



# MindScape *Where Mind Meets Matter*

Expressive Arts Therapy & Mental Health

News Letter - April to June 2023

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“Art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life”

Pablo Picasso

## *News and Views*

### INTERNATIONAL

- A new study by University of California found new brain connections that can explain the relationship between early life adversities and disrupted brain reward system that can be thought to underlie many mental health issues such as depression, substance abuse and excessive risk taking behaviour.
- Teens who reduced their social media usage by 50 percent just for few weeks saw significant decline in body image issues and increase in overall acceptance of their appearance when compared with peers who maintained consistent levels of social media, reports a study by Children's hospital of Eastern Ontario Research Institute.
- A new study by University of Kansas professor of communication studies suggests that one quality conversation with a friend during the day can enhance happiness and well-being.

### NATIONAL

- Psychological clinics and hospitals in Noida and Ghaziabad saw a spike in patient load with growing anxiety amidst board exams.
- The psychology department of Patna Women's College organised a workshop on 'careers options in psychology with special reference to clinical psychology', which saw large number of participants
- An NGO named Community renovation and organisation advancement trust (Coroat) is offering a training program in psychology-cum-entrepreneurship to Transwomen in Trichy.

### LOCAL @MANASTHALI

- Manasthali inaugurated Therapy & Wellness Studio in its premises to promote health & wellbeing activities.
- From January 2023, Manasthali has started a workshop series focusing on innovative themes such as Music Therapy, Art Therapy and Emotional Freedom Technique. The main focus is to provide experiential workshops on the concepts of Integrative Wellness.
- We are happy to announce that Manasthali is starting Group and Individual Art Therapy sessions for interested individuals.
- Manasthali is stepping into Corporate wellness sector with its specialized program focusing on the wellbeing of working women.



**Manasthali's**  
**Mental Health Support Helpline**  
(Psycho Education, Guidance, Support)  
**85 2775 2775 चलो बात करें**



## *Editor's desk*



### Expression, Arts and Therapy

The first thing a child does when she is born is make noise, scientifically we understand that the cry serves the purpose of filling lungs with air, but we can only guess what could be going in the mental world of the newborn. As the child grows, crying is a signal that something is needed, milk, change of diaper, alleviation of some discomfort.... and the very physiological act of transformation of aquatic way of living to terrestrial way also becomes a mode of communication.

In corollary, the being has been trying to express her needs as well as desires to be picked up, hugged, cuddled and also exploring the potential of her calls.

Expression is thus an innate part of our existence, we express through sounds, facial expressions and gestures, body language and as the control over voluntary muscles grows, we become creative in our expressions. The result is signs, symbols, language, dance, play, acting and even strategically placed silence. There is the birth of art..... the cave paintings emerge, drums beat in rhythm, music manifests, songs start singing, stories form and drama of creation takes center stage.

This need to express doesn't stop at just letting it out, it also involves getting a feedback, a response. We want reciprocation, tears when we convey sadness, laughter when we fool around, applause when we feel proud! We want to be understood and when there are questions, we also want to understand. So expectation of a response is inherent component of expression. The child scrawls on a paper and looks up with wide eyes, "did you see, what I just did", the pet animal pulls the hem of your dress and pulls you to the corner similarly, "Do you understand?".

Being social is this phenomena which starts with fulfilment of basic needs for survival and quickly evolves into desire to connect with the environment at a primal level of understanding.

So why are we connecting something as basic as need for expression, reciprocation and connection to

therapy?

Because that's the most logical way to find our way home when we find ourselves lost.... Poetic .... Isn't it!

In psychotherapies, emphasis is on exploring the self by connecting to various mental processes like thoughts, feelings, emotions, behaviors etc. and language has limited potential. Exploring our psyche is also about creating a dialogue with this inner world which speaks in the gut, in the rhythm of our body and many a times appears to be misunderstood.

Expressive Arts Therapy is thus about communicating with the subconscious aspects of our selves ( I am deliberately avoiding the word 'mind' because again the word has very limited potential for explaining all that goes on in 'the self'). This communication brings an awareness which is less prone to being shut up by arguments conjured up by our belief systems and can be used to navigate the subconscious terrain to identify goals and make changes for our well-being.

