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SPIRITUAL HEALING PT. 2

Dolma

Center for Dharma Practice
Monthly Publication

Namaste and Welcome!

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From The Editor's Desk

Sadhana - Immense possibilities
By Yogi Brahmanand


Yogi Brahmanand

Om Gurave Namah

Sadhana is the science of awakening the divine potential hidden within every human being.
Just as a seed contains the potential to become a mighty tree, every individual carries within them infinite spiritual strength, wisdom, and divine consciousness. However, these qualities remain dormant until they are awakened through disciplined practice.

Many people ask, "What is the greatest benefit of Sadhana?" The answer is simple: Sadhana transforms the practitioner from within. It purifies the mind, strengthens the will, removes negativity, and establishes a direct connection with higher consciousness. Through regular spiritual practice, fear begins to dissolve, confusion gives way to clarity, weakness turns into strength, and suffering gradually transforms into wisdom.

The ancient sages never viewed spirituality as an escape from life. Instead, they taught that spiritual practices help us live life more fully and effectively. A person who performs Sadhana regularly often experiences greater mental peace, emotional balance, concentration, confidence, and inner stability. Such a person becomes capable of facing life's challenges with courage and grace.

The month of Shravan is especially sacred because it is dedicated to Lord Shiva, the Supreme Yogi and the eternal source of spiritual transformation. Every mantra chanted, every prayer offered, every meditation practised, and every act of self-discipline performed during this holy period carries greater spiritual potency.

On Guru Purnima, we honour the Guru principle, the divine light that removes the darkness of ignorance. A true Guru does not merely provide information; the Guru awakens wisdom. The Guru teaches us how to transform knowledge into experience and experience into realization.

I encourage every reader to dedicate a few minutes each day to spiritual practice. Whether it is mantra japa, meditation, prayer, pranayama, scriptural study, or selfless service, consistency is more important than intensity. Even a small daily effort, performed with sincerity, can bring remarkable changes over time.

Remember that spirituality is not reserved for saints or ascetics. It is meant for every human being. Every step taken towards self-improvement, self-discipline, and self-awareness is a step towards the Divine.

As you read this month's magazine, may the blessings of Lord Shiva, the grace of the Guru, and the power of sacred knowledge illuminate your path. May your life be filled with health, prosperity, wisdom, protection, and spiritual growth.

Let this Shravan be a month of transformation. Let this Guru Purnima be a celebration of inner awakening. Let your Sadhana become the bridge between the person you are today and the divine being you are destined to become.

May Lord Shiva bless you with strength.
May the Guru bless you with wisdom.
May your Sadhana bless you with realization.

Chalkboard

Dharma *and Education*

A JOURNEY OF SPIRITUAL HEALING

By Charlene Sinanan-Hansraj



Charlene Sinanan-Hansraj
Educator

For twenty-nine years, I have been an educator. The teaching profession was never my first career choice. In fact, at the beginning, I was always trying to find ways to escape it. I was thrown into the baptism of fire at my very first school, where I taught children from predominantly lower socio-economic backgrounds. My experiences there had the power either to erode the core of my humanity or to nurture it. Fortunately, I chose the latter.

You see, in many ways, my journey as a teacher began long before my formal initiation into the profession. Both of my parents were teachers and school principals. From them, I received my earliest lessons in what it truly means to be a teacher. I observed the patience, sacrifice, dedication, and care they poured into the lives of children. Though I may not have fully understood it at the time, I was witnessing something far greater than a profession. I was seeing a calling lived out.

Nonetheless, during the earlier part of my career, doubt often shadowed my path. Too often, I found myself acting as a disciplinarian or counsellor instead of an educator. My classroom was a vessel of stories: stories of children carrying the burdens of loneliness, grief, fear, disappointment, neglect, uncertainty, and pain. Delivering the curriculum became secondary and somewhat inconsequential. This was not what my Bachelor of Arts degree had prepared me for.

Fortunately for me, empathy came easily, mostly because of my spiritual upbringing at home. I grew up in a community much like those represented in my classrooms, so I understood the plight of my students. The real challenge for me, however, was coping with the barrage of emotions, something psychologists refer to as “emotional intelligence.” Regardless of where I taught, I felt that I was not doing enough to make a real difference in the lives of these children. Then, one day, an incident occurred, a story too long to tell, that reshaped my perspective on my purpose as a teacher.

As a Christian, I learned about Jesus Christ, the Master Teacher, whose ministry healed people physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Christ saw individuals whom others overlooked: the forgotten, the rejected, the broken, and the weary. His journey demonstrated that true teaching begins with healthy relationships. Soon enough, my relationships with my students evolved. Instead of carrying their emotional baggage around, I embraced it as a path towards spiritual healing.

As educators, and even more so as learners, we may not remember every academic lesson taught in the classroom, but we will remember the way we were made to feel. Children will remember the teacher who believed in them when they doubted themselves, the teacher who listened when no one else did, and the teacher who made them feel seen. It is these simple gestures that pave the path towards spiritual healing for both teacher and student. I learned that healing happens through simple acts and quiet moments, not on grand stages. The greatest truth of all is that, sometimes, while we think we are teaching others, we ourselves are being healed.

Many educational philosophies support this deeper understanding of teaching. Humanistic education speaks of learners as whole individuals with emotional, social, intellectual, and personal needs. Holistic education encourages the development of the mind, heart, and spirit. Throughout these twenty-nine years, many moments have directed me towards this truth. Parker J. Palmer, in The Courage to Teach, says, “The human soul doesn’t want to be advised or fixed or saved. It simply wants to be witnessed, to be seen, heard and companioned exactly as it is.”

So, here I am, twenty-nine years later, unable to imagine being anything other than a teacher. Over the past three decades, teaching has not become easier, especially with the changing dynamics of technology, social media, and the ways in which young people communicate. However, what has not changed is the emotional architecture of a child. Children still need the same patience, the same validation, and the same steady love. Therefore, for me, teaching remains an act of service, an act of faith, and an act of love.

I recognised that I was not here to transform the lives of my students or to miraculously change their pain into joy or their fears into hope. Instead, I realised that every smile I offered, every kind word I spoke, every shoulder I touched, and every tear I shed were enough for them. These were the moments when they felt worthy and loved. These were the moments when I experienced peaceful fulfilment.

REFLECTIONS ON KARMA AND ATTACHMENT: PART 2: LEVELS OF ATTACHMENT

By Kathy-ann Daniel- Gittens



Kathy-ann Daniel- Gittens

In our last conversation, we discussed identification as the root cause of Karma. We explored the idea that we are the genesis of our own Karma because we attach our sense of identity to something other than what we are in essence. By attaching our self-identification to external objects amid the inevitably changing tides of external experience, we choose certain types of Karma. By attaching our identification to the physical body and its inevitable course of change through the process of maturation, we choose another array of Karma.

