

Interview Satish Kumar

By Guillem Ferrer

The most important thing in my life is friendship. All my work is out of friendship. Resurgence magazine is a result of friendship because I have so many good friends who have contributed articles, and everything else for Resurgence. Same way I have done all other work, like the Small School, it has come out of friendship. Many friends have supported me financially and teaching, and have contributed ideas to the Small Schools. And in the same way, Schumaker college has grown out of friendship. Friendship for me is a supreme principle and bread and butter of my life. I live by friendship. For me friendship is the most spiritual quality because friendship is unconditional, there are no ifs and buts, there is no reason why somebody is a friend. You don't say: I am your friend because you are this or that, you are educated, you are rich, you are intelligent, you are handsome, you are good to talk to, all those things don't come to your mind. You have friends because of nothing else but you are inspired to be a friend. And friendship is without any expectation. You don't expect anything, just you give, and just you receive. Friendship has a deep gratitude but no expectation, only gratitude, only thanks. So in friendship and because of friendship, you say only yes. When somebody asks you out of friendship you can't say no. So there only yes in friendship. If somebody asks me some help out of friendship, I say yes. And if I ask someone out of friendship they say yes. Friendship to me is the most essential, but friendship is not only a human attitude. I also feel friendship towards nature. I am a friend of my place and friend of my garden. I am a friend of trees, flowers. I am friend of the bees in my garden, and I am friend of even the earthworms and slugs and the snails in my garden. There is nothing in my garden which is not my friend. They are all my friends, even the weeds are my friends. The grass is my friend. So there's a kind of friendship, of acceptance as it is. You don't say: I like a garden when it is organized and cured and designed in such and such a way. I like the garden as it is, whatever it is, I like it. So there is unconditional love and unconditional acceptance to my garden. So garden is my friend. But also my home is my friend, because I accept the home as it is. Friendship is generally we use the term for human relationship, but I use the term friendship in a broader way and I say everything in my home is my friend. Even my chairs are my friend. They look after me and I look after them. Even the glasses and the jars and the jugs and the knives and the forks and the spoons and the chopsticks and the cups from which I drink my tea, are my friends. So it's a very broad relationship. And then it goes further and wider and I say: not only my home, my place and my garden is my friend, the whole village is my friend. So even my children are my friends. I don't say that my son Mukti and my daughter Maya are my son and daughter. In India we say that when your children become 16 they are no longer your children, they are your friends. It's better the term friendship in the relationship with your children than son and daughter, because son and daughter have expectation. You expect something from your children. They expect something from you as parents. As friends you don't expect anything. You treat them in a different way, in a respectful way. Same is with my wife June, she is no longer my wife: she is my friend. That extends to everything. As I was saying, the village is my friend so I accept the village as it is. I don't say: my village should be like this or like that, people are no good. I don't sit in judgment. There is no judgment. I accept my village as it is. As it is built, as it is designed, as it is evolved. Then I accept the village, not only its people but the valleys and the trees and the natural landscape, I accept it as my friend. Then, I live by the ocean, and so the ocean is my friend. And I

