

# THE HEARTFULNESS WAY



THE  
HEARTFULNESS  
WAY

Heart-Based Meditations for  
Spiritual Transformation

*Daaji*

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 Juggernaut

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# Preface



WE NEVER KNOW what life has in store for us and what is just around the corner. That is part and parcel of the mystery and beauty of living. I have received many blessings during my six decades on this Earth, and one of those happened while I was a teenager, studying pharmacy in Ahmedabad in India in 1976. Thanks to one of my college pals, I came across Heartfulness meditation, and a few months later was face-to-face with a remarkable man who immediately became my first guru and who guided me in this practice. His name was Ram Chandra, and we called him Babuji.

The effect of the very first Heartfulness meditation on me was so profound that it was clear I had found my direction and anchor in life. But the effect of meeting Babuji was beyond even that—something so precious and subtle in its

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essence that it defies description. While universes and dimensions have opened in my inner world since that time, it is only one aspect of what has unfolded during these last four decades. What is even more wonderful is the wealth of everyday qualities that have come through Heartfulness practice—qualities such as love, acceptance, humility, service, compassion, empathy, and a higher purpose to existence.

It all starts with the simple act of meditation. Nothing much is required of us as we sit quietly, close our eyes, and focus within on the Source of all existence in our hearts. If we can approach the act of meditation with childlike wonder and innocence, our inner universe unfolds before us naturally. In a heart-based meditation practice, we explore and experience the simplest and purest aspect of our existence: our soul. Everything about it is so natural.

The Heartfulness practices in this book nurture our souls, remove the weeds and mud that keep them hidden, and set free that spark of childlike innocence and wonder that makes life truly meaningful. At the same time, we have to live in the day-to-day world of urban stress, wages and mortgages, careers and relationships. Heartfulness



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practices help us simplify our responses and navigate our daily lives in an enriching, fulfilling manner.

If you knew there was a practical way to transcend suffering and fly into the sky of hope and contentment, would you be interested? That is exactly what Heartfulness offers—not by removing problems or by shutting them out, but by transforming us from the inside out so that we see the world in a new way, without the filters of our limitations.

In the Heartfulness way, we explore and expand our consciousness, and even go beyond consciousness to uncover true potentiality. I hope you enjoy this book and benefit from what I have learned on this journey of life so far.

KAMLESH D. PATEL

*January 2018*



# Introduction



IN AUGUST 2015, as I sat in my home office in Chennai, India, my wife appeared with my phone. ‘It’s Kamlesh calling from Europe,’ she said, laughing. Apparently, our two-year-old daughter had answered the phone and held her own conversation with him for some time before my wife noticed. When I picked up the phone, he said, ‘I would like you to write a book about meditation.’ I immediately agreed, but I also had a little trepidation. Because Kamlesh has been meditating for over forty years and is a spiritual guide to seekers all over the world, I felt he was far more qualified to write a book on this subject.

When we met weeks later, I said, ‘Maybe you should write this book instead.’

He laughed and replied, ‘We’ll write it together.’

Over the course of two years, we had numerous

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wide-ranging discussions in locations throughout India and the US. *The Heartfulness Way* chronicles those conversations.

About twenty years earlier, a fascination with books prompted my interest in meditation. As a teenager, I found myself drawn to the subject of spirituality. I was sure that if I searched long enough through my parents' enormous book collection, I would find some obscure and esoteric text, and from its pages, all the great secrets of the universe would pour out.

First, I encountered the *Tao Te Ching*, penned by the eminent sage Lao Tzu, supposedly at the point of a spear. It mesmerized me with its simplicity and wisdom, and fanned the flames of spiritual craving in my heart. This led me to other books. I poured through the literature of the Buddhists, Taoists, Sufis, Christians, and others. I read Aristotle and Augustine, Emerson and Epicurus. Gradually it dawned on me that through all my reading, I had only learned about the experiences and ideas of others. What about my own? Until this point, all my knowledge was abstract. I had become familiar with so many spiritual ideas, but in a bookish way. I had come across so many terms—*enlightenment*, *satori*, *samadhi*, *illumination*. I needed to find out

on my own what these concepts meant, and I knew that this required a practical approach.

