

The Call Beyond

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*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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Mind Matters

‘What is mind? Doesn’t matter. What is matter? Never mind!’ says a good old one-liner. Good humour, pretty smart too, but the wisecrack lacks wisdom. The mind does matter, and matter deserves application of mind. Starting with the latter, the Mother said that she was a thorough materialist. She saw (not just knew) the Divine in matter. That is why She told us to take good care of material objects, and to keep our surroundings clean and aesthetically pleasant and beautiful. Coming to the former, mind matters so much that it can override the effect of adverse physical factors on physical health. Here is a real study that I must have narrated a zillion times in my talks. The study was on atherosclerosis (deposition of fatty deposits in arteries, which leads to heart disease, stroke, etc.), and was done on rabbits. The rabbits were divided into two groups. One group (experimental) was given a high-fat high-cholesterol diet, while the other group (control) received what rabbits normally eat: fruits and vegetables. At the end of the experimental period, as expected, the control group stayed healthy. But, surprisingly, even in the experimental group, some rabbits got atherosclerosis while others escaped. The results in the experimental group were found to be related to the position of the cage in which the rabbit had been kept. In the animal house, the rabbit cages were placed on shelves. The rabbits in the top cages got atherosclerosis, while those in the cages not so high escaped the disease. What could the position of the cage have to do with the results? The puzzle was solved when it was discovered that the technician who came to feed the rabbits was not very tall. When she went to feed the rabbits in the lower cages, she took the rabbit out of the cage, cuddled and fondled it, kept it back in the cage, and then served it food. When it came to the cages at the top, she could barely reach the cage, and therefore she just opened the cage, threw the food in, and shut the cage.

Thus, the rabbits who got a daily dose of love and affection could overcome the effects of a high-fat high-cholesterol diet. Mind does matter, QED. That is why The Mother’s Integral Health Centre at Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch has decided to focus on the mind during the year 2017. The centre will try in ways more than one to prompt as many as possible to rid their minds of clutter, errors, negativities and impurities; in short the centre is launching a clean mind campaign. Let us wish and pray that, with the Mother’s Grace, the centre succeeds in promoting swachh minds in swachh bharat.



Wish you all a new year full of love, peace, joy and fulfillment!

readers write

Dear Taradidi and Call Beyond Staff,

I am very happy to receive The Call Beyond on a monthly basis. Thank you for this work and sharing.

With love and appreciation,

Jaya

(Jaya Jorel Berggreen-Clausen)

Auroville

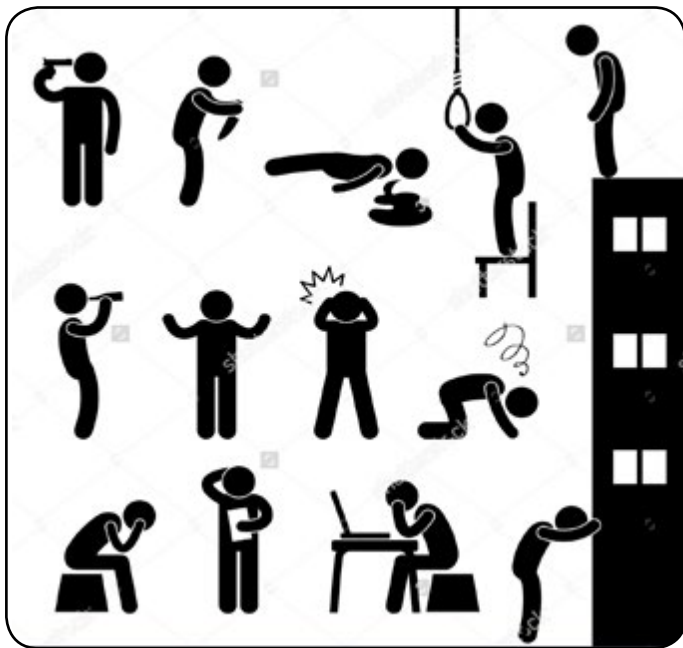
(in an e-mail dated 20 Dec 2016)

Suicide Among the Young

Archana Ramnathan

Suicide.

The word caught your attention, didn't it? The truth is, suicide catches everyone's attention. It's the actions leading up to suicide that go unnoticed.



Suicide at any age is alarming, but in the young even more tragic. A news item in the Indian Express of 10 February 2016 says that two in every five suicides are of people under 30. Some of the explanations are that adolescence and transition to adulthood can be a very challenging phase of development where a young person is struggling to form his/her identity, and also building relationships with people and the environment around. This is also the age where the onset of mental health issues is seen. This increased vulnerability to conflict, confusion and stress can make a young person susceptible to suicide if adequate coping methods and resources have neither been developed nor are they available.

