

# The Power of Love

SATISH KUMAR



**B**efore I start, I would like to do a short meditation which is a mediation of Love but in a slightly broader way. In Indian tradition we greet people by bringing two palms together. The right palm represents the world and the Other and the left palm represents the Self. And by bringing those two together we bring the world and the self together in love. So let's greet each other by putting our two palms together and bowing. Then relax and I will read this little mediation, then I will start.

*Let us bow to sacred life, sacred soil, sacred earth, sacred universe. We see all beings in us and ourselves in all beings. We see the whole universe in ourselves and ourselves in the whole universe. Each one of us is a microcosm of macrocosm. Cosmos is our country. The planet Earth is our common home. Nature is our nationality. And love is our religion. All living beings are sustained by the same breath of life. Thus we are all connected. We are all related. We are interbeings. We all share a single origin. Unity and diversity dance together. All our thriving is mutual*

*Above: a woman performs the Namaskara gesture, a traditional Indian greeting with hands in front of chest and a slight bow*

*when separation and divisions and suffering ceases. We go beyond right and wrong, we go beyond good and bad, and then we bow to the unity of life. We bow to the diversity of forms. We bow to the sacred. To life. To the Earth. To the universe. Breathe in, breathe out, smile, relax, and let go. Let go of all expectations, all attachments, and all anxieties. Let go of all worries, fears, and anger. Let go of ego. And move from ego to eco. Breathe in, breathe out, smile, relax, and let go. We are at home. I am at home. You are at home. We are at home.*

In a way the poem [‘Tree’] that Richard just read you can call a Tree of Love because a tree is a great giver of love. I have fifteen apple trees in my garden, in my orchard. I planted a small seed forty years ago and that one little seed transformed itself with the help of the soil and the sun and the rain and became a plant and a trunk and eventually branches and leaves and, every year, produces blossom and apples. All that is the gift of love. And now year after year people come to the apple trees and the apple trees are waiting to give from September through October, November, December, four months in succession the trees will give apples. And the tree loves each and every one of us without any discrimination. Love knows no discrimination. Love does not say I will love you only if you are good. The apple tree does not say you can have apples only if you are good. It says: you are a saint or a sinner—have apples! If you are black or white—have apples. Educated or uneducated—have apples. You are man or woman, rich or poor, or an animal, or bird, or bees or



wasps—whoever you are—have apples. This love without condition, love without qualification, unconditional love, the tree gives.

So we can learn from the trees. Trees are our teachers. Nature altogether is our teacher—teacher of love. *We* put conditions—I will love you only if you are good and you are kind and you are favourable and you agree with me. What’s so good about loving if you like something or somebody. But the real power of love, and the real test of love, is if you can love even those who harm you. Even those who hurt you. You can love even those who insult you or abuse you. And even then you can wish them wisdom and happiness and give your love. This is the power of love.

Now when we think about what is holding everything together in scientific language, we say the Earth and everything upon the Earth are held together with the power of gravity. That’s a very good scientific theory—gravity. But I would say that love, and the power of love, is similar to the power of gravity. Material things are held together by the power of gravity, but the relational, spiritual, non-material existence is held together by the power of love. And when the power of love diminishes, things fall apart. And therefore, for me, the principle of love is as broad-ranging, as cosmic, as planetary, as wide-ranging as the power of gravity.

Love is a motivation behind all our activities—or should be. Now many people have replaced the motivation of love with the motivation of money. People will say ‘I practice medicine, I’m a doctor, because I need money. This is my job. I have to earn money so that I can pay the bills.’ A teacher would say ‘I teach children because I need money. I have a job because I have to pay the bills.’ A farmer would say ‘I grow food, but I need money, I need to make a profit.’ A builder, a politician, business leaders—we are all now doing work or doing things so that we can earn money. That is why our civilization, and our economy and politics, our businesses, they are all in a kind of crisis. And all the time we are seeing that the relationship between humans and nature is also of the same kind—utilitarian. We are looking at nature as a resource for the economy, a resource for money, profit. Now the power of love says that we need to change that motivation. Of course money is a very good invention. Very practical, very pragmatic, very useful, but only as a means of exchange. And only as a servant but not as a master. Love is the master and money should be the servant.

But at the moment money has become the master and love has become a personal thing meaning love your mother, love your father, love your wife or husband and your children, and that’s it. That’s the limit of love. Or maybe friends. But not neighbours. We don’t love neighbours. What’s happening between Ukraine and Russia? They are neighbours. They are both Christians. They both believe in ‘Love thy neighbour as thyself.’ But they forget that Russia and Ukraine have to live next to each other as



neighbours forever. Ukraine and Russia cannot change their geography. Ukraine and Russia cannot change location. Either they can live next to each other as neighbours and friends and love each other or they can fight and hate each other and live like enemies. Now living like enemies is very, very expensive and very uncomfortable. When you are living like enemies and not like lovers and friends then you have to have a lot of weapons and wars and conflict and bombing. I want Ukrainians to love Russia. I want the president of Ukraine to love the president of Russia. And I want the president of Russia to love the president of the Ukraine. That's the power of love. And you can live happily together. Wars are unnecessary. Conflicts are unnecessary; they can be avoided if you have love in your heart.

