth to world affairs to sustainable ecology have one single focus - finding freedom from anger, fear and vengeance, mastering the art of peaceful and joyful living.

Unique Features

- * More than 35 world class speakers.
- * Multi-level practicums on yoga and pranayama and guided meditations.
- * Opportunity to meet with like minded people from yoga teachers to diplomats, executives to health practitioners, and academics to spiritual seekers, from around the world.
- * Kirtan (chanting) and concert-a blend of East and West.

The Goal

The goal of this conference is to breathe new life into our shared quest-the quest for freedom and happiness. It is only when this very quest is threatened that we become angry, fearful, and defensive, and then, inevitably, we hurt others as well as ourselves. In this conference, we'll share with each other the tools and means to stop perpetuating anger, fear, and vengeance, and accomplish our personal quest of living a joyful and purposeful life.

Who Will Benefit?

This conference is for those interested in personal growth, health, and well-being, sustainable economy and ecology, and discovering their own core Self and the sacred bond that holds our hearts, families, and communities together.

Who Will Be Here?

This conference is an opportunity to interact with the 'movers and shakers' of our society from the top level to grassroots-diplomats, executives, academics, yoga teachers and students, holistic health practitioners, and inspired individuals who wish to see this world a better place.

Unique Features

- * More than 35 life-changing sessions will be offered in three concurrent tracks
- * Multi-level practicums on yoga and pranayama
- * Guided meditations
- * Main conference concurrent sessions you missed will be available to you online for six months at no additional cost (conference attendees only)
- * Kirtan (chanting) and concert-a blend of East and West.

Added Bonuses

1. Visit our **Sacred Link Art Gallery** and enrich yourself with the experience of diversity preserved in the arts and crafts that we have gathered from Central and South America, India, and Southeast Asia. As you walk through the crown jewel of our collection, the Madhubani art (the most ancient sacred art of India), your heart will pulsate with the wisdom of yantra, mantra, mandala, tantric deities, mythology, and astrology. Seeing is believing.

2. Take part in **Shakti Yajna** - the group practice for world peace and healing. It is a 121-day-long fire offering that will conclude on September 19, the last day of the conference. Shakti Yajna consists of propitiating and nourishing the 64 yoginis, 9 planets, 10 directions, natural forces that sustain life on our planet, and the fire offering to free our personal and collective consciousness from fear. Experience for yourself how ancient people put the idea of peace into action.

3. So that you can have it all - conference presentations will be available online through March 2005. Pick up, online, all the topics you missed in person at www.HimalayanInstitute.org and experience the entire Healing Revolution at your convenience **at no additional charge**. Details provided at the conference.

Early registration: through July 10

Regular registration: July 11 - September 10

Late registration: from September 11

Details and fees available online at **www.HimalayanInstitute.org**
or Call **800-822-4547**

Full payment is required at the time of registration. No membership discount. Limited double or dormitory accommodations are available at the main campus at an additional charge. Please call for availability and cost. Cancellation Policy is available online.

Freedom from Fear

By Sunita Singhi

We call Sacred Link™ a Healing Revolution because it initiates a process of healing in every aspect of our lives. This may sound like a grandiose claim, but it is really a simple statement about the nature of health. Real health is holistic: it encompasses our body, mind, and consciousness, as well as our families, workplaces, social circles, and communities. Health is everything from the functioning of our bowels to the foreign policy of our governments; from how we feed our families to our motives and methods for exploring distant planets.

The basic limitation that we all face in our personal development is fear: fear of failure, fear of success, numberless little fears that surface in our daily lives—all of them resting on a deep, nameless fear, a dis-ease, a feeling of emptiness where a fullness should be. Health is the absence of this disease; it arises when our individual selves are in harmony with the large and small societies in which we live. When we have realized our relationship to the entire world, then all our actions will naturally incline towards the good of all. That is why we are launching **Sacred Link™ — The Healing Revolution** with this conference on *Freedom from Fear*.

Health, like war or peace, does not just happen. Conscious planning and determined effort are necessary. Health is a group activity. Freedom from Fear is an important first step in bringing together the kinds of people who want to help bring about meaningful change in themselves and society— people who want to be part of the solution.

“The goal of this conference is to breathe new life into humanity’s shared quest—the quest for freedom and happiness,” according to Pandit Rajmani Tigunait, the spiritual head of the Himalayan Institute. “In this conference, we will share with each other the tools and means to stop perpetuating anger, fear, and vengeance, and accomplish our personal quest—living a life filled with joy and purpose.”

More than thirty-five distinguished speakers from around the globe have been selected because they and their work embody Sacred Link—they are bridging gaps everywhere, creating dialogue and facilitating healing. In fact, most of them have dedicated their lives to this mission, defying the conventions of their fields when they see innovative ways to end separation and strife. These people are inspirational role models and their presentations are intended to remind us of what is really important and what we can each do to create the kind of change we wish to see in the world.

Presentations for the conference are divided into five main categories: Sacred Link, Corporate Perspectives, Socio-Political Views, Yoga, and Health. These categories help us to see how different parts of our lives are integrated and, when in balance, promote health for individuals and the societies they live in.

