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DR. MAHIMA NAYAR
Psychosocial Distress
and Healing amongst Women

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Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

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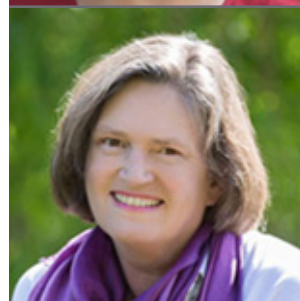
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Psychosocial Distress and Healing amongst Women

Dr Mahima Nayar

Dr. Mahima Nayar is an independent researcher working in areas of disability, women, children and families. She was previously an Assistant Professor at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. She has worked extensively with survivors of trafficking (women and children), women facing domestic violence, survivors of sexual assault, persons with psychosocial disabilities and their families. She has a M.Phil in Psychiatric Social Work from National Institute of Mental Health and Social Sciences (NIMHANS), Bengaluru, PhD in Social Sciences from Jawaharlal Nehru University and a Masters in Social Work from Tata Institute of Social Sciences, and a gold medallist in her M.Phil Programme and a Senior Research Fellow during her doctoral programme.



On Alice A. Bailey

Isobel Blackthorn

Isobel Blackthorn is a novelist and independent scholar. She writes contemporary and literary fiction, mysteries and dark psychological thrillers. Her interest in esotericism has culminated in *The Unlikely Occultist: A biographical novel of Alice A. Bailey*. Isobel holds a PhD in Western Esotericism for her ground-breaking study of Alice Bailey's body of work. Isobel has a background in theosophy spanning three decades and she's a qualified Astrologer. Her reviews, articles and opinion pieces on various topics have appeared in journals and magazines around the world.



Democracy, Civil Society and Governance

Ghanshyam Shah

Ghanshyam Shah is an independent researcher, based in Ahmedabad. He is a retired professor of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi. He has authored/co-authored and edited more than 20 books, including *Social Movements in India* (1981 and 2004), *Protest Movements in Two Indian States* (1977), *Public Health and Urban Development: The Study of Surat Plague* (1997), *Untouchability in Rural India* (2006), *Dalit Identity and Politics* (2001), *Re-reading Hind Swaraj: Modernity and Subalterns* (2012) and *Growth or Development: Which Way Is Gujarat Going?* (2014). He is a recipient of several academic awards.



Caste, Social Inequality and Mobility in India

Professor K L Sharma

K.L. Sharma is Pro-Chancellor at Jaipur National University, Jaipur and Vice-Chairman of the Institute of Development Studies (IDS, Jaipur). Prof. Sharma taught at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi for more than three decades. He was Professor of Sociology and Rector (Pro-VC) at JNU. Sharma was Vice-Chancellor at the University of Rajasthan, Jaipur and Jaipur National University, during 2003-2014. K.L. Sharma was a visiting Professor for five times at College de France, Paris, during 1991-2005. He was also a National Fellow (ICSSR) during 2014-16.



Dilemma of Democracy...

Dr N Bhaskara Rao

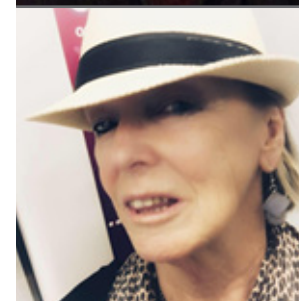
N Bhaskara Rao is Founder-Chairman of Centre for Media Studies (CMS) and also Founder-Chairman of Marketing and Development Research Associates (MDRA), a prestigious market research and forecasting outfit. Earlier, he had built up Operations Research Group (ORG) as its CEO. Dr Rao was also an expert member of government's high-level committee to draft National Population Policy with Dr M. S. Swaminathan and an expert-member of the committee to reorganize media units of Information and Broadcasting Ministry under the chairmanship of late G. Parthasarthy.



Heartbeat of Bali

Mark Ulyseas

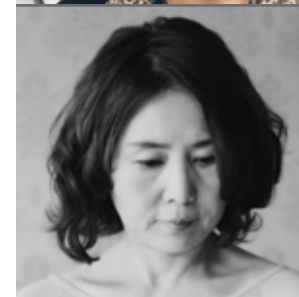
Ulyseas has served time in advertising as copywriter and creative director selling people things they didn't need, a ghost writer for some years, columnist of a newspaper, a freelance journalist and photographer. In 2009 he created *Live Encounters Magazine*, in Bali, Indonesia. March 2016 saw the launch of its sister publication *Live Encounters Poetry & Writing*. He is the author of three books: *RAINY - My friend & Philosopher*, *Seductive Avatars of Maya - Anthology of Dystopian Lives* and *In Gethsemane: Transcripts of a Journey*.



My Phone, My Life!

Jill Gocher

Bali based international photographer has spent her life exploring and enjoying Asian cultures. Her work has appeared in National Geographic, Time, International Herald Tribune, Asia Spa, Discovery, Silver Kris and many more. Her books - *Asia's legendary Hotels*, *Periplus*, *Bali- Island of Light -Marshall Cavendish*, *Indonesia - Islands of the Imagination*. *Periplus*, Australia - *the land down under* - Times Editions, Singapore, Indonesia - *the last paradise* - Times Editions. She has held exhibitions in Singapore, Kathmandu, and Bali.



Sri Lanka - II

Mikyoung Cha

Mikyoung Cha is a graduate in Oriental Painting from Hyosung Women's University, Daegu, South Korea. She has participated in a number of group art exhibitions in South Korea and Japan. In 2016 she took up photography - the camera becoming her paint brush. This globe trotting photographer is a regular contributor to *Live Encounters Magazine*.



Patlicanli Eksi Asi

Ozlem Warren

International cooking teacher and Turkish culinary expert Ozlem Warren is a native of Turkey, lived there and extensively travelled for 30 years. She has been teaching wholesome, delicious Turkish cookery in the US, Jordan, Istanbul and England. Her recipes have been published in the local media in England, *Hurriyet* and *Sabah* national daily newspapers in Turkey. Ozlem also took part at the *"Turkish Chefs of the World"*, *"Dunyanin Turk Seferi"* TV program aired at TRT, National Turkish TV channel and in 37 countries.



Shakti

speaks to Mark Ulyseas in Arambol, Goa, India in February 2012.

Shakti helps people with the knowing of the knowing of who they are inside and to live from there, and be in the moment of who they are, what they want to do, who they'd like to be and to be true to the self thereby shining from within with their own qualities, expanding this and sharing it with others. Many people with emotional baggage and a disconnection with the Self approach her. She assists them to transform this emotional energy and to get to know who they are, to connect with the essence of their Being, to heal old wounds related to lost loves, family, childhood etc.



Dr. Mahima Nayar is an independent researcher working in areas of disability, women, children and families. She was previously an Assistant Professor at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. She has worked extensively with survivors of trafficking (women and children), women facing domestic violence and survivors of sexual assault, persons with psychosocial disabilities and their families. Her educational qualifications include M.Phil in Psychiatric Social Work from National Institute of Mental Health and Social Sciences (NIMHANS), Bengaluru, PhD in Social Sciences from Jawaharlal Nehru University and a Masters in Social Work from Tata Institute of Social Sciences. She was the gold medallist in her M.Phil Programme and a Senior Research Fellow during her doctoral programme.

DR MAHIMA NAYAR

AGAINST ALL ODDS: PSYCHOSOCIAL DISTRESS AND HEALING AMONGST WOMEN

Madness, insanity and mental disorders have been subjects of discussions for a long time. The manner of viewing and understanding them has changed according to the historical period and the developmental stage that a particular society finds itself in. In most eras, it is the voice of the professionals and not the voices of the people who are living through the experience which has dominated the discourse. There is a silence around how everyday routines/patterns and life-circumstances lead to madness or mental disorders. The aspect of distress often goes unrecognized in the larger imagery of 'mad' people. In the twenty-first century where change is occurring at an unprecedented pace, the everyday lives of women are often considered a 'small detail' in the larger historical landscape. However, the distress that they face in their everyday lives reveals the link between macro changes and their impact on the day-to-day lives of people. This book attempts to explore the everyday meaning of distress in relation to the larger changes that are occurring.

Distress in this book has been understood as including feelings of sadness, restless, nervousness and hopelessness. Often these feelings get categorised into medical categories without exploration of their social meanings. Being female is reported to be a risk factor for common mental disorders. The social roles and spaces assigned to women create a lot of stress in their lives and thereby the greater prevalence of common mental disorders amongst women. Glimpses of this relationship were evident in the outpatient clinic of a psychiatric hospital where I worked. While working there I met many women whose distress was not high enough for admission but they frequently visited the clinics for medication. None of the medications really seemed to help them. In the short meetings they described several difficulties in their family life ranging from issues related to poverty, health issues and violence. Questions related to social structures and their impact on the individual were emerging in this clinical set-up and there was no space or time to explore this further over there. As a psychiatric social worker being in a hospital setting was easier for me but there was a realization that there was need to move beyond the hospital for finding these answers. So I moved to a community clinic and from there on to the community itself. This study was then designed to explore the extent of psychosocial distress faced by women living in a low-income neighbourhood in Delhi. This book is based on those experiences.

This research explores the linkages between the socio-cultural, political and economic conditions of a community and their impact on the level of psychosocial distress faced by women. To establish a relationship between social structures, women and psychosocial distress, it was important to understand the manner in which psychosocial distress, madness and mental health were defined in the community. Did the class, caste, region of the women have an impact on the understanding of distress? This understanding would remain partial without knowing what the women themselves thought about it. Therefore, exploring the ways in which women perceived and defined psychosocial distress was important. A related objective of the research was to explore whether women considered their distress important enough to seek help and if they did, then what kind of help did they seek. The health care systems and modes of healing present within the community were also explored here.

In order to give a context to understanding of psychosocial distress, this book begins with discussions about madness, neurosis or hysteria among women. It explores different perspectives related to 'madness' or 'mental illness' and how distress has been viewed as 'abnormality' for a long time. It explores psychosocial distress through the 'medical lens' as well in the context of prevailing social, cultural, economic and political conditions. Social and cultural space, the concomitant gender regime, urbanization, globalization and their impact on mental health are discussed in order to establish linkages between the individual situations and structures present within the community.

I began the book by asking the question: So what is abnormality? In all the interactions with women and men in Jahangirpuri, I found that there are multiple answers reflecting multiple realities. Psychosocial distress is embodied and expressed through the categories of possession and illness experiences. Caste, class and religion may shape and change the terms used for description of psychosocial distress/madness but the experiences appear to be on a similar continuum. This is evident from the growing use of bio-medical idioms to describe conditions of distress amongst women from different backgrounds in Jahangirpuri. Psychosocial distress was related to the substantial changes in the physical structures in Jahangirpuri which have not translated into a better subjective quality of life.

