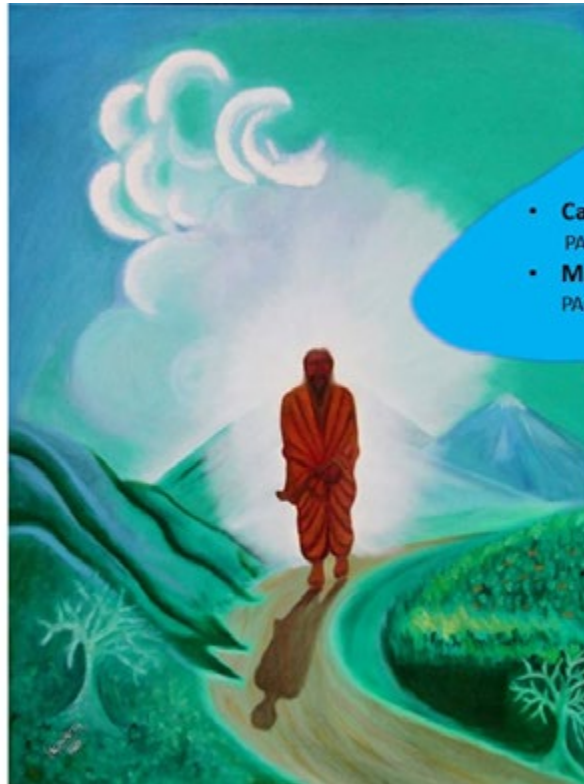


The Call Beyond

Volume 42 // No. 8 // 15 Aug 2017



- **Categorizing People**
PAGES 3,4
- **Maid Writes a Best-seller**
PAGE 12

*Heaven's call is rare, rarer the heart that heeds;
The doors of light are sealed to common mind,
And earth's needs nail to earth the human mass,
Only in an uplifting hour of stress
Men answer to the touch of greater things:
Or, raised by some strong hand to breathe heaven-air...*

Sri Aurobindo
Savitri, Book 11, Canto 1, p. 689

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The Call Beyond wishes its readers a happy Independence Day, and a happy Darshan Day. It was on Sri Aurobindo's birthday, 15 August 2015, that we published the first on-line issue of The Call Beyond. With this issue, we have reached the twenty-fifth issue. This has been possible only due to the Mother's Grace, and it is at Her lotus feet that the publication is offered.

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The opinions expressed in articles published in The Call Beyond are those of the individual authors, and reflect neither the official policies of Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch nor are purported to be the most authentic interpretations of the teachings of Sri Aurobindo or The Mother.

Cover painting: Shri Hrishikesh Kumar

Categorizing Human Beings

The ancient Chaturvarnya must not be judged by its later disintegrated degeneration and gross meaningless parody, the caste system.

SRI AUROBINDO, in 'The Foundations of Indian Culture', SABCL Edition, p. 111

Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them, said Shakespeare. A politically more acceptable version today may be 'all are born equal, but some have inequality thrust upon them'. The difference between these two approaches is due to a subtle semantic nuance which is very easy to miss. We are all born equal, but we are born different. The differences at birth are enough to improve the chances of some of us to achieve greatness. In scientific terms, the differences at birth are due to our genes. In spiritual terms, we are not alike at birth because of the varying influences and degree of spiritual development that we bring into this life from our previous lives. But spiritually we are all equal because we are manifestations of the same Divine. Knowing these spiritual realities and recognizing the all too obvious differences in individual temperament, inclinations and abilities, India evolved long ago a social structure that expected from each according to his capacity. That social structure has now degenerated into the much-maligned caste system, and the despicable practice of untouchability.

Closely linked to the acknowledgement of differences between individuals was the type of work expected of them, and the observance of guidelines about conduct during different phases of life. Thus, the man of learning (Brahmin) did enjoy greater respect than the unskilled labourer (Shudra), but the degree of perfection expected in the observance of Dharma was also higher in the former. Further, the punishment for violation of Dharma was also more severe in the man of learning than in the ignorant and bewildered unskilled labourer. Finally, **the categorization of human beings was based on their innate tendencies and capacities, not on the family into which they were born.**

In this issue, we begin with the guidelines of conduct as given in the Shastras of the Hindu tradition for different categories of people. We start with category 4, because the expectations are the minimum from them. But even the minimum seems in some respects conspicuous by its absence in today's society. Equally urgent is the need for at least that minimum to return, of course with appropriate modifications in today's context, to halt the wave of degeneration which is currently overtaking the society with unprecedented and dangerous speed. To apply a brake to the wave of degeneration is the purpose of this series, painstakingly put together by Acharya Navneet, a scholar in Vedanta who is also more than familiar with modern science and modern day living.

