SWADHARMA BULLETIN

April 2021

Illustration by Emanuella Lele

We are sending our April edition of the newsletter when each one of us is going through a difficult and challenging time. As we make our way through the pandemic we wanted to say that it is OK to slow down, OK to feel unproductive, and let us try to help each other in whatever way possible. If you are going through a struggle, please reach out to us at swadharmablog@auroville.org.in and we will try to help you as a community.

A BEAUTIFUL CAMPAIGN TO SUPPORT COVID DONATIONS

Ishita recently concluded a compassionate Instagram campaign to support covid donations by offering handcrafted watercolor paintings to the kind souls who contributed to the cause. Ishita has also set up a site with a consolidated list of initiatives currently in need of donations:

DONATE FOR COVID

CONVERSATIONS WITH MEEDU

One Sunday morning, I got a chance to talk to Meedu about her play 'Bhoomi' which premiered on 10th April at the Adishakti Theatre. She is from the second batch of Swadharma and has been working with Adishakti since 2018. Before Swadharma, Meedu worked as a journalist for The Hindu for about three and a half years. Like so many of us, she came to Swadharma questioning and wondering how she could move ahead with all she had. How does one solve the puzzle when you're the only piece that matters?

Adishakti Laboratory for Theatre Art Research is a contemporary theatre research and repertory company near Pondicherry, India. The stage always allured and maybe in different ways, over time beckoned her as well. Life has a way of leaving clues and cues for those who seek. She dribbled in almost all the performing arts as a child. What stood out for me, was the purpose of her work and her art; which is to enable her to evolve and grow. It was amazing to see how profoundly her clarity is crystallizing. She has found her own process to move in the creative space, whether it is through movement to center her or writing to pour out all her thoughts and channelise her energy.

WHAT IS THE TRIBE UPTO?

Through her time at Adishakti, she got an opportunity to give life to all the arts that have always surrounded her. One of the things she said was "It wasn't important about being the performer, it was the learning." At Adishakti she got that chance to learn the grammar, skills, techniques, and give shape to her craft.

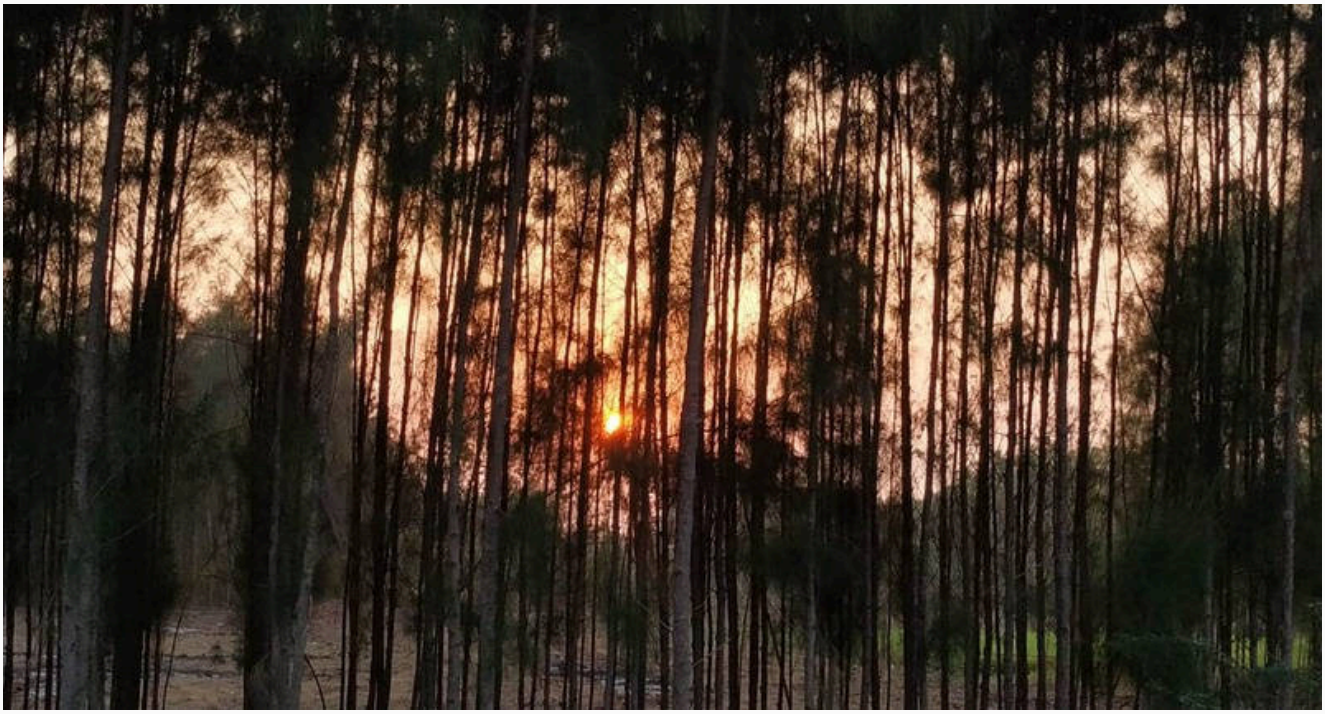
Bhoomi is an adaptation of a Malayalam play written by Sarah Joseph, which is a take on rape and sexual assault. The play explores the vastness of a topic like this and starting a conversation about it. Her purpose shines through when she mentions that as an artist your job isn't to change the world yet a change is brought about when you start doing all the things that make you happy or do the things you believe in, very much like a ripple effect. The intention isn't to bring about a change but to do your bit. In this play, Meedu brings to life four very different characters through music, dance, and her acting prowess. The play was a superb seamless experience for her since the six cast members were also providing live music, getting on the stage to play their respective characters, and running backstage to change costumes.

For me, in a time like this, Meedu's journey, her experiences, learnings, insights, achievements, discoveries, self-explorations, her several moments of introspection were inspiring, calming, and hopeful. There is another joy in pouring the different aspects of your being into an act of creation. The coming together of your ideas, inspirations and stories is another lived experience of its own. On behalf of everyone here in the Swadhama family, I wish Meedu many more 'Bhoomis'.