accept it as it is. Then it continues broadly, and I say the Earth is my friend, and the World is my friend, and there is no judgment. Whatever transformation I am trying to bring in my life, I'm trying to bring from friendship. From love. From acceptance. So first of all I say the world is beautiful as it is, the world is wonderful, but within that world we have developed such institutions, and those institutions need to be renewed. And renewal like my home is my friend, but I clean it and from time to time I repair it, and paint it because after a while home becomes old and needs repair and renewal. And my garden needs repair and renewal. And in the same way, politics needs repair and renewal. So I bring transformation and renewal into politics. Economics needs renewal, so I work to have a renewal of economics. And farming systems need renewal, because they have been going for a long time, and they have become old, disrepaired. So I am bringing repair and renovation to systems of farming. It is all out of love, I don't have any judgment or criticism. I just say like my body needs washing and cleaning and healing if I become ill, if I become sick, if I have a headache, a skin problem or any problem in my body, I try to repair and renew and heal. In the same way, the world is my body, society is my body, and sometimes I notice that society needs healing and repairing and renovating and renewing. So my work is the work of a healer, to bring renewal and repair. That is how my work of the Small School is an act of friendship for children, my work for Resurgence is an act of friendship, to bring good values and good ideas to the world. My work of Schumaker college is an act of friendship for the world, like if I do something for my body, that is also an act of friendship for my body. Because my body needs healing and so I bring healing to my body. Through meditation, good food, relaxation, rest, siesta... When the body gets tired, I take a siesta, and that is healing. In the same way, I see society as my body. Sometimes society goes too frantic and works too hard, too fast, so I say to society: slow down. In the same way I say to myself and to my body: slow down, have a siesta. I say to society: have a siesta, slow down, don't work too fast or too hard. So it's out of friendship that I advise to my fellow human beings whether they are economists, or politicians, or business people, teachers or doctors, whoever they are I give them my friendly advice. As a friend, I give them my advice. And when I come here to teach in Mallorca, I come out of friendship, to give my healing and my help. And when I speak at the Camper foundation I speak out of friendship, to help people to renew and repair and also learn about new things. Learn about a happy way of life, like if a friend asks me for advice, I give them advice as a friend about how to live more happily. So I advise my friends to have less attachment, because attachment brings disappointment. Expectation brings disappointment. Live lightly and live detachment, when you are detached you can keep moving, you're not stuck, there is no bondage. Detachment is to be free. All my work for ecology and for the environment and for spirituality, education, good agriculture is out of profound friendship in my heart for the world. And I see society and the world as my own body, and so when I am working for the transformation of society and transformation of the world, I am working for the transformation of my own self. The greater self. In this body I have a small self, but when I expand my consciousness then I include the greater self, which is the self of the universe. So the whole universe is my body. I am in this body microcosm of the macrocosm universe. The most essential in my life is friendship.

What is the next word, after friendship?

After friendship, the second word is art. Art of living. For me all other arts emerge out of the art of living. So I am always refining the art of living. And art of living has a

tremendous transformative power. So for me everything becomes an artform. When I am cooking, it's a work of art. Art connects me with alchemy. An artist is an alchemist. You take raw ingredients, what alchemists call a base matter, meaning raw ingredients. You have flower, you have rice, vegetables, spices, herbs. All are disconnected. Then you take a pinch of salt and a pinch of chilly, a pinch of cinnamon and of garam masala, and a cup of rice and a cup of dahl, and a little onion, garlic and all together you transform ingredients and becomes a delicious dish. That is a kind of alchemy, the art of cooking becomes an act in its own right. I am not cooking to eat, that's my product. I am cooking because cooking itself has value. The intrinsic value of the action in itself, every action has intrinsic value. When I am in the garden, it's the same thing: art of gardening. You have a spade or a fork and you dig the soil a bit, you plant a seed, a seed grows, you put a stake and you observe it and you look after it and you put water, compost, and with all that raw material of compost and water, soil, seed, fork, spade, when you bring them together in the right proportion, the right balance, the right harmony and tremendous attention and meditation, you turn that piece of land into a garden. That is a transformation. When an artist has a color, a little blue, a little black, a little yellow, a little piece of canvas there, and just a little color there,... with meditation, presence, and concentration, love and being fully in the moment, in the here and now. The artist is not thinking of the past, not thinking of the future, he is in the now, in the present, and the power of the present moment and attention, and putting colors together, those colors are only raw material, and they are turned into a beautiful piece of painting. There is a transformation happening there. And those paints, and that picture, has transformed the artist, or the cook, or the potter, or the furniture maker, or the architect, or whatever. So the art transforms me, and I transform the art. This is a kind of transformative power. Art of living is the greatest art, and we are all living. So everybody is an artist. This was essentially uttered by Joseph Boyce, the German writer. He said an artist is not somebody special. Everybody is an artist. Similarly, Anandkatva Swami said that artist is not a special kind of person but every person is a special kind of artist. We are all artists. But our artist quality are suppressed, they are hidden, dormant, and they need to be unfolded, they need to emerge, they need to uncover, come out like in the seed – the tree is hidden. With the process of relationship with the soil and water and sun, the seed unfolds and the tree emerges. So every human being is the seed and by right relationship and right attention, the seed will unfold and the artist will come out. Emerge. And you don't have to be a famous artist, you don't have to be known, because there are many many seeds becoming trees in the forest and nobody sees them. Nobody takes a photograph of them. Nobody writes articles about them. Yet they are trees, fulfilled. In the same way, there are human beings who are fully self-realised. Fully satisfied as human beings, who live a fully happy life as human beings. You don't have to be known. Art is not a quality for selling in the galleries or in the marketplace. Art is a way of life. The art which is sold in the supermarket and in the galleries and concert halls is commercial art. I'm not talking about that art, I'm talking about the real art which brings you a sense of fulfilment, which brings you your creativity, unfolds your imagination. Poetry of life, the art of living, the music of life in everyday living is not in galleries or concert halls where you sell, that is a product, something you sell like a piece of furniture, it's a commodity to sell, that's different. My favourite art is how you live artfully. When you live artfully, then you are contented. Like tree is content. Tree just is, it doesn't need to be something else, it's a tree. A person who lives artfully just is, there is no need for titles, or descriptions. So my second word is the art of living.