Triggers and Risk Factors

Some of the problems that may not seem like a crisis to adults, may be a source of immense distress to a young person. It becomes important to recognize that a crisis – whether real or perceived – could contribute to suicide. While suicidal risk factors vary with age, gender, family dynamics, and stressful life events, some of the factors that cause suicidal distress are mentioned below.

Psychological: A sense of hopelessness, lack of belonging and sense of burdensomeness,

impulsiveness, aggressiveness or being withdrawn.

Psychosocial: Life events that involve a sense of shame, humiliation, loss or defeat. Some examples may be interpersonal conflicts/losses, disciplinary problems, family violence, physical and sexual abuse, bullying.

Mental Health Issues: History of depression or other mental health issues, family history of suicide, suicidal ideations or previous attempts, increased substance or alcohol abuse.

These triggers in association with acute distress and access to lethal means can lead to suicidal behavior.

Prevention

For prevention of suicides among the young, the role of caring adults, particularly parents and teachers, is crucial. A very common myth that exists is that talking about suicide is likely to induce ideas of killing oneself. On the contrary, talking about it in an open, empathic and non-judgmental way can help someone express their thoughts and feelings, and seek help. Identifying the warning signs that suggest that a person is thinking about suicide or struggling with thoughts of suicide, and taking some action in response to such signs can go a long way in preventing suicides.

Warning signs

- Thinking or talking about death, dying or suicide, be it seriously or in jest
- Feelings of purposelessness, hopelessness, sense of being trapped or being burdensome, behaving as if problems are beyond solution, or believing that things will never get better
 - Feelings of worthlessness, shame, overwhelming guilt or believing that the world will be a better place without him/her
 - Withdrawing from friends, family and activities that one would normally engage in
 - Unusual changes in mood, anger or recklessness, seeking revenge or engaging readily in risky activities
 - Increased substance (alcohol or drug) use
 - Changes in eating/sleep patterns: inability to sleep or sleeping all the time, loss of appetite or overeating

It is important for adults in close touch with the young person to keep communication channels open, and be willing to seek professional help, if necessary. Schools and colleges should run awareness programs, create an environment of openness for counseling, and provide access to helplines for distress.

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Please see also the other two related articles, 'Walking Out Wilfully', and 'What we can learn from Jiah Khan' in this issue

Know for certain that to commit suicide is the most foolish action that a man can do; because the end of the body does not mean the end of the consciousness and what was troubling you while you were alive continues to trouble you when you are dead, without the possibility of diverting your mind which you can get when you are alive.

THE MOTHER

Walking Out Willfully

Life is difficult, it seems unfair, but it can be beautiful. Yet, so many young people, who have not yet seen much of life find it so intolerable that they come to the conclusion that life is not worth living. About 50,000 persons below age 30 commit suicide every year in India; in fact, suicide is the topmost cause of death in young people in the age group of 15 to 30 according to the cause of death statistics from 2010-2013. Interestingly, these statistics are from the National Crime Records Bureau, which makes it look as if suicide is a crime. Instead, let us analyze why young people, who should be full of dreams and also the confidence that they will be able to realize their dreams, give up so early in life and decide to walk out of life.

Triggers

What precipitates suicide is great emotional pain that diminishes the person's sense of self worth. The sense of **self-worth** may be **diminished** by any significant **loss or failure**, be it a financial loss, failure in business, passing an exam, losing a loved one, or the end of an important relationship loss such as break-up with the girlfriend or boyfriend, or in general, failure to achieve a goal that the person considered very important, a goal without achieving which the person considers life to be not worth living. Self worth is also felt to be diminished when there is a loss of face, or in a situation where the person feels ridiculed or humiliated. Bullying, which to an adult may appear not worth the bother, may bother a young person so much as to drive him to suicide. Having a sexual orientation that is looked down upon or is unacceptable to the parents and the society can also lead to a drastic loss of self-worth.

Suicide may also be triggered when the person feels **trapped and helpless** and is unable to deal with the situation. A few examples of such situations are physical or sexual abuse, or being forced to be party to a crime, or being lured into procuring and consuming drugs. The physical and emotional torture might be tolerated for a long time, but one day the person feels enough is enough. The result could be **intense self-hatred or anger** against others which results in suicide. The person looks upon suicide as the only way out and also the only way he can teach the perpetrator of the torture a lesson; he does not look upon suicide as an act of self-destruction.

Young people are particularly vulnerable to loss of self-worth because their sense of themselves is still taking shape, is still fragile, and therefore they are often doubting their own selves. In a world full of competition and high expectations from family, school, college, and their own expectations and societal pressure, it is difficult for them to accept their selves with their own limitations. This leads to frustration, helplessness, and depression.

Suicide may be triggered by reading or hearing an account of suicide or knowing a peer who committed suicide. Correspondingly, suicide may be prevented by reading or listening to an inspiring story where a person bounced back after being down in the dumps.