There is nothing here [in the Indian culture] that can be said to discourage life and its flowering or to deprive it of impetus and elevation and a great motive. On the contrary there is a full and frank recognition and examination of the whole of human existence in all its variety and range and power; there is a clear and wise and noble idea for its right government and there is an ideal tendency pointing it upward and a magnificent call to a highest possible perfection and greatness.

SRI AUROBINDO, in 'The Foundations of Indian Culture', SABCL Edition, p. 108

What is My Duty as per the Hindu tradition? (Part I)

ACHARYA NAVNEET

Summary of the article on the same theme in the previous issue

It is impossible to think of spiritual life without considerations of Dharma (guidelines about right and wrong). Although there are some core values of universal validity, in the Hindu tradition, these guidelines are complex, not only because of the multiple texts in which they occur but also because of the necessity to vary these guidelines according to the temperament of the individual, the stage of life, and the time and place in question. In this issue, the focus will be on the guidelines for individuals in whom *tamas* is dominant, *rajas* is substantial, and *sattva* is negligible. Such an individual is lazy, ignorant, and when he does get active, the activity is likely to be mechanical, executed imperfectly, and motivated by confused or perverted thinking. This is the category the author has called Category 4.

We have already considered the Dharma guidelines which are applicable to all, irrespective of temperament and the stage of life. Now we shall take up one category of people, characterized by a given temperament, and study the guidelines specially applicable to them (Varna Dharma). We shall also see how these guidelines change for the same category of people depending upon their stage of life (Ashrama Dharma). Finally, we shall also see how the guidelines given in ancient texts might be interpreted or modified in the context of today's world. Thus, there is an intersection of Varna Dharma and Ashrama Dharma that leads us to the Dharma of an individual. Further, we have divided life into only three stages, instead of the traditional four. We have merged the Vaanaprastha Ashrama (the stage from 50-75 years of age) and Sannyasa Ashrama (the stage from 75 years of age till death) as the post-retirement phase of life. That makes it convenient, and also more consistent with the current society.

CATEGORY 4

Persons in this category are slow thinkers and find it difficult to understand things. It is very difficult for them to understand subtle and abstract concepts, it takes them long to understand a subtle joke, although flimsy jokes are understood well and enjoyed. They are not ambitious, have a low motivation, are the lazy procrastinating types, have fear of taking risks, have a reactive approach to life, and their aim in life seems to be just to somehow survive. Their tastes, behaviour, inclinations and attractions reflect *tamas* predominance.

This type of persons are expected to perform rather gross actions – in other words, manual rather than mental work, because this is what suits them. Work done by these persons generally supports the work of other categories of people. Their actions are more 'other-directed' than self-directed. Being employed under somebody else for jobs involving repetitive work, or a profession which requires skilled limbs is suitable for them. People with blue-collar jobs, artisans, craftsmen, drivers, plumbers, key makers, labourers, sweepers, cleaners butchers, etc. come under this category.

All the components of basic dharma apply to this set of people, but the level could be different. For example, the definition of saucham (cleanliness) is quite relaxed for a person engaged in the sweeper's profession as compared to an artist engaged in sculpting. Or, the definition of ahimsa will be different for a butcher as compared to that for a farm labourer. Similarly, tapas for them is more at the physical level rather than the mental level.

Their religious life is guided by prayers to the almighty for keeping them on the right track and for meeting their survival needs. Only occasional attendance in religious discourses is considered enough for them. Their food, lifestyle and other occupations of life are governed by their profession. They don't have to get up early in the morning for religious rituals, and they do not have difficult religious or social duties except on special occasions.

All the traditional dharma shastras give a lot of leeway in deciding the punishment for a crime committed by this class of people. They get the least punishment for the same crime as compared to other categories of people. The reason is that their ability and/or inclination to grasp the subtle nuances of dharma is considered to be poorer than in the other categories.

We have so far seen the general Dharma guidelines applicable to this category of people. Now we shall see the guidelines particularly applicable to them at different stages of life.

Dharma till marriage

We shall first discuss the guidelines as given in the ancient texts, some of which may naturally seem archaic, unrealistic or irrelevant. Then we shall see how the guidelines may still be used in today's context by getting into their underlying spirit instead of concentrating on the words.

Traditional view

Category 4 (tamas dominant) people, till marriage, were supposed to concentrate on learning and getting skilled in their vocation / trade. Those children who showed the psychological traits of this category were preferably put in vocational courses rather than academic courses. The parents used to be the teachers in many such cases. Apart from this, it was a must for a child to learn about the right conduct and values from the parents. The child was encouraged to give guru-dakshina to the teacher before marriage. Service to the teacher was also enjoined. Girls were encouraged to stay at home and learn life skills and other skills at home, but there were enough exceptions to this practice.

