



**mantra**  
e Magazine

*Creating the attitude of **i can***

Adding life to the power of thought

# You are Your Mind

M N Raju

**Scientific Temper**

Shailendra Chauhan

**In Meditation**

S S Moorthy



# What Wordsworth Knew

Rayla Noel

# Disclaimer

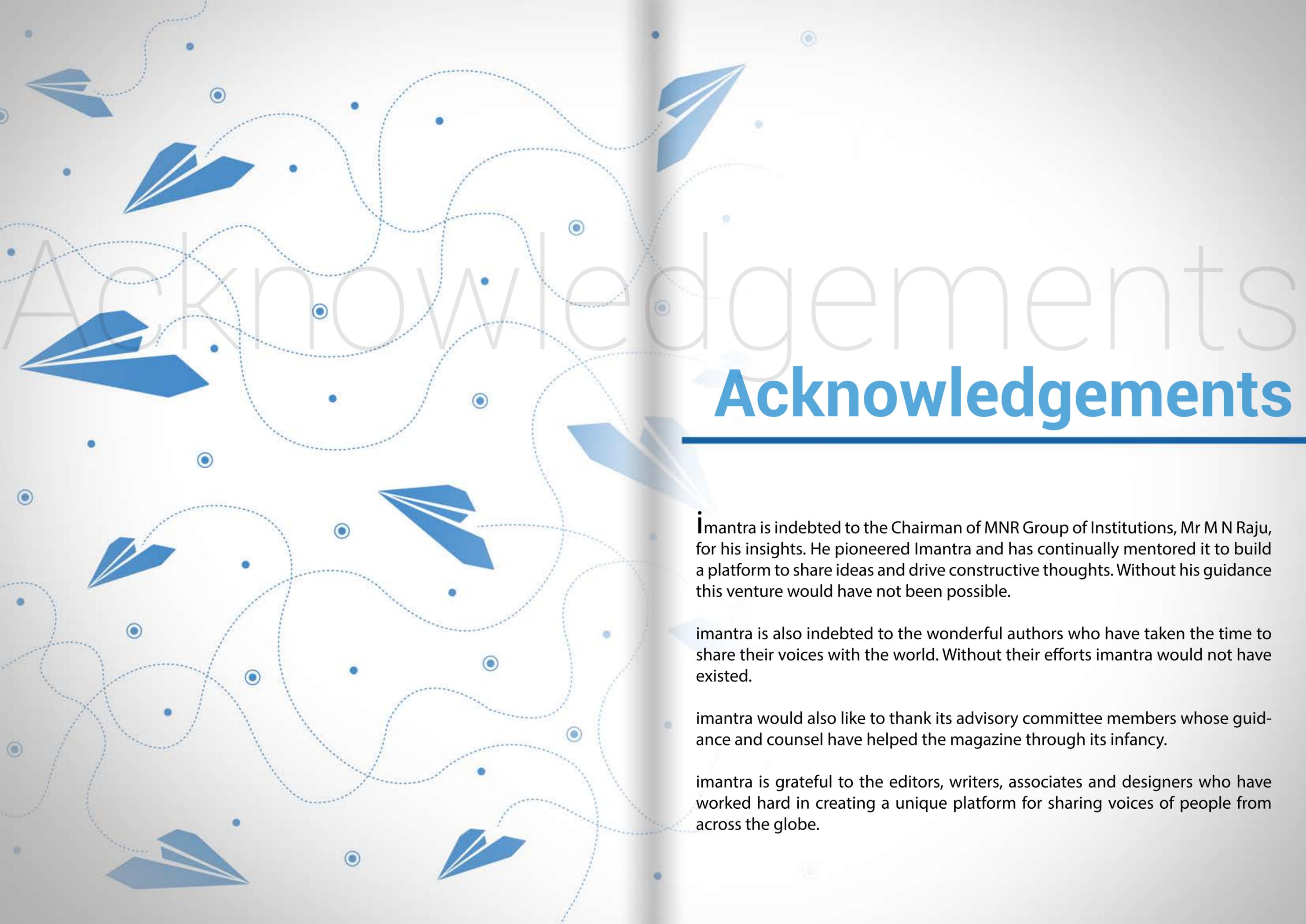
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# Acknowledgements

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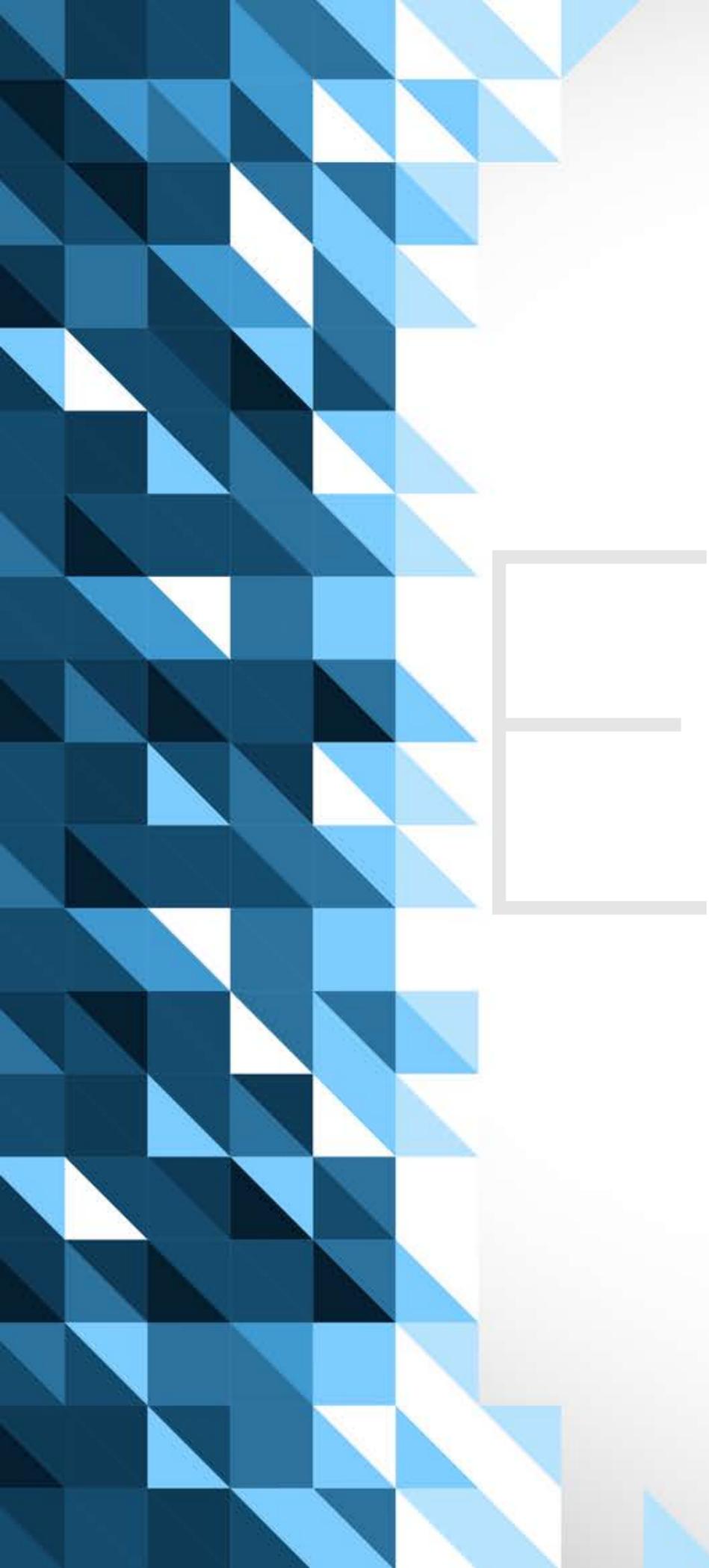
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Imantra is indebted to the Chairman of MNR Group of Institutions, Mr M N Raju, for his insights. He pioneered Imantra and has continually mentored it to build a platform to share ideas and drive constructive thoughts. Without his guidance this venture would have not been possible.

imantra is also indebted to the wonderful authors who have taken the time to share their voices with the world. Without their efforts imantra would not have existed.

imantra would also like to thank its advisory committee members whose guidance and counsel have helped the magazine through its infancy.

imantra is grateful to the editors, writers, associates and designers who have worked hard in creating a unique platform for sharing voices of people from across the globe.



# Editorial

## **Welcome to the second issue of imantra.**

Our experiences, often the results of the choices that we make, mould us. They are unique to each one of us, are great teachers and the best guiding principles. If we are to keep our experiences just to ourselves, and learn from them, they would be limited to us. But, if we share our experiences with the world, they will bring immense joy, further our happiness and make others wise.

Our experiences could inspire others. We can give to the society the knowledge that we have acquired over the years. imantra is all about sharing our experiences with others and spreading the light of knowledge. imantra is about inspiring others with positive thoughts.

In this issue of imantra we look at several interesting articles on ethics, spirituality, inspiration, nature, human mind and much more. These insightful readings will inspire boundless positive thoughts, energy and translate feelings and ideas into words to motivate others around you.

I hope you will enjoy the second issue as much as we did while preparing it for you.

B Roychoudhury  
Editor-in-Chief

# Melange de Muse...

*Motivated by thoughts...*

Heartiest Congratulations! I am delighted to see the inaugural issue of imantra.

Nanduri Subrahmanyam  
Hyderabad

Very good design, lovely layout ...  
Thanks a lot for sending it across.

Arunashis Bhattacharjee  
Hyderabad

I congratulate you for bringing out a magazine that I am sure shall go a long way in filling up the vacuum of every individual's practical and intellectual life. The work is immaculate and wonderfully textured and embellished. The dedication of your foundation inevitably sparkles through this. I am grateful to you for making me a part of this landmark first issue and I shall eagerly look forward to being associated with imantra in its eventful future.