Causes

While the young are more vulnerable to loss of self-worth and a feelings of helplessness and hopelessness, these feelings might develop over a considerable period of time before the person actually commits suicide. Therefore, it is important to understand the causes that lead to the loss of self-worth and a feeling of helplessness. A basic cause is that young people are not helped by parents, our educational system, and the society to develop a rounded personality with good coping skills. Good coping skill would mean that the person is aware of his own strengths and weaknesses, and feels positive about himself. He can therefore deal with problems and difficult situations without cracking up. He has trust in people around him such as parents and other adults, the peer group and friends. He shares his problems with them readily, and seeks help if necessary rather than isolate himself. What is most important is that the adults whom the young person confides in should listen patiently, try sincerely to understand the young person by going down to the level of the person that age, and be non-judgmental in their approach.

Prevention

Prevention of suicide cannot be only an intervention in the crisis situation. Prevention has to begin well before the crisis, that is, in childhood. The attitude and behaviour of parents and teachers should be such that the feelings that lead to suicides are unlikely to develop, and if they do, the teenager seeks help. A few tips, especially relevant for parents, follow.

- It is incumbent on all those who are dealing with children to focus not only on achievements but also on the emotional well being of the child from the early years.
- Be proud and accepting of your child for what he is.
- Be in touch with him and his feelings supportively, and help him to cope with his problems big and small.
- Allow him to voice his feelings and opinions, respect them and encourage him to make decisions.
- Do not overprotect or pamper the child.
- He needs to deal with realities of life. Give him responsibilities to handle.
- Do not load him with your expectations based on your own desires. He is a person with his own distinct capabilities and feelings, which should be respected.
- Have open communication with him so that he feels comfortable to share with you whatever is happening in his life, be it a love affair, a break-up, or discovery of homosexual orientation. When parents listen without bias or blame, offer empathy and understanding, and openly communicate with their young adult, they may be preventing a future suicide attempt.
- Ensure that he is managing to make good friends and is with them. This is especially necessary during adolescence.

- In short love him for who he is.
- Earmark sometime in the daily routine when the family sits down together, and any member feels free to share the ups and downs of life.
- Special attention is required if there is a family history of mental disorders, substance abuse, suicide, or violence. Depression is also more likely if the young person has a medical condition such as a chronic disease, chronic pain or terminal illness.
- However, problems happen despite our best efforts. If the child is going through a problem, whether it is depression, excessive anger, not being able to study, the grades falling, or drugs, do not hesitate to take professional help. Do not see the need for professional help as your personal failure. The child has been shaped not just by your efforts, but also by its innate tendencies, the peer group, and the society in general.
- The primary cause for suicide is untreated depression. While the tendency to get depressed may be genetically determined, an episode of depression is precipitated by several negative life experiences which lead to feelings of loss of self-worth or helplessness. Therefore, parents should take serious note of depression developing in the child, and should get it treated professionally, if necessary.
- Parents may benefit from seeking counseling or joining a support group as well. While the causes can be many and varied, timely intervention can help individuals come out of their negative spiraling attitudes and create a renewed association with life.
- Schools should monitor incidences of bullying, academic decline, absenteeism or sudden changes in behaviour. Both the parents and the school should take note of changes in behavior such as withdrawal from family and friends, loss of interest in just about everything, lethargy, being quiet and aloof, changes in sleeping and eating patterns, low mood, decline in academic or other leisure time activities, increased episodes of crying or moodiness. These could be the warning signs of impending depression. Support squads, in the form of student groups and teachers, and counsellors must be accessible to students so that they have a forum to express concerns.
- Schools and parents should also monitor for risk taking sexual behaviors or addictions.
- Regular participation in sports, fostering healthy peer relations, encouragement and enhancement of a person's self-esteem and making the person feel valued are important protective attributes to which schools can make an important contribution.
- If the school learns about the child's parents going through serious disharmony, separation, or divorce, a financial crisis, or any 'unreasonable attitudes' or parenting styles, the school should intervene to minimize the impact of these factors on the child's personality and vulnerability. Any emotionally significant event, such as loss of a parent or sibling, or sometimes even a grandparent, could affect the child so much as to warrant some attention from the school.
- Academic pressures around marks, careers and anxiety require a psycho-spiritual perspective building that needs to start consciously while the child enters middle school and thereafter.

Conclusion

Suicide in children and teenagers often follows life events that may seem minor to an adult. A young person may take very seriously problems such as classmates avoiding him, or the loss of a friendship. In some cases, a child or teen may feel suicidal due to certain life circumstances that he or she may not want to talk about, such as having a psychiatric disorder, loss or conflict with close friends or family members, history of physical or sexual abuse, problems with alcohol or drugs, becoming pregnant, or having a sexually transmitted infection, being the victim of bullying, or being uncertain of sexual orientation.