In the Present Context

Going to school, learning values, safety and civil rules to conduct one's life, learning vocational subjects after the age of 14 or 16 years, avoiding wasteful expenditure of parents' money; learning to respect teachers, parents, guests and people around: this should be the agenda before marriage. Further, in today's context, it is important for the person not to get involved in a relationship with opposite sex till one is ready for marriage. According to the traditional view, even a live-in relationship or relationship between mutually consenting adults is a marriage. The current local laws vary from place to place. Preferably, wherever possible, the person should repay the expenses on his or her studies to the parents before getting married.

Dharma after marriage till retirement

Traditional view

After marriage, they pursued their vocation with full dedication till the age of 50. They had to take care of their families, having children and bringing up the children as per their psychological temperament, and contributing to the society through their vocation / trade. It is pertinent to discuss at this point that polygamy was an accepted norm in the Vedic Dharma for all categories of people. I guess, it is in keeping with the biological make up human beings. Even polyandry was accepted in the society, Draupadi being a well known example. But it was not done in any insidious way; there were rules governing more than one marriage. It was only after we got independence in 1947 that the Hindu Marriages Act was instituted, making it illegal for a Hindu to have more than one spouse.

In the Present Context

One has to learn to balance the various demands of different people within and outside the family. On one hand, one has to deal with one's immediate family of spouse and children, on the other hand there are pressures from parents and in-laws, even if they are staying away in a different location. There is very little left for contributing to the society after spending on necessities, luxuries and celebrations (anniversaries, birthdays, ceremonies, marriages, festivals, vacation trips, etc.). Living in a consumerist society, one is oriented to think only about one's needs and hardly anything is left for charity. Giving money to one's servant is not charity; it is an investment.

Then, in spite of a busy schedule, one has to find time for reading scriptural texts and stories; attend discourses; follow the yamas and niyamas and prayers; looking after the welfare of one's children with special attention to their inner growth and maturity – this has gained more importance because the gurukul type institutions hardly exist. They have been replaced by hostels, which function as hotels rather than train the child to get prepared to live a difficult or frugal life. Helping people (relatives, friends, neighbours, community) at the time of need and occasions of socialization; following the prescribed duties towards state or the country one lives in (assuming that they do not violate the basic dharma – well being of maximum people for the maximum length of time); strengthening the useful social institutions and avoiding the wasteful social institutions using one's influence. One is not expected to live just the 'I, me, mine' type of life. There are enough social and political obligations which one needs to fulfill.

Dharma after retirement

Traditional view

Listening to discourses of saintly people, reading puranic stories, reciting the Lord's name, etc. became part of their dharma after 50 years of age. During this phase of life, gradual withdrawal from the profession / vocation / trade and spending more time on reflecting on religious stories, or recitation of the Lord's names was recommended. Less resources in terms of time, effort and money were spent on enjoyment and pleasure seeking, and more on spiritual growth than in the previous phase of life. Even the concept of socializing gradually changed for them. The preference was for socializing with like-minded individuals who were treading the path of spiritual growth. One had to learn to pass on the baton to the next generation instead of interfering with their affairs unless asked for. For this, they had to move away from the home to somewhat secluded places.

In the Present Context

There is hardly any concept of joint families in the Dharma Shastra where more than two generations live simultaneously at home. By the time younger generation returns home from the gurukulam, the first generation is preparing to leave home with a brief overlapping phase for both the generations to handle the transition. So, there were no ‘in-law’ problems. Even in today’s times, if one can afford, after the age of 50, one should start preparing to live in another town or in another house, or at least on a different floor of the same house with one’s spouse. One may eat with the

family occasionally or simply carry one’s food from the common family kitchen if one does not want to maintain a full-fledged kitchen. But there should be no demand on the family members with respect to food, and no interference in their day to day matters. If the dietary supplements are required, one may buy them oneself – anyway, the wealth has not yet been distributed among the children.

By the age of 60, this move should be complete. On one hand, it is the duty of the children to treat the parents as ‘Devas’ (celestial beings); on the other hand it is the duty of aging parents not to give unasked for advice to their children, and not to interfere with their lives. They have to learn to be emotionally independent even if there is physical dependence. “Nobody asks me anything, they do what they want” syndrome should be overcome voluntarily and consciously. If one feels insecure, one need not give away all the property to one’s children while living. But, then, one should not demand too much from the children – even they have their children to take care of.

If one cannot distribute one’s assets by this time, at least one should be willing to write a Will assigning the possessions among the successors along with their responsibilities. But so far as withdrawal from the day to day affairs of the next generation and not imposing one’s advice unless asked for are concerned, there is no room for compromise.

If the financial health of the elderly couple is poor, one may opt to live in some charitable old age home. Or, if even that is not possible, one should be away from home during daytime and come back only for meals and sleep. One may like to engage in some fruitful activity, or simply pass time with the peer group. It is always better to move away voluntarily with dignity rather than be forced to do it after a few fights with the children.

With young age being spent living a sedentary life and consuming food laced with pesticides and chemicals, old age these days is bound to require more medical attention than was the norm in ancient times. But, then, these days we have the health insurance eco-system too. One has to manage one’s wealth in such a way that the children are not burdened with expenses on medical treatment.

