

DESIGNING
DESTINY



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The Heartfulness Way

Daaji

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 juggernaut

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*You are the experiment,
you are the experimenter,
and you are the outcome.*

Dedicated to all sincere experimenters.

What does destiny mean in the course of our lives?

What is fixed and how much can change?

How can we design our own destiny?

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Preface



I HAVE ALWAYS been fascinated by evolution and destiny. In my own life there have been pivotal moments when life took a turn, where a decision has led me down a certain path. One of the most important turning points happened in 1976, when I was nineteen years old. One of my college friends, who would watch me meditate, asked bluntly one day, ‘What are you doing? Why are you wasting your time closing your eyes? I see you are always disturbed when you try to meditate.’

I said, ‘Well, I am trying my best, but I don’t know how.’

He said, ‘Let me take you to a lady who will help you to go into a trance right away.’

It appealed to me, so I said, ‘All right, let’s go.’

He took me to meet a very humble woman in her forties, who asked me, ‘Why do you want to meditate?’

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I said, ‘It’s my natural desire. I would like to meditate. I would like to travel all over India, learning about life, like the great sages and yogis of the past. I want to become like them. I would like to realize God.’

She said, ‘My spiritual Guide says that God is everywhere. When He is everywhere, why not look for Him where you are?’

I continued, ‘I’d like to become a wandering monk and just disappear. I don’t want to marry.’

Then she said, ‘God is not such a fool to create two sexes if one were enough. Isn’t it a good idea that spiritually-oriented people also have children and contribute to the future of humanity?’

She went on, challenging fundamental beliefs that I’d held dear. Finally, she said, ‘Let us not discuss this further. I will initiate you into a system of meditative practices called Heartfulness.’

Sitting for that first meditation session with this lady was the most amazing experience I had ever had in my life—it was so profound, proving to me that this system was right for me. I thought, If a trainer of the system can transmit like this, imagine what the Guide can do! (You will learn about this ancient yogic art of transmitting in the practice section of this book.)

The spiritual guide she spoke of was Ram Chandra—and now I was longing to meet him.

But I had to wait. I could only visit him during my college vacation almost a year later in 1977. When I reached him in Shahjahanpur, I found him to be a loving, simple, genuine, down-to-earth person. His utter simplicity amazed me. Just looking at him made me wonder how there could be such purity in a person. His whole being radiated love. There was never a dull moment, even when he was silent, which he was most of the time. There was always inner communion, during which I could feel his presence. That was the beginning of my journey with Heartfulness and my Guide.

Destined to Be Daaji?

Let me ask you, the reader, a question: Suppose my destiny was always to become Daaji, the spiritual Guide of the Heartfulness movement. Does that mean my fate was completely fixed? Or could I have spoiled that in some way through making a certain choice?

That topic is the heart of what this book is about: How much of our destiny is fixed and how much can be changed? Now, I don't want to ruin the surprises along the way! What I can say, however, is that from a very early age, I was drawn to spirituality, although I was equally comfortable in worldly life. One of the reasons I still find Heartfulness so fulfilling is that it supports us to excel in both.

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I am sure, however, that my life would have never been as it is now if I had not met Ram Chandra, who is generally known as Babuji. He is the epicentre of Heartfulness and the reason I am doing what I do today. One day, the world will know the contribution he has made to humanity, quietly, in anonymity, with the true humility of a divine being. His inspiration keeps me going and nourishes my life.

He was able to distil the practices of Heartfulness from all the yogic traditions so that anyone, anywhere, from any background, any walk of life, who practises them sincerely, may evolve to the highest limit possible for human beings.

There are still a number of people from various countries who met him and spent time with him in Shahjahanpur, North India, and during his travels abroad. All of them have been deeply transformed by their experience with him, and most speak of him as 'the essence of pure love.' Since his passing in 1983, the organization has continued to expand and thrive, and his simple, practical approach has continued to form the foundation of Heartfulness today.

What Is Designing Destiny?

There were two main catalysts for this book. One was a simple message that Babuji gave in his hometown of Shahjahanpur in January 1982. In it,

he addresses the goal of life and our spiritual destiny. (You will discover the message in the right context later in the book. I don't want to spoil the fun by revealing it now.)

