



# PRACTISE

THE SPEAKING TREE  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 17, 2018

Prayer is when you talk to God; meditation is when you listen to God  
— Diana Robinson

## LEARNING TREE



### On A Yatra

One day, all the disciples went to their master and said, “Master, we are all going on a pilgrimage. The master asked, “Why do you want to go on a pilgrimage?” The disciples replied, “So that we can improve our devotion”. Said the master: “Okay. Then do me a favour. Please take this bitter gourd with you and wherever you go and whichever temple you visit, place it in the altar of the deity, take the blessings and bring it back.” Thus the disciples took the bitter gourd with them on their pilgrimage, from temple to temple. On their return, the master said, “Cook that veggie and serve it to me.” The disciples cooked it and served it to their master. After having the first bite, the master said, “Surprising!” The disciples asked, “What’s surprising?” He replied, “Even after the pilgrimage, this is still bitter. How come?” The disciples said, “But that is its nature, Master.” The master stated, “That’s what I am saying. Unless you change your nature, undertaking a pilgrimage will not make any difference. So, you and I, if we do not change ourselves no teacher or guru can make a difference in our lives.



### In Good Company

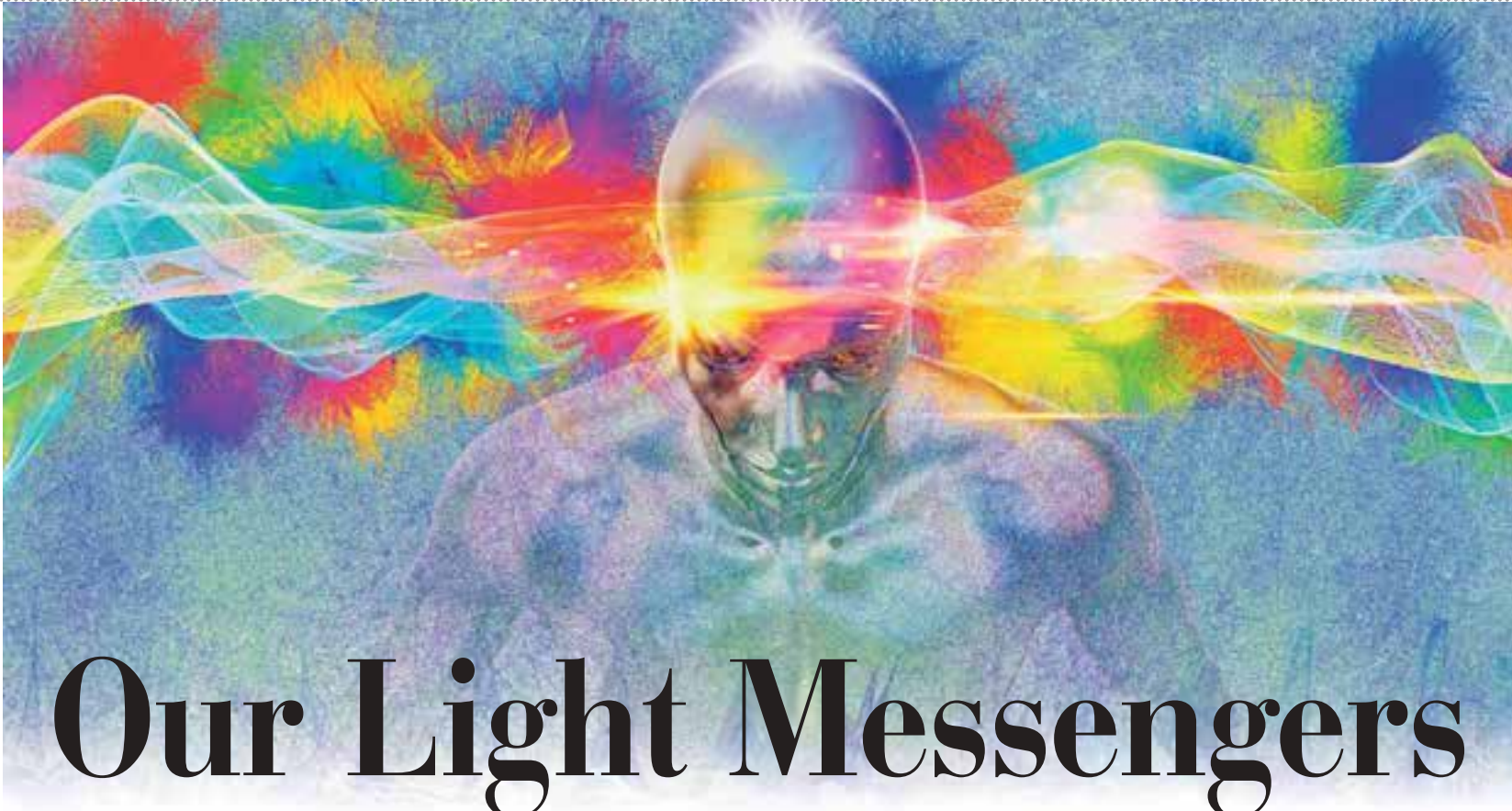
Svami Vivekananda explains the value of our ‘associations’ thus: A rain drop from the sky: if it is caught by clean hands, is pure enough for drinking. If it falls in the gutter, its value drops so much that it can’t be used even for washing your feet. If it falls on a hot surface, it will evaporate. If it falls on a lotus leaf, it shines like a pearl and finally, if it falls on an oyster, it becomes a pearl. The drop is the same, but its existence and worth depends on whom it is associated with. Always be associated with people who are good at heart. You will experience your own inner transformation.