Basudhara Roy  
Jamshedpur

Congratulations on the release of the inaugural Issue of imantra. I had a quick look at the website and should say it is very pleasing and contains very readable articles. I wish the venture a big success.

G S P Rao  
Hyderabad

Thanks very much. A good start has been made ...

Gabriel  
Dublin

Let me congratulate for the excellent issue you have brought out. I have gone through the issue. It has come out quite well. The articles are very good.

Kasibabu  
Hyderabad

The article on the Jammu Transit Camp is simply brilliant and its amazing how one person with his man management skills could do such exemplary work for our brave jawans. I hope we have many more such people in our country.

Srinivas Biranthbail  
Hyderabad



Fantastic work ! The concept of 'get and give' is so unique. This is a wonderful platform to know people, learn from them and share your own story. Everyone has a story and can be relevant, helpful and inspiring for others.

The life stories in this edition are so real, heart touching and motivating. I wish we could connect with the authors and know more about them.

Anurag Aggarwal  
Pune

Congrats for the successful launch of your emagazine, imantra. It has come off with heart touching and wise articles and lovely illustrations. Congrats once again.



Anjana Mittra  
Mumbai



Have had a cursory glance at the articles and will be going through them in detail, shortly. My first impression is that a lot of good work went into transforming the original idea of initiating imantra.

Hearty congratulations to Sri M N Raju, the Editor-in-Chief and the support staff, besides the authors.

D V Raju  
Hyderabad

I went through imantra and found it really fascinating. Well planned design, layout and excellent literary work. Something so simple but so touching. Thank you so much for providing me with this. Please keep me updated.



Rupam Bhaduri  
Bengaluru



Thank you for mailing me the first issue. I browsed through just now and was quite impressed with the range of subjects. I shall commence reading soon. A very good endeavour ... congratulations ...

KSS Rau  
Hyderabad



Excellent! Your new e-magazine lines up with what should be showing up ... Inspiration.

Robrert Fay  
California



Thanks for sharing a copy of Imantra with me. It is very well produced and all the articles are interesting. I am sure the journal will reach more hands and become popular. I shall send in my contributions as per the norms prescribed when I find something to write on.

Sathuvalli Mohanraj  
Hyderabad



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Nanduri Subrahmanyam  
Hyderabad

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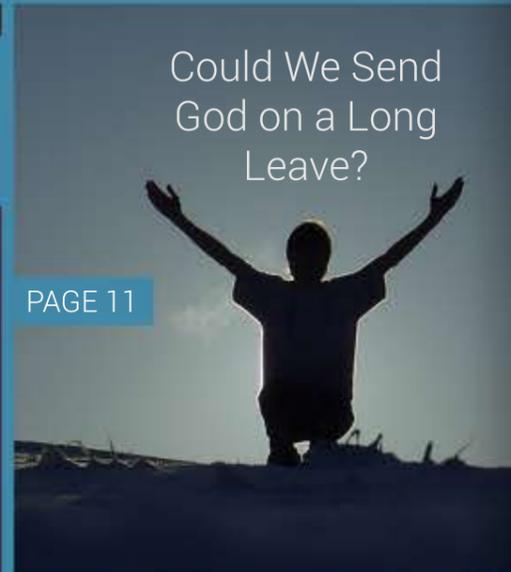


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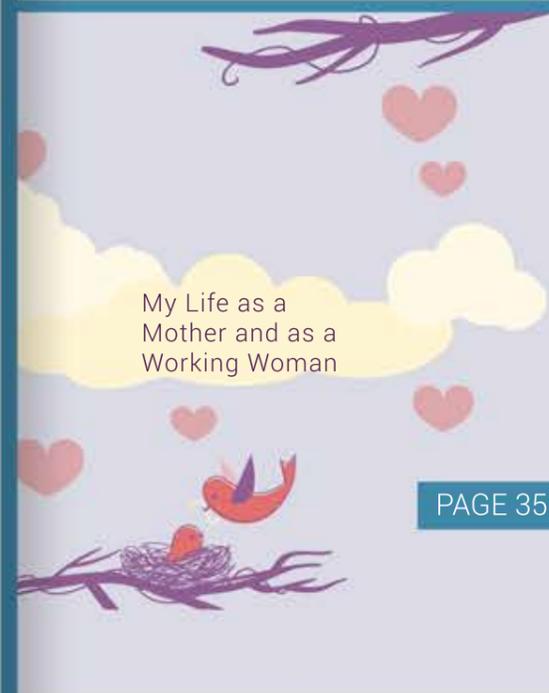
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# At Home with Kids

Shefali Shah Choksi

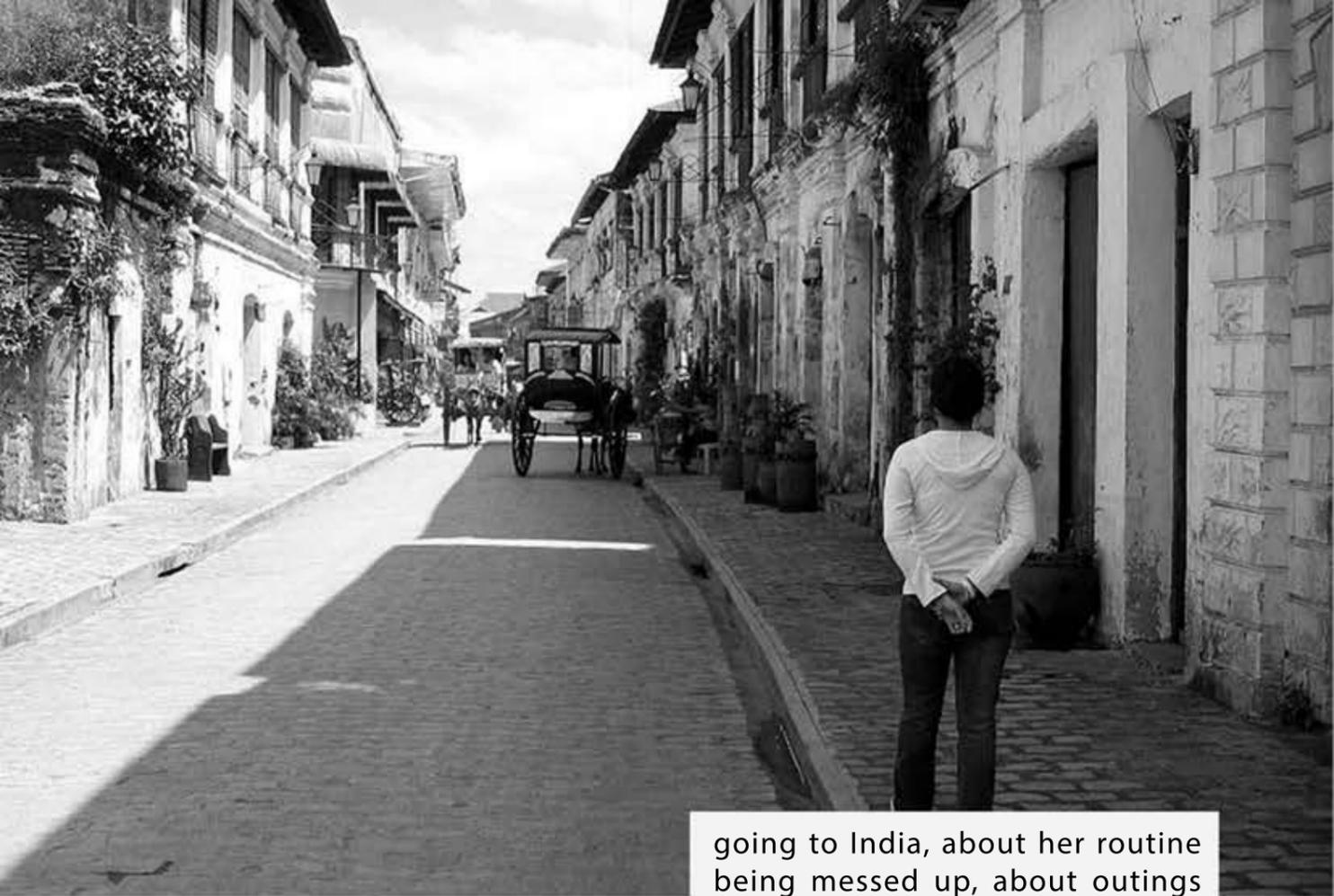


## About the Author

Shefali Shah Choksi teaches Literature and Composition at the Art Institute of Fort Lauderdale. She has an M.A. (English) and M.Phil (Women's Studies) from Maharaja Sayajirao University of Vadodara (Gujarat, India) and has lived in Florida since 1988, when she first immigrated to the US from Mumbai.

Home is where  
the heart is.  
Pliny the Elder





going to India, about her routine being messed up, about outings with friends she would miss, about visiting a country with many beggars and refuse heaps, and about having to go to a place where she doesn't speak the language as fluently. Her suddenly brightening eyes and widening smile answered me more eloquently than her words could: she couldn't wait!

What, then, is it about going home that makes this Odyssey such a necessity? How can a visit of 20 days during which we are going to travel harrowingly, get absolutely no rest, socialize around the clock, fight germs we no longer have immunity against, travel to a land we know offers no comfort of readily-available rest rooms and whose currency we no longer feel familiar with, revive our spirits and lost hearts?

A student walked into my classroom 45 minutes late, pleading, of all things, jetlag: she had just flown in from California, and passing through a couple of time zones had fried her nerves. This led to a discussion on how we all fight natural forces like time-space continuum and gravity, how we all willingly and deliberately discombobulate our comfortable routines, uproot our kids, all to go home for a few days or if we are luckier, a few weeks

Very few of us who call South Florida our primary residence are native to it and this experience resonates with us.