The second catalyst for this book was a series of seminars that we at the Heartfulness Institute held for youth in 2014 and 2015. I wanted to share with my young associates the importance of living a life of purpose, excellence, and higher destiny, rather than living as a reaction to all the stimuli and demands of modern society. Peer pressure is rampant; the media and advertising companies prey upon youth shamelessly in our material world. Without the guiding principle of the heart, young minds may easily succumb to the environmental pulls of our current era, without realizing that self-mastery is actually a very simple process.

In this book, I will share with you what I have learned about destiny, and how our beliefs determine the relative importance of fate and free will in our lives. I will also share with you a set of simple Heartfulness practices and lifestyle changes that can help you to design your destiny. What we do today determines our future. What we did in the past has already determined our present. This is how we weave our destiny.

Introduction



Destiny, Fate, and Free Will

THE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION about destiny has always been: What is fixed and what can be changed? Are our lives governed by fate, or do we have the free will to choose our destiny? There have been endless treatises and debates over thousands of years examining the influence of karma, of astrology, of the Gods, of the fates, and of free will on our lives.

Some people believe in fate while others think that free will and freedom of choice are our birthright. Most accept a mixture of the two: there is no absolute free will and no absolute fate. Life is lived somewhere in between these two extreme views. It is like genetics. There is a fixed genetic pattern defined by the human genome, as well as a flexible epigenetic component. The basic genetic

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structure is fixed, but our environment, thoughts, and emotions all affect the way our genes express themselves, switching them on and off. Like destiny, genetics is both fixed and flexible. Without this, there would be no evolution!

Each one of us exists in the dimensions of time and space, and we are constantly making our mark in those dimensions by forming impressions in our energy field, creating a signature, a personality, defined by a set of cognates—an individual character or blueprint of our future karma. If we could only remove those impressions, wiping the slate clean, then the karmic blueprint would be erased, removing our limitations and expanding the possibilities of our future destiny. The good news is that those impressions can easily be removed to clear the energy field and transform our personality and karma. Throughout this book, we will discover how this is done, and understand why removing impressions can totally transform our lives.

The Principles of Destiny

There are some fundamental principles that let us approach this topic of destiny in a very practical way. The first principle of destiny is that we can only change it in the present. The past is gone and cannot be changed. It is advisable not to stay stuck

in the past, as it wastes precious energy, especially as we will learn to remove the impressions left by the past so as to erase the blueprint it has left. The future is determined by the present, by how we live now. It is what we do today that matters. Every day is a golden opportunity to design the destiny of our future trajectory in every present moment.

The second principle of destiny is that we create it for ourselves by our everyday thoughts—our wishes, what attracts us and repels us, our likes and dislikes. Have you noticed that some things attract us, while others repel us, and still others do not affect us at all, as they are neutral? When we like certain things, we attract them to our own energy field. When we dislike certain things, we think that we repel them from us, but in reality they affect us just as strongly as our likes; we just bind them in a negative way instead of in a positive way.

For example, hatred can lead to thinking about a person just as strongly as love. I once had to mediate a conflict among a group of people who were very upset about their group leader—she was behaving in an oppressive way, and people were very hurt. They came to me complaining about her, and I could see that they were spending all their time thinking about her. They were meditating on her weaknesses and faults! Once they realized that is what they

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were doing, they changed their whole approach, and things started to go in a much better direction.

Most of the time our thoughts are busy in this activity of likes and dislikes, even though we are not aware of it: 'I really like that house—I want it!' 'I don't want to work with her—she is too arrogant,' 'I wish I were like him—he is so capable,' 'These people look dangerous—it's best to stay away from them,' 'She is so beautiful—I want to look like her,' and so on. We constantly form impressions in our minds by letting ourselves react in the moment with our likes and dislikes.

The third and final principle about destiny we will explore in the book is that we are not alone; we are all connected. We are not only designing our own individual destiny; we are also evolving together as a species and in communities. This is known as co-evolution. This can only happen when we first evolve as individuals.