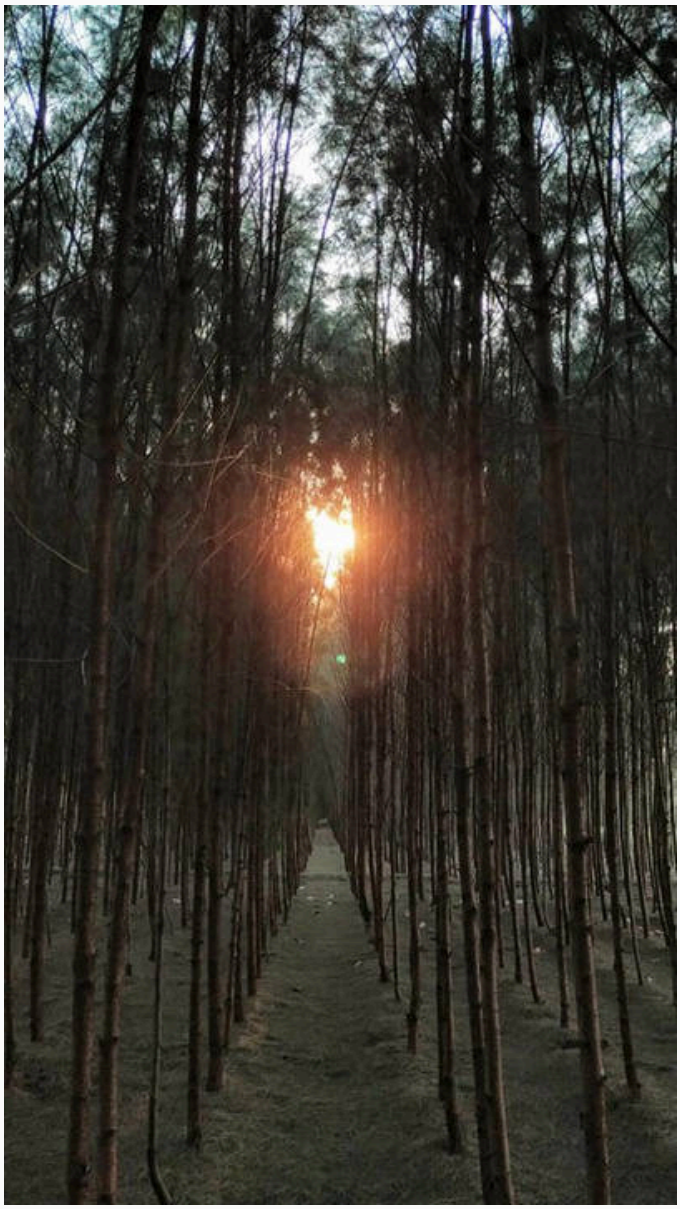
-Abha Kate

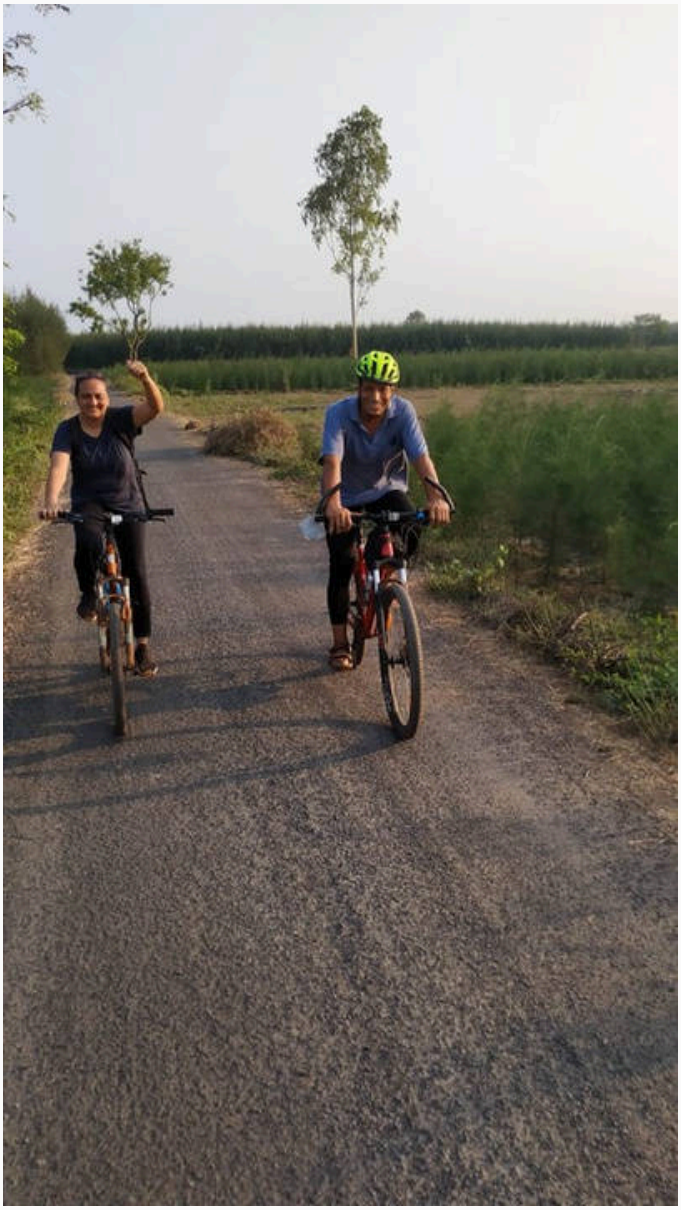
CYCLE TRIPS

Lalit and gang continue their cycling explorations across the rich Auroville bio-region. Each time the same landscapes offer a different feel & flavour, and there is always more to explore. Here are some beautiful photos from these adventures



CYCLE TRIPS



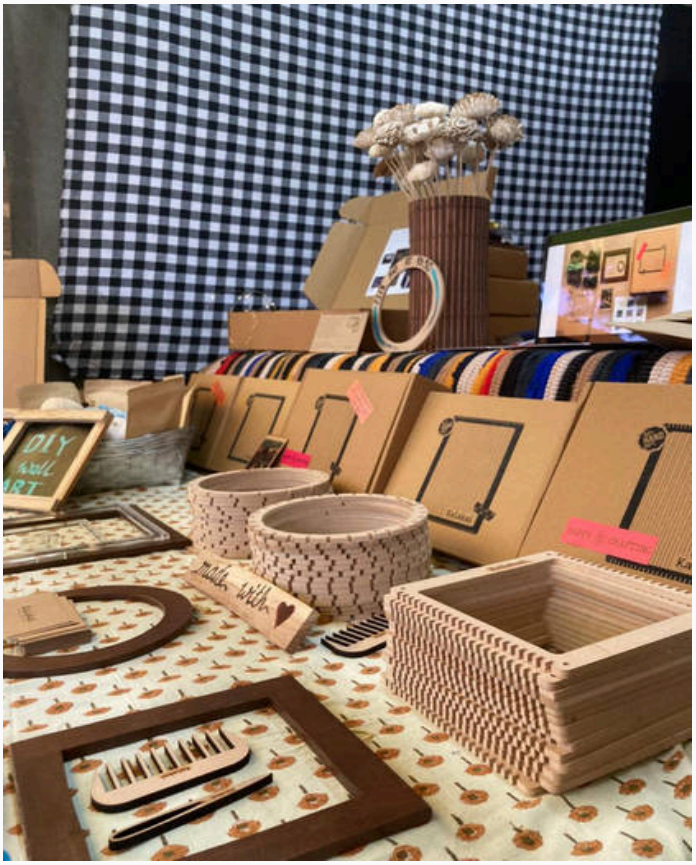


If you are in Auroville and wish to join us for the cycling trips, please do reach out to Divyanshi directly for details :)