There should be a conscious shift from a pleasure-seeking life to a spiritually-uplifting life. One cannot give up young age duties and, yet, continue seeking young age pleasures. Old age is the age for contributing more to the society (and less to the family) through one’s wisdom and influence.

(To be continued)

Cinema... Cinema

REENA SEN

I love watching movies - almost all the various genres except the gory ones. Guess it is the impact of being born under the effect of planet Venus as a taurean.

I have often wondered as to what makes me love watching these movies when I know it's an illusion. I wonder why it is that I can experience tears of joy and pain, the deep pleasure and disappointments of the characters that I watch on the screen in the darkness of the theatres. It's even more embarrassing when I am the person who sportingly pokes fun at my mother over her deep and utter involvement with the characters of the TV serials she watches so diligently!

Over a period of time I have discovered a few home truths about my movie watching. At least they are the reasons I give myself for unashamedly watching as many movies as possible without having to trouble my conscience much about the money and time I am spending on them.

I have an innate curiosity to know and experience different thoughts, different lifestyles, different individuals in different situations – all of which is most certainly not a real-time or real life possibility in one lifetime.

I wonder how Mukesh Ambani feels on being one of the world's richest men and also how the man sleeping on the divider of the highway feels about the moments that life has given him. My mind tries to figure out with equal passion as to what feelings a figure skater might be having when doing all those beautiful moves with élan as also the psyche of an old lady when she is haggling while buying vegetables from the vendor. I suppose this desire to live and experience different lives and different situations is the biggest reason for my fascination with movies.

For me, movies are like buddies who can cheer me up no matter what might be happening in my life. The drama on the screen unerringly has a message waiting to be picked up. When I look back I find that on a number of occasions I have been drawn towards movies which have catered to some emotional or spiritual need of mine at that point of time.

The book 'Illusions' by Richard Bach made me think about this fascination of mine. I realised that at any given point in time I have the freedom to choose the movie I shall be watching. It has a parallel in my real life too. Most of the time the universe provides us with the freedom to choose what we want to experience and the sort of people we want to associate with in our life. But seldom do we realise the power of choice and freedom we have been gifted by the universe. The type of story I prefer to watch shows the type of thinking that I have or the extent to which I am prepared to expand my thinking and living. It's a parameter of where I am and where I am aspiring to go in life.

Editor's comment:

The above article, from a collection titled 'Musings' by Reena Sen brings out in a light-hearted manner the stupidity of man, the species that is proud of its being the most intelligent animal on earth. He gets emotionally involved in illusions as if they are real, and ignores the real opportunities he has for living a meaningful life.

hundred years ago

Man and Tree: One Consciousness, Two Expressions*

The collection Prayers and Meditations consists of extracts from the Mother's spiritual diaries. Most of them are from the period 1912 to 1917



A deep concentration seized on me, and I perceived that I was identifying myself with a single cherry-blossom, then through it with all cherry-blossoms, and, as I descended deeper in the consciousness, following a stream of bluish force, I became suddenly the cherry-tree itself, stretching towards the sky like so many arms its innumerable branches laden with their sacrifice of flowers. Then I heard distinctly this sentence: "Thus hast thou made thyself one with the soul of the cherry-trees and so thou canst take note that it is the Divine who makes the offering to this flower-prayer to heaven."

When I had written it, all was effaced; but now the blood of the cherry-tree flows in my veins and with it flows the incomparable peace and force. What difference is there between the human body and the body of a tree? In truth, there is none: the consciousness which animates them is identically the same.

Then the cherry-tree whispered in my ear:

"It is in the cherry-blossom that lies the remedy for the disorders of the spring."

THE MOTHER (In *Prayers and Meditations*, prayer dated 7 April, 1917)

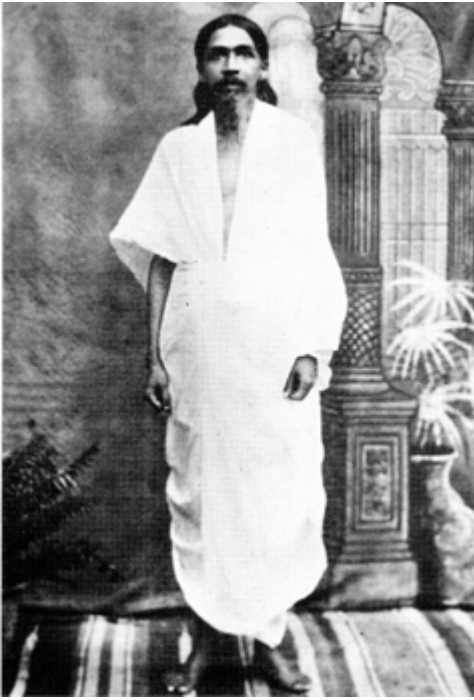
**Title given by the editor*

Editor's comment: The last sentence of the above prayer gives a clue to the manner in which Ayurvedic knowledge was revealed to rishis.

