

# ANANDDA

*A Confluence of Pathways to Bliss!*

THE  
ANANDDA DIALOGUE  
**DECODING THE HUMAN BLUEPRINT**

Chitra Singh

WITH

Sidheshwar Bhalla



**ONE EARTH**  
**ONE BODY. ONE CONSCIOUSNESS**

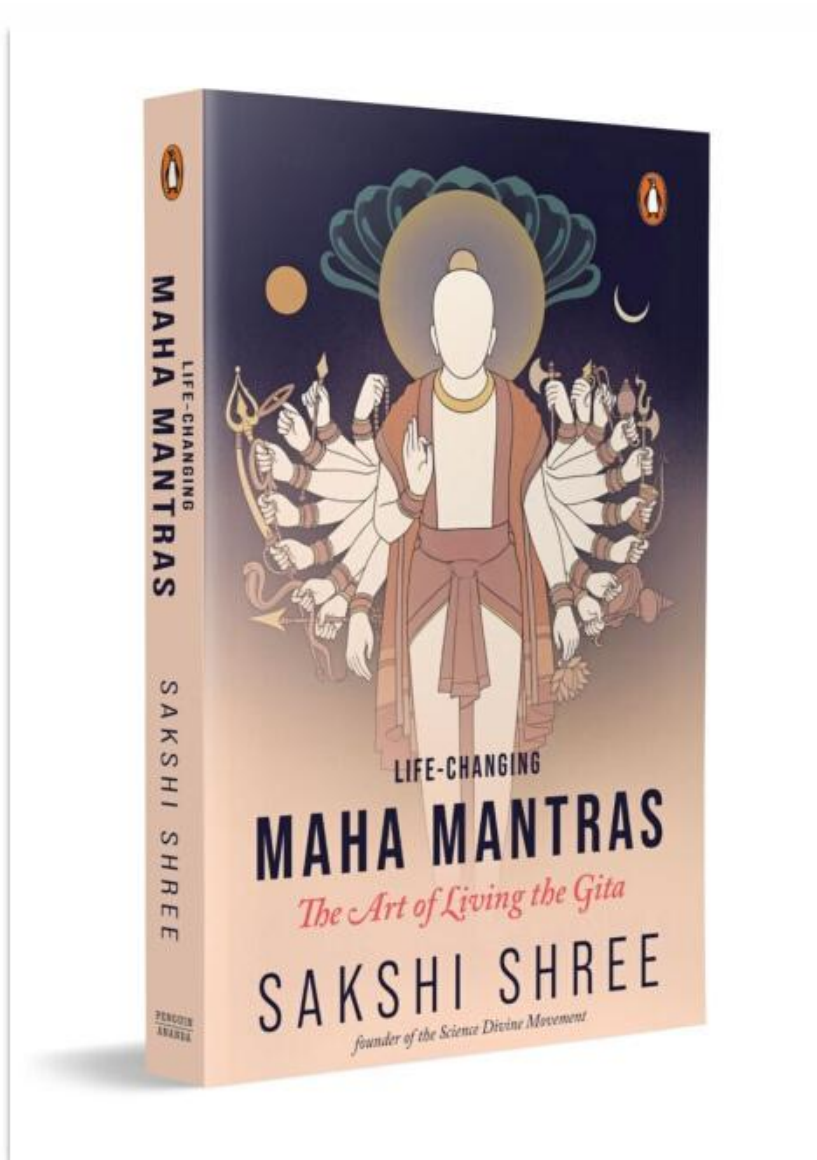
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#### ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

*Dedicated to my parents, Purnima and Janardan Thakur, and my brother, Sankarshan Thakur, Anandda is a global digital publication – a confluence of pathways to bliss that brings together wisdom, wellness, and wonder to inspire conscious living worldwide.*

Chitra Singh  
Founding Editor & Publisher

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*Here with a purpose*

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.....  
*Each one is a lamp on the path, gathered to serve the reader's awakening.*

# Table Of Contents



## 05 Letter From the Editor

Chitra Singh reflects on this issue, gently bringing together voices from across the world around a shared understanding - the interconnectedness of humanity, nature, well-being, and consciousness.

## 06 The People Behind the Vision

Meet the people behind Anandda — a collective brought together by creativity, consciousness, experience, and a shared commitment to meaningful storytelling and human connection.

## 07 From the Desk of the Honorary Consultant Editor

Sidheshwar Bhalla shares a wider leadership perspective on the growing global movement towards interconnectedness, conscious living, and the deeper human conversations shaping our times.

## 08 Pathways of Purpose: Anandda's Journey

A continuing chapter in Anandda's evolving journey, embracing a growing global readership and creating a meaningful new home through [www.ananddaglobal.com](http://www.ananddaglobal.com) where readers across the world can explore and revisit every issue together.

## 09 Anandda's Himalayan Message Reaches Uttarakhand Leadership

Tehri MLA Kishore Upadhyay presents his crusade to save the Himalayas and the Ganges through Anandda's environmental vision and FARMS campaign to Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami while honouring the legacy of Sunderlal Bahuguna.

## 10 The Anandda Dialogue: Decoding the Human Blueprint

In this illuminating Anandda Dialogue, Chitra Singh and Sidheshwar Bhalla uncover the hidden blueprint of human existence, exploring the elemental forces that shape well-being, consciousness, and the journey of life itself.

## 13 The Planet's ICU

Dr. Kishori Mahat reflects on the growing connection between climate change, emotional exhaustion, public health, and the deeper human disconnection shaping modern life.

## 15 Anandda Salutes Padma Shri Awardee K. D. Amma

From nurturing a single sapling to creating a thriving forest sanctuary, Kollakkayil Devaki Amma's lifelong devotion to the Earth stands today as a powerful symbol of ecological care and environmental consciousness.

## 16 The Walnut Village

Chitra Singh examines how Kishore Upadhyay's Walnut Village initiative is reimagining the future of Uttarakhand's hills by aligning nature, entrepreneurship, and community-led development.

## 19 Nature Is Still Our Greatest Teacher

Senior retired Indian Forest Service officer S. R. Mehta reflects on the lessons forests teach about balance, responsibility, citizenship, and humanity's enduring relationship with the natural world.

## 22 BeLucidNow: The Green Juice That Arrived

In his latest BeLucidNow reflection, Manu Puri turns a quiet breakfast moment in Mumbai into a profound meditation on trust, presence, inner balance, and the living connection between Earth, Body, and Consciousness.

## 25 The Quiet Strength of Giving

S. Aditya Kumar reflects on how generosity, trust, and human connection have always formed the invisible foundation of a life truly well lived.

## 28 The Rise of Antioxidant-Rich Drinks

Acclaimed gastronomy specialist and flavour developer Ali Özseven explores how antioxidant-rich beverages are transforming modern wellness through science, flavour innovation, sustainability, and a more conscious relationship with what we consume.



## Our Pathway Partners

People walking with Anandda through advertisements.

### AI Services/AI Personal Assistant

CognoLabs.....42

### Astrology/Numerology

Master Fon Lim.....24

### Bespoke Wall Art

Sudarshana.....38

### Books

The Maha Mantras.....2

### Digital Marketing

AlgoHype.....27

### Online Art Classes

Learn Madhubani Art.....54

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New Delhi, India.

# Table Of Contents



## 31 Nuggets

Inner Reflections on different facets of life!

## 32 Can Our Breath Give Us More Than Just Life?

Award-winning wellness advocate and yoga coach Dr. Bhawna Gautam explores how conscious breathing can restore balance, calm the mind, and reconnect us with our deeper self.

## 35 Managing Pressure at Work

MindKaizen founder Peter Weiss reflects on the quiet disciplines that help leaders meet pressure with greater awareness, steadiness, and clarity.

## 39 Sleep, Silence and the Restless Modern Mind

India's Sleep Guru Dr. Sanjay Manchanda explores how restorative sleep, inner quietness, and emotional balance remain among the most essential foundations of human wellbeing in an increasingly restless world.

## 43 The Lifeline That Flows Through Humanity

Marking World Blood Donor Day 2026, this reflection honours the quiet humanity behind every blood donation and the invisible lifeline that continues to save countless lives across the world.

## 44 Chair Tai-Chi

Founder of Perfectly Imperfect Yoga, Heidi Nechtman, reveals how Chair Tai Chi transforms a simple chair into a pathway towards greater balance, vitality, mindfulness, and holistic well-being.

## 47 The Boardroom in Your Belly: How Corporate Stress Is Rewriting Gut Health

Renowned Surgical Gastroenterologist Dr. Neeraj Dhamija explores the growing impact of workplace stress on digestive health, revealing the powerful scientific connection between the brain, the gut, and modern living.

## 50 The Quiet Catch: The Ancient Family of the Ragas

Chandna Dixit reflects upon the timeless world of Hindustani ragas, where music, seasons, emotions, poetry, and consciousness once flowed together as one living family of sound.

## 52 Nothing New!

Curated by Neeraj Singh, this edition of Nothing New brings together three timeless reflections that reveal how compassion, wisdom, and inner character quietly shape the way we experience life and the world around us.

## 55 Art Time By Chandna Dixit: Where Healing Finds Colour

In this issue, Chandna Dixit introduces Dr. Rohit Durga, whose journey through medicine, nature, and art reflects how creativity quietly deepens through a life lived with compassion, observation, and care.

## 58 Join the Anandda Family

An invitation to join the Anandda family as a reader or as an advertiser, with a sneak peek into our reach and philosophy.

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# LETTER FROM THE *Editor*

“When voices from across the world begin to flow towards the same deeper truth, a magazine slowly transforms into a living space of consciousness, reflection, and shared humanity.”



Dear Reader,  
Greetings!

As Anandda continues its journey across continents and conversations, this June issue carries a deeply meaningful energy.

While curating these pages, I sensed a quiet thread flowing through every article and every voice arriving from different parts of the world.

Writers, healers, artists, medical experts, environmental voices, and seekers all seemed to touch the same deeper truth: life is profoundly interconnected. The theme of this issue - *One Earth. One Body. One Consciousness*, unfolded gently as a living experience.

Within these pages, forests speak about human values, breath opens pathways towards calm, sound carries memory and healing, movement becomes meditation, and acts of generosity become expressions of humanity itself.

What moved me deeply was the sincerity with which contributors from across the globe aligned themselves with Anandda's spirit.

From reflections on rivers and nature to explorations of consciousness and well-being, there is a beautiful sense that people everywhere are seeking greater harmony within themselves and with the world around them.

I feel immense gratitude towards every author who entrusted Anandda with their voice and experience.

Together, these writings create a rich field of reflection that gently invites readers into deeper awareness.

I must also mention the growing response to *The Anandda Dialogue*, which is steadily becoming one of the magazine's most loved spaces. The thoughtful feedback we continue to receive shows how deeply readers are connecting with these conversations that bring together wisdom, reflection, science, consciousness, and lived human experience in such a meaningful way.

This month also carries the energy of many globally significant days: World Environment Day, Global Wellness Day, International Yoga Day, World Music Day, International Men's Health Week, and World Blood Donor Day.

Running through this issue is one shared understanding: the well-being of humanity and the well-being of the planet move together.

The health of our rivers influences the health of our bodies. The atmosphere around us influences the atmosphere within us. The harmony we nurture within ourselves shapes the harmony we bring into the world.

I also wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to the entire Anandda team whose care, dedication, and sincerity quietly breathe through every page.

My gratitude extends equally to our growing global readership. It is deeply fulfilling to witness Anandda resonating with thoughtful readers, professionals, educators, artists, wellness communities, and seekers across the world.

Many times, I feel Anandda is gradually becoming what it was always meant to become: a meeting ground for meaningful voices, conscious conversations, and pathways that help people reconnect with themselves and with life.

Thank you for walking this path with us.

May this issue offer moments of reflection, balance, clarity, and quiet joy.

With warmth, gratitude, and goodwill,

*Chitra Singh*



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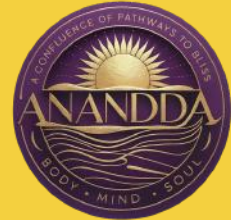
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Behind every idea is a team that makes it happen. From planning to execution, our people bring passion, creativity, and commitment into everything we do. Proud to introduce the faces behind the work!



Curator of  
Inspired Expression  
**Sheena Mendiratta**



Head – Global  
Collaborations & Impact  
**Shalini Gaur**



Visual & Art  
Alchemist  
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Advisor – Pathways  
& Presence  
**Pratishtha Bhardwaj**

## THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE VISION





# FROM THE DESK OF THE

*Honorary Consultant Editor*

## The Emerging Consciousness of Our Times

Dear Reader,

Greetings!

*As I reflect upon this issue of Anandda, there is a growing sense that conversations across the world are steadily moving towards a deeper understanding of interconnectedness.*

*Across leadership forums, professional environments, sustainability discussions, and health systems, themes once viewed separately are increasingly being understood as part of a larger human ecosystem. Environmental well-being, emotional resilience, ethical leadership, and collective consciousness now flow into the same field of awareness.*

*In many ways, Anandda's June theme reflects this wider global movement. Throughout this issue, subjects such as environmental stewardship, sleep, breath awareness, movement, sound, compassion, and blood donation reveal their relationship to the broader quality of human life and societal well-being.*

*Increasingly, thoughtful leadership communities are recognising that resilience, emotional intelligence, sustainability, and inner steadiness contribute meaningfully to long-term human progress.*

*One encouraging aspect of Anandda's evolution has been the widening range of contributors engaging with the platform. Medical experts, educators, wellness practitioners, governance professionals, environmental thinkers, artists, and seekers from different parts of the world are helping shape a meaningful space for reflective dialogue and contemporary human concerns.*

*I also remain grateful for the engagement readers continue to extend towards The Anandda Dialogue. These conversations are gradually evolving into a thoughtful space where wisdom, lived experience, scientific understanding, and contemporary realities meet with sincerity and openness.*

*As I continue to observe Anandda's journey, I see a publication steadily shaping a distinctive global identity through reflective conversations and a growing culture of awareness.*

*My appreciation to the entire Anandda team, whose care, discipline, and commitment sustain this evolving pathway with consistency and grace.*

*And to our readers across the world, thank you for engaging with Anandda so openly and thoughtfully.*

*May this issue encourage reflection, awareness, and a renewed sense of connection with the larger intelligence of life that quietly sustains humanity and the planet together.*

*With warmth and goodwill,*

*Sidheshwar Bhalla*






# Pathways of Purpose: ANANDDA'S Journey

We have been spreading  
our wings!

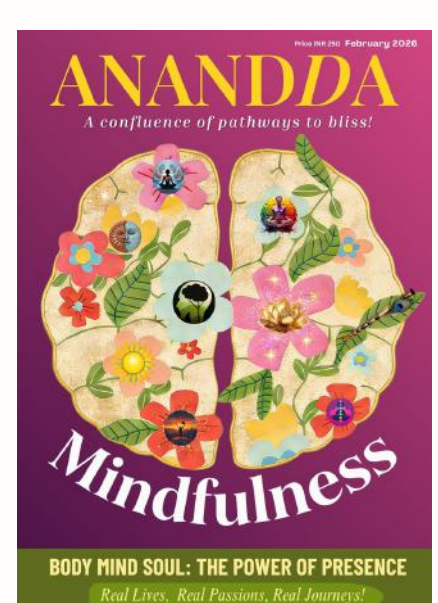
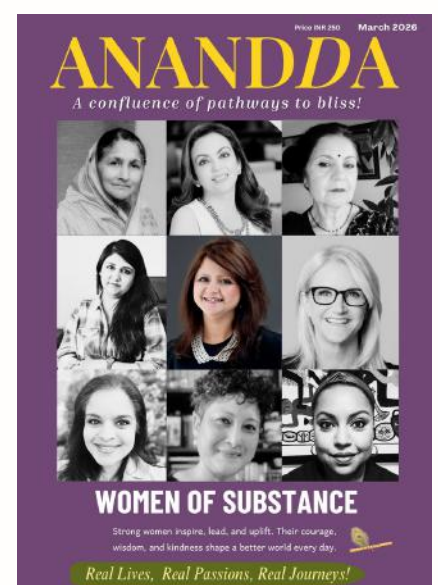
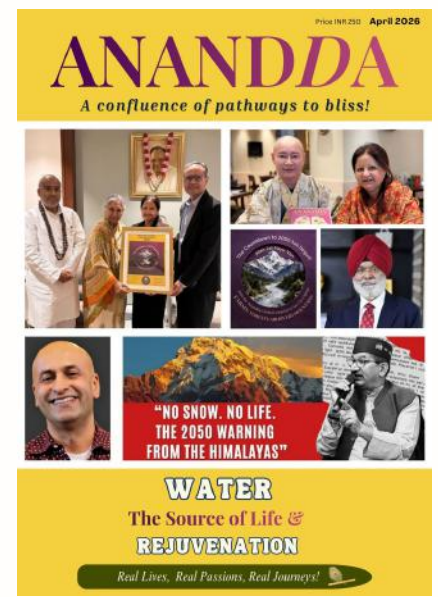
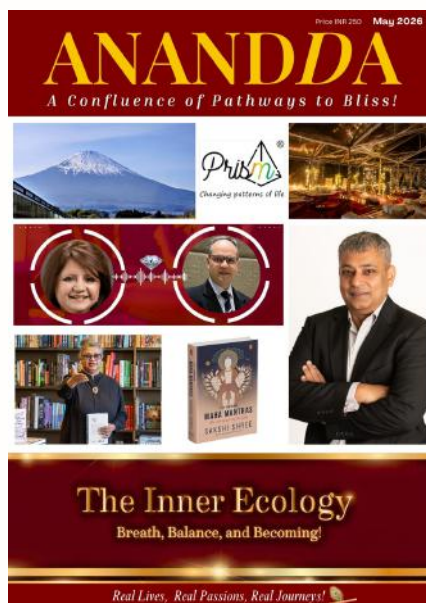
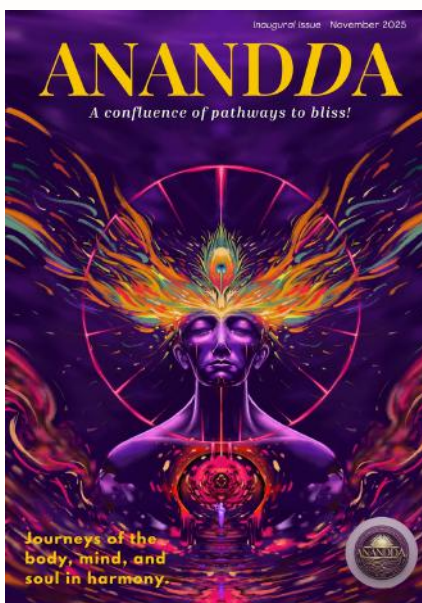
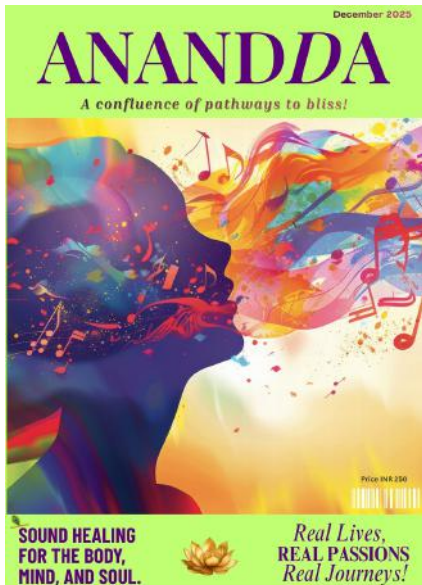
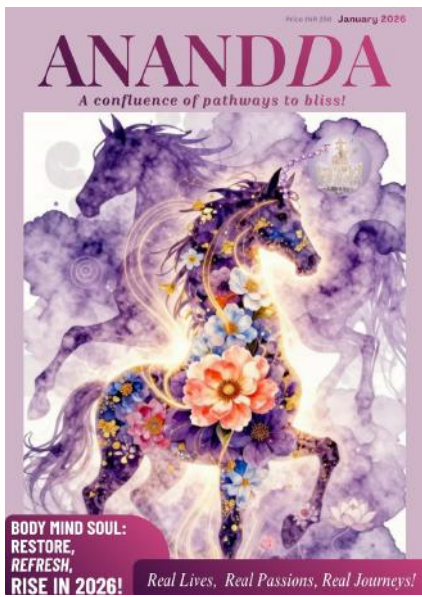
Exploring our readers and our editorial contributors.  
We found our readers particularly in:

- Afghanistan
- Australia
- Bangladesh
- Belgium
- Brazil
- Canada
- China
- Egypt
- Germany
- Hong Kong
- India
- Ireland
- Kazakhstan
- Mexico
- Myanmar
- Nepal
- Netherlands
- New Zealand
- Philippines
- Russia
- Rwanda
- Singapore
- South Africa
- Spain
- Switzerland
- Thailand
- Turkey
- United Arab Emirates
- United Kingdom
- United States of America
- Zimbabwe

We have created a robust space where you can find your anandda, your bliss! We have put all the issues of Anandda on our website so that whenever you wish to read what you may have missed, you can log on to:

 [www.ananddaglobal.com](http://www.ananddaglobal.com)

and enjoy the content!





# Anandda's Cover Story on the Himalayas Reaches Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhama

Tehri MLA *Kishore Upadhyay* presents Anandda's environmental message and FARMS campaign while commemorating the life and legacy of Sunderlal Bahuguna.



On May 21, 2026, the fifth anniversary of the death of legendary environmentalist and Chipko Movement leader **Sunderlal Bahuguna**, Anandda's April 2026 special issue on Himalayan conservation was presented in Dehradun to the Honourable Chief Minister of Uttarakhand, Shri Pushkar Singh Dhama, by Tehri MLA and environmental advocate Kishore Upadhyay.

Long associated with Sunderlal Bahuguna and a committed champion of the Himalayas, the Ganga, and the region's fragile ecosystems, Upadhyay chose this significant day to take Anandda's environmental message and ongoing FARMS campaign to the state's highest leadership.

The occasion reflected a shared commitment to safeguarding forests, air, rivers, mountains, and soil while honouring the enduring legacy of a man whose life became synonymous with ecological stewardship and Himalayan conservation.

Anandda expresses its sincere gratitude to Kishore Upadhyay for carrying this message forward and to the Honourable Chief Minister for generously devoting his valuable time and encouragement to a cause of lasting importance for future generations.

THE

# ANANDDA DIALOGUE

# DECODING THE HUMAN BLUEPRINT



WITH



Chitra Singh

Sidheshwar Bhalla

In this month's issue of Anandda, Chitra Singh (CS) and Sidheshwar Bhalla (Sid) engage in a thought-provoking dialogue on One Earth. One Body. One Consciousness - a theme that invites us to re-examine one of humanity's oldest and most profound questions: are we separate from nature, or are we expressions of the very forces that sustain it?