At the moment our world is spending billions and billions and billions of dollars and pounds and euros and rupees and yens and all the currencies of the world to build the citadel of hate. The United States of America, China, India—all countries. They spend so much money



*Above: Satish Kumar became a Jain Monk aged nine, joined the Gandhian land reform movement aged eighteen, and in his twenties made an 8,000-mile, penniless Peace Walk from Delhi to the world's then four nuclear capitals: Moscow, Paris, London and Washington*

on armaments and weapons. This is why I went from India—New Delhi to Moscow—and then from Moscow to Paris, and Paris to London and Washington DC, for two and a half years as a peacemaker with the message of love. At that time it was the height of the Cold War. The Soviet Union and the western countries led by America they were at loggerheads. Nuclear threat was severe. Bertrand Russell in England at age ninety, protesting against nuclear weapons, went to jail for peace in the world. So, inspired by that, I walked with a friend of mine for 8000 miles without any money, with the power of love. My power of love in practice. I went to Muslim countries, Christian countries, Communist countries, capitalist countries, poor countries, rich countries, without any money. And I was fed, sheltered, supported, cared for, looked after, by strangers. So I experienced the power of my love for people and the power of the love of people for me. So what I am talking to you about is not a kind of ideal and wishy-washy thinking. It's my experience.

Our civilization, our politics, our education, all these things have promoted the idea of money; profit replacing the power of love with the power of money. So what I would like to see is a transformation of consciousness. So when you are a doctor with this new consciousness of love, you say: 'I am going to be a doctor. I'm going into medicine because I love people. I love to heal. I love to look after and care for those who are suffering in sickness and ill health. I'm motivated by love to go into medicine. Of course money is a means to an end. Money is a good way of exchanging goods and services. So I'm paid. But that is not my motivation to go into medicine. I'm a doctor because I love people and I love the process of healing.'

The same goes for everybody. If I'm a teacher in this new power of love and consciousness you will say I teach

because I love knowledge. I love wisdom. I love children. I love to explore ideas and find new ways of being. And I love poetry and music and arts and crafts and science and mathematics and I love children. So I will share this experience, this knowledge I have, with the children and we will together make the journey of consciousness and journey of exploration and journey of discovery. That is the great motivation of love.

My ideal society will go to the farm, work on the land, sow the seeds, harvest the grain, because they love nature. They love to feed people. They grow food with great respect for nature, in great harmony with nature, taking care of the soil, not thinking the soil is just a dead soil. I can put lots of chemicals and fertilizers and pesticides and herbicides and grow more crops. I can sell more, whether they are healthy or nutritious or not, it doesn't matter. Quality does not matter as long as there is enough quantity to make profit. That motivation has to change in this new vision, this new ideal of a society which is motivated by love. So farmers will farm and agriculture will become agriculture as a spiritual practice. It's a practice of love, for your family, for your friends, for your neighbours, for



*Above: thanking the soil and the earthworms working under the soil*

your countrymen and women that you grow food so that everybody, our whole society can be nourished. And you thank the sun for giving us photosynthesis and an energy and a warmth. And you will stand with gratitude to the rain. Thank you beautiful water coming from the sky. And you will thank the soil and the earthworms which are working under the soil. And you will enjoy working with your hands. All this modern agriculture has no love. You sit on a big tractor, a big combine harvester, with all the computers and all the robots. You have 30,000, 40,000 chickens in one factory farm. 10,000 20,000 animals—cows, pigs—on one farm with no compassion, no love. And these animals in this factory never see the light of day in their whole lives. That is not a way of farming with love. Farming with love will be when you are taking care of each animal, each creature, each piece of soil, each tree, each hedge, and you are one with the soil. And I realize that the soil is not only in my field or in my garden. I am also soil. I am made of soil.

The word human comes from hummus. Hummus means soil. So human beings are literally 'soil beings.' And all our food is soil transformed—delicious mangoes and oranges and bananas and pineapples and healthy rice and wheat and barley and oats and millets. And delicious vegetables like cauliflower and spinach and asparagus and carrots and cabbages and wonderful herbs like rosemary and sage and thyme and basil. They are all soil transformed. And soil loves us, and we use soil as a means to make money. Why are we doing that? So we need to enlarge the idea of love, the power of love, from personal to social to planetary.