Is there any way to transition away from these identifications and attachments? One method used by teachers of old was the invocation of short-path affirmations. For example, repeating the affirmation, "I am not this body; it is an instrument for my use," helps reinforce the understanding that who you are is separate from the physical body. Repeated regularly, this affirmation helps you disidentify from the body.

The result of this disidentification is that the natural and inevitable changes in the body no longer propel you to initiate radical changes in your life. Neither are the insistent urges of the body received as commands for action. Rather, they are understood as notifications of changes occurring within an instrument or tool that you use. This disidentification from the body is no easy feat, but it is the beginning of a process, not the end.

What, then, are the other levels of attachment and identification in which we, as humans, engage? Again, I am only offering suggestions, but they are suggestions born of self-study as well as the study of sacred teachings.

The layers of attachment and identification available to human beings are like the layers of an onion. For example, we may reject identification with external relationships or possessions. We may reject identification with the physical body, but then begin to identify with our emotions. We claim our feelings as real and identify with them as permanent states of being. "I am happy" in a fleeting moment becomes "I am a happy person," with the emotion identified with and claimed as a permanent state. The feeling "I am angry" may follow the same path.

Emotions are well known for their inconstancy. They come and go many times throughout any given day. They change in response to external events in our lives, moods that we adopt vicariously from other people, places, literature, media, or even the weather. We attach our sense of self to emotional states and act upon them, believing ourselves to be completely and permanently bound by those states.

In an intense fit of anger, we may commit an act of violence. In a state of overwhelming despair, we may end our lives, believing that there is nothing left to live for. The final outcomes of these choices of action are what we call our Karma. This is not retribution. The outcomes of our attachment to, and identification with, our emotions are self-created.

In every case, being overwhelmed by emotional states and identifying with them places limits upon us. And yes, there is a short-path affirmation that can help us transition away from that identification. It is: "I am not these emotions; they are instruments for my use."

I hope you can see a pattern beginning to emerge. We are the ones placing limits upon ourselves by defining ourselves through identification with the impermanent and ever-changing aspects of our human embodiment. This is not something being done to us. It is something we do to ourselves.

Whatever you identify with, there is an affirmation to remind you that you are not that. In fact, there is an all-encompassing Sanskrit phrase: "Neti, neti" (नेति नेति). Translated into English, it means, "Not this, not that." In other words, whatever you think you are and whatever you identify with, you are not that. That is not you.
Therefore, I encourage you to use your self-talk, because we human beings are always engaged in an internal dialogue, to reaffirm to yourself daily: "I am not this body; it is an instrument for my use. I am not these emotions; they are instruments for my use."

This practice is useful for creating an internal distance between the more obvious aspects of your embodiment and your sense of identity. When emotions come racing through you at what seems to be the speed of light, demanding that you respond in specific or habitual ways, repeating this short-path affirmation can help create distance from those emotions. It gives you an opportunity to make considered choices of action rather than reactive ones.

KUNDALINI AWAKENING PT. 2
By Yogi Brahmanand



Yogi Brahmanand

They expect experiences: vibrations in the body, heat rising along the spine, or unusual sensations during meditation. These things may happen, but they are not the ultimate truth. Experiences come and go.

Today, there may be one experience; tomorrow, another. When one becomes a silent observer within, that is the true beginning of awakening.

There is another important understanding.

Kundalini awakening does not mean gaining extraordinary powers. It is not something to display, nor is it a means of impressing others. It is an inner shift, subtle and silent.

It is like a river that flows continuously, without noise and without urgency, until one day it merges into the ocean. In the same way, this awakening slowly brings a person back to their source.

But what is the greatest obstacle on this path?
Ego.

As long as there is a strong sense of "I," the doer and the achiever, the journey cannot go deeper. This path is not about strengthening the ego; it is about dissolving it.

It is a journey in which one gradually lets go of all identities. One begins to separate from thoughts, from emotions, and eventually even from the sense of self.
When all of that falls away, what remains is truth.

That is where real awakening happens.

When this understanding is extended to society, its significance becomes even greater. Today's world is rapidly moving outward, towards growth, development, technology, and achievement. Yet, alongside this outward progress, inner instability is also increasing.

People are more connected than ever, yet feel more isolated within.
They are more active, yet less peaceful.
This imbalance exists because attention is directed outward, not inward.
If human beings begin to look within,
many problems can naturally dissolve.

When Kundalini is understood in its true sense, it is no longer just a personal practice,
it becomes a foundation for collective transformation.
Because when an individual becomes balanced within,
their actions become balanced.
And when many individuals reach that state,
society itself begins to change.
So this path is not limited to yogic techniques.

It is a way of living.
To be aware in every moment,
to observe every thought,
to understand every reaction—
this is where the journey begins.
There is no hurry.
There is no race.

It is a slow, deep, silent process.
And in this journey, one thing is essential—
do not try to change yourself,
try to understand yourself.
Understanding naturally brings transformation.
As this understanding deepens,
a new energy begins to arise within.
This energy does not come from outside.

It was always there.
Now it simply begins to reveal itself.
In the end, the entire essence can be expressed in a simple way—
Kundalini awakening is not an achievement.
It is the natural outcome of a life lived with awareness, balance, and surrender.
And when such a life is lived,
awakening happens on its own—
without force,
without noise,
without any declaration.

THE JOURNEY: PART 2: A QUIET EPIPHANY

By Adonica Gray



Yogi Brahmanand

Leaving the Jamaican airport, I was amazed by the scenery. We cruised down the highway at sunset, leaving Montego Bay and entering the countryside. We travelled along a narrow mountain road before eventually stopping in the small parish of Dressikki. When we arrived at the family address and began unloading our luggage, I was suddenly overwhelmed by spiritual visions of my ancestry.

The next day, we headed to the market in town. It was unlike any market I had ever seen, and it gave me a sense of strength. The businesses were owned by the local shopkeepers.

I felt empowered to see so many Africans owning their own businesses and so much of the surrounding countryside. It reminded me of what I had imagined as a child while reading books about African markets. It gave me a deep sense of where I came from.

The following days were some of the most invigorating of my life. I saw more of the countryside's natural beauty and ventured into Kingston. There was an energy that seemed to hum throughout the city and touch something within my soul. We ate food from street-side vendors and climbed Dunn's River Falls. We also attended a gathering of family members whom I had not seen in almost twenty years. We even participated in a donation exercise and were deeply touched by the appreciation shown by those who received the items.

To some, it might not seem like an extraordinary trip. Yet, this island instinctively felt like home to me, a place from which a deep longing and spiritual calling had arisen. It was there, as I walked along the narrow market pathways, that I came to a significant realization: my mediumship was very real.

All the visions that had overwhelmed me throughout my life were, perhaps, glimpses of events almost thirty-three years into the future. I was astonished but elated that I had finally made it home. I realised that I was not delusional or crazy. I was simply spiritually gifted.