Many of us want to change the world and our collective destiny through external means, such as politics, government policies, social causes, and grassroots movements, and all of these have their place. But society is made up of individuals, and Russian author Leo Tolstoy once said, 'Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself.' To change the world, we have

to change ourselves first. To design the destiny of humanity, we start with designing ourselves first and then expand our radius to include others. A day will then surely come when together we are capable of changing the direction humanity is taking.

The Importance of Training the Mind

Unfortunately, most of us have not trained ourselves to escape this wandering, reactive mode. Like autumn leaves falling from the tree, blown by the wind every which way, we are going wherever we are taken, without any direction or higher focus. When the mind is like that, everyday events determine our destiny with no active planning or forethought on our part.

So what can we do? Start by training the instrument that is going to design our destiny.

Imagine that you have a beautiful new Ferrari and you are so happy driving it everywhere, across wide highways, through magnificent country, on long road trips, exactly to your heart's desire. But you are so busy driving that you have no time to service it. So after some time, the car's engine starts to lose performance and eventually breaks down. Soon, the car is no longer roadworthy.

But why am I discussing a Ferrari? What is the engine's equivalent that we need to keep in good

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condition to design our destiny? We call it the mind, or the heart-mind, or the subtle body.

It is only once we ‘service’ or ‘train’ our mind that we will have an instrument capable of designing our destiny. This means regulating our thoughts to find inner stillness and clarity, clearing the clutter of constant emotions arising from the subconscious, and learning to access a deeper part of our human potential within the heart that guides us like radar does. And for this we need a meditative practice, which we will explore in depth in this book.

You may say, ‘I am perfectly happy as I am. Why should I change? What is wrong with my current destiny?’ Of course it is *your* choice, and if you are happy, you may not want to change anything. But are you really perfectly happy? Think about it. If you look around you and deep into yourself, you will discover that we generally base our happiness on external objects or circumstances, so when situations change and sadness strikes, we are left without any inner tools to cope, like the Ferrari driver left stranded on the side of the road with a broken-down car. It is smart to train yourself to be happy no matter what is going on.

Think of it in another way: Is it a good idea to ignore the needs of your body until you have a chronic or terminal disease? Similarly, why wait

until your mind is falling apart before looking after it? Why not keep it in excellent condition, like the Ferrari?

Shaping Our Fate: Where Is Destiny Taking Us?

The word *destiny* implies that we are going somewhere or toward something. If destiny is fixed, is there any need to have any personal goals in life?

But if we believe that *we* design our destiny, then we will set a direction with a goal. And what is it that we want in life? The most common answers given by people from all walks of life and cultures are happiness, contentment, and love. Also in some of the greatest texts, like the Ashtavakra Gita and the Bible, what did the sages of old say? Ashtavakra told King Janaka to practise forgiveness, simplicity, compassion, contentment, and truth so that happiness and love can be exposed as the core. And Jesus's teachings are also based on the same principle in the Bible.

And what brings happiness, contentment, and love? Perhaps for you, right at this moment, it is a wonderful relationship or a great career, children whose lives are fulfilled, or a comfortable lifestyle. But even if you have everything else, you know that without peace and calm you will never be happy.

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When you go deeper into the subject, as we will do in this book, you will agree with me that happiness does not depend on external things or people. Things like success in our studies, a happy family life, a healthy bank balance, good friends, pleasure, possessions, and so on bring temporary joy, and that is important in day-to-day life, but they do not ensure lasting happiness. Why? They are all ephemeral; when they are gone, the happiness disappears too. And that is not a clever way to go about life—letting others determine how happy or unhappy you will be. So we need to balance this dependence on outer sources of happiness with something more enduring. To find lasting happiness, we need to look deep within ourselves. It is all about balance between the inner and the outer life.

Let's assume for a minute that we do have a calm, balanced, and happy mind. That is already a great achievement, especially in the modern world of busyness, stress, and short attention span. But is that our destiny, just to be happy and peaceful? No. It is only a stepping-stone. It is important to know what to do with that still mind, how to use it.