As the world confronts rising stress, lifestyle disorders, emotional fatigue, ecological imbalance, and an increasing disconnection from the natural environment, ancient wisdom offers a perspective that feels remarkably relevant.

Long before the emergence of modern medicine, psychology, and environmental science, Indian sages described a living relationship between the human being and the cosmos through the science of the Twenty-Five Tattvas and the Panchamahabhutas, the Five Great Elements.

Sid, a renowned Jyotish Acharya (Master of Vedic Astrology), respected risk and governance leader, author, and lifelong seeker,

has spent decades exploring the intersections of astrology, elemental science, human behaviour, consciousness, leadership, and holistic well-being. His journey reflects a rare synthesis of professional excellence and inner enquiry. Deeply anchored in values and guided by wisdom traditions, he brings an unusual ability to interpret ancient knowledge in ways that illuminate modern challenges, helping individuals discover greater clarity, balance, purpose, and alignment in their personal and professional lives.

Chitra Singh, Founding Editor of Anandda, approaches every conversation as both a journalist and a seeker. With four decades of experience in writing, storytelling, and publishing, coupled with a natural sensitivity to the deeper currents that shape human lives, she brings a unique perspective that invites reflection, discovery, and meaningful dialogue. Together, they explore how ancient wisdom can help modern individuals reconnect with themselves, with nature, and with the larger intelligence that unites all life.

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**CS: Sid, the theme of this issue is One Earth. One Body. One Consciousness. Many people see the human body, nature, and consciousness as separate subjects. Ancient Indian wisdom appears to have viewed them as part of a single reality. How did our sages understand this relationship?**

Most people identify only with the visible body. The sages saw something far more expansive.

They spoke of the intangible 20, which included consciousness, primordial nature, intelligence, individuality, mind, perception, action and the subtle sensory qualities.

What we call the body, constituted of five elements, is actually the final expression of a much deeper architecture.

The profound insight is that the same twenty-five principles operate in both the cosmos and the individual.

In other words, we are not merely living in the universe; the universe is expressing itself through us.

When these principles function harmoniously, there is health, clarity, and balance.

**Sid:** Ancient wisdom began with a simple observation: nothing exists in isolation. The human being is not separate from nature, nor is nature separate from consciousness.

The sages described existence through the Twenty-Five Tattvas - the fundamental principles or elements that together constitute both the universe and human life.

Of these, 20 are intangible and five tangible.



## COMPOSITION OF THE HUMAN BODY & THE UNIVERSE: THE 25 TATTVAS

A balance of these 25 elements is essential for maintaining health in the human body and order in the universe

1	Purusha	Pure Consciousness (Self)	
2	Prakriti	The Root Matter (unmanifested)	
3	Buddhi	Intellect / Intelligence	
4	Ahamkara	Ego / Self-awareness	
5-9	Pancha Tanmatras (Subtle Elements)	Smell (Gandha), Taste (Rasa), Form (Rupa), Touch (Sparsaha), Sound (Shabda)	
10-14	Pancha Jnanendriyas (Senses of Perception)	Nose (smell), Tongue (taste), Eye (sight), Skin (touch), Ear (hearing)	
15-19	Pancha Karmendriyas (Senses of Action)	Mouth (speaking), Hands (working), Feet (moving), Genital Organs (reproduction), Anus (excretion)	
20	Manas	Mind (central controlling organ)	
21-25	Pancha Mahabhutas (Gross Elements)	Ether, Air, Fire, Water, Earth	

©Sid

When harmony is disturbed, imbalance appears in the body, mind, emotions, and behaviour. This understanding forms the foundation of the theme One Earth. One Body. One Consciousness.

**CS: Could you please tell us about the five core tangible elements and their importance?**

**Sid:** Sure. The Earth, water, fire, air, and ether constitute the Panmahabhutas and are

“ Many diseases do not begin in the body. They begin in the silent accumulation of stress, emotion, and unresolved tension. ”

the tangible expressions of the entire gamut of tattvas. Everything we experience physically is ultimately an expression of these five elemental forces.

**Earth** represents structure, stability, endurance, and grounding. **Water** represents nourishment, adaptability, emotion, and flow. **Fire** governs transformation, metabolism, vitality, and illumination. **Air** governs movement, communication, circulation, and change. **Ether** or Space provides the field within which everything exists.

These elements are not merely philosophical concepts. They are present in every aspect of our lives.

Our bones, muscles, and tissues express Earth. Blood, lymph, and bodily fluids express water. Digestion and metabolism express fire. Breathing and movement express air. The spaces within cells, organs, and even consciousness itself express Ether.

The same elements that form mountains, rivers, forests, oceans, and the atmosphere form us. This is why environmental well-being and human well-being are inseparable. When we damage nature, we ultimately disturb the very elements that sustain our own existence.

**CS:** Modern medicine increasingly recognises the impact of stress on health. Ancient systems seem to have understood this long before scientific instruments existed. How do the Tattvas help explain psychosomatic illness?

**Sid:** Most people think disease begins in the body. Ancient wisdom often viewed it differently. It recognised that imbalance could begin much earlier in thought patterns, emotions, behaviour, energy, and consciousness.

Today, we know that stress influences digestion, sleep, immunity, blood pressure, hormonal balance, and mental health. We have all experienced it. Anxiety affects the stomach. Fear alters breathing. Anger changes circulation. Emotional tension often becomes physical tension.

Many experts acknowledge that a large proportion of illnesses have psychosomatic components.

The body constantly responds to what is happening in the mind.

Ancient systems, therefore, placed great emphasis on awareness. *meditation, mindfulness, breath practices, prayer, mantra, visualisation, and contemplative disciplines* were designed to restore harmony before imbalance became disease.

The gut is a particularly good example. We often feel tension there before we consciously recognise stress.

*The body is continuously communicating. The question is whether we are listening.*

**CS:** Sid, you are a renowned Jyotish Acharya. Could you please share with our readers how astrology can help an ordinary person understand health, the purpose of life, and the deeper patterns influencing life?

**Sid:** One of astrology's most valuable insights is the concept of the **birth tattva**.

Every individual is born under a dominant elemental influence. This element becomes a kind of energetic signature throughout life. It influences temperament, strengths, emotional tendencies, behavioural patterns, relationships, health predispositions, and life purpose.

An experienced astrologer can identify this elemental predominance through the birth chart.

Many people ask, “What is the purpose of my purpose?”

Often the birth tattva contains important clues. It reveals the direction in which life naturally wishes to unfold.

I often describe it as a person's inner compass or North Star.

When people live in alignment with their elemental nature, they usually experience greater ease, fulfilment, and meaning. When they move in directions that are fundamentally opposed to their nature, life often feels unnecessarily difficult.

Understanding the Birth Tattva does not limit us. It helps us understand where our greatest natural potential lies.

**CS:** You often speak about elemental rhythms operating throughout the day. What does that mean, and how can it help people live more consciously?

**Sid:** Ancient elemental science teaches that beginning at sunrise, the Tattvas rise and recede in a sequential rhythm approximately every ninety minutes. These cycles continue throughout the day and night.

The sages observed that certain activities naturally aligned with particular elemental states.

Some periods supported contemplation. Others favoured communication, physical activity, decision-making, creativity, or healing.

Today, we speak about circadian rhythms and biological clocks. Ancient traditions recognised additional energetic rhythms operating alongside them.

The important lesson is not memorising the cycles. The lesson is to learn to respect natural rhythms rather than constantly resist them.

Nature functions rhythmically. Seasons change. Tides rise and fall. The body follows biological cycles. When our actions become more aligned with these rhythms, life tends to become more balanced and effective.



THE 25 TATTVAS AND THERAPIES				
Therapeutic principles to balance and restore each of the 25 Tattvas				
			SAH	
1	Parsha	Pure Consciousness (Self)	Jnana (path of knowledge), Shivan (Shiva meditation)	Ashtanga Dharma Dhatu Dancing
2	Prakriti	The Root Matter (unmanifest)	Eating seasonal foods, Directarya (herbalism)	Yoga Siva
3	Budhi	Insight / Intuition	Spiritual philosophy	Gayatri Mantra Meditation
4	Astardhan	Rigo / Self-awareness	Karma Yoga (selfless service)	Mantra Meditation
5-8	Pancha Tanmatras (Five Elements)	Smell (Gandha), Taste (Rasa), Form (Rupa), Touch (Sparsha), Sound (Shabda)	aromatherapy, sound bath, touch therapy	Physiology
9-14	Pancha Jnanendriya (Senses of Perception)	Nose (Ghrani), Tongue (Jihva), Eye (Netra), Ear (Shrotra), Skin (Mamsu)	specific diet, eye relaxation, massage, sound bath	Yoga Meditation
15-19	Pancha Karmandriya (Senses of Action)	Mouth (Khaṇḍa), Hand (Karma), Feet (Padma), Genital (Srotrika), Anus (Anu)	cleaning, massage, neurofeedback, yoga postures	Yoga Meditation
20	Manas	Mind (central controlling organ)	Pranayama, Meditation	Ashtanga Meditation
21-25	Pancha Mahabhutas (Five Elements)	Ether, Air, Fire, Water, Earth	Feeding, Pranayama, Ayurveda, Herbs, Yoga, Mantra, Sound Therapy	Yoga Meditation



**5 TATTVAS (ELEMENTS) & ASTROLOGY ~ BIRTH TATTVVA**

Five elements are fundamental building blocks of creation that influence human temperament, health, and events

Element	Fire	Earth	Air	Water
Rashi	1	2	3	4
Rashi	5	6	7	8
Rashi	9	10	11	12
Rashi Governs	energy, enthusiasm, and leadership	stability, practicality, and wealth	intellect, communication, and movement	emotions, intuition, and creativity
Planets	Sun, Mars	Saturn & Mercury (Neutral)	Saturn & Mercury (Neutral), Jupiter (Space)	Venus, Moon
Planets Represent	energy, passion, courage, and leadership	practicality, communication, stability, and intelligence	intellect, movement, detachment, and karma	emotions, nurturing, creativity, and affection

Akash Tatva (Ether) is linked with Jupiter and high spiritual knowledge

<b>Birth Tatva:</b> determined by DTP of birth & dictates the native's dominant element, life purpose	<b>Vayu Tatva:</b> high immunity, not overweight	<b>90 Minute Cycle:</b> Pritivi (6), Jal (12), Agni (18), Vayu (24), Akash (30)	<b>Starts with Sunrise:</b> Sunday (Sun): Fire Monday (Moon): Water Tuesday (Mars): Fire	<b>Wednesday (Mercury): Earth</b> <b>Thursday (Jupiter): Space</b> <b>Friday (Venus): Water</b> <b>Saturday (Saturn): Air</b>
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The Earth Star Chakra

The Anandda Dialogue

**CS:** How do the elements influence personality and temperament? Why do people respond so differently to the same circumstances?

**Sid:** That happens because each individual expresses a different elemental balance.

**Earth-dominant individuals** are often grounded, dependable, patient, disciplined, and resilient.

**Water-dominant individuals** tend to be compassionate, intuitive, adaptable, nurturing, and emotionally aware.

**Fire-dominant personalities** are ambitious, courageous, visionary, dynamic, and transformative.

**Air-dominant personalities** are curious, communicative, creative, flexible, and intellectually agile.

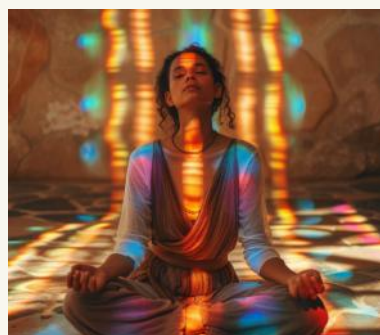
None of these temperaments is better than the others. Society needs all of them.

The challenge arises when an element becomes excessive or deficient.

Too much fire may manifest as irritability or aggression. Too much air may create restlessness and anxiety.

A deficient Earth can reduce stability. Imbalanced water may affect emotional equilibrium.

Once we understand our dominant element, we gain insight into both our strengths and the areas that require greater balance. Self-awareness becomes far easier.



**CS:** Once an imbalance is identified, how can that be corrected?

**Sid:** Nature itself often provides the remedies to tackle the imbalance.

Hydrotherapy works through the balancing qualities of water. Mud therapy utilizes the grounding and cooling properties of Earth.

Breath practices influence air. Sunlight supports fire. Meditation creates greater spaciousness and balance within consciousness.

One particularly interesting concept is the **Earth Star Chakra**, which is traditionally understood to exist approximately six to 12 inches below the feet in the etheric body. Known as the “super root,” it is the anchor of the entire chakra system, especially of the seven chakras.

Modern life frequently disconnects us from natural environments. We spend our days surrounded by concrete, technology, artificial lighting, and constant stimulation.

The earth star chakra connects our personal energy to the greater earthly and universal energies. Grounding practices help restore this connection. Walking barefoot on grass, soil, or sand. Spending time in forests. Gardening. Working with natural earth. Certain forms of mud therapy.

Many people report feeling calmer, clearer, and more emotionally balanced after reconnecting with nature in this way. Perhaps that should not surprise us.

After all, the Earth is not merely beneath our feet.

It is one of the fundamental elements from which our bodies are formed.

**CS:** Finally, Sid, if there is one insight that modern humanity urgently needs to rediscover, what would it be?

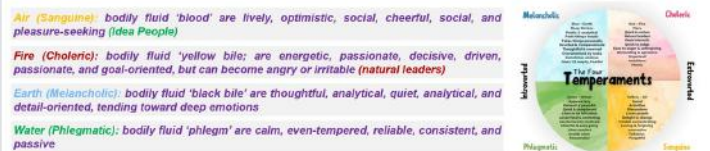
**Sid:** The recognition that human well-being and planetary well-being are inseparable.



Mud Bath

**WATER AND FOUR TEMPERAMENTS**

The Four Temperaments are personality theories linked to Four Elements (Air, Fire, Earth, Water)



**Excess Water:** sensitive, swelling, obsessed, confusion  
**Adequate Water:** emotional, flexible, shining skin, interest in arts  
**Less Water:** cruel, dreamless, loss of taste, impotency, irritated



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The same elements that flow through rivers, forests, mountains, oceans, and skies flow through every human being.

The same intelligence that governs nature governs life within us.

When we understand our birth tattva, respect natural rhythms, care for our emotional well-being, reconnect with nature, and live in alignment with our deeper purpose, life becomes more harmonious.

The Earth ceases to be merely a resource.

The body ceases to be merely a machine.

Consciousness ceases to be merely an abstract idea.

And we begin to recognise a truth that ancient wisdom understood long ago and which our times urgently need to remember: **The health of the Earth, the health of the body, and the evolution of consciousness are part of the same living story.**

**CS:** Thank you, Sid, for generously sharing these insights with the global Anandda family. In every issue, our conversations invite readers to pause, reflect, and reconnect with deeper dimensions of life.

This dialogue beautifully reminds us that the wisdom of nature, the wisdom of the body, and the wisdom of consciousness are part of the same unfolding journey. I look forward to our next conversation and to exploring another fascinating pathway to understanding, awareness, and bliss.

**Sid:** Thank you! Every conversation in Anandda is an opportunity to learn, reflect, and grow together.

I am grateful to our readers across the world for joining us on this journey of exploration and discovery.

Until we meet again in the next dialogue, may your path be illuminated by curiosity, enriched by understanding, and filled with the joy of continual learning.





# THE PLANET'S ICU

WHEN THE HEALTH OF THE EARTH, THE HUMAN BODY, AND CONSCIOUSNESS BEGIN COLLAPSING TOGETHER

By Dr. Kishori Mahat



As the world observes **World Environment Day**, **Global Wellness Day**, and the **World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought** this month, the meaning of health is expanding far beyond medicine alone. Increasingly, climate change, emotional exhaustion, loneliness, polluted environments, and rising lifestyle disorders are revealing themselves as deeply interconnected realities rather than isolated crises. For Anandda's June 2026 theme, "One Earth. One Body. One Consciousness," public health physician Dr. Kishori Mahat brings the rare perspective of someone who has witnessed human vulnerability both inside hospitals and across larger public health systems. Her reflective essay gently asks whether humanity is facing not merely a medical emergency or an environmental emergency, but a profound crisis of disconnection itself.

The monitor alarm would not stop.

A young woman struggled to breathe while we adjusted oxygen lines, interpreted scans, and searched desperately for answers hidden somewhere inside her failing lungs.

As a young doctor back in 2004, I believed medicine was straightforward: *identify the diseased organ, stabilise the patient, save the life.*

But years later, after epidemics, disasters, overwhelmed hospitals, exhausted health workers, and conversations with patients who carried stories far heavier than prescriptions, I began to understand something uncomfortable.

People rarely come to hospitals carrying disease alone.

They carry loneliness, stress, polluted air, violence at home, unemployment, unsafe roads, exhaustion, and grief that has quietly settled inside the body for years.

Modern medicine often treats the lungs while overlooking the life that damaged the lungs.

Perhaps that is because many of our health systems were designed around diseases, not people.

We became extraordinarily sophisticated in treating organs, yet often inadequate at understanding the human condition surrounding them.

As a public health doctor, this realisation changed the way I see illness, and increasingly, the way I see the world itself.

Today, when I look at the planet, I sometimes feel we are collectively standing beside a patient in intensive care.

*The Earth has a fever.*

Forests disappear silently. Rivers struggle under the weight of waste. Oceans warm. Heat waves kill quietly. Air pollution enters children's lungs before they even learn to read. In one part of the world, glaciers melt; elsewhere, farmers wait anxiously for rains that no longer arrive on time.

As a doctor, the symptoms feel disturbingly familiar: fever, breathlessness, inflammation, systems under strain.

The planet is speaking the language of illness.

And at the same time, human beings also seem increasingly unwell.

Dr. Kishori Mahat is a public health physician with over two decades of experience across South Asia, working at the intersection of health systems strengthening, communicable diseases, emergency response, leadership development, and wellness. Having served in senior technical and strategic roles within the United Nations system and international health in the South-East Asia region, she brings a rare perspective that bridges medicine, humanity, and systems thinking.

Hailing from Nepal, and trained in medicine and public health, Dr. Mahat is deeply committed to advancing equitable and people-centered health systems while mentoring young public health professionals across the region.

Her work increasingly explores a more holistic understanding of well-being - one that integrates resilience, emotional balance, mental wellness, compassionate care, and human connection within an increasingly complex world.

We live in an age of extraordinary technological advancement, yet people feel profoundly alone.

Anxiety, burnout, insomnia, hypertension, diabetes, depression – these are no longer isolated conditions. They are becoming part of modern living itself.

We eat without nourishment. Communicate without truly connecting. Rush endlessly without ever arriving emotionally.

Somewhere along the way, wellness became confused with performance.

Yet long before modern medicine, ancient cultures understood health differently.

In South Asia, healing was never viewed as purely biological.

Our grandparents spoke of santulan – balance. Ayurveda saw health as harmony between body, mind, food, environment, seasons, and spirit.

Buddhist teachings reminded us that nothing exists independently.

The Vedic idea of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam – “the world is one family” – was not simply philosophical poetry. It reflected an understanding that life is interconnected.

Interestingly, modern science is now rediscovering much of this wisdom. Research increasingly shows that chronic stress alters immunity, loneliness affects mortality, polluted environments shape disease patterns, and climate change affects both physical and mental health.

Everything touches everything else.

Public health teaches us that health does not begin inside hospitals. It begins long before that – in homes, schools, workplaces, neighbourhoods, food systems, transport systems, public policy, and social relationships.

Clean air, safe housing, education, green spaces, dignity, social trust, and economic security shape health long before medicines enter the picture.

This is why the climate crisis is not only an environmental issue.

It is a public health emergency.

Heat stress affects workers and older persons. Floods displace communities and increase infectious diseases. Air pollution worsens respiratory and cardiovascular illness. Food insecurity fuels malnutrition.

Climate anxiety increasingly affects young people's mental health. The same systems driving environmental destruction are often driving unhealthy lifestyles, inequality, and emotional exhaustion.

As a public health physician, I have increasingly realised that the future of health will not be determined only by hospitals, medicines, or technology.

It will depend on whether humanity learns to live differently.

Because perhaps the deepest illness of our time is not simply disease.

*It is disconnection.*

Disconnection from nature, from community, from silence, from meaning, and often, from ourselves.

Many people spend their healthiest years sacrificing sleep, relationships, and peace of mind in pursuit of success, only to spend later years trying to recover the health they lost along the way.

And at the end of life, something profound becomes clear.

As doctors, we have witnessed it quietly, again and again.

Patients nearing death rarely speak about promotions, titles, or possessions.

They speak about unfinished conversations, estranged children, regrets, love, and home. They ask for familiar voices and familiar hands. They seek dignity, presence, and sometimes simply someone willing to sit beside them in silence.

It leaves us with an uncomfortable but necessary question: *In the life we are building, are we also nurturing the relationships that will remain when everything else fades away?*

No one asks to see their bank balance before taking their last breath.

We arrive in this world empty-handed, and we leave the same way.

Yet humanity continues exhausting itself in a race many no longer fully understand. Entire societies now function under chronic stress.

Children grow up surrounded by anxious adults. Health workers burn out while trying to heal others.

Young people increasingly measure self-worth through invisible digital approval. Even rest has started to feel unproductive.

*Perhaps society is not facing only a climate crisis or a health crisis. Perhaps we are also facing a crisis of consciousness.*

What happens when children grow up disconnected from nature? When silence feels uncomfortable? When productivity becomes more valued than presence? When human worth is measured almost entirely through output?

Awareness shapes behaviour.

Behaviour shapes systems.

And systems, over time, shape the emotional climate of societies.



Still, I remain hopeful.

I have seen humanity at its best during earthquakes, outbreaks, floods, and emergencies – strangers carrying strangers, communities sharing food, exhausted nurses comforting frightened patients, and young volunteers cleaning rivers they may never personally benefit from.

Human beings still remember compassion.

*Perhaps wellness, in its truest form, was never about perfection. It is about alignment.*

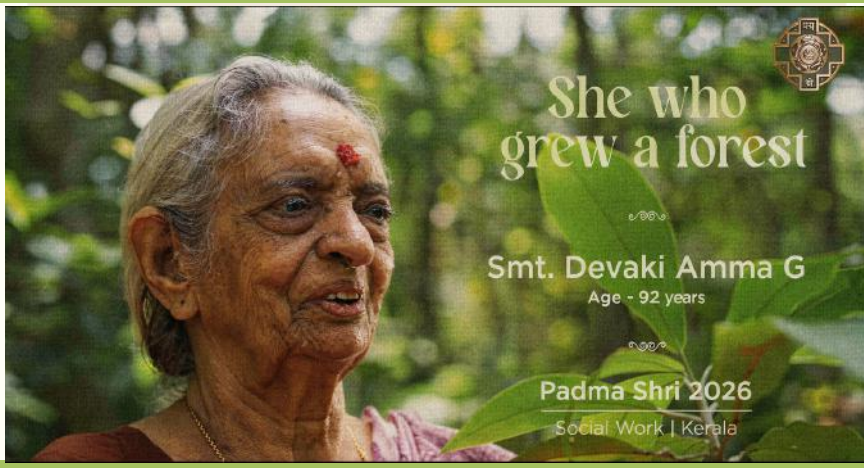
A life where ambition does not destroy peace, where development does not suffocate nature, where progress does not come at the cost of human connection, and where success still leaves room for kindness.