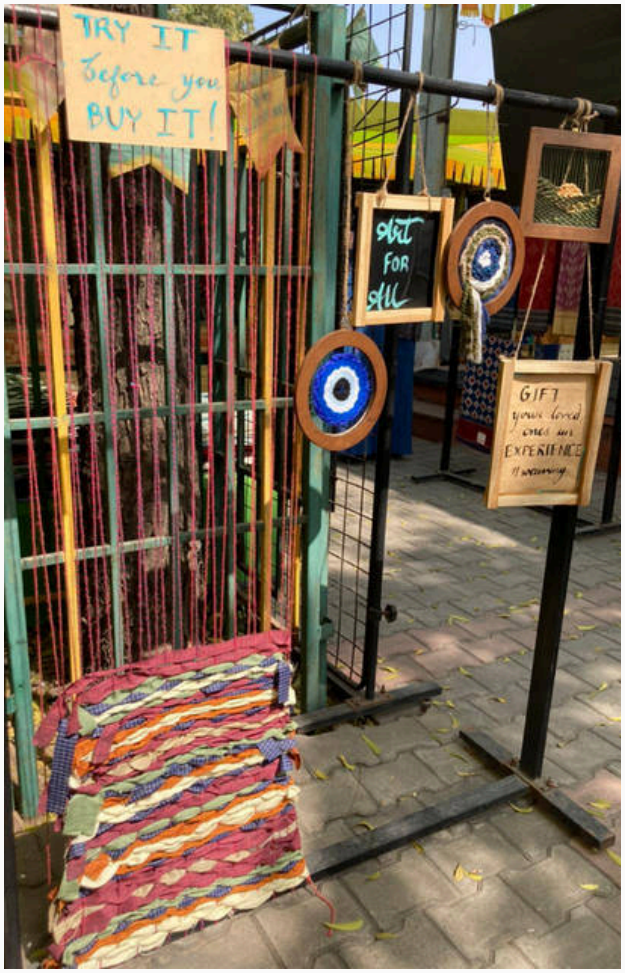
KALAKAI CELEBRATES ITS 6 MONTHS ANNIVERSARY THIS APRIL.

At Dastkar, Basant'21, Delhi - Shefali Patil(L) and Aayushi Shah(R), Co-founders at the Stall

Starting with a mission to bring an amalgamation of Indian craft and its history for all to experience, today Kalakai has shaped itself in various dimensions with its weaving kits. One of the notable events which changed our own perception was participating in a craft-based Exhibition, Dastkar. This exhibition in Delhi not only brought us closer to the artisans' community but several visitors who were joyful to see us and buy, mainly to gift their loved ones and take ahead this story of craftsmanship. A human interaction-based 12-day event after a year-long pandemic really got us all to appreciate the experience as a whole than just a product. Coming in close with the artist community, we recently had an opportunity to conduct an online workshop for women across states.



Installation for visitors to
try weaving and then purchase it.

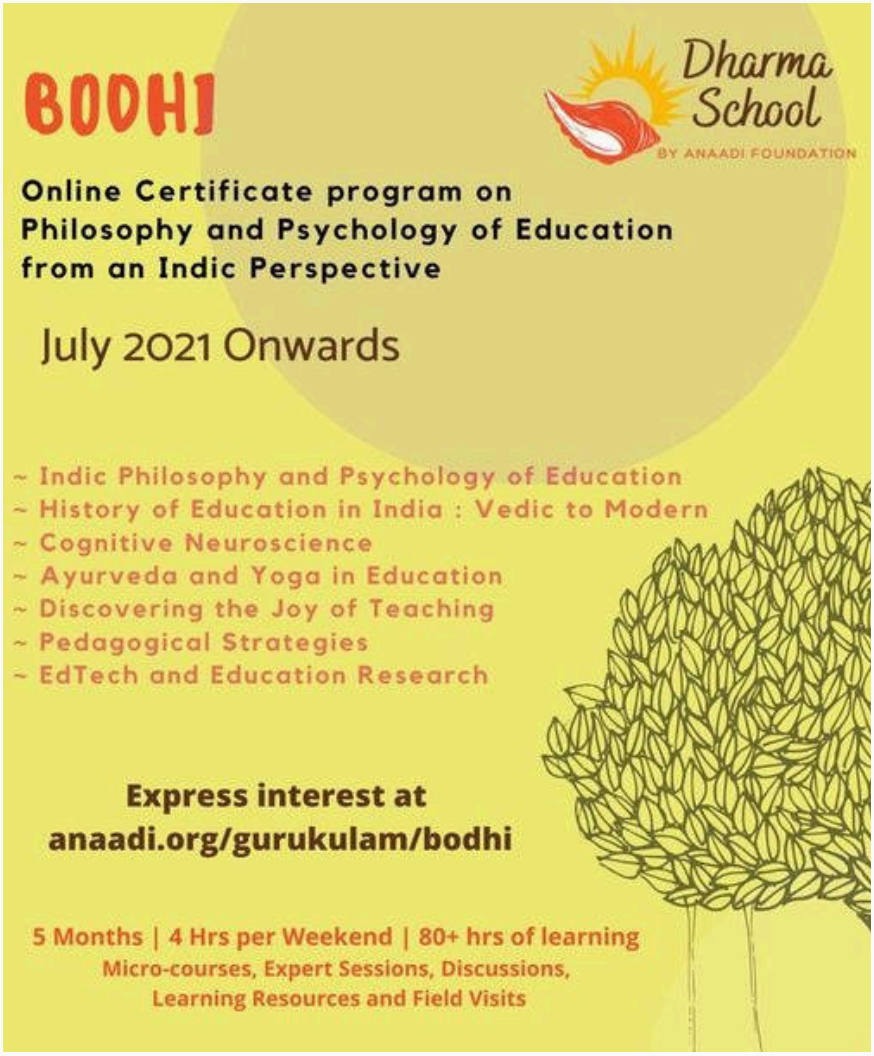


Lessons that I carry from this ongoing journey:

- Many times it has been that one reply from 20 emails sent to various people, that would have helped us bring subsequent movement. So learning to sell, sell and sell the idea, product and vision.
- With a new product like ours which didn't have a constructive market. We had to try across various target markets in terms of age group and professions. Only now do we really understand who our potential buyers are.
- Bring in discipline and focus when you're all on your own - it has not been as easy to motivate ourselves each day and research.
- Keep Evolving - As designers, we have evolved our product across various times and spaces.
- Listening to customers. Directly and indirectly.