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Women face frequent emotional, economic and physical violence within the household. Performance of multiple roles within the household with very little time for leisure or relaxation is increasing women's psychosocial distress. With the help of narratives, the book brings out the manner in which women perceived their family and societal relationship as being instrumental in impacting their health.

Crime rates continue to be high. Constant and continuous sense of insecurity prevails among the women of the area and leads to restrictions (internal and external) of their movements. This internalization of restrictions often leads to feelings of suffocation. Along with a high rate of crime, a high cost of living forms the main macro-issue of concern for women. The everyday lives of women living in the site are marked by problems created by living in a certain social situation and there are many similarities in the experiences of these women. Distress appears to be arising out of similar reasons and leading to similar outcomes (pains, tensions, worries).

Women face frequent emotional, economic and physical violence within the household. Performance of multiple roles within the household with very little time for leisure or relaxation is increasing women's psychosocial distress. With the help of narratives, the book brings out the manner in which women perceived their family and societal relationship as being instrumental in impacting their health. There was some recognition of the power dynamics in the societal set up but only some women were able to question and challenge societal norms. The presence of civil society organizations working for women has helped bring about some changes. But these organizations are not seen as 'legitimate' sources of help by everyone in the community. Therefore, women seek help mostly from culturally sanctioned spaces. These include traditional or folk healers as well as bio-medical doctors. It was found that women usually sought multiple sources of help simultaneously. From the interviews, I also found that the traditional or folk healers were considered approachable as they paid more attention to the psychosocial context of the women. When distress was expressed through aches, pains and tension, women sought general medical care. This often led to women being on medication for long periods of time without much change in their situation. Physical and social structures are important in the everyday lives of women and therefore Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and social space are used in examining this concept of psychosocial distress. The intersections between physical and social space, household organization and psychosocial distress are also explored in the book.

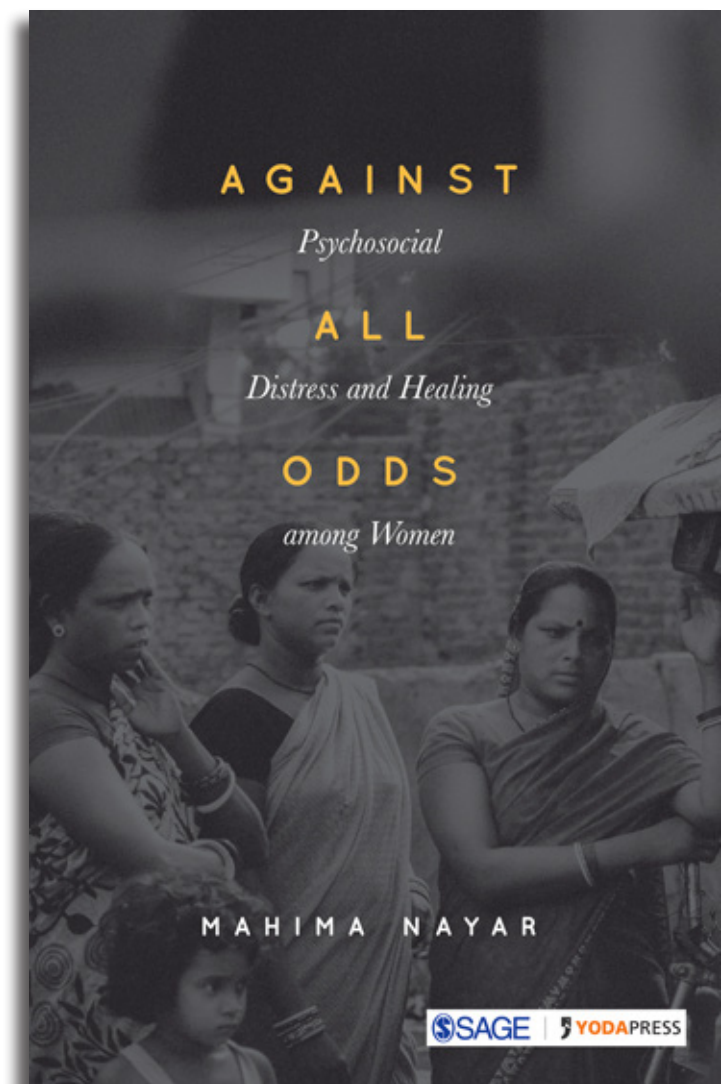
Exploring the relationship between psychosocial distress and social position of women, I found that when women start questioning certain societal prescriptions they are labelled as 'mad'. It is through the support of other women that a change in power relations has come about. In many ways, it is the women's movements that have provided secular spaces for women, spaces which have enabled them to seek the support of other women, to help themselves and others, and to explore ways of coping which have empowered them. It is important to recognize the role of both the women's movement and the cultural ways of healing as they complement each other. Women's movements and medical pluralism both seem to provide choices for people who are suffering.

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This research does not negate the importance of psychiatric drugs and treatments. There are many instances wherein these have helped women and their families. But there is a need to exercise caution in their usage and prevent their rampant misuse. Issues of illness and health remain embedded in social decisions and actions, not only in medical decisions about transmission and cure.

The complex nature of 'madness' or 'psychosocial distress' has to be addressed from a variety of perspectives as multiple factors influence it. More data is required on the linkages between poverty and psychosocial distress. Poverty underlies the poor health status of developing world populations, and women represent a disproportionate share of the poor. Furthermore, the cultural and socio-economic environment affects women's exposure to disease and injury, their diet, their access to and use of health services, and the manifestations and consequences of disease.

In order to understand psychosocial distress in this context, there is need to develop newer models which take into account intersections between the cultural, social and economic realities faced by women. This book explores interactions between individuals and systems and argues that an equitable society is what is required to reduce psychosocial distress. This book would be helpful to anyone interested in gender studies, psychology, anthropology and social work.



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Alice A. Bailey

Isobel Blackthorn is a novelist and independent scholar. She writes contemporary and literary fiction, mysteries and dark psychological thrillers. Her interest in esotericism has culminated in *The Unlikely Occultist: A biographical novel of Alice A. Bailey*. Isobel holds a PhD in Western Esotericism for her ground-breaking study of Alice Bailey's body of work. Isobel has a background in theosophy spanning three decades and she's a qualified Astrologer. Her reviews, articles and opinion pieces on various topics have appeared in journals and magazines around the world.



ISOBEL BLACKTHORN ON ALICE A. BAILEY, WORLD GOODWILL AND THE UNITED NATIONS

Esotericism is concerned with explanations and manipulations of the inner planes of existence. Alice Bailey's writings belong to the variant of Western Esotericism known as Theosophy. While the term can be traced back to Neoplatonist Porphyry to describe a combination of the capacities of the philosopher, the artist and the priest, it was Russian aristocrat and Spiritualist Madame Helena Petrovna Blavatsky who harnessed theosophy when she founded the Theosophical Society in 1875. British aristocrat and former devout Christian, Alice A. Bailey (born in 1880 Alice La Trobe-Bateman) was a second-generation Theosophist in communication with the same Master of the Wisdom as Blavatsky: The Tibetan or Djwhal Khul.

Drawing on Eastern mysticism and Western occult formulations, Bailey wrote twenty-four volumes, most as The Tibetan's amanuensis, dedicated to informing future generations of seekers of the coming new age of spiritual enlightenment. Written between 1919 and 1949, Bailey's opus includes works on meditation, esoteric healing, astrology, initiation, the chakras, yoga, education and psychology, along with an abstruse treatise on cosmology, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*. She also provides detailed explanations of the Plan of the Spiritual Hierarchy of Masters for the forthcoming era and instructions to her disciples to make that plan a reality. Much of the writing is impenetrable and alien to non-esotericists. The tone is instructional and dry. There is nothing exotic and enticing in the style and yet many will mention a strange almost magnetic pull once the mind starts to grapple with the meaning held within.

Of all the spiritual and occult teachers of her day, Alice Bailey was one of the most prolific and determined. Her legacy, whilst hidden, runs deep. She is regarded in scholarly circles to be the main theorist of the New Age movement, her teachings informing an early vanguard of writers and practitioners who went on to influence future generations of seekers.

In 1922, from a humble Theosophy class held in a room on Madison Avenue, Alice Bailey, with the help of a small group of dedicated followers, founded the Lucis Trust (who continue to publish her works to this day), and a year later the Arcane School – an esoteric training school delivered for free by correspondence. She also established a magazine, *The Beacon*, a meditation network known as Triangles, and Men of Goodwill.

Many leading New Age proponents champion or acknowledge her influence. She is also a pet hate among conspiracy theorists, mostly due to her belief in the need for a ‘new world order’ based on ‘a plan’ devised by spiritual masters.

Alice Bailey’s main goal was to purify esotericism and make esoteric practice serve good not evil purposes. She imbued Theosophy with the basic Christian principle of goodwill and believed in the Second Coming of Christ. She exercised her formidable missionary zeal to establish all the foundations necessary to fulfill her vision for a better world.

Alice Bailey started out in life as a Christian missionary serving soldier’s homes in Ireland and India. She went on to endure years of hardship, first horrific domestic violence, then packing sardines in a cannery in Monterey while bringing up three young daughters alone.

Alice Bailey’s conversion to Theosophy was swift and absolute. She devoured the teachings.

In 1922, from a humble Theosophy class held in a room on Madison Avenue, Alice Bailey, with the help of a small group of dedicated followers, founded the Lucis Trust (who continue to publish her works to this day), and a year later the Arcane School – an esoteric training school delivered for free by correspondence. She also established a magazine, *The Beacon*, a meditation network known as Triangles, and Men of Goodwill.

Of all her organizations, Men of Goodwill, now World Goodwill, exemplifies the manner in which her dedicated co-workers, including those who have graduated from the Arcane School, operate in the world today. Founded in 1932 by the Lucis Trust, World Goodwill works to encourage right relations and unity amongst nations. Its aims are to foster goodwill and cooperation through education, and provide a universal spiritual perspective on the future. World Goodwill serves as an advisory body, enabling individuals and groups to enhance their effectiveness in service. It cooperates with other groups in world service initiatives, and supports the various efforts towards human and planetary betterment. The organization holds seminars, conferences, and produces study guides, newsletters, articles, blog posts, all aiming to foster a way of understanding the problems facing the world, revealing the underlying universal principles at play, and finding ways to heal, transform and resolve problems. World Goodwill recognizes the unsustainable path of so-called free-market economics with its trajectory of ever increasing inequality, and that such an economic and political model is not the only pathway to a globalized world.