The Synthesis of Yoga

THE LADDER OF SELF-TRANSCENDENCE

The transcendence of this lower triple being and this lower triple world, described by the Vedic seers as a breaking beyond the two firmaments of heaven and earth, opens out a field of being to which the normal existence of man even in its highest and widest flights is still a stranger and to that therefore it is difficult for him to rise. There is a hard separation in practice between the lower hemisphere of mind-life-body and the upper hemisphere of the spirit. The higher hemisphere is the perfect and eternal reign of the Spirit; there it manifests its infinities, deploys the glories of its illimitable being, illimitable consciousness and knowledge, illimitable force and power, illimitable delight. The lower hemisphere belongs equally to the Spirit, but here it is veiled, closely, thickly by its inferior self-expression of limiting mind, confined life and dividing body. To understand how to transcend, we must know the practical relations between the two hemispheres.



The spirit poised in matter is absorbed in the experience of matter; the individual soul here is the physical soul, *annamayapurusha*. This soul lives in a physical body and takes normally the experiences of its physical organs, senses, materialised life and mind and limited spiritual experience as the whole truth of existence. His natural highest conception of himself is a vaguely conceived soul or spirit manifested only in his physical life's experiences, bound to that and on its dissolution returning to the Infinite.

Poised in the principle of Life, the Spirit becomes a Life-soul: absorbed in the experiences of the power and play of a conscious Life and dominated by the desire activity and passion of the *rajasic* principle power to the vital being, *pranamayapurusha*. The vital substance is much subtler than matter, more plastic, more full of conscious energy. As this soul manifests more in a man, he becomes charged with strong emotions and desire; larger powers are available, but also a larger and stronger ego. The vital soul can rise to a spiritual realisation which is less

quietistic, more dynamic. But to develop the spirit fully it must turn away from life towards the Silence or the Beyond.

Poised in the principle of mind, the Spirit becomes mental self of a mental world dwelling in the reign of a luminous mental Nature whose laws are those of the intellectual, psychic and higher emotional being dominated by the clarity and happiness of the *sattwic* principle proper to the mental soul, *manomayapurusha*. The more this soul influences a man, the closer he is to the characteristic of humanity. Man can live in this soul and on this plane, where he is united with other beings in sympathy, with purer senses and the reflection of a higher knowledge and joy. But spiritual realisation here is limited by mind. For the mental being to perfect itself it must rise into the pure spirit.

Beyond the mental soul is the knowledge-soul or gnosis, *vijnanamayapurusha*, by putting on the nature of its infinite truth of being, by living in the knowledge-sheath of the casual body as well as in the subtle mental and the grosser vital and physical bodies that man could draw down entirely into his terrestrial existence the fullness of the infinite spiritual consciousness or raise his total being into the spiritual realm. But this causal body is not naturally developed in man. This supramental nature is lodged in all existence, but obscured, distorted or minimised by the lower hemisphere.

Beyond the gnosis is a soul of bliss, *anandamayapurusha*. The nature of these higher states of the soul and worlds of spiritual Nature are necessarily difficult to seize and even the Upanishads and the Veda only shadow them out by figures, hints and symbols. Yet it is necessary to attempt some account of their principles and practical effect so far as they can be seized by the mental being standing on the border of the two hemispheres, because the passage beyond the border is indicated to us as the completeness of the Yoga of self-transcendence by self-knowledge. The soul that aspires to perfection, ascends says the Upanishad, from the physical Purusha into the vital, from the vital into the mental, from the mental into the knowledge-self, from the knowledge-self into the bliss-self; this bliss-self is the foundation of the perfect Sachchidananda and to pass into it completes the ascension.

SRI AUROBINDO (In the *Arya*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 15 Aug 1917)

twenty five years ago

The Secret of True Happiness

SURENDRA NATH JAUHAR

A devoted band of *sadhus* lived in a *math* and led a carefree life of great happiness. They owned a sizable herd of cows and derived not only inner satisfaction by *gau-sewa* but also enjoyed everyday sumptuous feasts of milk, butter, *kheer* and other dainties.

An even tenor of luxury and plenty such as this could not go on unchallenged for long. It became an eye-sore to a jealous neighbour whose sense of equality was wounded to see that the life of these *sadhus* should never be visited by adversity common to the human lot. Driven by sheer ill-will and malice he contrived to give to the *sadhus* what in his judgement they deserved but which a too kind and favouring fate had spared them so far – a taste of want and worry. And so one night he managed to get the *sadhus*' entire live-stock stolen, and chuckled at the prospect of marring their happiness and seeing them miserable.