And your third word?

The third word would be relationship. Because everything is related, we are all related to each other and to the earth. I was present in my genes and cells in the beginning of time, eternally or if you want to use scientific language, at the time of big bang. Ever since, everything that I am has changed forms in relationship to other genes and other cells and other life forms on the planet, and the creativity and the consciousness. Life exists only in relationships. When seed is in relationship with the soil and the water, it grows, becomes a tree. When man and woman are in relationship, they produce a child. When I touch and sit in this chair, the chair holds me up. I am in relationship with the chair, and in relationship with my food. There is nothing I am not in relationship with. Everything exists in relationship, so my mantra is: We are all related to each other and to the earth. All related. There is nothing outside. In sanskrit, we say: vasu ney vakutun bakam which means: the whole earth is our family. The earthworms and snails and bees, and wasps and mosquitoes and the birds in the sky and animals like deer and snakes, and lions and tigers and elephants, and trees and flowers and humans, the blacks and whites, the educated and non-educated, **everything** is our family. We are all members of one family. They are all kit and kin, brothers and sisters, fathers and mothers. The american indians always say: the sky is my grandfather, and the earth is my grandmother. San Francisco of Assisi said the sun is my brother and the moon is my sister, and he talks to the wolf and says: wolf is related to me, and I have communication and conversation with the wolf. He also says the ducks and its chicks are my family and I feed them. All earth is my family. The humans and other than humans, plants, etc., they are all related. If there was no nature there are no humans. So we are related. Relationship with the earth and with other humans, it's wonderful to have diversity. Diversity is wonderful. You have this book of figs, there are hundreds of varieties of figs, and of mangoes, and of apples. Evolution is in diversity. Evolution evolves in diversity. If there is no diversity there is no evolution. Diversity comes so that all diverse things can relate to each other. If there is no separation, no diversity, how do we relate? So diversity is created for the purpose of relationship. And when we say we are related, then we can respect and have reverence for all life, respect all life and love all life. In relationship there is love. All the creatures of the earth are related to us and to each other and all are one family. Whether you are living in Africa as a black person, or living in Europe as a white person, in China as a yellow person, as an American Indian as a red person, or you are speaking swahili or majorcan or Spanish or French or you follow christianity or Buddhism or you are a communist – all these varieties are wonderful. Then we can relate to each other. Diversity is for relationship. I celebrate diversity because I celebrate relationship. Because we have forgotten the fundamental significance and essential quality and the paramount importance of relationship, we dominate and exploit and kill and have hierarchy. We say something is higher and something is lower, and something can dominate. All this is result of not accepting the world in its diversity, and not accepting the essential paramount importance of relationship. Before we change or transform everything, we have to accept that we are all related. And we can bring transformation through relationship. Seed and soil in relationship can transform the seed into a tree. Teacher and child in relationship of respect can transform a child into an educated, mature, wise human being. By helping each other, we transform in relationship. So my third word would be relationship. Which is connected with friendship but even if you don't feel friendly with something, ... well, I feel friendly with everything ... but if someone doesn't feel friendly with something, he is still related, even if we don't share the same genes, or

