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CAPE TOWN
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Dear Friends

I have written a book called *Leadership as Healing* which I would like to tell you more about. It is a book that I believe has the potential to change our lives, without exception, for the better.

So often when we talk of the failings of leadership in the world, or consider those most impacted by these failings, the oppressed, the exploited and the disadvantaged, and try to uplift them, we are unable to provide them with tangible concrete assistance on how to change their lives. My book is designed to address this flaw in our approach – for unless we can provide tangible guidance on what it means to live a full life – effectively, what it means to be a leader and how to become one – all our efforts to bring about profound, radical and lasting change in the societies most in need of change are destined to be futile. Furthermore, ultimately it will not be established leaders who will ‘save us, it is we (each one of us) who will have to save ourselves as well as those who need assistance, by becoming leaders in our own right – in whatever field and to whatever extent we feel most comfortable. The book (a course) provides detailed, step by step guidance on how each one of us can become a leader.

The thesis of the book is that unless we all become leaders ourselves, fulfil our innate potential, and live full healthy lives as well as help others to do the same, we will not only do an injustice to our Essence in being disconnected from it but will stagnate, grow frustrated, angry and eventually possibly even become violent. The book not only postulates that we should all become leaders in our own right, but shows *what it means to be a leader and how to become one* – beginning with the need for identifying a higher purpose for our living, believing in our potential, having the intention to achieve it, determining our breakthrough potential for fulfilling this potential, knowing what attributes and skills are essential for us to do so, determining in what areas we need development, subjecting our development to reality checks to avoid self-deception and so becoming capable of achieving our goals.

It initially provides a spiritual-philosophical basis for understanding who we essentially are – and what we can accomplish when we live and lead with integrity: our living based on principles such as Potential, Purpose, Paradox, Power, and Peace. These principles affect every aspect of our lives as well as the lives of corporates and other organizations, including all political life. And not only are they inextricably inter-related but they determine our vision, the pathways we choose, the destination of our journeys as well as our means or modes of travel. Remove these underpinnings and the journeys become incredibly more difficult, uncertain and prone to failure – sometimes, catastrophic failure – where the future of an entire way of life or of civilization itself can be placed in jeopardy.

It defines integrity in a new holistic light. And it challenges and encourages us to revisit and overcome many areas of our constructed selves in order to see ourselves and the world anew. The book adopts an approach that may be considered organic and systemic. It has a deep spiritual-ethical foundation, and is also comprehensive – both essential as well as practical. It is meant to be a timeless book – and can benefit whoever reads it, young and old, regardless of the world they function in (be it corporate, political, or any other) – and regardless of whether they are established or aspirant leaders – or living in societies brimming with hope or those where only hopelessness currently prevails.

If we fail to help the young especially, re-envision the meaning of life in general and of their own lives in particular, and tangibly assist them to succeed in all aspects of their lives, they will grow up living in silos, divorced from the reality of a higher existence as much as they are compelled to contain it within their world-view because of their upbringing. The book therefore focuses on the importance of developing our consciousness and awareness as the highest source of our power, of enhancing both our intuition and as well as our intelligence, being creative and innovative, thriving on challenge and especially on the challenge of change, and dealing with failure, remaining courageous and hopeful.

It does not name or identify good guys and bad guys (as these keep changing) – but rather focuses on how we can all be the highest reflections of Essence – for at the core of existence is nothing but Essence, and leading with integrity effectively is nothing but a myriad sublime translations of Essence. I live in South Africa but wrote this book not only for South Africans but for everyone who might see a need for it and might benefit from it regardless of where they live or who they are, particularly the under-privileged, the exploited and the oppressed. In reading this sentence, consider the wealthy too as oppressed – by their wealth. I know my own land has a desperate need at this time for a leadership that is ethical and healing. And there is a dire need throughout the world, evidenced by the violence we experience every day, to promote this message, and not only to offer hope, but concrete assistance (as the book does) on how we may all recognize and fulfil our innate potential and what the consequences are likely to be if we fail to do so.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to me. Let me know if you would like to attend the launch (see attached invitation) or engage with me further concerning this message and my book. I will also be offering courses based on the book.

Warm regards

Shabbir Banoobhai

Comments on *Leadership as Healing*.

In *Leadership as Healing*, Shabbir Banoobhai has crafted a journey into the deepest heart of leadership that is both pragmatic and poetic. Mirroring connection and oneness as outcomes of our real identity, the journey is rooted in the methodology of self-enquiry and factual observation, rather than theory building. The author's gentle voice is a constant guide in accessing the courage to make the turnaround and see beyond the limitations of confining mental models; see the immensity that is our birthright, which allows us to be authentic creative leaders in all that we do. It calls for an inner paradigm shift, and provides the tools to effect this transformation. The inner is never separated from the outer; we are made to look meticulously at all our social constructs and to see which serve and which do not. *Leadership as Healing* is a resource that I would find essential to use in my academic work and experiential training.