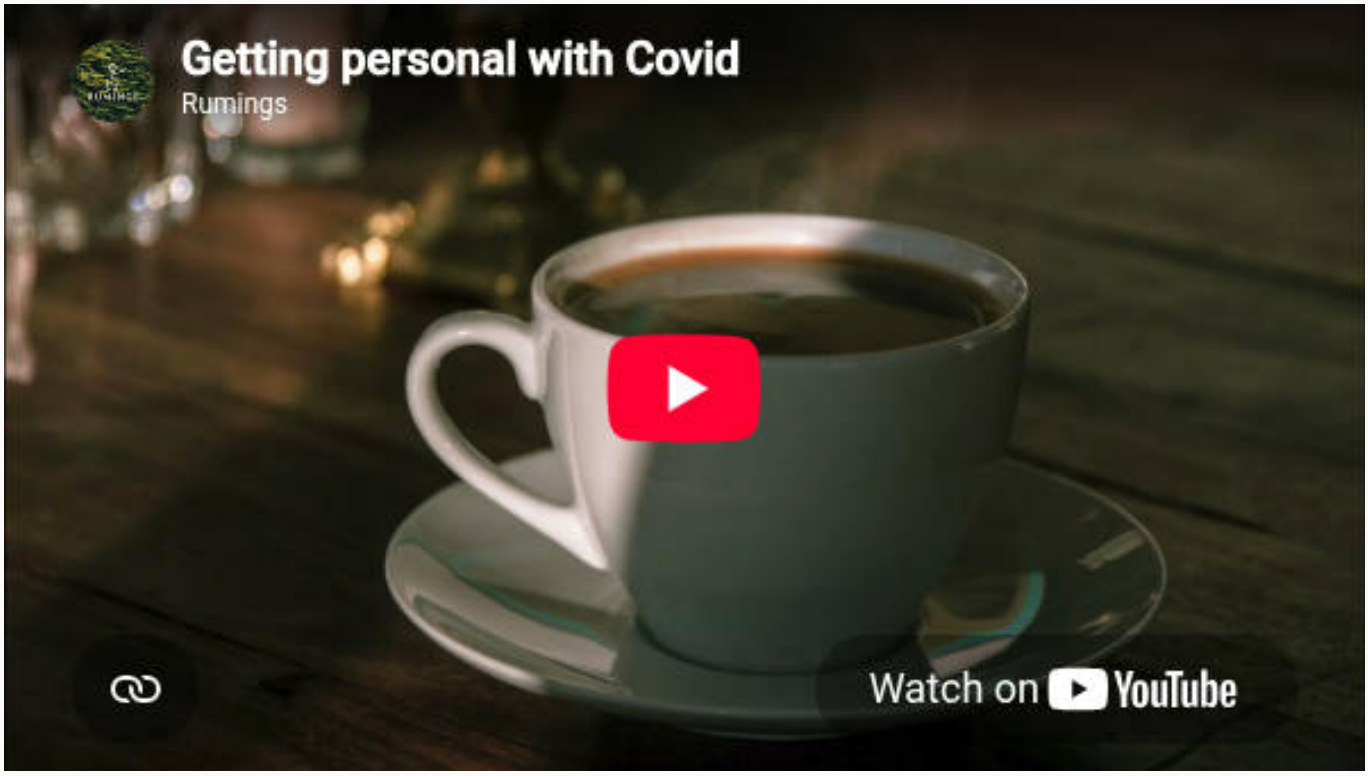
COURSE ON INDIAN EDUCATIONAL PHILISOPHY AND PSHYCHOLOGY

Vipul, our mentor for Swadharma batch 7 is co-designing and offering an online course on Indian Educational Philosophy and Psychology, in collaboration with Anaadi Foundation, Dharma School. The program aims to bring together the traditional Indian perspectives and practices in the educational field and draws from the wisdom shared by great seers of this land such as Sri Aurobindo, Rabindranath Tagore, J. Krishnamurti, Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi, and Vinoba Bhave. It will also be an opportunity to explore a wide variety of holistic learning initiatives across India.
Please fill out this interest form and share it with anyone who would like to join this course: BODHI



GOING THROUGH COVID - ABHA

Sharing my journey of covid through our podcast, 'Rumings'. We conversed about the mental health during these trying times which pose a challenge for all of us. It is in hope that this podcast reaches whoever in need amidst their struggles. You can listen to this podcast on Spotify and on Youtube under Rumings. Happy Rumings everyone!