The Earth today does resemble a patient in ICU. But perhaps the prognosis is not hopeless yet.

In medicine, healing often begins when oxygen finally reaches struggling cells again. Maybe humanity now needs another kind of oxygen: wisdom, stillness, empathy, restraint, and the courage to reconnect with what truly matters.

Because when the planet heals, people heal too.

And when human beings rediscover balance – within themselves, with each other, and with nature – life slowly begins to breathe again.



## Anandda Congratulates and Salutes Padma Shri Awardee Kollakkayil Devaki Amma

Indian President Droupadi Murmu conferred the prestigious Padma Shri award upon Kollakkayil Devaki Amma G of Kerala on May 25, 2026, at a ceremonial function held at the Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi.

Honoured in the 'Unsung Heroes' category for her extraordinary contribution to afforestation, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable ecological restoration, Devaki Amma's recognition stands as a powerful celebration of grassroots environmental stewardship.

The Padma Awards, announced annually on the eve of India's Republic Day, are among the country's highest civilian honours, recognising exceptional service across fields including environment, social work, science, public affairs, art, and culture. The Padma Shri is India's fourth-highest civilian award.

Widely known as the Forest Grandma, the ninety-two-year-old environmentalist has spent more than four decades transforming barren coastal sandy land in Kerala's Alappuzha district into a thriving ecological sanctuary called Kollakal Thapovanam.

Through extraordinary patience, traditional ecological wisdom, and unwavering commitment, she nurtured over 3,000 indigenous, medicinal, rare, and endangered plant

species, creating a flourishing green ecosystem that today supports birds, butterflies, aquatic life, and diverse small fauna.

Her inspiring journey began in 1980 after a serious car accident left her with a severe leg injury, bringing her farming activities to a halt.

Before the accident, Devaki Amma had actively cultivated paddy, coconut, gingelly, and vegetables.

During her long period of recovery, she turned quietly towards nature and began planting saplings on the sandy coastal land surrounding her home.

One tree gradually became many. What started as a deeply personal act of healing slowly evolved into a lifelong environmental mission that would eventually inspire an entire community.

Working patiently over decades, she relied on traditional knowledge, close observation of soil and climatic conditions, organic manure from her cattle, mulching, leaf litter retention, and thoughtful water conservation practices to restore the fragile coastal terrain.

Two ponds maintained within Thapovanam now contribute significantly to groundwater recharge and prevent saltwater intrusion and

sustain year-round ecological balance in the region. The increasing green cover has also helped moderate local temperatures and improve environmental stability in the surrounding area.

Today, her forest functions as an important conservation repository for several rare and endangered plant species native to Kerala.

Students, researchers, environmentalists, and nature lovers regularly visit the site to understand sustainable afforestation practices and grassroots biodiversity conservation.

Her influence extends far beyond her own land.

Over the years, she has actively encouraged schools, colleges, and households to cultivate native and medicinal plants by distributing seeds and saplings and spreading awareness about long-term environmental responsibility.

Her philosophy remains beautifully simple and deeply relevant: people must plant according to their oxygen and food needs and nurture nature with continuity and care.

Four generations of her family have participated in nurturing this living forest. Her grandchildren plant

“ One woman. One sapling at a time. Four decades of devotion. Today, an entire forest breathes because she chose to heal the Earth. ”

saplings during their holidays, and one of them even chose botany as a field of study inspired by her lifelong devotion to nature.

Devaki Amma has earlier received several national and state honours including the Nari Shakti Puraskar, the Indira Priyadarshini Vrikshamitra Award, the Vanamitra Award, the Bhoomitra Award, and the State Biodiversity Award.

In 2019, she was also recognised by The Better India as one of the “10 Heroes Saving Us All” for her decades of environmental service.

Her life stands today as a luminous reminder that ecological transformation often begins quietly, with a single sapling, a patient hand, and a deep love for the Earth.



# THE WALNUT *Village*

*The Seed was an Idea. The Harvest will be a Generation's Prosperity.*

*By Chitra Singh*



Kishore Upadhyay

*Every mountain community carries within it two stories. One is the story of what has been lost: young people leaving in search of livelihoods, agricultural lands lying fallow, and villages gradually becoming quieter with each passing year. The other is the story of what remains possible when vision, leadership, science, and community come together around a common purpose.*

*On 8 May 2026, in the village of **Pali** near Anjanisain in Tehri Garhwal, a remarkable idea took visible shape. What emerged was not merely an agricultural initiative but a blueprint for rural renewal.*

*Conceived by **Kishore Upadhyay**, a member of the legislative assembly from Tehri and a long-standing advocate of sustainable Himalayan development, **Uttarakhand's first Walnut Village** represents a powerful attempt to align ecology with livelihoods and local aspiration with long-term prosperity.*

*In a month when we reflect upon One Earth. One Body. One Consciousness, **Walnut Village** offers a living example of how environmental stewardship can serve as an engine of economic resilience, community well-being, and hope for generations yet to come.*



## WHEN VISION BECOMES A SAPLING

On 8 May 2026, a transformative idea took root in Pali village, carrying within it the promise of livelihoods, ecological renewal, and prosperity for generations to come.



“The water of the mountains and the youth of the mountains must serve the mountains.”

Some dreams are measured in months. Some in years.

*The most transformative ones are measured in generations.*

On 8 May 2026, in Pali, a tranquil village nestled within the Himalayan district of Tehri Garhwal in Uttarakhand, a northern Indian state renowned for its soaring peaks, life-giving rivers, ancient forests, and spiritual heritage, a remarkable vision took root.

What began that day was the start of a journey that could reshape how mountain communities envision prosperity, livelihoods, ecological stewardship, and self-reliance.

Extending far beyond a single harvest or a single generation, the dream of Walnut Village embodies a future where economic opportunity grows

alongside environmental renewal, allowing both people and landscapes to flourish together.

What emerged was Uttarakhand's first officially recognised **Walnut Village**, an initiative that seeks to transform not only a village but potentially the economic future of an entire region.

At its heart lies a simple yet powerful conviction held by Kishore Upadhyay, MLA from Tehri: *the future of the mountains must be built through the strengths of the mountains themselves.*

For decades, Uttarakhand's villages have faced a familiar challenge. Productive young people leave in search of employment.

Agricultural land remains underutilised. Traditional livelihoods struggle to compete with urban economies.

Families are often left wondering whether prosperity and mountain living can coexist.

*Kishore Upadhyay believes they can.*

His vision is rooted in a phrase that has long echoed through Uttarakhand's public discourse: *"The water of the mountains and the youth of the mountains must serve the mountains."*

Walnut Village is an attempt to turn that belief into reality.

### More Than a Plantation

It would be easy to describe Walnut Village as an orchard project.

That would be a mistake.

The initiative has been designed as an economic, ecological, and social model capable of generating long-term value for rural communities.

Under the scientific guidance of UCOST (Uttarakhand State Council for Science and Technology), with technical support from the Horticulture Department, Agriculture Department, Agricultural Training and Research Institute (IATR), and implementation support from partner organisations, Pali village has been transformed into a demonstration of what future mountain economies might look like.

Approximately 130 farmers participated in the programme that marked the completion of the village's initial development phase.

Experts shared knowledge on scientific plantation methods, grafting techniques, soil nutrition management, water conservation, drip irrigation, orchard management, entrepreneurship, value addition, and market development.

*Yet the most important lesson was perhaps the simplest: A tree can become an economy.*

### Why Walnut?

Around the world, walnut trees have quietly transformed mountain landscapes.

The famous walnut forests of Central Asia, particularly in Kyrgyzstan, support livelihoods, conserve biodiversity, stabilise fragile slopes, protect watersheds, and sustain local economies.

Scientific research has repeatedly demonstrated that walnut-based agroforestry systems generate environmental benefits while creating long-term economic resilience for rural communities.

The Himalayan region shares many of the same ecological characteristics.

Walnuts are naturally suited to mountain environments. They adapt well to cooler climates, strengthen soil stability, contribute to ecological diversity, and provide a high-value crop with strong market demand.

### *The variety selected for Walnut Village is especially significant.*

According to project planners, the plantation includes internationally recognised, premium-quality walnut varieties capable of commanding prices several times higher than ordinary walnuts. The economic implications are substantial.

Experts estimate that these trees will begin producing commercially viable yields within approximately three years of plantation.

Even a household cultivating ten to fifteen walnut trees could potentially generate a meaningful supplementary income. For mountain families, this represents more than revenue. It represents stability.



## INSIDE THE WORLD'S LARGEST WALNUT FOREST



Kyrgyzstan

### Restoring the Economics of Staying

Migration is rarely caused by a lack of affection for one's village.

More often, it reflects a lack of opportunity.

When livelihoods become uncertain, people move.

When opportunity returns, communities remain.

*One of the most compelling aspects of Walnut Village is its ability to create income without requiring people to leave the places they call home.*

The initiative seeks to establish sustainable economic activity within the village, allowing its youth to participate in productive local enterprises while remaining connected to their families, land, and communities.

The goal is not merely agricultural output but economic confidence.

### The First Step Towards a Self-Sustaining Village

Perhaps the most visionary aspect of Kishore Upadhyay's concept is that walnuts are only the beginning.

The project forms part of a broader ambition to create what he describes as a **self-sustaining village ecosystem**.

Future plans include:

- Scientific beekeeping integrated with walnut orchards to improve pollination and generate honey production.

- Fisheries development through local ponds and water resources.
- Collective farming models across irrigated agricultural land.
- Farmer-Producer Organisations (FPOs) and Self-Help Groups (SHGs).
- Cultivation of vegetables, pulses, medicinal plants like drumsticks, and other high-value crops.
- Diversified income streams that reduce dependence on a single agricultural activity.

### The philosophy is clear.

A resilient village economy should never depend upon a single source of income.

It should be built upon multiple interconnected opportunities that strengthen one another.

### From Walnut Village to Walnut Valley

Every successful model invites replication.

For Kishore Upadhyay, Walnut Village is not the destination.

### It is the beginning.

His larger ambition is to expand the model across neighbouring mountain regions and ultimately create a broader Walnut valley capable of transforming the economic profile of the Tehri district itself.

If implemented successfully across multiple villages, the region could emerge as a recognised centre for premium-quality walnut

*“A village changes when a tree is planted. A region changes when a vision takes root.”*

production, attracting markets, investment, entrepreneurship, and wider economic activity.

*What has begun as a village initiative today could become a regional identity tomorrow.*

### Planting Beyond a Lifetime

Walnut trees teach an important lesson.

They do not reward impatience.

Those who plant them understand that the fullest harvest often belongs to the future.

The individual who places a sapling into the soil today may never witness the orchard at its maturity. Yet they plant it anyway.

That act carries extraordinary meaning.

It reflects faith in tomorrow.

It reflects responsibility towards future generations.

It reflects an understanding that the greatest contributions are often those whose benefits extend beyond our own lifetime.

In Pali village, some 300 seeds were planted.

The harvest will belong to generations.





WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

# NATURE IS STILL OUR GREATEST TEACHER

Why humanity's future depends upon restoring balance between nature, society, and consciousness

**By S. R. Mehta**

Senior Retired Indian Forest Service Officer

Every generation inherits the natural world and leaves its imprint upon it. Forests, rivers, mountains, wildlife, air, and water quietly sustain life, often without demanding attention until their balance begins to shift. As humanity confronts increasingly visible environmental challenges, the need to understand our relationship with nature has never been more urgent.

On the occasion of World Environment Day, Anandda is honoured to feature the reflections of Mr. Mehta, a senior retired Indian Forest Service officer whose nearly four decades of service brought him into close contact with some of India's most ecologically significant landscapes. Aligned with this month's theme, he shares lessons drawn from a lifetime spent observing forests, ecosystems, governance systems, and human behaviour. His reflections move beyond environmental concerns alone, inviting us to reconsider how responsibility, values, education, health, and consciousness shape the future of both humanity and the planet.

**Sant Ram Mehta**, IFS (Retd.), joined the Indian Forest Service in 1969 and served for nearly four decades across some of India's most ecologically diverse landscapes, including the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, and the Union Territories. A member of the AGMUT cadre, he held several senior leadership positions during his distinguished career, culminating in appointments as Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Head of the Forest Department in Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands before his retirement in 2007.

He also served with the Forest Survey of India in Shimla, contributing to the monitoring and assessment of India's forest resources, and with the State Forest Service Academy in Dehradun, where he helped train future generations of forest officers. Throughout his career, he worked at the intersection of forest conservation, biodiversity protection, wildlife management, ecological restoration, and sustainable stewardship of natural resources.

Drawing upon decades of experience in forests, wildlife habitats, mountain ecosystems, and island landscapes, he remains a thoughtful advocate for environmental responsibility, ecological balance, and the enduring lessons that nature offers humanity.

Over the years, countless discussions have taken place around climate change, environmental degradation, biodiversity loss, water scarcity, pollution, and sustainability.

Governments formulate policies, institutions conduct research, organisations launch campaigns, and experts continue to highlight the growing ecological challenges facing humanity.

The problems are largely known.

What concerns me today is a different question: what additional measures are required to improve the situation beyond the efforts already being undertaken by governments, non-government organisations, institutions, and society at large?

After nearly thirty-eight years of service in the Indian Forest Service, including assignments in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, and various positions under the Government of India, I have come to believe that many answers can be found by observing nature itself.

Nature remains one of humanity's greatest teachers.

### The Wisdom of Forest Ecosystems

One of the most profound lessons forests offer is the principle of *coexistence*.

Forest ecosystems support countless forms of life and sustain numerous livelihood systems that depend upon them. Within a healthy forest, plants, animals, insects, birds, microorganisms, water systems, and soil function together in remarkable balance. Every component contributes to the well-being of the whole.

Plants and animals coexist peacefully, drawing from nature what they need to survive and flourish.

Resources are used within limits that allow regeneration and continuity.

The result is a living system capable of sustaining itself over long periods while continuously supporting life around it.

*Human beings often follow a different path.*

Meeting our needs is natural. The challenge begins when needs expand into limitless wants.

Much of the environmental degradation we witness today stems not from necessity but from excessive consumption and exploitation. When extraction exceeds regeneration, ecological imbalance becomes inevitable.

The consequences eventually return to society in various forms. Degraded forests, polluted rivers, declining biodiversity, poor air quality, and diminishing natural resources ultimately affect human health, livelihoods, economies, and social stability.

The encouraging reality is that nature possesses remarkable resilience.

When protected and managed responsibly, forest ecosystems have the capacity to regenerate themselves and continue providing invaluable goods and services to society.

Forests conserve soil, regulate water cycles, support biodiversity, moderate climatic conditions, and contribute to the overall well-being of communities.

Nature demonstrates every day that sustainability is not an abstract concept. It is a practical principle upon which life itself depends.



Standing beneath one of nature's grandest living classrooms – the magnificent National Banyan Tree at Children's Park, Arakkonam Naval Base, Tamil Nadu. Its vast canopy and enduring roots remind us that strength, resilience, and continuity are built patiently over generations.

### Looking Beyond the Physical Environment

Environmental discussions often focus primarily on forests, rivers, wildlife, land, and natural resources. While these are undoubtedly important, my experience has led me to view the environment through a broader perspective.

*I see the environment as consisting of three interconnected dimensions.*

The first is the physical environment, which includes the natural world and all the resources that sustain life.

The second is the social environment, comprising governments, institutions, organisations, communities, and society at large.

The third is the spiritual environment, which includes our values, attitudes, ethics, awareness, beliefs, and consciousness. Together, these dimensions form what may be called the total environment.

They are deeply interconnected and mutually dependent.

The condition of our forests and rivers reflects social decisions.

Social systems are shaped by human values and behaviour.

Our values, in turn, emerge from the quality of our inner awareness and consciousness.

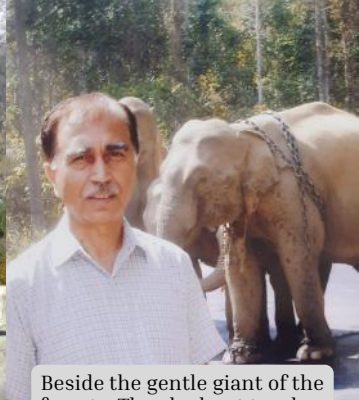
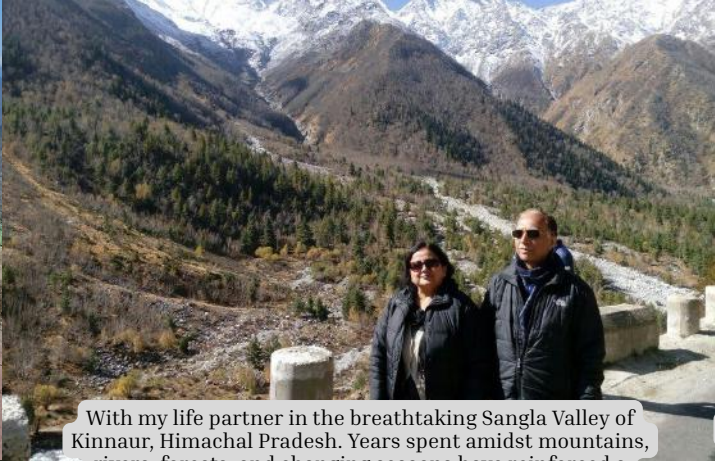
For this reason, environmental well-being and human well-being are inseparable.

*The health of the planet, the health of society, and the health of human consciousness move together.*

### Responsible Citizens Are Not Created Overnight

Whenever environmental challenges are discussed, attention often turns towards laws, policies, technologies, and institutional interventions. These are undoubtedly necessary, but lasting change begins much earlier.

*It begins at home.*



Lessons that cannot be found in books alone. With life partner Subhadra and grandson Viraj, sharing the values of responsibility, respect, and stewardship that pass from one generation to the next and shape our relationship with the natural world.

With my life partner in the breathtaking Sangla Valley of Kinnaur, Himachal Pradesh. Years spent amidst mountains, rivers, forests, and changing seasons have reinforced a simple truth: nature rewards those who learn to live in harmony with its rhythms.

Beside the gentle giant of the forests. The elephant teaches lessons that humanity often forgets – coexistence, patience, memory, community, and the wisdom of moving through the world with strength balanced by restraint.

The process of developing responsible citizens starts within families and continues through educational institutions.

Parents and teachers play a vital role because they serve as role models whose behaviour shapes attitudes more effectively than instruction alone.

Children learn through observation, participation, and experience.

Values such as cleanliness, orderliness, discipline, responsibility, cooperation, and respect for shared resources should be cultivated from an early age.

Children should participate in household activities and community responsibilities so that they develop awareness of their relationship with others and with the environment around them.

Environmental stewardship ultimately emerges from a sense of responsibility.

Responsibility develops through habit.

Habit develops through consistent guidance and example.

### Why Education Must Build Character

Education plays a central role in shaping society.

Its purpose extends beyond imparting information or preparing individuals for employment. Education should help people understand both the workings of nature and their responsibilities within society.

Equally important, it should nurture values, ethics, morality, attitudes, and civic sense.

In my view, contemporary education often places insufficient emphasis on these dimensions.

While knowledge and technical competence are important, they alone cannot create responsible citizens.

A society requires individuals who are willing to recognise harmful practices, challenge wrongdoing, and participate actively in constructive solutions.

Ethics and civic responsibility provide the foundation upon which environmental responsibility is built.

*Knowledge guided by values becomes wisdom.*

*Wisdom shapes responsible action.*

### Laws Exist. Implementation Matters

India possesses a substantial framework of laws and regulations designed to protect forests, wildlife, biodiversity, and the environment.

The challenge often lies not in the absence of legislation but in effective implementation and enforcement.

Environmental laws can only fulfil their purpose when they are applied consistently and fairly. Activities that damage ecosystems, degrade natural resources, or threaten public welfare must attract meaningful consequences.

In my opinion, deterrent penalties are not always sufficient to discourage environmentally harmful behaviour.

Stronger implementation and accountability can significantly improve outcomes.

*Environmental protection requires a partnership between responsible citizens and effective institutions. Neither can succeed fully without the other.*

### The Connection Between Environmental Health and Human Health

The quality of the environment directly influences the quality of human life. Clean air, safe water, nutritious food, healthy ecosystems, and balanced natural systems contribute not only to physical well-being but also to mental and social well-being.

Governments therefore carry an important responsibility to ensure the availability of safe and nutritious food for all citizens.

A healthier population contributes more effectively to national development and enjoys a higher quality of life.

At the same time, food adulteration and the use of harmful chemicals in food products present serious threats to public health and deserve firm regulatory attention.

Environmental protection and public health are not separate concerns.

They are complementary responsibilities that support one another.

### Nature's Final Lesson

When I reflect upon my years in the forests, one lesson stands above all others.

*Nature thrives through balance.*

Every ecosystem functions through relationships, cooperation, adaptation, renewal, and restraint. Nothing exists entirely in isolation. Every element contributes to the well-being of the larger whole.

*Human society is no different.*

Our future depends not merely upon technology, policy, or economic growth.

It depends equally upon our ability to restore balance between the physical, social, and spiritual dimensions of life.

Nature continues to teach patience, resilience, humility, and interconnectedness. The lessons remain available to all who are willing to observe.

*The forests are still speaking. The question is whether humanity is prepared to listen.*

*The wisdom in this article reminds us that every positive step towards a healthier planet begins with a conscious choice. Nature continues to offer timeless lessons in balance, renewal, and interconnectedness. By embracing them in our daily lives, we become active participants in creating a more harmonious future for all.*





## The Green Juice That Arrived!

### A Lesson in Trust, Presence, and Inner Balance





*Sometimes, life offers its deepest insights through the simplest of moments. A quiet thought, an unexpected gesture, a feeling of being gently met by life exactly where one is. For Anandda's June 2026 theme, "One Earth. One Body. One Consciousness," Manu Puri reflects on an ordinary breakfast experience in Mumbai that unfolded into a profound understanding of trust, nourishment, presence, and inner alignment. Through his BeLucidNow lens of mindful awareness, he explores how the body, the earth, and consciousness often respond beautifully when the mind relaxes its need to force outcomes and simply learns to remain present.*



*Manu Puri is a mystic executive coach, AI strategist, and seasoned learning and development leader. Based in the Greater Seattle Area, he is the creator of the BeZenDo process, a structured pathway that moves from intentional being to mindful awareness and purposeful action. He works with executives, managers, and Fortune 100 organisations to cultivate clarity, presence, and sustained performance in complex environments. He currently leads the Learning as a Service initiative for Microsoft customers at TechM-Allyis and heads the AI Centre of Excellence, guiding teams to design intelligent, scalable solutions that elevate performance and human potential. With over 25 years of experience across global organisations, including Microsoft and GE, Manu integrates Eastern wisdom with practical executive realities.*

*As Anandda's revered AI and L&D strategist, he continues to guide individuals towards BeLucidNow, a direct experience of lucid awareness within the flow of everyday life.*

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-  [@namastenow](https://twitter.com/namastenow)

It was our last morning at a fine hotel in Mumbai. During our six-night stay, I had ordered the green juice at the breakfast buffet only a couple of times.