### A Celebration

If you think positively:  
Sound becomes music,  
Movement becomes dance,  
Smile becomes laughter,  
Mind becomes meditative and  
Life becomes a celebration!



High achievers in life have one common secret — something done is always better than waiting to do something perfectly. Version one is better than version none — Tony Robbins



# Our Light Messengers

A true yogi experiences oneness with the world and the universe, says ANIL K RAJVANSHI

Vivekananda was probed and tested thoroughly by Ramakrishna to ascertain his yogic karma, when they first met. One of the things that Vivekananda revealed to Ramakrishna was that before he went to sleep, he used to see white light. There are countless examples of advanced yogis who have reported seeing white light in deep meditation and being immersed in it. Likewise, there are any number of psychedelic drug users who have also reported and written about seeing brilliant white light during their ‘trip’. Similar claims have been made by those who have had near death experiences. Irrespective of religion or faith, they have all reported witnessing brilliant white light and having an out-of-body experience.

So what is the nature of this light? Recent research in the science of neuron communication may throw some light. Neurons communicate with each other via electrical signals through wires of the brain namely axons and dendrites. A large number of neurons, firing and sending signals through these brain wires produce thought. Recently, scientists discovered that information between neurons is passed by mechanical pulses in axons and dendrites and via light.

It was recently discovered that neurons also communicate through light. Light or photons are produced when neurons fire. The exact mechanism on how they are produced is still not known but they vary in wavelength from 200 to 1300 nanometres which corresponds to ultraviolet (UV) to far infrared (FIR) radiation. Thus a large number of neurons firing will produce white light.

The light produced by neuron firing is transmitted through axons and dendrites which behave like optical fibres. Scientists estimate that they can transit anywhere between 50 to 96 per cent of the light incident on them. Transfer of information among neurons via light could be the basis of the brain’s high speed reaction and processing.

There are close to 100 billion neurons in the human brain. These neurons are connected to each other via dendrites, axons and also to glial cells. The total connections, therefore, number between 500 to 1,000 trillion. Each connection is capable of producing photons during its firing.