I was still thinking of the class discussion when later that day, I asked my teen what she felt about

There are many answers to this riddle, but the fact of the matter is, we all have this irrefutable need to visit our home land every so often.

And we recognize this need in ourselves and those we see around us.

A comment on this need to visit *Des* (nation) is an inevitable part of any exchange with one's acquaintances of South Asian origin, and it immediately connects us with an intimate experience. When someone tells me that she hasn't visited *Des* for 4 years, I instantly sympathize and wish her all the best for an imminent voyage. Every time I hear someone has just returned from a trip home, my envy is equally instant and heart-felt. This is assuaged only with extensive updates on the latest INOX theatres, coffee shops, and *chudi* shops that my kid and I can look forward to on our next visit.

I believe this need to go back home with our children has its roots in the choice we all made when we decided to immigrate; in archetypal terms, we decided against making our *Janma Bhoomi* our *Karma Bhoomi*. We also signed up for a spectrum of worries that come with forging a new self in a different world, and these worries have to do with the next generation, and the fear and absolute certainty that the land we call home has changed and continues to do so, without us.

I constantly worry about the many points of difference between me and the next generation, which are compounded because I am an immigrant. I worry my daughter will grow up without the intensely spiritual experience of lighting a clay *diya*, filled with *ghee* and a hand-made cotton wick. I am afraid she will never feel like a real woman because she won't know how to wrap or feel comfortable in a *sari*. I am concerned that her critical thinking and analytical skills won't sharpen because she didn't have the *Akbar-Birbal* stories or the tales of *Vikram-Vetal*. She is growing up without *Sattodiu*, *Kho*, *Kab-badi*, even cricket! How do I infuse in her a modicum of who I am? I am afraid I shall be completely erased when she is an adult.

There is another concern central to this same gap between generations: the gap between what we remember of home, and the reality of it.

When we go back each time, we find that the world has changed almost beyond recognition. The hawkers who frequented our streets are no longer the same: they either retired or moved on; the sugarcane juice vendor near the campus has been replaced by an air-conditioned novelty shop; the *paan-wallah* at the street corner has moved in with his daughter and now his little hole-in-the wall has expanded to a restaurant attended by his son-in-law; the *maidan* where kids used to play cricket and *kho*



is no longer there: instead, there is four-storey high mall; the familiar banyan tree that was known to be haunted has been replaced with a garden for the adjoining high-rise apartment complex. These are familiar sights, and while they are inevitable as the seasons and changing worlds, they rob us of our links with places that we grew up in. We feel uprooted again, like people trapped in a time-warp, who remember times and places that are far gone into the misty realms of memory.

However, a visit home with our kids somehow heals these gaps, both internal and the ones with the next generations. This healing starts even before the journey begins. In my house, it starts before the packing does, through the sparkle in my kid's eyes and the spring in her step. Somehow, once the tickets to India are bought, it seems a new person emerges slowly from deep within my teen's American-Eagle Hoodie clad shell.

She starts answering me in our mother tongue with more frequency; she is careful to finish all homework and keep herself out of trouble for fear that she might be punished and be excluded from shopping trips to get small gifts for people back home; she spends time poring over memories of our previous visits; and most of all, she talks incessantly of the visit, I am sure, much to her friends' frustration and boredom. She does not resent even the harrowing journey to reach home.

By the time she emerges from the last leg of the plane journey, her Indian self blossoms completely and it really doesn't matter that she still has her American Eagle hoodie on: she is Home and she belongs here.

When I see these signs, I smile to myself and remember another time when I used to worry that she would not fit in with the people, and would have trouble in adjusting with the air, water and the atmosphere. During my first visit with her, I had promised myself that I would board the first flight if my baby caught a bad bug or sprouted mysterious allergies.

Now, I believe, had I acted on and given in to my fears then, my daughter would never have known the richness of belonging to two worlds at one time. I would have cheated her out of the complexity that defines who I have become because I belong to two different worlds. By taking her back on subsequent visits, in fact, instead of exposing her to new disease vectors, I might have actually done some good: I might have helped crystallize a truly global citizen, who is accepting differences between peoples and is respectful towards other ethnicities.



This realization is indeed healing, and I know I am not alone in feeling it. Our kids merge the different worlds with amazing, even enviable ease and grace. While they definitely belong to the place where they live, a belonging that is reflected in their speech, music, dresses, and lifestyle, they are equally of our land of origin. This belonging is also reflected during our visits home, when we see our kids mingle with their *Desi* peers, playing the newest version of *Vyapaar*, using the latest local slang, learning the popular *Bollywood* music and dance moves, watching the popular game shows, and humming to commercials on ZEE TV and Sony.

Our hectic routines in this world, though of our choosing, sometimes erode our internal compasses and we tend to lose touch with places that define us. In fact our routines can be so devouring that we have to make an extra effort to celebrate our festivals, go for an Indian movie, or treat ourselves to cuisine from home. Our kids, too, tend to get swallowed up by their own lives and obligations and we fear we might lose them in essential, really frightening ways. This sense of isolation can be further compounded when we go back to our *Des* and find that things changed there as well. Such experiences at times make us feel that we belong nowhere, like the proverbial *washer man's dog*

However, this uprooting, this sense of discomfiture that awaits all immigrants, is the very reason it is important to go back home with our children. Seeing our children find their own way in this land that is no longer ours, heals our sense of displacement and eases our spirit. When we see our kids owning the new landscape, riding their bikes through the new streets, confident in their *kite-flying* skills, greeting the new neighbours with familiarity, haranguing with the *coconut-water* man, arguing with the tailor, meeting friends at the *Barista* or *Kwality*, and begging us to take them to *Crosswords* assure us that in spite of the fact that our kids are born in one place and we in another, we've given them the sense of belonging, their roots, and these roots go beyond their place of birth and find their way to what is generally understood as the concept of home, *Des*, where one associates with and in turn is associated with.

So, a visit home with the next generation strengthens our roots. It doesn't displace us. Our inner compasses click and *whirr* into place. We are comforted that despite our fears, things have NOT fallen apart; the center still holds.

**The only source of knowledge  
is experience**

**Albert Einstein**



# Could We Send God on a Long Leave?

B M Hegde



## About the Author

Dr Belle Monappa Hegde was the visiting professor at various universities. He has been the chairman of Bharathiya Vidya Bhavan in Mangalore for the last 35 years. He has authored 35 books in English and Kannada besides presenting 289 research papers in the country and abroad.

*The function of prayer is  
not to influence God, but  
rather to change the nature of the  
one who prays.*

Søren Kierkegaard



A few years ago when Ian Wilmut, at the Rosalind Institute in Edinburgh, produced the first cloned sheep, "Dolly", by electrically fusing one of the mother's mammary cells with another body cell, sparing the need for a father, he and many others of his ilk felt that they could send God packing back to his abode in heaven, since man did not need him any more. People started worrying about the prospect of cloning humans with base instincts like those of Hitler and were afraid that human cloning would be disastrous, to say the least. Many Governments and Church leaders asked for a ban on

human cloning experiments. Man, proud man, having created God in his own image, with his limited knowledge of the working of this Universe, predicted that the day is not far when he would be able to cure all ills of mankind with genetically engineered quick fixes for every disease and also predicted that he would be able to keep man alive here for ever!

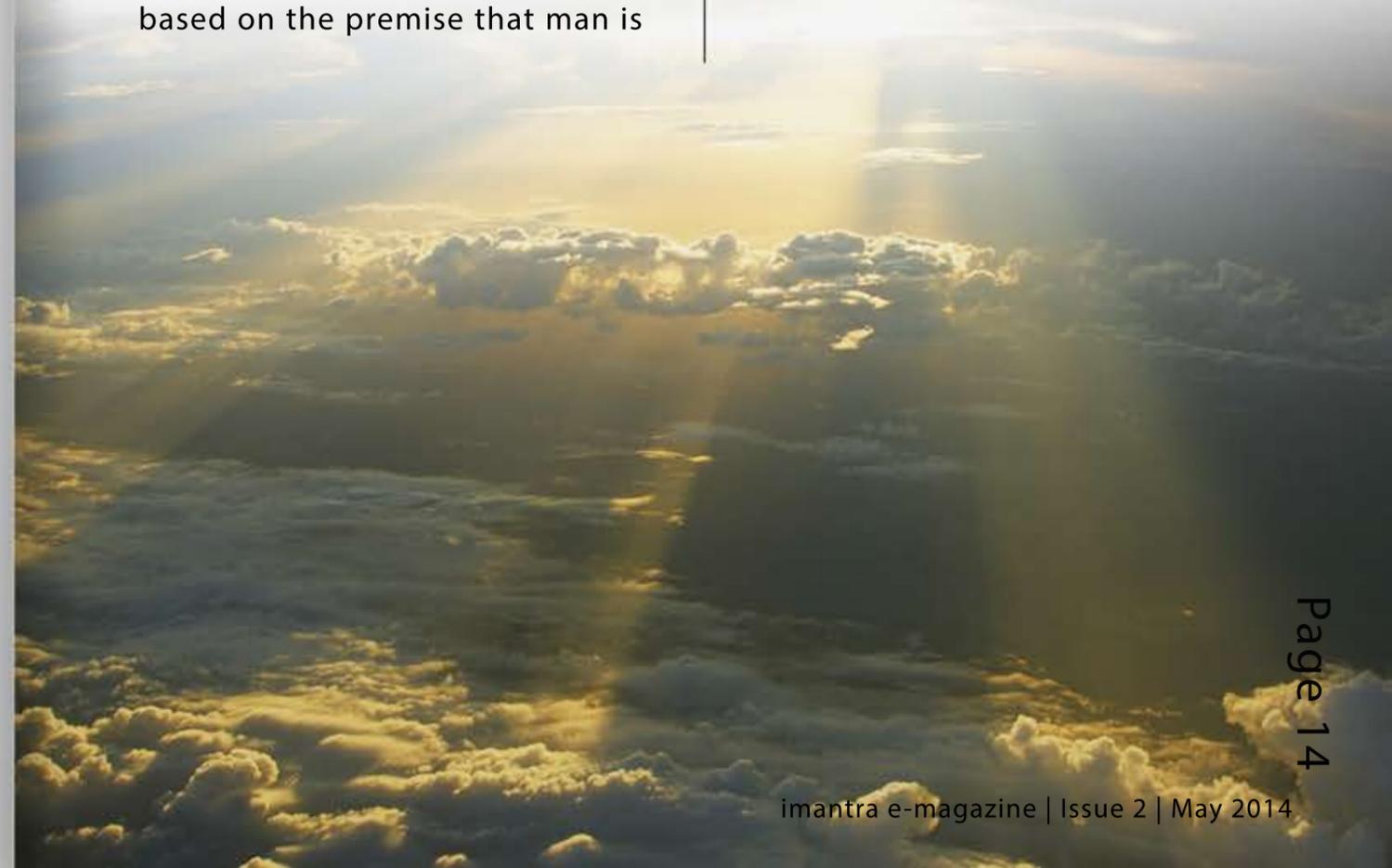
Scientists also claimed that they are at the threshold of unravelling the mystery of the human genome, which they thought would be anywhere between 100,000 to 150,000 genes in each chromosome. Writing a scientific