The therapeutic potential of expressive arts is being explored worldwide and as I explore it's potential, I have come to understand the role of the therapist, because unless there is somebody to decode the signs and symbols, the process serves limited purpose. This limited purpose is served by way of relieving stress and anxiety in those moments of expression but channelizing this creative energy to bring about a change in perspective that helps navigate the vulnerable aspects of our personality is the ultimate goal of psychotherapy.

At Manasthali, we are forever exploring alternatives that can serve as tools for better mental health and well-being, not just to treat a disorder but also to empower people to root out the cause of those disorders. Expressive Arts is one such tool and integrating it in mainstream treatment and preventive processes is our goal.

And while doing it, let's have some fun!

**Dr Jyoti Kapoor**

Sr. Consultant Psychiatrist and Psychotherapist

## ***EXPRESSIVE ARTS FOR NEURODIVERGENT POPULATION***

In the core of the term neurodiversity lies variation. Thinking what does it mean? Neurodiversity is a commonly used term to refer to the idea that neurological differences as seen in autism and ADHD, can reflect some normal variations in brain development. These differences are not seen as deficits in functioning but carries the idea that there is no one "correct" method of thinking, learning, or acting, and that people interact with the world around them in a variety of ways.

Neurodiversity refers to the idea that there is a natural variation in the human brain, which leads to different cognitive and sensory processing styles. Examples of neurodivergent conditions include autism, dyslexia, ADHD, and Tourette's syndrome.

### **HOW EXPRESSIVE ARTS CAN BE USEFUL FOR NEURO DIVERGENTS?**

Expressive arts therapy is an approach that involves the use of creative activities to enhance emotional, physical, and mental well-being. This therapeutic approach has proven to be effective in helping people with various conditions, including those who are neurodivergent. Expressive arts therapy can be an effective way to help people who are neurodivergent in several ways. Here are some of the benefits of expressive arts therapy for this population:

- **Non-Verbal Communication**

Many people who are neurodivergent struggle with verbal communication. They may find it difficult to express themselves using words, or they may have trouble understanding what others are saying. Expressive arts therapy provides a way for people to communicate without using words. Through creative activities such as drawing, painting, or sculpture, individuals can express their thoughts, emotions, and experiences in a non-verbal way.

- **Sensory Integration**

Many neurodivergent individuals experience sensory processing issues. They may be over or under-sensitive to certain stimuli, which can affect their ability to engage with the world around them. Expressive arts therapy can help with sensory integration by providing a safe and structured environment for sensory exploration. For example, using different materials to create art can provide a sensory-rich experience that can help individuals

develop their sensory processing skills.

- **Emotional Regulation**

Many neurodivergent individuals struggle with emotional regulation. They may experience intense emotions that are difficult to manage or regulate. Expressive arts therapy can help individuals learn to regulate their emotions by providing a safe space to explore and express their feelings. Engaging in creative activities can help reduce stress, anxiety, and depression while promoting positive emotions such as joy, excitement, and pride.

- **Social Connection**

Many neurodivergent individuals struggle with social interaction. They may find it difficult to make friends or feel socially isolated. Expressive arts therapy can help individuals connect with others in a safe and supportive environment. Group art activities can provide opportunities for social interaction, collaboration, and teamwork.

- **Self-Expression**

Many neurodivergent individuals struggle with self-expression. They may find it difficult to articulate their thoughts, feelings, and experiences. Expressive arts therapy can help individuals develop their self-expression skills by providing a creative outlet for their thoughts and feelings. Through art, individuals can develop a deeper understanding of themselves and their experiences, leading to greater self-awareness and self-acceptance.

In conclusion, expressive arts therapy can be a powerful tool for helping neurodivergent individuals improve their emotional, physical, and mental well-being. By providing a safe and supportive environment for creative expression, individuals can develop important skills such as non-verbal communication, sensory integration, emotional regulation, social connection, and self-expression. If you or someone you know is neurodivergent, consider exploring the benefits of expressive arts therapy as a way to promote positive growth and healing.

By **MEHAK THUKRAL**  
(Assistant Psychologist)



## Insights from the Vedic Lore

'6'

From creation of universe to creative potential in humans....