There is a sizable segment of parents today who have considerable resources, but only one or two children to look after. They make it very easy for the child to get anything that the child wants. But when the child grows up, the world treats him as one in millions, and he has to compete for grades, admission to a particular course or college, a coveted job, or a partner. He does not always succeed in getting everything he wants, and in these situations, his parents may be of no help. Since as a child he never learnt to face failure or accept a no, he is shattered. To teach these things early in life, a few things that may help are to treat cousins and children in the neighbourhood also as family so that even the single child learns to share, struggle, and control his ego; to reject frivolous demands that will make no substantial contribution to the quality of life and explain to the child why the demand is being rejected; to not create the impression that not getting into a particular course will be the end of the world; and to set an example of equanimity in the face of trying circumstances.

The young people who opt to end their lives are the tip of the iceberg; many more under similar circumstances go into a depression, contemplate suicide but do not actually commit it. What helps prevent suicides also helps prevent the misery caused by depression. By identifying early signs of depression and taking appropriate action, much misery and many suicides can therefore be prevented.

(Contributed by our mental health team: Ms. Vatsala Sivasubramanian, Ms. Neha Bhimwal and Dr. Arpita Lal)

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Please see also the other two related articles, 'Suicide Among the Young', and 'What we can learn from Jiah Khan' in this issue

What we are striving towards is completeness and harmony; an imperfection and incapacity or a discord of our nature is that from which inwardly we most suffer.

SRI AUROBINDO (*The Life Divine*, p.973, SABCL edition)

What We Can Learn From Jiah Khan

Shishu



The tragic recent death of the highly talented and accomplished actor Jiah Khan very recently should wake us up to some uncomfortable facts about today's society. She saw herself as a failure. If she was a failure, how many in the world can claim to be successful? She had accomplished in her twenty-five years what many cannot in twenty-five lives. What then, was her point of reference when she saw herself as a failure? The point of reference was the society. Every society has some cherished values and goals, and that influences how we

judge ourselves. The most enlightened societies (India included) during their most glorious phases have valued simple living and high thinking. Based on this dictum their cherished goals have been peace, honesty, freedom of thought, self-reliance, scholarship, and so on, and the ultimate goal has been self-realization. But unfortunately we live in an age that values high living and simple thinking. The prevalent simple thinking is to get as much money as possible any-which-how because money can buy all the good things of life, which in turn will make us happy. Based on this thinking, even the best of our schools prepare a child for making a living, not for life. The upper-middle class that sends its children to these schools has, in general, abundant resources and very few children. Therefore, the life of these parents revolves around these children. Because of their love for their children, and with all good intentions, they not only send their children to the best school possible, they also pressurize the child and the school to make sure that their child is successful in all the board and entrance tests that pave the way to the best-paid jobs. Further, to ensure success, they send their child for tuitions and coaching classes. They also want their child to become an all-rounder, and therefore, for a few years they may also send their child for additional classes in sports, music, dance and painting. The result is that the child is hardly ten but the child and the parents are on a roller coaster every day, the child moving from class to class, and the parents (usually the mother, or the driver) dropping and picking up the child. Under the best of circumstances, the child succeeds in achieving the goals that the parents determined for him, but not without paying a price. The price that he pays is that he develops, what psychologists call an entitlement personality, that is, a firm belief that he is entitled to get from the world whatever he wants. Further, he grows up without learning many indispensable lessons of life.

- He does not learn that effort is not all, and results are unpredictable. He forgets that the starting point of his success was his parentage and the unique gifts and talents with which he was born. The beautiful beginning that his life got was irrespective of his personal effort. What he observes instead is that it is possible to get predictably from his parents whatever he wants without much effort. In exams, he can reasonably predictably get whatever he wants, of course with a lot of effort. At the work place, the relationship between effort and the outcome becomes much less predictable. And, when it comes to life, so many terrific as well as terrible things happen irrespective of, and sometimes even in spite of, personal effort. That happens because superseding all human effort is an unseen hand. Neither school nor home has prepared this rich and successful boy or girl for the uncertainties that plague life.

- He does not learn that success and failure are relative; one might even say they are misnomers. What we get in life are not success and failure, victory and defeat, insult and praise, but just conditions and circumstances for fulfilling the purpose of life, which is spiritual growth, or growth of consciousness. And for fulfilling this purpose, we need both types of events – those that are perceived as good, and those perceived as bad. If everything went well with life, we might get so absorbed in ‘wine, women and music’ that we forget the purpose of life. On the other hand, if all went wrong with life, we might get so depressed as to not even feel like living. Therefore, we need both success and failure. By accepting both success and failure in the right spirit, we can use both as opportunities for spiritual growth. God does not give us everything we want because that would not be good for us. He gives us everything that we need for spiritual growth. Neither school nor home has taught the rich and successful boy or girl to look at success and failure in this dispassionate manner, and to use both for fulfilling the purpose of life.