article in the *Journal of the Association of Physicians of India*, I had seen the writing on the wall. For the reductionist science predicting the future with limited knowledge of the initial state of the organism is impossible. "Doctors have been predicting the unpredictable," wrote Professor Firth of the Starthclyde University in Glasgow, years ago in the *British Medical Journal*, 1991 Xmas issue. Being a physicist he knew what he was talking about.

In my article in the physician's journal, which was later published in the book *Progress in Medicine*, I had postulated that it would be impossible to clone another man from his genes alone. We could certainly clone and produce a genetic "look-alike", but never another man like the one whom we were trying to clone in the first place. This reasoning was based on the premise that man is

made up of three parts basically, his phenotype that is based on his genes, his genes, and his consciousness (mind) that evolves basically with the environment that the zygote (product of the fusion between the father's sperm and mother's ovum) lives from the time of its getting embedded in the mother's womb till it ends up in the tomb!

Even the time of delivery, the second stage of labour, if delayed, could change the prospect of later onset of certain diseases like asthma! There is no way we could clone another Mahatma Gandhi or Hitler unless we could make the cloned first cell to go through the same environment that any of them went through from the time of conception to the time they did what they did for society, an impossibility even in the best of scientific laboratories.



Any thinking scientist would be wiser by the events of the last few years. The much-hyped genome is now ready with only 30,000 to 45,000 genes or so; much less than what was predicted (predicting the unpredictable). In addition it has become very clear to the scientists, if not to the companies funding this research and wanting to patent them as soon as possible to make money, that there is not likely to be a single gene in total charge of any disease. Just as there is no single pill for every ill, there can not be a simple one gene for every human trait!

How true that sage Kapila way back around the seventh century BC had clearly written down in his treatise on illnesses that for all the three major classes of human diseases, *dhukhathriyas-aadhyathmika*, *adhiboutika*, and *adidai-vika dukhas*, there could be a fault in either the *bhijaha* (chromosome) or *bhijabaaghaha* (gene); but the penetrance of the fault depends on the assistance of the environment where the seed is sown.

How I wish we had heeded his suggestions! Now it must be clear even to an elementary school child that it is near nigh impossible to clone a complete human being unless we could know his phenotype (form), his genotype (genome), and also his consciousness (mind).

Positive sciences are just about getting an introduction to the human mind. Till now even physicists thought the answer to the million-dollar question: "*where is the mind?*" was simply, "*never mind*". Now with the advances in quantum physics, the mind has been defined to a certain extent, although not fully. Interestingly, the ancient Ayurvedic concept of the mind comes very close to the concept in physics. Simply put, the mind cannot be considered as an organ-based idea like the liver or the heart. The mind also is not confined to the brain. The brain has about a billion cells. If the mind were to be like the liver one would not even be able to understand a grain of salt, since the latter has more than ten billion atoms. *The mind, therefore, is a sub-atomic quantum concept present in every human cell.* Most physicists now agree with Schrodinger that everything is, possibly, in the eyes of the beholder!

Recent studies have shown the singularly significant role played by the human mind in the causation of any disease, especially in the cases of killer diseases like heart attack, cancer, and stroke. Of the multitude of risk factors associated with these diseases, negative thoughts stood out as one of the most significant ones in both men and women. In short, *it is what eats one that seems to kill him rather than what he eats.* Now we have to change our views, after having lived in a make believe world of reductionist science, that time evolution in any dynamic system depends not on one or two initial characteristics of the organism. Far from it. Very far indeed! Time evolution depends on the total initial state of the organism that includes the knowledge of the genes, the form (phenotype) and, above all, the mind (consciousness). *That is exactly what sage Kapila wrote nearly three thousand years ago.*

The genome, which has, of late, come to the fore, would help mankind to a certain extent in understanding the mysteries of diseases and their solutions, but will never completely solve the issues. It could, however, add to man's misery. If a child's genome were to have "heart-attack related" genes, there is a possibility that the child could suffer from a heart attack later in life, provided the other two parts of the child—the body and the mind—were to abet the genes. The hapless child, its parents, the insurance company that might be asked to insure this child, the future in-laws and employers, however, would be in trouble. They would always be anxious about the risk that the child runs. For the poor child the anxiety could be killing. Mankind already has so much of anxiety, partly due to the present concept of civilization. That could be compounded by the awareness of the gene map. In reality, therefore, gene mapping could make life hell for some, in addition to the ethical dilemma for the medical and allied professions about the confidentiality. I wonder how we would be able to solve the problem of giving evidence in a court of law when called upon to do so regarding the gene map, while, at the same time, keeping individual genetic knowledge a secret.

The initial euphoria regarding gene mapping is settling down to anxiety. The drug companies, which have been proved to run medical education in the USA from the time the medical students enter the portals of a medical school till the time he is buried in the grave (*The Lancet* 2000, December 5 issue), are the ones that exaggerate the whole game. Like any other new discovery in the field of reductionist science we should take this news about the genes with a pinch of salt. However, this new development has a positive side to it as well. Scientists are slowly realizing the need for non-linear mathematics and holistic science in unraveling the mysteries associated with the human beings.

Chance governs our very existence on this planet. Science could try to keep us healthy and happy as long as we live. Sexual reproduction is still our best bet to have a wide gene base for the offspring to be healthy and happy. Most genetically engineered species would be vulnerable even to the slightest change in their environment!

Genes came, our dreams, however, have remained unrealized in reality after all! Needless to say that time is still not ripe for God to go on a long leave. In fact, humans have just over a couple of thousand genes which will not cure every disease. But we have two trillion genes of all kinds of germs in us which have made a permanent home inside us. This should make man humble as there is nothing called MINE. Everything is ours. This is the best lesson that any human being could learn from human physiology. Love all to live well. Hate and get into troubles.



**People grow through experience  
if they meet life honestly and cou-  
rageously. This is how character  
is built.**

**Eleanor Roosevelt**

# YOU ARE YOUR MIND

M N Raju



*We are shaped by our thoughts; we become what we think. When the mind is pure, joy follows like a shadow that never leaves.*

Buddha

#### **About the Author**

Shri M N Raju, the Chairman of the MNR Group of Institutions, is a prolific writer and critic. He has to his credit several articles published in literary magazines across the world. His book *Two Billion Heartbeats* that talks about his philosophy and his life, has been published by Jaico Books and is widely read and acclaimed by authors and critics alike. He has won several national and international awards for his contribution to Indian education and healthcare sectors.





How about man's mind? Is man capable of training his mind to achieve a higher end?

Yes, it is possible. There are many great examples to prove this. Man can develop a focused mind through *Sadhana*. Mind, cells, heart, skin and other sensory organs work together, think together to build the most effective "Mind Hill" like the ants that build "Ant Hill". However the ant hill is an effort by a small creature, which is a visual wonder and the man's mind is invisible wonder of wonders.

How can the mind of man be developed? As it was already discussed, it is possible by constant *Sadhana* and the laboratory which is needed to learn is all around us. The society teaches several aspects to develop our mind.

Here is an example to prove how differently the minds of two people work on the same incident.

Once I had two guests from two different medical colleges. Both were senior teachers with similar qualifications. They accompanied me during my walk into a beautiful garden at 5.30 am on a pleasant morning. I informed them that I chewed a few *neem* leaves everyday. They also expressed their desire to chew *neem* leaves at the spur of the moment.

One doctor selected tender brown leaves at the tip of the stems, plucked them and started chewing.

The second doctor also plucked tender brown leaves. But there was a difference in the way the first and the second doctor plucked the leaves. The second doctor was very sensitive. He did not pluck the whole bunch but left the smaller leaves at the tip and started plucking other tender leaves below the tip. This was a small act. But there was a lot of benevolence and positivity involved.

The second doctor's attitude was wonderful. He did not hamper the growth of the tree, but just plucked the leaves. Later, I came to know about both the doctors. The first doctor was a professor in a medical college while the second was not only a professor, but won many awards, including the *Padma Shri* and was loved by many.

Man's tiny brain lies within a small skull and makes the mind work. A single brain can contain all the libraries of the world, if trained properly. Adopt the following principles to develop your mind and to make use of its maximum potential.



## Clear Your Mind

- Keep the mind free from all junk.
- Remove all unnecessary and unproductive thoughts.
- Don't worry about the past, it is dead.
  - Your future is uncertain.
  - Your present is the reality and it will shape your future. So act now.
- Stay clear of fear and egotism.
- Give your best to your work and life.
- Perform your duties efficiently and let the results follow.
- Yoga and meditation are the best agents for clearing the mind.
- Keep away from negative thoughts.