नासदासीन्नो सदासीत्तदानीं नासीद्रजो नो व्योमा परो यत्।  
किमावरीवः कुह कस्य शर्मन्मम्भः किमासीद्गहनं गभीरम्  
(ऋग्वेद मंत्र १०/१२६/६)

Then even nothingness was not, nor existence,  
There was no air then, nor the heavens beyond it.  
What covered it? Where was it? In whose keeping?  
Was there then cosmic water, in depths unfathomed?

As per the Vedas and later explanations in Upanishad about the origin of the universe or 'Srishti' which indicates the whole or creation, there was no concept of even 'nothingness' before the creation happened. And then dormant consciousness woke up with a desire to create!

कामस्तदग्रे समवर्तताधि मनसो रेतः प्रथमं यदासीत् ।  
(ऋग्वेद मंत्र १०/१२६/४)

In the beginning desire descended on it  
that was the primal seed, born of the mind

सः इक्षत लोकान्नु सृजा इति। (एतरोपनिषद्)  
उस परमात्मा में ईक्षण (विचार) हुआ कि लोकों को रचूं।

In other words, it was the desire of the un-manifest to manifest itself and it happened through it's 'Sankalp' or imagination.

That's how the concept of 'Leela' or 'play' has come about because the supreme consciousness imagined it and then pervaded it. All the creation has the consciousness with in, in various proportion of un-manifest and manifest 'gunas' and as the Creator is supposed to have created human being in Her own image, the creative will and potential in humans is instinctive.

Thus, we have an intense desire to create, that's why we as a civilization has evolved to its present level and will continue to do so.

In our day today life, creativity gives us the purpose. There is joy in things we do for the sake of creating something new, be it drawing or painting, singing or dancing or even fantasizing. When we start losing that purpose, we start feeling lost, helpless and hopeless. The innate need to express our creativity thus needs to be addressed by all, young and old. Every child and adult needs to be able to access this aspect of our consciousness if we want to connect with our true self.

I was watching the animated movie, 'Soul' (2020, Disney Pixar), how the moments of intense creation of music or art take the person to the world beyond the physical, seemed to resonate with the shared experience of most artists. It's not without reason that all forms of creative art processes are called meditative or meditation, a process of connecting with something beyond the manifest conscious mind, which may be subconscious or super conscious depending on who is talking ( a psychologist or a spiritual philosopher).

Eventually, the wisdom of Vedas also leads us to our innate need to make art or music or engineer an automobile because the seed of creativity is the essence of who we are.

Let's not give up this urge to 'create' for the sake of mere utility.

Let's draw, sketch, paint, cook, sing, play not because we have to be perfect or get rich or get credits, but because that's who we are... the creators!

The Mahavakya says it all....

अहं ब्रह्मास्मि (बृहदारण्यक उपनिषद् १/४/१० - यजुर्वेद)  
- "मैं ब्रह्म हूँ"

**Dr Jyoti Kapoor**

Sr. Consultant Psychiatrist and Psychotherapist



## HOW TO BRING ART INTO YOUR LIFE?

Choose a creative activity you like to engage in. Dance, painting, or making music could be examples. What emotions do you have while making art? Some would say content, joyful, at ease, or motivated. The world is connected in amazing ways through art, and it also gives us the chance to express ourselves. Art is a potent tool for self-care and mental wellness due to these feel-good effects.

As a significant factor in promoting both physical and mental health, art is not just a luxury for our free time. According to studies, those who struggle with stress, anxiety, or depression might find relief through the creative process. Another connection between art and ageing adults' memory, reasoning, and resilience has been found. It has been demonstrated that engaging in creative pursuits can lower cortisol levels, a hormone your body releases in response to stress. Art can be a way for people with emotional trauma or Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) to let out their feelings, express their grief, and decompress. According to other studies, producing art raises dopamine levels.

We're delving into the life-changing effects that art can have. The nicest part is that everybody can contribute in art. It is specific to each and every one of us and does not conform to any certain set of conventions. Why not attempt it then? It might be a great stress busting hack!