- He does not learn to see beyond himself. The parents have been so focused on their child, and have taught the child to do the same so effectively that the child forgets that he is part of a larger whole, a fragment of a larger unity. He forgets that he cannot insulate himself so effectively as to be happy when those around him are unhappy. This has at least two ramifications. First, the successful boy behaves as the owner of his wealth, not as its trustee. Secondly, if faced with failure, he cannot see that his problem is very small as compared to the misery that many others are living in. Sharing success, and helping others in need, help most the one who shares and helps. The one who shares and helps forgets his own problems, and grows spiritually through all happenings in life. Neither school nor home has taught the rich and successful boy or girl the paradox that it is in giving that we receive.

- He does not learn that life is precious. Human life on earth is a privilege. This is the only phase in the long journey of the soul during which the individual grows in consciousness. Neither school nor home has taught the rich and successful boy or girl the deeper truths of existence.

Stereotypes are never completely right. I am quite conscious of the many honourable exceptions among the rich and the successful to whom the above generalizations do not apply. But I believe these exceptions exist in spite of the system of education and the social milieu we have in the country today. This article is a tiny effort to facilitate moving towards a society where we do not have repetitions of the Jiah Khan tragedy. The fact that she was not totally Indian makes little difference. In today’s globalized culture, the upper middle-class Indians live more like those in London and Manhattan than in the Bharat that few have the time to think about.

First posted as a blog on 5 June 2013 on www.speakingtree.in

Please see also the other two related articles, ‘Suicide Among the Young’, and ‘Walking Out Willfully’ in this issue

Sometimes a parent’s ignorance, cruelty and lack of understanding can lead a child to suicide.

KHORSHED BHAVNAGRI (*The Laws of the Spirit World*, p. 248)

Aspiration

Shishu

The aspiration need not be in the form of thought – it can be a feeling within that remains even when the mind is attending to the work.

SRI AUROBINDO



An aspiration is for something that we wish to be or want to have. An aspiration, however, is not an ordinary desire. An aspiration is for something so good that wanting it is not only permissible and harmless, but also desirable. Ordinarily, desires are quite rightly considered to be the root cause of misery, as declared by Lord Buddha more than 2,500 years ago. Therefore, desires should be reduced to the minimum. But an aspiration gives us a reason for living. An aspiration gives a purpose to our life. An aspiration leads us towards a better and more meaningful existence. An aspiration is a desirable desire.

An aspiration is not an ambition. An ambition is usually a material goal, e.g. becoming a doctor, or becoming a millionaire. When the ambition is achieved, one has the choice of treating it as the final destination, or as a milestone on the way to another ambition. An aspiration is neither material, nor a station reached in the course of a journey. An aspiration is limited to the direction in which the journey will be performed, the manner in which the journey will be performed, the vehicle in which the journey will be performed, and so on. The journey may have a destination, but that is not the primary concern. An ambition may or may not be fulfilled. But a sincere aspiration is always realized.

What may an aspiration be like? A good example is an aspiration for self-improvement. We may think that we are good. But very few of us can truly say that we cannot become better. Becoming better than we are may look like a very simple aspiration. Yes, it is simple, but it is not easy. Since there is always room for improvement, self-improvement is a life-long journey. After we have become a little better than we are, we find it is possible to become still better, and so on. Thus the process of self-improvement never really comes to an end. Another name for this life-long journey of self-improvement is yoga. The aspiration for self-improvement is not only perfectly compatible with worldly life; it is actually essential for the worldly life to be happy, healthy, and fulfilling. It is not enough to be a doctor or a teacher; one should be a good doctor or a good teacher. A good doctor is a doctor who is also a good person; a good teacher is a teacher who is also a good person. To put it ‘mathematically’,

A good doctor = A doctor + A good person

A good teacher = A teacher + A good person

If the good doctor or the good teacher has an aspiration for self-improvement, she becomes a better person. As the good person turns into a better person, she also becomes a better doctor or a better teacher. Irrespective of the type of work a person is engaged in, it is only the person on a life-long journey of self-improvement who finds peace, joy and fulfillment in life.

Aspiration is one of the three major tools in the integral yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother: the other two are rejection and surrender. According to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, the aspiration should be intense, sincere and perseverant, but not impatient. Calm and steady effort towards the aspiration, and rejection of all that comes in way of the aspiration, is what is required of us. The simplest and safest effort towards the aspiration is the work that is done as an instrument of the Divine and then offered to the Divine. To be rejected are the desires, passions, temptations and attachments that are inevitable in worldly life, but obstruct movement towards the aspiration. Having done our bit, spiritual progress may be left with relief and pleasure to the Divine in a spirit of sweet surrender.