We may strive for self-improvement in order to excel at whatever we do and expand our possibilities. Human beings have always done so. They have been willing to undergo struggles and discomfort to attain

their goals. An Olympic gold medallist, a master violinist, and a small child learning to walk all know this. Anyone who has ever had a goal or purpose in life knows it. We struggle for something we want. Contentment is not enough. We strive to excel and improve in whatever we love.

Life is about evolution, and every life is an evolution of some sort. It may be in developing wisdom, skills, and attitudes. Inventions and discoveries are also about evolution. Even a life of failure and struggle teaches us so much and may lead to a future of growth. We can't judge because we only know in hindsight how our failures have brought wisdom. What we do know is that this instinct to excel and push past the boundaries into the unknown is part of being human. The very fact that we ask questions like 'What is the purpose of life?' shows that we have this urge. *Homo sapiens* means 'wise man.' Even the word *man* comes from the Sanskrit word *manas*, meaning 'mind'. We identify with our mind much more than our physical body.

If someone says, 'What is wrong? Your face looks terrible,' you may be offended, but you will be more offended if they say, 'You have lost your mind,' or 'You are so stupid!' Our ego is hurt more by an insult to our mental well-being. That is also why mental illness is more of a stigma than physical disease.

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Diabetes is more acceptable than schizophrenia, even though both are serious health problems.

In April 2017, the World Health Organization announced that depression is now the number one cause of ill health in the world. At that time, there were over 300 million people with depression. What is the implication of this? It means a vast number of people are unhappy and wish to find a more positive, joyful purpose in life. We have reached a critical time in human history when we need to address the complexities that lead to so much depression.

If we examine our situation, we find that on the one hand we let ourselves be pulled by the desire for wealth, possession, pleasure, contentment, and success, while on the other hand we also know that lightness, joy, and love pull us toward something higher. In fact, this instinct for a higher purpose drives many of our behaviours. For example, why is love so important to us? A person in love has a spring in their step, a mother's love is as important as good nutrition to a tiny infant, while the love between a grandparent and a grandchild is one of the most beautiful things to behold.

We search for meaning and purpose in life, for love and inner happiness, and this can be witnessed in many everyday behaviours. For example, why do we try to escape our mundane existence, whether

by healthy or unhealthy means? Why do children look at the world with a sense of wonder? Why do adults still love daydreaming? All of these things are symptomatic of the search for an inner connection to a different plane of existence, the spiritual dimension, which is part of our lives as human beings. It is also very important in the bigger picture of our destiny during and beyond this life.

But how can we know how much influence can we have over our future? Is it already mapped out for us, or can we create a direction in life?

What About Free Will?

Let's imagine that we can create our own futures. Is this possible in all aspects of our lives? We will explore this in more detail later in the book, but for now let's just say that we have three bodies: the physical body, or *sthoola sharir*; the mind, or *sookshma sharir*; and the soul, or *karana sharir*, and each one requires a different approach.

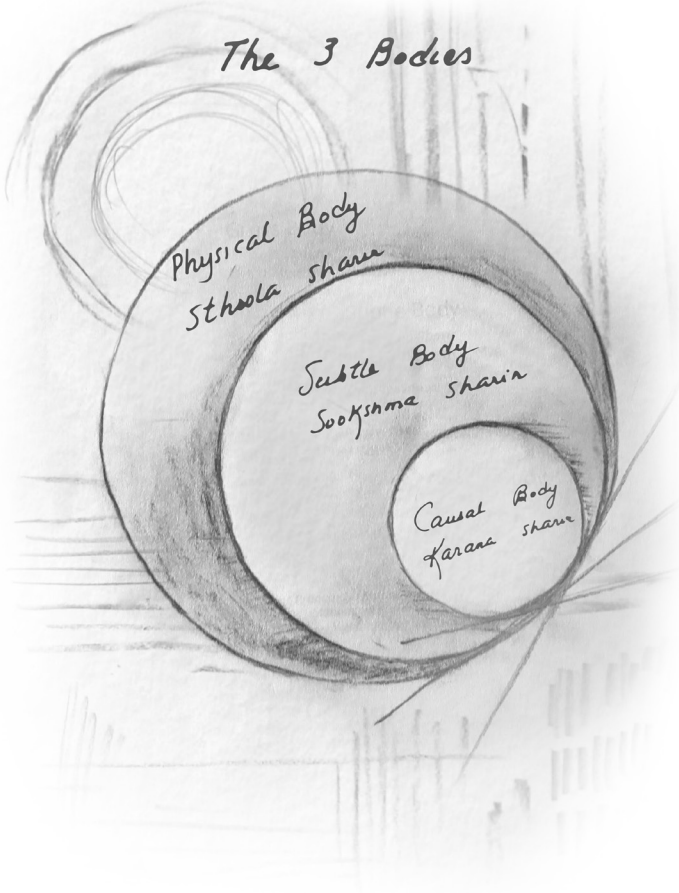
Let's take the physical body first. How much of it can we change? Some of us are short and stocky in build, while others are tall and willowy. We cannot change from one to the other, no matter what we do. We can optimize our body's well-being by healthy eating, regular exercise, good hygiene, proper sleep, and living in tune with natural rhythms, but the