In 1947, as she neared the end of her life, Bailey wrote *Problems of Humanity*, a slim volume composed in her own pen, containing a collection of pamphlets dated from October 1944 to December 1946. As the title suggests, in this work Bailey discusses the pressing problems facing humanity and proposes solutions. In the final chapter, she discusses world unity in a post-war world, a world unity based on goodwill and cooperation, arguing that the United Nations must be the body to achieve it.

In April 1940, in response to the commencement of World War II, and to the evils of dictatorship and the oppression of the citizenry of a nation by its leaders, Bailey, like many others of her time, yearned for better global governance. She was distressed by the war, deeply affected by the suffering she saw, and appalled by the aggressor nations, which she viewed as agents of the Black Lodge. In response, she argued the need for a new world order, one that would meet humanity’s need for equality and goodwill. Bailey advocated equality of opportunity for all, individual freedom and autonomy, the eradication of poverty, the sovereign rights of all nations, a universal education, shared resources, distributed fairly, and disarmament.

Bailey had no outward anchor for her reflections until 1st January 1942, when government representatives of twenty-six nations pledged to fight against the Axis powers and signed the Declaration of the United Nations, a declaration that led to the founding of the United Nations on 24th October 1945 in San Francisco, when its charter was ratified. She was an admirer of Franklin Roosevelt, who came up with the term, and the United Nations gave Bailey a focus. From then on, in the last four years of her life, she directed her disciples towards it. If a new world order was to manifest then the singular hope for humanity was to be found in the United Nations, the only organization on the horizon capable of holding humanity’s highest aspirations.

Bailey’s support of the United Nations is unsurprising. The organization represents a dovetailing of her spiritual ethos with widespread concerns running through the minds of many during the war’s aftermath, concerns centering on finding ways to address the situation that had led to it. Not least among these concerns was the desire to create some form of international law designed to protect individuals and groups from abuses meted out by nation states, challenging the idea that a nation has an inviolable right to treat its citizens or anyone within its borders however it wishes. To that effect, The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 December 1948. There was at last hope of a better world, she had thought, one founded on unity, goodwill and right relations.

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Her commentary on the United Nations is given from her esoteric point of view and in no way compares to works of an erudite nature or comprehensive commentaries by political commentators of the day. Yet the little she had to say in her body of work was sufficient to direct her followers from then on to focus their efforts in the arena of the United Nations. Bailey's co-workers took her at her word and forged links with the UN, not only through World Goodwill, but via a raft of other initiatives including hosting seminars, conferences, meditation days, founding magazines and organizations devoted to world peace.

She knew the task was onerous. In *The Destiny of the Nations*, a volume dedicated to commenting from her esoteric perspective on the problems facing the United Nations. It was to her Units of Service that she called, those women and of goodwill, seeking to encourage them to help restore confidence.

In the same year, Bailey wrote the later sections of *The Rays and the Initiations*, in which she voices her concerns over the direction humanity takes in the aftermath of the war, particularly with regard to the Zionist movement and the formation of Israel. Even as early as April 1942, Bailey saw difficulties emerging in the United Nations, as nations followed their individual desires for victory and peace, using their own methods to end to suffering, cruelty, starvation, death and fear, rather than bow to spiritual unity.

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Bailey's contemporaries, Rudolph Steiner and Krishnamurti, both founded systems of schooling. Bailey, too, saw the importance of education. Her focus was on the education of the whole of humanity. Written at a time of re-evaluation of educational theory and practice, her *Education in the New Age* work contains a preface composed by eminent professor of philosophy Oliver L Reiser (1895-1974), personal friend of Albert Einstein. Reiser draws parallels between Bailey's thinking and that of educational philosopher John Dewey.

Of concern For Bailey was the need to educate the masses to realign values from material to spiritual; to find educational methods to synthesize discrete areas of academic thought to offset polarization and purism; and to find a unity of principles. In other words, to universalize education and build bridges between discreet disciplines, such as history or geography. *Education in the New Age* covers theory, methods and goals, a discussion on the mental development of humanity, and the need for personality control. The premise of the book is simple.

Perhaps it is about time the conspiracy narrative surrounding Alice Bailey is challenged and her contribution to human thought acknowledged and evaluated and even appreciated, not least for its fundamental intention of goodwill. An opportunity exists today just as it did in Bailey's day to step into a better world, yet this chance is contingent on the willingness of more and more people to do something to make a difference and take on the responsibility for co-creating alternatives. Good ideas abound. Innovation is everywhere. Perhaps now, more than ever, humanity needs a touch of Alice Bailey's zeal to fully realize our potential.

Humanity too easily slips into selfishness and greed, and the entire curriculum needs to change. Based on the ideas found in this book, Robert Muller, former assistant to three UN Secretary Generals, created the World Core Curriculum, for which he has been described the father of global education and received the UNESCO Peace Education Prize in 1989. The curriculum has four strands: openness with the planet, unity with people, harmony with self, and evolution through time.

World Goodwill is an accredited nongovernmental organization with the United Nations, working with other NGOs to foster unity in diversity. A cohort of co-workers dedicated to carrying forward Bailey's vision can be found on the council of the Spiritual Caucus on the United Nations, which originated in 2000 and meets twice a month to meditate and create an inner group focus oriented to serve the UN's highest potential. Members include Lucis trustees and other prominent figures closely associated with Alice Bailey, including Nancy Roof, Tara Stuart, Barbara Valocore and Steve Nation.

Alice Bailey's sole aim was to foster human and planetary betterment. Yet few have heard of her outside of esoteric and alternative spirituality circles other than conspiracy theorists, who point to Bailey's teachings and organizations as evidence not of good but of evil. Her support of the United Nations lies at the heart of their concerns. Conversely, Alice Bailey's championing of the UN is used to support their argument that the UN is dedicated to instituting a new world order. From such thinking arises paranoia concerning population control, the notion of sustainability, and human-induced climate change.

Perhaps it is about time the conspiracy narrative surrounding Alice Bailey is challenged and her contribution to human thought acknowledged and evaluated and even appreciated, not least for its fundamental intention of goodwill. An opportunity exists today just as it did in Bailey's day to step into a better world, yet this chance is contingent on the willingness of more and more people to do something to make a difference and take on the responsibility for co-creating alternatives. Good ideas abound. Innovation is everywhere. Perhaps now, more than ever, humanity needs a touch of Alice Bailey's zeal to fully realize our potential.



Ghanshyam Shah is an independent researcher, based in Ahmedabad. He is a retired professor of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi. He was earlier a Fellow in Resident, the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study, in Humanities and Social Sciences, Wassenaar; and National Fellow, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla, and Indian Council of Social Science Research, New Delhi. He was also Director, Centre for Social Studies, Surat, and Dr Ambedkar Chair Professor (1995–1996) at LBS National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie. He was a Visiting Professor at the University of Chicago, Illinois; Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi; M.S. University of Baroda, Vadodara; and S.G. University, Surat. He has authored/co-authored and edited more than 20 books.

GHANSHYAM SHAH

DEMOCRACY, CIVIL SOCIETY AND GOVERNANCE

Democracy is both an end as well as a means for social transformation towards building egalitarian social order. The Indian constitution directs the State to carry out that mission by formulating policy and governance. Since the early 'sixties, however, the idea of an egalitarian society has ceased to be on the political agenda of the State. All political parties have been engaged in all kinds of compromise to gain power. Except for Left, they have followed neo-liberal economy ironically as an end of ideology, a *fait accompli* for India's destiny. Over and above, Narendra Modi's BJP government in 2014 is welded with cultural nationalism albeit 'Hindu Rastra', undermining India's plural culture embedded in different religious traditions and secular ethos in everyday life.

In this situation, civil society has a crucial role in asserting pressure on the one hand on the state for formulating policy and modus operandi of governance; and on the other articulating public opinion to translate constitutional principles of equality, liberty and secularism in practice. It is expected of civil society to function as a watchdog on the state whenever constitutional principles are violated. Besides public discourse, secular civic associations and social movements are its components.

The present book is an endeavour to critically examine the role of civil society in social transformation in India. At empirical level, civil society is not a unified entity. The unequal strength and position of various socio-economic strata and elite with divergent perspectives in culturally plural and socio-economically stratified society reflect in the nature and composition of civil society. The composition of its segments changes from time to time and issue to issue. Their areas of activities, organisational structure and political perspective differ. For brevity, we classify these segments into a broad two categories: Hegemonic (HCS) and Radical (RCS). The former is the largest in size, legitimises the existing political economy and social system that breeds and perpetuates inequality and strengthen the influence of dominant classes/castes. It functions as an ideological and cultural apparatus of the state and dominant castes/classes. The RCS, on the other hand, questions and challenges the present neo-liberal political economy, hierarchical and particularistic values and norms reinforcing inequality. It often confronts the state and dominant classes/castes and strives for changing the existing power structure.

The boundary between these two segments is fluid, frequently negotiating on different issues. Both the segments of civil society irrespective of their position on neoliberal political economy stand for the democratic system and raise voice. The HCS is more concerned with formal democracy whereas the RCS stands for a substantial democratic system.

The modern civil society in India is the legacy of the western education system and governance. The first generation of western educated elite adhering to their lifeworld initiated public discourse on rationality, the relationship between society and man, science and religion, state and citizenship etc. They formed public associations for discourse related to the common good and also undertook activities for spreading formal education, 'modern' values and reforming social customs and structure. The space of modern civil Society then was primarily occupied by the upper strata of society. Its scale gradually enlarged with the expansion of higher education coupled with urban industrial centres. The freedom movement accelerated the process with an entry of a small section of peasant castes. It grew at a faster rate with growth in economy and education in the post-Independence India. The expansion, however, has so far remained largely horizontal than vertical in terms of the social composition of upper and middle castes. Over six decades, few activists and organisations belonging to traditionally deprived communities have entered civil society, particularly its RCS segment. Women activists and their organisations for gender equality also have a visible presence.

On the whole, civil society reproduces hegemony and way of life of dominant upper castes. The hegemonic values, however, are not monolithic and one dimensional. During the freedom movement values of dominant strata castes embedded with the hierarchical caste system were reiterated. There is a more element of compassion than empathy and comradeship in their work among the have-nots. At the same time, the forces of modernity, and the capitalist political economy invoke competition, profit, achievement and rationality which too work in favour of the hegemonic classes. Conflicting nature of social hierarchical and modern market values coexists with tension and generates their new dynamic. The formal and informal education system, public discourse, media as well as the inter-personal relationship in public spheres reinforce hegemonic values.