The first experiences were pleasant enough — fresh, healthy, but nothing particularly memorable. A little too watery. Slightly bland.

After those two attempts, I stopped ordering it. I simply did not expect much from it anymore.

On this final morning, as I filled my plate with nuts and fruit, I glanced across at the juice counter.

A quiet thought passed through me, almost like a soft inner whisper: I wish I could have a truly wonderful green juice experience... though perhaps they do not really make it that way here.

I did not dwell on the thought. I did not ask anyone. I did not complain or make a request.

The thought simply arose and faded naturally.

I returned to our usual table by the window and sat down beside my wife.

We spoke quietly, enjoyed the soft morning light, and lingered over breakfast without hurry.

A few minutes later, I returned from the hot food station carrying a small dosa.

And there it was.

A tall glass of green juice stood beside my plate.

Bright emerald in colour, tiny droplets of condensation resting on the glass, almost glowing in the morning light.

I stopped and stared.

"Where did this come from?" I asked my wife.

She looked up, equally surprised.

"I thought you requested it."

"I did not ask for any juice," I said slowly.

"But I was just thinking about one."

I lifted the glass and took a sip.

My eyes widened instantly.

It was perfect.

Thick, vibrant, alive with freshness. The exact balance of greens.

The right touch of ginger. A subtle hint of mint I had not even consciously imagined.

Every sip felt deeply nourishing, as though the body recognised something it had quietly been waiting for.



**Great leadership begins when inner stillness replaces the need to force outcomes.**

In that simple, unexpected moment, I felt the quiet truth of Anandda's June theme settle gently within me:

***One Earth. One Body. One Consciousness.***

The earth had provided the fresh ingredients.

The body had received exactly the nourishment it needed. And consciousness – calm, open, non-grasping consciousness – had allowed the experience to unfold naturally, without force or insistence.

The moment may appear small from the outside.

Yet inwardly, it revealed something profound about how many of us live, especially as men navigating modern professional and personal responsibilities.

For much of my life, I have carried the familiar pressure to push, manage, control, and “make things happen.”

Leadership roles, family responsibilities, organisational demands, and even ordinary daily situations often carry an unspoken expectation that we must constantly solve, fix, optimise, and drive outcomes forward.

Yet this small incident revealed another possibility.

- A quieter form of strength.
- The strength of trust.
- The strength of presence.
- The strength of allowing.

The green juice was not merely a drink. It became a gentle reminder that life often responds differently when we stop grasping at outcomes and instead remain inwardly aligned and present.

This principle extends far beyond a breakfast table.

In high-pressure boardrooms, emotionally charged conversations, difficult leadership decisions, or moments of personal stress, many people instinctively respond by tightening internally and pushing harder externally.

Yet sustainable vitality rarely emerges from continuous force. It emerges from balance.

Through practices such as BeLucidNow, I often encourage leaders to reconnect with the body's natural intelligence through simple awareness-based shifts.

These shifts include returning attention to the breath, relaxing awareness into the abdomen, softening mental overactivity, and reconnecting with the quiet center beneath constant cognitive noise.

Something important begins changing in those moments.

The nervous system settles.

- The body relaxes.
- The mind clears.
- Awareness expands.

Energy becomes regenerative rather than depleted.

Modern life has normalised overstimulation to such an extent that many people no longer recognise what calm presence actually feels like. We move from one demand to another while remaining internally contracted.

Over time, the body absorbs this acceleration through fatigue, stress, emotional reactivity, shallow breathing, poor sleep, and mental exhaustion.

In many ways, the ecological imbalance visible across the planet is also mirrored within the human nervous system.

We consume excessively externally while exhausting ourselves internally.

This is why the June theme feels especially meaningful to me. The earth, the body, and consciousness are deeply interconnected systems. When one moves out of rhythm, the others quietly feel the impact.

When we restore balance internally, our relationship with the external world also begins changing.

We listen more carefully. We consume more consciously. We lead with greater clarity. We relate with greater presence.

We begin recognising that true leadership is not only about performance.

It is also about energetic stewardship – how we hold attention, respond to pressure, care for the body, and influence the emotional environments around us.

When men especially cultivate this kind of inner ecology, something beautiful begins unfolding.

We become better leaders, partners, fathers, colleagues, and human beings - not because we are forcing outcomes more aggressively, but because we are showing up more fully present.

And presence itself changes the quality of life.

That green juice arriving unexpectedly on a quiet Mumbai morning became a small yet deeply meaningful teaching for me.

True masculine strength also includes the courage to trust.

- To soften.
- To pause.
- To let go of unnecessary force.

To remain open enough for life to respond intelligently.

Perhaps this is what conscious living ultimately invites us into – a relationship with life that is less driven by anxiety and more guided by awareness.

So I leave you with a simple reflection.

*What quiet wish, need, or longing are you carrying within yourself today? And what might happen if, even briefly, you held it gently rather than forcefully?*

***Without gripping. Without over-managing.***

Without exhausting yourself trying to control every outcome.

You may discover, as I did that morning in Mumbai, that when consciousness becomes calm and aligned, life often has a beautiful way of meeting us exactly where we are.



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*When inner alignment is cultivated, life begins to flow  
with greater clarity, harmony, abundance, and purpose.*

# The Quiet Strength of Giving

Why the deepest form of wealth has always flowed through human connection, trust, and shared humanity



By S. Aditya Kumar



As Anandda's June 2026 theme, "One Earth. One Body. One Consciousness," explores the interconnectedness among human well-being, awareness, and the larger fabric of life, this reflective piece by S. Aditya Kumar gently turns towards another essential human truth – the quiet power of giving. Moving through memory, culture, relationships, community, and modern ambition, the article reminds us that life has always sustained itself through invisible bonds of trust, generosity, and mutual support. Beyond wealth, performance, and accumulation lies something far more enduring: the human capacity to enable, uplift, and nourish one another in ways that quietly strengthen both society and consciousness itself.

Have you ever noticed that the people who worry most about losing what they have are often the ones who have the most to lose?

And yet, when we look back through history, we find something quietly remarkable.

The greatest accumulators were often also the greatest givers. The Maharajas who built temples and fed thousands. Business houses whose wealth flowed outward as naturally as it flowed inward.

They accumulated, certainly – with ambition, discipline, and extraordinary drive. Yet alongside that accumulation existed an equally powerful sense of responsibility.

Wealth, to them, was never entirely private. It was, in some fundamental sense, held in trust.

Think of the oldest person you have known – perhaps a grandparent, or someone from that generation.

Did they often speak about what they owned? Or did they speak about people – who helped whom, who stood beside whom during difficult times, and obligations that had nothing to do with money?

*There is a reason for that.*

For most of human history, a person's worth was not measured by what they accumulated. It was measured by what they contributed.

Somewhere along the way, we confused security with accumulation.

The two are not the same.

For generations, security came not from what people stored away, but from the strength of the human circle around them – the neighbour who would help when the rains failed, the community that stood together when hardship arrived unexpectedly.

The farmer who harvested more than his family needed did not lock away the surplus. He shared it naturally, without ceremony, almost the way one breathes. Not because scripture demanded it.

S. Aditya Kumar is a qualified Chartered Accountant with a deep interest in reflective writing, literature, and the quieter dimensions of human experience beyond the boundaries of his profession. An avid reader, enthusiastic traveller, and occasional writer, he believes that life's most meaningful lessons emerge through lived experiences, observation, introspection, and genuine human connection rather than theory alone. Preferring meaningful conversations and reflective spaces over constant digital distraction, Aditya often finds profound wisdom in ordinary moments of everyday life. His writing draws from this lived understanding, exploring themes of human values, relationships, consciousness, and the subtle emotional truths that shape people and societies. Thoughtful and deeply observant by nature, he continues to learn through experiences, conversations, and the evolving journey of life itself.

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Not because society applauded it. But because another person's hunger felt, in some very real sense, connected to his own.

That was not generosity in the performative sense we often associate with the word today. It was simply the quiet texture of ordinary living.

The lived wisdom of generations who understood instinctively that human beings survive and flourish through one another.

Until, gradually and silently, we forgot.

### The Indian Way: Giving as Celebration

In India, this instinct was woven deeply into the rhythm of daily life – into festivals, rituals, harvests, and ordinary acts of human participation.

*Consider Diwali, the festival of Lights.*

Homes prepared sweets in quantities no single family could ever consume because they were never meant for one household alone. The security guard at the gate, the domestic worker, the milkman arriving at dawn – all became part of the celebration.

Not because the law required it. Because abundance felt incomplete unless it moved.

Similarly, Pongal in the South celebrated the harvest not merely as personal success but as shared gratitude. The first offering belonged not to the family, but to the cattle, the sun, and the larger ecosystem that made life possible.

The joy was inseparable from participation.

Children growing up in such homes did not require lectures on generosity. They absorbed it naturally through observation. A grandmother packing sweets for every neighbour taught more about giving than any moral instruction possibly could.

Giving was never separate from celebration. The two moved together.



### When Success Became Arithmetic

Industrialisation and modern economic systems transformed not only how wealth was created, but also how individuals began understanding themselves.

Ambition expanded. Scale became limitless. "More" slowly became the defining aspiration.

*There is nothing inherently wrong with this.*

The entrepreneur who builds something meaningful through relentless effort deserves admiration. The professional who rises through decades of discipline and perseverance contributes significantly to society and progress.

Accumulation itself was never the problem. What changed quietly was the relationship between personal success and collective responsibility.

The neighbour gradually became irrelevant.

Community became optional.

And in that slow distancing, something deeply human weakened.

Modern systems often measure output through numbers, metrics, performance indicators, and visible achievement. Yet what these systems frequently fail to capture is that people are not equations. Relationships are not transactions.

Two individuals working together with trust and goodwill consistently create outcomes far greater than isolated individual effort.

A team that genuinely cares for one another multiplies possibilities in ways no spreadsheet can fully explain.

A mentor who truly believes in someone can alter another person's life simply by instilling confidence.

*This is not arithmetic.*

*This is human chemistry.*

Ancient Indian households understood this intuitively.

Modern management theories continue attempting to recreate it through frameworks, incentives, and engagement structures.

Yet authentic trust cannot be manufactured.

It can only be cultivated through human sincerity, generosity, and emotional investment.

### Giving Beyond Obligation

Eventually, societies attempted to legislate generosity itself.

Mandatory Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in India has undoubtedly created positive outcomes.

Yet its very existence also reflects something important – society increasingly turns towards law when conscience weakens.

And yet, even today, there remain individuals and organisations who give quietly without requirement, visibility, or performance metrics attached to it.

They support education. Share opportunities. Mentor young people. Open doors. Create access.

Not because they must.

Because they recognise that holding onto resources while others remain excluded feels deeply incomplete.

That is not CSR.

That is character.

### Giving Is Enablement

Perhaps the most important distinction this reflection makes is this: Giving is not charity. Charity, at its weakest, can sometimes preserve distance between the giver and the receiver. It temporarily addresses discomfort without always changing deeper conditions.

*True giving enables.*

It is the senior professional who gives genuine time – not leftover time – to mentor someone uncertain of their own potential. It is the teacher who stays after class. The leader who creates opportunities where none existed before. The expert who shares knowledge freely. The colleague who offers encouragement at precisely the moment another person needs it most. This kind of giving does not diminish the giver. It expands possibilities.

### The Wealth That Truly Remains

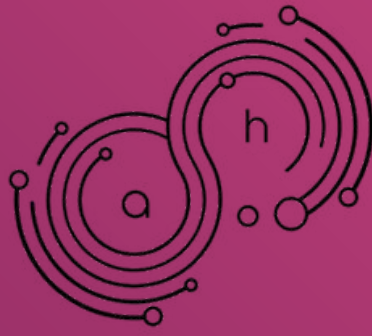
None of this requires extraordinary wealth. It requires only the willingness to ask one honest question: *What do I have that someone else may need, and am I holding it too tightly?*

**Knowledge. Experience. Time. Encouragement. Trust.** *These too are forms of wealth, often transforming lives far more deeply than money ever can.*

*And often, they become the very virtues that quietly transform another human life. So yes, accumulate. Build. Grow. Achieve. Create.*

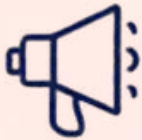
*There is dignity in ambition honestly pursued. But alongside that success, carry the awareness that no life is entirely self-made. Somewhere, someone offered guidance, encouragement, trust, access, opportunity, or belief at the precise moment it mattered.*

*And perhaps the most human response to that inheritance is to continue the flow forward. Not as an obligation. Not as a compliance. Not as charity. But as participation in the larger human ecology that sustains us all.*



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Anandda June 2026 **27**

# The Rise of Antioxidant-Rich Drinks

Science, sensory design, and the future of wellness in a glass

By Ali Özseven

As we go deeper into the essence of this month's theme, even the world of food and beverages begins revealing a larger story about how we live, nourish ourselves, and relate to the planet around us. Increasingly, wellness is moving beyond labels, trends, and calorie counts towards a more conscious understanding of how what we consume affects not only the human body but also the environment, emotional well-being, and our long-term relationship with nature itself.

Aligned beautifully with Global Wellness Day, World Environment Day, and World Oceans Day, this thoughtful article by gastronomy specialist and flavour developer Ali Özseven takes us into the evolving world of antioxidant-rich beverages through the interconnected lenses of science, flavour, sustainability, and conscious living. Drawing from years of culinary experience and food innovation, he explores how modern wellness drinks are gradually becoming more than refreshments – evolving into experiences where nourishment, creativity, environmental responsibility, and sensory pleasure coexist in harmony.



Ali Özseven is a gastronomy specialist, flavour developer, and food innovation professional based in Istanbul, Türkiye.

With nearly fifteen years of experience working with food ingredients across professional kitchens, bars, and hospitality environments, he has developed a deep understanding of flavour, raw materials, sensory experience, and sustainable culinary practices. He later pursued a bachelor's degree in gastronomy and culinary sciences, combining hands-on kitchen expertise with academic training in food systems and flavour science.

Over the years, Ali became increasingly drawn to the untapped creative and environmental potential of food waste – fruit peels, trimmings, seeds, and by-products often discarded despite their rich aromatic and nutritional value. His work today focuses on sustainable ingredients, flavour design, and innovative recipe development that bridges culinary artistry with applied food science. Through his evolving exploration of wellness beverages and conscious consumption, he continues to examine how flavour, sustainability, science, and nourishment can coexist in more thoughtful and responsible ways.

 [ali-özseven](https://www.linkedin.com/in/ali-ozseven)



“Waste is no longer being viewed as loss, but as untapped creative potential.”

The category is also deeply connected with sustainability and resource innovation.

More producers are now rethinking food waste by transforming by-products such as fruit peels, seeds, pulp, and plant trimmings into valuable ingredients.

Citrus skins can become aromatic extracts, grape skins can be converted into polyphenol-rich concentrates, and berry residues can be repurposed into antioxidant bases.

This movement towards “waste-to-value” systems is both environmentally significant and economically transformative, expanding what society considers usable raw materials in beverage production.

However, the science behind antioxidants remains complex and often misunderstood.

While these compounds are associated with various health benefits, their effectiveness depends on factors such as bioavailability, processing methods, and dietary context.

Not all antioxidants function identically within the body, and not all are absorbed efficiently in liquid form.

This has increased the importance of formulation science, which examines how ingredients are extracted, stabilised, combined, and delivered to improve their functional potential.

Modern beverage technology plays an important role in narrowing this gap.

Techniques such as controlled extraction, microfiltration, fermentation, and pH balancing allow developers to preserve sensitive compounds while improving absorption.

Some formulations include complementary ingredients that enhance uptake, while others rely on gentle processing methods that maintain molecular integrity.

The result is a category balancing food science with almost pharmaceutical precision while remaining deeply rooted in experience and enjoyment.

Another important aspect of antioxidant-rich drinks is their rejection of the old divide between health and pleasure.

In the past, beneficial drinks were often perceived as healthy but unpleasant in taste. Today, that perception is shifting. Bitterness, acidity, and astringency are increasingly appreciated for the complexity they contribute.

This evolution has opened the door to more adventurous recipes where taste itself becomes part of the functionality rather than separate from it.

This transformation has also reshaped the social and cultural role of these drinks.

Antioxidant beverages are now appearing in cafés, fine-dining restaurants, wellness bars, and cocktail menus.

They receive the same creative attention traditionally reserved for crafted spirits, with layered presentations, aromatic garnishes, foams, mists, and temperature control contributing to the overall experience.

In some spaces, the distinction between a functional beverage and a non-alcoholic cocktail has nearly disappeared.



Antioxidant-rich drinks have transformed from a niche wellness idea into a major trend in modern beverage culture.

What started as a simple cup of green tea or a glass of fruit juice has evolved into a complex category where science, sensory experience, and lifestyle intersect.

These drinks are no longer only about hydration or basic nutrition; they reflect a deeper cultural shift towards understanding how food interacts with the human body at a cellular and long-term level.

At the heart of these beverages are antioxidants, naturally occurring compounds such as polyphenols, flavonoids, carotenoids, and vitamins C and E.

These compounds are found abundantly in fruits, herbs, spices, and botanicals. They help the body manage oxidative stress, a process linked to ageing and environmental exposure.

Ingredients such as blueberries, pomegranate, citrus, green tea, turmeric, and dark leafy herbs have become increasingly popular, not only for their health-supporting qualities but also for their strong sensory appeal.

One significant evolution within this category is the merging of science and sensory design.

Antioxidant-rich drinks are no longer formulated purely for nutrition; they are crafted as layered sensory experiences.

The balance of flavours is essential. Bright top notes from citrus oils or fresh herbs combine with fruity mid-palates and earthy, sometimes bitter, bases from roots, teas, or roasted botanicals.

This layered approach mirrors the complexity found in wine or craft cocktails, where balance and progression matter as much as the ingredients themselves.

Colour has also become part of the narrative.

Deep purple berry hues, vibrant green herbal infusions, and golden turmeric beverages are not only visually striking; they also communicate information about composition and intensity.

Consumers increasingly associate rich colours with higher concentrations of beneficial compounds.

This visual language has helped elevate antioxidant beverages into a category that feels both scientific and artisanal.



Despite the popularity of the category, some scepticism remains.

Nutrition scientists continue debating the long-term impact of antioxidant intake on overall health.

Critics caution against oversimplification, pointing out that “more antioxidants” does not automatically guarantee better outcomes.

Excess sugar in some commercial products also raises concerns, particularly when health claims are not supported by balanced nutrition.

In response, many brands are now moving towards greater transparency, simpler ingredient lists, and reduced reliance on exaggerated marketing claims.

What is emerging is a more mature understanding of functionality.

Rather than positioning antioxidant drinks as miracle solutions, the industry is now

increasingly presenting them as part of broader lifestyle and dietary systems.

Hydration, dietary diversity, stress management, movement, and sleep all play equally important roles alongside these beverages.

In this context, antioxidant-rich drinks serve as supportive elements rather than standalone solutions. Looking ahead, the next phase appears to center around personalisation and system-based nourishment.

Advances in data-driven nutrition suggest a future where beverages may eventually be customised according to individual biological needs, activity levels, environmental exposure, or time of day.

Morning focus blends, afternoon recovery formulations, and evening relaxation beverages are already emerging.

Even more advanced possibilities include adaptive drinks that can release functional compounds in

phases or evolving over time through fermentation-based systems.

There is also increasing interest in hybrid formats that blur the boundaries between beverage, food, and supplement.

These may include layered drinks with sequential release systems, fermentation-led formulations, or modular beverages tailored to dynamic nutritional requirements.

In this sense, antioxidant-rich beverages are gradually becoming less like static products and more like evolving nourishment systems. Ultimately, the rise of antioxidant-rich drinks reflects a broader cultural shift.

In an increasingly fast-paced and complex world, people are seeking greater clarity, intention, and consciousness in what they consume.

A simple glass of brightly coloured liquid becomes more than a drink.

It becomes a sensory pause, an act of nourishment, and a subtle expression of care for the body.

Whether viewed through the lens of science, design, sustainability, or culture, antioxidant-rich beverages reveal something larger about the future of wellness itself: the desire to reconnect health, pleasure, creativity, and environmental responsibility into one harmonious experience.