Of course personal love is very, very important. And in personal love we have to start loving ourselves. If you don't love yourself, how are you going to love anyone else? This is why Jesus Christ says, 'Love thy neighbour as thyself.' Loving thyself is a prerequisite for loving your neighbour. And everybody is somebody's neighbour. The trees are our neighbours, animals are our neighbours, climate is our neighbour, birds are our neighbours, and all humans are our neighbours. And we don't say that you are my neighbour if you are my countryman. If you are in England, you can't say only Englishmen are my countrymen and I don't love you if you are Black or are an alien or a refugee or somebody like that. Neighbour has no discrimination. Whoever is around you and near you and by you, is your neighbour. And everybody is somebody's neighbour.

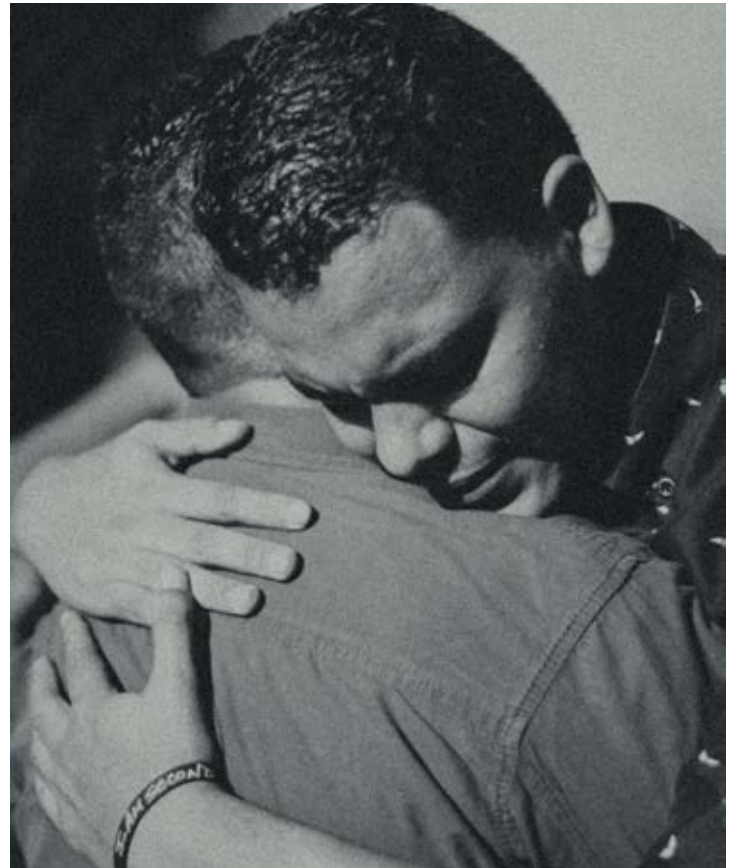
At the moment we have all this hatred, all this anger, all these fights and conflicts and wars. They are caused because of self-hate. We think that we hate our enemy but hating the enemy is hating yourself. It's a manifestation of self-hatred and therefore we need to begin by loving ourselves. And loving ourselves means accepting ourselves for who we are. We are nature, we are soil, we are also consciousness. We are spirit, we are imagination, we are love itself, we are compassion, we are generosity. We are



*'Animals are our neighbours.'*

full of imagination and creativity. It is I who am capable of writing beautiful poetry. I who can sing and write beautiful songs and play beautiful music. I who can sow the seeds of an apple tree and grow apples and work on the land. It is I who can be a doctor and heal other people. So do not underestimate your own being and your own potential—the human potential and the human capacity.

On the one hand you are able to reason—on the other, you have love and intuition. And you use your left brain and right brain together, balancing the brain. And working in such a holistic way that you love yourself. And in loving yourself, accepting yourself as you accept all living beings. You accept your neighbours, you accept your parents, you accept your children, you accept your wife, and you accept your husband. You accept. Love is letting go of ego. Love is letting go of separation. Love is letting go of control and domination. Love is total and unconditional acceptance of others as others are. This is the vision of love; this is the power of love. And it is because of the power of love that all humanity has sustained itself. And the power of love is the only teaching of all religions—the Buddha taught the power of love, Mohammad taught the power of love, Jesus Christ taught the power of love. Guru Nanak of the Sikhs and Mahavira of the Jains, and



*'You accept your parents...'*

Judaism—all religions, to love is the true religion. And whenever religion moves away from love and becomes an institutionalized organization with money and wealth and churches and mosques and temples and dogmas and controlling people, that's not love, that's not religion anymore. No more Hindu or Muslim or Christian anymore if you have control and domination and subjugation. Sometimes we have a label—Hindu, Muslim, Jew, Sikh, Buddhist, Christian—but a label is not love. It's just a label. Love is to accept everybody as they are.

And so love is a wonderful word with profound and deep wisdom and teachings embedded. I have had the great pleasure of meeting many, many wonderful people who were the embodiment of love. And one of them—the meeting of whom I can never forget in my whole life who made a deep and profound impression on me—was Martin Luther King. In 1964 when I finished my walk in Washington, DC, I went to meet Martin Luther King and he was so gracious, so kind, so generous, he welcomed me with open arms. I cannot tell you what a meeting it was—he was the embodiment of love. Even though he was so radical. He was standing up for justice. Racial justice. And fighting against racial discrimination. Out of love he went to prison twenty-nine times. So loving is not the act of a coward.