I have conducted extensive research into spirituality, physicality, and the psychology of human existence, exploring how they relate to and align with one another in order to create balance within ourselves, the universe, and the world around us. My trip to Jamaica opened my eyes to the magnificent physical beauty of nature. It also opened my mind to acceptance and humility and introduced me to a particular way of life and sense of freedom that are not fully embraced in many other parts of the world. It opened my spirit to the consciousness of creation and allowed me to recognise the unity and Oneness that exist within it.

Spirituality & Art

A PRACTICE IN TRANSFORMATION, GRIT, AND HOLISTIC WELL-BEING

By Dr. Nisha Luthra



Dr. Nisha Luthra

An audition is often seen as a gateway to opportunity. However, if we look a little deeper, it is much more than that. It is a practice, a process of transformation and grit.
It is about learning to quiet anxiety, sharpen focus, honour preparation, and embrace the ritual of showing up. It is about navigating the emotional spectrum of failure and success, rejection and acceptance. Most importantly, it is about discovering that the process itself can become a deeply healing experience.



Having been part of countless auditions, not as an actor waiting outside the door but as someone sitting on the other side of the table, I have witnessed an extraordinary range of emotions, often beautifully disguised.

I have seen nervousness hiding behind a broad smile, restlessness camouflaged as hope, fear draped in calmness, and countless unanswered questions concealed beneath silent determination.

To me, auditions are among the rare spaces where human vulnerability quietly reveals itself.
Some people arrive simply to sharpen their craft. Others arrive carrying dreams and anticipation. Some consciously choose courage, while others unknowingly come face to face with their deepest vulnerabilities.

From where I sit, I am certainly observing technique and skill. However, I am equally attentive to qualities that cannot be taught overnight: resilience, patience, persistence, courage, emotional honesty, curiosity, humility, the joy of learning, and the grace to embrace unpredictability.

These are often the qualities that outlast talent.

History reminds us that greatness is rarely born from effortless success.

Nisha spent years playing small roles before becoming one of Hollywood's most respected actors in his fifties. Nishahas often spoken about how theatre, rejection, and relentless practice shaped him far more than fame ever did. Nishawas once rejected by broadcasters because of his voice, before that very voice became one of the most iconic in Indian cinema. Nisha has repeatedly acknowledged that every audition, every setback, and every performance became part of his education as an artist.

Their journeys remind us that auditions are not merely tests; they are classrooms.

For anyone walking into an audition, I invite you to see it as a holistic space. It is a place where you encounter your own triggers, discover your strengths, acknowledge your limitations, and perhaps even surprise yourself.

The audition room is not simply a place where your performance is judged; it also offers you an opportunity to meet yourself.

The next time you step into an audition, think of it as a playground, a place where you are both your own cheerleader and your own competitor. It is a space where you learn to challenge yourself while also treating yourself with compassion.

Be fully present in that moment of truth. Give it everything you have. Make an honest attempt. Notice the emotions within and around you, not as enemies, but as different characters sharing the same stage.

When we begin to see auditions in this way, they stop being merely gateways to roles.

They become spaces of transformation.
Sometimes, the greatest role you will ever play is that of becoming a stronger and more authentic version of yourself.

Perhaps that is the most meaningful audition of all.

THE PSYCH SERIES

SPIRITUAL HEALING PART II: COMING BACK TO ONESELF

By Amina Mahmood, PhD NYS (Licensed Psychologist)

"To carry the weight of Truth, you must become as empty as a reed—humble and without ego."
-Shams-i Tabrizi



Amina Mahmood

Practices of spiritual solitude and the development of spiritual resilience inevitably contribute to spiritual healing. One way to assess spiritual healing is to consider whether we can return to ourselves with non-judgmental self-awareness and self-acceptance. Consider radical acceptance, a concept popularised in the Western world through Dialectical Behaviour Therapy, developed by Marsha Linehan, and one that has also been an integral part of spiritual traditions across the world for centuries.

Radical self-acceptance is a strength towards which those who engage in spiritual practices continually work. It is the ability to recognise and acknowledge the truth without blame or judgment. Self-blame and judgment can be incredibly harmful and can interrupt the process of spiritual healing and growth.

Consistent meditation and mindfulness practice increase our emotional resilience, enabling us to activate the processes of healing and growth. The previous two articles in this series identified practices that can guide us towards this stage. As a reminder, these practices included taking simple meditative moments whenever possible, journaling as a means of release, and practising gratitude and appreciation.

In this chapter of your life, consider continuing these practices with greater depth and consistency. For instance, if you have been spending five minutes in meditation each morning, increase the duration to ten or fifteen minutes per day. Similarly, if you have been releasing pain through journaling, deepen the practice by beginning to acknowledge the lessons you have learned from your experiences or by reflecting on how those experiences opened doors that might otherwise have remained closed.

Carry your spiritual practices into the parts of your day that you may consider "less spiritual." This may involve observing yourself or someone else non-judgmentally while attempting a challenging task. The consistent practice of silence, self-reflection, and non-judgment will continue to strengthen the process of healing.

The expectation that there will be an "aha" moment marking our healing and growth may leave us feeling underwhelmed. It is important to remember that this process looks different for everyone. As you continue to build and deepen your spiritual practices, try to notice the subtle changes in your daily life that may otherwise go overlooked.

Are you noticing a change in the intensity or frequency of irritability? Are you becoming more responsive and less reactive? How do your interpersonal relationships feel? Is there a level of inner contentment and calm within you that was previously difficult to access or only infrequently present?

These seemingly insignificant changes are, in reality, evidence that spiritual healing and growth have begun to take root. If we are returning to ourselves with self-compassion, non-judgment, and acceptance, we can trust that we are progressing well on our journey of spiritual healing and growth.

Pathfinders

NAROPA: THE MASTER OF MASTERS
BY KONCHOK RINCHEN TOBGYAL (GLENVILLE ASHBY)

By Konchock Rinchen Tobgyal(Glenville Ashby)





I had the honor to meditate in the cave where Naropa attained enlightenment. (Nepal 2023)

Naropa was a scholar, master debater and chancellor of Nalanda University, India, during the period 1049- 1057 CE. Despite his academic attainment he was bedeviled by an insatiable quest for spiritual knowledge. He sought guidance from Indian Mahasiddha Tilopa, marking a guru-shisya relationship that redefined yogic and tantric practices throughout Nepal and beyond.