First posted as a blog on 25 October 2012 on www.speakingtree.in

A reader, Shri Ashok Kumar Sethi, had requested for articles on Aspiration, Rejection and Surrender, the three pillars of sadhana in integral yoga. This article is the first in the series. Look out the next two issues of 'The Call Beyond' for articles on Rejection and Surrender.

hundred years ago

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

Top Secret*



I hail Thee, O, Lord, and bow before Thee. But I shall not write, for Thou hast just told me, in reply to a question about the present meditation: "We have had a private conversation which even thy own physical ears should not hear."

THE MOTHER (In *Prayers and Meditations*, prayer dated
12 December, 1916)

*Title given by the editor

The Unequaled Lap*

I hail Thee, O, Lord, and bow before Thee. But I shall not write, for Thou hast just told me, in reply to a question about the present meditation: "We have had a private conversation which even thy own physical ears should not hear."

THE MOTHER (In *Prayers and Meditations*, prayer dated
6 January, 1917)

*Title given by the editor

The Synthesis of Yoga

The Passive And The Active Brahman



The difficulty which the mental being experiences in arriving at an integral realisation of true being and world-being may be met by following one or other of two different lines of his self-development. He may evolve himself from plane to plane of his own being and embrace on each successively his oneness with the world and with Sachchidananda realised as the Purusha and Prakirti, Conscious-Soul and Natural-Soul of that plane, taking into himself the action of the lower grades of being as he ascends. He may, on the other hand, aim straight at the realisation of pure self-existence on the higher plane of mental being and from that secure basis realise spirituality under the conditions of his mentality the process by which the Self-existent becomes all existences, but without that descent into the self-divided egoistic consciousness which is a circumstance of evolution in the Ignorance.

The difficulty is created by the exclusive concentration of the mental being on its plane of pure existence in which consciousness is at rest in passivity and delight of existence at rest in peace of existence. It has to embrace also its plane of conscious force of existence in which consciousness is active as power and will and delight is active as joy of existence. Here the difficulty is that mind is likely to precipitate itself into the consciousness of Force instead of possessing it. The extreme mental state of precipitation into Nature is that of the ordinary man who takes his bodily and vital activity and the mind-movements dependent on them for his whole real existence and regards all passivity of the soul as a departure from existence and an approach towards nullity. He lives in the superficialities of the active Brahman and while to the silent soul exclusively concentrated in the active self all activities are mere name and form, to him they are the only reality and it is the Self that is merely a name. In one the passive Brahman stands aloof from the active and does not share its consciousness; in the other the active Brahman stands aloof from the passive and does not share its consciousness nor wholly possess its own. Each is to the other in these exclusiveness and inertia of status or an inertia of mechanically active non-possession of self if not altogether an unreality. But the sadhaka who has once seen firmly the essence of things and tasted thoroughly the peace of the silent Self, is not likely to be content with any state which involves loss of self-knowledge or a sacrifice of the peace of the soul. He will not precipitate himself back into the mere individual movement of mind and life and body with all its ignorance and straining and disturbance. Whatever new status he may acquire, will only satisfy him if it is founded upon and includes that which he has already found to be indispensable to real self-knowledge, self-delight and self-possession.

Still there is a likelihood of a partial, superficial and temporary relapse into the old mental movement when he attempts himself to ally himself to the activity of the world. To prevent its relapse or to cure it when it arrives, he has to hold fast to the truth of Sachchidananda and extend his realisation to the infinite One into the movement of the infinite multiplicity. He has to concentrate on and realise the one Brahman in all things, not only as containing all in a transcendent consciousness, but as becoming all by a constituting consciousness, this is the next step towards his true possession of existence. In proportion as this realisation is accomplished, the status of consciousness as well as the mental view proper to it will change.

Instead of an immutable Self containing name and form, containing without sharing in them the mutations of Nature, there will be the consciousness of the Self immutable in essence, unalterable in its fundamental poise but constituting and becoming in its experience all these existences which the mind distinguishes as name and form. All formations of mind and body will not be merely figures reflected in the Purusha, but real forms of which Brahman, Self, conscious Being is the substance, as it were, the material of their formation. The name attaching to the form will be not a mere conception of the mind answering to no real existence bearing the name, but there will be behind it a true power of conscious being, a true self-experience of the Brahman answering to something that it contained, potential but unmanifest in its silence. And yet in all its mutations it will be realised as one, free and above them. The realisation of a sole Reality suffering the imposition of names and forms will give place to that of eternal Being throwing itself out into infinite becoming. All existences will be to the consciousness of the Yogin soul-forms and not merely idea-forms of the Self, of himself, one with him, contained in his universal existence. All the soul-life, mental, vital, bodily existence of all that exists will be to him one indivisible movement and activity of the Being who is the same forever. The Self will be realised as the all in its double aspect of immutable status and mutable activity and it is this that will be seen as the comprehensive truth of our existence.