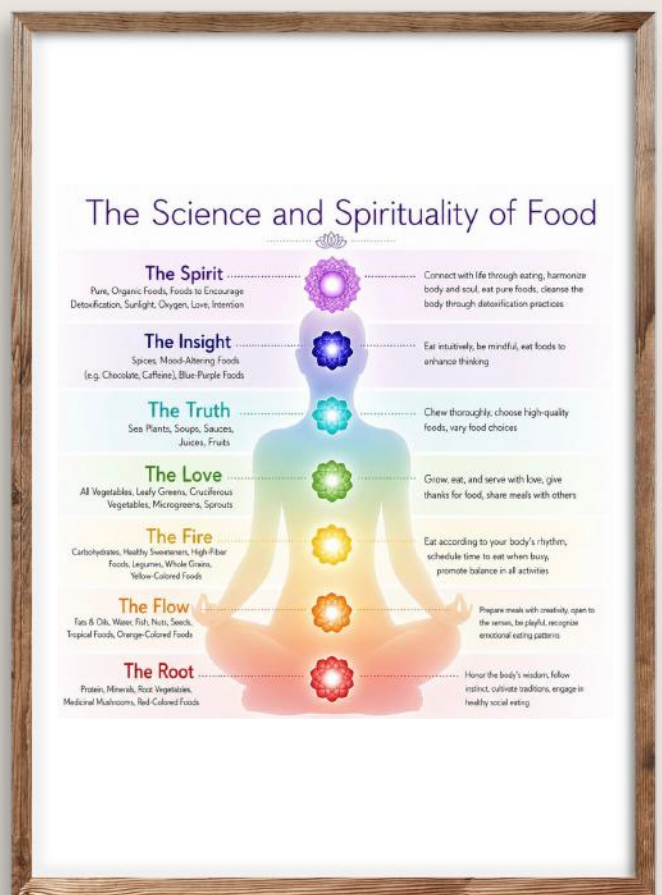
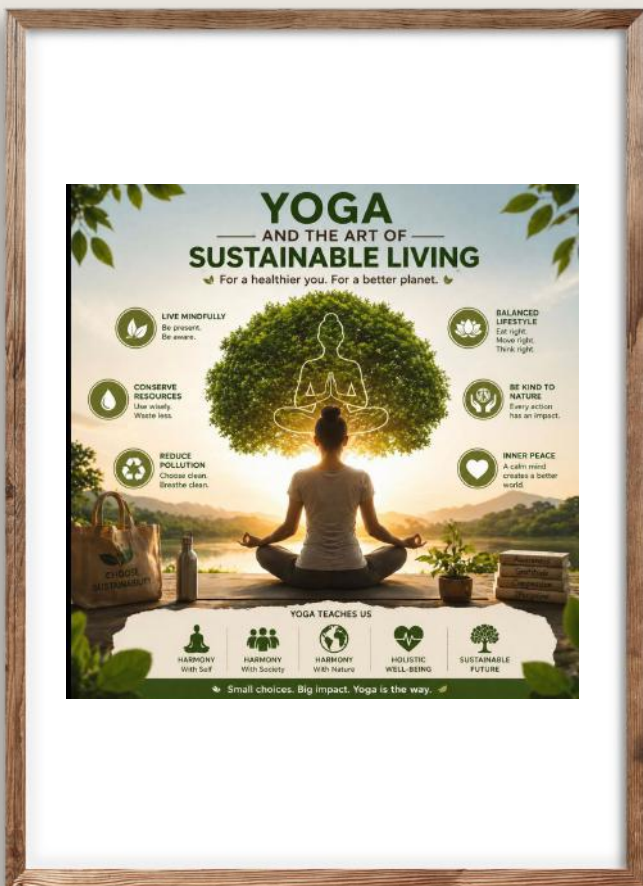
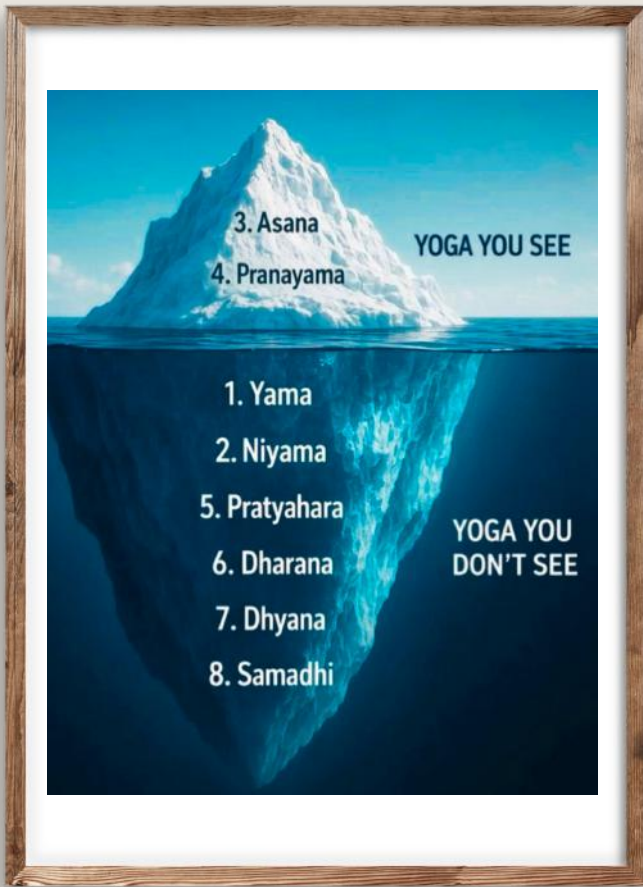
The rise of antioxidant-rich beverages reflects a deeper shift in human consciousness – a growing desire to nourish the body while caring for the planet.

*Perhaps the future of nourishment lies not only in what we consume, but in how consciously we choose to live.*





# Nuggets



# Can Our Breath Give Us More Than Just Life?

By Dr. Bhawna Gautam



If you ask someone why we breathe, they will reply, "To live."

While this is quite true, what we often do not realise is the deeper science behind breathing. Our yogis understood this long ago and harnessed it to attain physical and mental well-being and spiritual connection.

Once you gain this understanding, it can change your perspective on life completely. You begin to value your breath even more and live a life of greater fulfilment.

Yoga is often associated with movement and poses. This is true, but it forms only a small part of yoga.

At its core, yoga is actually about stillness of body, mind, and soul. Stillness creates the space needed for our body, mind, and soul to align. Once we align the three through yogic breathing techniques, we can attain a state of comfort and bliss both internally and externally.

Comfort is one thing we seek in almost everything we do. In fact, the silent reason many of us participate in the race of life, strive to make money, achieve goals, and pursue a certain lifestyle is to attain comfort. What we often fail to understand is that although physical comfort may come from outside, inner comfort comes from within. External factors may act as triggers, but we still have the power to control how we respond.

For example, when we face a difficult situation, a person, or an event in life, we become uncomfortable, stressed, or uneasy.

*What is this unease?*

It is the imbalance created within us in that moment.

There are many subtle changes that take place within us at such times, and one of the most noticeable is the change in our breathing pattern.

If we observe this with awareness, we can actually identify these subtle shifts, realign ourselves, and restore balance.

Once we do, we are able to find comfort and stability even in stressful situations.

*Such is the power of yoga.*

**"A calm mind is the greatest comfort you can give yourself."**

So, what does controlled breathing do, and how can we make breathing our superpower?

*Our breath is our connection.*

It connects us with the outside world around us, forming a fine line between life and death.

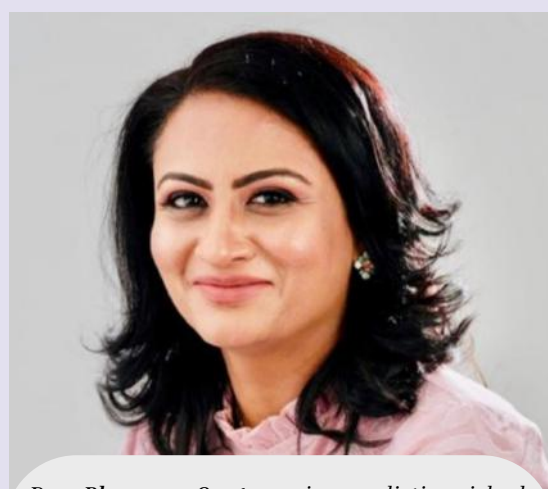
It connects organs and cells.

It connects us with deeper awareness.

It also connects our soul to our higher self.

As we explore the profound relationship between well-being, awareness, and the rhythms of life, the timeless science of breath emerges as one of humanity's most powerful yet often overlooked tools for inner balance and healing. Aligned beautifully with **Global Wellness Day** and **International Yoga Day**, this deeply reflective article by award-winning wellness advocate, author, medical professional, and yoga and meditation coach Dr. Bhawna Gautam revisits the ancient yogic understanding of breathing as far more than a biological process.

Anandda is honoured to feature her voice and wisdom in this issue, especially at a time when the world is increasingly seeking deeper pathways towards emotional resilience, conscious living, and holistic well-being. Moving gracefully across physical health, emotional stability, spiritual awareness, and disciplined living, the article reminds us that the breath is not only what sustains life – it is also what reconnects us to ourselves.



*Dr. Bhawna Gautam is a distinguished Indian-born Australian medical professional, author, thinker, and yoga and meditation coach deeply rooted in ancient Indian yogic philosophy. Drawing from her personal experiences and life lessons, she believes that the true purpose of life lies in healing, giving, and inspiring others towards greater awareness and inner balance.*

*Over the past decade, she has consistently shared reflections on well-being, discipline, mindfulness, and self-awareness, reaching a global audience across social media platforms.*

*Dr. Gautam is the author of 50 Best Quotes from The Power of Thoughts and Imaginations: A Book of Inspiration Vol. 1 & 2 and the co-author of My Voice, where she shares her spiritual journey and lived experiences. Her contributions to healthcare, wellness, and community empowerment have earned recognition and honours across Australia, France, Singapore, and the Philippines. Through her work, she continues to inspire individuals towards healthier, more conscious, and purpose-driven living.*

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**Links for Books:**

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## Physical Benefits

At the bodily level, breathing enriches our major systems. With yogic breathing, we can enhance its effects.

At the level of the nervous system, controlled breathing supports the circulation of brain fluid. This fluid helps clear metabolic waste, supplies nutrients to the brain and spinal cord, and helps prevent neurodegeneration.

Controlled breathing also activates the part of the nervous system that helps us feel calm, contributing to improved memory and cognitive function while reducing the chances of diseases such as dementia and Alzheimer's.

Controlled breathing creates a reset effect, leading to a lower heart rate, reduced blood pressure, and improved overall heart health.

Full expansion breathing creates pressure that allows more air into the lung bases and stretches the extreme lung alveoli, leading to greater oxygenation of the blood.

More oxygen becomes available at the cellular level, improving health throughout the body.

As a result, hormones become more regulated, sugar levels stabilise, sleep improves, and overall physical performance becomes more efficient.

## Mental Benefits

Our minds often become cluttered with everything we see, observe, and discuss. This clutter is frequently accompanied by fear, negativity, overthinking, and emotional fatigue.

Yogic breathing brings stability and clarity to the mind. It may not change the situation or the people around us, but it changes our attitude towards them. Our focus gradually shifts towards self-growth and self-discovery.

We naturally begin withdrawing from interactions and environments that drain our energy and find ourselves drawn towards smaller yet uplifting circles of people.

In fact, we begin to enjoy silence and the time spent with ourselves.

The more involved we become with our inner self, the more we begin to understand our real needs.

Life becomes simpler, calmer, and more meaningful, and we start enjoying it more deeply than before.

## Spiritual Benefits

We are all spiritual beings, but layers of envy, comparison, negativity, deceit, and dishonesty often create barriers between us and our deeper spirit.

Yogic breathing helps dissolve these barriers by increasing awareness and bringing us closer to our true self. The more spiritually aligned we become, the more empathetic, forgiving, loving, and kind we naturally grow. In turn, we become more capable of contributing positively to the world around us.

## The Importance of Discipline

To reap the full benefits of yoga, it is important to maintain a disciplined lifestyle.

Two important lifestyle factors that deeply affect us are what and when we eat and when we sleep.

Unmindful eating and irregular sleeping patterns increase stress within the body and gradually reduce our efficiency, creating a vicious cycle.

Our bodies are naturally designed to align with circadian rhythms – with the highest digestive efficiency when the sun is up and the deepest restorative sleep as night sets in.

“To rise like the sun, you have to rise with the sun.”



When we eat or sleep disorderly, this alignment is disturbed. The body becomes exhausted, the mind feels tired, and we feel disconnected from our spirit.

## Making Breathing Your Superpower

Most of us do not utilise the full capacity of our breath. Our breathing often remains shallow rather than full and deep, even though we possess the capacity for much more.

*This reflects life itself.*

We all carry immense potential within us, but only those who truly understand and utilise it are able to fully grow and flourish.

Yogic breathing strengthens us internally while also giving us the courage, resilience, and clarity to face the outer world.

Two yogic breathing techniques, or pranayama, that can easily be incorporated even into fast-paced modern lifestyles are **Bhastrika** (deep inhalation and complete exhalation) and **Anulom Vilom** (alternate nostril breathing).

Deep inhalation allows the lungs to fill completely, while complete exhalation empties them thoroughly, leading to a better exchange of respiratory gases. Anulom Vilom activates both sides of the brain, helping create balance, calmness, and mental stability.

While breathing is a powerful tool for attaining health and well-being, true balance is achieved only when the mind, body, and spirit align. Breathing must therefore be accompanied by a simple and honest lifestyle, good intentions, positive thoughts, and compassion.

## A Quick Breathing Technique for Stress Relief

Here is a simple breathing technique to help restore calmness, balance, and clarity during stressful moments:

- Find a quiet place and sit or stand with your spine erect.
- Bring your awareness gently to your breath.
- Initially, your breathing may feel irregular or noisy.
- Slowly calm the breath over a few cycles while keeping your awareness centered at the middle of the forehead. This helps retain focus and mentally withdraw from the stressful situation.



- Breathe deeply and exhale completely until the inhalation and exhalation become balanced, softer, quieter, and more even.
- Repeat as needed.

You will gradually gain clarity, feel calmer, and begin to reset your thoughts.

*So, whether you wish to improve your physical health, calm your mind, connect with your soul, or pursue your dreams, remember that you already carry a powerful tool within you at all times – your breath.*

Align yourself with it, and you can create endless possibilities.

***“To balance your life, you have to balance your mind.”***



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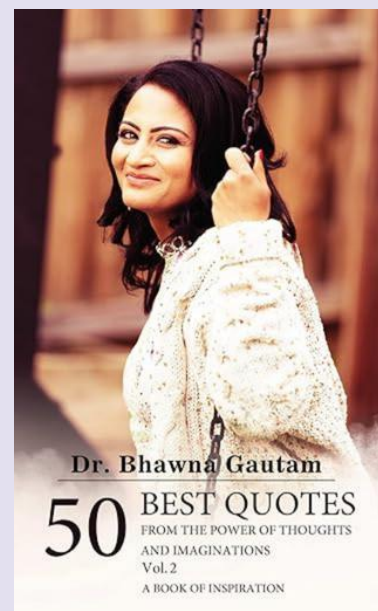
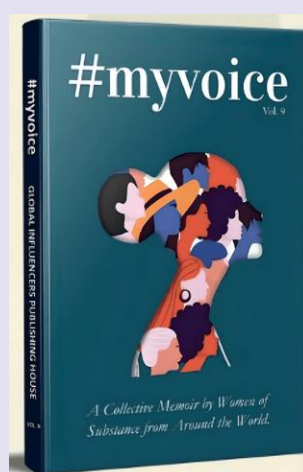
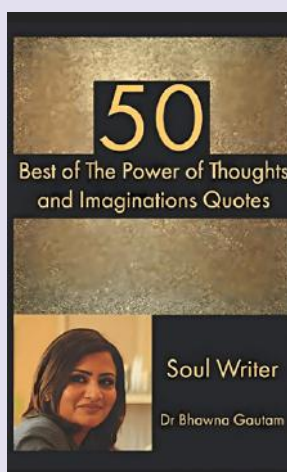
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# Managing Pressure at Work

Caring for the body and mind that carry our decisions

*By Peter Weiss*



**Peter Weiss** is a Kaizen mentor, executive coach, and founder of **MindKaizen**. After many years as a managing director, business owner, and Kaizen consultant, he now helps senior leaders and high achievers remain clear, calm, and effective under pressure.

Combining practical leadership experience with Kaizen thinking, Vipassana practice, and body-based awareness training, Peter developed **ShinKaizen**, a practical framework for inner stability, self-observation, and purposeful growth. His approach follows a simple progression: stabilise daily practice, deepen awareness, and then use coaching to pursue meaningful goals with clarity and intention.

Based on a homestead in rural Thailand, his work is shaped by simplicity, nature, disciplined practice, and the belief that genuine leadership begins with seeing reality more clearly.



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*There are moments in life when everything appears perfectly manageable from the outside, yet something deeper asks for our attention. The demands may be familiar, the routines well-established, and the responsibilities willingly carried, yet many people quietly sense the need for greater clarity, balance, and steadiness amid the movement of everyday life. As we continue our exploration of “One Earth. One Body. One Consciousness,” Peter Weiss brings a perspective shaped by years of leadership, observation, and personal practice. Rooted in simplicity and real-world experience, his reflections invite us to pause, look more closely at how we meet the demands of modern life, and rediscover the quiet disciplines that support resilience, awareness, and sustainable well-being. Particularly relevant during Global Wellness Day and International Men’s Health Week, this article offers gentle wisdom for anyone seeking to navigate responsibility with greater presence and ease.*

A leader can look calm in a meeting and still feel under pressure inside.

The voice is steady. The slides are ready. The numbers are known. The questions are answered. From the outside, everything looks under control.

Inside, it can feel very different.

The body is tight. The breath is shallow. The mind jumps ahead to the next problem. One part listens to the person speaking. Another part is already calculating risk, delay, cost, politics, and consequences.

*This is the hidden side of pressure at work.*

Pressure rarely arrives as one big event. It enters through small doors.

One difficult email.

One meeting that should have been shorter.

One customer complaint.

One person who does not take ownership.

One promise made too quickly.

One more evening where the body is at home while the mind is still at work.

For a while, high achievers can carry this.

*They are used to carrying things.*

They carry targets, teams, family expectations, business risks, and their own identity as someone who can cope. Many have built a career by staying reliable under pressure.



That strength deserves respect.

*Yet the same strength can become a trap.*

The body starts to live in a quiet state of readiness. The mind becomes faster but less clear. Small signals feel like threats.

A question can sound like criticism. A delay can feel like disrespect. A mistake can feel personal.

This is where managing pressure becomes more than stress management.

*It becomes a matter of awareness.*

### **The Body Is the Workplace We Never Leave**

We often speak about work as if it happens outside us.

The factory. The office. The boardroom. The laptop. The phone. The project. The customer.

Yet every decision, every reaction, and every difficult conversation passes through the same place first: the body and mind of the person involved.

*The body carries the leader.*

It carries attention, emotion, memory, habits, fear, and hope. It carries the tone of voice used in a meeting. It carries the impulse to interrupt. It carries the silence when something should be said.

This is why workplace pressure cannot be solved by better planning, better tools, or another productivity method.

Those things can help. They have their place.

Still, if the person using the tool is tense, distracted, or emotionally charged, the tool will be used from that condition.

A calm spreadsheet can still be used by an anxious mind.

A good meeting structure can still be driven by a defensive leader.

A clear strategy can still be damaged by a nervous reaction.

This is where *Vipassana* offers a practical skill for working life.

Vipassana means seeing clearly. In practice, it trains the ability to observe what is happening in the body and mind without reacting blindly.

This sounds simple.

It is not easy.

### **The Retreat and the Kaizen Event**

A traditional ten-day Vipassana retreat can be a powerful experience. For ten days, a person steps away from normal life. No phone. No meetings. No entertainment. No usual distractions. The day is structured around silence, sitting, walking, eating, and observation.

Many people come out of such a retreat with a different sense of themselves. They feel calmer.



**Most leaders  
are not failing.  
They are overholding.**  
The heaviest pressure is often not outside.  
It is the pressure to **hold everything together.**

They notice their thoughts more clearly. They see how much of life is driven by reaction.

That can be a deep experience.

Yet when they return to normal work, the old system is waiting.

The inbox is still full. The team still needs decisions. The family still needs attention. The body still remembers old patterns. The mind still wants quick relief from discomfort.

***This reminds me of Kaizen work in companies.***

A Kaizen event can create a strong shift in a short time. A team stops normal work, studies a process, sees waste, tests changes, and improves flow. For a few days, people think differently. They cooperate more closely. They see problems they ignored before.

***Then Monday comes.***

The old meetings return. The old measures return. The old leadership behaviour returns.

The improved process slowly bends back towards the old way.

The event was not the problem.

The missing daily practice was the problem.

This is the same challenge with inner work.

A retreat can open the door. A daily routine keeps the door open.

### **First Stabilise**

In Toyota thinking, improvement does not start with chaos.

First, the process needs stability.

This is the logic of *SDCA: Standardise, Do, Check, Act.*

Before a team improves a process, it needs a stable baseline. People need to know the current way. They need to follow it long enough to see what really happens.

The same principle applies to the inner life.

Many people try to improve themselves while their daily system is unstable.

They read a book. They download an app. They try a breathing practice for three days. They start journaling. They stop. They start again. Then they blame themselves for lacking discipline.





The issue is often simpler. There is no stable daily standard. **ShinKaizen** starts here.

Before asking people to change their lives, it helps them stabilise attention through a small daily routine. The aim is to build the basic capacity to sit, breathe, feel the body, and observe the mind.

No drama. No heroic promise.

Just a clear daily practice that can survive normal life.

For a busy professional, this matters.

A practice that only works in perfect conditions will disappear when pressure rises. A useful practice must fit into real life, with emails, family, travel, deadlines, and tired mornings.

The first step is to become the kind of person who returns to practice.

Even for ten minutes.

Especially when the mind says there is no time.

**Then Improve Awareness**

Once a routine becomes stable, improvement can begin.

This is the logic of **PDCA: Plan, Do, Check, Act.**

You test, observe, learn, and adjust.

**In ShinKaizen, the improvement phase works through body-mind awareness.**

The body gives signals before the mind creates a story.

- A tight jaw.
- A closed chest.
- A short breath.
- Heat in the face.
- Pressure in the stomach.

A sudden urge to defend, explain, control, or withdraw.

*These signals matter.*

They are often the first signs that pressure has entered the system.

Without awareness, the reaction runs automatically. The leader sends a sharp email, interrupts the meeting, avoids the conversation, or makes a decision simply to remove discomfort.

With awareness, there is a small space.

In that space, choice becomes possible.

*This is practical.*

A senior leader does not need poetic language when the board is pushing, the customer is angry, or the team is losing trust. The leader needs the ability to notice what pressure is doing inside before it becomes behaviour outside.

This is where Vipassana becomes useful at work.

It trains observation at the level where reaction begins.

Not as an idea. As direct experience.

The person learns to feel pressure without being fully owned by it.

The emotion can be present, but it does not have to drive the next sentence. The fear can be present, but it does not have to shape the next decision. That is a serious leadership skill.

**Then Choose a New Direction**

Stability and awareness create a stronger base.

Only then does it make sense to ask bigger questions.

What do I really want next? What kind of leader do I want to become?

Which goal is worth my energy now?

What old identity am I still protecting?

What would change if I acted from clarity rather than pressure?

**This is where GROWTH coaching enters.**

Many high achievers are good at setting goals.

They know how to plan, push, measure, and deliver. Yet under pressure, goals can become borrowed goals.

- A bigger title.
- A larger business.
- A higher number.
- A stronger image.

There is nothing wrong with ambition. The question is whether the goal still belongs to the person or whether it was inherited from an older version of the self.

*When body and mind become clearer, goal setting changes.*

The person can see the difference between a goal that expands life and a goal that keeps the old pressure alive.

This is where real growth begins. Through clearer seeing, steadier practice, and honest action.

“The strongest people are not those who never feel pressure. They are the ones who can feel pressure without immediately obeying it.”

**Pressure as a Teacher**

Pressure at work will not disappear.

Leadership includes pressure. Business includes pressure. Life includes pressure.

The question is how we meet it.

If pressure always pushes us into speed, control, and reaction, it slowly shapes our character. We may become successful and tense at the same time. We may win externally while losing contact with the body and mind that carry us.

