

25 August 2009

A Breath of Fresh Air from Akasha

Hi Everyone!



The Empowering Partnership
EMPOWERING YOUR PROFESSIONAL, BUSINESS AND PERSONAL LIFE

Welcome to the newsletter in the new format! We're hoping we now have a system that is more easily manageable for our non-techie capabilities.

It's been an even longer gap than expected since the last newsletter, as Akasha has been so immersed in her book that I'm helping out. So this newsletter is intended to keep in touch and to update you with things we'll be doing over the next few months.

In this issue

- So, how about Akasha? An update
- We all seem so different: an article
- Forthcoming events
- To make you smile....

Reading time? About 6 mins

So, how about Akasha?

Well, she is very immersed as I said. She might at times use somewhat stronger language than that! It's actually a really worthwhile project, a real object lesson in diversity, in respecting each other's culture and traditions. As some of you know, she's doing a guide for people attending a ceremony in a faith tradition other than one they may have had experience of. This has meant really getting to know practices in Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, branches of Christianity, Buddhism, and Sikhism. This has been an enormous project. Each faith tradition has a vast range of practices and also variations within and between countries. It's a bit like people: we all seem so different!

The idea is that you as reader might need to go to a ceremony for a friend, say a wedding, and you want to know what happens and what you need to do, to prepare before going or when at the actual occasion. Of course, you might be just curious. In the process of reading the book, you'd learn a huge amount about the various faiths as well.

Say you were brought up to some extent in the Christian tradition, have you any idea what occurs at a Hindu or a Jewish wedding?

So there's been masses of research, lots of meetings with imams, rabbis, priests, etc., attending ceremonies to see what goes on first hand, discussions with learned people, etc... In the process the book changed title mid-way: it is now called "Do I kneel or do I bow?"

She's now on the last lap - one more chapter to go - and already editing other chapters with the publisher, which is where the publisher goes through it with a fine toothcombe. There's a rumour that she may not be that far off finishing it. So we're optimistic she'll be back in touch by perhaps November or December, maybe with tales of being a commissioned author.

We all seem so different

Talking about people seeming so different, as I observe Akasha's project from the sidelines, I am reminded about how difficult it can be at times for us humans to get on with one another.

Historically, one of the great fault lines in relationships between peoples has been religion. The history of religion has been one of fracture, in pretty much each of the major faith traditions. Bloody wars were fought as a consequence. Today, this continues in one form or another: one only has to think of Northern Ireland, Israel and Palestine, Islamic fundamentalism and the West, the former Yugoslavia, Beirut, Cyprus, Sri Lanka, India, to name a few! And the conflict is not only religious but also cultural, linguistic, ethnic and so on. In fact religion is often the cloak for other issues.

We humans seem to have contrived all sorts of ways to be different. Just pause for a moment to think of some. Apart from religion there's wealth for starters. Those who have more or less money than us, have bigger houses, or smaller ones, live in more or less posh areas, dress in certain ways, speak differently, have regional accents or not, drive particular cars, have particular jobs (banker, landless labourer, admin support, director, dust-cart worker, farmer), have certain partners even.

Got any reminders for you?

For a lot of us, being different stirs up feelings. For some of us, we might feel pride. Others have feelings of antagonism towards those who have what they don't have. They might feel jealous, envious, and unhappy. Or they feel they themselves lack something. They, you or I might make others or ourselves wrong. We're reminded about what we think is missing in us.

We compare. It happens a lot.

Being different drives powerful wedges between people. But, are we really that different? Who we present ourselves as being and who we are really can be very different. Or so people can think.

What do you find when you get to know someone seemingly different from you? Do they turn out to be that different? You've probably often had the experience of getting to know someone whom you were not sure about, only to find them not all at all what you had thought.

Think of one whom you really got to know, maybe someone whom you got close to. What of that person at core? What about when you really meet someone, when you really make real contact with them? Who did you find under those layers?

If you've had this experience of really meeting another, you may now be thinking something different again. For example he or she might actually be a lot like you, even a mirror sometimes. You might have more in common than you thought. You might feel a lot more in touch with their humanness, with who they really are. Sometimes, your sense of connection can even lead you to feel that you and this other person are one.

This sense of connection is one we find a lot in our work. People often report it in workshops, for example. People who feel close to one another say it. This experience is very important. It is what I refer to as an experience of the transpersonal. This is what is possible when we step aside from the usual perception of difference. It's about seeing beyond our projections and perceptions based on our conditioning, and seeing people for who they really are. When we're in role-mode, living out of our conditioning, conflict and disagreement is more possible. When we allow ourselves to make real contact, to see others for who they really are, we find warmth, contact, engagement, friendliness, love.

This awareness can take you to another level of being with others, one always available to you. It can transform your relationships with your fellow humans. It is a shift of awareness.

So, here is a useful reminder for when you next become aware of another who irks you in some way: Just pause for a moment, breathe and say to yourself

"At essence, you and I are One".

Forthcoming events

Yoga meditation

I'm starting a series of **evening meditation workshops** local to us, in Chippenham, Wiltshire, from 27th September.

This is an opportunity to experience Yoga meditation, a process of going within, stilling the mind, letting go and connecting with your Self within. I'll be teaching not only the basics of meditational practice but also the underpinning philosophy and useful techniques for dealing with that mind stuff. Meditation offers not only a simple relaxation technique but actually a whole way of approaching life and yourself that sees beyond the illusory self, the "I" that I referred to above.

I plan to run these in a few other venues and lead [some workshops](#) as a follow-up in due course.

For more details, [click on this link](#).

To make you smile....

Watch [this video link](#)

It makes interesting watching and is well worth seeing right through. It starts very slowly, a train journey, suitably dark, on the Paris Metro underground. Everybody totally disconnected from one another as ever. Just watch the people and see what happens!

It is actually a process we use on [some of our workshops](#). Some of you might recognise it.

No, not mad! Natural!

Pass this on

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Take care,

John

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