Scientists have also estimated the rate of photon production by doing experiments on rat neurons and then extrapolating it for human brains. The photon production rate was developed for a very ‘quiet’ neuron. This rate was then multiplied by total connections so that the total number of photons produced comes close to 10 trillion per second. In the human brain especially during deep meditation the frequency of neuron firing is about 100 times that of ‘quiet’ brain and gives rise to Gamma brain waves. This can produce close to 1,000 trillion photons per second and could be the source of the bright light reported by yogis and psychedelic drugs users.

Data from brain scans reveal that psychedelic drugs work by depressing the areas which give rise to ego. They also help increase connectivity in other parts of the brain. Thus these drugs allow the brain to work by melting down boundaries between self and the world. These effects are similar to those observed in *samadhi*, deep meditation.

*Samadhi* also dissolves the ego and focuses on a single thought for long-term results in *sanyam*, control, which allow all parts of the brain to work in harmony. This results in experiences

where the yogi feels that he has melted into Universal Consciousness. The major difference between the experiences of psychedelic drugs and meditation is that the former cannot be controlled while the latter can.

Advanced yogis and psychedelic drugs users have regularly reported life changing experiences after seeing and being submerged in white light. They feel a sense of oneness with the world and the universe and a belief in interconnectedness of everything. Similarly, in near death experience, scientists have recorded Gamma brain waves indicating a high level of brain activity akin to *samadhi* and hence a vision of white light and spiritual experiences.

Thus such spiritual experiences are not because of light but because of the production of a superfast and powerful brain which produces *sanyam* and hence gains knowledge of the Universe. The brain under *sanyam* and to some extent under drugs is firing all cylinders. Light is simply a by-product of neurons working and firing in unison. It is as if when one attains *samadhi*, the fireworks tell the brain it has arrived! ■

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## MEDITATE

## LAUGHING TREE



### Store Santa

While I was working as a store Santa, a boy asked me for an electric train set. “If you get your train,” I told him, “your dad is going to want to play with it too. Is that all right?” The boy became very quiet. So, moving the conversation along, I asked, “What else would you like Santa to bring you?” He promptly replied, “Another train.” — [guy-sports.com](http://guy-sports.com)

### Happy Journey

When my summer teaching post in the Czech Republic came to an end, I told my students my next teaching destination would be in Australia, “The land down under.” On my final day, they presented me with a card. The carefully worded note read, “Good luck, and happy journey to the underworld.”

### Nearer My God

My niece Katrina tailgates other cars and it makes me nervous. I just can’t get it through her head that she does this and that it’s very dangerous. One good thing is that I sometimes find myself drawing closer to the Lord when I ride with her!

### Stay Cool

Carter: Lee how do you manage to stay cool all the time?  
Lee: Because I don’t get into arguments with stupid people, I just cut it short and say, ‘You are right’.  
Carter: But that’s completely irrational and wrong.  
Lee: You are right.



## INBOX

### The Real McCoy

■ Yes, I concur with the article, ‘Is True Happiness Possible?’, June 10. We are all entitled to experience the real thing. But first we need to discover what real happiness is. True happiness is free from our worldly conceptions of money, power, position and relations. — [Arvind Patel](http://ArvindPatel.com), via [speakingtree.in](http://speakingtree.in)

■ Happiness varies from person to person depending on the state of mind. It has two levels — a transitory shallow level and a deeper profound level. We can reach it by being in touch with the soul and setting our mind to it — we arrive at a *samadhi*, state of deep contentment.

— [Manoj Kamat](http://ManojKamat.com), via [speakingtree.in](http://speakingtree.in)

# Ways Of The Soul

## YOG GURU SURAKSHIT GOSWAMI

How do we actually know or believe that we are not the body, but we are souls that never die and change the body?

— [Vishwanath Bilgi](http://VishwanathBilgi.com), 57

■ If someone has an accident, and loses a limb, biologically, the person is incomplete without that limb. However, there is an invisible being within that person who sees himself as complete. Even when the body begins to get old, there is someone inside, who never seems to age and treats himself as he was, say 20 years ago.