RUMINGS ON YOUTUBE

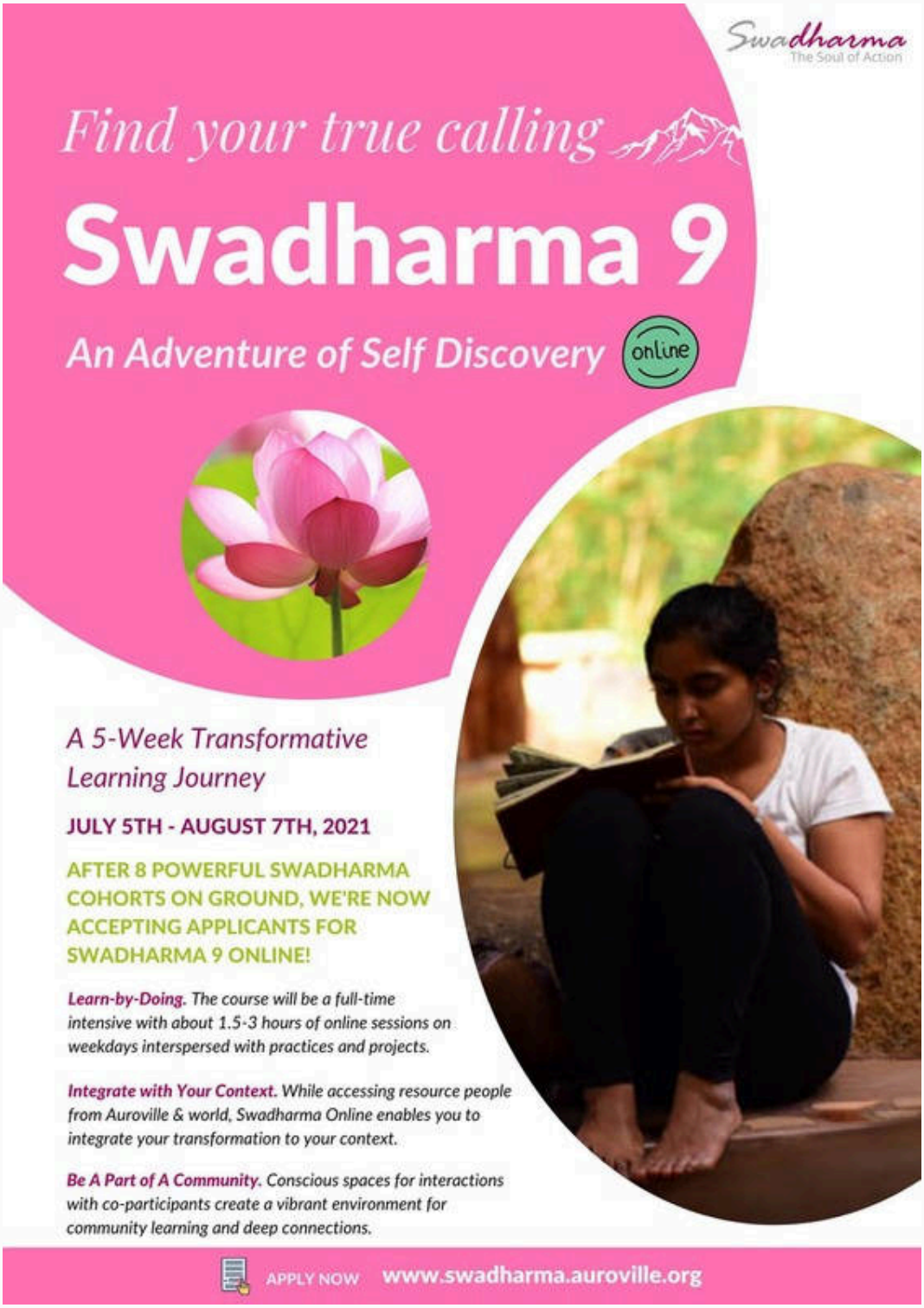
BIRTHDAY KOLAMS

An art psychotherapist and artist, Aishwarya is crafting customized birthday Kolams. Each of these kolams is unique, personal, and made with a lot of love! As per Aishwarya, "Kolam is an ancient art form that has been passed down from one generation of women to the next for thousands of years. It is ephemeral and archetypal, contextual and universal, ancient and contemporary all at the same time! And I am honoured to be able to give it a new life the way it gave me mine :)". Reach out to Aishwarya on Instagram @tip_of_the_aishberg to know more.

SHARING CIRCLE ON APRIL 30TH 2021

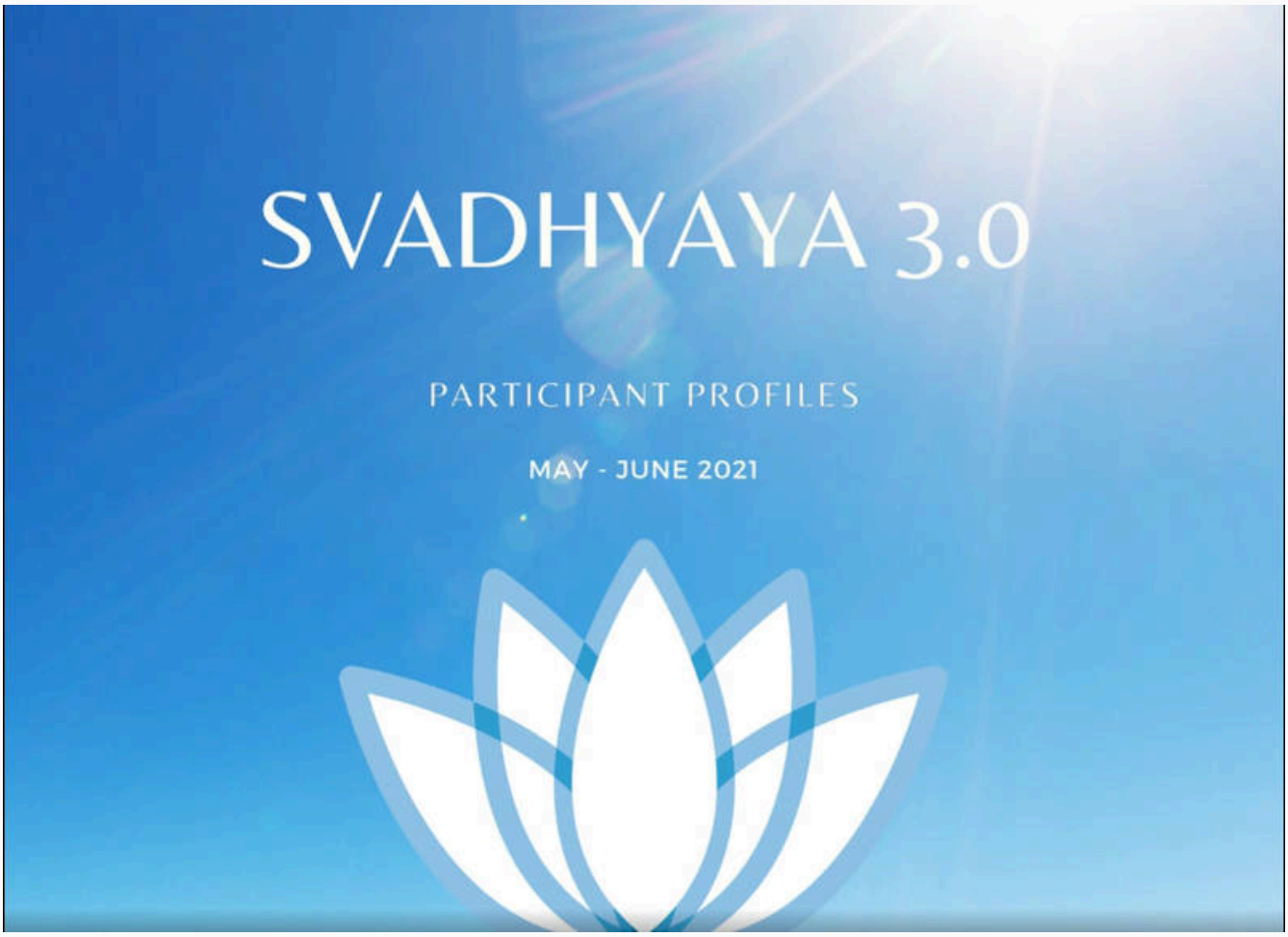
April edition of Swadharma Monthly Session concluded with an intimate sharing circle hosted by Drishti. Here is a glimpse:

SWADHARMA 9 ADMISSIONS OPEN



Applications for Swadharma's next batch are now live at https://www.swadharma.auroville.org/. Due to the ongoing restrictions, Swadharma will be happening online from July 5th - August 7th 2021

SVADHYAYA 3.0 BEGINS



ACI team is excited to welcome an enthusiastic batch of participants to SVADHYAYA 3.0 this May. Here's introducing the participants, watch the participant profiles video to know about their diverse backgrounds and aspirations. Click the above image to watch or use this link:

SVADYAYA 3.0 PARTICIPANT PROFILES

THE THEME OF EMOTIONS

The Integral Education Portal newsletter series was launched on August 15. The newsletter is for all lifelong learners of Integral Education. It has a theme of the month on which we send biweekly newsletters. Newsletters consist of videos, practices, quotes, and short write-ups. The theme of April was Emotions. Below is a short text from one of the newsletters:

When we hear of the word "emotions" or think of this, we tend to associate it with sadness, gloom, broken hearts and it is often seen as a weakness in one's personality. It is often known to act as a roadblock in the pathway of true knowledge and action as it is perceived to make one weak, be irrational and delay decisions. Even in the personal space, emotions have lost their charm owing to the unending play and drama. Eventually, one ends up shutting their hearts towards any emotional exposure out of a fear of getting affected.

What if emotions could help tap into the higher consciousness and become a means of strength and pave way for the flowers of relationships to a full bloom of harmony.