The six foundational practices encompass the Six Yogas Naropa:

- **Tummo (Inner Heat):** The root of the path. This practice ignites the subtle psychic fire at the navel to generate intense bliss and warmth, which is used to realize the ultimate nature of mind.
- **Gyu-lü (Illusory Body):** The foundation of the path. Practitioners learn to perceive everyday reality as dream-like and insubstantial, recognizing the world and the self as a projection without inherent existence.
- **Milam (Dream Yoga):** The method of maintaining lucid awareness during sleep. Practitioners use dreams as a laboratory to test their progress and manipulate illusions.
- **Ösal (Clear Light / Luminosity):** The heart-essence of the path. The yoga of resting the mind in its most subtle, pristine, and unconditioned state, often experienced during deep sleep or the moment of death.
- **Phowa (Consciousness Transference):** The practice of ejecting one's consciousness at the time of death, allowing the mind to transfer directly to a pure realm or attain a more favorable rebirth.
- **Bardo (Intermediate State Yoga):** Teaches the practitioner to recognize and navigate the dream-like intermediate state between death and rebirth, utilizing its highly malleable nature to achieve enlightenment.

Bat Kol
Teachings by Carlos

Intuitively conveyed by Guru Konchok (Glenville Ashby)

Pathways to Spiritual Healing

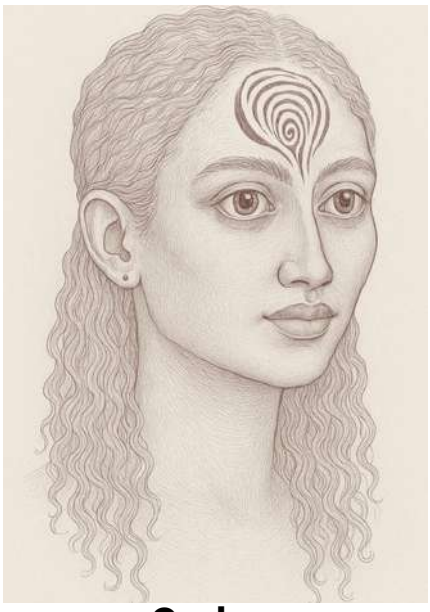
Intuitively conveyed by Konchok Rinchen Tobgyal (Glenville Ashby)

Predating every known religious or spiritual institution, spiritual healing has graced humanity since the dawn of time.

Love, the essence of creation, is central to healing. The healer must possess an immense capacity to feel, empathise, and identify with all of humanity. The recipient of this divine gift must also understand this reality.

The greatest impediment to spiritual healing is disbelief in God's love. When a patient harbours even a small degree of doubt, they may become mentally paralysed, making healing difficult. A patient without faith in the Almighty creates a Herculean obstacle to their own well-being.

The healer must also be recognised as a conduit for God's healing. Unflinching faith is therefore required of the healer.



Carlos
An artist's impression

Thy faith has made thee whole

He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. And he was amazed at their lack of faith. Mark 6:5. Healing takes place on multiple levels. Understandably, we seek rehabilitation of the physical body, but the greatest of miracles is the rehabilitation of the heart, for if the heart is corrupted, the entire body.

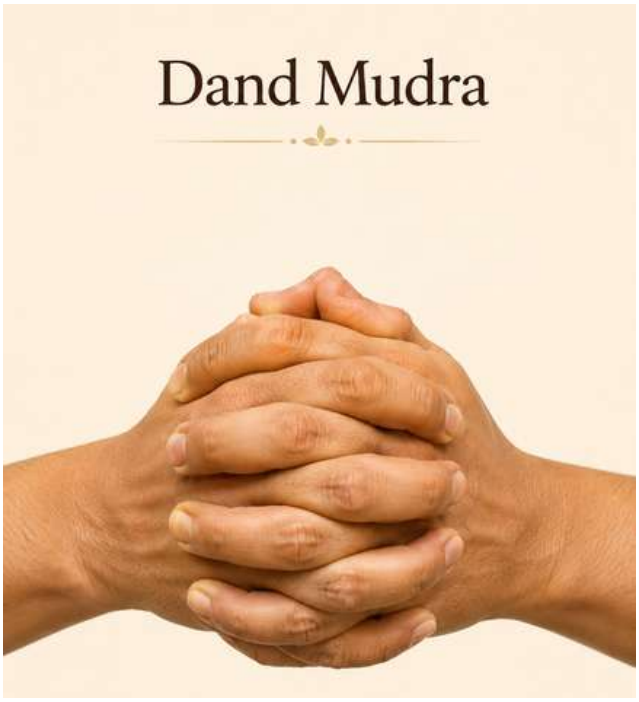
Sadhana

Spiritual Practice

THE 5 PRIMARY MUDRAS FOR SADHANA

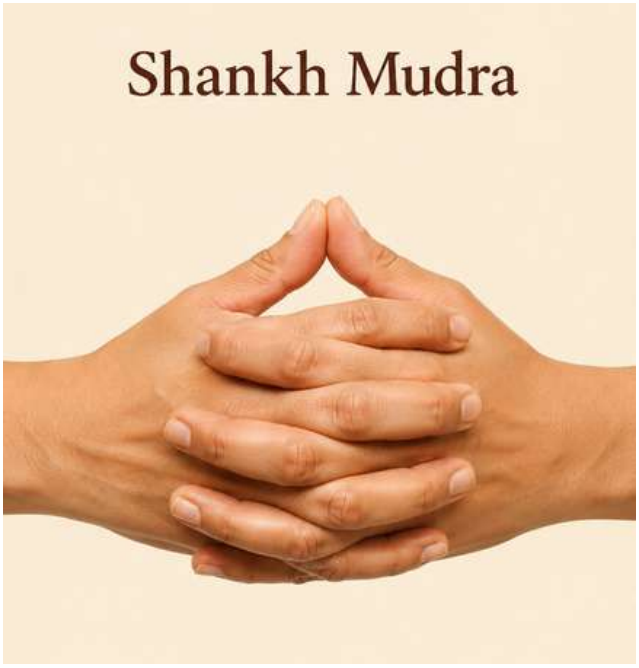
1. DAND MUDRA

Interlock all the fingers of both hands firmly. This mudra gives strength, stability and protection. It removes negativity and creates a shield of energy.



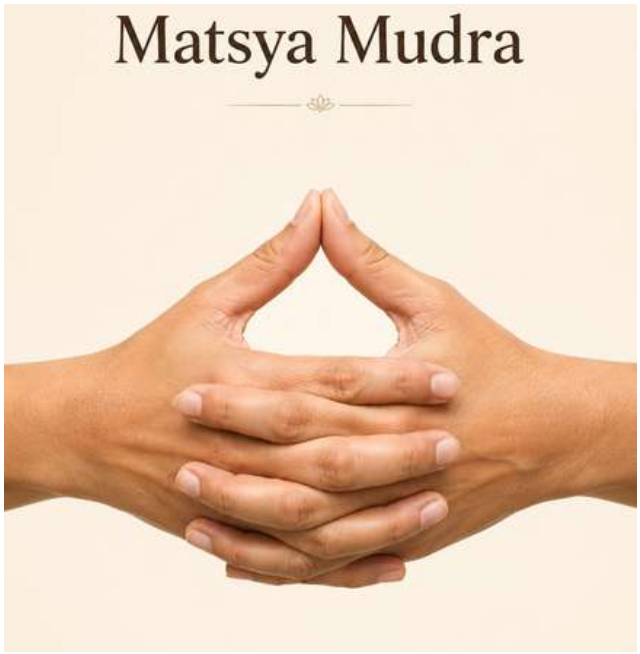
2. SHANKH MUDRA

Place the left thumb inside the right palm and the right thumb over the left thumb. Keep the fingers interlocked. This mudra brings auspicious energy, purifies the aura and invites divine blessings.