*'Love, the sustaining power of the world.'*

Love is an act of bravery, of courage. To be a lover and practice the doctrine of the principle of love, you have to be courageous. Only cowards can hate and kill each other. There is no cause good enough to kill somebody, but I can die for a good cause myself. Jesus Christ was prepared to be crucified because he believed in love. Martin Luther King was prepared to go to jail twenty-nine times because of his love for humanity. He did not hate white people he just wanted to transform them. Justice delayed is justice denied. And that was the teaching of many, many other great teachers.

Mahatma Gandhi was another great embodiment of love. Unfortunately I was too young and I did not have the honour and the pleasure and the privilege of meeting Mahatma Gandhi but I have read his work and I met many people who worked with him. We have great teachings; we have many examples of love as the sustaining power of the world. Mothers love their children; parents, brothers and sisters love each other. And when shopkeepers love their customers, and when farmers love nature, and teachers love knowledge, and doctors love healing, that is how it will happen. And when many of the doctors and teachers and many of the farmers and even many of the people going into politics they *do* go with the idea of love. But once they are there, they get stuck in this juggernaut of the economy and money and so on. And therefore I would say: Pass on the love—romantic love, erotic love, love of wisdom, philosophy, a love of people and languages. Everywhere we should look at this idea and meditate on the power of love.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to share my passion and my understanding and my commitment to spread the word of love and practice the ideal of love in my own life. My life has been sustained by love as I've said already, how I was sustained around the world walking. I would not be here without the love of so many people and I'm deeply grateful to all who have loved me and I'm



*Nature is full of love*

deeply grateful to nature and the sun and the rain and the soil and the air and the fire which has sustained me out of their love. Nature is full of love. We humans need to learn from nature and be loving in return.

## ***Q&A and discussion***

**Alan:** I feel we are brought up to form judgements very quickly about people, things, situations and even ourselves. But I was once told that you don't have to like someone but you do have to love them. How does one do that in experience? Does one have to overcome not liking in order to love, or can one hold love and not liking together and still love?

**Satish:** You can do that. Liking is related to the acts of somebody. If somebody is being angry you can say: 'I don't like you because of your anger.' You don't hate the person who is angry. You say: 'I don't like your behaviour.' So if someone is using politics as a means to gain power for themselves, you can say, 'I don't like this kind of person.' You dislike the *act*. You dislike the behaviour. You dislike the policy, you dislike the organization that has been built around such-and-such a person but you don't hate the person. So, for example, Mahatma Gandhi said the British people are my friends and brothers and sisters, but I don't like their way of imperial colonial rule. Martin Luther King said, I don't hate white people, I don't hate the people who are discriminating against Black people, but I don't like their behaviour. So it's a dislike of the action, of the system which is exploitative and destructive, and a dislike of inhuman, cruel acts.

But a person is a person. They are misguided, they need help, they need support if they are exploiting, dominating,

killing. This is why the act of Nelson Mandela against apartheid was an act of love even for the white people who were perpetuating the discrimination. Desmond Tutu did not like the apartheid but he was a man of great love and compassion. He set the example of truth and reconciliation, he brought everybody together and said ‘We love you all, but we don’t want apartheid.’ You can dislike the act but you must love the person and in loving them you can transform them and transform their system and policies and acts. Without loving you will not be able to communicate, without loving you will not be able to transform. If Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu had not loved white people, they would not have transformed and brought an end to apartheid. Because of the love of Mahatma Gandhi for all people, including the British and white people, many white and British people supported Mahatma Gandhi and the independence movement. You have to love your enemy, your opponent, someone you don’t agree with and are opposed to our system so they can be transformed.

**Gary:** What is the connection between interpersonal love and collective love?

**Satish:** Collective love is the love for the whole of humanity, the whole planet which includes all living beings. It is cosmic love. When we are in awe and wonder at the rainbow, the sunrise and sunset, the flowers blooming in the spring, and the leaves of the trees in the autumn and the winter trees and the rivers flowing, and all humanity, and the love of culture, music, poetry, philosophy—all that is collective love but that is not enough. It’s a good ground of being that we have universal love in our hearts but love has to be expressed in a personal way. Intimate love and ultimate love—these are the two words you have to bring together. Intimate love is personal love—wife,



*‘Collective love.’*

children, neighbour, colleagues, whoever you are working with. Love them. Respect them, Help them. But that has to extend to ultimate love. You can’t walk on one leg. You can’t say: I love my wife and children but I don’t care for anybody else. Or, I love humanity and people but I hate my colleagues or my family. That will not work. So the intimate love is every person who comes into your life. Accept them as they are without judging, criticizing, complaining controlling, but by participating in the process of life by journeying together. By making a pilgrimage together you transform each other. At the same time, in your consciousness and in your awareness and in your mental landscape, you have love for all of humanity, all living beings and one humanity—one earth, one planet, one cosmos. We are all in it together.