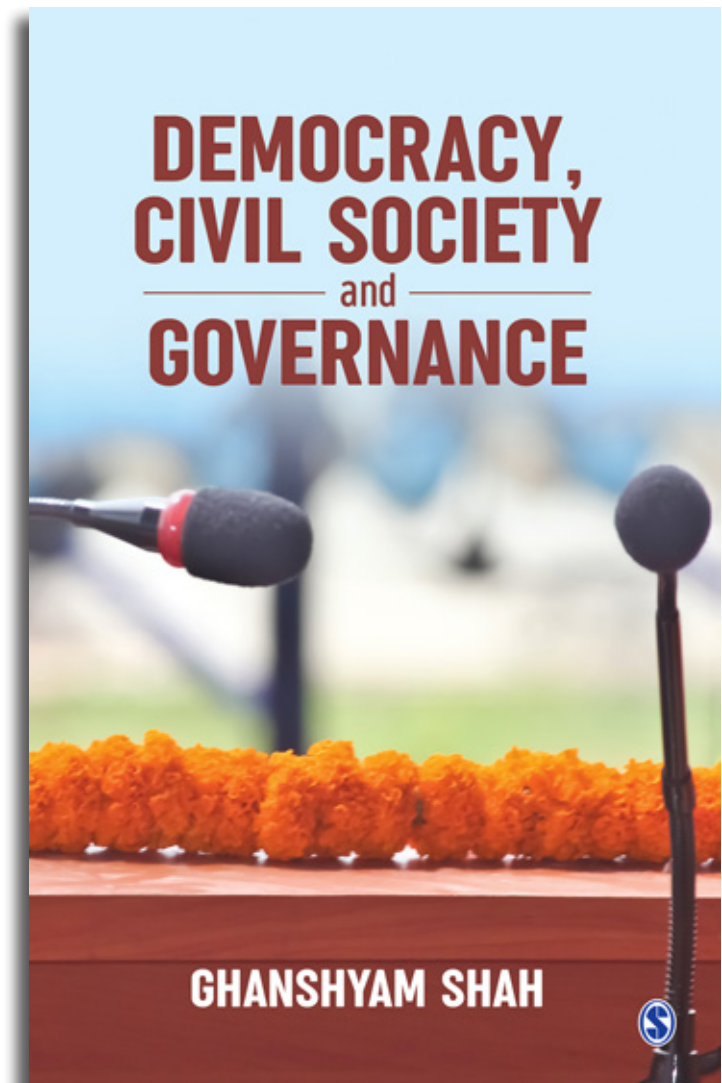
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The subaltern communities with their own experiences and aspirations often contest hierarchical norms. They strive for equality and dignity. A large segment of the RCS activists is not free from these hegemonic values because of their social orientation of being from upper strata. At the same time, they get perturbed when the state and dominant castes violate or ignore adherence to the core democratic components. The activists and organisations of RCS protest and even confront the state. They continue to do so, though numerically not strong. They are under state surveillance and subject to harassment.

With the financial support from international organizations and corporate houses, a large number of NGOs posturing as apolitical are engaged for 'development' work and for good governance. For them, professional expertise and participation of stakeholders with accountability and transparency in governance is the royal path for development. They work at different levels and segments, including infrastructure, credit, sanitation, health, education, etc. The parameters of 'good governance' have been actualized in a few cases where the stakeholders are from the rich and middle class. Participation of poor stakeholders and accountability of the government have remained on paper. These NGOs do assist the poor to add some income and to sustain life so that cheap labour remains available to the propertied classes. Not only that, they make the poor feel guilty if they are unable to develop their skills and capacity to meet the needs of the market. Large segments of the pro-poor civil society engaged in welfare programmes depoliticize and socialize the exploited have-nots to the market, despite their dislike of capitalism. They inadvertently promote a capitalist culture and legitimize the neoliberal economic system. On the other hand, some organizations with a rights-based perspective use these programmes to develop consciousness among the poor for their rights as citizens. They develop local leadership among the deprived communities who develop the confidence to negotiate with political leaders and bureaucrats for their rights. These grassroots activists encourage and lead collective actions of local residents and in some instances have successfully obtained few basic services. Such success stories boost the morale of the poor for collective actions to get amenities without raising questions to the exploitative political economy. Grassroots struggles of the oppressed people resisting and confronting the state and the dominant classes for their rights to protect natural resources, land, wages, etc., and also against atrocities and injustice, are innumerable. RCS actively support these struggles. Over a period of time, these struggles have acquired visibility in media and public discourse. Their gains are often localised, mostly remained on paper and illusionary providing hope that they would bend the system in their favour. The forms and nature of these struggles vary. They are isolated, often around issues rather than the system. They are missing a larger political perspective related to the political economy. Their strength to sustain these struggles is so far limited.

At the same time, the forces of modernity, and the capitalist political economy invoke competition, profit, achievement and rationality which too work in favour of the hegemonic classes. Conflicting nature of social hierarchical and modern market values coexists with tension and generates their new dynamic. The formal and informal education system, public discourse, media as well as the interpersonal relationship in public spheres reinforce hegemonic values.

RCS activists are relatively well articulated than HCS on public issues. They are actively engaged in raising their voice on the issues related to violation of public morality, injustice to poor, freedom of expression, etc., by the state and dominant strata. Though the presence of RCS organizations is quite visible and the state is occasionally compelled to take cognizance of their demands, their capacity of mass mobilization so far is limited. In terms of space, RCS is on the periphery of civil society. But with unfolding contradictions of the neoliberal economy, the circumference of RCS organizations in civil society is expanding. Different segments of RCS have different ideological positions on the nature of power relations in society, the character of State and political class, political economy in general and neoliberal economy in particular. Their premise on Indian culture and tradition and their strategies for transformation vary. But, they often work in alliance with each other on most of the issues related to deprivation, violation of human rights, shrinking democratic space, etc. All of them increasingly realize the limitations of their ideological framework in comprehending changing social realities. But either because of their constant engagement in the field and/or because of their lack of aptitude and/or arrogance about their ideology, many of them are not inclined to engage in reflective analysis of their own experiences and to unlearn their pet theories. This is a major stumbling block to meet the increasing challenges of rising sectarian forces and the neoliberal political economy widening inequality.



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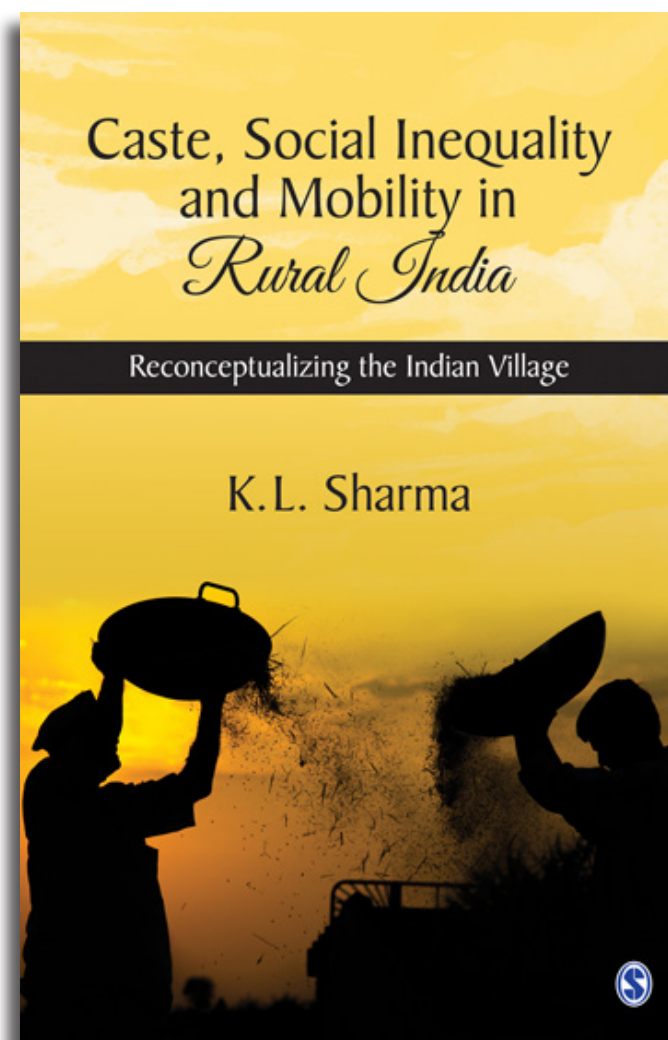
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K.L. Sharma is Pro-Chancellor at Jaipur National University, Jaipur and Vice-Chairman of the Institute of Development Studies (IDS, Jaipur). Prof. Sharma taught at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi for more than three decades. He was Professor of Sociology and Rector(Pro-VC) at JNU. Sharma was Vice-Chancellor at the University of Rajasthan, Jaipur and Jaipur National University, during 2003-2014. K.L. Sharma was a visiting Professor for five times at College de France, Paris, during 1991-2005. He was also a National Fellow (ICSSR) during 2014-16. In, 2002, Prof. Sharma was honoured with the Swami Pranavananda Saraswati Award by the University Grants Commission (UGC) of India.



PROFESSOR K L SHARMA

CASTE, SOCIAL INEQUALITY AND MOBILITY IN INDIA



The author questions the taken for granted concepts and views about Indian village, caste system, family, rural economy and power structure. He observes that differences are found within and between villages, castes, family life, occupational pursuits, income and assets, and power structure. The author has analysed a large number of studies with a view to attempt an interdisciplinary understanding of caste, social inequality and mobility in village India. A restudy of the six villages (studied earlier by Sharma in 1965-66), and then after half a century in 2016, shows the extent and magnitude of change relating to caste, inequality and patterns of mobility.

Intra and inter-village differences clearly indicate that no single village in India is representative of the villages in a given area, district, state, and in India as a whole. As such, inter-village and country-town nexuses have always existed, though such networks have witnessed paradigmatic shifts caused by both micro and macro factors. Thus, an image of a 'holistic' village is an unrealistic one. The village had well-recognised social arrangements in the past with some degree of flexibility and reconciliation in inter-group relations. Even today, it has, though substantially transformed patterns of social relations, recognized by the village people. The village is not an 'ambiguous' social formation.