Positive emotions energise, they make every experience far rich and intense. These emotions are in essence energy in motion and they move the heart, thereby making actions effortless. Purest emotions reveal a profound delight which is pure and exquisite, and that is its sole inspiration. It uses the power of emotions to navigate, without giving in to external stimuli. These deepest emotions rise from the soul of pure love and delight. Psychic emotion is not just one of the most powerful means of our inner progress, but also one of the nearest one to the Divine. Emotions are in fact indispensable to our integral progress, as love and devotion can only manifest in the presence of the emotional being.

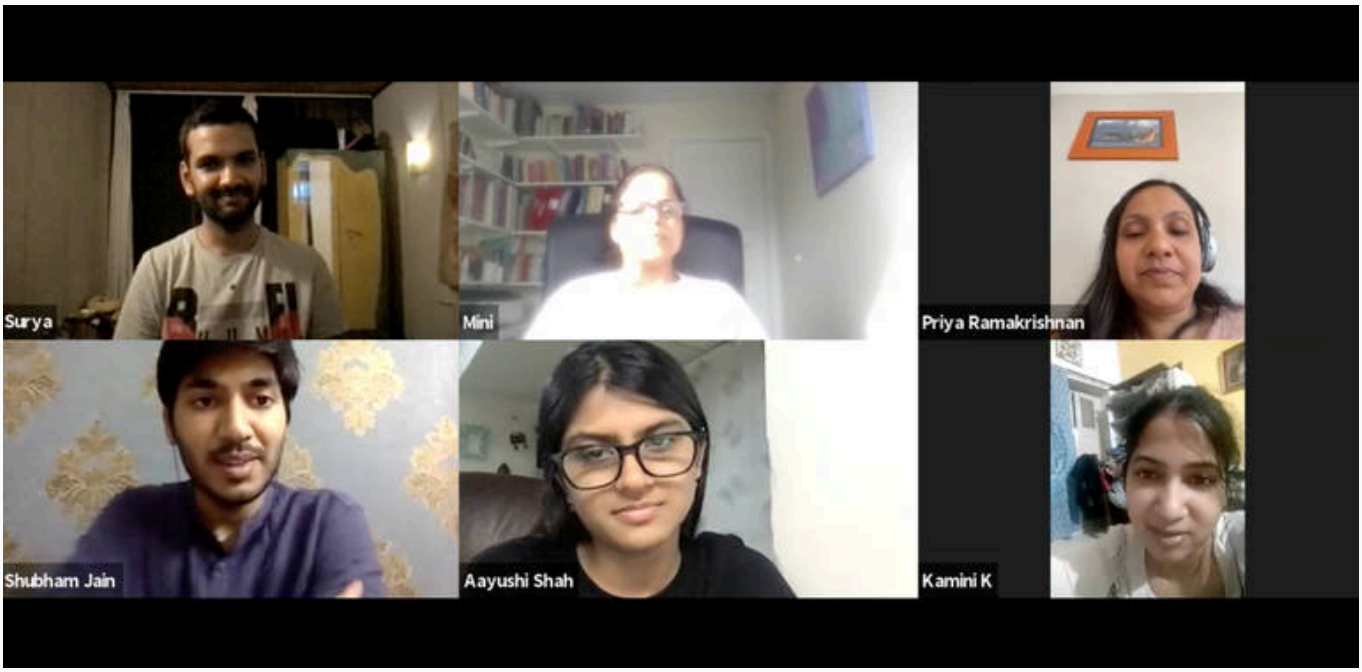
To read further, you can have a look at the Emotions newsletters here: https://ie.auroville.org/tag/newsletter/. Here is a video on "Why Emotions Matter?" - that was a part of one of the newsletters and put together by Palak and Surya :)

If you have not already subscribed to the IE newsletter, subscribe at https://ie.auroville.org/#subscribe

SWADHARMA TRIAD COACHING CIRCLE

It's been 6 weeks since we began the third cycle of the Swadharma Coaching circles. The participants are grouped into smaller focussed triads that meet every week to share their challenges and progress with their practices. These triads have been a source of a lot of support, inspiration and nourishment.

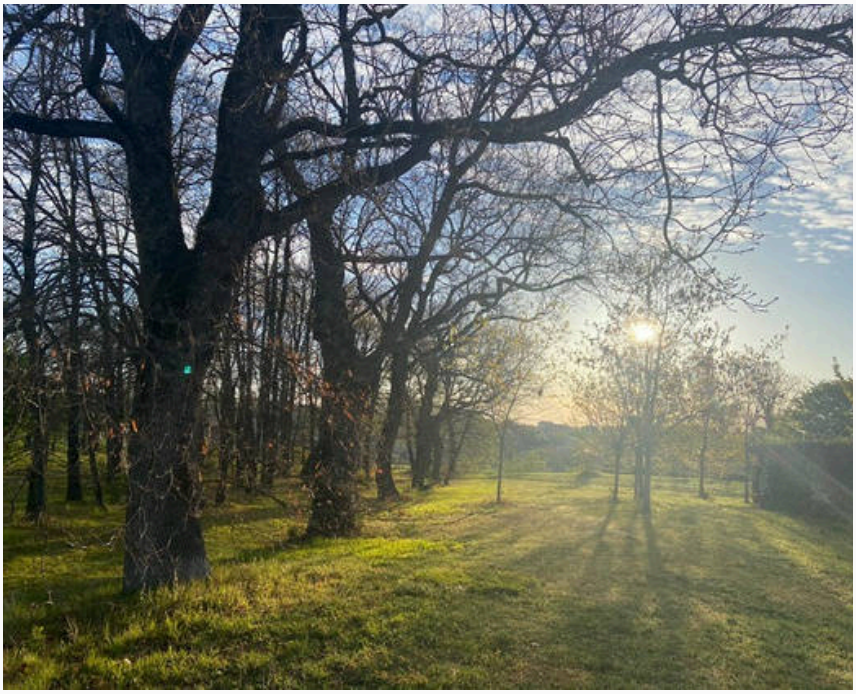
We recently also had our monthly gathering as a full group. It was touching to see how each one was tapping into their inner aspirations and showing up for their practices. Everyday the group is enriched by the updates of the participants with their practices - be it Rupal's flower arrangements, Kamini's workouts, Mini's nature walks from Sweden and Priya's from France or Aayushi's experiments with food - it has been inspiring and lively to be a part of the circle.