In fact, bodily changes occur as long as we are alive. When we are walking, there is someone inside our body who stays stable. Whether we are happy or unhappy, whether we are being praised or insulted, whether we have hit the jackpot or are incurring losses — all through the ups and downs of life — there is someone within us who stays still and calm. We fall asleep, but someone within us always keeps awake and wakes us when the situation warrants. That person is nothing but our soul. And soul is nothing but energy.

This soul, energy, permeates the entire universe. There is no place where the soul is not present. The whole universe is mov-



ing on the basis of the soul. While the soul itself is not doing anything, the energy — in the presence of the soul — is doing all the work.

The soul does not take birth, nor does it die. Even *pralaya*, cataclysm, will not make any difference to the soul, because it is beyond *prakriti* and imperishable, whereas this body, mind, intellect are made of *prakriti*. As long as we live in *dehahyasa*, body consciousness, it is difficult to believe in the soul and experience it. People use different words to describe the soul, but these words don’t reflect the essence of the soul. Just as we cannot experience a place, without going there, we cannot experience the soul without Self-realisation. ■

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# Change Your Mindset

Opt for a healthy lifestyle to fire your life force, writes YOGI CAMERON

How you feel will mostly be affected by one thing — what’s going on in your mind. Moment to moment, your thoughts fluctuate from one idea to another, from one person to another or from a situation to another. Most of the time, we are just observing our mind going around the neighbourhood, collecting more thoughts and recording them all for future reference as memories. Even when we don’t want to think of something, they just pop up in our mind and decide to stay, like old friends we feel comfortable with.

Now like with old friends, we have some attachments towards them. Of course, our friends are comfortable with us just drifting by and keeping them company and we have desires to move beyond our limitations and make our life better but find it hard to let go of the past. At this time, we have to remind ourselves that we also have other friends in our life who will help us achieve the change we are looking for.

It isn’t just with our speech that we change things but with our actions. It isn’t much use to sit around and talk about change or to put it off but to use the tools at our disposal to make changes and stick to them however big or small. With positive actions come positive habit changes, which bring on new thoughts and a shift in mindset towards optimism and enthusiasm. From here you can keep moving forward knowing that the future is only going to get brighter because you are taking the necessary steps, although it may be some of the hard-

est moments of your life.

As you keep moving forward and creating new positive moments, your memories will fill up with these new thoughts, which create new impressions. These new impressions help to fade out your old stale habits which have no place in your life any longer and you are happy to lose all memory of. This is when the magic starts to happen in your life, when you are creating the most positive and joyous impressions in your mind and living them out. Not everyone chooses intentional positive change but when they do, a lot of unexpected miracles start to happen.

### Right Moves

Usually when we talk about energy conservation, the topics refer to how we use, or abuse, fossil fuels. But our own energy, our life force, should receive some consid-



eration as well because it powers our emotional, physical, and psychological well-being. We can sustain and improve our energy levels by making better choices that align with a healthy lifestyle.

**Eat less:** Eating large quantities of food actually makes you more lethargic. In *ayurveda*, the digestive fire is called *agni*. The body becomes overwhelmed to process so much at one time, so eating less helps to constantly keep the fire burning for an active metabolism.

**Deep sleep:** Consider your sleeping patterns. Deep sleep is where your body recharges the most. If you’re a light sleeper, you may get rest but still feel tired. Sleeping in a potent way is important.

**Speak less:** Incessant chatter is just a noise-maker. Carefully choosing your words and what you communicate about is a more efficient way to converse.

**Slow down the breath:** The breath is the regulator for the nervous system. When we inhale and exhale longer and more fully, it calms and centres us, which allows the body and mind to be steady rather than hyperactive.

**Be in the moment:** We can overspend our energy by worrying about our future that may never come to be. Instead, if we focus on the now we can give full attention to what is at hand. East And West Series ■

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