Jajmani system, caste as a system of intra and inter-caste relations, caste and village councils, inter-village networks, village economy, etc., as traditional institutions, have almost disappeared. Besides the changed mode of agriculture, non-agricultural means of income have become pronounced. In its new avatar, country-town nexus has weakened the old ties, relating to relations between individuals, families and castes/sub-castes. Though, village has become considerably a resilient entity, however, it retains its identity as a 'community' in terms of spatial entity, with its transformed social milieu.

Today, new 'actors' have entered into the village arena, who aspire for power and high status. They have acquired material assets, including land and access to non-farm income. A tiny public sector functioning has emerged by way of institutions, such as school, public health centre, statutory panchayat, cooperative society, etc. Functionaries like teacher, doctor, nurse, patwari, gramsevak, panch and sarpanch are at the center-stage of the Indian village.

Finally, a word about the caste system may be uttered. Caste as a system has collapsed. Its systemic ethos has disappeared. Obviously, 'caste' is appropriated by vested interests for specific ends-in-view. Caste is discretionary in terms of its use, misuse, abuse and non-use. 'Caste' in its non-systemic avatar is being used in terms of favours, discriminations, mobilizations and seeking of power. This shows emergence of new parameters of status and power. However, there is no uniform system of stratification and change throughout

Despite, such a new face of the village, over the years, merchants, markets, moneylending and migration have changed, as their traditional base has shrunk, resulting in a 'push' factor for those who have left the village. Education and networks have played an effective role in this context. The impact of such a change has added to a sort of 'modernity', a sense of urban life, by continued contacts of the out-migrants with their village and family members. This has also impacted urban life as well. One can see a 'village' in the town, and a 'town' in the village. This is, in fact, a renewed country-town nexus. Thus, country-town nexus is multifaceted and multidimensional, both, historically and contextually. Hence, reconceptualization of Indian village is inevitably unavoidable.

One can note the presence of a new man and a new society with wide-ranging ramifications at the level of family, jati, and village organization. A new pattern of status and power has emerged in place of family and caste-based determination of social relations in terms of high and low positions. A new form of reproduction of status and power is in process, uprooting the age-old socio-cultural moorings.

The book contains fifteen chapters, arranged in five parts, besides Foreword by Prof. Dipankar Gupta, and Introduction and Conclusion. As mentioned above, a specific feature of the book is a double synchronic study of the six villages in Rajasthan, narrating the changing village scene over a period of half a century.

It is evident that a village is a mirror of differentiation and mobility in terms of caste, class, power, networks, education, employment and somewhat more egalitarian relations. However, unevenness in the distributive shares implies dominance of the new middle class, and a new social formation in making. As such, social inequality has acquired a new form. The present village scene can be characterized as follows:

1. Downward mobility of the traditionally entrenched castes, families and individuals;
2. Upward mobility of peasantry, artisans and deprived groups;
3. Non-farm income as a new source of status and social mobility (composite social status); and
4. Transformed country town-nexus, urban income, savings and surpluses as a means of social mobility and change.

Based on a comprehensive analysis of the studies on village India, it can be stated that the Indian village is not a monolith. It has both cooperation and conflict, selfhood and collective identity, unity and factionatism, hierarchy and individualism/segmentation. All these aspects can be observed in varying permutations and combinations in different parts of rural India. Even country-town nexus is of differing degrees.

One can see an individual and his/her family at the centre of social and occupational mobility. As such, rural India is engaged in reinterpretation of criteria of status and power. The caste-based norms and practices are being questioned. Assertion for equality and dignity is quite often visible by those who were at the bottom of social hierarchy in the past. Despite such a wave of social change, 'democratic dynasties' persist by way of continuity of the same set of people in positions of power and authority, though following electoral process. Differential access to resources, such as quality education, gainful employment and participation in decision-making, is the main factor in the persistence of inequality and its reproduction.

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N Bhaskara Rao is Founder–Chairman of Centre for Media Studies (CMS) and also Founder–Chairman of Marketing and Development Research Associates (MDRA), a prestigious market research and forecasting outfit. He is a pioneer in social research in India and an eminent mass communication expert with over 40 years of distinguished background. Earlier, he had built up Operations Research Group (ORG) as its CEO. Dr Rao was also an expert member of government’s high-level committee to draft National Population Policy with Dr M. S. Swaminathan and an expert-member of the committee to reorganize media units of Information and Broadcasting Ministry under the chairmanship of late G. Parthasarthy.

DR N BHASKARA RAO

DILEMMA OF DEMOCRACY, DEVELOPMENT AND GOVERNANCE

At a time when political leaders are competing with claims of “good governance”, here is a book based on fifty years of research insights that suggests that good governance is not even understood what it is all about. The book explains how governance is different from the government.

“Good governance” is a buzz claim these days of many leaders in power and also those trying to get in to power positions. What this good governance is all about? For most it meant Government working against corruption. For many others, governance is what the Government is seized with. These are limited perspectives. In a democracy, governance is sum total of what the Government and civil society does over time and how other stakeholders take it or respond and with what impact and implications. Good governance is more than a popular government. As good Governance in a parliamentary democracy is not possible without “good politics”, good politics is not feasible without good political parties. That is, Good governance is not possible without good leaders. All this is not sustainable without active citizenry and a civil society. That is why our Constitution starts with “WE, THE PEOPLE”. The book analyses how and why the trajectory of development, democracy and governance need to be viewed together.

The book reminds that unless the Governments are viewed as of all people and parties, (instead of a party which had won a poll) there cannot be good governance. The book calls for a debate on proportional representation system of elections. It contends that no change can be expected in our polity and development paradigm without drastic decline in poll expenditure.

In a democracy governance is sum total of what the Government does over time and how other stakeholders take it or respond and with what impact and implications. More citizens are stakeholders in a “governance” scenario than the number involved in or concerned with the “Government” of the day. Political leaders tend to talk of good governance as if it meant “achievements” of the Government of the day. Good governance cannot be an outcome of a one term (or may be even more) of a party in the Government based on some popular programmes described as flagship. Good governance has to be viewed in a long term context.

If “WE the people” are not sensitive to differences and characteristics, how do we expect to accomplish what we envisioned in the Constitution of our Republic? That process is what I tried to discuss in this book.

Political leaders in power claim “good governance” even when the Government was a year or two old as if good governance means Government announcing a couple of relief or welfare schemes. Such a tendency recently has anguished me and made me to wonder about limited perspective of our leaders and lack of a futures outlook. But then such a naive view now is not limited to political leaders but also the news media and other key sections engaged in public policies. Leaders tend to think in simplistic terms like one nation, one election and even one leader!? Their view more often is that Government of the day being stable or decisive or being popular is good governance. The realisation that civic society matters for success - failure and fate of development endeavours is a more recent phenomena. But that remained a poll time rhetoric at the most.

Unless there is wide spread sensitivity what this good governance is all about, we continue to remain in a quandary about development also. That is how I thought I should bring together my own insights based on my fifty years of public policy pursuit (with a futuristic concerns). And initiate at least a debate to ponder ourselves as to why seven decades of experiments in parliamentary democracy, development model and preaching decentralisation have not lead to cherished goals.

In nutshell the book contends at the outset that Republic of India although has come a long way, on social sector the scenario calls for a critical view and perhaps for a shift in the very approach and model itself. The book maintains that unless decentralised outlook is evident in the instruments of governance with a bottom up approach (in public policies) it amounts more of the same of the past. More specifically, states should be restored to their position in a federal framework. It suggests that the republic (pillars of the state) should be looked from much beyond three pillars view --the judiciary, the legislature and the executive. Apart from the fourth pillar or estate of media, even the civil society be viewed and considered as the fifth pillar. And that only then a breakthrough is possible in our development saga.

© N Bhaskara Rao

The author, concludes that even by 2050 when “India at hundred” will not realise its basic democratic-development goals going by-and-large “more of the same” approach. To catch up, the author suggests 45 interventions in all in political parties, polling practices in primary education and in the functioning of legislatures, judiciary, executive and media.

No significant changes could be expected in the country even when the Republic completes hundred years in 2050. If 16 general elections could not help achieve national goals, how next six are going to? Bits and pieces approach to reforms will not yield unless citizen and civil society takes active interest in governance. Will India be able to fulfil its democratic goals in the next 30 years?

Good governance claims of political leaders need to acquire meaning and seriousness. A combination of rights regime in an era of transparency and citizen activism with proliferation of newer technologies offers better scope for good governance today, if only we could consolidate the trends. Transformation of India requires hard and radical decisions beyond economic terms. The book suggests more than a couple of immediate minimum correctives needed in the case of each of the pillars of the state for an overall effect and making the difference. And that is possible with a beyond election centric view and a futuristic perspective. We need to get out of elections-only democracy. How can we? Governance is much maligned rhetoric today. Some clarity and understanding about good governance is needed not only among political leaders but also among news media and civil society. This book does not claim describing all about good governance or even define it fully. But an attempt is made with a hope it paves way for a serious public discourse.

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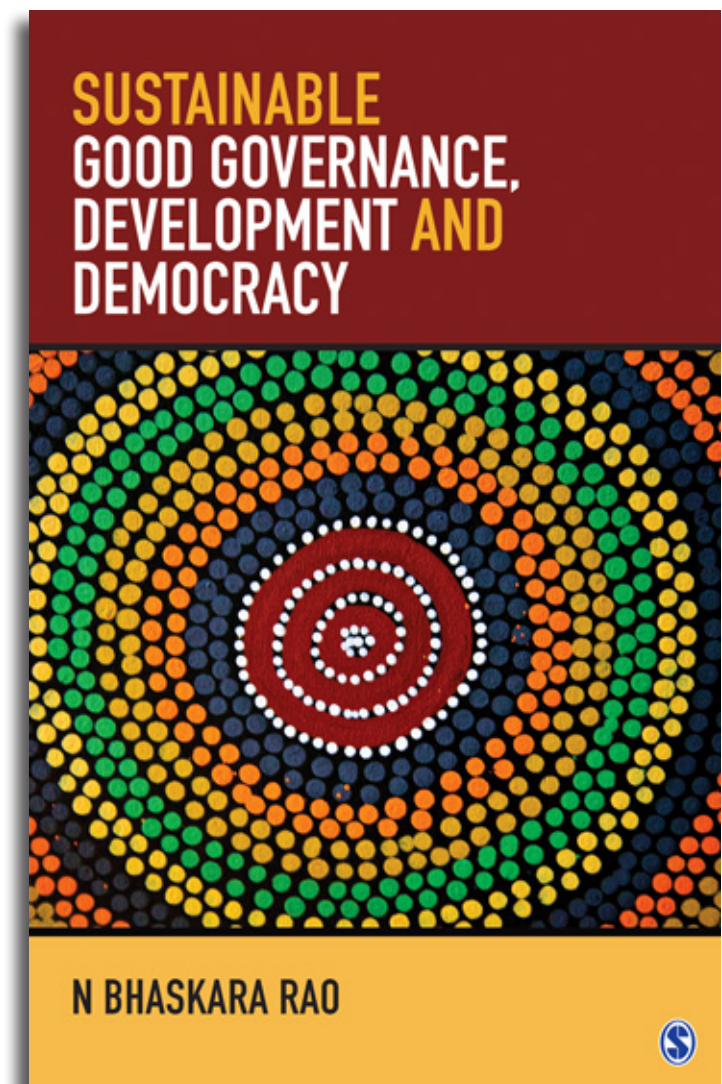
Despite seven decades of planned development efforts, there remains disparity in distribution of wealth in India. More than half of the national wealth is owned by merely 1 per cent of the population. In 2050, the Indian Republic completes 100 years. A hundred years should be good enough for a country to accomplish its democratic goals as envisaged by its constitution makers. Will India be able to fulfil its objectives in the next 30 years? Sustainable Good Governance, Development and Democracy addresses this question and argues that this is the time for a forthright perspective of what went wrong and how this should be corrected to make headway in the model of governance, development and democracy in India. The book argues that the three pillars of the State – the legislature, judiciary and executive – alone cannot accomplish these goals. It advocates six pillars, including the news media, civil society and political parties, to work in tandem with each other through a ‘checks and balances’ framework to achieve Sustainable good governance.

