

KAIF MAHMOOD

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Education

2015-2019

M.Phil. in Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy, Ambedkar University, Delhi. A partly practice-oriented and partly academic training programme that trains one to work as a psychotherapist in the psychoanalytic tradition, with a strong emphasis on the relationship between human consciousness and socio-political reality.

Dissertation topic: The Still, Small Voice Within: Learnings from Gandhi's Responses to the Violence of Partition.

2012-2014

M.A. in Psychosocial Clinical Studies, Ambedkar University, Delhi.

Dissertation topic: Lives in Prayer: An Existential and Phenomenological study.

2009-2010

M. Phil. in Religious Studies, University of Cambridge, UK.

Dissertation topic: Yoga and Depth Psychology: A Comparative Inquiry into Two Traditions of Psychological Transformation.

2007-2009

M. A. in Comparative Religion, Jamia Millia Islamia University, New Delhi, India.

2002-2005

B. A. (Honours) in Journalism, Delhi College of Arts and Commerce, University of Delhi, India.

Dissertation topic: The Naxalite Movement and the Media.

2002

12th standard, CBSE, Laxman Public School, New Delhi. Stream: Humanities.

Publications

The academic writings mentioned here can be downloaded from:

<https://independent.academia.edu/KaifMahmood>

Mahmood, Kaif. 2019. "The Still, Small Voice Within: Learnings from Gandhi's Responses to the Violence of Partition", *Samiksa: Journal of the Indian Psychoanalytical Society*, 63:89-112.

Mahmood, Kaif. 2015. "Muslims, Yoga and the Empty Heart of Fanaticism", *Kafila*, 15 June. <https://kafila.online/2015/06/15/muslims-yoga-and-the-empty-heart-of-fanaticism-kaif-mahmood>

Mahmood, Kaif. 2014. "Psychoanalysis, Religion and Enculturation: Reflections Through the Life of Mother Teresa", *Journal of Religion and Health*, 53:3.

Mahmood, Kaif. 2012. Review essay on the book *Unifying Hinduism: Philosophy and Identity in Indian Intellectual History* by Andrew J. Nicholson, *South Asian History and Culture*, 3:1, 137-139.

Blog on psychotherapy: http://www.kaifmahmood.com/?page_id=2432

Approach to psychotherapy

I allow my approach to psychotherapy to arise from the therapy relationship organically and spontaneously, rather than determining it beforehand. I have found that different patients evoke different ways of working. Given my personal inclinations, however, these ways of working constellate around the following elements, as freely as possible.

- Discovering an awareness of the present moment, of the capacity to see habitual ways in which one turns away from the reality of the moment, and the suffering, as well as the healing and opening up of new possibilities, that lies concealed in the present moment, now.
- The therapy relationship is a non-hierarchical relationship, a companionship of two persons walking together in an exploration of the inner life. To meet the other with empathy and possibly without defences can reveal new learnings for both self and other.
- Understanding how one's life-history has progressed to develop habitual responses that obscure an awareness of self and other. By understanding and gradually, releasing the painful experiences stored in mind and body, one's openness to life experience widens.

I also try to clarify how these painful experiences are still alive, subliminally, in the way the same habitual responses manifest in the psychotherapy relationship and obscure a direct encounter with the other.

- I encourage patients, if they find it meaningful, to cultivate a practice of breathing awareness which can deepen a similar process on a more subtle level in their daily life and also help them relax, if they feel the need for that. However, they are free to not take up such a practice if it does not appeal to them. If needed, I also work with body awareness, particularly for expressing aspects of consciousness that are difficult to verbalise.
- For those interested, I am happy to recommend and discuss texts, films and other resources that can help open up new perspectives in the inner journey.

Previous work experience

September 2017 to March 2019

I have worked as a trainee psychotherapist at Ehsaas Psychotherapy Clinic, Ambedkar University, Delhi, approximately 10 hours a week. This work was the major part of my M.Phil. in Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy at the university. My work has largely been with adult individuals and occasionally, couples suffering from psychological difficulties, offering them care and insight into their situation.

For shorter periods of time, I have also worked with children and teenagers at Ummeed Aman Home, a home for children from backgrounds of urban poverty, and the National Association for the Blind, a residential school for blind children.

August 2013 to May 2015

Worked for two academic years as Guest Teacher at Centre for Study of Comparative Religion, Jamia Millia Islamia University, teaching 5 hours of classes a week to M.Phil. level students and performing administrative duties. The courses I taught were: Introduction to the Study of Hinduism; Approaches and Methods in the Academic Study of Religion.

March 2006 to June 2011

Worked as a volunteer instructor, in my free time on weekends and on weekday evenings, at Acem School of Meditation, Delhi. I taught people meditation and provided counselling for adults in one-to-one and group settings.

Acem School of Meditation was established in Norway in 1966 by a group of psychotherapists, artists and lay persons, who seek to bring together a traditional Indian form of meditation with insights of contemporary psychotherapy, to facilitate healing and personal growth in a non-religious context.

I began to go to Acem in 2004 to learn meditation and yoga, and from 2006, I trained as an instructor and volunteered in the school's centre in Delhi, and briefly also in Norway and Sweden. Besides meditation and yoga, the school facilitates processes relating to body awareness and group therapy, both of which I trained in. In 2012, I decided to move to other avenues in my personal journey and am not part of the school since then, but do use the skills and understandings I found there in my work today.

Miscellaneous

- Junior Research Fellowship (JRF) from the University Grants Commission, India to pursue research at a university in India. December 2009.
- Oxford-Cambridge Society of India Scholarship to support my master's studies at the University of Cambridge. October 2009.

Personal information

Date of birth: 31.12.1984

Languages known: English, Hindi, Urdu, basic Sanskrit.

Other interests: writing, nature walks, poetry, cinema as an art form, caring for and communicating with animals.