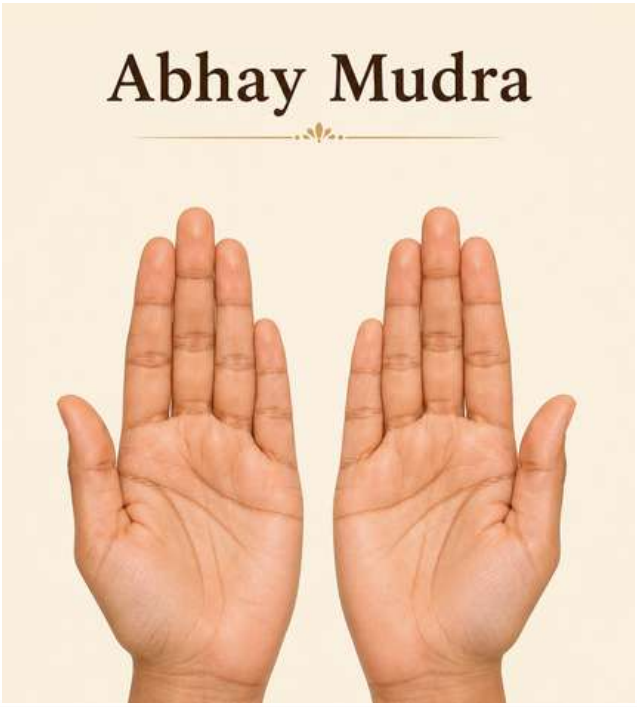
3. MATSYA MUDRA

Place the palms facing each other. Interlock the fingers except the thumbs. Keep the thumbs joined at the tips. This mudra removes inner restlessness and improves concentration in sadhana.



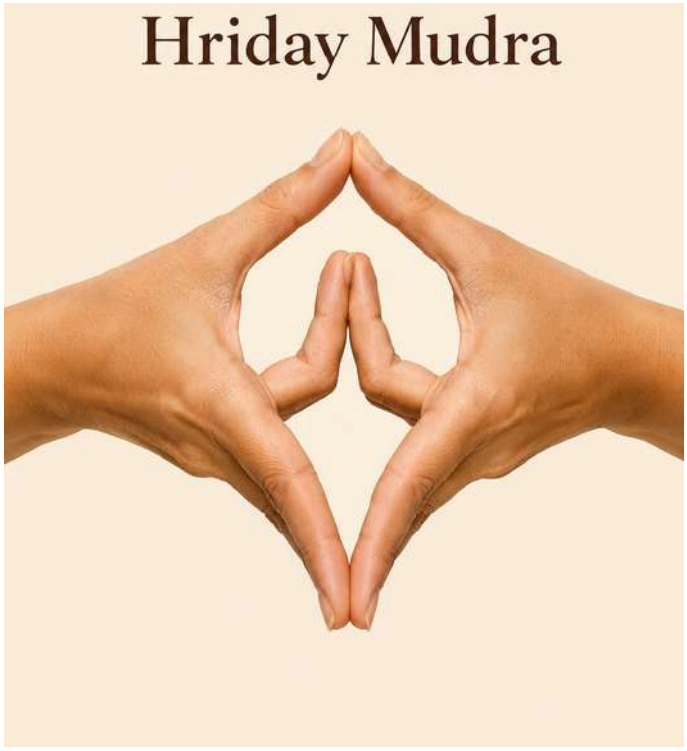
4. ABHAY MUDRA

Keep both palms open and facing outward. This mudra removes fear, gives courage, protection and blesses the practitioner and surroundings.



5. HRIDAY MUDRA

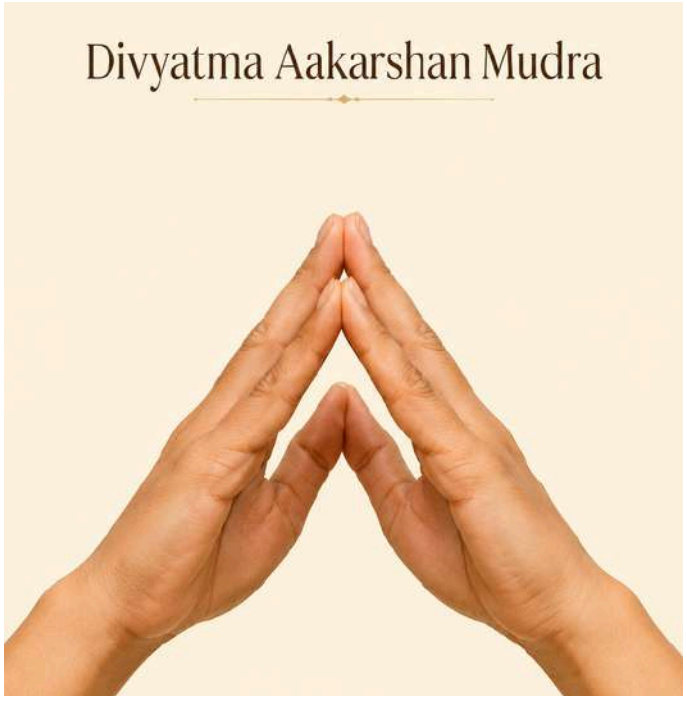
Join the tips of index fingers and thumbs of both hands to form a heart shape. This mudra opens the heart chakra, increases devotion, compassion and inner peace.