I embarked on a mad dash through various practices. I took meditation classes, tried yoga, and studied martial arts. Once, I met a famous Zen master. When he looked at me, I only managed to stammer, 'I've never met a master before.'

'But you will!' he replied.

By then, I was already meditating on a daily basis. However, I did not find meditation to be gratifying. It was a real struggle—a difficult and tedious affair. After a few years of searching, my enthusiasm started to wane. Eventually, I gave up my quest, empty-handed and a little disillusioned.

In August 2002, I met a stranger while standing outside a local shop. In the course of our conversation, I learned that she practised a form of meditation known alternately as *Sahaj Marg* (which means 'natural path' in Hindi) and Heartfulness. She spoke as if the practice of Heartfulness had really changed her life.

Despite my curiosity about this new kind of meditation, I was also a little skeptical. By now, I had become immune to the various claims made about meditation. My own experience of meditation had been different. *Perhaps I just*

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*wasn't cut out to meditate*, I thought. Additionally, I suspected that a true path might not be found so easily. I wondered whether finding a capable teacher might involve trekking deep into the Himalayas or travelling to some other remote locale. What are the odds of finding something authentic during a chance encounter on the street? But something else inside me said, 'It's possible...'

Then, one bright September morning, my mother called me. She was in tears. My little sister had just been in a car accident. She was unconscious and on her way to the hospital. Nobody knew if she would live or die, and I was halfway across the country. I could do nothing. Toward midnight, my sister was dead at the age of sixteen.

These are the times when people tend to seek meaning, spirituality, and hope. But I had already done that and come up empty. Nevertheless, I set up a meeting with a Heartfulness trainer named Brian Jones. Brian is a professional artist. We met at his studio, which was filled with paintings in varying stages of completion. Over coffee, I was impressed to learn that all Heartfulness trainers are volunteers, that none of them accept any fee for their service. Brian then invited me into an

adjacent room to meditate, or to give me a ‘sitting,’ as he called it. He motioned me to a chair and took the seat across from me. He explained how to meditate on the heart and said that his role would simply be to meditate along with me and that this would help facilitate my own meditation. He then asked me to close my eyes and said, ‘Please start.’

It is difficult to explain what followed. It wasn’t until much later that I understood that I had experienced a glimpse of *samadhi*—a state of profound inner equanimity, where you drift beyond yourself, beyond the here and now, beyond everything. When he broke the meditation by saying, ‘That’s all,’ I felt as if I had been yanked out of eternity.

Quietly, we sat in the post-meditative stillness, enjoying its languid beauty. In that moment, I knew that I had experienced something unique—something for which I had been thirsting my whole life. I did not know what that ‘something’ was, but for the first time in memory, my heart was absolutely joyful and at peace. Later, I would learn that this experience was brought about by something called ‘yogic transmission.’

Heartfulness is an integrated approach that consists of three core practices: meditation,

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cleaning, and prayer. These three practices are supported by yogic transmission, which is the essence of the Heartfulness approach and the key to its transformative potential.

Through meditation, we move from the complexity of mind to the simplicity of heart. Everything starts with the heart. When the heart is at peace, the mind is at rest. When the heart is content, the mind gains insight, clarity, and wisdom. We often think that the heart and mind are two distinct entities that are often in conflict with one another. In Heartfulness meditation, we use the heart to regulate the mind, thus bringing them both into alignment. The two entities unite in meditative togetherness, and we become integrated.

The cleaning method frees us from the various mental and emotional tendencies that often dominate our lives. Through it, we purify our hearts by removing inner heaviness, base qualities, and desires. Gradually, our authentic nature is revealed.

In prayer, we affirm our connection to the spiritual Source within. The act of prayer further evolves into a state of prayerfulness, which beckons us to unite with that Source. It creates an aspiration



and a craving that resolves itself in profound meditation.