## Watch Your Mind

- The mind is like a beautiful garden, keep it free from weeds.
- An average man uses only 5% of mind power. You should understand that it has tremendous potential for one who knows how to tap it.
- The mind is a limitless resource. The more you use it the better it becomes.
- If you neglect your mind, it will become extremely lazy.
- Leisure to mind is meaningless.
- It is like a river. If you don't use the mind power it goes waste like the water in the river. If you make a dam across the river, it is the source of life and likewise the mind also becomes the source.

## Train Your Mind

- As it is said, it is a wonderful servant under your control if you train it.
- If you let loose the reins it will be a terrible master.
- Under perfect concentration it remembers what you want to remember.
- Train your mind to steer clear of negative thoughts.
- Fatigue, fear, egoism, laziness, forgetfulness are close friends of the mind. Don't allow them to take over.

The status of the mind is the status of the man. His personality depends on his mind and to enhance his personality he has to train his mind.

We can transform an insignificant piece of bamboo into a flute that gives eternal joy. Just like the flute, we can transform our minds to sources of eternal joy. This is what *Lord Krishna* has also preached.

One has to understand that the mind is supported by all our sensory organs and by our aura. The combined effort of all these wonders make up a person.

With self-discipline, an average person can rise as far and as fast as his talent and intelligence can take him. But without self-discipline, a person with every blessing of background, education and opportunity will seldom rise above mediocrity.

So start doing what is essential, then add what is possible, and one day you will discover that you have made the impossible possible.



**A mind that is stretched  
by a new experience  
can never go back to its  
old dimensions.**

**Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.**





# In Meditation

S S Moorthy



## About the Author

Satyam Moorthy is a retired Professor of English from Southern Utah University, USA.

*To understand the immeasurable, the mind must be extraordinarily quiet, still.*

Jiddu Krishnamurti



*I cogitate, sit cross-legged, and meditate glorifying gods as my invisible friends and recite mystical verses silently seeking their blessings 'cause I don't see them. But it is their immanence, their pervasive spirit that provides solace to my troubled spirit and offers guidance. And I don't need a temple or a church or a congregation to think about god and to offer prayers to Him. I perform my meditation daily religiously, but I need the names of gods to relate to them. The ancient Greeks had their Apollo and Zeus; Hindus still have Brahma, Vishnu, Maheshwara. Rama, Krishna, and Shiridi and Satya Saibaba. So, I recite ancient verses in solitude for solace.*



**Nothing ever becomes real  
till it is experienced.**

• **John Keats**

**experience**

# My Life as a Mother and as a Working Woman



Simran Oberoi

## About the Author

Simran Oberoi is working as the Knowledge Advisor at Society for Human Resource Management, India. She holds an experience of more than a decade in HR Advisory Services. At SHRM, she is currently responsible for in-depth knowledge development. Her poems have been published in literary journals such as Apostrophe'O , Muse India, Kritya India, Free India Media.

*Art is the child of nature in whom we trace  
the features of the mothers face.*

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

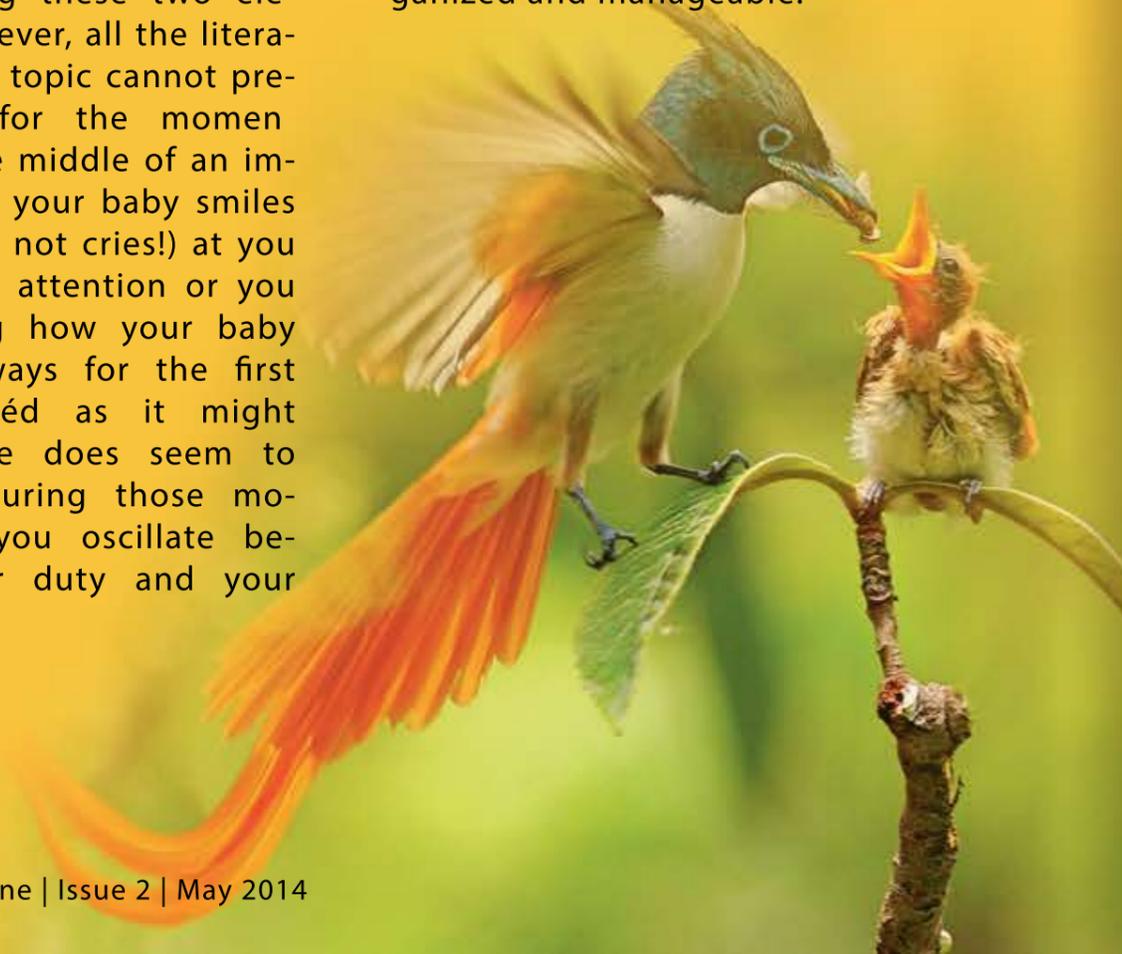
I began writing this article several times and each time something came up which needed my immediate attention. These were either associated with my work or with my 4 ½ month old baby. I would like to add the word “new” before mother, simply because my current status is a reflection of that.

A lot has been shared on how a working woman balances her job against her role as a mother—attending conference calls interspersed with diaper changes or client meetings juxtaposed with visits to the paediatrician. A lot has also been shared on how women get increasingly better at balancing these two elements. However, all the literature on this topic cannot prepare you for the moments when in the middle of an important call your baby smiles (yes, smiles, not cries!) at you to get your attention or you miss seeing how your baby turns sideways for the first time. Clichéd as it might sound, time does seem to standstill during those moments as you oscillate between your duty and your love

Having just joined after the birth of my first kid, I am in a phase where I juggle between my baby’s needs and my professional commitments.

To say that I have been able to successfully manage both fronts smoothly, even after a month of re-joining my duties would be wrong. But I can confidently say that I know it gets better with each passing day and that I am hopeful of being able to acquire that skill. Honestly, there are days when I discover that there is no method to the madness.

Here are a few basic techniques that one could adopt to make one’s life a little more organized and manageable.



## Make Lists!

The only way to control the situation is to make proper to-do lists. Earlier you had to manage your grocery list for home and your to-do list for work. Now you have an additional list—a list of the things necessary for the baby. So you may want to ensure that you make a note of even the smallest requirement of your child. Be more specific with your work list—sub-divide it into first and second half of the day. You may want to finish your mails/deliverables/reports/reviews first and then have your conference calls or vice versa. I do it as per my baby's requirements. So, if I plan to bathe my baby in the afternoon, I get over with my calls in the first half and then work on the mails in between his play as well as food timings.

## Prioritize—Segregate the Essentials from the Non-essentials

These could vary for each individual. For me, bathing and playing with my child are essentials or non-negotiable alongside ensuring that I complete all the work that I have assigned to myself. Work-related non-essentials are kept for Friday early evenings or for an hour or two during the weekend when my husband is around to help me with the baby. Home-related or child-related non-essentials are either delegated to the domestic help or done over a period of time. I rely a lot on online purchases. They are not the best always, but help me devote my time to the bare essentials associated with my child and work. Perhaps when I have the luxury of time, I may rediscover the joys of actually visiting a shop to buy things.

## Discuss with Your Managers/Leaders

You will be surprised to know how often this works out positively. To give you an example, we had a business review meeting recently with the team of our global leaders visiting us. I had to make the presentation for my team and with a 4 ½ month old that may need me anytime, it seemed like a mammoth task. I discussed the issue with my manager. My manager allowed me to leave after my presentation and also to get my baby along. Having a supportive spouse who came along and baby sat in the hotel room, while I went ahead with my presentation, was an additional bonus.

## Take out 10-15 Minutes for Yourself

For a mother and a working woman, life seems to be clearly confined between one's job and children. Dissolve the boundaries and 're-demarcate' them! You need to be yourself to do justice to both these critical roles—and the only way you will continue to be yourself, is by taking out time for yourself whether it is 10-15 minutes or an hour each day. It helps you to organize your thoughts, channelize your energy and re-focus and helps you to revisit those corners of your mind and heart that you forgot about!