DNA, we are all made of air, fire, water, earth, space, consciousness, creativity and imagination. These are the essential qualities from which everything is made, beings and cells and the soul and spade. Everything is made of these basic elements. There is a unity of life manifesting in diversity. If you have a kilo of gold, you cannot use the kilo of gold so you transform it into fifty pieces of jewellery: a necklace, a bracelet, an anklet, a ring, you make different items of jewellery. They are shaped in different pieces, but they are made with the same gold. In the same way, we are all made of the same basic element. If you have just one element, one kilo of gold, then there can be no relationship. Only by transforming one into many united diversity you can create relationship.

Mallorca...

Mallorca is a very beautiful and unique island, and in the past fifty or sixty years people have turned Mallorca into a tourist playground. But I come to Mallorca as a pilgrim. And I would like to see people of Mallorca thinking of themselves as pilgrims and welcoming all the visitors from outside as pilgrims and people who come to Mallorca also come here as pilgrims. Because when you come as a tourist, you are mainly interested in yourself. You want comfort for yourself. You want beach for yourself, good hotel for yourself, good restaurant for yourself. The tourist mind is a very egocentric mind, a very self-centered mind. But when you come as a pilgrim, you are interested in the place, because you feel that the place is sacred, beautiful, that the place has its' own integrity, its' own genius. So I must respect the integrity and the genius and the uniqueness of this place, and not destroy it. Whereas a tourist mind says: it doesn't matter the place, I want comfort for myself. So how about a nightclub to entertain myself. I won't come to Mallorca unless there are nightclubs, and casinos, and five star hotels. All those demands are touristic. But when you come as a pilgrim, you come for the intrinsic value of the place itself. I am all in favour of people going to places as pilgrims, and learning from the places and also finding joy out of those places. The beauty of these places. It's good to come to Mallorca to find joy of the beauty of Mallorca. It is wonderful, the hills and mountains are so gorgeous, and the sea and beaches that you have here are kind of riveting. Very wonderful. And the trees and the fruit you have here, the land, the traditional architecture. I think if we can come and celebrate and enjoy, find pleasure and delight in our time in Mallorca. That is one point.

The other important point is: for the long term future sustainability of Mallorca, we need to welcome as pilgrims and not change Mallorca to suit pilgrims. Mallorcan pilgrims. Mallorcan people should not think in order to attract people we need to destroy Mallorca and turn it into the same as another place. Same kind of casinos, same kind of beach huts, same kind of not good food, then why come to Mallorca? Just for the sunshine? There are many other places for sunshine. Mallorcan people need to welcome people from outside without destroying the integrity and the indigenous geny of Mallorca. That is the first thing.

The second thing is: Mallorca has got everything: sunshine, sea, beaches, fishing, wonderful mountains, lovely forests, all the fruit you can imagine, caroubs, olives, almonds, oranges, lemons, pomegranate, melons, amazing wonderful fruit. And land is very fertile. Mallorcans don't need to depend on outside world for their basic livelihood. For me, I think every Mallorcan should have connection to land. Not all Mallorcans have to be farmers, they can be gardeners. It's better to be gardeners. Farming involves