His obsessed mind was greatly relieved. The next day he hastened triumphantly to the scene of his manipulated interest hoping to find the victims of his trick smarting with grief and torment at the privation that had come upon them. But to his utter discomfiture and despair, when he did reach the *math*, he found the *sadhus* in their usual gay and happy mood. He even heard them remarking to each other, "Thank God, we will no longer have to spend our precious time in the long daily toil and botheration of looking after the cows, arranging for their food, washing their stable, removing the cow dung, milking them, attending on the sick ones and all that. These cows had seriously taxed our time. Now we will be able to devote all such time to *bhakti*, *japa* and meditation."

Instead of making him repent, his folly only further accentuated his jealousy, anger and desire for molesting the *sadhus*. He thought that under the circumstances the easiest way to make the *sadhus* unhappy would be to reimpose on them all the drudgery and headache of serving the cows. So he stealthily brought the stolen cows back to the *math* that very night.

Next morning, he was again at the *math*, dead sure that the *sadhus* would feel extremely exasperated at the return of the cows and the life of burden and boredom entailed by them. But he was once again disillusioned for he saw the *sadhus* laughing, and bright as ever. His annoyance and bitterness left him cold and confounded when he heard some of the *sadhus* airing their reactions like this, "It is so good to have the cows back. To say nothing of the stream of the milk flowing once again, giving us nourishment and pleasure, they have restored to the deserted place the charm and zest of a busy life and reoffered to us the opportunity of serving *gau-mata*, and of entertaining visitors to nice treats."

A new vision of life, the true secret of happiness, now dawned upon him. It is not material conditions and outer circumstances that make a man really happy. It is by attaining an inner poise which nothing can shake or disturb that one can become the master of his destiny. To these *sadhus*, plenty and privation were equal. They had risen above the dualities and the source of their never failing happiness was elsewhere: they drew upon the perennial richness of the soul's *Ananda*.

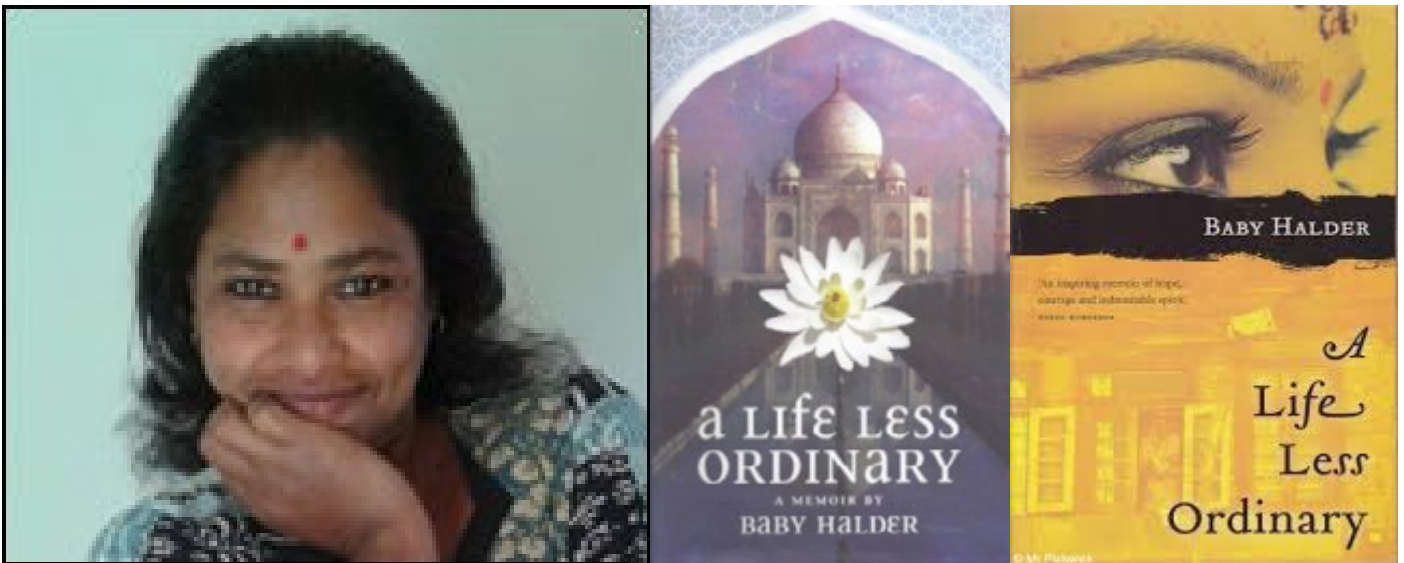
Smitten with remorse at his meanness and realizing the status attained by the *sadhus* he fell prostrate at their feet with tears in his eyes which washed away the dirt and duality from his heart and mind.