Setting the tone for the conference, Pandit Tigunait will lead a panel of speakers presenting an overview of the Sacred Link philosophy and how it can help us to create the kind of society in which we wish to live. This orientation will provide a framework for understanding the different perspectives offered by individual speakers.

Work is an important, often stressful, part of life. Without balance and harmony, our work becomes merely labor, devoid of satisfaction. Leaders in business and management will offer Corporate Perspectives on achieving worldly success, respecting spiritual values in the workplace, and ensuring corporate accountability both globally and locally.

Providing a global view, ambassadors, diplomats, and peacekeepers from around the world will share their Socio-Political Views in discussions of how to nurture diversity; disarm our minds as well as our armies; and police ourselves in thought, speech, and action so that we can create a healthier, more compassionate world. These are people involved in exciting, though not well-publicized efforts to unite people across cultural and political divides. They are living proof that international dialogue can work for the betterment of all.

The Yoga tradition will be represented by nationally recognized experts whose long years of practice and extensive teaching experience give them a unique insight into the needs of today's students. Presenters include David Frawley, Rod Stryker, and Gary Kraftsow.

Eight highly trained healers, including four MDs, will speak on holistic Health. All of these speakers will offer practical techniques for physical and emotional wellbeing from specialties including herbalism, cranial-sacral therapy, nutrition, music therapy, and ayurveda.

Freedom from Fear is the first step in the Himalayan Institute's vision for a healing revolution. Your participation in this conference will bring new perspectives for integrating various aspects of life into a harmonious whole. You will gain a greater understanding of how different segments of society function together to create the conditions for peace and prosperity or conflict and poverty. Perhaps most important, you will meet people who, like yourself, are committed to building the enduring communities that can bring lasting changes and true healing to our fractured world. But this conference is only the beginning.

We are gathering our energy and resources for the Sacred Link Global Conference in 2007, expected to draw 10,000–25,000 people. In 2007, we will find ourselves in the presence of world-renowned thinkers and activists, Nobel Prize winners, and great spiritual leaders. During this conference we will begin a one-year, around-the-clock meditation session held in a specially constructed dome here on the Himalayan Institute's main campus. The purpose of the yearlong meditation is to engender a sense of peace in the world by first establishing inner peace in our own hearts. Please join us as we deepen our understanding of our role in the world, affirm our many connections, and make the vision for global healing a reality.

Details and fees available online at www.HimalayanInstitute.org
or Call **800-822-4547**

Sacred Link 2004 Conference

Invited Speakers

A finalized list of speakers will be available online after July 4th, 2004

B.K. Agnihotri, PH.D.

Indian Ambassador-at-Large; Former Chancellor, Southern University Law Center and Dean of State Law School; Recipient of Israel Peace Medal, 1996

Nurturing Diversity for a Healthier Humanity

Sandra Anderson

Faculty of Himalayan Institute; Contributing editor of Yoga International magazine; Co-author of Yoga-Mastering the Basics

Yoga-Honoring Our Sacrament with the Natural World

Kiran Bedi, PH.D.

United Nations Civilian Police Advisor; First and highest-ranking women in the Indian Police Service; Founder and President of Navjyoti and India Vision Foundation

Self-Policing - Way to Create Healthy Families and Societies

John Davies, PH.D.

Co-Director of Partners in Conflict and Partners in Peace building Projects at the Center for International Development and Conflict Management, Department of Government and Politics, University of Maryland

The Role of Science and Spirituality in Conflict Resolution and Reclaiming Peace

Jatin H. DeSai

CEO, DeSai Learning, a provider of corporate human resources, strategic leadership and management education

Spiritual Discipline for Worldly Success

Carrie Demers, M.D.

Medical Director of Himalayan Institute's Center for Health and Healing; Leader in integrative medicine; Practicing and teaching Ayurveda, homeopathy, and yoga therapy for the past 15 years

A Prescription for Radiant and Fearless Living- An Ayurvedic Approach

Masaaki Fujisaki

Direct disciple of His Holiness, Kotama Okada, the founder of Sukyo Mahikari of Japan; Disciple of the current spiritual head, Seisha Okada; Director of Sukyo Mahikari in North America

Living Peacefully in a Troubled World

His Excellency Monsignor Hanna Golta

Auxiliary Bishop of the Coptic Catholic Church of Egypt
Creating a World Free of Fear

Subhash Kak, PH.D.

Delaune Distinguished Professor of Electrical Engineering and Professor in Asian Studies and Cognitive Science Programs at the Louisiana State University; Author of 15 books
Science and Spirituality: Bridging the Gap

Wafik Kamil, PH.D.

Egyptian Ambassador to India; Secretary General, Asian African Legal Consultative Organization for the United Nations
Seeing the World Through the Eyes of Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, and President Sadat

Sandra Summerfield Kozak, M.S.