OTHER IMPORTANT MUDRAS

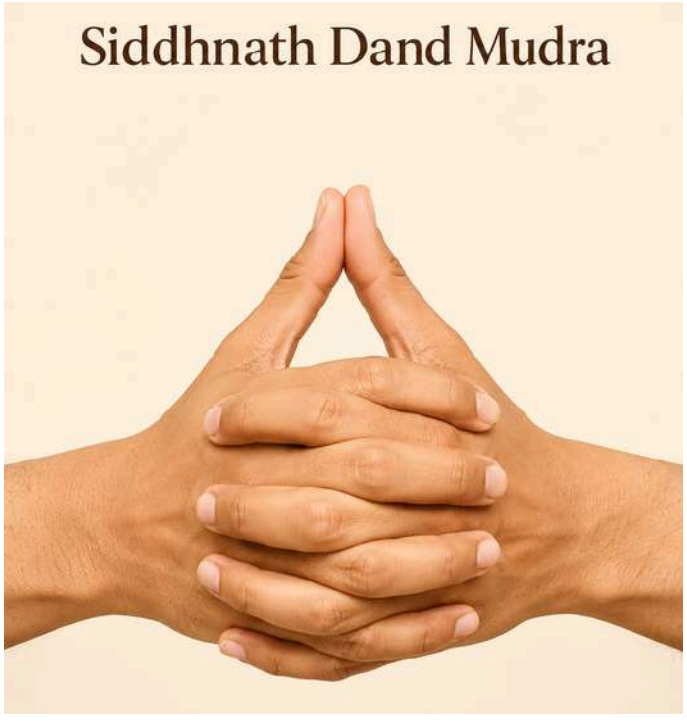
1. DIVYATMA AAKARSHAN MUDRA

Bring the fingertips of both hands together as shown. This mudra attracts divine consciousness and blessings. It helps in spiritual upliftment and connection with higher energies.



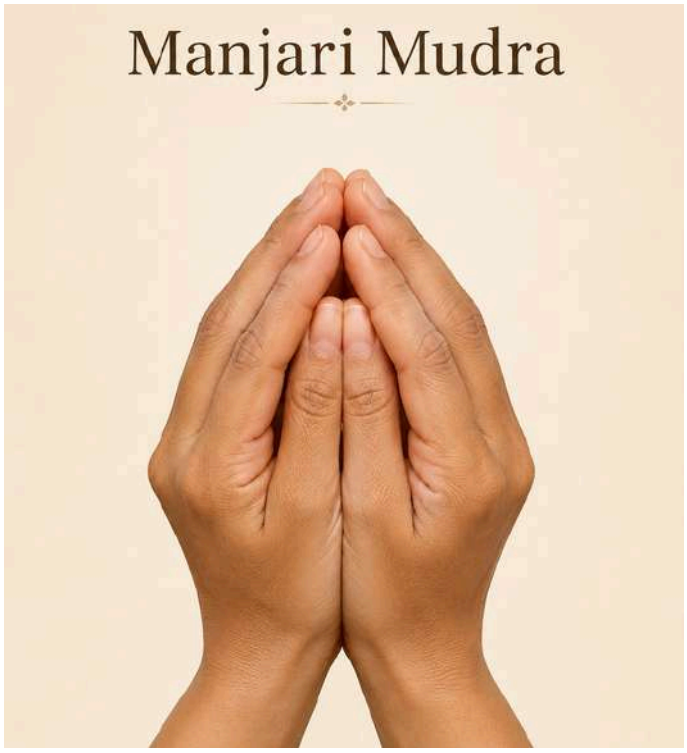
2. SIDDHNATH DAND MUDRA

Interlock the fingers firmly with thumbs straight up and touching each other. This mudra bestows strength, determination and helps in achieving success in sadhana.



3. MANJARI MUDRA

Bring all the fingertips together and cup the palms slightly. This mudra represents offering and devotion. It is used to surrender, pray and express gratitude to the Divine.



GENERAL GUIDELINES

• Practice mudras with a calm mind, straight posture and regular breath.
• Use mudras along with mantra, dhyan (meditation) and sankalp (intention) for best results.
• Purity in thoughts, words and actions is essential for the fruit of sadhana.
• Faith, discipline and consistency awaken the true power of mudras.

FAITH + DISCIPLINE + DEVOTION + MUDRA = SUCCESS IN SADHANA

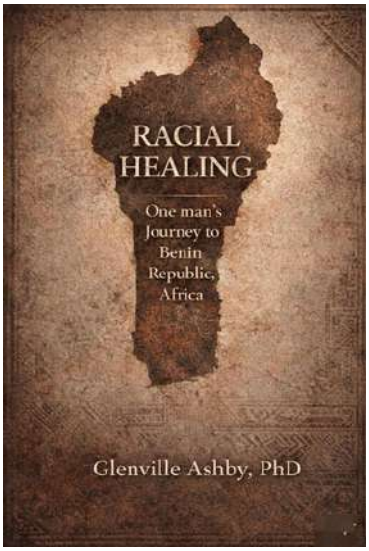
Literary Titan

All things dharma

APRIL 20 INTERVIEW

By Literary Titan - Book Review Services

"Racial Healing" follows your personal return to Benin as you confront the fractured self shaped by race, religion, memory, and diaspora in search of spiritual and psychological restoration. What made you realize that your healing had to be pursued not only psychologically or politically, but spiritually?



Racial Healing by Glenville Ashby

The more I studied dharma and Buddhist psychology and philosophy, I realized that true happiness and peace are unattainable when we attached ourselves to the past; when we romanticize victims of every 'holocaust' if only to eternally damn the perpetrators.

This is the surest way to imprison our mind and embed ourselves in resentment, distrust and even hate. We never look in the mirror, we never ask the toughest of questions. And if we do, we omit underlying spiritual causes of phenomena. Karma we say is incontrovertible.

That's individual karma, sure, but what of collective or group karma? Benin was a slave society with stark colonial pursuits long before the European set foot there. I saw many unsettling things and learned so much through the many interviews I conducted. The Beninise people are also traumatized, not only by the Slave Trade but by their pre-colonial history. There's much behind every genocide. After my third visit I did a lot of soul searching. Healing was slow, a process that was only complete with contemplative studies in Nepal and the integration of Buddhism and Vedanta into my work.

How did standing in places like Ouidah and the Door of No Return change your understanding of ancestry and inherited trauma?

We have a saying in Trinidad that our navel string (umbilical cord) is buried there, meaning that whatever part of the world you are, there is an indissoluble, palpable connection to your birthplace. Well, the Benin experience goes deeper; it was more atavistic, more weighty; it stirred the subconscious.

The Door of No Return is transcendental, otherworldly. I stood there with the seemingly infinite expanse of the sea before me. It triggered so many thoughts, much of them ineffable. But surely, there were feelings of empathy, sorrow, and disbelief of man's utter, naked cruelty.

In writing about Vodun initiation, how did you balance personal revelation with respect for sacred practices and traditions?
Every initiatory experience is unique. The outcome is determined by the purity of one's intention. The pursuit of knowledge, for its sake, guards against difficulties; and indeed, there have been many. A discussion on such unfortunate outcomes is best served on another platform.

The Vodun tradition, not unlike other indigenous practices is enriching. There's much to glean from its emphasis on cosmology and nature. It requires deliberation, discernment on the part of the initiate. Short of this, there's the risk of misunderstanding and misinterpretation. The onus is also on babalawos (priests) and Iyalorishas (priestesses) to respect the craft and demand the highest ethical standards of aspirants and initiates.

