

Editorial: A Silent Prayer

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Cover Page Footnote

A Silent Prayer, Poem by Dr. Meenakshi Mohan A Silent Prayer, Painting by Dr. Meenakshi Mohan
Knowledge is power by Kofi Annan, online site When the mind is without fear, Rabindranath Tagore,
Gitanjali Clouds come floating, Rabindranath Tagore, Stray Birds

Editorial

A Silent Prayer

Meenakshi Mohan, Ed.D.

“Clouds come floating into my life from other days,
no longer to carry rain or usher storms but to add color to my sunset sky.”

Rabindranath Tagore

Stray Birds

Have you seen the birth of the Sun? I have! It was when I visited my daughter’s house in Maine, where her backyard opened to the wide span of the ocean, where on misty days the sky and the ocean melted into one, where the swishing sounds of the ocean with the rustlings of the plants and foliage made a musical rhapsody of its own. It was so peaceful and quiet, away from the noise of the world, the peace I most needed, away from the treacheries of pandemics, war, and other upheavals of the world.

One early morning, with dreams still lingering in my eyes, I woke up to the melodic tempo, a light knock at my window. I lazed around, listening to the musical trill of a pink-gray cardinal sitting on the ledge. I looked out. The sky, painted in roseate pink with a touch of blue-gray, and its mirror image on the water was enchanting. Some vagabond clouds floated around, caressing the trees. I walked out to the backyard, and there, mesmerized, I watched the grandiosity of the birth of the Sun from the womb of the ocean, piercing the vermilion around it. I sat at the edge of a cliff under an oak tree and let the resplendency of nature drown me in its nostrum. The high tide rose like a mother was reaching out to endear her newborn. I watched the birds flying off to their day’s work and bouncy squirrels on the lookout for their bounty. Not too far off, I saw a boat keeping itself astute in the stormy scales of the waves. Its sails touched the highest hemisphere as if scribbling a message in the sky. *When the going gets tough, the tough get going!* Silently, I mumbled a prayer:

“A Silent Prayer”

As my vessel sails through the stormy,
tumultuous waves of life,
I stretch my wings to reach thee
in silent prayer—
please guide me,
to conquer the clamorous journey ahead
with astute knowledge and strength.

Then,
endow upon me the peace and calm
as flows in the heart of the ocean.
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A Silent Prayer (oil on canvas)
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That day, the emerging Sun, the oscillating boat, and nature taught me a lesson that I do not have to go far to find inner peace. It is within me. The strength I drew was the beginning of my meaningful journey, a silver lining behind the dark clouds. The last three years, despite the cataclysm around the world, were the most productive years of my life as a scholar, writer, poet, and artist. I published four books, and my work circulated worldwide in various journals and anthologies. The Panorama International Literature Festival nominated my book, *The Rebirth of the Demon*, for the best book award. My anthology, *Tapestry of Women in Indian Mythology*, made its way into universities and libraries, including the University of California Santa Cruz (UCSC) and several colleges of Delhi University, India. *Setu: A Bilingual Journal*, published in Pittsburgh, presented me the Award of Excellence for my writing and art.

Today, as I am reviewing the seven manuscripts for the spring issue of *Inquiry in Education* (*i.e.*), a peer-reviewed journal of National Louis University, I feel enlightened by the diversity of topics discussed. However, they all endure around the theme of enhancing the quality of education to bring forth the optimum student learning experiences.

In their research, Ramazan Atasoy and Mehmet Tufan Yalçın examine the relationship between school leadership and teacher professionalism. Their article focuses on the effects of trust on school systems. The study has adopted a cross-sectional survey and design. The findings obtained through the study provide data to emphasize that teachers' professional development, mediated by trust, is critical in enhancing the school learning environment.

Olga Shugurova, in her article "Searching for a More-Than-Human Dialogic Pedagogy in a Teacher Education Classroom: 'I Make My Way to the Sun'," explores nature's miracles in a more relaxed and enjoyable environment than a classroom. This unique study reveals that dialogues emerge in students' encounters with nature while they get involved in reflective learning.

In their study on developing leadership dispositions, Carol A. Burg, Stuart I. Carrier, James L. Schott, and Daniel C. Buckman investigate leadership development for chronically low-performing (CLP) schools in a large demographically diverse American public school district. The research analyzes the program's effectiveness in developing leadership dispositions for CLP schools with significant poverty levels. The study seems to validate The Haberman Foundation Star Administrator Pre-Screener as a guide that every child can learn, and every district should hire and train teachers who believe in this philosophy. The Haberman method seems to enhance the learning environment.

Gamze Erdem Coşgun, in the article "Pre-service English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Teachers' Awareness of the Pragmatic Aspect of Language," explores teachers' understanding of languages in the pragmatic linguistic forms and their communicative aspects. Both are essential factors in making English as a foreign language curricula more effective.

Jessica Brooke Jack, in her study entitled, "Visibility of School Leadership: Building Trust," explores three themes for a positive learning environment: the positive effect a trusted leader has on an organization and school, the positive effect a leader's visibility has on building trust in leader-follower relationships, and the need for frequency and quality of leader visibility to build trust. The study concludes that school leaders have an indelible impact on the well-being of their staff, school, and students.

Abdelnasser Hussein's self-reflective study, "Reframing and the Power of Resistance," is based on the premise Bolman and Deal offer in their book, *Reframing Organizations*. Hussein says a structural framework includes a sharp vision, goals, and rationality. A symbolic structure often conveys rituals and ceremonies, and a political frame provides for power, conflict, networks, and building coalitions. The author urges educational leaders to comply with a comprehensive strategy to reframe an organization to bring harmony and effective changes.

Batsheva R. Guy and Tziporah Feldman, in their article, "Please Stop Bringing Up Family Life; We're Here to Talk about Science," explore the cause of a stark underrepresentation of

undergraduate women enrolled in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) programs of study. This study emphasizes the importance of Participatory Action Research, including group-level assessment and a participatory qualitative research method. The research considers both barriers and support factors for women in STEM. Their article highlights suggestions to bring in more women in STEM by improving pedagogical methods at the university level.

The diversity of these articles and their various approaches to enriching curricula are the fundamental concepts of *Inquiry in Education*—we learn, thrive, and make the best of the educational system. Kofi Annan said, “Knowledge is power. Information is liberating. Education is the premise of progress in every society and family.” I hope you enjoy reading each piece as much as I did.

In my closing remarks, I would send my silent prayer into each crevice and corner of the world for peace and harmony. I wish each emerging sunrise would be a new beginning and a page of our lives full of knowledge and learning. I echo the same ethos as Rabindra Nath Tagore (Gitanjali):

When the mind is without fear, and the head is held high
Where knowledge is free
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments
By narrow domestic walls . . .
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.

Happy 2023!