big machinery, you need large land. A garden can be a small piece of land, And the garden should be organic, with slow food principles, permaculture principles. We value the soil for its' own intrinsic quality. This should be, from my point of view, a kind of moratoria of new buildings, of hotels and roads, and business parks, and industrial estates. If you lose land, you lose your source of livelihood. If the crisis stops and the food can't come from far away, then what would happen to Mallorcan people? Food is essential, it should be local and fresh. If you bring food from outside, that means fruit and vegetables are picked a week before. Whereas if you have local food, then it's fresh. And it's great fun. When you are in the land, working the gardens, working in the land, you are healthy. It's a natural health system, because you are exercising, cultivating the land, planting, all that work brings you out of the house, into the fresh air. It's good exercise. So it's for physical health that we need to garden. But also for spiritual health. Gardening is a spiritual practice. It's not just for our food, it's for our spiritual wellbeing. You will have peace of mind if you have practice of gardening. Healthy soul, healthy spirit. So the second thing I would suggest that we need to create in Mallorca are places where people can learn gardening, practice gardening. And a law that should exist is that by birthright, every Mallorcan should have a piece of land. If you can have food self-sufficiency and gardening in mallorca, that will be a very strong foundation for resilient Mallorca. Because the dependence on imported food is fragile. If anything goes wrong, if oil runs out, if transportation goes wrong, we can be stranded. For physical, economic, practical, health, spiritual, all these points of view. We need to reconnect with the land. Once you are reconnected with the land, the second thing I would like to see is the revival of arts and crafts. People are never happy if they are only consumers. People are happy when they are bakers, when they make furniture, they make shoes, they make anything. We are makers. We you build a house, you make a garden, you make shoes. We are using our hands. Revival of arts and crafts should be the second thing. In every school in Mallorca, children should learn gardening. That is real, holistic, healthy education. You are not only teaching reading and writing, you are educating your head, your heart and your hands. Three "h"s. Food, arts and crafts. When every Mallorcan is able to practice arts and crafts, they will be healthy and happy. That's all you need. Art also includes music. The traditional music of Mallorca should be revived. Poetry, dance, are arts and crafts. People will be more satisfied with arts and crafts. Consumerism is not satisfying, because there is no challenge to your imagination, to your creativity. Human beings are by birth creative beings. But our consumerist culture suppresses our creativity because you just go and work in an office, there is no time to be creative because you are just following the orders of your boss, the rules of your company, doing what the company requires to do, in a bank or in a business. Very little creativity is required. Big offices, big operations, big governments, where everything is laid down. The rules are laid down. That's why everybody is so unhappy, their creativity is suppressed. So when you bring arts and crafts and gardening, then creativity will be required. If you are creative, you use your imagination, and then your genius will come out. Every human being has a genius of its' own kind, a particular genius. That particular genius comes out through living. If you can have that kind of approach, you will have a more sustainable, more green, more resilient Mallorca.

Love...

Love is the foundation upon which all other things I have talked with you are built. Friendship is built on love, arts and crafts come out of love, relationship is based in love. And love is the greatest power, the greatest force. When you have love, then fear

evaporates, it disappears. We need to live and act in our life from the basis of love. I act in my life from the basis of love. I am an environmentalist, an ecologist, not because I have fear of doom and gloom, or disaster or end of civilization, not out of fear. I am not driven by fear. My ecology, my social movement, my environmental movement, my spiritual movement, of which I am a part, is driven by love. My ecology is driven by love because I love the trees, I love the forest, I love the mountain, the soil, the colours of the flowers, the smell of the fruit, the sound of the wind. I love the sunshine, the rain, I love the snow, and I love human beings, I love communities. I love children, I love women. My life is based on love, and this is a great start. The power of love. I think when there is attraction in nature, the plants are attracted towards the sunlight, there is a love between the plants and the sunlight. Love is not only a human attribute, love is an essential ingredient even in nature. When bees pollinate the plants, that is an act of love. When there is a mating in all creatures, to reproduce and procreate, that is out of love. Physical love, which is also part of the spiritual love and attraction, it's a kind of allurements so the biology of love. There is also the economics of love. When we make something to sell to a customer, we have no interest in money, we want to serve the community. Essentially, the farmer is growing food out of love for the community and the family. There is love there. When a shoe maker is making shoes, there is love in every stage, love of making shoes, and then love for the person who is going to wear the shoes. When it is made with love, it's beautiful shoes. Because it's made with love. And when it is worn those pair of shoes made with love, they are more comfortable shoes. When you make something with love, you make it very lovely, very perfect, very beautiful. You are not cutting corners, you are not economizing. You put every effort, your best ability to make the best shoe because of love. That example can go with everything, whether it's relation or food of house, anything. When you make something with love, then it is very beautiful. When you make something with love, the making itself has its' intrinsic value and it is an end in itself. You are not doing something to achieve something else, not working towards an outcome. You are not attached to the fruit of your action, because your action itself is an act of love. When I am talking to you now, this itself is an act of love. I have no other desires to achieve something, to have an outcome or to get something. There is no exterior motive, the only true motive is the act of love itself. There is true action, pure action. I live my life, every act I follow is an act of love. There are no other desires, no other attachments. So for me, love is a process of living. Love is means and also an end. Love is the way and also the place of arrival. There is no distinction. There is no way to love, love is the way. If you can just be, then you are in love all the time. You are falling in love every moment. The moment you wake up, you are falling in love with the beautiful sky and sunrise, and you are falling in love with your beautiful wife, or partner, every day. And you are falling in love with your parents, and children, every day fresh. Life becomes very light when it is lead with love, true love. It's very light. There is no burden, there is no bondage. When you act out of love, there is no karma. Karma is a kind of consequence. Every action has a consequence and has a karma. But if you live out of love, you accumulate no karma. Because it is so pure, it does not stick. Your essence does not stick, love is so pure, like a feather, so light. Gone. And when you are in love, you are not expecting anything. You have no desires, it's love for the sake of loving. There is no other destination, love is the destination. There are many levels, personal love, social love, politics love, universal love. Out of love, you produce a sense of sacred. Out of love, you sacrifice your comfort to maintain life, to maintain family, to maintain your relationship. Out of love, you sacrifice your personal comfort. Love produces a sense of sacred. The word sacred comes out of sacrifice. Sacrifice is not out of hardship, or reluctance, that is not