**Sam:** Could you speak more about the relationship between love and acceptance?

**Satish:** Acceptance and expectation these are two opposite words. When you expect somebody to behave in a certain way you are limiting the potential of that person. And you are limiting the emergence of something miraculous, something unexpected, something amazing and wonderful. The moment you start to expect, you limit, you put a boundary. I’m expecting this person to behave in this way. I’m expecting this conference to have this outcome. I’m expecting my action to have this result. The expectation limits the scope of love. When you have no expectation, then you are going with an open heart, an open mind, open consciousness, and you are loving without expecting any results or achievements. You are loving without expecting anything in return. Even if somebody doesn’t love in return, still you love. That is the kind of acceptance. So you



*Spiritual leader Dalai Lama in 2015 sharing his birthday cake with Archbishop Desmond Tutu at the Tibetan Children's Village School in Dharamsala, India*

accept life as it is. You are not the designer of the universe. You are not the designer of every other human being. You are not in charge. You are not in control. You are a pilgrim. You are a participant. You are working together with other people. But you are not in charge. So why do you have the idea that people should behave this way or that way? That's arrogance. Love and arrogance don't go together. With humility and by dropping your expectations and accepting other people as they are, and then by being in dialogue, in conversation, in communication, in journeying together, participating and working together in that way you transform each other, you learn from each other, you teach each other.

So love is a way of mutuality. Love is a way of reciprocity. Love is not a one-way street. Even with your wife or husband or children you have no expectations. Let them be what they are without criticizing, without complaining, without controlling, without comparing, accept them as they are and then participate and journey together, travel together, and that way you will change but without expectations. So love and expectations don't go together. You have to drop your expectations of the other. I say: accept yourself as you are, don't expect yourself to be grand, or do this or do that. Why didn't I achieve this or that? Why wasn't I good and amazing and marvellous? You are who you are. Always cultivate your love, cultivate your music, cultivate your poetry. Do your gardening, do your cooking, do your activism, whatever you are doing but accepting who you are. Your limits are wonderful as well as your potential. Potential is unlimited but by dropping your expectations, you can rise to the challenge and you can become a Mahatma Gandhi. By accepting yourself as you are, you move forward. By expecting yourself to be



*'Let them be what they are without criticizing, without complaining, without controlling, without comparing; accept them as they are and then participate and journey together, travel together'*

something you are limiting your potential. So I would say love and expectations don't go together.

**Rachel:** Can you say something about love within a marriage because it seems to me it is more difficult than collective love since even spiritual giants like Nelson Mandela got divorced.

**Satish:** Divorce or not divorce is not necessarily related to love. You can love and yet divorce amicably and in a friendly way. Because you realize that although I love you, we are not compatible. Our way of being together is not compatible. And therefore it is better for us to live separately, in a different way, in different places, and yet we love each other. So I would say: I don't know Nelson Mandela and Winnie Mandela's personal lives but as an idealist I would think that Nelson Mandela and Winnie Mandela did not hate each other. Did not have any kind of hatred or lack of love for each other. Things did not work out just as sometimes your job does not work out. You change your profession or you start in a business and after ten years decide this is not the right place for me, I'm not comfortable. So I leave but it does not mean that I have to hate that job; somebody else might love it. And so divorce is more a question of compatibility, but the love is accepting the other as the other. I would say in marriage both partners are in mutuality and reciprocity and of equal status. No one is higher or lower, we come together like two arms, two hands, two brains.

Romantic love, erotic love and love in marriage is very beautiful and a wonderful, a joyful way of expressing our universal love because we cannot love the whole universe in a practical way. So through one person, one wife, one husband, you are expressing your love for the universe. When you are in love with one person you are in love with the whole universe. You love the rainbow, the sunrise, the sunset, a beautiful garden, the spring, without complaining or comparing. It's very beautiful to bring our bodies together in a romantic and sexual love. Through sexual love we bring new life into the world. What a great gift marriage is that together we bring a new life into the world and through that process we have joy, we have a celebration, we have pleasure, and we have Ananda. We call it in Indian Sanskrit 'Ananda,' which is a kind of blissfulness. So I think nature has designed our life in such a way so that we can have children. You have life continuing and you can have joy in the same way, like when we eat food. Food sustains our body but at the same time it is fragrant, it tastes good, it looks good on the table, so it's a joy, a bliss, a celebration. Both pleasure and utilitarian. This is the power that brings fulfilment spiritually but also physically—they go hand in hand and that is the great gift of love.