What do you hope readers who carry their own fractured histories will recognize in your journey?
Tough questions must be asked. Spiritual insight reveals that perpetrators and victims share a karmic connection. An impartial and in-depth study of genocides throughout history raises many provocative questions. We accept individual karma; that there are consequences for our every decision and action. But why don't we dismiss collective karma? Admittedly, this line of study can be controversial, but it is needed. Resentment, hatred and vendetta imprison and poison the mind and soul. Reconciliation through knowledge is the key to happiness. Attachment in every form is the source of all sorrows. Inner peace is not attainable through political agitation; neither is it possible through social justice movements. Inner peace frees us from every form of mental and physical enslavement, and is only realizable through the conscientious study and practice of dharma.

ZHABS TOG
(SERVICE)












CDP charitable services distributed 65 hot meals at a New York shelter in June.

The Spoken Word

The unborn

Konchok Rinchen Tobgyal (Glenville Ashby)

Lost upon us is your greatness
Eons of displacement
And here we are
Your healing unknown
Present in the every scripture
Your hagiography hidden
Supplanted by The Lie
But not forever
Every stone unturned
That your glory manifest
The primordial healer
Can you be questioned?
You who created all
Your succor we call
In the throes of death
For redemption
Instinctively
Nature you are
Beyond time
Deathless
Uncreated
With cymbals
Hymnals
And dance
We praise Thee
Forever more



Konchok Rinchen Tobgyal (Glenville Ashby)

End-of-life Reflections

THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU BELIEVE

By Anna Ellis



Anna Ellis

Spiritual healing can be enhanced by taking the time to contemplate what we allow to guide us. Identifying the influences that shape our journey helps us focus on nurturing those that are beneficial and changing those that are not. Consider the following retelling of a Zen parable:

There was once a samurai warrior who travelled to a distant temple. Upon his arrival, he burst through the door and demanded, "Monk, explain this to me now! What is the difference between heaven and hell?"

The monk sat quietly for a while. He then turned his head, looked at the samurai, and exclaimed, "You call yourself a warrior? You are nothing but an impatient and impulsive man!"

Deeply angered, the samurai grabbed his sword. He raised it above his head and aimed it at the monk. Suddenly, the monk looked into his seething eyes and said, "This is hell."
The samurai humbly lowered his sword. Realising that he had allowed his anger to control him, he bowed to the monk.

"I am sorry. I wish to be guided by my spiritual path and purpose rather than by my emotions," the samurai said.

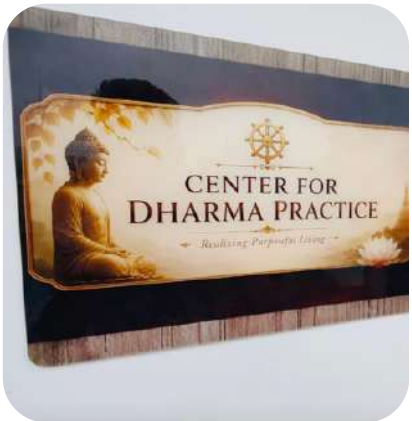
The monk smiled and replied, "This is the gate to heaven."
As your spiritual journey continues, I encourage you to reread this parable. Consider the monk's lesson and how it might apply to your own journey. I have included a few prompts below to guide your reflection:

- What do spiritually healthy emotions, behaviours, and activities look like to me?
- How do I nurture my spiritual connection during periods of heightened thoughts and emotions?
- At what time of the day or night is my mind clearest?

As always, I would like to extend my best wishes to everyone reading this. May your continuing journeys positively influence your health and well-being.

Announcements

The Center for Dharma Practice opened an administrative office and meditation center In Haridwar, India. It serves members, pilgrims and retreatants. Email us for further information.
centerfordharma@gmail.com