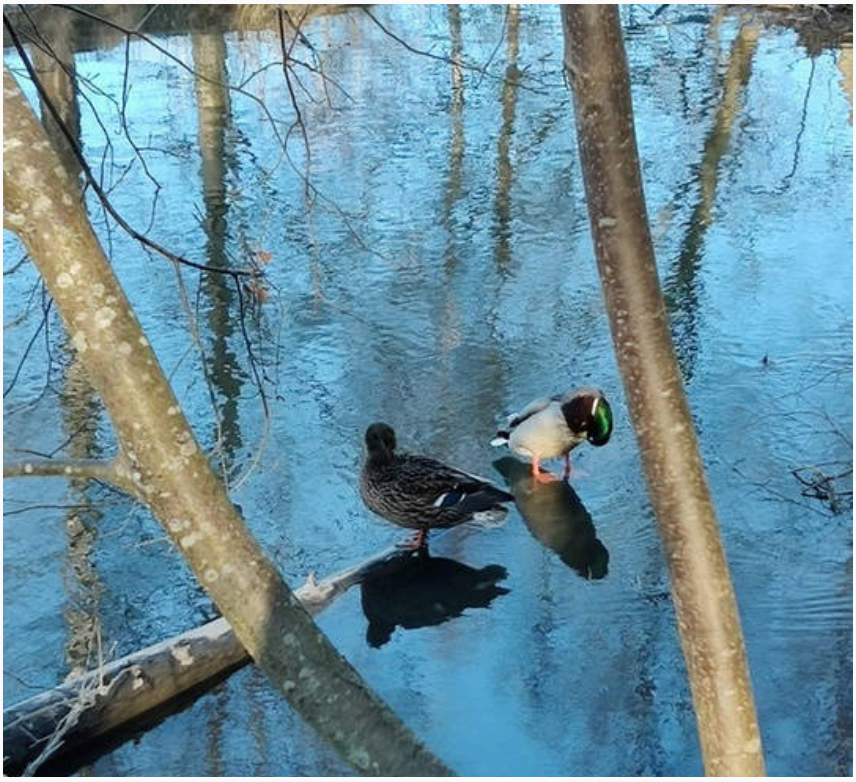


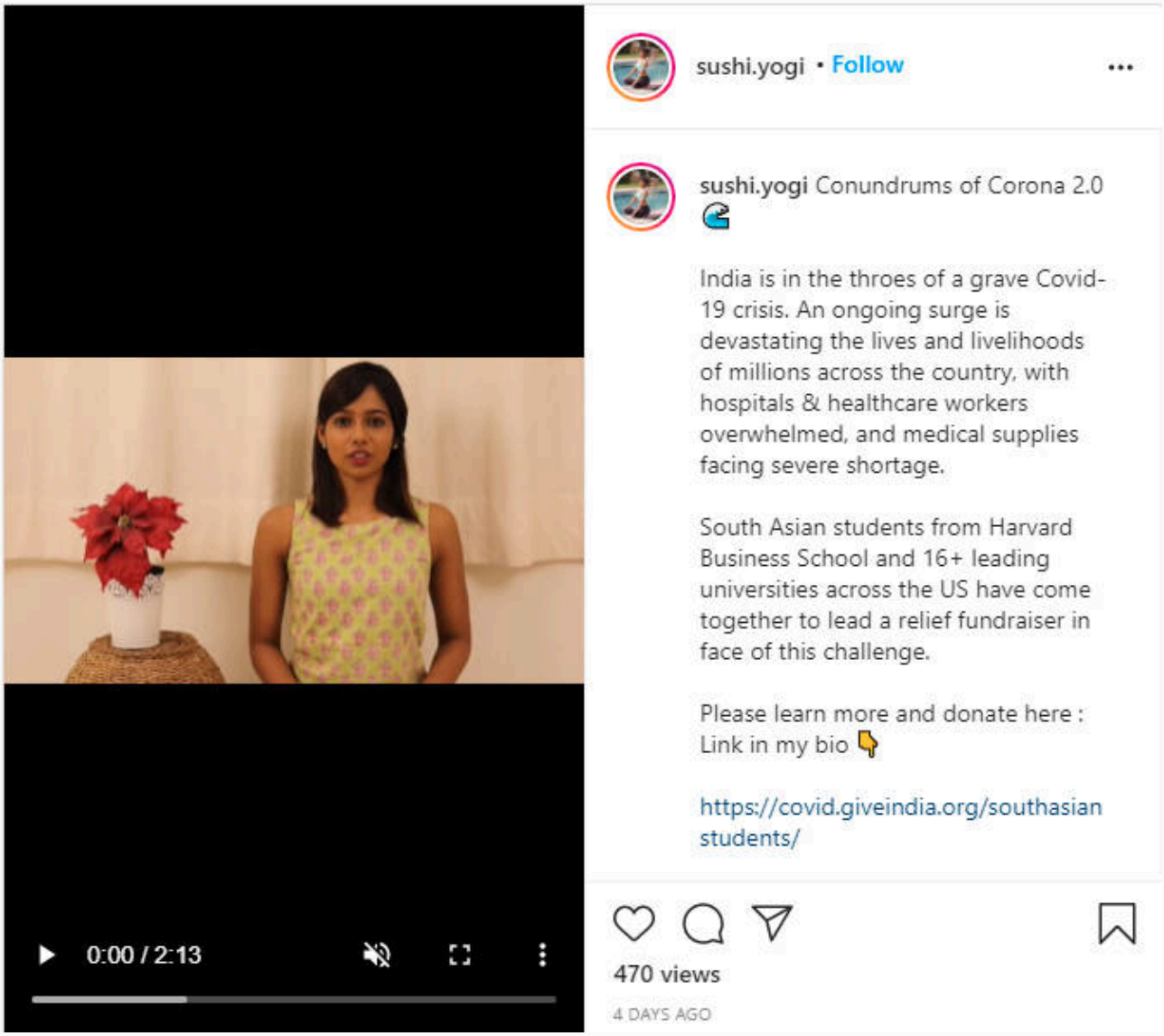
To make lasting shifts in one's life, the power of the collective, a sangha of sincere aspirants has been an indispensable support. The cohort now goes into the last 4 weeks of its journey determined to progress joyfully.