The Heartfulness practice emerged in India in the early twentieth century. Its progenitor was a yogi named Ram Chandra, whom people called Lalaji. From the very beginning, Lalaji set a tone of inclusiveness, accepting students from any religious and social background, which was rare for his time and place. He himself was steeped in various traditions, which he synthesized and innovated to create a path that could serve an increasingly modernized humanity. Modern seekers have numerous responsibilities and are not equipped to devote themselves exclusively to their spiritual aspirations. Heartfulness proposes a balanced, integrated existence, where life's spiritual and material wings can harmoniously coexist.

Lalaji's spiritual successor was also named Ram Chandra, but was commonly known as Babuji, who perfected the Heartfulness practice, bringing it into its present form and guiding seekers around the world. Babuji's successor was Parthasarathi Rajagopalachari (Chariji), the third guide of the Heartfulness way. When Chariji passed away on 20 December 2014, Kamlesh became the fourth guide in the Heartfulness lineage.

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It was my good fortune to have numerous interactions with Chariji when I relocated to India for work in 2008. When I first met him, I immediately remembered what the Zen master had foretold years earlier. However, I would later come to understand that ‘meeting the master’ is something that happens within, rather than externally.

While living in India, I also met Kamlesh, who was my neighbour and the father of one of my friends. I quickly developed great respect and affection for him. He was one of the most authentic and down-to-earth individuals I had ever known. I remember one instance when his son remarked that one of our apartment complex’s security guards always seemed unhappy. ‘Maybe he would benefit from meditation,’ he said to his father. Kamlesh replied, ‘Right now, that man needs bread more than he needs God.’

Kamlesh was born in the northwestern Indian state of Gujarat in 1956. He started Heartfulness practice in 1976, while a student at pharmacy college. After graduating, he moved to the United States and worked as a pharmacist in New York City while continuing his meditation practice. In 2011, Chariji formally nominated him as his

spiritual successor, which came to fruition on the sad day of Chariji's passing.

Since then, Kamlesh has completely devoted himself to his spiritual duties, which include guiding the activities of Heartfulness Institute and offering continuous support to seekers from every corner of the world. He eschews all formal titles, but many people refer to him as Daaji, which means 'father's younger brother' in his native Gujarati.

*The Heartfulness Way* is a series of candid conversations between Daaji and me, in which we explore the practice and principles of Heartfulness. In these conversations, I ask Daaji many questions. Some are questions that I had as a beginner in meditation. Others are questions that I have often been asked in my capacity as a Heartfulness trainer. Still others are questions that sprung naturally to my mind in the course of our discussions.

*The Heartfulness Way* consists of three parts. Part 1 examines the nature of the spiritual search, and demystifies meditation and yogic transmission.

Part 2 introduces the core practices of Heartfulness: meditation, cleaning, and prayer. It blends foundational knowledge and practical instruction. Each chapter concludes with a step-

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by-step guide to lead you through these simple practices.

Part 3 is a discussion about the guru's invisible yet vital role in supporting our inner journey.

*The Heartfulness Way* is an invitation to experience the simple practice that has transformed my life and those of others practising Heartfulness around the world. Of course, no book can ever transform us. A book may give us wisdom, but it cannot make us wise. A book can give us knowledge, but it cannot make us experience the truth of that knowledge. What this book offers is an experiential method that has helped many individuals discover that truth for themselves.

We may seek spirituality in various places, but the spiritual Source can never be found externally. It is a presence that can never be grasped, but only felt. When we do, it is with the heart that we feel it, for the heart is the organ of feeling. To practise Heartfulness is to seek the essence beyond the form. It is to seek the reality behind the ritual. It is to centre oneself in the core of one's heart and find true meaning and contentment there.

Daaji's message to seekers is simple and direct: experience is greater than knowledge. Any good teacher understands this. That is why so many

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classes have both a lecture and a laboratory module. Daaji often says that in the lecture, you learn the principles, but in the lab, you experiment and gain practical experience. I invite you to make your own heart your lab and the practice of Heartfulness your experiment.

In any experiment, there is an experimenter, there is a subject to be experimented upon, and there is a result. In the spiritual experiment, all three roles belong to you. You are the experimenter, you are the subject of the experiment, and you are its result. With such an experiment, there is never any finality, but only an ongoing process of discovery. That is the joy and wonder of Heartfulness.

JOSHUA POLLOCK

*January 2018*