In his foreword, Dr Subhash C. Kashyap, constitutional expert and a former Secretary-General of Parliament wrote – “Dr Bhaskara Rao’s excellent work covers a wide spectrum, raises many pertinent

questions and suggests viable mechanisms for resolving conflicts and ways out from difficulties. I hope this dispassionate voice of sanity would be heard and the book would be widely read. It should serve as a clarion call to all of us to wake up, introspect and act.”

The author suggests that Prime Minister Modi’s five slogans could as well be the *mantras* for the country, if only they are taken seriously by political parties and citizen. These are: Swaraj to Suraj, power- not by wooing voters, politics should never override policy, less government, more governance, and *sab ka sath, Sabka Vikas*. The book suggests a national campaign on these.

This SAGE book was released at India International Centre, New Delhi, by Shri Suresh Prabhu, Union Minister, and by Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister, Chandrababu Naidu, in Amaravati, AP, on January 5, 2019. This is my second book by SAGE on *Good Governance* (2013). I have been pursuing this theme since my first book in 1967, “*Politics of Leadership in an Indian State*”. That was in response to a 1964 book by then New York Times Correspondent in New Delhi, Selig S. Harrison “Most dangerous Decades of India”. My forthcoming book in 2019, *Rejuvenating the Republic* is a follow up to this book.



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Ulyseas has served time in advertising as copywriter and creative director selling people things they didn't need, a ghost writer for some years, columnist of a newspaper, a freelance journalist and photographer. In 2009 he created *Live Encounters Magazine*, in Bali, Indonesia. It is a not for profit (adfree) free online magazine featuring leading academics, writers, poets, activists of all hues etc. from around the world. March 2016 saw the launch of its sister publication *Live Encounters Poetry*, which was relaunched as *Live Encounters Poetry & Writing* in March 2017. He has edited, designed and produced all of Live Encounters' 148 publications till date (March 2019). Mark's philosophy is that knowledge must be free and shared freely to empower all towards enlightenment. He is the author of three books: *RAINY – My friend & Philosopher*, *Seductive Avatars of Maya* – *Anthology of Dystopian Lives* and *In Gethsemane: Transcripts of a Journey*. www.amazon.com/markulyseas



HEARTBEAT OF BALI

TEXT & PHOTOGRAPHS BY
MARK ULYSEAS

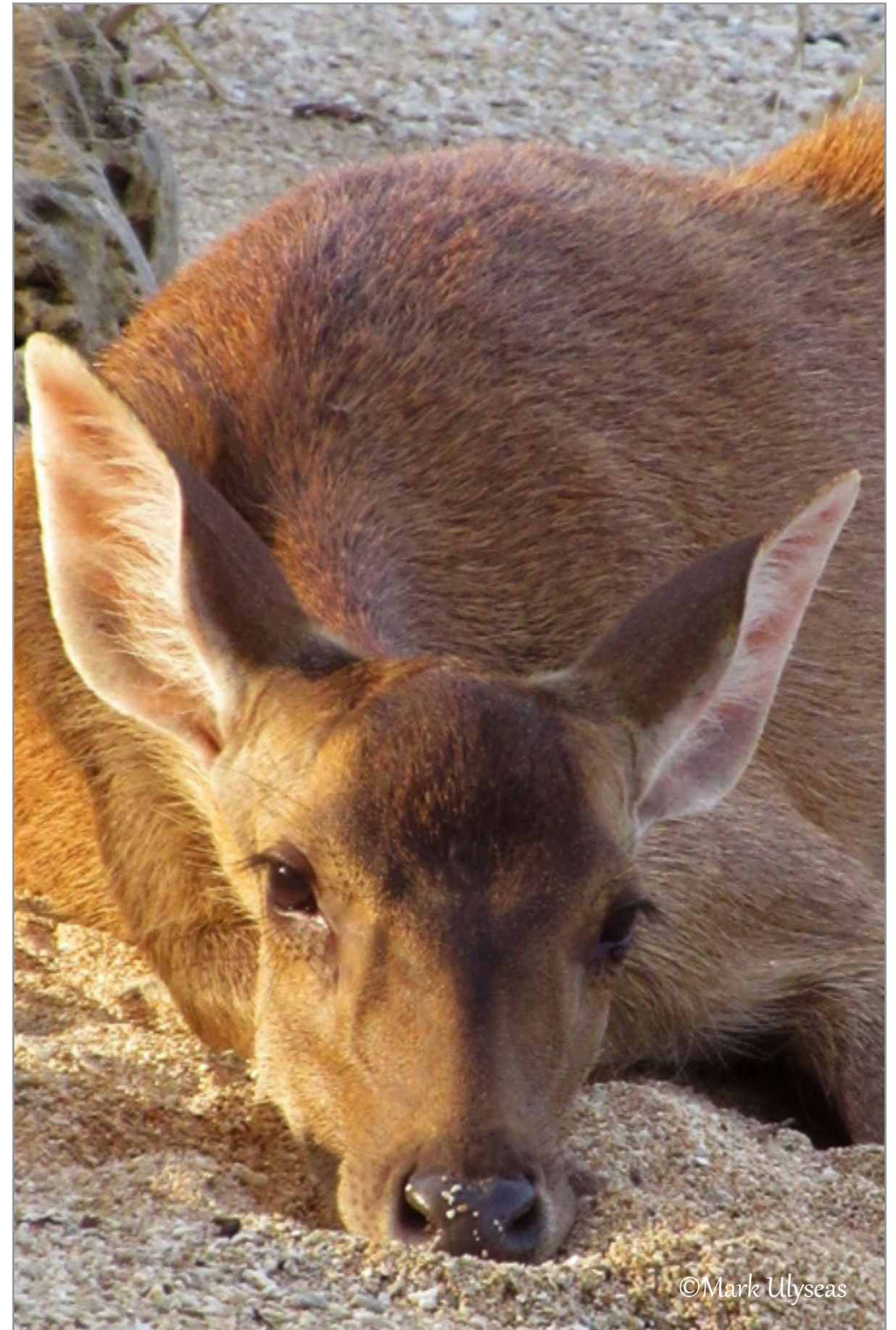
In the north-westerly point of Bali is situated the protected *Taman Nasional Bali Barat* (Bali National Park), which is home to over a hundred species of birds (including the stunningly beautiful Bali Starling), numerous animals, insects and more, is the Kotal Beach on the Prapat Agung Peninsula. Here lies the NusaBay Menjangan* a five km white virginic beach front with jade blue waters, a coral reef home to exotic tropical marine life like the fabulous blue parrot fish.

Wild animals saunter between the forest bungalows disregarding the presence of people. The main visitors are Samba deer who arrive to eat the fresh grass, moss from the rocks on the sea shore at low tide, and to laze around on the beach in the sun while watching people sunbath.

Humans and wildlife mingle in a natural way. No one imposes on the other and each one's space is respected.

NusaBay Menjangan is a cluster of forest bungalows created with natural material to accommodate bird watchers and nature lovers who come to hear the comforting heartbeat of Bali. To visit this place one has to take a twenty minute boat ride.

*NusaBay Menjangan is managed by [WHM](http://www.whm.com).



©Mark Ulyseas

On the beach at sunset soaking in the warmth.



©Mark Ulyseas

Early morning walk to munch on moss on the rocky shoreland at low tide.



Lounging on the beach near the jetty to watch tourists.



©Mark Ulyseas

Sprucing up for the day.