SWADHARMA TRIAD COACHING CIRCLE

Here are some glimpses from the group







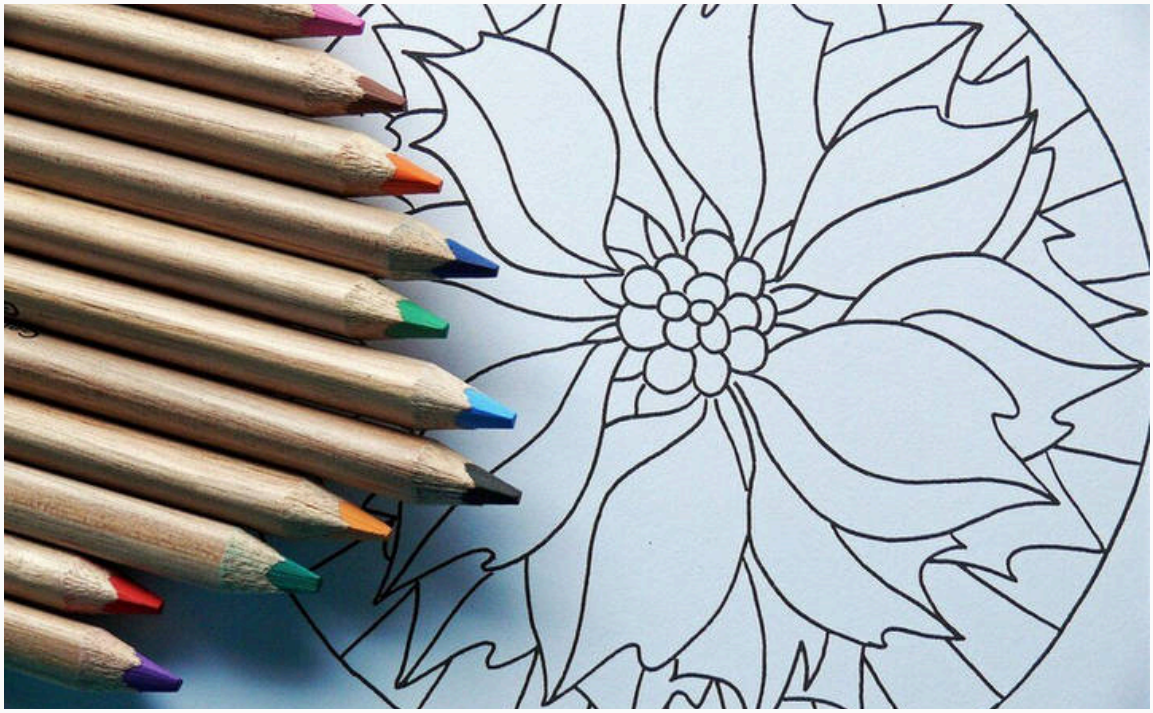
India is in the throes of a grave Covid-19 crisis. An ongoing surge is devastating the lives and livelihoods of millions across the country, with hospitals & healthcare workers overwhelmed, and medical supplies facing a severe shortage.

South Asian students from Harvard Business School and 16+ leading universities across the US have come together to lead a relief fundraiser in face of this challenge.

DONATE FOR COVID

PRACTICE OF THE MONTH

Refining our Emotions



One of the simple ways of refining our emotions is through art. Giving space and time to develop a particular art be it music, poetry, dance, painting makes us touch something very deep which purifies our emotions. The energies of our emotional centre is given a channel to express itself. Thus emotions that pull us down like fear, anger, anxiety etc tend to slowly lose its grip on us.

We can choose an art form we are getting drawn to give ourselves to the process of learning it. In the course of this journey we will capture the true joy behind the art form (rasa) and make it penetrate our being. We can make ourselves more receptive to the source of inspiration and allow it to flow through us.

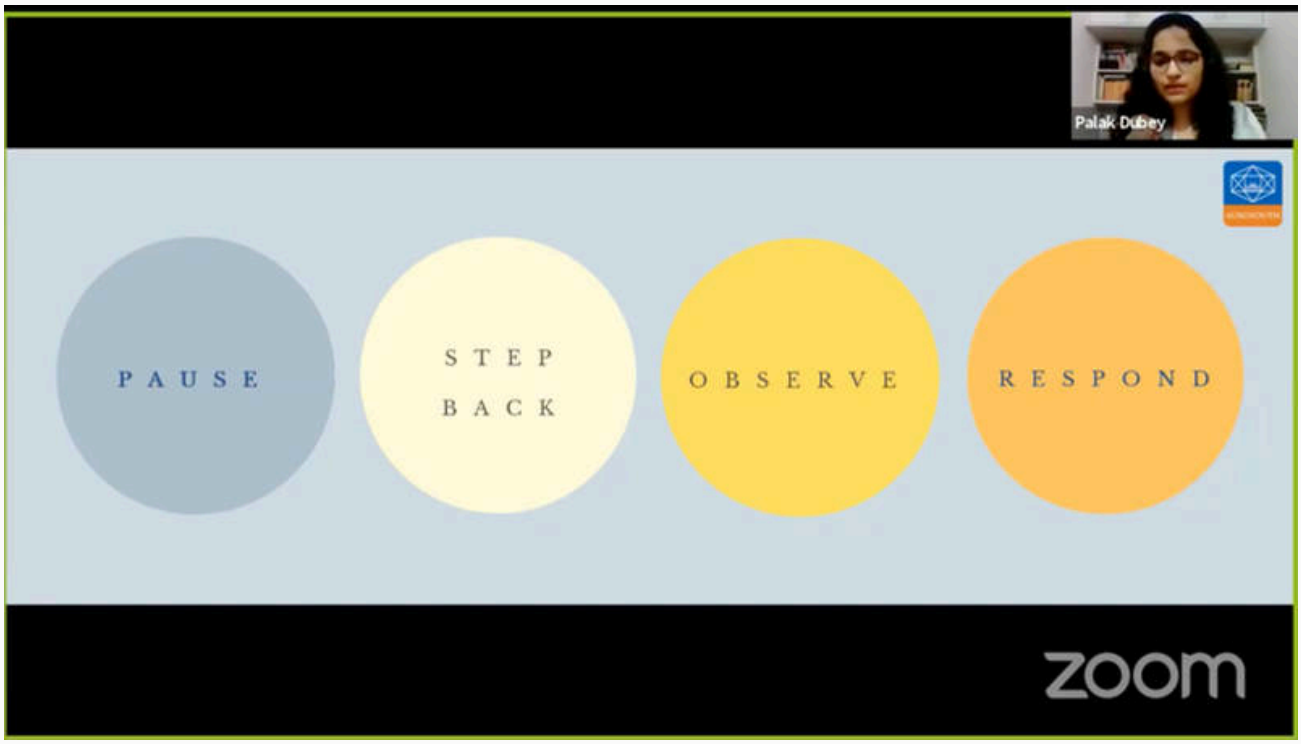
Often we engage with an art form, from the lens of perfecting it outwardly. But here we are talking about using art as a process of self-expression and evolution. It is true that outer perfection itself helps in inner evolution, but it must come as a natural and organic byproduct of a deeper inner growth and self-expression through art.

PRACTICE OF THE MONTH

Refining our Emotions

In simple words, here we are looking at art not as something meant for a performance and self-aggrandisation, but something that is simply a tool for processing one's emotions and refining them. Many times, people do not touch painting or poetry or dancing, thinking, "I am not a dancer or an artist, how can I think of engaging with it." But it is not about being an artist here. It is like one does not need to be a writer to write a journal at the end of a day. Similarly, one does not need to be an artist, to make zentangles, paint, dance, write poetry, colour mandalas. Art is merely used as a medium of release and ascension.

You can buy a "mandala colouring book" to explore this practice :)



Here is video by Palak on "How to Handle Our Emotions"

SHARE YOUR JOURNEY WITH US!

Share with the tribe

We invite you to share with us **Your Learning Journey**, for the Swadharma Blog. Be it your experiences, musings, practices, or breakthroughs, we would love to feature your story. You can share, in the form of articles, poems, photographs, music, art-work, etc whatever you feel is the best way for you to express. General word limit is 500 words. **Share from your heart!**

We would also love to know about your **Initiatives** and the milestones in your journey. Whether it is a new project, website, collaborations, new experiments, ventures or an initiative, share with your tribe.

Write to: swadharmablog@auroville.org.in

Thank you! Swadharma Blog Team