



Psychophonetics Institute International

YEHUDA TAGAR AND PSYCHOPHONETICS A SHORT BIOGRAPHY

Creating Psychophonetics as a personal journey

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I have been publishing monthly articles for Vitalita magazine in the column named Psychophonetics for nine years now, which is well over a hundred articles. I am regularly asked by people about the story of its creation.

Recently, I was asked by my new Chinese colleagues, who are initiating Psychophonetics counselling and psychotherapy training in China, to present a short biography of my development of Psychophonetics towards the start of my online seminars in China, leading to the start of the professional course there in the Autumn of 2024. As I completed it, I realized that it may be of interest to my Vitalita readers of the past nine years. So here it is, for your interest.

Psychophonetics was born out of my striving to find expression to the deeper and the higher dimensions of human reality. I always knew that besides everything that we are conscious of, there exists a deeper, higher, clearer, wiser dimension of reality and I never stopped hoping and striving for the realization of it. Psychophonetics is an ongoing development of this striving, my own and others. A few landmark thresholds that I crossed on my journey of creating this work birthed Psychophonetics out of my human potential into reality.

Childhood

I was born to two idealistic parents who created and ran an orphanage for child refugees from the holocaust, survivors of concentration camps in Europe, adopted them as their own children and brought them into young adulthood. We lived in the middle of our citrus tree farm, oranges, lemons and grapefruits. Our land was a frontline in the struggle to create the country. Compassion, nature and existential struggle marked my biography from the start.

Early in my youth, growing in a collective rural community in Israel, I became aware of the gap between what comes to expression in the normal social exchange of people around me and what is really going on inside of me and them. Discovering and creating expression to the unknown, unexpressed, uncommunicated in myself and in others became the major driving force in my life. That led me to poetry as a language of the soul, the striving to capture and make known and expressed the deep human content that prose cannot allow.

In my original country, in the 1950s, a new culture was still being created out of ancient roots and songs, dance, stories, deep literature, epic and mythology, played a deep role in bringing people from many different countries, languages and cultures in a new social creation. My parents came from Ukraine and Bulgaria, and most of the adults around me and parents of my friends came from Russia, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Romania, Austria, Germany, Hungary, and later on in the 60s and 70s from Morocco, Iraq, Egypt, Algeria, Libya, Iran, Yemen and Tunisia. My parents spoke between them 8 languages, and nearly everyone spoke either Yiddish or Ladino. It was a vibrant, rich, international community in formation. Hebrew, a 3,000-year-old language brought us all together, and was still in formation as the new national language of the country.

Literature, history, philosophy and music, old and new, Israeli and international, were essential for this creation. The people who formed my community were deeply educated and cultured. Central and Eastern European classics of music and literature were essential to our education as well as biblical and Jewish literature. Love of nature and the land was celebrated. Work was celebrated not primarily as a means for making money but as a social contribution, opportunity to develop one's gifts and skills and to benefit the community as a whole. Beethoven, Bach, Andean music, Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, Pinchas Sadeh (the Israeli poet), Socrates, Goethe, Thomas Mann, Jewish, kabbalistic, Buddhist, Hindu, Esoteric Christianity, European esoteric teaching, German Idealism, Leonard Cohen and singers of the 60s, Shakespeare, Oscar Wilde, romantic and modernist English poets, Rabindranath Tagor, Kahlil Gibran, Omar Khayyam, Rumi, Solzhenitsyn, and renaissance artists, revolutionary social theorists and Greek mythology—all inspired my cultural/spiritual development. I am very grateful for my upbringing and for the later self-education of my life.

Meeting Anthroposophy

At age 17, I met Rudolf Steiner's Anthroposophy, through the only book that existed about it in Hebrew at the time: *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and its Attainment*. It reminded me of something essential in the depth of my soul and it opened my connection to the deeper, higher, broader self, humanity, nature, human wisdom, evolution and the universe. This process of remembering, creation and discovery never stopped and is a core foundation of Psychophonetics. At the same age, another door opened for me: I am a third generation secular

Israeli with no affiliation to any religion. But at age 17, in the narrow lane of Via Delarosa in old city Jerusalem, I discovered personally the Christ impulse as an individual, personal reality. The vision that this created in me, of the deep potential of humanity and of the ideal human being that is progressively evolving, never left me. There could be no Psychophonetics without that vision.