Professor Kriben Pillay

Graduate School of Business and Leadership

University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa

Author of Radical Work: Exploring Transformation in the Workplace through 'The Work of Byron Katie'

Shabbir Banoobhai's new book, *Leadership as Healing*, is a must for those who want to grow in the area of leadership and are willing to view it as a journey of self-discovery. It gives practical and flexible guidance on how to own, execute and reap the rewards of a diligent investment in a personal development strategy. Its focus on leadership as healing and leaders as healers is a fascinating and unique viewpoint about present and future leadership that matters. The book explores the depth of the self, and stimulates and challenges us to review our lives radically, as it covers the simplicity of leadership – its complexity in its seeming simplicity. Shabbir Banoobhai's brilliant exposition on leadership is an invaluable approach to re-perceiving the nature of leadership in the coming century. All aspiring and established leaders should read this book and share its lessons widely to transform themselves and the communities they serve.

Dr Koffi M. Kouakou

MD, Stratnum Futures

Co-Author of *AfricaDotEdu: IT Opportunities and Higher Education in Africa*

Formerly Senior Lecturer at the Wits School of Governance, University of the Witwatersrand

Comments on some of my earlier works.

echoes of my other self

I first came to know Shabbir through his poems when I was struck by the clean simplistic line he generally favoured. But the simplicity was deceptive: he made each word (a sign of the true poet) carry great emotional and intellectual weight. An obsessive and talented poet, a precocious master of the Word and a fine lyricist to boot, almost every line of the work was subliminally ignited by the ancient great Islamic poets. He shares their prime qualities: sensuality, passion, brilliance of imagery, a holistic approach to nature, and love of God.

Knowing Shabbir Banoobhai, the man through his work, can illuminate something of the unknown. Here, then, is a further asset to and aspect of, South Africa's uncommon humanity.

(Douglas Livingstone – renowned South African poet)

The volume contains pieces on a variety of themes – religious poems, love poems, philosophical poems, poems of social and political concern. Through all of them, one senses the poet's personality – sensitive, meditative, scrupulous, passionate, humane. Banoobhai's apprehension of society and its pains and injustices is grounded, then, in an impassioned sense of the possibilities of human expansion and human relationships.

(Professor Colin Gardner – University of KwaZulu-Natal)

shadows of a sun-darkened land

Shabbir Banoobhai again gives us poems of an intense yet simple lyricism. The simplicity of Banoobhai's poetry is deceptive. His language is simple, his words chosen with an almost austere delicacy. The meaning of his poems is immediately accessible and the emotional appeal direct. His images are the universal ones of land, sea and sky, used with a Biblical economy of detail. Yet the

meaning of these poems often has a profundity that yields ever-widening rings of understanding, like a stone thrown into still water.

Banoobhai's strength lies in this combination of simplicity and universality. The most outstanding feature of the poetry is that it is infused with such clear intelligence ... so that feelings become intelligence and intelligence, feeling...

(Eve Horwitz – University of the Witwatersrand)

book of songs

There are very few book-length sequences of poems and it excites me to encounter this form in the work of a well-known South African poet. To sustain a cycle of poems is to begin to dismantle the barriers between a novel or short story and poetry.

In *book of songs* Shabbir Banoobhai takes a position that requires daring combined with humility – there is no rhetoric, no propaganda, but also no slinking away, no hiding in the suburbs of language, no shrinking from an encounter with mystery. A meditative cycle like this one reminds us of our common thirst for love and meaning.

(Joan Metelerkamp – poet and academic, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban)

a mountain is an upside down valley

Shabbir Banoobhai seems to have arrived at the point where he sees in all human beings and creatures – in all of creation – reflections of the light of God. Even in the darker and darkest face of humanity he sees a flicker of primordial and transcendental light.

(Mphutlane wa Bofelo, South African poet, essayist and social activist)

lyrics in paradise

A wise, distinctive voice – powerful, pure poetry.

(Michael Chapman, renowned anthologist of South African poetry and academic at the University of KwaZulu-Natal)

if i could write – Ramadan letters that can be read at Christmas or on any other day

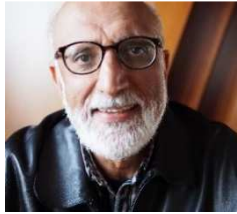
The sky, the sea, the earth, the mountains, the rivers, the trees, are all manifestations of Divine love. They are not just formed by love, not just created because God loves or because of His love, but are themselves revelations of love – in fact we can say they are love. Everything we see, feel, touch, hear, is (His) love. We see His love, we feel His love, we touch His love, and we hear His love. That is all we ever do – from morning until evening, waking or sleeping, from birth until we die. (From the book)

A luminous work of the heart containing profound reflections on the nature of the Divine, Prophetic and human consciousness, love, justice, peace and war. A genuine and original Sufi primer for the twenty-first century seeker, reflecting an important development in contemporary South African spiritual thought, it is both a treasury of wisdom and a hands-on learning manual for our times.

Speaking the universal language of love, in a series of tender letters to his daughters engaging the personal and public realms of human existence, Shabbir Banoobhai unravels humanity's highest spiritual dimensions to those who are willing to hear – who seek to become what the *Qur'an* describes as 'people who have a centre'.

(Associate Professor Sa'diyya Shaikh, Department of Religious Studies, University of Cape Town)

Shabbir Banoobhai



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