## Indulge in Your Hobbies

I love baking and that was the first thing that was put on the back burner because between my work and my baby, there was just no time to do anything else. And then I thought, let me start it once again—once a day to begin with—the idea changed me. I would identify the low pressure days when my baby needed me a little less or my work commitments were lighter and I would spend an hour baking or writing my blog. It worked wonders in rejuvenating me because it gave me a small window to relax and focus on something beyond work and child.

I have tried to share my experiences and how I am learning from them, to manage this delicate balance. Often times, women have to choose between their child and work, because of our current corporate set-ups, absence of flexible work arrangements, no childcare facilities at work places ... it will always be a struggle unless our organizations demonstrate a better understanding of the needs of a mother who is a high performing professional for them! But till then ... ways of trying to manage can help each of us get by.





**You cannot create experience.**

**You must undergo it.**

**Albert Camus**

# Scientific Temper

Shailendra Chauhan



## About the Author

Shailendra Chauhan has a Bachelor's in Electrical Engineering. He works as a Deputy General Manager in a Public Sector Undertaking of Govt. of India and lives in Jaipur. He is a poet, a short story writer and a critic. He publishes in Hindi and English. He has published several poems, short stories and memoirs/biographies. He has been editing an unscheduled little magazine "Dharati" since 1979. He regularly contributes to Hindi literary magazines.

*Our scientific power has outrun our spiritual power.  
We have guided missiles and misguided men.*

Martin Luther King, Jr.

In the heady post-independence years, when our leaders were giving shape to our emerging nation, science was given a predominant role. Nehru's vision for India included the 'scientific temper', which would lead to the unlearning of biases and untested beliefs and it was hoped that people would be prompted to at least question—if not give up—superstitious practices altogether. Nehru wanted that scientific temper should characterize all Indians. It called for objectivity, open-mindedness, empiricism, respect for accuracy, a logical bent of mind and so on. *It did not necessitate the formal study of any branch of science.*

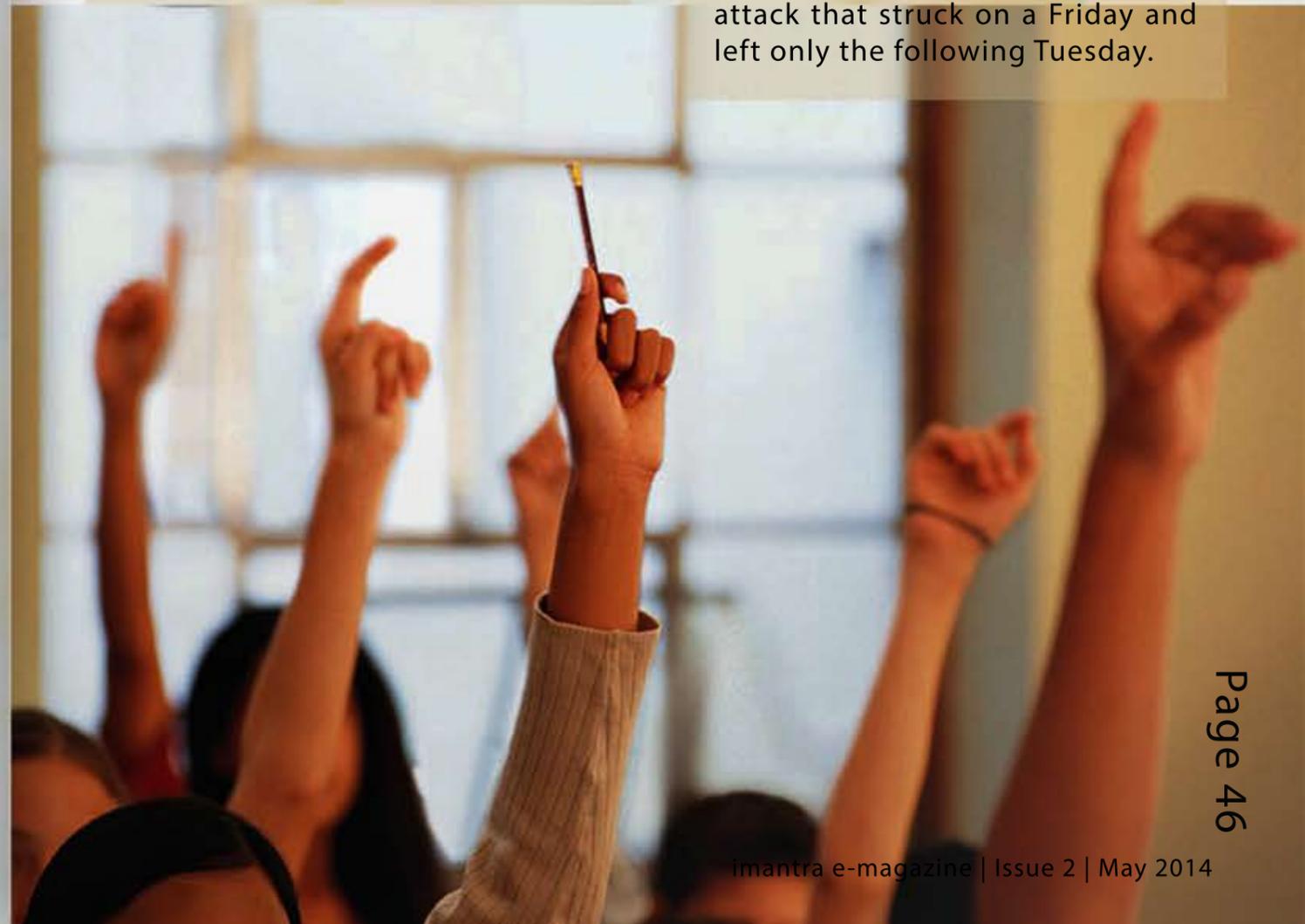
Many scientists are capable of speaking competently on literature, paintings and music but many artists, musicians and writers are generally incapable of holding a discussion on even the basic topics of science. A physicist friend was lamenting that people were practically unaware of Tagore the scientist. "They only associate *sangeet* and *nrityanatya* with Tagore—why is Tagore's *Visva-Parichay* not read or engaged with?" he asked indignantly. Here we are reminded of C. P. Snow's 'two cultures' but Snow blamed the "literary" types for the split between the scientists and literary scholars. According to him, these literary intellectuals were quite unembarrassed about not understanding scientific principles which would be the scientific equivalent of admitting igno-

ignorance of Shakespeare's plays. Why does this gulf between the arts and the sciences exist in our country today, if we have all been dedicated to the imparting of a holistic education?

But are we fostering a scientific outlook or 'science-mindedness' even while we are teaching the sciences? Usually, the teacher is so busy delivering content and carrying out fixed procedures of experimentation that the aim of fostering the spirit of discovery remains unfulfilled. Besides, we are so obsessed with 'right answers' that even in practical classes students are preoccupied with the task of 'getting the expected reading or result' instead of observing changes with an open mind. In any case, the sense of wonder with which children enter school has by now been irretrievably lost. The worst example of perpetrating an unscientific outlook is seen in the teaching of history. Our children are not given an opportunity to examine different viewpoints and arrive at their own interpretations. We brainwash them with what we want them to think in the interest of patriotism or national integration or worse, the ideology of a political party or religious sect. Moreover, we carefully sanitize our history textbooks so that various 'sentiments are not hurt'. In other words, the brain-deadening process is well under w

We successfully and progressively destroy the questioning minds of children as they navigate the journey through primary, middle and high school. In fact, it was in connection with this kind of killing that Einstein had remarked, "It is a miracle that curiosity survives a formal education." Little children are naturally blessed with a scientific temper. When they first enter the portals of school, they are bright, spontaneous and delightfully uninhibited as well as unselfconsciously transparent. They are full of *whys* and *hows* and are ever ready with their comments and answers

Knowing this well, one young mother decided to pin a note on her little daughter's dress on her first day in school. The note said, "This child's opinions are not necessarily those of her parents." How refreshing to come across independent thought. Little children are also accurate and truthful as parents find out to their embarrassment when their offspring quote, with disconcerting accuracy, what they shouldn't have said in their presence. We teachers have umpteen stories of children coming to school and telling us in graphic detail, how their family had enjoyed a holiday at the sea-side when, for example, the note from a child's parents clearly mentioned that her absence was on account of an unfortunate viral attack that struck on a Friday and left only the following Tuesday.