SRI AUROBINDO (In the *Arya*, Vol. 3, No. 6, 15 January 1917)

twenty five years ago

The Unity of India

Dr. Rajendra Prasad

The diversity which I find in the local cultures and various traditions of India fascinates me. Perhaps it is not the diversity alone which is fascinating but the unifying thread of certain basic concepts and beliefs which binds them all together.

... In her long history, India has never known regimentation of thought. Even at the time when her thought touched Elysian heights and the various systems of Indian philosophy were in the making, the most interesting feature of Indian thought was its diverse pattern based on the fullest freedom of thinking and philosophising. What greater proof can there be of this freedom than that no fewer than half of the six schools of Indian philosophy may be said to be atheistic in nature and that, in each of the remaining three which believe in God, the underlying idea of the Supreme Being is quite different? Nevertheless, this amazing diversity characterizing the intellectual and emotional levels of the people never seriously undermined their cultural unity and their beliefs in things and matters important in everyday life.

Reprinted from *The Call Beyond*, Vol. 17, No. 1, 1992, p. 4

Dr. Rajendra Prasad was the President of India from 1950-1962

Paradoxes of Life

Anita Sharma



*It feels so noble sometimes,
To not only acknowledge your failings
But also willingly accept
the faults that were never yours.
For it creates a picture
Of strength and understanding,
Raising you to a level higher
Than ever before.*



There is no greater courage than that of recognizing one's own mistakes.

THE MOTHER

kidspeak

Children generally know and understand much more than we think. Even in the realm of spirituality, they can show amazing insights because their psychic being is wide awake. This column will carry striking expressions suggesting remarkable spiritual development actually spoken by children. Readers are welcome to contribute to the column. Entries received may be edited and published at the editor's discretion.

At school, even in kindergarten, you teach us how to behave in the world. You teach us not to fight with others, to work things out, to respect others, to clean up our mess, not to hurt other creatures, to share, not to be greedy. Then why do you go out and do the things you tell us not to do?

*From the speech delivered by **Severn Cullis-Suzuki**, at age 12,
at the 1992 Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.*

Source: *Reader's Digest* (India), November 2016, p. 29.

Always be kind and you will be free from suffering, always be contented and happy, and you will radiate your quiet happiness.

THE MOTHER

may i help you

In this column, we try to answer three types of questions from the readers: those related to spiritual quest ('aspiring high'); those related to psychological issues ('feeling low'); and those related to physical health ('frailties of the flesh'). It is needless to say that the identity of the person sending the question is kept confidential if the question is about a sensitive issue. The questions may be sent to callbeyond@aurobindoonline.in

'P' wants to know:

Is it essential to have a guru?

For all practical purposes, it is essential to have a guru. That is why, even those who did not need a guru have adopted one to set the right example. Be it Rama or Krishna, Sri Ramakrishna or Sri Aurobindo, they all had a guru although they did not need one. The teachings of the guru as well as the example set by him are important for the disciple, but what matters the most is the subtle influence exerted by the guru. The influence is due to the guru acting as a channel for conveying the Power of the Divine to the disciple. Whomsoever the disciple has faith in, becomes that channel.

Is it necessary to have a living guru?

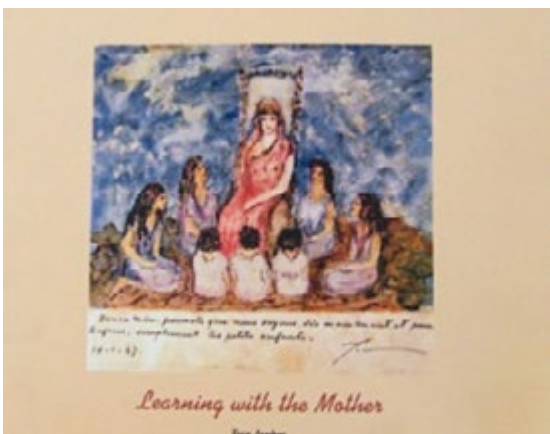
No, it is not. Not only the teachings and example of the guru, even the influence of the highly evolved spiritual beings stays on the globe after they have left the body.

After adopting a guru, is it acceptable to change the guru?

About changing the guru, the guru does not mind it! A genuine guru neither tries to attract disciples and take pride in the number of disciples he has, nor does he expect the disciple to always remain dependent on him. In fact, the guru is happy if the disciple evolves to a level that he does not need the guru anymore. But it is not in the disciple's interest to change the guru unless there is a clear necessity for doing so. There is a bond that develops between the guru and the disciple. It is because of that bond that just thinking about the guru gives the disciple a sense of security, protection, and guidance; and with time, the thought of the guru becomes constant. To establish this valuable bond takes time, and changing the guru can disrupt it.

appreciations

Feedback for Learning With The Mother



Dear Tara,

Thanks so much for your gift 'Learning with The Mother'. It is a wonderful booklet, which shows aspects of The Mother which I have never read about before. You are truly blessed to have met Her and have had such an intimate interaction with Her!