Reproduced from *The Call Beyond*, Vol. 17, No. 1, 1992, p. 46

August 13 is the birthday of Shri Surendra Nath Jauhar (Chacha ji), the founder of Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch.

inspiration

Bad Beginning, Bitter Middle, Beautiful Ending



Imagine a girl of four, abandoned by her mother because the father is abusive. The abusive father ‘rescues’ her but she gets in the bargain also a step mother. She is married off at 12 to end up with an abusive husband. She finally escapes with her three children to work as a domestic help for abusive employers. Then comes some light at the end of the long tunnel. Her last employer, Professor Prabodh Kumar, comes as more than a breath of fresh air in her sordid life. He is none other than the grandson of the great writer, Munshi Premchand, and himself a writer. One day he finds his domestic help trying to read some book while dusting the bookshelf. He encourages her to read, and later gifts her a diary and a pen, and encourages her to write the story of her life. She writes it in her mother tongue, Bangla. He edits it, translates it into Hindi, and manages to get it published by a small Kolkata-based publisher, Roshani Publishers, in 2002. At age 29, Baby Halder (or Haldar) is a writer. The book turns out to be a best-seller, and by 2017 has been translated into 25 languages, more than half of the translations being in foreign languages. It was a long journey from being abandoned to getting ‘adopted’ by a kind man. But all that ends well is not well. One wonders how many children are missing out on childhood, living a life worse than hell, getting no chance to realize their potential, and dying without ever meeting a good Samaritan.

This issue carries an article on the guidelines of conduct for those who by temperament are suited primarily for manual jobs (page 4). There is nothing wrong with manual jobs, so long as the person and the job are well-matched. How about those who are forced into manual jobs and worse, but are hiding the abilities for intellectual work? Was Baby Halder simply lucky, or did destiny bring her in contact with Prabodh Kumar when she had exhausted enough of her karmic debt? Perhaps these questions serve to merely mask the injustice that will continue to plague human societies till there is a perceptible upward shift in the level of the average human consciousness. Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have given the assurance that this fundamental remedy will materialize on the planet Earth in the near future.

(Based primarily on: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baby_Halder)

The Guru

GITI TYAGI

*In darkness lost, by ignorance blinded,
Life's wiggly journey squiggles away,
Clutched and clasped by vicious brawn,
Demonic devilish iniquity prevails,
Bewildered, perplexed, the distracted soul,
Amidst the evil, survives a being!*

*Whence the path with darkness veiled,
All hopes, all courage, all recourse failed,
The dissolute earthling in pleasures indulged,
The distressed psyche, the mortal degenerates,
In the awry course of eventful life,
Obscured and vague, the soul seems lost!*

*Thence emerges a ray of light,
A sudden bliss, a gleaming hope,
A shimmering candle, an aura holds,
Right through the darkness steers,
A light so dim, yet so bright,
A glint of hope, all eyes stuck wide!*

*When all seems lost, life gone haywire,
A mentor, a guide puts back on track,
As a mother to a child, with open arms,
Despite the flaws, embosoms all,
'The Guru', the messenger of God irrefutably is,
A modest, a humble self-effacing 'Divine'!*

*Sheds off the darkness, the ignorance dissipates,
Dispels all fears, all distress evanesces,
'The Guru', 'The Divine', when embraces the learner,
The guidance, the compassion, a path new opens,
The soul, the psyche, the being enlightens,
The Guru's blessings illumine all!*



To gossip about what somebody is doing or not doing is wrong. To listen to such gossip is wrong. To verify if such gossip is true is wrong. To retaliate in words against a false gossip is wrong. The whole affair is a very bad way of wasting one's time and lowering one's consciousness.

- THE MOTHER

tip of the month

This column shall carry advice, practices or exercises which can make it a little easier for the spiritual seeker to walk on the path of spiritual progress. Contributions from the readers are welcome, and may be printed at the editor's discretion after editorial revision.

A Sample Meditation

Preparation

Sit in a relatively silent place with subdued lighting, which is neither too hot nor too cold, on a seat that is neither too soft nor too hard, in a stable and comfortable posture. Keep the back and the neck erect but relaxed. Close your eyes. You may have sweet, soothing instrumental music at low volume in the background.*

Breathe slowly and consciously, about 5 times a minute.

If you hear any sounds, ignore them. If you get any thoughts, ignore them. Right now, nothing is important. Everything can wait.

Thoughts come dressed up in words. Engaging with these words would be talking to yourself. How does talking to yourself help? Stop talking to yourself.

Chant your mantra silently, and synchronize it with breathing. If it is a one-word mantra, chant it while breathing out. If it has more words than one, break it into two parts. Chant the first part while breathing in, and the second part while breathing out. Slow breathing, and slow chanting.

Meditation

As you breathe in, feel a wave rise up your spine. As it reaches the head, the wave opens up into a sort of funnel. As you breathe out, feel the energy of the Divine enter the funnel and go down the spine. As the wave goes down the spine, feel the divine energy radiating out of the spine to enter every nook and corner of your body, creating a sweet soothing resonance throughout the body. Continue with slow breathing, slow chanting, and this visualization which fills your body with potent, protective, healing and reassuring divine energy which brings immense joy, total health and perfect peace to every cell of your body.