sacrifice, it's not love. True sacrifice is no burden, you don't suffer, you don't even notice that you make a sacrifice. That is love, sacred. In sacred love, you go all the way, there is no limit. It's unlimited and unconditional love. You don't say I come this much, you come this much. That is not unconditional love. Sacred love is without limit. You are prepared to give your life. You are prepared to die for love. And you don't even notice, you don't even know that you are dying for love, you just die. If you know: I will die for love – then that is not complete. Unselfconscious.

A personal question: how would you describe your experience of love with your wife, June.

First of all I have a sense of gratitude. Gratitude that she has agreed and decided to give her life to me and decided to live with me for the rest of her life. I am nothing, I am not perfect, I am not great, I am very ordinary, and she has decided to live with me. So I am thankful, first of all. And secondly, I feel a sense that only by falling in love every day – like I said before – and realizing how wonderful it is that someone who I already know, someone who is near me is so wonderful. So without judging, without criticizing, I fall in love every day in appreciation of the miracle of this relationship. With gratitude and with spontaneous every day appreciation, I live happily with June for 37 years and they have passed by quickly. She is wonderful. Like your mother, she never gets angry. It's wonderful, she is very generous, very kind. Also, June and I have a kind of partnership. We have produced Resurgence magazine together, we have a home together, she is a great gardener, we have children together. She is a great teacher, a very spiritual being. She goes to Thick Nat Hanh once or twice a year, and people come to our house to meditate every Monday, and she reads spiritual books. She is a great practitioner of spirituality and meditation. I am very lucky to have someone like that as my wife. She is more ecological than I am, more spiritual than I am, I am very lucky. I don't have to argue, I don't have to fight, we both agree that she knows more. She gives me a lot of energy.

Design... (during lunch)

Mahatma Gandhi was a designer and he designed a spinning wheel, which is easy to carry, and easy to make, easy to spin and he designed it when he was in prison. Then he said: this spinning wheel is for the poor and those who spin should wear the hand spun clothes, those who wear the cloth spin the yarn. So everybody should be self-sufficient in clothes. So he designed the spinning wheel for the poor, for everybody to become self-sufficient. Also he designed a toilet, easy to build, with four posts and a canvas around it, and a little wheel so you can pull it and dig a little hole in the ground for the toilet, and then put earth on it. When it's full you pull it over, then after six months, the land is perfect to grow food, and you mix some straw or something like that. So he designed a composting toilet and a spinning wheel. And he also started a school and a workshop where simple tools for cotton industry can be designed and built. So the main thing was that every day the students would spin their own yarn and make their own clothes and be self-sufficient.