Here are some ways to bring more art into your life:

1. **Develop an arts practice:** We hope that people start to think about 20 minutes of an arts practice, whatever that is, throughout the day. This could be music, dancing, coloring, sculpting or knitting,
2. **Appreciate art in your daily life:** It doesn't have to be an art regime— it can be an effort to appreciate the art in your daily activities. Preparing food or gardening can both be artistic pursuits.
3. **Be creative about living with art:** Other ways to live with the arts include waking up to smells that make you happy. Embrace the sheer joy of singing in the shower. Gaze at the clouds and find new images. Bringing flowers indoors.
4. **Use Art as a Release:** A common exercise to utilize art for release is to first represent things you want to let go of as words, drawings, colors, or images on a blank canvas. Then you can burn it, rip it up, cover it up with something new that inspires you, throw it away, put it in water, or destroy it in any way you

please.

5. **Respond through Art:** In the same way that releasing through art can help us overcome difficulties, it can also be used to cope with pain and negative feelings. Some examples include writing to a loved one that hurt you or taking photos of a place that used to hold meaning to you. It is also helpful to find a piece of art you connect with such as music, writing, or a painting, and to then utilize this inspiration to create something of your own as an emotional response. Understanding what you are trying to capture through this piece and breaking down how it makes you feel can be beneficial to this analysis.
6. **Mindful Creativity:** Art doesn't require thought, it can be a free-flowing creative process. To practice mindful art, you can simply start creating or choose a piece of art as inspiration for your own creation. Block out the other thoughts and distractions in your life and give yourself a set amount of time to make art or enjoy it.
7. **Collage your Thoughts or Visions:** Some people find it difficult or don't enjoy the practice of drawing, painting, or writing but there are endless ways to practice art. You can create a collage that expresses what you're feeling about a specific situation to process your emotions and thoughts. You may also collage a vision board to focus on the future and use photos that excite you. All you need are some magazines, newspapers, or old images around your house.

In conclusion, engaging in art of any kind can be a wonderful approach to enhance your mental health by lowering stress, raising happiness, developing social relationships, and encouraging self-discovery. Whether or not you consider yourself an artist, creative expression can be beneficial for your health. So why are you still waiting? Make some art together!

**Aishwarya Raj**

Consultant Clinical Psychologist

**Self Help Tip** - Draw a circle then divide it into eight parts and write one emotion in each section, then pick a color that represents that feeling and color the section in. Afterwards, pay attention to which emotions were associated with which colors, the feelings you wrote first, and how this is applicable to your everyday life.



## Manasthali® *Mental Health and Wellness Services*

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### Manasthali®'s Rehabilitation Programs

According to WHO, Rehabilitation is "a set of interventions designed to optimize functioning and reduce disability in individuals with health conditions in interaction with their environment".

At Manasthali®, we understand the role of Rehabilitation as an essential element in holistic recovery and wellbeing of an individual and have designed programs which incorporate psychological, social and alternate healing practices to achieve integration of the individual into socio cultural milieu.

### Our Programs :-

#### Basic Stress Management and Skills Training Program

Aim-Rehabilitation of People with special Needs

Approach- Integrative Medicine and wellness

Components- Behaviour Therapy, Social Skills Training, Music Therapy, Therapeutic Yoga, Positive Psychology

#### Online Wellness Restoration and Wellness Programs

Aim- Restoration of various elements of routine life that go out of sync as a result of disease process by daily counselling and follow up by qualified psychologists via phone/online means.

- Online Healthy Routine Restoration Program (Behavioral Activation)
- Online Mood Restoration Program
- Online Substance abuse Rehabilitation Program
- Online Positivity Development Program (CBT based cognitive restructuring)
- Online Dementia Rehabilitation Caregiver support Program
- Online Schizophrenia Rehabilitation Caregiver support Program

### Our Services :-

- Individual & Group Art Therapy Sessions
- Corporate wellness programs
- Happiness Club : A space where you can be yourself and enjoy all that makes you, YOU!



For more details,  
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For regular updates check out Instagram @manasthali or visit www.manasthali.com



## Guest Article **ROLE OF MUSIC IN ART THERAPY**

Even I saw the mountains, rivers and I was trekking up the hills leisurely with the only goal to be euphoric." Says a 24 years old, while listening to Raga Hansdhwani on Veena. Some kind of musical pieces when listened to in a meditative state, give mesmerizing experiences, per-se, imaginations which implies universal happiness like nature, love, eating joy etc.

Both Art therapies and music therapy are a form of expressive arts which lie under the umbrella of 'Holistic Healing with regards to Emotional Expressions'. Art therapy is not about creating an art piece but it's about canvassing the inner journey comprising current feelings, emotions, cognitions, much similar to the goals formed by music.