Adulthood

After National Service in frontline units, including the 1973 war and command positions, I moved with my wife to a migrant's community on the northern border, where I became a youth social worker and an organiser of community self-defense. We later moved, with our two children to a farm in Galilee, growing fruit trees again, then back into education in care of children and later, as the head of a youth department in a university town, where I studied education, literature, history and philosophy at Haifa University. I was a founding member of an idealistic group aiming to create a futuristic community, inspired by the Findhorn Community in Scotland. Upon the breakup of my family, I moved to Jerusalem where I worked as a support worker for youth with borderline personality disorders. That was my first encounter with mental health crisis which brought me to the threshold of my own personal crisis.

Professional turning points

1. **England:** I left the community I was involved in, my family, my homeland, and went to England to study: drama, literature and evolutionary philosophy at Emerson College and later on, at the London school of speech and drama. That was the first professional turning point of my life: I discovered drama as the deepest language of the human soul. I spent the next ten years exploring the spiritual, developmental, transformational and healing effects of theatre in London—then Australia—in Sydney, Adelaide and Melbourne.

Australia: I discovered the transformational potential of drama through the intense use of spontaneous gestures, visualization, and the sounds of human speech. I completed my degree in English literature and drama in Adelaide University in South Australia by re-opening a small *Intimate Theatre* with my production of *De Faustus* by Christopher Marlow. The human and the spiritual world mix up in this play with physical and metaphysical characters which I had to find a way to create with my actors and to perform as a professional production. It was successful and I could stay in theatre as a career, but I was more attracted to the transformation and therapeutic potential of the dramatic process.

At this point I had already developed my own unique approach to the training of actors and building characters that involved the methodical use of Sensing, Gesture, Visualisation and Sounds. This process is the birth place of **Psychophonetics**. Then, another turning point arrived:

2. Women who had heard about my innovative drama process, who suffered from past abuse and could not find effective help in verbal psychotherapy, started to come to me asking to do with them something like I did with my actors. I did not pretend to be a therapist, but they had already given up on therapists and were desperate. I started to work with them to act out their suffering and life experience the same way I would build a character with my actors out of their life experience. Something started to shift in them and I became interested in the therapeutic/ transformational effects of the dramatic method I was developing. It excited me much more than producing more plays for the entertainment of passive audiences. These women birthed the healer in me.

One day, a wise man, my university professor, who became a friend, told me that I should know that what I am doing with these people is psychotherapy. I was surprised. I thought I was just using some dramatic tools to help them to get some perspective on themselves. He said that usually this is called counselling and psychotherapy. He recommended I do a post graduate diploma in counselling at the University of South Australia. I did it, and it changed my life. I met a group of special humanist psychotherapists and educators who left a deep impression on me, introducing me to the history of 20th century humanistic, existential, behavioral, cognitive and transpersonal psychology. They birthed the psychology academic and teacher in me.

Beginning of professional training in Psychophonetics counselling & psychotherapy

My theatre and counselling practice kept growing, but now with a new professional, vocational orientation. I became a counsellor and psychotherapist, using Psychophonetics. I developed a form of workshop for personal development using Psychophonetics and went on a lecture tour in four states of Australia to present it. As a result, a group of women from all these places approached me to teach them to do what I could do with people. I had no idea how to teach it. They asked me to find a way to teach it. I had to create an educational/developmental process for training adults to be able to do what I myself was developing. In 1990, I started the first professional training group of Psychophonetics in Adelaide, South Australia. My threshold of adult education came to me and I had to cross it. Together with this pioneering group of deeply self-aware women, I developed a whole curriculum for training counsellors and psychotherapists with Psychophonetics. These women birthed the adult educator in me.

Working with Psychophonetics and complementary medicine

I accepted a scholarship to do a Masters degree in Arts therapy at La Trobe University in Melbourne and moved there to start a new training course in Psychophonetics. I joined the Melbourne Medical Centre in outer East Melbourne with a group of integrative medical doctors, art therapists, nurses, masseurs, hydro-therapists, and movement therapists—as a holistic psychosomatic therapist. This was a wonderful team, with open-minded doctors and a space to develop a new approach to psychosomatic medicine under their supervision and in partnership with them. They initiated me into complementary medicine. I joined the national board of the Australian Whole Health Institute, organising conferences for medical doctors, medical students and the public in what had become the seed for the Australasian Institute of Integrative Medicine. I grew in these circles and through my growing training groups into the therapist and the trainer that I am. I joined the growing association of counselling and psychotherapy in Australia and was a founding member of SCAPE (Society for Counselling & Psychotherapy Educators).