©Mark Ulyseas

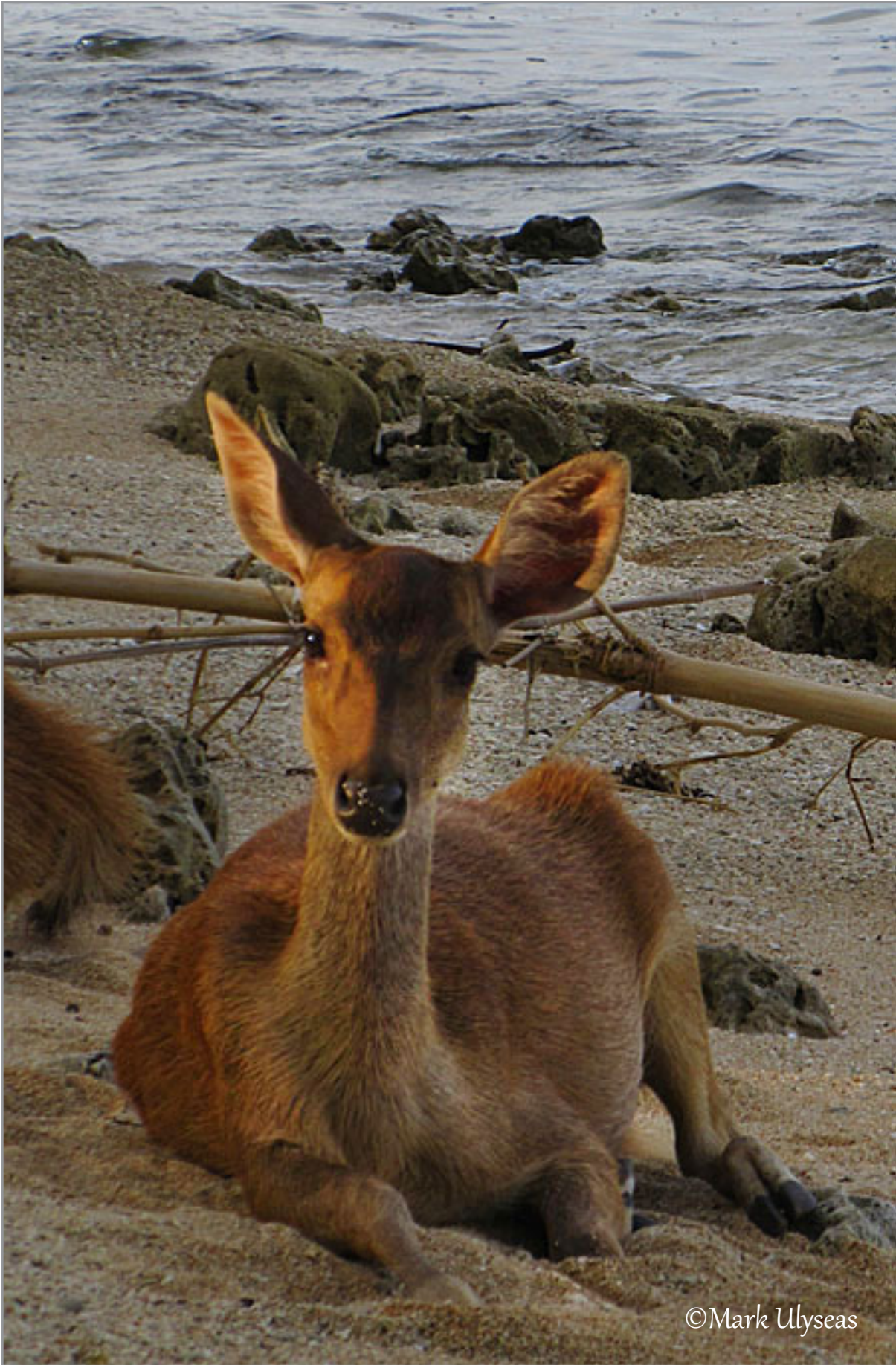
A lazy day at the beach.



©Mark Ulyseas

View from my bedroom window facing the forest.

When will I see you again?



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www.amazon.com/author/jillgocher

Instagram @jillgocher, @jillgocherphotography, @rajasthanreally



MY PHONE, MY LIFE!

TEXT & PHOTOGRAPHS BY
JILL GOCHER

People like to say 'oh it's only a phone shot' but do they not realise the technology in a smart phone camera is more sophisticated than most any camera.

They produce wonderful images, and they are non-threatening so that frequently, you can get a more intimate portrait with the phone than with a big intimidating camera that will often cause people to freeze to a stiff likeness of their real self.

Walking around the wonderful streets of Jaisalmer, is always a pleasure and there is always something that catches the eye.

As a photographer, I can only say 'my phone, my life'!



1/ This lovely man is cooking a killer chicken curry with a desi (village) chicken. It takes a while to tenderise but its worth the wait. While the kitchen is simple, lacking modern amenities, the flavour he pulls from his culinary creation is out of this world.

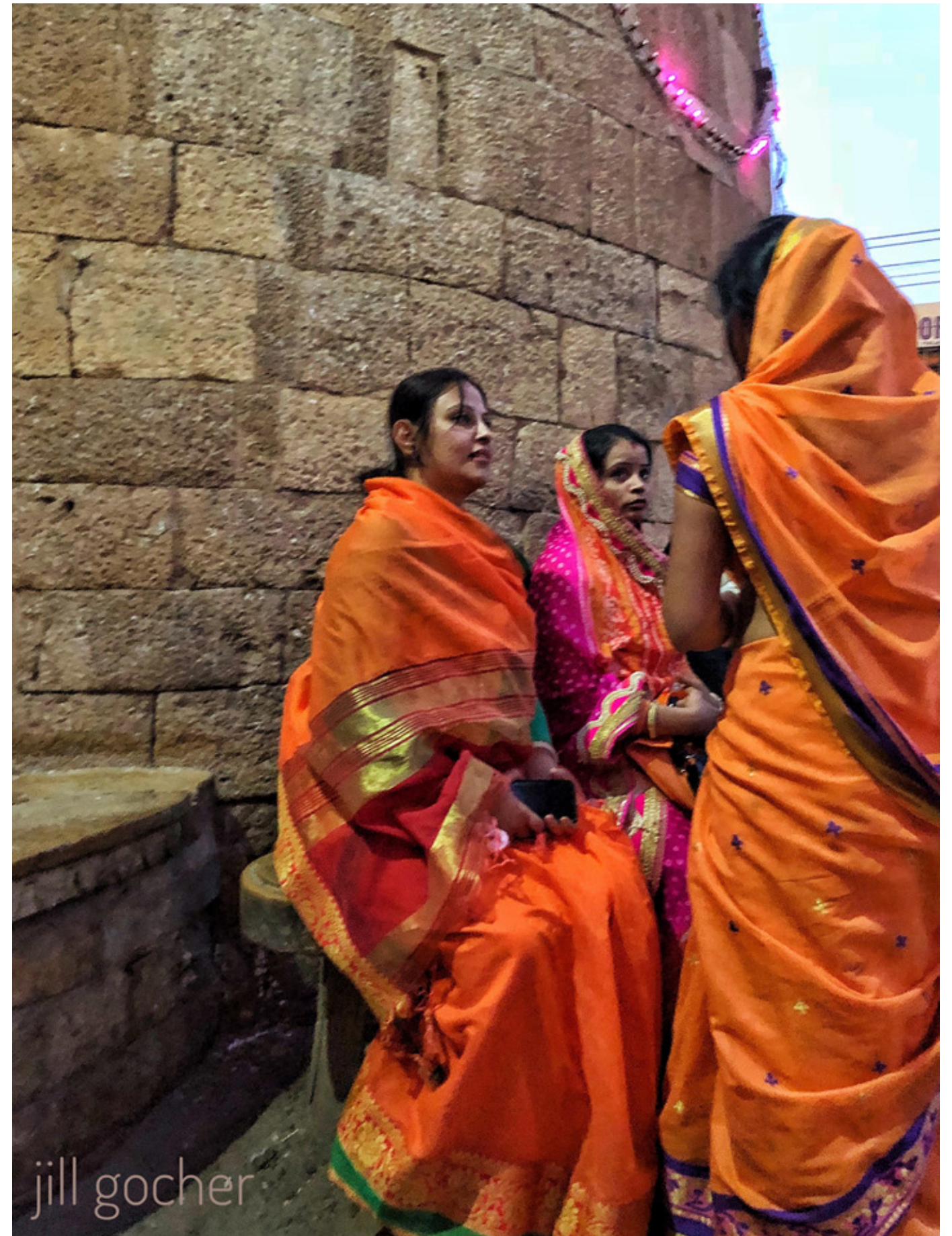


2/ Just standing about having a chat in one of Jaisalmer's wonderful authentic streets.



3/ Lit by an early winter sun, this crumbling old house takes on an aura of romanticism making me itch to take it and restore to its former glory!

4/ As i passed these women chatting by the golden sandstone of the Jaisalmer Fort
I caught them in action before they knew what was happening.



5/ This beautiful dignified village elder from the desert was mad as a hornet.
Even after I gave him a little money, he refused to relent.
What could I do but apologise and move on.



6/ Seen at one of the little boutiques that line the narrow lanes in Jaisalmer Fort.
There is a wonderful photo op at every turn if you know how to look.



7/ The late afternoon sun illuminates the village wall with gold and the cow just adds to the scene.



Mikyoung Cha is a graduate in Oriental Painting from Hyosung Women's University, Daegu, South Korea. She has participated in a number of group art exhibitions in South Korea and Japan. In 2016 she took up photography – the camera becoming her paint brush. This globe trotting photographer is a regular contributor to *Live Encounters Magazine*.



DAILY LIFE IN SRI LANKA

TEXT & PHOTOGRAPHS BY
MIKYOUNG CHA

These photographs are second in a series on Sri Lanka, the first being 'Serendipity' in the February issue of LE Mag.

People everywhere are the same in more ways than one. Their daily lives merging into a coat of many colours, aromas, sounds and tastes. Here in Sri Lanka it has that added flavour of their famed tea with fascinating touches of living the simple and yet productive life.



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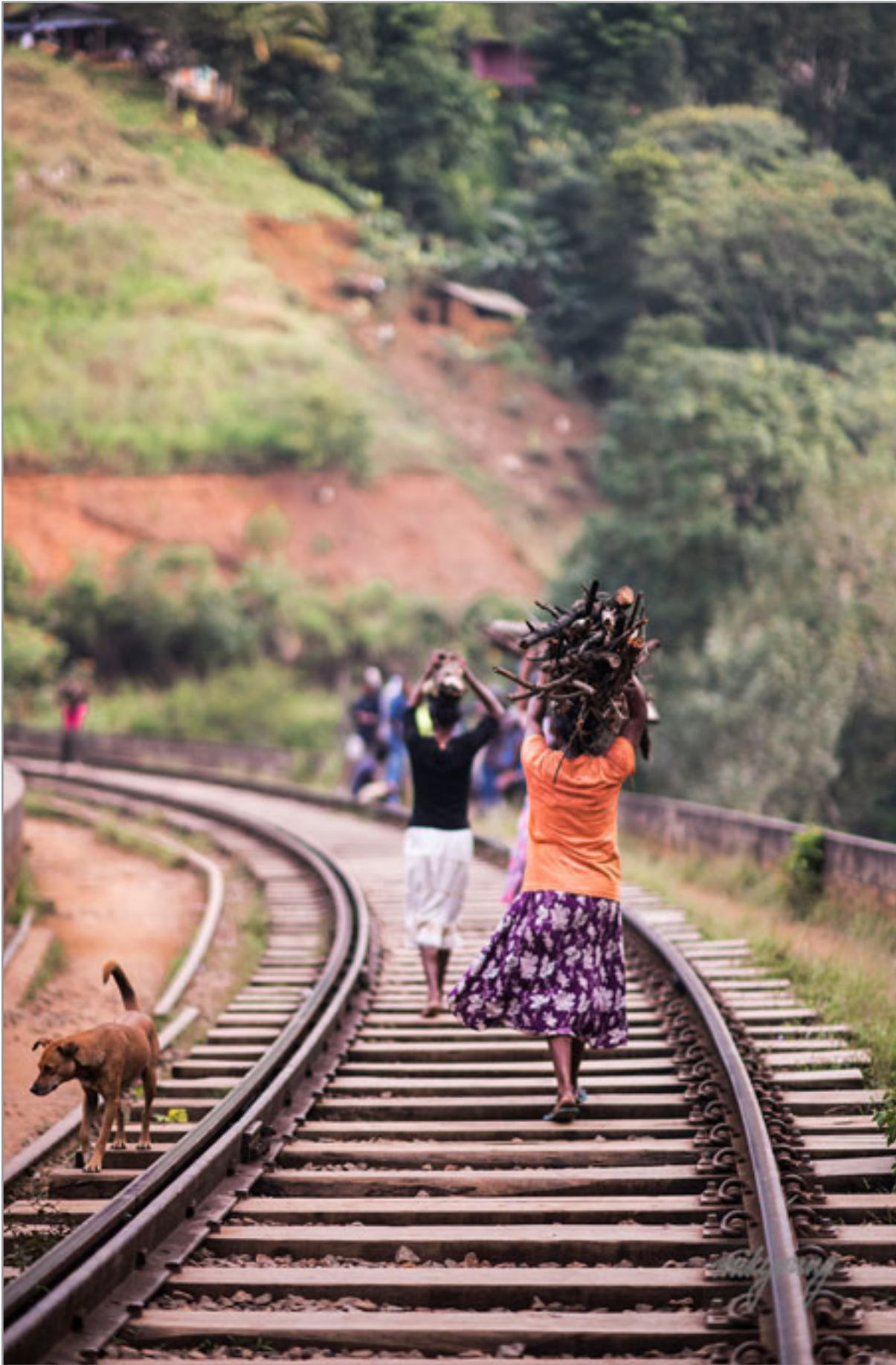
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PATLICANLI EKSI ASI BULGUR BALLS IN AUBERGINE & TOMATO SAUCE