*There is another way.*

We can treat pressure as a signal.

- A signal to pause.
- A signal to observe.
- A signal to return to the body.
- A signal to see what is really happening before we act.

This does not make life soft.

It makes leadership more honest.

The strongest people I have met are rarely those who never feel pressure. They are the ones who can feel pressure without immediately obeying it.

*That capacity is trained.*

A retreat can start the process. A daily practice can sustain it. Awareness can improve it. Coaching can turn it into a new direction for life and leadership.

This is the spirit of ShinKaizen.

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Before every sunrise, nature offers us a gift: the opportunity to begin again. Sleep is the bridge that carries us there. It renews the body, calms the mind, restores energy, and helps us meet life with greater clarity and balance. Yet in a world that rarely slows down, this simple gift is often the first thing we sacrifice. In this thoughtful article, Dr. Sanjay Manchanda, affectionately known to many as India's **Sleep Guru**, explores the extraordinary role sleep plays in shaping our health and well-being. Combining decades of medical experience with a deep understanding of human lifestyles, he explains why quality sleep remains one of the most powerful and natural contributors to a healthier, happier life. His message is simple yet profound: when we learn to honour sleep, we begin to honour ourselves.

# SLEEP, SILENCE AND THE RESTLESS MODERN MIND

## Why Sleep May Be the Most Important Health Investment of Our Time

By Dr. Sanjay Manchanda



For more than three decades, I have worked in the field of sleep medicine. Since establishing the Department of Sleep Medicine at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, New Delhi, in 1996, my team and I have conducted more than twenty-seven thousand sleep studies.

Over these years, I have watched lifestyles transform dramatically. If there is one trend that concerns me most, it is the growing normalisation of exhaustion.

Today, sleeping only a few hours is often worn as a badge of honour. Long workdays are celebrated as commitment. Constant availability is mistaken for productivity.

Many people believe they can negotiate with sleep and continue performing at their best. The human body, however, follows a different reality.

Sleep is not an optional luxury. It is one of the most fundamental biological processes sustaining physical health, emotional balance, cognitive performance, and long-term well-being. Yet modern society increasingly treats it as expendable.

### The Sleep Crisis of Modern Life

Across the world, a growing proportion of adults regularly sleep less than the recommended seven to nine hours. Adolescents are among the most sleep-deprived groups, influenced by academic demands, social media, gaming, and prolonged screen exposure.

Healthcare workers, shift workers, drivers, entrepreneurs, IT professionals, and corporate executives face particular challenges because their schedules often conflict with natural biological rhythms.

India is witnessing the same pattern. As lifestyles become increasingly digital and globally connected, sleep disorders, insomnia, burnout, anxiety-related sleep disturbances, and obstructive sleep apnoea are becoming more common.

Several forces are driving this change. Smartphones, streaming platforms, and social media have effectively removed natural stopping points from daily life. Artificial light delays the release of melatonin, the hormone that regulates sleep. Work often continues long after

Dr. Sanjay Manchanda is one of India's foremost pioneers in the field of Sleep Medicine and currently serves as Chairperson and Head of the Department of Sleep Medicine at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, New Delhi. His journey in sleep medicine began in 1993, followed by advanced experience at St. George Hospital, Sydney, Australia, in 1995, where he further deepened his expertise in the emerging science of sleep disorders and restorative health.

In 1996, Dr. Manchanda established the stand-alone and dedicated Department of Sleep Medicine at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, making it one of the earliest specialised sleep medicine centres in India.

Widely known as the *Sleep Guru*, he has been a passionate advocate for recognising sleep as a fundamental pillar of health alongside nutrition and physical activity. His work bridges clinical medicine, circadian health, emotional well-being, lifestyle medicine, and preventive healthcare, helping individuals understand the profound relationship between sleep, mental resilience, productivity, relationships, and long-term well-being.

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office hours through emails, messages, and virtual meetings. Global connectivity has blurred traditional distinctions between work and rest, home and office, and day and night.

The result is a society that remains mentally awake long after the body is ready to rest.

### When the Mind Refuses to Rest

Many people tell me the same story.

“I am exhausted but cannot sleep.” “My body is tired, but my mind keeps running.” “I wake up feeling as tired as when I went to bed.”

These experiences reveal an important truth: sleep is not simply the absence of wakefulness. It requires the nervous system to feel safe enough to let go.

When stress remains unresolved, the brain continues functioning in a state of alertness. Even after work ends, the mind may replay conversations, anticipate problems, revisit disappointments, or prepare for tomorrow's responsibilities.

Stress hormones remain elevated. The body's fight-or-flight response stays active. The body lies down, but the brain remains on duty.

This is why anxiety and sleep share such a close relationship. Anxiety disrupts sleep, while poor sleep amplifies anxiety. Even one night of inadequate sleep can increase irritability, emotional sensitivity, impaired judgement, and stress reactivity. Over time, chronic sleep deprivation weakens emotional resilience and mental clarity.

### The Hidden Burden of Emotional Fatigue

Many people today are not simply physically tired. They are emotionally exhausted.

Modern life places individuals under constant pressure to perform, achieve, adapt, and remain connected. Alongside these expectations come uncertainty, information overload, social comparison, emotional suppression, and unresolved personal stress.



“If sleep does not perform an absolutely vital function, then perhaps it is the biggest mistake the evolutionary process has ever made.”

During the day, distractions keep these pressures hidden beneath activity. At night, silence removes those distractions. Suddenly, the mind begins processing what it has postponed.

Bedtime becomes the hour of overthinking. Conversations are replayed. Future scenarios are imagined. Worries expand. The nervous system remains activated when it should be settling into restoration.

Many people sleep for seven or eight hours and still wake feeling depleted because sleep quality has been compromised by emotional overload.

The body may rest. The mind often does not.

### A Culture of Continuous Stimulation

Human beings evolved within rhythms of activity and recovery. Daylight encouraged wakefulness. Darkness encouraged sleep. Nature offered regular cycles of effort and restoration.

Modern life frequently ignores these rhythms.

Notifications arrive constantly. News cycles never stop. Social media encourages comparison. Entertainment is available at every moment. Digital platforms compete continuously for attention.

The nervous system was never designed for this level of sustained stimulation.

Many younger professionals now live in a state I often describe as **functional exhaustion**. They maintain careers, meet deadlines, and appear productive, yet beneath the surface, they are sleep-deprived, emotionally drained, and chronically overstimulated.

Eventually the consequences emerge. *Sleep deprivation has been linked with hypertension, diabetes, obesity, cardiovascular disease, impaired immunity, anxiety, depression, burnout, cognitive decline, and reduced emotional stability.* It affects attention, memory, creativity, decision-making, and performance.

Ironically, the pursuit of productivity eventually undermines productivity itself.

### Relationships Need Rest Too

One of the least recognised consequences of chronic sleep deprivation is its effect on human relationships.

Technology has connected humanity globally, yet many people feel increasingly disconnected emotionally.

Families may sit together physically while remaining absorbed in separate digital worlds.

Meaningful conversations become shorter. Listening becomes rarer. Presence becomes fragmented.

Sleep deprivation directly affects patience, empathy,

emotional regulation and communication. Small disagreements escalate more quickly when individuals are tired.

Emotional fatigue reduces intimacy, understanding, and connection.

Children are especially affected. Reduced parental attention, irregular schedules, excessive screen exposure, and emotional distraction can influence their sense of security and belonging.

Healthy relationships require emotional presence.

Emotional presence requires mental and physical restoration.

This is why sleep disorders, emotional burnout, and relationship strain are increasingly interconnected challenges.

### Why Emotional Safety Matters

One of the most powerful influences on healthy sleep is emotional safety.

When people feel understood, accepted, valued, and emotionally secure, their nervous systems relax.

Stress hormones decrease. The body shifts towards restoration.

Meaningful conversations matter. Genuine human connection matters. Feeling heard matters.

Human beings regulate emotions through relationships. We are biologically designed for connection.

When emotional needs remain unmet, loneliness and stress often increase.

The nervous system becomes more vigilant. Sleep becomes lighter and more fragmented.

Good sleep is often one of the clearest signs that the mind feels safe enough to rest.



### One Earth, One Body, One Consciousness

The theme of this issue resonates deeply with what we observe in sleep medicine.

The human body functions through rhythms: sleep-wake cycles, breathing patterns, hormonal fluctuations, energy cycles, and recovery processes.

Nature functions through rhythms as well: sunrise and sunset, seasons, tides, periods of activity, and periods of stillness.

For thousands of years, human life evolved in harmony with these natural patterns.

Today, artificial lighting, irregular schedules, excessive screen exposure, and constant stimulation frequently disrupt that relationship.

When we reconnect with natural rhythms, remarkable benefits often follow.

Morning sunlight helps regulate biological clocks.

Physical activity improves sleep quality.

Time spent in nature reduces stress hormones.

Silence calms mental activity. Mindful breathing supports nervous system balance.

The body thrives when it remains aligned with the rhythms that shaped human evolution.

### The Healing Power of Stillness

Modern medicine increasingly recognises the value of practices

that calm the nervous system and support emotional regulation. Yoga, pranayama, meditation, mindful breathing, prayer, gratitude, reflection, and conscious relaxation are not simply spiritual practices.

They influence physiology. They support emotional balance, improve nervous system function, and create conditions favourable for restorative sleep.

Equally important is the restoration of simple daily habits.

Maintaining consistent sleep and wake times. Creating a digital sunset before bedtime.

Seeking morning sunlight.

Moving the body regularly. Spending time outdoors.

Reintroducing silence into daily life.

Establishing healthier boundaries around work.

Small changes, practised consistently, often produce profound results.

### A More Humane Future

If humanity continues to neglect rest, emotional well-being, meaningful relationships, and inner balance, we risk creating a future that is technologically extraordinary yet emotionally depleted. We may build smarter machines, faster networks, and more efficient systems while quietly

witnessing rising levels of anxiety, burnout, loneliness, chronic disease, and psychological exhaustion.

We may gain efficiency while losing peace.

We may increase connectivity while reducing intimacy.

We may accumulate information while neglecting wisdom.

The human nervous system was never designed for continuous stimulation, endless notifications, chronic comparison, emotional suppression, and perpetual productivity.

Without adequate recovery, even the most capable individuals eventually experience depletion of mind, body, and spirit.

Sleep deprivation and chronic stress are already linked with growing rates of lifestyle diseases.

*Yet there is every reason for optimism.*

Across the world, people are beginning to recognise that well-being cannot be outsourced to technology alone.

There is a growing movement towards mindfulness, sleep health, yoga, meditation, emotional intelligence, preventive healthcare, and conscious living.

Increasingly, individuals, organisations, educators, and

healthcare professionals are acknowledging that true success is measured not merely by achievement but by the quality of life that accompanies it.

A meaningful life includes restorative sleep, emotional balance, healthy relationships, inner calm, physical vitality, and a sense of purpose. It includes the ability to work with excellence while preserving one's humanity. It includes moments of silence amid activity, reflection amid information, and connection amid complexity.

Perhaps the next chapter of human progress will not be defined solely by how fast we move but by how wisely we live. It may depend on our ability to restore balance between ambition and recovery, achievement and well-being, and productivity and presence.

They will remember that rest is not laziness. Sleep is not wasted time. Silence is not emptiness.

They are biological necessities, powerful healers, and essential foundations of human consciousness. In many ways, healthy sleep is more than the absence of insomnia. It is often a reflection of how peacefully, rhythmically, and meaningfully a person is living. A civilisation that forgets how to rest may become powerful, yet profoundly unwell. A civilisation that remembers balance has the opportunity to become not only advanced, but truly humane.





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## The Lifeline That Flows Through Humanity

Every year on 14 June, the world comes together to observe World Blood Donor Day, a global initiative led by the World Health Organization to honour the millions of voluntary blood donors whose generosity quietly saves lives every day.

Their contribution supports patients during emergencies, childbirth, surgeries, cancer treatment, accidents, blood disorders, and countless other critical medical situations worldwide.

The theme for World Blood Donor Day 2026, *“One Drop of Humanity. Give Blood. Save Lives,”* beautifully places humanity at the heart of every donation.

It reminds us that each drop of blood carries far more than medical significance.

It carries compassion, solidarity, and the simple willingness to help another human being survive.

The message is profoundly universal. **Humanity itself can be reflected within a single drop of blood.**

Every donor becomes part of an invisible lifeline connecting strangers across nations, cultures, and communities.

Modern medicine has transformed blood transfusion into one of healthcare’s safest and most reliable interventions through advanced testing, storage systems, and screening technologies.

Yet one truth remains unchanged: **blood cannot be manufactured.**

Hospitals and emergency services continue to depend entirely upon people willing to donate regularly and voluntarily.

Every two seconds, someone somewhere in the world requires blood.

*A child undergoing surgery.*

*A mother facing complications during childbirth.*

*A patient receiving cancer treatment.*

*A trauma victim after an accident.*

*A person living with thalassaemia or sickle cell disease requiring repeated transfusions for survival.*

Behind many successful recoveries stands an unknown donor whose quiet act of giving became someone else’s chance to live.

The World Health Organization continues to emphasise the urgent need for sustained voluntary unpaid blood donation worldwide because many countries still face shortages and unequal access to safe blood and blood products.

Low and middle-income nations remain especially vulnerable, where emergency blood availability can often determine survival itself.

This year’s campaign, therefore, seeks to encourage regular voluntary donation, strengthen national blood programmes, and raise awareness about the life-

saving impact of blood and plasma donation.

Blood donation also carries immense social and emotional value.

It is among the purest expressions of shared humanity and collective responsibility.

A donor may never meet the recipient, yet chooses to become part of another person’s survival story.

In a world often divided by differences, blood quietly reminds us of a deeper truth: human life remains profoundly interconnected.

Donating blood also fosters a stronger sense of social consciousness.

It nurtures empathy, civic participation, and awareness that healthcare is sustained not only by hospitals and doctors but also by ordinary individuals willing to help others without expectation.

An equally important yet lesser discussed aspect of blood donation concerns **rare blood groups.**

For people carrying rare blood types, medical emergencies can become particularly challenging.

Blood groups are considered rare when they occur in fewer than one in a thousand individuals.

Some specialised blood subtypes are found only within very small populations globally.

This creates an emotionally difficult reality. Individuals with rare blood groups may themselves donate blood regularly for others, yet when they require urgent transfusions, finding compatible blood can become extremely complex and time-sensitive.

Even blood groups considered relatively uncommon, such as AB negative, often remain in critically short supply. Certain specialised blood types required for treating conditions such as sickle cell disease also depend heavily upon carefully matched donor networks.

This is why **diversity in blood donation matters deeply.** Blood compatibility often relates to ancestral and genetic backgrounds, making broad community participation essential for maintaining safe blood supplies for everyone.

Many countries are strengthening rare donor registries and encouraging younger generations to participate more actively in voluntary donation programmes to ensure wider access to safe blood.

World Blood Donor Day therefore serves as a powerful reminder that humanity survives through quiet acts of care shared between strangers. One donation can save multiple lives. One donor can offer hope to an entire family. A single act of generosity may last only minutes. Its impact can last a lifetime.



# Chair Tai Chi

*Finding stillness,  
balance, and vitality  
through movement  
that meets us where  
we are*

*By Heidi Nechtman*

**Heidi Nechtman** is an accessible yoga and Tai Chi teacher, yoga therapist, and founder of **Perfectly Imperfect Yoga**, dedicated to making wellness practices available to people of all ages, particularly older adults and those living with chronic conditions.

Based in Tempe, Arizona, USA, she offers in-person and online classes, along with on-demand programmes that support physical, emotional, and mental well-being through gentle, adaptable movement.

Her Tai Chi practice is rooted in the Yang style, developed through extensive study with teachers and masters at MoonWillow Tai Chi & Wellness in Illinois. Heidi is also certified to teach Tai Chi Walking and Tai Chi Ball Qigong, expanding her ability to help students cultivate balance, mobility, coordination, and inner calm.

Through her work, she champions the belief that wellness should be accessible, adaptable, and available to everyone, regardless of age, ability, or circumstance.



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[heidi-nechtman](#)

*“Balance begins where safety and presence meet.”*

Wellness often begins with a simple question: What if the practice could adapt to us, rather than us having to adapt to the practice?

As June brings global attention to wellbeing through **Global Wellness Day** and **International Yoga Day**, conversations around movement, mindfulness, and healthy ageing are expanding beyond conventional definitions of exercise.

Increasingly, the emphasis is shifting towards practices that are sustainable, inclusive, and accessible across every stage of life.

In this thoughtful article, Heidi Nechtman invites us into the world of Chair Tai Chi, a practice that honours both movement and stillness while making the deeper benefits of Tai Chi available to everyone.

Drawing upon ancient wisdom and modern accessibility principles, she explores how a simple chair can become a gateway to greater balance, resilience, awareness, and well-being.





## Chair Tai Chi: A Deep Practice for Everyone

As the sun rises, you may see small groups in parks performing synchronised, slow, graceful, and deliberate movements.

At the same time, others may be seated in a chair at home, practising similarly slow, graceful movements coordinated with their breath. Still others may be participating in online classes or attending sessions at a community centre, workplace, or university.

Tai Chi and Chair Tai Chi are for everyone: busy executives, rushed parents, older adults, athletes, people with chronic conditions, young people, and anyone who wishes to slow down, breathe, and improve their mental and physical well-being.

As an accessible yoga and Tai Chi instructor, I have a front-row seat to the misconceptions and confusion surrounding both of these rich traditions and, indeed, around the concept of accessibility itself.

In many modern settings, yoga and Tai Chi are viewed simply as exercise. At best, they may be regarded as physical mind-body practices.

However, the histories of yoga and Tai Chi stretch back thousands of years and are far deeper and more complex than movement alone.

Fortunately, we do not need to understand every aspect of that complexity in order to access their benefits.

When a practice is viewed as purely physical, accessibility is often seen as compensation for what someone cannot do.

However, as an accessible teacher, I do not design my classes to fill gaps or overcome perceived limitations. Instead, I teach in ways that allow everyone to access the deeper dimensions of these practices – the dimensions from which we can all benefit equally.

### A Brief History of Tai Chi

The origins of Tai Chi predate written history, though the foundations of the tradition likely began more than three thousand years ago.

Tai Chi is rooted in martial arts, ancient Chinese philosophy, and Chinese cosmology.

In much of the modern world, military practice, philosophy, health and wellness, and religion are treated as separate areas of life. Historically, however, these aspects were deeply interconnected.

As a result, the martial art of Tai Chi remains closely connected to Taoism and Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM).

These traditions contemplate the natural balance in all things and the existence of complementary forces throughout the universe.



It is believed that sometime during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, more defined movement sequences and physical routines began to emerge.

This period brought greater standardisation, but also more variation as the practice spread.

Several major styles were created by different founders. Some emphasised martial applications, while others focused more on meditative movement, mindfulness, or health benefits.

As Tai Chi continued to evolve and spread geographically, variations within each style increased. Today, there are countless ways to practise Tai Chi.

By the nineteenth century, the focus shifted increasingly towards health benefits, although all aspects of the tradition remain present in its many styles.

During the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, Tai Chi expanded globally as a health and wellness practice.

It is often paired with Qigong, a term describing Taoist physical, mental, and breathing exercises designed to cultivate qi – energy or life force.

# CHAIR YOGA

is a Love Letter  
to Your Self



Heidi Nechtman

Large Print



Together, these traditions inform the Tai Chi styles and forms familiar today.

Tai Chi continues to gain popularity worldwide as a way to maintain physical and mental health across all ages and backgrounds.

The practice embodies many apparent opposites: stillness within movement, stability within fluidity, awareness within mental quietness, and focused concentration alongside the release of tension.

Although there are many stylistic variations, most practices begin with a rooted, upright, and grounded posture.

Maintaining this posture while balancing these complementary qualities creates a meditative state throughout the practice.

The benefits are numerous: resilience, release of mental and physical tension, reduced stiffness, improved strength and balance, healthier joints, smoother movement, improved posture, and greater awareness of body and mind.

People who practise Tai Chi often experience reduced blood pressure, improved overall health and fitness, enhanced respiratory function, reduced anxiety and depression, decreased chronic pain, better sleep, and stronger immune and digestive system function.

## What Is Chair Tai Chi?

Chair Tai Chi is an accessible style of Tai Chi practised either fully seated or with the chair used as support during standing movements and postures.

It may also incorporate Qigong movements, tapping, acupressure point stimulation, joint exercises, and brain-based movement activities.

Chair Tai Chi is a physical practice, yet one that also offers deep emotional and mental benefits.

Whether practised standing or seated, the core benefits remain the same.

Chair Tai Chi incorporates the same posture principles and complementary forces that create the physical and mental health benefits associated with traditional Tai Chi.

Tai Chi practice often begins with Wuji – a stable, still, and quiet posture and state of mind. To connect with Wuji, a person must first feel safe. For some people, that sense of safety comes through the use of a chair.

Incorporating a chair makes the practice accessible to more people, often including those who may benefit from wellness practices the most.

For individuals who have difficulty with balance or standing for extended periods, the chair offers a safe and supportive way to access the practice.

Additionally, when attention must constantly shift towards maintaining balance, the quality of the practice can be affected. Similarly, someone practising outdoors on cold ground might choose to wear shoes or move indoors.

A person practising in a noisy environment may seek a quieter space if sound becomes distracting.

Using a chair enhances the practice rather than diminishing it.

There are many reasons someone may choose to use a chair: practising at a desk during a work break, moving safely in small spaces, preserving energy for caregiving or other responsibilities, adjusting to sensitivities or neuropathy in the feet, or simply because the chair feels more supportive. Personal preference alone is reason enough.

A common recommendation for improving physical and mental health is to move in small amounts throughout the day. Chair Tai Chi makes this possible almost anywhere.

You can practise one or two movements at your desk, during a phone call, or in the comfort of your home or office.

## A Sample Chair Tai Chi Practice

Just as there is tremendous variation in Tai Chi overall, Chair Tai Chi classes also vary widely. Here is one example of how a class may flow:

1. Bow into the practice by making a fist with the right hand (representing the sun) and covering it with the cupped left hand (representing the moon), then bowing.
2. Come into Wuji posture and mindset, grounding and breathing into the Lower Dantian, one of the body's primary energy centers located just below the navel.
3. Move the body from head to toe, warming the joints, activating and oxygenating the muscles, and maintaining a strong, stable posture.
4. Practise Qigong and Tai Chi movements in various directions while cultivating qi, strengthening muscles, spine, and joints, incorporating brain challenges, and coordinating flowing movement with the breath.
5. Stand or remain seated for the next portion of practice while continuing Qigong and Tai Chi movements.
6. Incorporate additional practices such as tapping, self-massage, eye movements, hand and finger exercises, and acupressure point work.
7. Practise single-posture or non-stepping Tai Chi forms such as Upward/Downward, Inward/Outward, and Tai Chi Stance.
8. Return to meditation and Wuji.
9. Bow out of the practice.