South Africa: In 2002, I accepted an invitation to the founding conference of the South African Association of Psychotherapy in Grahamstown, Western Cape to present Psychophonetics there. It was well received. I became a founding member and had my *African Experience*. Resulting from presentations in Johannesburg and Cape Town, I was invited by two institutions to present Psychophonetics training in South Africa. I started with 51 students in two groups and consequently migrated to South Africa, starting Persephone College SA. I joined the Syringa Health Centre for Integrative Medicine as a psychosomatic therapist, continuing the development of Medical Psychophonetics there. That initiative lasted for 8 years, resulting in an enormous development of Psychophonetics in collaboration with medical doctors and other therapists. Upon presenting Psychophonetics to the international conference of the World Council of Psychotherapy in the University of Limpopo, I was accepted to the African Chapter of this worldwide organisation.

England: In 2006, I accepted an invitation from the European Association of Psychotherapy to present my work on the recovery from past sexual abuse in South Africa, at Cambridge University. Combined with an invitation to present Psychophonetics at the East Grinstead school of speech and drama, organised by Louise Waterfall. Giving a few seminars and workshops in England resulted in an invitation to start Psychophonetics professional training in the UK. I taught in England for the next 8 years.

Europe—Slovakia: In 2011, an invitation came from Budapest, Bratislava and Prague to start Psychophonetics training there. I taught in these countries for two years and in 2013, we established Skola Empatie in Slovakia where the training is currently operating. During this time, we started 15 Psychophonetics training groups,

established the center of Psychophonetics Institute International and IAPP (International Association of Psychophonetics Practitioners).

In Slovakia, I met and united with Miroslava Tagar who became my life partner, wife, my most important creative colleague, and my home. With Mira, I made my deep connection to this beautiful country, Slovakia, which became my home country for the past 10 years. Slovakia has been extremely kind and welcoming to me. Here I found very competent colleagues, a steady stream of students and graduates of Psychophonetics, and a growing professional community—my new roots and the new roots of Psychophonetics. We are still planting the tree of Psychophonetics and Methodical Empathy and through Skola Empatije, the only professional training college for methodical empathy in Europe—Psychophonetics keeps growing. At our center in Bernolakovo, near Bratislava, we have started 10 groups.

In 2018, Jana Mudra, a graduate from Kosice, initiated the start of professional Psychophonetics training in Kosice, East Slovakia. This initiative continues to grow today with five starting groups and graduating students. Mira and Janka, brilliant Psychophonetics practitioners and trainers, together with me are grounding Psychophonetics in Slovakia as a basis for its life in the world.

Starting in 2014, Silvia Galatova is a steady partner in the translation of my Vitalita articles and encouraging a steady flow of this creative expression of Psychophonetics in Slovakia. Silvia is a brilliant translator, Psychophonetics practitioner and trainer. She is playing a major role in grounding Psychophonetics in this country.

Throughout this period Dr Robin Steele, the creator of the first doctoral thesis on Psychophonetics and my original Australian coordinator and co-teacher, also wrote and edited the first book on Psychophonetics published by Steinerbooks, with chapters contributed by myself and other practitioners. Robin has continued to publish the international newsletter of Psychophonetics practitioners, continuously creating the international community of Psychophonetics practitioners from Australia, South Africa, UK, Slovakia, Hungary, Czech Republic, Germany, Israel, US and Spain.

I cannot name all of them here but a growing community of co-teachers, colleagues and helpers make this impulse viable and growing in Slovakia and other countries. To their steady loving support, I am deeply grateful.

China: In April 2023, I was approached by Mingyu, a Chinese publisher living in Austria, to bring Psychophonetics training to China. We met and created the vision for it, a team of translators and organisers were created, Louise Waterfall who originally brought me to England in 2006, offered to accompany and assist in this initiative in China, and now we are working towards the start of the first Psychophonetics training in China at the end of 2024. Louise is also working towards restarting Psychophonetics training in the UK and international accreditation of it with BACP.

This summary is the short version of the story of the creation of Psychophonetics, which is, at the same time, is the story of my life. Throughout all the changes of countries, locations, organisations, developing teaching programs and the ever-growing range of therapeutic and developmental processes, one factor stands steady: the ongoing progress of discovering further possibilities in the conscious connections between the body, the soul and the individual spirit. In this, Psychophonetics specialises and this creative process never stopped. Psychophonetics is a constant living example of practically applied spiritual science, participatory medicine, methodical empathy and a psycho-development of freedom.

Yehuda Tagar, 10th July 2023, High Tatra, Slovakia



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Videos of Yehuda's public talks – www.youtube.com/@yehudatar