Warmly,

Carel

Auroville

(in an e-mail dated 20 Dec 2016)

Feedback from the 'Yoga and Life Management' program for teachers from Engineering and Management Institutes in association with IIT-Delhi, 7-11 Nov 2016

Really blessed to have the program with Dr. Ramesh Bijlani, including the night stay, felt the spirituality. This must be extended to other colleges of India. I wish Dr. Ramesh to have a long life so that he can do his spiritual duty for a long time.

N M Balamurugan

I didn't expect the program to be conducted in an Ashram suitable for meditation. I am blessed to have stayed and attended the course in such a beautiful place. Sessions, stay and food, everything was excellent.

Adimoolam M

It was a nice program. I enjoyed a lot and learnt many things like time management and out of the box thinking. The environment is spiritual and gave me inner strength. Meditation helped me to think about my goal, follow the right path, and also helped me to cope with my problems. Discipline of the ashram is unique. The food is healthy, and reminded me of the importance of what and how much to eat. I am obliged that I got an opportunity to stay here.

Jyoti Arya

The program was very well conceptualized and conducted. The talks were exquisitely delivered which made principles of Yoga look simple and achievable. It made me develop more clarity about the concepts of Integral Yoga, as propounded by Sri Aurobindo.

Prakash Verma

Sessions: Very well planned, both in content and quality

Stay: Excellent. Nice, calm environment

Food: Satvik food, enjoyed it a lot

Resource persons: With high caliber and experience

Subramanya H C

The purpose for enrolling in this workshop has been fulfilled completely. Dr. Bijlani gave us lot of enlightenment. Many doubts have been cleared. Myths, stories about nutrition, yoga, health have been answered to satisfaction. Food was good and the stay was very comfortable. Thanks a ton to Sri Aurobindo Ashram and Bijlani Sir. Acharya Navneet's class was also very good. Looking forward to more such workshops. Thanks.

Seema Desai

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

BERNIE SIEGEL

Feedback from the participants of Orientation to Integral Yoga, 10-11 Dec 2016

This program was a life changing experience. I learnt a lot of things about myself and the way I behave under different circumstances. This was my first experience and it has made me want to come here again and again. It feels like home, a home for my soul. Thank you!!

Pabil Basnet
(from Nepal)

This program has helped me resolve lots of questions bothering me in my daily life. The examples from daily life to reflect on complex issues helps relate to these very easily. The program is a complete exercise and a great platform to begin your journey to self discovery.

Sankalp Shukla

It was an extremely enriching experience. I would like to be informed whenever the course is repeated. Thank you!

Vismai Rao

The Integral Yoga course was very good, balanced and effective. The discourses were very helpful and simply put. Thank you.

Divya Pandey

This two-day course has been definitely very useful. There were some things that I already knew but some were new for me. It helped me to put the jigsaw puzzle together in a better way. The heavy topics, like who am I and the purpose of life, were addressed in a nice and simple manner which we could understand and relate to. On the whole it was a good experience and I look forward to more talks by Dr. Bijlani. Thank you.

AnennyaGautam

The program was very useful. It increased awareness about what we think we are and actually what we are... and also how to move on the path of joy and happiness. The sessions were very compact and full of knowledge. I am thankful to Sri Aurobindo Ashram for offering such beneficial programs to people. Thank you.

Roopa Gupta

I had come to attend the program seeking inputs for having better control over my life. Having experienced it for the last two days I feel very satisfied that now I have some direction and insights to move ahead on the path of spiritual growth in my life following yogic ways for betterment of myself, family and society at large.

Virender Bejgotra

I found this program very useful and I really hope I could attend regularly but I can't as I live in Sydney. I hope all the people who suffer from stress, depression, etc., come to this session so that they can have a better life. Namaste.

Junko Kodama

Forthcoming events

Friday, 20 January 2017

6.30 pm Bhajan Sandhya

Singer: Gaurav (disciple of Shri Nalin Dholakia)
from Van Niwas, Nainital

Duration: about 1 hour

Venue: Meditation Hall

SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM – DELHI BRANCH

(entry through Gate No. 6, opposite Sarvodaya Enclave)

Contact us

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callbeyond@aurobindoonline.in

To learn about the recent and forthcoming activities through the Ashram's e-magazine, **Realization**, send an email to:

emagazine@saaonline.net.in

Please follow a simple two-step process:

1. Subject: Subscribe
2. Click on Send

If you subscribe either to **Realization**, or to **The Call Beyond**, you will start receiving, month after month, both the magazines.

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Please visit the website www.auomira.in

Feedback

Please send your feedback to
callbeyond@aurobindoonline.in

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