Author, yoga teacher, and teacher trainer for over 30 years; Board member of Yoga International magazine
Reducing Fear Through Yoga

Gary Kraftsow

Founder and Director of the American Viniyoga Institute; Consultant on research on yoga therapy- a project undertaken by Harvard University
True Freedom and Lasting Peace-The Wisdom of the Yoga Sutra

Irene Landers

American Diplomat (1995-1998); Acting State Department Protocol Officer, Bolivia, for First Lady Hillary Clinton during the 1997 First Ladies of the Americas Latin American Conference
The Elusive nature of Security-A Personal Quest From Governments to Tribes

Blair Lewis, P.A.

Co-Founder of the Blue Sky Educational Foundation; Lecturing and teaching for more than 25 years on the subjects of holistic health, Ayurveda, and spirituality
Happiness- The Real Medicine, and How it Works!

Karen Lewis, W.C.M.T.

President and Co-Founder of the Blue Sky Educational Foundation, Inc; An authority on Ayurveda and Cranial-Sacral Therapy
Rest and Renew Yourself Through Pranayama and Cranial-Sacral Therapy

Jan Jyoti Mathews

President of Avocorp, Inc. real estate development company; 30-year career in technology management and marketing

The Power of Internet in Discovering the Unity in Diversity

Timothy McCall, M.D.

Board Certified Internist; Author of Examining Your Doctor: A Patient's Guide to Avoiding Harmful Medical Care; Frequent contributor to Yoga Journal

Discovering the Sacred Link Between Body and Soul

Louise Montello

Author of essential Musical Intelligence; Jazz pianist and composer; Clinical research scientist at New York University

Sacred Music, Sacred Heart

Raghu Nath, PH.D.

President of the Institute For the Development of Human Potential; Professor Emeritus at The University of Pittsburgh and former Executive Director of the World Technology Center project sponsored by Carnegie Mellon, the University of Pittsburgh, and the United Nations

Corporate Responsibility and Leadership Development

Steve Nezezon, M.D.

Board Certified Psychiatrist. Faculty of the Himalayan Institute; Holistic health practitioner integrating herbs, homeopathy, Ayurveda, diet and nutrition, and yoga

Healing Herbs for Healing Hearts

Dave Pauly

President and CEO of Capitol Transamerica Corporation; Graduate of Wharton School of Business

Spiritual Solutions for Financial Security

Irene Petryszak

Chairman and faculty, Himalayan Institute; Associate editor, Yoga International magazine

Transforming a Fearful Mind- The Meditative Techniques as Taught in the Himalayan Tradition

Richard Ravizza, PH.D.

Professor of Psychology, Penn State University; Board member and faculty, Himalayan Institute

The Inward Journey- First Steps Toward a Peaceful World

Jaime Stover Schmidt, Ed.D.

Author, *Every Woman's Yoga*; Faculty, Himalayan Institute; Specialist in yoga movement therapy
Fostering Non-Violence Through Personal Practice: A Special Asana Workshop

Rolf Sovik, Psy.D.

Spiritual Director, Himalayan Institute; Ordained pandit in the Himalayan tradition since 1989;
Co-author of the award winning book, *Yoga- Mastering the Basics*
The Healing Revolution of Sacred Link for the 21st Century

Rod Stryker

Teacher of yoga and meditation for the past twenty years; Board member of the Himalayan
Institute and *Yoga International* magazine
Tantric Yoga for Discovering Our Own Sacred Link

Susan Taylor, PH.D.

Nutritional Biochemist; Faculty, Himalayan Institute; Specialist in neuroscience and psychology;
Author of *Sexual Radiance*
Nutrients for the Healing Revolution- In the Home and At the Pharmacy

Pandit Rajmani Tigunait, PH.D.

Spiritual Head of the Himalayan Institute; Author of eleven books; Regular contributor to *Yoga
International* magazine, and the force behind *Sacred Link*
The Quest for Freedom and the Sacred Link
Sacred Link's Vision of Power, Money, and Lasting Peace (panel discussion)

Graciela Uribe de Lozano

Counselor to the Colombian Foreign Ministry and the United Nations' Center for Peace,
Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean Region
Toward a New Consciousness of Mankind

Marc Vaccaro

Co-Chairman and Founding Director of the Great Lakes Companies, Inc.; Board member of
Berkshire School, the Menasha Corporations Foundation, and the Theda Clark Foundation
Key to Success in a Changing World

Sharon P. Wilkinson

Former US Ambassador to the Republic of Mozambique
Disarming the Mind

Deborah Willoughby

President of the Himalayan Institute; Editor of Yoga International magazine; Former writer/editor for the Department of Justice and the Environmental Protection Agency

Myths that Pass for Truth: How Journalists Create the World You Live In

Lorene Y. Wu, M.D.

Founder and Director of The Whole-Life Center in Chicago; Family practitioner and diplomat in acupuncture

Integrating Yoga, Ayurveda, and Chinese Medicine in Today's Health Regimen

Satoshi Yanai

Former International Broadcasting Executive, Tokyo Broadcasting Service; Reported on the Reagan/Gorbachev Summit in Moscow, Nelson Mandela's release from prison, the reunification of Germany, the first Gulf war, and more

Staying Informed Without Harming Yourself: Tips for Surviving Television News

Javad Zarif, PH.D.

Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations and Officer in Charge of the Dialogue Among Civilizations

Necessity for Dialogue Among Civilizations