With each exhalation feel the Love and Light of the Divine flooding your body. The flood is so overwhelming that it does not stay confined to your body. Visualize The Love and Light radiating from your body to your surroundings. Visualize it spreading further, and further, and further.... You are now floating in an ocean of Love and Bliss.

Send your love to all the plants, animals, and human beings. ...

Send your love to all those who are suffering due to natural disasters such as floods and earthquakes. ...

Send your love to all those who are suffering due to man-made calamities such as wars and terrorism. ...

Send your love also to those who are responsible for these man-made calamities. ...

Send your love to all the people you know and like. Think of them one by one and send them your love. ...

Send your love to all the people you know but do not like. Think of them one by one and send them your love. ...

Send your love to all the people whom you have hurt intentionally or unintentionally. Think of them one by one and apologize to them. ...

Send your love to all the people who have hurt you. Think of them one by one and forgive them. ...

Think of the one person who hurt you the most by what he or she did or said. Imagine that this person has just walked in. Look at this person with love, and forgive him or her. This person is astonished with your behavior. Offer this person a flower, and experience the wave of joy and peace enveloping you both.

Resolve to keep this feeling of love, joy and peace within and around you all the time.

Return to slow chanting, synchronized with breathing.

Coming out of the meditation

Rub your palms.

Place the cupped palms in front of the closed eyes. Don't touch the eyes – just keep the cupped palms near the eyes without touching them.

Experience the eyes relaxing in warmth and total darkness.

Bring your hands down slowly along the body.

Return to the meditative posture.

Open your eyes with a few blinks.

Enjoy the feeling of love, joy and peace.

Look around.

Return slowly to ordinary activity.

*Sweet soothing Mother's music is available for free download for personal use from <http://www.sriarobindoashram.org/music/index.php>

kidspeak

Great Expectations

A nine-year old boy, Samyak (son of a college teacher, Dr. Dhani Ram), recently asked me, “Can yoga give us the power to stop wars?”

The answer: “Yes, if many of us practice yoga. All wars start in the minds of people. Yoga changes the way we think. If a very large number of people in the world practice yoga, their thinking would change in such a way that they would not want a war. If a very large number of people do not want a war, there will be no wars anymore”

Editorial comment: Yoga is about raising the consciousness, which in turn changes human nature. If human nature changes on a sufficiently large scale, the affairs of the world will be conducted differently. One of the differences would be that wars would become a thing of the past.

appreciations

Feedback on the story, ‘The Pain That Woke Up Kavita’

‘The Pain That Woke Up Kavita’ is a children’s story on dental health by Dr. Ramesh Bijlani. It was sent to the parents of children studying in Pre-school to Class V of The Mother’s International School. Any reader interested in getting the story may send an e-mail to callbeyond@aurobindoonline.in



The story is indeed a reminder for us as parents to initiate the habit of good dental hygiene in our children. Though I do not practice this habit now, but, this small story reminded me of my grandfather telling us the same thing: “Rinse the mouth after eating anything”.

Thanks for sharing the beautiful story. Eagerly waiting for the others in the series.

Regards

Henna Das Gupta

(in an e-mail dated 18 July 2017)

Thank you for the beautiful story with a strong message. Japji enjoyed it and is brushing teeth regularly.

Regards,

Sarabjit Kaur

(in an e-mail dated 15 July 2017)

Very well written and nice presentation. Waiting for more stories...

Regards

Dr. Leena Pandit

(in an e-mail dated 20 July 2017)

Feedback from Visitors from Japan



Dear Dr Bijlani,

Greetings from Tokyo !

Thank you very much for your time and impressive talk to the group members.

Mr Tahara and all members were very happy to meet you and appreciated your hospitality on such a short notice.

Looking forward to meet again.

With kind regards,

Markus

(in an e-mail dated 24 July 2017)

Feedback from Sponsors



Dear Tara Didi and the team of Delhi Ashram,

I thank you very much for sending us the report and I see how it is important to encourage and to continue to support the children. My husband and me are enthusiastic about participating in this great human and divine adventure.

We came back to our country, Belgium, in May. I think of the short time that I came to the Ashram, and that makes me happy; the flowers and all the nice people that I met there in the heart of Delhi. Thank you, from the depths of my heart.

With Love,

Gwendoline

(in an e-mail dated 1 August 2017)

Dear Sabita,

Thank you for the report. God bless all of you for being such wonderful helpers of God! I loved reading the whole report.

Many thanks and warm regards,

Jaleh

(in an e-mail dated 2 August 2017)

The only way to make sure you never outlive all the people you love is to find new people to love.
- BERNIE SIEGEL

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