**James:** Is there love in religion?





*'Have festivals together.' Diwali is a festival of lights celebrated by Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, and some Buddhists. The festival usually lasts five days and is celebrated during the Hindu lunisolar month Kartika (between mid-October and mid-November)*

**Satish:** You come together so that you can share love in your family, in your community between husband and wife. You want to create a sense of community of a common vision, language ritual, celebrations, festivals, so that communities can come together and that is a very great and important role that religions can play. The problem comes when those things become dogmatic, ritualistic, without bringing the community together. My religion is better than your religion; the only way to find God is to become a Hindu, Christian, Buddhist. Sectarianism and even fundamentalism destroy the true meaning for which communities come together. There's a room for communities to celebrate together, have festivals together, have Christmas together, eat Diwali together. These are beautiful ways of expressing our love in the community. But don't think that Christmas is better than Diwali. I am not against religious communities if they genuinely sincerely come together to find a common ritual and ground. Relationship is the key, the gravity that holds everything together whereas sometimes religions separate each other.

**Jo:** At eighteen you took off on a pilgrimage. Where did that come from? How at such a young age did you know what to do?

**Satish:** My life story begins at age nine not eighteen. At age nine I became a Jain monk. I left my mother and brothers and sisters behind and followed a monk's life. Begging with a begging bowl in my hand and walking with bare feet and no horse or camel or train or boat. Nothing, just on my two legs for nine years. Where did this come from? There is a possibility that some of your inspiration and connection comes from a previous life. When I was four years old my father died and I saw my family crying, mourning, in a very sad situation and that touched me and also made me ask



*A group of Jain monks waits to cross a polluted New Delhi street, 2017. The monks carry brooms to sweep insects from their path and also cover their mouths to keep from accidentally inhaling an insect*

the question: Is there a way of stopping people dying? Can we stop death? So that was one trigger to enter the monk's life to being an end to the cycle of birth and death. I wrote in my autobiography *No Destination* that things happen, doors open, some sparks come and you feel inspired by that. At eighteen I had a dream, and in my dream Mahatma Gandhi came and touched me and inspired me so I left the monkhood. Then Bertrand Russell was arrested and put in jail. I thought: Wow here's a man of 90 going to jail for peace in the world. What am I doing here a young man drinking coffee, and so things happen like that. I got inspired to do something about it. It's not just the news but something that inspired me to take action. We all have those opportunities happening in our lives; doors open but we don't enter, we don't take advantage of the opportunity, we ignore it and carry on with our daily lives

**Question from the Chat:** Can you please offer a reflection on how love is experienced in our bodies? What is sacred action from thinking, feeling or moving centres as individuals and in groups?

**Satish:** Body, mind, soul and consciousness are a continuum; there is no separation. Without body, mind is useless, consciousness cannot be experienced in practical life, so through love we experience and practice and we manifest through our body. So body is an essential and fundamental part of our being and therefore we need to revere our body. The body is sacred, the mental is sacred, the mental is holy and the body is holy. Sometimes in Christianity you say 'holy spirit,' but I would like to say to my Christian friends that, yes, spirit is holy but matter is also holy. Soul is holy but body is also holy. We need to experience our love through our body, and when we experience through our body we also experience through our consciousness, our

mind, our intelligence, our feelings, through our senses, a whole experience. It's not a partial experience, love is a whole experience. We are a microcosm of macrocosm. We are the whole universe in our body. We are made of the sun, the moon, the stars. We are children of the stars, we are cosmic beings. We have earth in our bodies, we have fire in our bodies, we have water and air, and our body is in them as well. So we can say, body is the way nature has designed to give that big experience, the mystical, the cosmic, and the unlimited experience. The tree experiences everything. The tree which the rich poem at the beginning shows us—the tree of love and the tree of life. So a tree is also full of consciousness and intelligence and love.

**Shantena:** Is there a connection between loving and happiness? And joy and pleasure?

**Satish:** We have three words in the Indian tradition—Sat-Chit-Ananda. Sat is the reality, manifestation and truth. Chit is consciousness unmanifest, unpredictable and yet cosmic, everything held together in consciousness. Like space, like air, consciousness is everywhere. But when those two come together and coming together is an act of love, then there is a birth of joy, happiness, bliss—Ananda. So happiness comes when you are in relationship, you are kind to someone, you are happy. You cook for someone, you are very happy. You have some guests coming to your house, that is a great joy. Happiness is when you come together. Separation brings unhappiness. Connecting together is an act of love. When you are in love you are contented, fulfilled, satisfied. Happy, blissful. I think coming together is the key, the relationship is love.

**Shantena:** In my generation people used to say 'Make Love, Not War.' It doesn't seem as though we have learned that yet.

**Satish:** At the moment that is not happening. When you make love that is people coming together. When you are not literally making love but metaphorically, when you are together and sit down together and have a cup of tea together, then a cup of tea becomes a cup of peace. So if



*'We are the whole universe in our body.'*

presidents and prime ministers can come together, have tea together, or lunch and say can we find common ground where we can always have tea together and lunch together and be together and not be separate then I think we could have peace.