The 3 Bodies

Physical Body
Sthoola sharira

Subtle Body
Sookshma sharira

Causal Body
Karana sharira



possibility of changing our physical structure or genetics is limited. Next, let's take the soul, also known as the causal body, because it is the cause of our existence. There are two theories: one says that the soul is already perfect and changeless in nature, and the second says that the soul, too, has a purpose and that purpose is to evolve. Either way, the soul's evolution is not something we can control. It happens as a result of the practices we will discuss in this book. Nurturing the soul's existence is the way we support the causal body.

So that leaves the third body, the middle one, the mind, also known as the subtle body or the astral body, the energy field of the heart-mind. What can change here? Everything actually. We can train ourselves to regulate our thoughts, and we can work on our patterns and fears, our desires and emotional reactions. We can develop our decision-making ability, our generosity of heart, our attitude, our strength of will, and our capacity to love. These can all change drastically. This is the main body we refine in order to design our destiny.

How Do We Start, and What Are the Steps We Follow?

There are three broad steps in this process of designing destiny. First, everything starts from

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practice. This is the focus of Part I of the book. We need a set of practices that refine the mind so that it becomes an instrument for our growth. Such inner practices are known as meditative practices or spiritual practices. I will share with you the practices that have worked effectively for me—the Heartfulness practices. We start with practice, because change is always more effective when it starts from the inside out. Then it is lasting.

Heartfulness gives us a simple scientific approach to meditation: we are the experiment, the experimenter, and the outcome. Our heart is our laboratory. What qualifications and preparation do we need to start these practices? Interest, enthusiasm, and willingness. After purifying and simplifying the mind and heart, we are really able to expand our consciousness, realize our full human potential, and live a purposeful life.

Then, over time, practice leads to lifestyle, which is the focus of Part II. This is a natural and necessary step, because inner change is not enough; it must reflect outwardly in day-to-day life. What is the point of meditating if we do not become better people, kinder, more compassionate, and more giving? It will have been a waste. Ultimately, inner change and outer change cannot be separated, and our external habits and behaviours are the external expression

of our inner state. So there is always a fine-tuning going on between outer behaviour and inner transformation. As we grow and expand our inner potential through meditation, we need to refine our lifestyle. The two go hand in hand.

Finally, lifestyle leads to destiny, which we address in the last part of the book. This ongoing process of refining the personality through practice and lifestyle changes is known as the spiritual journey, or *yatra*. It is also known as the path of yoga. By following this process, designing a destiny becomes second nature.

We create our destiny, step-by-step, bit-by-bit, through the journey of life. Every moment we make choices that lead us in a certain direction—either toward or away from our life's purpose. But it is not a linear journey, and sometimes we go backward to move forward. We make mistakes and learn from them, and that is all part of the rich tapestry of the journey. Every thought and every action contribute.

As our lifestyle evolves, consciousness expands and becomes subtler, to the extent that our ability to design our own destiny becomes natural and effortless. Now we shall explore that path together.