No matter your age, health, profession, or personal circumstances, Chair Tai Chi can become a meaningful addition to your holistic wellness toolkit.

It is adaptable, accessible, and can be practised almost anywhere there is a chair.

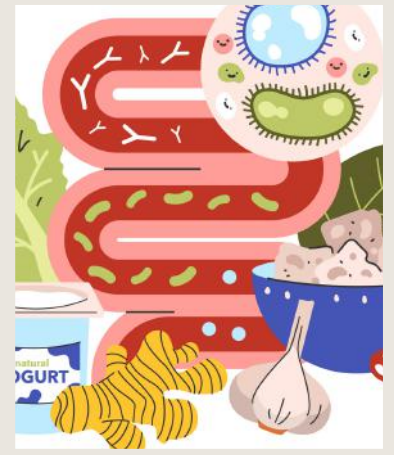
More importantly, it reminds us that well-being is not measured by how much we can do, but by how deeply we can connect with ourselves through mindful movement, breath, balance, and awareness.



# The Boardroom In Your Belly

How Corporate Stress Is Rewriting Gut Health

By Dr. Neeraj Dhamija



*Every age leaves its signature upon the human body. Some eras were marked by scarcity, others by infection, physical hardship, or environmental challenges.*

*Our own age carries a different imprint, one shaped by relentless connectivity, constant engagement, and lives lived at an extraordinary pace. The body, as always, continues to record the story.*

*In this month dedicated to well-being and conscious living, Dr. Neeraj Dhamija offers the perspective of a gastrosurgeon who has spent decades listening closely to what the body reveals beneath the surface.*

*Through the lens of contemporary medicine and lived clinical experience, he invites us to look more deeply at a growing health reality that touches millions, often quietly, and far more closely than many realise.*



Dr. Neeraj Dhamija

Dr. Neeraj Dhamija is one of India's most renowned surgical gastroenterologists and a recognised leader in advanced gastrointestinal, hepatobiliary, and pancreatic surgery. As a senior consultant in Surgical Gastroenterology and HPB Surgery at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, New Delhi, he has spent nearly two decades delivering highly specialised care while advancing the field through clinical excellence, innovation, and patient-centered practice.

His expertise spans the full spectrum of complex gastrointestinal disorders, with particular proficiency in minimally invasive laparoscopic and robotic surgical techniques. Through his speciality practice, Gastro Surgery & Stone Centre, Janakpuri, New Delhi, Dr. Dhamija continues to combine cutting-edge holistic care with compassionate patient management, helping individuals navigate some of the most challenging disorders of the digestive system.

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[www.ananddaglobal.com](http://www.ananddaglobal.com)

Over more than two decades of operating on the human digestive tract, I have learned that the stomach rarely lies. Long before a patient mentions their job, their EMIs, their toxic boss, or their 14-hour shift, their gut has already revealed the story – manifesting as a burning chest at 2 a.m., a bowel that misbehaves before a Monday meeting, or an ulcer that refuses to heal despite the best medication.

### The Hidden Epidemic in Corporate India

We are living through what I believe is the largest, least acknowledged epidemic in urban India: *corporate stress and its quiet yet devastating assault on the gut.*

*The numbers are sobering.*

The *ADP Research Institute's 2024 People at Work* report found that nearly 30 percent of Indian employees experience daily stress, with only one in five describing themselves as “thriving” at work. *Gi Group's All in the Mind Survey* of corporate India placed the prevalence of clinically significant anxiety or depression among white-collar workers at an astonishing 42.5 percent.

An *HCL Healthcare assessment* of corporate employees found that 84 per cent reported low mood or depressive thoughts, and 59 per cent showed signs of moderate-to-severe anxiety.

The financial cost is equally telling. *Deloitte's Mental Health and Well-being in the Workplace Survey* estimates that poor mental health drains Indian employers of roughly ₹1.1 lakh crore (about US\$14 billion) every year, primarily through presenteeism, absenteeism, and attrition.

The *World Health Organization* projects that India could lose up to US\$1.03 trillion to mental-health-related productivity losses between 2012 and 2030.

Globally, *the American Psychological Association's 2023 Work in America Survey* reported that 77 percent of workers had experienced work-related stress in the preceding month.

These are not merely psychiatric statistics. They are gastroenterological ones.

### Where the Brain Meets the Bowel: Understanding the Gut-Brain Axis

The gut and the brain are not the distant relatives medicine once imagined; they are conjoined twins, communicating constantly along what is now called the *microbiota-gut-brain axis.*

Three highways carry the traffic.

#### The HPA Axis

The first is the Hypothalamic-Pituitary-Adrenal (HPA) axis – the body's master stress circuit.

When a deadline looms or a manager's email lands at midnight, the hypothalamus releases corticotropin-releasing factor (CRF), which triggers cortisol secretion from the adrenal glands.

A landmark review in *Frontiers in Endocrinology (2023)* and a 2024 narrative review in *Nutrients* on the chronic stress response confirm that sustained cortisol elevation disrupts the intestinal epithelial barrier, increases gut permeability (“leaky gut”), and reshapes the microbiome, favouring pro-inflammatory species.

#### The Vagus Nerve

The second is the vagus nerve, the body's longest cranial nerve and the main communication line between the brain and the gut.

Approximately 80 percent of its fibres are afferent, meaning they transmit signals from the gut to the brain. Chronic stress reduces parasympathetic vagal tone, which subsequently affects gut motility, visceral pain perception, and even mood regulation.



#### The Gut Microbiome

The third is the gut microbiome.

In their landmark *Physiological Reviews* paper (2019) and subsequent updates, Cryan and colleagues demonstrated that stress-induced dysbiosis decreases beneficial *Lactobacillus* and *Bifidobacterium* species while increasing pro-inflammatory microbiota.

These microbes produce neurotransmitters – over 90 per cent of the body's serotonin is synthesised in the gut – short-chain fatty acids, and lipopolysaccharides that directly impact brain chemistry, creating a vicious feedback loop.

*In essence, every anxious thought you have in a glass-walled office triggers a biochemical reaction in your intestines. And every disturbed gut sends signals back to the brain, exacerbating anxiety.*

This is not a metaphor. It is measurable physiology.

#### Irritable Bowel Syndrome: When Stress Begins Speaking Through the Gut

Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS), defined by the Rome IV criteria as recurrent abdominal pain occurring at least one day per week for the past three months, associated with defecation or a change in stool form or

frequency, is now classified as a disorder of gut-brain interaction.

A 2020 systematic review and meta-analysis published in *The Lancet Gastroenterology & Hepatology* estimated a global IBS prevalence of 3.8 per cent by Rome IV criteria and 9.2 per cent by the older Rome III criteria.

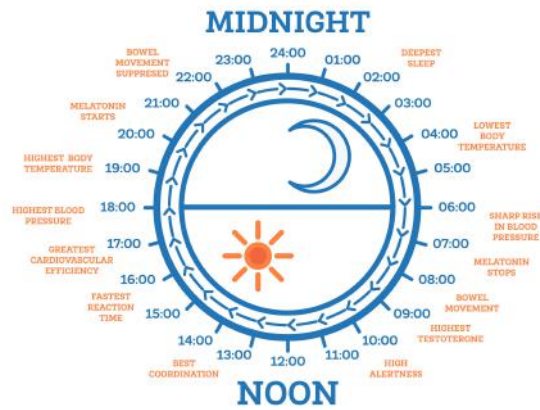
Indian community surveys have reported figures ranging from under 1 per cent to over 7 per cent, but these significantly understate the burden in white-collar populations.

An Italian study of 653 healthcare workers, published in the *Journal of Psychosomatic Research* (2021), found an IBS prevalence of 16.8 per cent, with job strain, sleep disturbance, and lower work ability all significantly associated.

A 2021 systematic review in the same journal concluded that patients with IBS exhibit heightened emotional reactivity to acute psychological stressors such as public speaking and arithmetic tasks, accompanied by altered gut motility and HPA-axis responses.

In my own practice, I observe this almost daily: bankers, consultants, IT professionals, and lawyers in their thirties and forties presenting with bloating, alternating diarrhoea and constipation,

## CIRCADIAN RHYTHMS



and an urgency that disrupts both meetings and self-esteem.

Their colonoscopies are normal; their cortisol curves are not.

### Acid, Reflux, and the Midnight Burn

The second major casualty is the upper gut.

According to a meta-analysis published in the *Indian Journal of Gastroenterology* (2021), India's pooled GERD prevalence is approximately 15.6 per cent, with regional studies in Kerala and Mumbai reporting figures as high as 22–28 per cent.

A landmark *AIIMS study of hospital employees* found GERD prevalence at 16.2 per cent, with stress, irregular meals, and night duty emerging as the strongest predictors.

The mechanism is well established. Chronic stress increases gastric acid secretion through vagal and gastrin-mediated pathways, delays gastric emptying, reduces lower oesophageal sphincter tone, and heightens visceral sensitivity, making even normal amounts of acid feel more painful.

Adding to this is *Helicobacter pylori*, which infects roughly 60–80 per cent of Indian adults.

A 2017 Indian study published in the *Journal of Clinical and Diagnostic Research* found that among 120 patients with functional dyspepsia, 82.5 percent tested positive for either *H. pylori*, psychological distress, or both.

Stress and *H. pylori* are not competitors; they are collaborators.

### Sleep: The Silent Multiplier

No discussion of corporate gut health is complete without considering sleep.

The Indian software professional sleeping five hours a night, the call-centre worker on rotating shifts, and the surgeon on call are all running their gut on a broken clock.

A 2020 review published in *Sleep Medicine Reviews* demonstrated that even two weeks of night-shift work measurably alters gut microbial composition, increases intestinal permeability, and raises inflammatory markers.

Circadian disruption desynchronises the gut's peripheral clock, impairing motility, mucus secretion, and bile acid rhythms.

A 2024 cross-sectional study of nurses working rotating shifts at a New Delhi tertiary hospital, published in *Cureus*, found a prevalence of functional dyspepsia of 31 per cent, with high perceived stress nearly tripling the odds.

The relationship is bidirectional: *poor sleep worsens gut symptoms, and a distressed gut worsens sleep.*

### Other Faces of Stress in the Gut

Functional dyspepsia – that nagging postprandial heaviness or epigastric burning without an ulcer on endoscopy – affects nearly 30 percent of urban Indians, according to data cited in *Indian Society of Gastroenterology* consensus documents.

Stress-related mucosal disease, classically described in ICU patients, where 75–100 percent develop gastric erosions within 24 hours of admission, has a milder outpatient cousin: erosive gastritis triggered by sustained sympathetic overdrive, NSAID misuse for “tension headaches,” and skipped meals.

Stress can also exacerbate inflammatory bowel disease. A 2022 systematic review published in *Alimentary Pharmacology & Therapeutics* found that perceived stress reliably precedes disease exacerbations.

### The Clinical Bottom Line: When Should You Consult a Specialist?

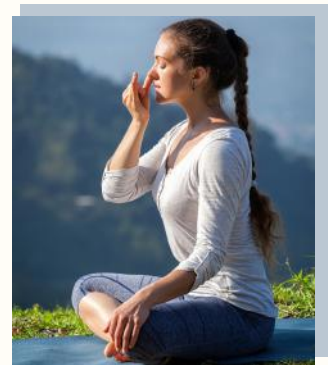
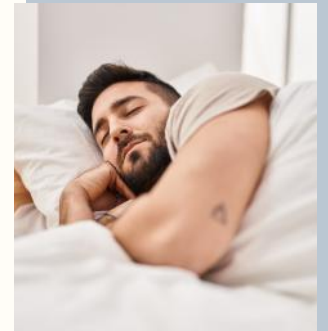
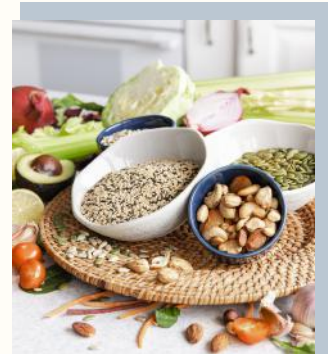
Any alarming symptoms – such as unintended weight loss, persistent vomiting, difficulty swallowing, bleeding, anaemia, a family history of gastrointestinal cancer, or new symptoms appearing after the age of 45 – require immediate evaluation.

Symptoms that disrupt sleep, work, or social life for more than a few weeks also warrant attention.

However, for the majority, the solution extends beyond medication. Regular meals, seven to eight hours of sleep, 150 minutes of exercise weekly, a fibre-rich diet that includes fermented foods, limiting alcohol and tobacco, practising mindful breathing or yoga, and ensuring at least one screen-free hour each day are not mere suggestions.

They are evidence-based strategies that directly influence the gut-brain axis. The corporate ladder will always be there, as will deadlines and challenging bosses.

*Fortunately, your gut is adaptable. Treat it with the same seriousness you apply to your quarterly review, and it will reciprocate in kind.*



# The Quiet Catch

Some stories arrive softly, unfolding in moments of pause and reflection. They surface from life's deeper currents, seeking only presence and patience. The Quiet Catch is Anandda's continuing space for such narratives, where insight emerges through lived experience, gentle memory, and attentive listening. These are insights shaped without urgency or display, gathered with care and shared with sincerity. They invite you to slow down, to feel before you analyse, and to linger a little longer. In their quiet unfolding, they offer something enduring, wisdom that settles within and remains long after the page is turned.



## The Ancient Family of the Ragas

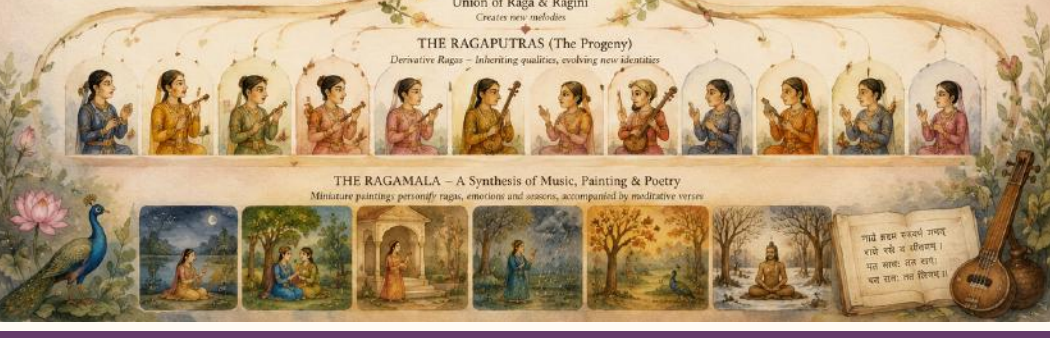
A lineage of notes, emotions and seasons

THE SEVEN ETERNAL NOTES

Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Dha Ni  
Natural, Sharp, Flat – The roots of all melodies

THE RAGAS (The Male)  
Power, Strength, Emotion (Raasa)  
Time of Day & Season

THE RAGINIS (The Female)  
Grace, Tenderness, Love, Longing  
Softer Melodies, Complementary Emotions



## The Ancient Family of the Ragas

By Chandna Dixit

As the world celebrates **World Music Day on June 21**, Anandda turns towards one of India's most profound cultural inheritances: the ancient world of the Ragas. Long before modern conversations around emotional well-being, mindfulness, and consciousness emerged, Indian classical traditions understood the intimate relationship between sound, seasons, emotion, nature, and the human spirit. In this evocative reflection, Chandna Dixit revisits the poetic universe of the **Raga families**, where music once flowed like a living lineage through time, carrying within it the rhythms of nature, the moods of the seasons, and the emotional ecology of human life.

This is the story of an ancient family lineage.

A family where musical notes, tones, and melodies run through every vein, whether instrumental or vocal.

A venerated family, steeped in tradition and preserving its heritage through every season of the year and every hour of the day.

Each branch of this extraordinary lineage traces its ancestry to a musical note or a unique combination of the seven eternal swaras: **Sa, Re, Ga, Ma, Pa, Dha, and Ni**, expressed through natural, sharp, and flat tonalities.

Yes, this is the ancient family of Hindustani classical music.

### The family of the Ragas.

In the old imagination of Indian music, ragas were not merely melodic structures.

They were living presences carrying emotion, personality, mood, season, and consciousness within them.

A **raga** was imagined as the male force, often centered on a dominant, recurring musical phrase or tonal emphasis, producing melodies capable of evoking powerful emotional states.

Each Raga belonged to a specific time of day, a season, and a Raasa, an emotional essence.

Dawn carried one mood; midnight, another.

The monsoon awakened certain melodies while spring invited others into bloom.

Every principal Raga was accompanied by several Raginis, feminine melodic counterparts carrying gentler emotional textures such as love, longing, tenderness, devotion, beauty, and grace.

Together, the Raga and Ragini formed musical unions from which the Ragaputras emerged, derivative ragas inheriting qualities from both parents while evolving their own distinct personalities within the folds of the family.

What emerged through this system was far more than music. It became an emotional and spiritual civilisation of sound.

This pure, sensuous, uplifting, and deeply meditative musical tradition eventually found synthesis with two other great forms of artistic expression: painting and poetry.

Through the celebrated Ragamala miniature paintings of India, ragas were visualised as living beings.

These paintings personified emotions such as laughter, longing, romance, devotion, separation, sorrow, and joy.

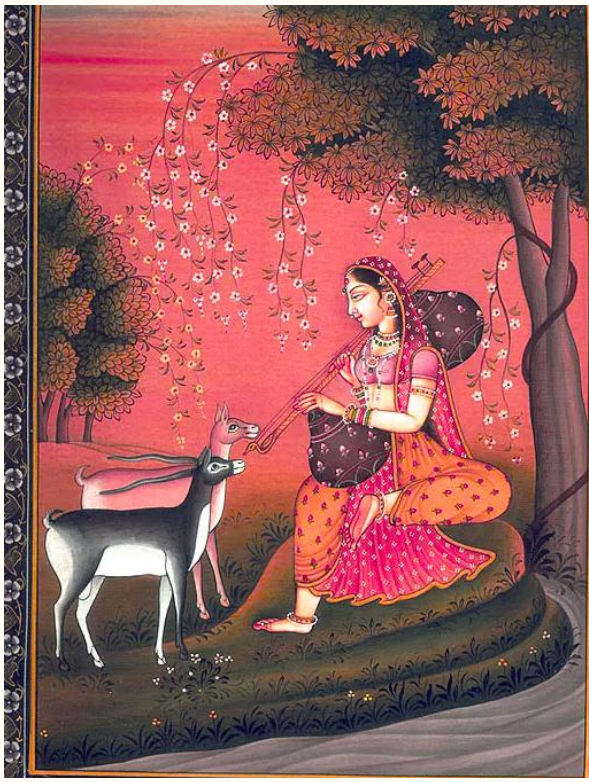
They also reflected the changing moods of nature through spring, summer, monsoon, autumn, and winter.

One painting might show a lonely woman waiting beneath dark monsoon clouds. Another could depict lovers meeting in flowering gardens.

Yet another might reveal a meditative yogi at dawn or a king listening to music beneath moonlit skies.

Every image carried emotional atmosphere.

Above many of these paintings appeared a contemplative verse, creating a sublime union of music, painting, and poetry.



These were emotionally and spiritually connected artistic families where one form flowed naturally into another.

Among the great ragas that formed these ancient musical lineages, several continue to hold timeless reverence.

**Raga Malkauns**, believed to arise from the cosmic Tandava of Lord Shiva, carries vigour, inward power, and meditative depth. Sung between midnight and three in the morning, it evokes profound stillness and spiritual intensity.

**Raag Bhairav**, a dawn raga, awakens gently with the first light of day. Its devotional mood carries solemnity, peace, and contemplation.

**Raag Hindol** is associated with beauty, springtime, and the playful divinity of Krishna. It carries softness, grace, and youthful joy.

**Raga Deepak** lives within musical legend as fiery, passionate, vibrant, and immensely powerful. Ancient lore speaks of its ability to light lamps through the sheer force of its melodic energy.

**Raag Shri**, among the oldest and most auspicious ragas, radiates dignity, serenity, and sacredness.

Then comes **Megh Malhar**, the beloved monsoon raga associated with clouds, thunder, lightning, rain, and emotional longing. Generations have spoken of its mystical ability to invite rain itself.

These ragas were never merely performed.

*They were experienced.*

The listener entered them almost as one enters a season, a landscape, or a state of consciousness.

Long before discussions around sound therapy, emotional well-being, and vibrational healing entered modern dialogue, Indian classical traditions understood the deep relationship between sound and the human psyche.

Music was aligned with nature's rhythms, with breath, with emotion, and with the subtle movement of consciousness itself.

Perhaps this is why the ancient Raga families continue to resonate so deeply even today.

They remind us that human beings once lived with greater attentiveness to the rhythms of dawn and dusk, rain and silence, longing and celebration.

Music was woven into the cycles of nature and into the emotional landscape of everyday life.

In many ways, this ancient musical worldview beautifully echoes Anandda's June theme: One Earth. One Body. One Consciousness.

The same monsoon that nourishes the earth also awakens Megh Malhar within the human heart.

The same sunrise that illumines the sky also stirs Bhairav into life.

The same longing carried through changing seasons continues to find expression through melody across generations.

After the eighteenth century, this ancient musical family was gradually reorganised through the **Thaat system** of classification based on ten foundational parent scales.

This brought greater structure and allowed newer ragas to find a place within an evolving musical tradition.

Yet somewhere within this evolution, the deeply poetic world of the Ragamala families slowly receded into quieter memory.



The soulful expressions, emotional personifications, and meditative verses became less visible, though the music itself continued to flourish.

And perhaps that is why these ancient traditions continue to evoke such tenderness even today.

They remind us of emotional continuity, cultural memory, and the quiet beauty of interconnectedness.

Time moves forward. Family structures evolve. Societies transform. Yet somewhere beneath the changing surface of modern life, these ancient melodies continue to hum softly within collective memory.

The notes remain the same. The seasons continue to turn. And the music still waits patiently to be heard once again.





# NOTHING *New*

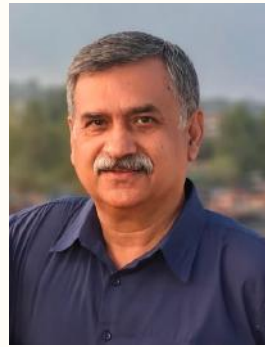
Humanity has always searched for answers. Across mountains and deserts, in monasteries and marketplaces, through kings, saints, warriors, and wanderers, people have asked the same questions: What gives life meaning? What makes us truly strong? How do we live in harmony with ourselves and with one another?

The wisdom that emerged from these questions belongs to no single culture. It flows through the collective inheritance of humanity, appearing in different forms yet pointing towards the same enduring truths. Long before modern conversations about well-being, consciousness, and human connection, these insights were quietly shaping lives and guiding communities.