In music there is a word called 'Manodharma' which signifies singing, playing or listening fully manifesting our mind, presenting our own thoughts and emotions or overall persona in the form of tunes/notes. Manodharma or self-improvisation also helps one to introspect and understand the psyche of self which is the first step towards mental healing.

Taking the same concept further, in music therapy, we have an expressive tools called art-music therapy or NAdA-KalA-BhAv, in which we merge arts, paintings with sonorous sounds and Ragas. There are many ways to merge art therapy with music:

1. **Paintings Meditation:** Ancient scriptures of music states the concept of Raga-Dhyan-Paddhati or RagaMala Paintings. Each raga was depicting in the form of paintings which expressed its associated time, emotions, Rasa, environment, and culture. Raga-dhyan or meditation on the paintings have been an effective source of introspection which provide a safe outlet for exploring and expressing feelings that are difficult to articulate verbally. Here is a raga-dhyan of Raga Basant (Springs).
2. **Sounds Sketch Meditation:** Here we make people listening to the sounds for 2-3 minutes, mostly instrumentals, and start scribble/draw something on paper, remaining their eyes close.

Initially, they just scribble but with time, they draw something which expressed their inward journey.



3. **Guided Imagery with sounds/Ragas-** In this, we guide people to meditate and draw something which is being guided through the sounds. The therapeutic goals are relaxation, mindfulness, pain/anxiety management, emotional expression, coping skills
4. **Song-writing with Colours-** Writing songs and composing using the colours is a process of navigation of people's mind to brighter state. Not only it makes the therapist understand their current state of mind through the use of colours but it also helps them navigate towards a better state by asking them to use brighter colours of joy with time. The therapeutic goals of this process are social interaction, group cohesion, communication, emotional expression, coping skills.

Nature Drawing with Nature Sounds, Shilp-NAdA-kalA (Music and DIY/Crafts), Mandala-Sangeet, Navarasa-Chants, are some other tools which come into the same realm which shares the purpose of navigating one towards thought-awareness, mindfulness, focus, introspection and other aspects which fulfill the requirement of wellbeing and less stressful lifestyle.

**By Dr. Shambhavi Das**



## Guest Article

# EMOTIONAL FREEDOM TECHNIQUE

### EFT Tapping

EFT is a meridian energy therapy. It involves tapping specific points on the body, in a particular sequence and by focusing on the issue that you face.

### Tapping along the meridians

Meridian points are where energy flows and when there is an imbalance, we react negatively leading to an impact on your mental health.

Tapping on acupressure points send vibrations along the meridians directly to the amygdala. This is an integral part of why EFT Tapping is so effective.

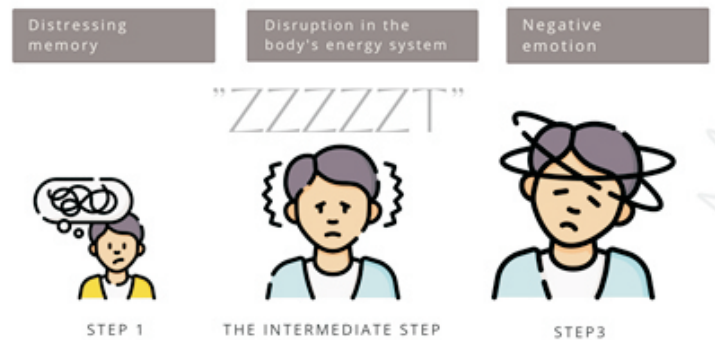
### E-motion: Energy in motion

What we think of as emotion is the experience of energy moving through the body. This is generally felt as sensations of contraction such as tension or expansion such as calm. Emotional energy is neutral. It is the feeling sensation and physiological reaction that makes a specific emotion positive or negative.