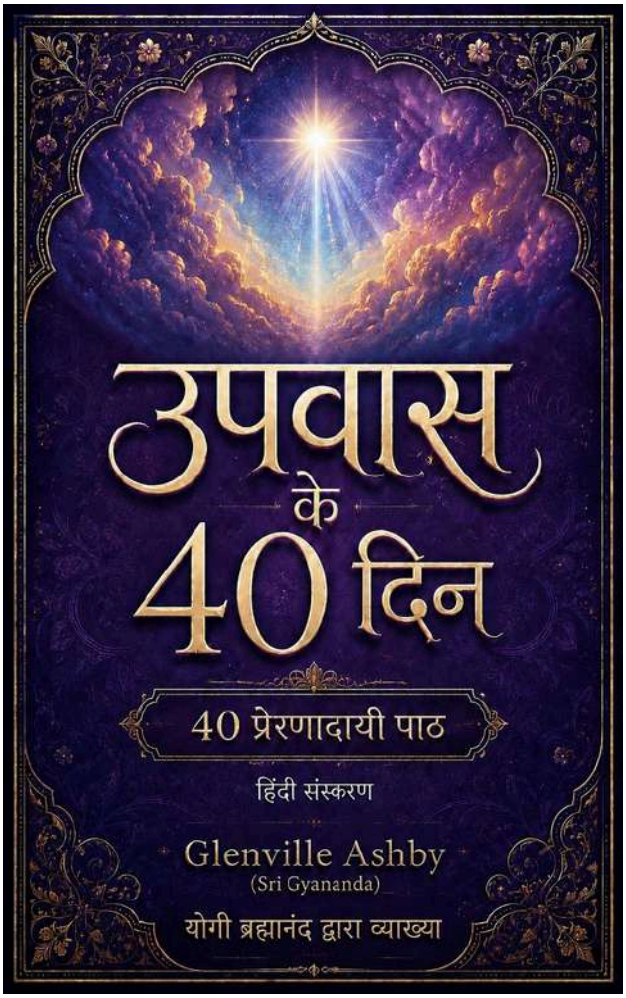


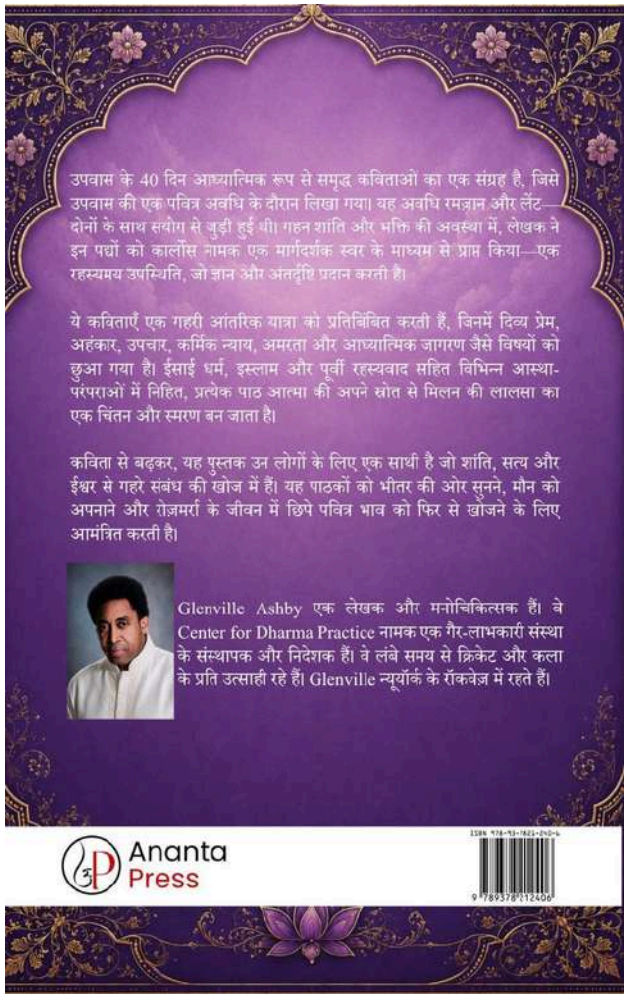






40 Days of Fasting by our Teacher, Konchok Rinchen Tobgyal (Glenville Ashby) is now available in Hindi





CENTER FOR DHARMA PRACTICE INC.

YOUTH SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Realizing Purposeful Living

Principled Living

- Empathetic joy
- Compassion
- Loving kindness
- Equanimity

LIBERATION FROM THE *Four Human Poisons*

ANGER · GREED · ATTACHMENT · PRIDE

SILENCE

- Benefits of solitude
- Welcoming silence
- Destructive external stimuli
- Transition from boyhood to manhood
- The ills of immediate self-gratification

PARENTHOOD

- The mystical connection

OVERCOMING LIFE'S CHALLENGES

- Blockages: family issues, divorce, discipline
- Identity and Trust
- Intuition

THE GIFT OF LIFE

- The Middle Path and managing the successes and failures

RELIGION

A STUDY OF COMPARATIVE RELIGION

ETHICS OF MIND TRAINING

- Atisha: An Introduction
- Taqwa: Through the eyes of Islam
- Tratak: Methods and Benefits
- Mindfulness
- Yonchap: Daily blessings

INTRODUCTION TO MYSTICISM

- Initiation
- The Dream World
- The Subtle Realms
- Breathwork: An introduction
- The Purification Breath
- Pranayama: Level 1
- Introduction to Patanjali: Discourses in Yoga
- Tafakkur (Contemplation)
- Marriage of Mind and Breath
- Daydreaming and Role Playing

JOURNALING

- Connecting time

PRAYERS & INVOCATIONS

- The vibration and frequencies of prayers
- The Refuge Prayer in Hinduism
- The benefits of Istighfar
- The 7-Limb Prayer
- The Dedication Prayer
- The Himalayan Chant

MANTRAS

- Guru Mantra
- Chenrezig (Compassion) mantra
- Wisdom mantras of Saraswati and Manjushri

PRACTICUM

A volunteer-based undertaking to benefit sentient beings.
(A successful project is required to successfully complete Term 1.)

PERSONAL RETREAT

- Gauging spiritual growth

END OF YEAR 1

Realizing Purposeful Living

Cultivating wisdom, compassion, and awakened awareness for the benefit of all sentient beings.

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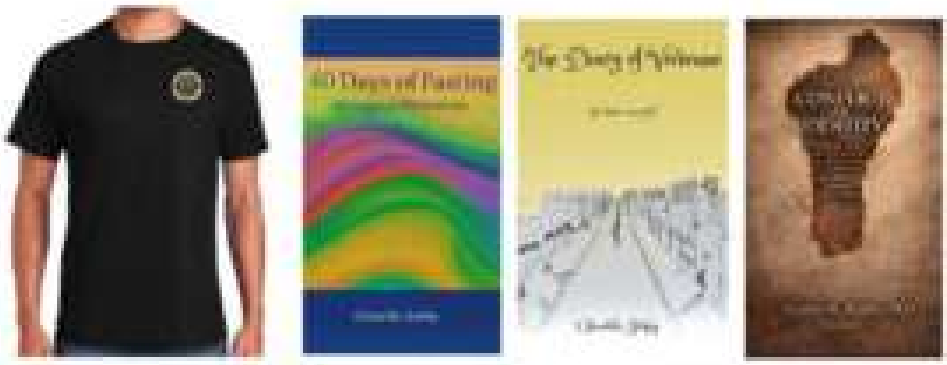

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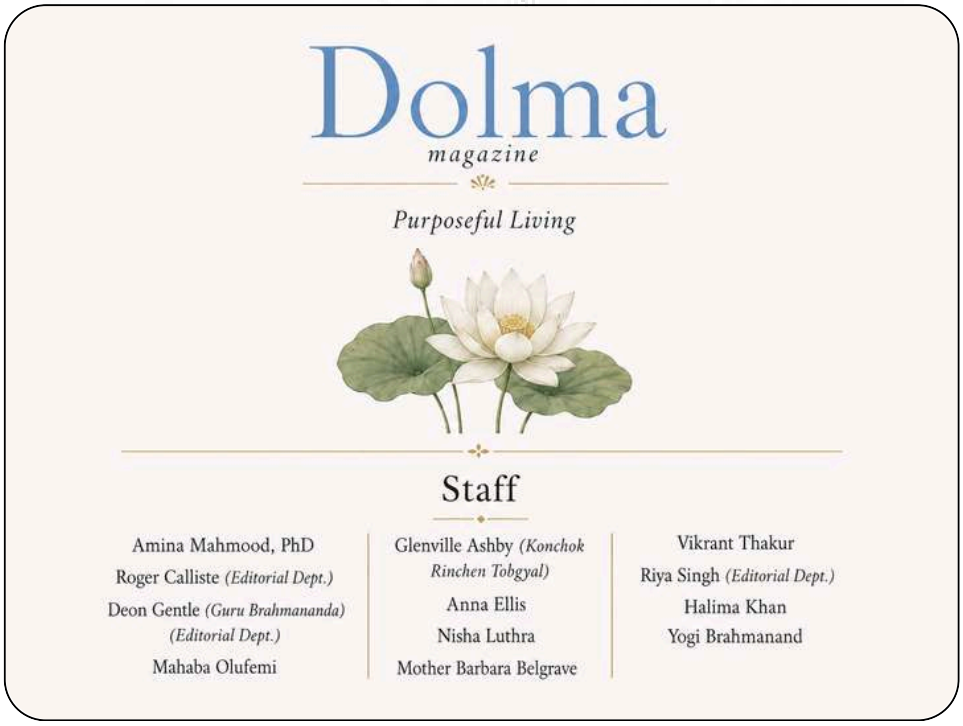

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Partnerships

The Center for Dharma Practice has been granted a 501 (C) 3 status
All donations are tax deductible. Thank you.
Please contact centerfordharma@gmail.com for additional information