**David:** You've said so many beautiful things and they are so rational as well. They make such sense, all the things that have been talked about—to know a way to live, to relate and so on. And yet things seem to be very different from that. So what I'm wondering about is that things are so different and seem to be established in ways so different. So that side must in some sense have a deep foundation too. I've come from an animal past which is hardwired right into me—fear, desire—I have to make distinctions, I have to say this is safe, that's not. I can count on my friend who's not going to attack me and so on. And so what I'm wondering about is the importance of the exploration and the understanding of the other side of this—in some sense, the darkness. I'm not sure that's the best way to say it. It seems to me it may not be enough to just put a positive spin on top of things. It seems to me that somehow what we might say the negative must be unfolded and exposed to light so that it doesn't have the power, because that seems to be very strongly grounding the world. I'm wondering about the other side that Jung would call the 'shadow side' so if you could say a few words on that.

**Satish:** That is a most challenging and profound question. Coming from an Eastern background, the Indian background, where there's a very dominant philosophy of non-dualism and a kind of relatedness of everything, we say that there is a field beyond right and wrong. There is a place where you transcend right and wrong and you see that dark and light and the shadow side of the physical body which creates the shadow side are related to each



*'People coming together.'*

other. You cannot have the body without shadow or the shadow without the body. They are interrelated. Yin and yang. You cannot have day without night.

In the world we have poison but it doesn't mean poison is bad—it also has a role. We have in our bodies anger and fear, that also has a role. We cannot say we have to be a hundred percent saintly with no anger, no fear, no anxiety, and that we are one hundred percent love. No. In our bodies we get headaches, we get ill. Don't say that we have to be always healthy and perfect. So that is part of the design of the universe. You have spring but you also have winter. We have the balance of the brain. Our left hemisphere of the brain wants to analyse and divide and control and subjugate and say no that is wrong and we have to suppress it. But the right hemisphere of the brain which is more holistic embraces the reality and the truth, of ambiguity, of uncertainty, of darkness, of what we call our failings. So non-dualistic in a Vedanta philosophy which is a kind of going beyond right and wrong, beyond good and bad.

Yin and yang is a kind of dance of the dark and light together. But in the dark there's a bit of light and in the light there's a bit of dark and they are in yin yang balance together. And that has to come when we are able to transcend the dualism and separation because of our dualistic thinking. Because of our dualistic thinking that we get from René Descartes and Francis Bacon and many others, we consider that nature is dead, nature is a machine, we are humans that can control nature and some people like St Augustine would say that is the original sin in the Christian tradition. That kind of dualistic thinking has caused so many of our conflicts and problems and tensions. But I come from an Indian background where we say we have to go beyond the moral questions and come to a more spiritual dimension where you rise above and you accept difficulty, you accept suffering, you accept fate. You accept sickness and death, you accept old age, you don't say everyone has to live forever. Accepting suffering, accepting darkness, accepting the shadow side is an essential part of the spiritual journey.

**David:** I really liked the expression the dance of yin and yang, perhaps of darkness and light, and perhaps in some sense of distinction, division, and wholeness. I understand you are saying there's a place for everything. Then the deep question becomes what is this dance? What does it mean to dance the dance. Maybe you can't give a verbal answer to that. Maybe in some sense it's an art form.

**Satish:** When you are walking, as I walked in the Himalayas and Afghanistan and Iran and so on, you are always going up and then coming down to go up again. And you don't say that going down is better than going up. Sometimes it's hard, sometimes it's difficult to go up, but then you come down. If you are walking in England, let's say, along the coast, along the sea, up and down, up



The Khyber Pass with the Fortress of Alimusjid,  
*James Rattray, lithograph, 1848*

and down, yin and yang dancing together, but the ocean is always on your left and that acceptance is the ocean. The love is the ocean. If you accept your life as it comes with the warts and all—accepting illness, old age, birth, marriage, death—that is dancing the dance. In accepting you go with the flow. A river flows and comes to an obstacle, a rock or a stone. It does not fight with the rock, it goes around it. So life is a flow, like a river is a flow. So keep flowing without getting stuck, without getting stagnant, without getting into conflict with the rock. The river does not complain, the river accepts the rock. Being water and being a rock are part of our existence. The river meanders and in the end it reaches its destination, the ocean. So that is the spirituality.

I think in our western culture in Cartesian dualism and a kind of science where everything is a machine and everything can be controlled and the left brain dominates, that is the cause of our anguish. If we want to be free of anguish, we have to accept life. This is where Jung was so enlightened. Jung accepted the shadow side and I believe he was a happy man, an enlightened being, whereas Freud accepted dualism and therefore he did not quite come to terms with his life. So if you take Jung as your psychological friend, then I would say he had accepted the shadow side. You cannot be free of shadow.