In this edition of *Nothing New*, three timeless stories illuminate different dimensions of our shared inner ecology.

A legendary encounter involving Hari Singh Nalwa reveals the power of character and self-mastery. His Holiness the Dalai Lama reflects on happiness, compassion, and the peace that arises from within. An old Sufi tale reminds us that wisdom cannot be handed over like an inheritance; it unfolds through understanding and maturity.

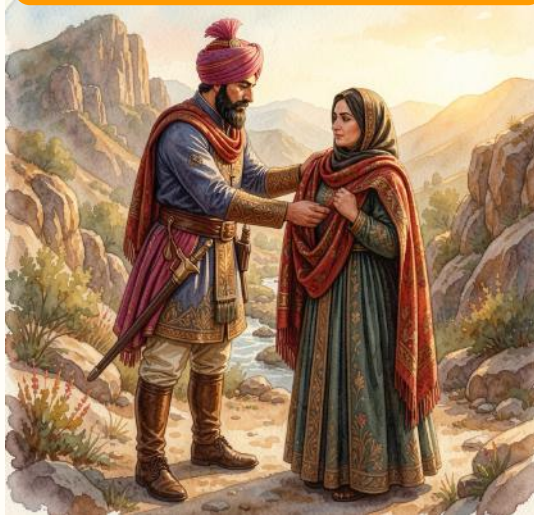
Curated by Neeraj Singh, this column invites us to pause and recognise that some of life's most profound discoveries have always been present. They continue to live within human experience, waiting to be remembered, practised, and lived.



**Neeraj Singh**  
Creative Director –  
Design & Advertising,  
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## The Measure of a Warrior



There are many stories about warriors. Most celebrate victories, conquests, and feats of courage. Yet the stories that endure across generations are often those that reveal the character behind the strength.

One such story is told about **Hari Singh Nalwa**, the legendary Commander-in-Chief of **Maharaja Ranjit Singh's** Sikh empire in the early nineteenth century.

Revered across the Indian subcontinent for his fearlessness, physical prowess, and military brilliance, Nalwa was a figure whose reputation travelled far beyond the borders he defended. In regions stretching across present-day Punjab, Kashmir, and Afghanistan, his name inspired both admiration and awe.

According to a cherished oral tradition, news of his extraordinary courage reached a woman in Afghanistan. She had heard countless accounts of a man whose bravery seemed unmatched and whose integrity was spoken of with equal respect. Deeply impressed, she undertook a long journey to meet him.

When she finally stood before the famed General, her request surprised everyone present.

She told Hari Singh Nalwa that she wished to bear a son like him. She believed that if such a child inherited his strength, courage, and noble qualities, he would become a remarkable human being. Her words were sincere. They arose from admiration rather than impulse.

The request placed the warrior in a delicate position.

A lesser man might have responded with pride, offence, or misunderstanding. Nalwa chose a different path.

He asked for a shawl. Walking towards the woman, he gently placed it over her shoulders.

Then, folding his hands with deep respect, he addressed her with words that have survived through generations.

"From this day, I accept you as my mother. Please look upon me as your son."

With a single gesture, he transformed the entire encounter.

He preserved her dignity. He honoured her intention. He remained faithful to his own values. Most importantly, he demonstrated that true strength requires neither domination nor display. It requires self-mastery.

The story has been retold for generations because it embodies a central ideal within Sikh philosophy: the Sant Sipahi, or Saint-Soldier.

Such a person combines courage with compassion, power with restraint, and action with wisdom.

Victory is measured not merely by overcoming external opponents but by remaining aligned with one's principles in every circumstance.

In today's world, strength is often associated with influence, visibility, achievement, or authority. Yet the deepest forms of strength remain remarkably quiet. They reveal themselves through respect, integrity, humility, and the ability to act from conscience rather than impulse.

Nature offers a similar lesson. The tallest mountain does not proclaim its height. A mighty river nourishes life without demanding recognition. The most enduring forces are often the most composed.

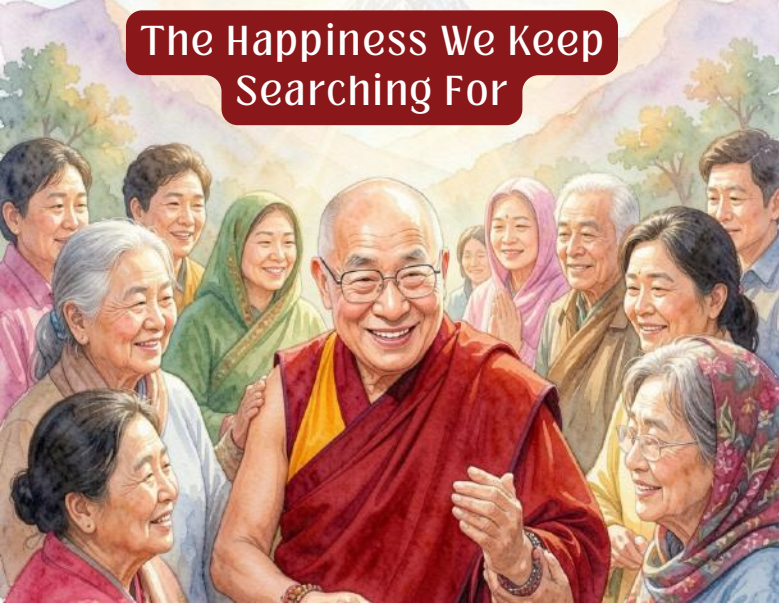
Perhaps this is why the story continues to resonate centuries later. It reminds us that character is the foundation upon which all other achievements rest. When inner values guide outward action, strength becomes service, power becomes responsibility, and respect becomes a natural expression of humanity.

The true measure of a warrior is not what he conquers.

It is what he chooses never to surrender within himself.



## The Happiness We Keep Searching For



Human beings may speak different languages, follow different faiths, belong to different cultures, and live in different corners of the world, yet there is one aspiration that unites us all: the desire to be happy.

**His Holiness the Dalai Lama** often returns to this simple observation.

We are born in the same way, we leave this world in the same way, and in between we spend our lives seeking happiness and freedom from suffering. Beneath all our differences lies this shared human longing.

Yet much of modern life encourages us to search for happiness outside ourselves. We look for it in possessions, achievements, recognition, status, and comfort. While these may bring moments of pleasure, they rarely bring lasting contentment. Material success can satisfy the senses for a while, but it cannot fully quiet anxiety, fear, or inner restlessness.

According to the Dalai Lama, the real source of happiness is peace of mind.

Unlike wealth or external success, peace of mind cannot be bought, inherited, or borrowed. It must be cultivated from within. Every great spiritual tradition, despite its philosophical differences, points towards the same foundation: love, kindness, compassion, and warm-heartedness.

The Dalai Lama often observes that children naturally possess many of these qualities. They are open, trusting, and accepting. As adults, we become absorbed in divisions of race, religion, nationality, ideology, and status. We begin to think in terms of "us" and "them." In doing so, we move away from the qualities that create genuine happiness.

Compassion occupies a central place in his understanding of life. Human beings survive and flourish through one another.

From the moment of birth, we depend on the care, affection, and support of others. Warm-heartedness is therefore not merely a religious ideal. It is part of our nature.

Ancient Indian traditions expressed this through ahimsa, the commitment to avoid harm, and karuna, the wish that others may be free from suffering. These principles remind us that transforming the world begins with transforming the mind.

The Dalai Lama's conclusion is beautifully simple.

Happiness grows when compassion grows. A happier individual contributes to a happier family. Families shape communities. Communities shape nations.

Perhaps the purpose of life is not as complicated as we imagine. As he often says, **"If you want others to be happy, practise compassion. If you want to be happy, practise compassion."**

## The Inheritance Held in Trust

A wealthy man lay on his deathbed.

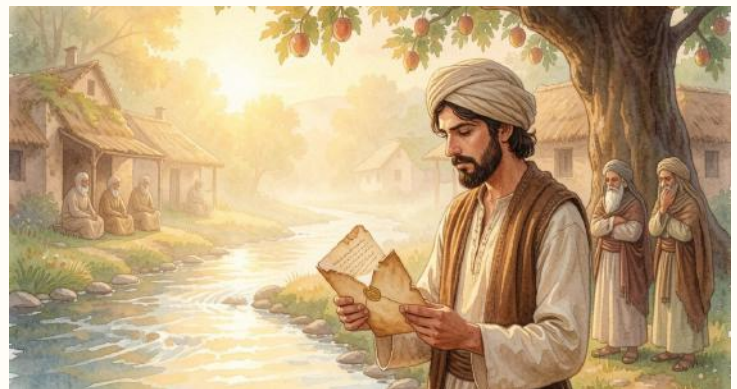
Unlike many wealthy men, he was also wise. His only son was still a child, far too young to manage the family's vast estate. Knowing his time was short, the father prepared a will and entrusted it to the village elders.

The instruction seemed perfectly clear.

"Take from my property whatever you like most. Then give it to my child."

After his death, the elders interpreted the instruction literally.

Each selected the finest land, valuables, livestock, and possessions for himself. What remained was of little value, and this remainder was given to the boy.



Years passed.

The child grew into a thoughtful young man.

On reaching maturity, he opened a sealed letter his father had left specifically for him.

Inside was a different interpretation of the same instruction.

"When the time comes," his father wrote, "tell the elders that they should take whatever they like most and then give that to my child."

Suddenly the meaning became obvious. The elders had chosen the best portions because they valued them most. According to the father's interpretation, those very possessions belonged to the son.

The matter was presented before the village council.

The elders realised that the father had anticipated exactly what would happen. Reluctantly but honestly, they returned the entire estate.

Yet the father's wisdom ran even deeper.

He had foreseen that enormous wealth placed directly into the hands of an immature child might easily be squandered.

By allowing the elders to treat the estate as their own, he ensured it would be preserved until his son possessed the maturity required to receive it responsibly.

The Sufi tradition treasures stories like this because they reveal how perception shapes understanding.

The elders saw the will through the lens of personal benefit. The son, with maturity, recognised its deeper meaning.

Life often works the same way. Some truths can only be understood when we are ready for them.

Like seeds that sprout in season and fruit that ripens with time, wisdom unfolds gradually.

It cannot be inherited. It must be recognised.

Perhaps the greatest legacy we can leave behind is not wealth, but the ability to see more deeply when understanding finally arrives.



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# Dr. Rohit Durga: Where Healing Finds Colour



Every artist carries a unique story, shaped by the experiences, observations, and passions that colour their journey through life. Some discover their creative expression early, while for others it unfolds gradually, gathering depth and meaning through years of learning, service, and human connection.

This month, I am delighted to introduce Dr. Rohit Durga, whose life reflects a beautiful meeting of healing, nature, and artistic expression. For decades, he has served people through medicine, bringing care, compassion, and understanding to countless lives.

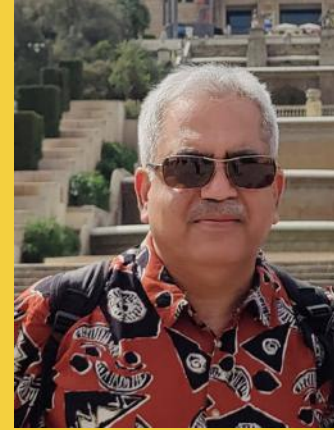
On this professional path, a rich creative spirit has continued to flourish, finding expression through painting and visual storytelling.

His artworks reflect a deep appreciation for the world around us, the rhythms of nature, the richness of human experience, and the quiet beauty present in everyday moments. There is a sense of attentiveness in his work that resonates deeply with the artist's eye and the healer's heart.

Each canvas carries an invitation to pause, observe, and reconnect with the wonder that surrounds us.

In this edition of Art Time, I invite you to step into his creative world and experience how art can become a celebration of awareness, imagination, and the enduring human capacity to find beauty, meaning, and inspiration throughout life's unfolding journey.

You may reach me at M/WA: +91 9717684469  
Email: [chandnaart@gmail.com](mailto:chandnaart@gmail.com)



Dr. Rohit Durga

*He was born in the gentle cradle of Dehradun, where mist lingers over rolling hills and the scent of eucalyptus drifts through the air.*

*Dr. Rohit Durga's story began in quiet harmony with nature.*

*Dehradun used to be a city that did not rush, and perhaps that is where he first learned the art of observation, of stillness, of listening.*

*Raised in a family of doctors, discipline was not imposed but absorbed. The rhythms of responsibility, empathy, and service were woven into everyday life.*

*The influence of dedicated teachers during his formative years shaped not only his intellect but also his sense of purpose.*

*Medicine, for him, was never just a career choice. It was a natural progression.*

*This journey led him to the prestigious Armed Forces Medical College in Pune, where the rigour of training sharpened both his skills and his perspective.*

*Those years laid a strong foundation, but it was what followed that truly defined him.*

*For twenty-five years, Dr. Durga served as a medical officer in the Indian Armed Forces.*

*His work took him through some of the most demanding environments, including institutions such as the National Defence Academy.*

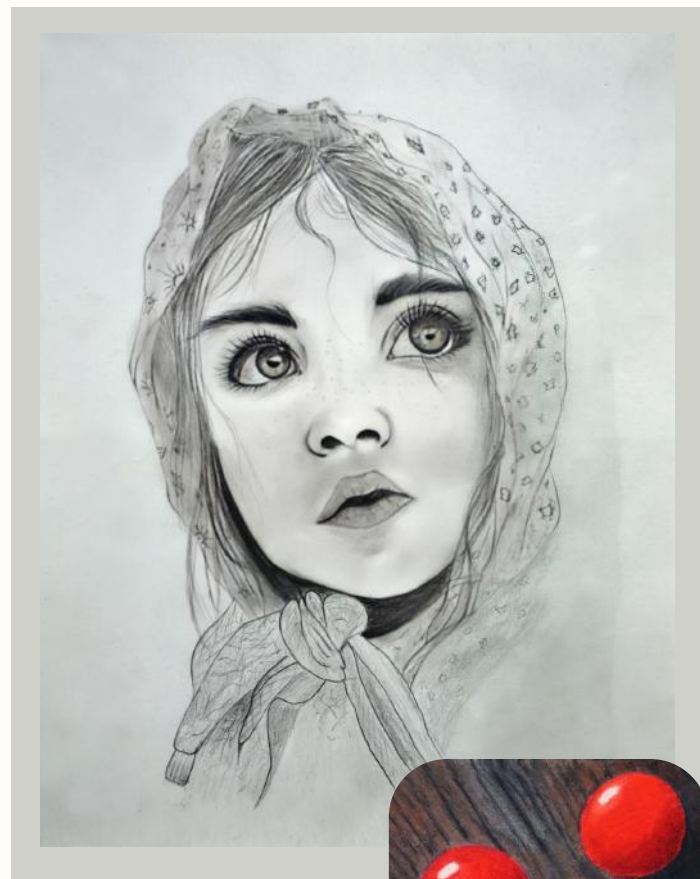
*Here, medicine was practised under pressure, with resilience expected and emotional burdens often unspoken.*

*It was in these spaces that his philosophy of healing quietly transformed.*

*He came to understand that not every patient who walked into his chamber carried a diagnosable illness.*

*Some arrived seeking something less tangible, yet equally urgent: a place to speak, a moment to breathe, a chance to be heard.*

*A soldier might report sick, not because of a fever, but because of fatigue of the mind. Another might carry the weight of personal struggles hidden beneath a composed exterior. In such moments, the role of a doctor extended far beyond prescriptions.*



*It became about listening without judgement, recognising unspoken distress, and offering not just treatment, but relief.*

*Over time, this approach became instinctive. Curative, preventive, and psychological care blended seamlessly into his practice, becoming part of his very DNA.*



And then, almost unexpectedly, another dimension of his life began to unfold.

#### Art.

Its presence had always lingered in subtle ways. As a biology student, he possessed a natural flair for drawing and sketching diagrams.

In lighter moments, he would recreate characters such as Tintin and Asterix, small creative expressions that brought joy, though they were never pursued seriously.

Photography, too, became a medium of expression during the days when cameras demanded both patience and investment.

Life, however, carried him along different paths.

#### Until Jaadu arrived!

His beloved beagle became the subject of his first true artistic return. A pencil sketch, intimate and unassuming, yet deeply meaningful. It was more than a drawing. It was a reconnection.

A quiet reawakening of something that had always existed within him.

Around the same time, a new influence entered his life through his daughter-in-law, a professional artist. Her presence brought encouragement and renewed confidence to explore this long-dormant passion.

What began with a single sketch soon evolved into an immersive creative journey.

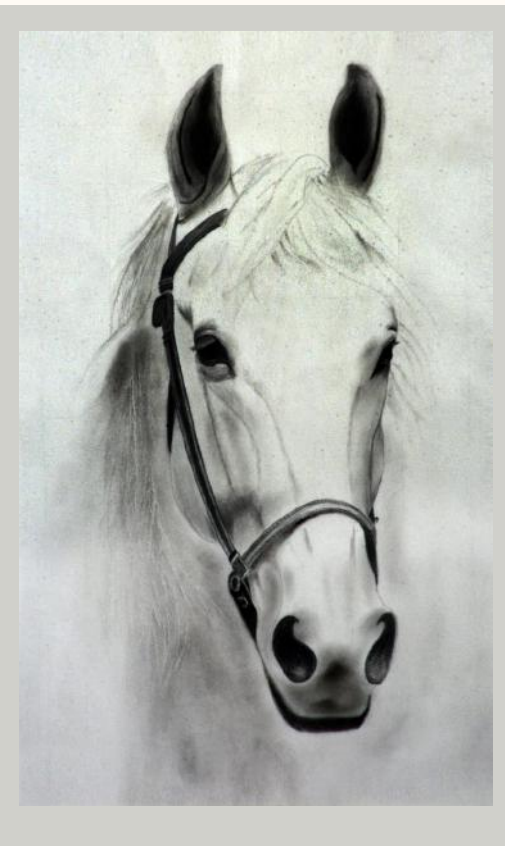
He experimented with oil pastels, soft pastels, charcoal, and acrylics, each medium offering a fresh way to interpret the world around him.

His work reflected patience, observation, and emotional depth, qualities that had long informed his approach to medicine.

His first exhibition at the Defence Services Officers' Institute (DSOI) Dehradun marked a significant milestone. The appreciation and encouragement he received from visitors became a powerful affirmation. Art had become a shared experience, deeply resonating with others.



Jaadu (magic) who acted as a catalyst



Yet even within a life of purpose, there can exist a quiet restlessness.

For Dr. Durga, it was not dissatisfaction but a sense that more could be explored, more could be expressed.

Choosing to step away from the Armed Forces before the expected time, he made a decisive shift into civilian life, returning to Dehradun to begin private practice.

There, he rediscovered medicine in a new light. As a family physician, his clinic became more than a place for treatment.

It became a space of trust. Patients walked in not only with ailments but also with stories. They came to share grief, celebrate small victories, and unburden themselves.

In an age increasingly driven by specialisation, his practice quietly reaffirmed the enduring importance of the family doctor, someone who sees the whole person, not merely the problem.

Beyond his civilian practice, Dr. Durga extended his service to the remotest regions of Uttarakhand through his association with the HIMAID Society, where, until the pandemic, he provided free medical care and medicines to people living in higher Himalayan regions where access to healthcare remains extremely limited.



*Beyond the clinic and the canvas, his bond with nature continues to shape his way of life.*

*A committed environmentalist, Dr. Durga transformed his terrace into a thriving space of sustainability.*

*Through hydroponics, he grew organic vegetables, nurturing them with care and precision. Kitchen and garden waste was converted into compost, completing a cycle that reflects responsibility, mindfulness, and respect for the environment.*

*It is, in many ways, an extension of who he is: thoughtful, grounded, and attuned to balance.*

*Today, Dr. Rohit Durga stands at a rare and beautiful intersection.*

*He is a doctor who understands that healing begins with listening.*

*An artist who finds meaning in the smallest details.*

*A man whose life reflects both discipline and creative expression.*

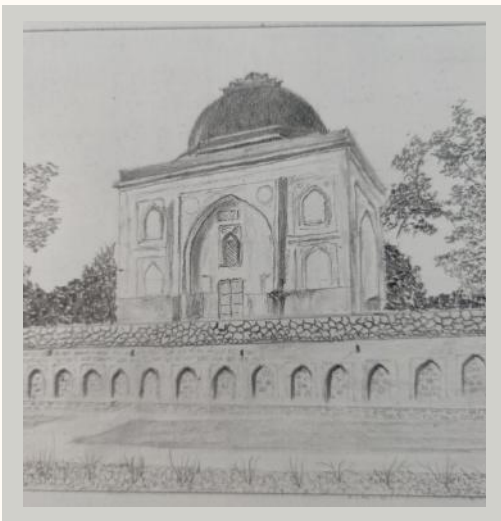
*His journey is one of integration.*

*Medicine and art, science and sensitivity, discipline and imagination coexist naturally, each enriching the other.*

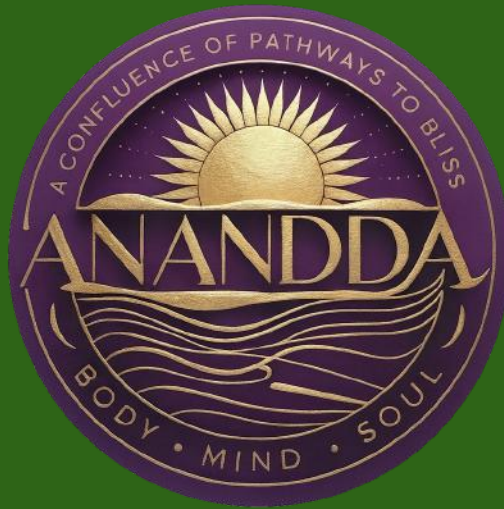
*In his world, a stethoscope and a sketchbook travel side by side.*

*And in that quiet harmony, Dr. Durga reminds us of something deeply human: it is always possible to rediscover a forgotten passion, to nurture a hidden gift, and to allow new dimensions of ourselves to emerge.*

*Passion does not fade with time. It gathers depth. And sometimes, the most meaningful chapters of life unfold when experience meets courage and compassion finds colour.*



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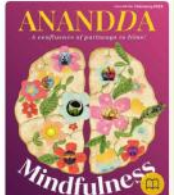
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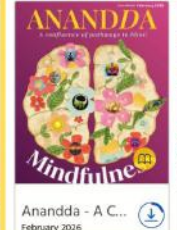
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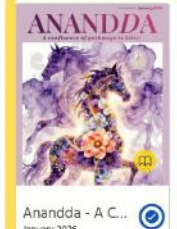
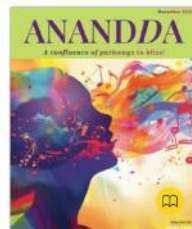


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