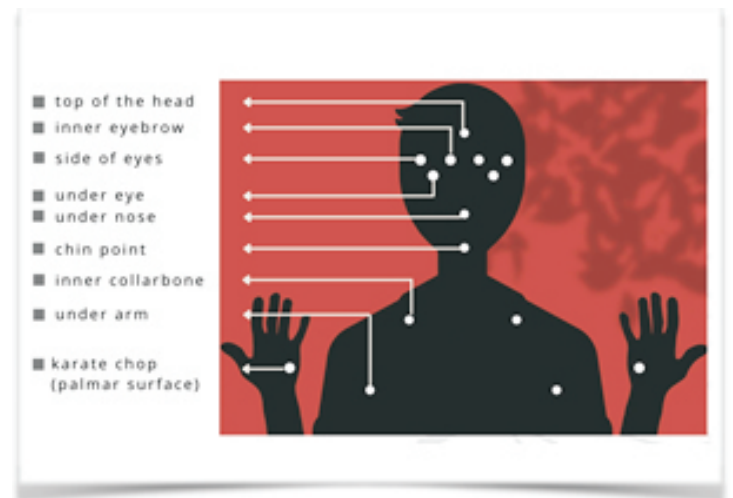


### How does it work?

Tapping involves the body's energy meridian points, which are a concept in Chinese medicine. Tapping on these meridian points with the fingertips restores the balance of energy to resolve physical and emotional issues. Any emotional disturbance is accompanied by a



corresponding distortion of the energy lines. Once emotional stability is attained, the energy lines revert back to their natural state and vice versa. The concept of reversibility and the law of similars states that we can reverse any energy disturbance created by a disturbed emotional state by inducing a similar fresh external artificial disturbance at the level of energy.



### The AMYGDALA & EFT

The amygdala is responsible for processing stressful events in our lives and turning them into memories. The amygdala is known as the brain's fear center, from which the "flight or fight" response originates, alerting other parts of the brain that it senses danger. This, in turn, initiates the firing of other brain receptors and the release of specific hormones that allow the body to respond to the perceived danger.

Tapping has been shown to essentially "turn off" the

amygdala, disrupting the stress response and allowing the brain synapses to be rewired for a more appropriate emotional response to a given situation.

## **EFT CAN BE HELPFUL FOR PEOPLE WITH :**

- Anxiety
- Stress
- Chronic pain
- PTSD
- Weight loss
- Other issues

## **The process:**

1. Focus on one particular issue.
2. Rate the intensity of your issue on a scale of 0-10 based on the emotional/physical discomfort you feel.
3. Set up a good acknowledging phrase which includes that you accept the issue despite the problem.

Example: "Even though I have this anxiety/fear, I completely accept myself"

4. Tapping sequence: follow the tapping points in ascending order. Start with the KARATE CHOP point as you recite your phrase 3 times. Then tap on each point 7 times as you go down on the other points.
5. Finish the sequence at the TOP OF THE HEAD point. Rate the intensity of the issue on a scale of 0-10, while comparing to the initial intensity. Repeat this till you are sure your intensity is at 0, on the scale of 0-10

## **GAMUT POINT: where all the meridians meet**

Most powerful EFT spot: Located on the back of the hand, between the base knuckles of the small and ring fingers and an inch towards the wrist. Tapping on this point alone with sufficient pressure helps you lower strong emotions and lower tension/stress.

**By Dr. Richa Dhamija**



# MindScape *Where Mind Meets Matter*

## Guest Section

### MASKED

It's hot and dry  
The desert mirrors the mirages  
For the eyes comfort  
But the dust is no comforter  
It's fills the mouth  
So the mask...  
The turban  
The clothes  
However free be the spirit  
The shroud covers  
The soft , perishable skin  
From the drought  
The raging storms  
Beneath the guise of nobility  
The water of the eye  
Held back by the eyelid  
The relentless desert  
The stage for this act  
Let's play Part one  
Till the lessons are learnt ...



World Autism Awareness Day



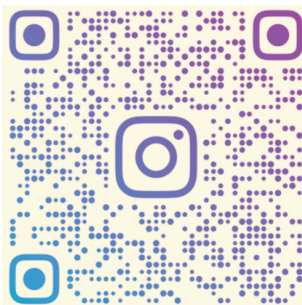
### STEPPING TOWARDS A NEURO-INCLUSIVE WORLD FOR ALL!

April 2nd 2023

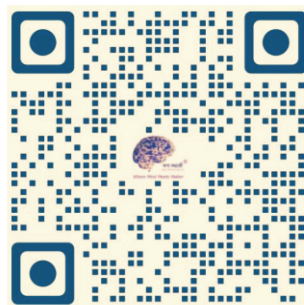
Let's try and see  
beyond the spectrum!



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