**David:** One part that particularly resonated with me was the notion of walking along the seacoast and you going up and down through the ups and downs and the land on one side and the vast endless moving sea on the other, and those two together to me that's a powerful image. And I would say someone who touched on that but perhaps failed to meet it was Newton who at the end of his life said 'I do not know what I appear to the world. But to myself I feel like a very small boy on the seashore picking up here and



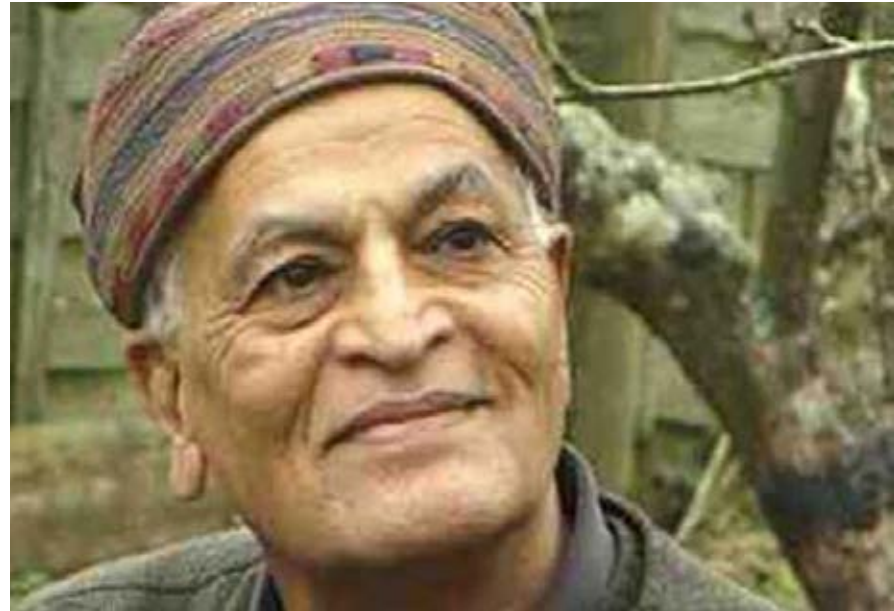
*'Walking along the seacoast...'*

there a smoother stone or a prettier shell while all before me lay the great sea undiscovered.' So he felt something, but somehow I feel he felt he missed the boat also.

**Satish:** You can also find in Einstein he also had similar expressions about the universe and the dance of the universe and the mystery of the universe. So I think these great scientists—and Wittgenstein is another one—who had a similar sort of understanding, that we are at that seashore collecting the seashells and enjoying and playing. So life is play and sometimes we cannot capture everything in our language. Language is a weak vehicle to communicate these profound experiences. So people like Einstein and Wittgenstein and Newton and Jung, these people have laid the path for us to understand that life is a continuum, life is a tapestry of black and white and yellow and blue and red and green. Everything is together. If everything was monotonous and beautiful and just sort of bland, it will not be a dance. Dance has to have two sides and accepting that, I would say, is a kind of contentment and love. Love is to accept all without discrimination. If you read the *Bhagavad Gita*, we see that wars do happen and have always happened, but we try to restore peace and to bring balance. This is why I walked for peace but it doesn't mean that I don't understand that war is part of existence and human psyche. And I don't expect that anytime soon wars will end and everything will be hunky dory. So this is a kind of generosity of heart, a generosity of spirit, inclusive of everything and we make that journey towards a more kind, a more loving way and being contented and joyful and happy. It's all part of the same tapestry.

**David:** I like that you bring in life and consciousness as a dance and play. It seems to me that the culture in which I grew up and was educated, has from the beginning channelled my thinking. So I really think this may be the important thing—consciousness and life as play. This may

take us to the difficult side, but I think it is the natural function of the mind to play freely yet so many obstacles to that have been built. I really appreciate the notion of free play. There may be my own play but there's also the sense that when I get out of the way the play of the universe is in me, our cosmic dimension.



**SATISH KUMAR**, peace-pilgrim, life-long activist and former monk has been inspiring global change for over 50 years. Aged nine, Satish renounced the world and joined the wandering Jain monks. Inspired by Gandhi, he decided at 18 that he could achieve more back in the world and soon undertook a peace-pilgrimage, walking without money from India to America in the name of nuclear disarmament. Now in his 80s, Satish has devoted his life to campaigning for ecological regeneration, social justice and spiritual fulfilment.

Satish founded Schumacher College as well as The Resurgence Trust, an educational charity that seeks a just future for all. Satish appears regularly on podcasts, radio and television shows. He has been interviewed by Richard Dawkins, Russell Brand and Annie Lennox, appearing as a guest on Radio 4's *Desert Island Discs*, *Thought for the Day* and *Midweek*. Satish presented an episode of BBC2's *Natural World* documentary series, which was watched by 3.6 million people. An acclaimed international speaker and author, Satish's autobiography *No Destination* sold over 50,000 copies, inspiring change around the world.