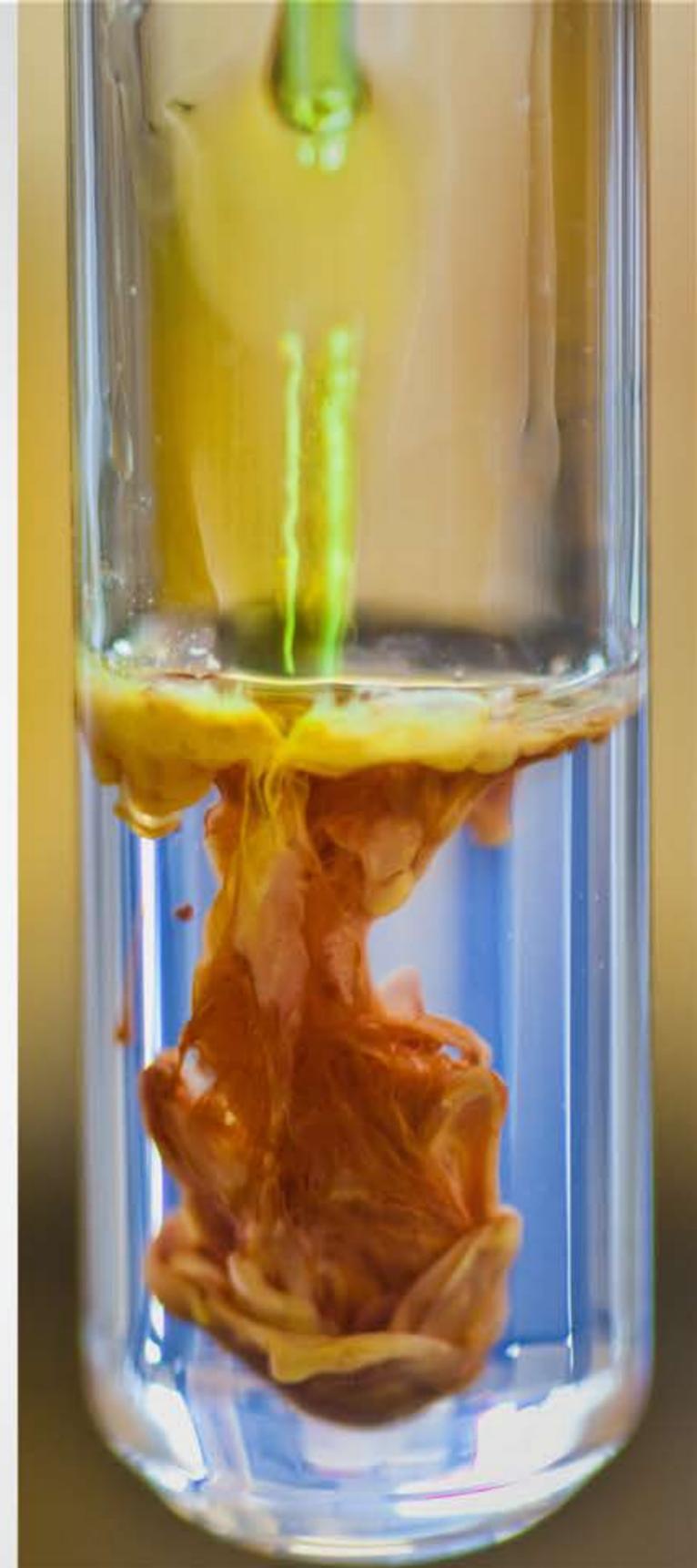
As for *skepticism*, another important ingredient of a scientific temper, it is sacrificed at the altar of the textbook or the teacher's prescription. Passive acceptance (or received wisdom) is not only dull and undesirable but downright dangerous because it conditions people to believe and obey blindly. It is tragic that the same children who earlier needed to be convinced before they finally accepted a principle or viewpoint have been tamed into 'model students' who don't interrupt lessons with 'unnecessary' questions or 'insolent' contradictions. I shall never forget the little child who

asked me why she had been punished for her misdeed when it was god, the creator of all, who had made her do what she did. Incidentally, in higher classes it is most invigorating to get young people's views on whether science and religion can co-exist. You can expect an earful of conflicting opinions and comments on the right of any government to spend public funds on ritualistic prayers for rain. But then who has the time or inclination to hold such 'out-of-the-syllabus' and potentially dangerous discussions?



Yet, according to our Constitution, (42nd Amendment), one of our fundamental duties is to promote the scientific temper. A few years ago, Dr. Manmohan Singh (our last Prime Minister), called for the promotion of scientific temper "to become a national movement and not a prisoner of bureaucracy or ideology". But like most other things he has asked for, this too was unheeded. Open-mindedness is a mark of scientific outlook. Do we see any evidence of mature and dignified debating in our public arenas? Every evening the television screen subjects us to the cacophony of several voices speaking at once and getting louder or shriller, depending on the gender. It is quite a circus out there, with dogmatic and opinionated individuals refusing to listen to a different point of view. And the less said about the quality of our parliamentary debates the better. They all demonstrate the validity of the new argumentative theory of reasoning (Sperber and Mercier). This theory says that we reason not to get at the truth but to corroborate our own beliefs and convictions.

So can we safely conclude that we as a nation are not carrying out our fundamental duty of spreading a scientific outlook?



**We choose our joys and  
sorrows long before we  
experience them.**

**Khalil Gibran**





# AN ABSOLUTION

Why were you afraid  
of the unknown?  
I am washing away  
the whole truth in the vicinity  
of discrepant nouns.  
The words will articulate  
the body overrun by rough  
handling of the golden triangle.  
The arrival does not stop  
the allegro.  
Claustrophilia enslaves you.  
You start a new journey  
towards a non-space and non-entity.  
Was there anything beyond the naught.  
I have come faraway.  
Will not return to numbers.



**One thorn of  
experience is  
worth a whole  
wilderness of  
warning**

**James Russell Lowell**

# What Wordsworth Knew ...

Rayla Noel

wissen question niemals  
really asking never the 3  
that's get it learn wise knowing  
the mh wirklich wieso unsinn hö what hm  
question?!  
sinn klug  
no! wise  
oh go ask  
...?ALICE  
Learner.  
hell life  
never  
weshalb  
ever  
why ask  
echt wth  
warum  
could be how  
living knowledge smart  
what mark  
fool  
nerd EVER  
FRAGE ...  
where  
was???

sorry belive  
!!!unwissen  
query ...  
? no way hä  
uhm what



## About the Author

Rayla Noel has worked with Broadcast for six years in Bengaluru before moving to Mumbai. She writes poetry and short stories; and has done street theatre with kids while residing in Mumbai for 16 years. She currently freelances at a special school for autistic children in Bengaluru where she helps out with activities that collect established creative persons, especially poets and artists, to interact with some of the kids who have exceptional talent

*When you stop expecting people to be perfect, you can like them for who they are.*

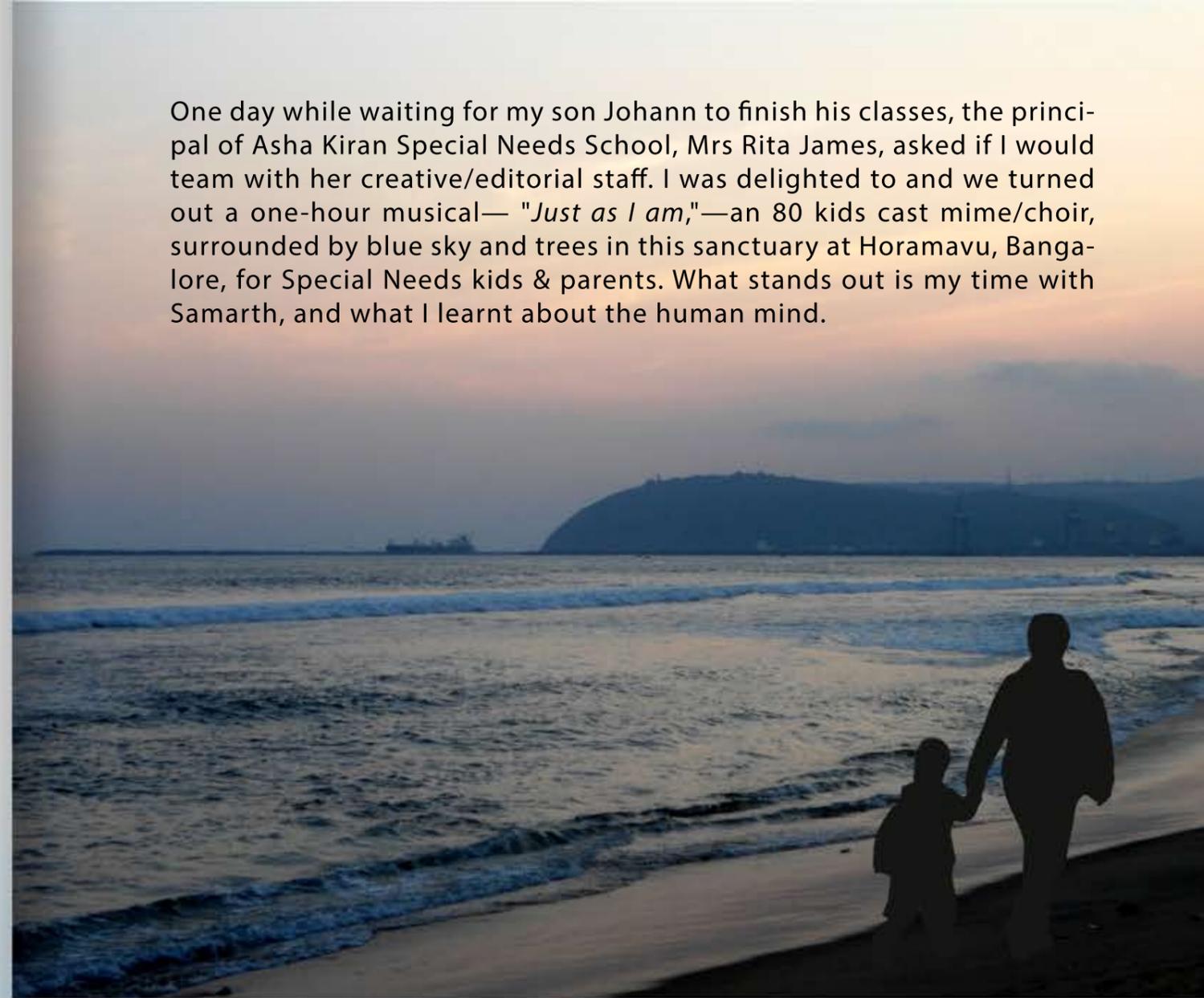
Donald Miller

*(Whrrr is my son's word for Joy). He, like the rest of us 7 billion, is also blessed with this amazing thing called the Human Mind. Johann is our third child, born blind, hyperactive and needed a home: when he came to us, joy walked through the door again, like it used to, when I was a little girl who played at school on an island off Paradip Port, with parents who made the most of the few choices we had in remote India, surrounded by sea and a simple life. \*\*\* I call it the University of Life.*

My first real job, at eighteen, was a part-time teaching assignment during college hours, thanks to my school principal who let me work with pre- and primary kids, talking about Tagore, Deserts and Wordsworth.

