

Vinayasādhana**Journal of Psycho-Spiritual Formation**

VOL. I, No. 2, JULY 2010

Last but Not Least

Editor

Wake up to Life

Washington DC Metro Station, on a cold January morning in 2007, standing behind an upturned cap, a violinist played Bach pieces one after another for about an hour. During that time approximately two thousand people went through the station, most of them on their way to work. About twenty of them took notice of his presence and his performance, dug their hand into their pocket or wallet, flicked few coins into his cap-turned-begging bowl, and walked away in their normal pace. Only six people stopped and stayed for a while to listen to him. When he finished after playing for an hour silence took over. No one noticed. No one applauded, nor was there any recognition. He collected \$32.

No one knew that the violinist was Joshua Bell, one of the best musicians in the world. He played one of the most intricate pieces ever written, with a violin worth \$3.5 million dollars. Two days before he played the same pieces in a theatre in Boston where the seats were sold out months in advance and averaged \$100. This is a real story. Joshua Bell playing incognito in the metro station was organized by the Washington Post as part of a social experiment about perception, taste and people's responses.

The questions raised: How awake are we? Are our senses perceptive during our habitual chores? Can we identify talent in an unexpected context? Do we stop to appreciate it? Do we notice those miracles happening all around us? A school teacher asked her students to list the Seven Wonders of the World. Quite a number of them wrote down the names of all the seven. However, to her surprise, one little girl wrote: The seven wonders are the following: I can see my mom, I can hear her voice, I can feel her touch, I can smell her fragrance, I can taste her food, I can think of her and I can love her too. Seven Wonders!

Quite often even with our eyes open we fail to notice and admire the miracles that are being unravelled amidst us. We need 'to wake up to life' to watch the amazing spectacles staged on the universal theatre. Unfortunately people rush to their work place to make enough money to buy tickets to listen to Joshua Bell, while he plays on their street corners!