This is a speciality from Antakya and I make it often for special occasions, using good quality can of tomatoes. Dried mint adds a fresh flavour and the tangy pomegranate molasses complete the finishing touch. The meaty-like aubergines/eggplants melt in the mouth in this dish and complement the bulgur balls well. Omit the minced/ground beef for a vegetarian version.

Afiyet Olsun,

Ozlem

Signed copies of
Ozlem's Turkish Table; Recipes from My Homeland
by Ozlem Warren is available at
www.gbpublishing.co.uk/product-page/ozlem-s-turkish-table-hardback

Serves: 4 to 6

Ingredients:

- 2 medium aubergines/eggplants
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 2 cans of 400g/14oz good quality plum tomatoes
- 10ml/2 teaspoons red pepper paste, biber salcasi
- 15ml/1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 15ml/1 tablespoon pomegranate molasses
- 45ml/3 tablespoons olive oil
- 900ml/1½ pints water
- 10ml/2 teaspoons dried mint
- 5ml/1 teaspoon Turkish red pepper flakes or chili flakes
- Salt and ground black pepper to taste
- For the bulgur dough:
- 110g/4oz fine bulgur, koftelik bulgur (if you can only get coarse bulgur, you can pulse it a few times in a food processor to make it fine)
- 90ml/3fl oz warm water to wet the bulgur
- 120ml/4fl oz warm water to knead the bulgur
- 40g/1½oz coarse semolina
- 30ml/2 tablespoons warm water for semolina
- 60g/2oz extra lean (double grind) minced/ground beef
- 15ml/1 tablespoon red pepper paste, biber salcasi
- 5ml/1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 5ml/1 teaspoon Turkish red pepper flakes or chili flakes
- Salt to taste



Bulgur balls with aubergine/eggplant, tomato, dried mint sauce – Patlicanlı Eksi Aşı



Instructions

1. First make the bulgur balls. Place the fine bulgur in a large mixing bowl. Stir in the red pepper paste, cumin, salt and red pepper flakes and mix them all well. Then pour the 90ml/3fl oz warm water all over it. Using your hands, give the mixture a good mix and let it absorb the water for 10 minutes. In the meantime, place the semolina in a separate bowl and stir in the 30ml/2 tablespoons warm water. Knead and turn the semolina mixture into a soft dough. Semolina is important here as it helps to bind the bulgur dough.

2. Have the 120ml/4fl oz warm water bowl next to you and start kneading the bulgur mixture for about 5 minutes. Wet your hands continuously while kneading. Stir in the semolina dough and knead together for another 5 minutes. Add the meat and knead for 10 minutes, until you get a smooth dough.

3. Have a bowl of cold water aside to shape the small round bulgur balls. Wet your hands and take a large cherry size bulgur dough into your palm and shape it like a small ball. Place the bulgur balls side-by-side on a tray and continue until you finish all the bulgur dough.

4. Quarter the aubergines then slice each piece diagonally in 3cm/about 1in chunks. Lay them on a tray and season with salt. Leave for about 15 minutes. Drain the excess moisture by squeezing them with a paper towel.

5. Place the plum tomatoes into a food processor and process until you achieve a coarse purée.

6. In a deep, heavy pan, pour in the olive oil and stir in the aubergines/eggplants. Sauté for 3-4 minutes, until they have a nice golden colour. Place the sautéed aubergines/eggplants on a wide plate over a paper towel to get rid of the excess oil. Stir in the garlic and the onions and sauté for another 2-3 minutes.

7. Pour in the puréed tomato, tomato paste, red pepper paste and the water to the pan. Stir in the aubergines/eggplants, season with salt and freshly ground pepper. Combine well gently. Cover and cook on a medium heat for 15 minutes.

8. Then carefully drop the bulgur balls into the pan and combine well. Cover and cook on a low heat for another 25 minutes.

9. Stir in the pomegranate molasses, dried mint and red pepper flakes, combine well. Turn the heat off and serve warm with pide bread or crusty bread aside.



Shakti, photograph by Mark Ulyseas.

Interview was first published in Live Encounters Magazine, March 2012.

SHAKTI, A PATHFINDER

speaks to Mark Ulyseas in Arambol, Goa, India in February 2012.

India is not a country, it is a Universe, ask any traveler who arrives from a far off land searching for the Spirit in the spiritual, Self in the crowds and Faith in belief. Many return to embark on the daunting journey back to Self by beginning a dialogue with the spirits. There are some that instantly connect with the unseen, to suck on the Power that sustains the sacred heart beat of this ancient land. They keep returning year after year to recharge the Power within them; often sharing this Power with those rudderless seekers who are in a fragmented state of mind.

Shakti is from Denmark. She came to India for the first time nearly five years ago. And since then, has made many trips to learn Yoga, Vinyasa and Hatha, so that she can honour the Shakti within her and glorify the Bhakti culture.

"Teaching yoga is a small part of my life. What is of primary importance is how I live with myself and the way I am able to "Be" with other people and to be present with them; how to perceive people and the meeting with these people...to see the Being within the person."

How do you perceive India?

India has this ancient "meditation umbrella" over it. It is also in the soil. Most Indians I have met don't know about this but yet they seem to plug into it. The land acts as an amplifier and this makes it easy to plug into the energy.

I have always felt that my spirit wants to be reincarnated in India. Maybe I was from this land and have returned because India beckons me to her embrace.

So I am here.

What is this energy?

I have heard many people say that the moment they got off the plane they could feel the meditation umbrella, the energy encompassing the land. The Nordic countries do have this collective energy which I speak about but it is scattered and it does not blanket the land. We need more Spiritual “poles” to connect, to form a web. Also it seems that everyone who meditates in India adds a drop of energy in the vast reservoir of energy that is India and this keeps increasing. Probably that is why so many of us are drawn to this country to meditate and learn yoga. In my home country, Denmark, it now accepted that one is not a weirdo if one does meditation and yoga. In fact there are commercials on television!

So how does one tap into this energy?

There are two aspects to this.

The first is understanding love. Love is different from the male and female. So I can say something only from my own experience. It’s difficult, painful and can be destructive through thoughts and mindsets. It can be painful when love is “unexpressed”. When you are a child and the surroundings do not want to accept the love then it becomes “unexpressed” love. And this affects one’s comprehension of love as one grows older and gets into serious relationships. Women have a 360 degree view of love. Full, round, all embracing. But the men have a more vertical love so woman and man are often at odds with each other because of the perception of what love is, should be or can be. That is why there are people who feel displaced, unwanted, unloved. And this creates fear, anxiety and disconnects the person from the love within them. A woman and man have to work together to bridge this disparity in perception; the man working on creating a more rounded perception of love and the woman reaching out to the vertical love being projected by the man. It is through an intrinsic understanding of love that one begins to appreciate the positive energy that it radiates and in this way opening one’s heart out to the Universe.

The second aspect is the Ego. Years ago I came across the works of A.H.Almaas and Faisal Muqaddam and through their teachings I learned how to consciously cultivate the skills needed to differentiate between my false personality, ego identity and essential nature, the true self. For me it was a gradual (still ongoing) process of removing the many layers of the self to discover the kingdom that resides within me...the very essence of my existence.

Here are two links for the readers: [A. H. Almaas](#) and [Faisal Muqqadam](#)
And an excerpt from Almaas’s teachings.

“In the Diamond Approach, reality is seen as consisting of three elements: God/Being/Spirit, Soul/Self and World/Cosmos.

World is understood as the outer manifestation of reality, the multitude of physical forms that all people are familiar with.

Being is understood as the inner source and true nature of reality, which is the focus of the great spiritual traditions of both East and West, and is known as Dharmakaya, Shunyata, Brahman or Tao. Being is understood as consisting of five co-emergent “boundless dimensions”: Divine Love, Universal Mind, Pure Being, The Logos, and The Absolute.

Soul is understood to be the individual consciousness that connects the world with Being, an idea found in ancient Chinese philosophy. It is believed in the Diamond Approach that the soul can be experienced as a living presence that contains the thoughts, feelings and sensations usually called our “self”.

How do you help people?

I help people to connect with the knowing of the knowing of who they are inside and to live from there, and be in the moment of who they are, what they want to do, who they’d like to be and to be true to the self thereby shining from within with their own qualities, expanding this and sharing it with others.

Many people come to me who have emotional baggage and a disconnection with the Self. I assist them to transform this emotional energy and to get to know who they are, to connect with the essence of their Being, to heal old wounds related to lost loves, family, childhood etc.

For me it is beautiful experience to witness people transform into radiant beings.

This is what I live for and I am happy and content...content inside, outside and all round (smiles).

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Photograph by Mark Ulyseas, Bali, Indonesia.