*(I say "work" because the word "teacher" is worthy of people who already have the knowledge on the subject matter. I was, and am a learner. Learners lean on each other through the throes of learning. It is a form of education. Is this very confusing?) So, the kids and I broke rules—we ploughed through the jungles of Amazon and long-winded scientific definitions, and you must remember I was no ace student. The only way I could cope with too much study was mixing up books with music and dance; we drew silly pictures in the mud and tapped to multiplication tables. It would prepare me for three kids at home now, esp. Johann, our visually challenged, hyperactive son. During our hunt for the perfect school for him, I met Samarth (Samu), a twelve-year-old kid.*

One day while waiting for my son Johann to finish his classes, the principal of Asha Kiran Special Needs School, Mrs Rita James, asked if I would team with her creative/editorial staff. I was delighted to and we turned out a one-hour musical— "Just as I am,"—an 80 kids cast mime/choir, surrounded by blue sky and trees in this sanctuary at Horamavu, Bangalore, for Special Needs kids & parents. What stands out is my time with Samarth, and what I learnt about the human mind.



*\*\*\*(Age 4-6, I was on an island off Paradip Port where dad made a small green desk for me, and we played School. My mom was a trained teacher and allowed me the joy of lecturing two kids from the neighbourhood, a cat, two pet dogs, some wild birds, a jungle and some lazy iguana. Very early, I was taught to 'teach', even though I stammered, and was an ambidextrous mess, writing with both hands in reverse. In a jungle there is no mocking, except the silly jackal and fussed-up crow pheasant. Even that is a riot of fun. You learn that your audience may not reply, you run barefooted through wild grass, unafraid. You appreciate dark nights, the silver moon, wild lilies in shallows. You discover your own creative enterprise through loneliness. And one can make poetry out of 'daffodils', or jump off a cliff. My parents were the creative directors any Wordsworth would love. They showed me how to respect life in any form, **but this story is about Samu: life brought us together, as my own son adjusted to a world of sighted people***





Samu loved paints. However, my initial attempts to make him paint something seemed futile. It was more like I was painting on those square canvas sheets, he wasn't. So we played kick ball, walked around hand in hand, his arm used to be a little limp, and eyes intense, as if in deep thought. It was hard to believe anything like Autism could inhibit his life. On a big white board in the Library we would doodle, draw, name objects we saw on a walk. 'Garden', 'Bench', 'Sun' ... there were either spurts of activity or silence.

In the days that followed, I was given the unusual opportunity of communicating with a child who could not talk verbally. We heard each others' voices in silences and little activities in the physiotherapy room, in play pens and jigsaw puzzles. Nothing happened in seconds—I had to wait till we had at least 30 seconds' eye contact and interaction. He had to follow my lead, agree when I called him to sit in a swing. It would happen within that first week, but first I had to learn to wait. Give myself room to discover his latent energy.

It began with a direct look as if asking, "So, aunt Ray, what do you do?"

I replied as if I had heard him audibly, "I paint, Samu. I also write, but I love to paint. It is a language without words, where you and I can create a world of images ..."

With help, Samu could use a brush and paint rather well. It was abstract, the colours blended with their own stories. There were 'horses' and 'trees', 'water' and 'earths'. Not everyone appreciates Abstracts, but they allow us our own interpretations. He needed help with clean up, with finding the right brush for the next stroke. We did not speak, the words were the look in his eyes, a turn of the head, a nod, a shake, a flat refusal, vibes, touch: the *language of the human mind. Its constant quest for peace—peace that eludes human understanding—a lesson on the spirits of human beings and on the invisible strengths of the mind. Human beings have this innate ability to allow one another comfort zones, freedom, business skills, acumen, if they are willing.*

In that first week we had our first laugh. I tripped on my *salwar* and fell down a slope, my sandals after me. He hooted with joy, then looked directly at me, then at the art room. See? I had to tumble. Then he said, "**Paint. Want paint.**"

Yayyy!

We walked casually on, as if nothing unusual had happened. It is amazing how this twelve-year-old grew into an artist whose tiny acrylic abstracts were selling more than my own paintings! What amazes me more is how we connected with each other without words but with all other senses—sight, touch, sound, smell ... uh, emotions as well ... Well, are there more senses? Perhaps ...

[Beside a basic degree in Psychology and six years of broadcasting experience (human interest stories), a spell with slum schools in Mumbai, and freelance writing, I am far from being a super-mom. We have three kids aged eight, thirteen and twelve and I am often too tired to even comb my hair decently! The days with Samu would prepare me for a stint at Personality Development. I have worked with 85 blind kids (my son now studies at Jyoti Seva School for the blind), where I have used my skills in speech and fun therapy, in talking to kids and making them talk. Yes, a Down Syndrome teenager can talk, a paraplegic can dance, wheel chairs can waltz, if we have the right partners]tt.

There are no printed options, no Quick fix Manual. "Fun-therapy" is something that I learnt from my father, and we grew up without TV, iPhone and American/Indian Idol. Our parents gave us humour. Dad would hide behind curtains and startle us to make us laugh, we dared cyclones and sometimes lived in the lonely stretches in these port-side villages with a lighthouse and tribal for company. They brought home PG Wodehouse and the BBC, we had picnics and swung hammocks in jungle terrain—these are dangerous fun on tiny budgets, disaster management with a cartwheel thrown in.

*Life isn't a bed of roses, not even of dandelions. We have a lot of perspiration and grumble-clubs, but we have our silent heroes as well, our angels of Happy Feet and the songs in the valley. Last week a friend diagnosed my condition as an overdose of positivity—what can I say. I use my face muscles to smile, the kids help keep alive within me the child I really am—they are our Educators, our hopes in these hard times*

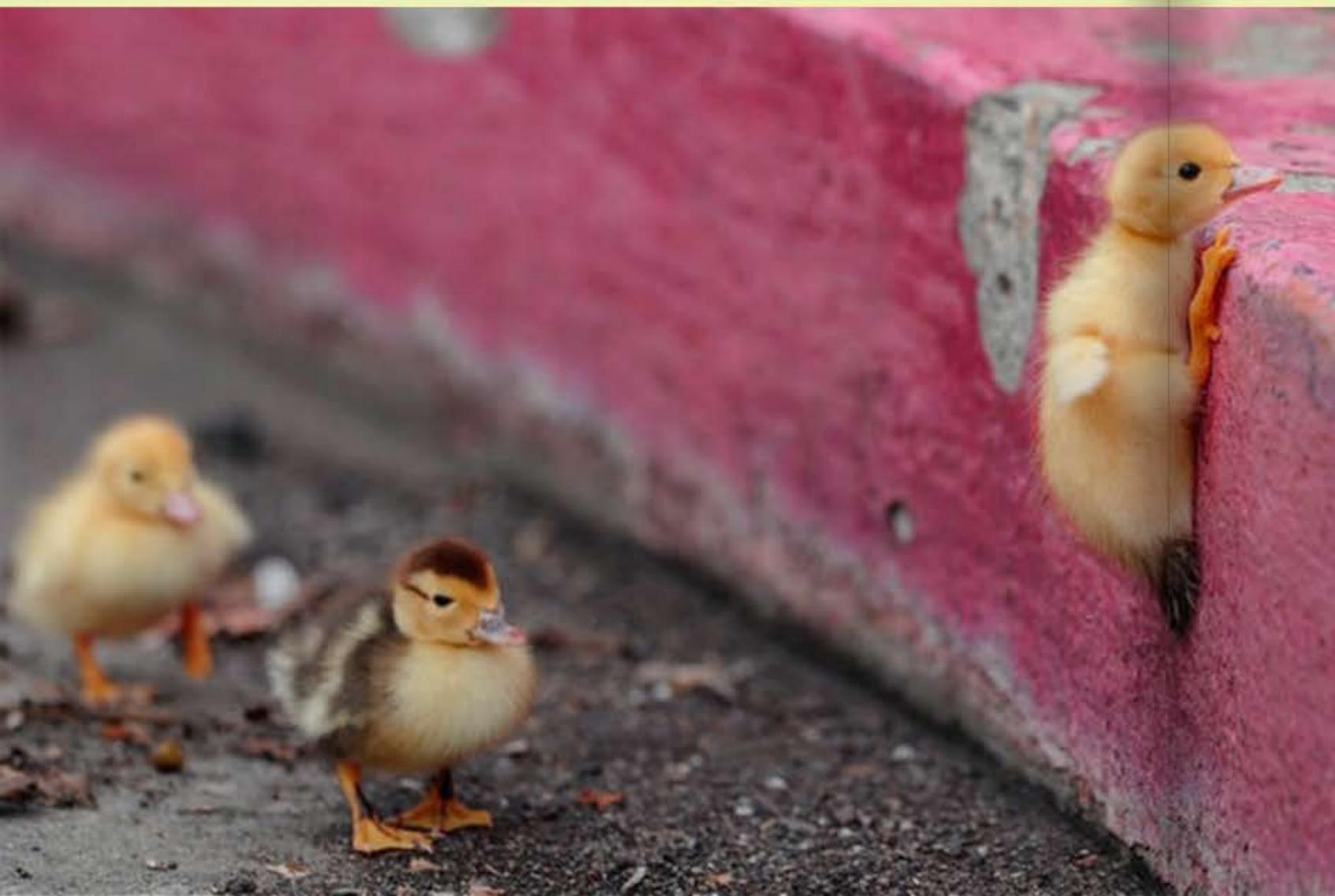
I hear Samu is well and happy—he has supportive parents and a good life. We have seen great people lose, we also see our problems reveal unusual options, and challenges. Sometimes we "wander lonely as a cloud ..." (Wordsworth) ... "to see a host of golden" ... wonders in each other.

The greatest university among all is called Life.



**Experience is one thing you  
can't get for nothing**

**Eleanor Roosevelt**



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