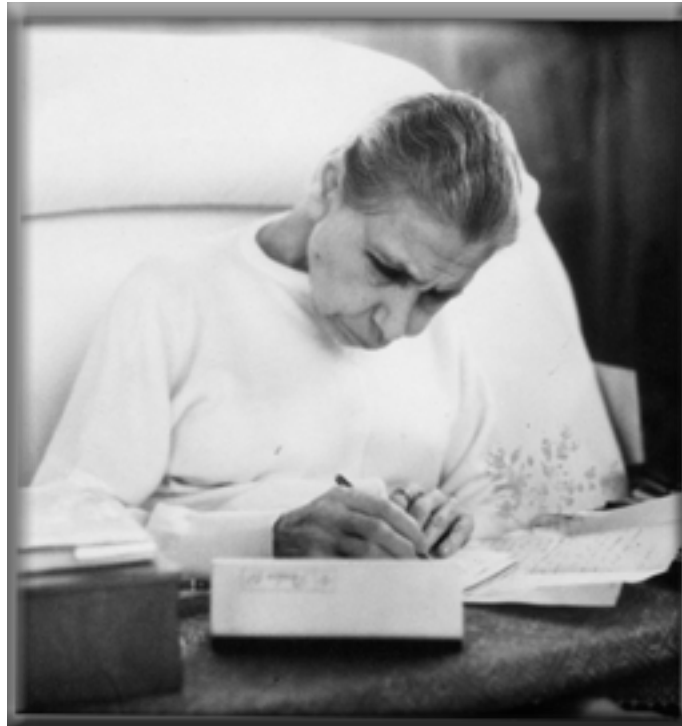


THE CALL BEYOND

Volume 41 // No. 6 // 15 June 2016



*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 // JUNE 2016

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To err is human; to forgive, divine.

ALEXANDER POPE

To forgive is to forget and to give; to forget the hurt, and to give love. Forgetting and loving are like two sides of a coin. Unless one forgets, it is difficult to love; unless one loves, it is difficult to forget. Genuine forgiveness is not easy. What passes for forgiveness is usually a pragmatic compromise, good manners, frustration or fatigue resulting from sustained hostility, or simply the blunting of hostility with the passage of time. Forgiveness is most difficult when hurt is inflicted by someone very close to us, and that too because we have been misunderstood. Forgiveness is not easy because a bruised ego is difficult to heal unless the ego itself is dissolved. There is only one thing that can dissolve the ego, and that is the warmth of love. Forgiveness rooted in the ego: 'I am better than the other person because I have forgiven', is not genuine forgiveness.



Forgiveness is important because anger harms most the person who is angry. The harm is physical; the person may get high blood pressure, peptic ulcer, or insomnia. The harm is emotional; the person feels drained. The harm is mental; the person loses the capacity to concentrate and to think clearly. The harm is spiritual; the person hits a roadblock on the path of spiritual progress.

The ultimate antidote for all anger, resentment and hatred is forgiveness. Nobody can change the past. Nobody can change others. It is relatively easier to work on oneself. Inner work undertaken with a positive attitude is sure to yield enough ground for forgiveness. The inner work can be at the rational level. At the rational level, one can find many reasons to explain the other person's behavior. The explanations may reside in the person's background, limited understanding (whose is not?) or in our own behaviour and outlook. Still better than work at the rational level is inner work at the supra-rational level. **First**, the person whom I am angry with is also a manifestation of the Divine. Seeing the Divine in him is difficult, and therefore a challenge. Overcoming the challenge is an opportunity for spiritual growth. Therefore, instead of being angry, I should be grateful to the person for providing me an opportunity for spiritual growth, which is the very purpose of life. **Secondly**, the hurt, the setback, that this person has caused me, is an opportunity for introspection, for reflection, which can also lead to spiritual growth. For example, if this person has humiliated me, it gives me an opportunity to put myself in the shoes of all those who are being humiliated day in and day out in the world, without any hope of recourse or retaliation. Feeling what they feel is itself spiritual growth, and reinforces my resolve not to humiliate anybody. There is a natural tendency to thank those who boost our egos. But those who bash up our egos deserve thanks even more because we grow spiritually more because of them. Thus, **genuine forgiveness is rooted in gratitude**. It results from the realization that the objects of our anger or resentment have given us some of the best opportunities for spiritual growth. The realization makes it easy to forget what they did, and to love them instead.

It is difficult enough to rise to the level of consciousness that makes forgiveness easy. But it is vastly more difficult to stay at that level of consciousness. To make it a little easier to stay at the level of consciousness at which forgiveness comes naturally, some practices may help. One of them is the fire ritual. Write down all the resentment you have, resolve to replace resentment with love and forgiveness, and then burn the paper on which all the negativity had been expressed as a symbol of rooting it out of the system. Another way is to meditate, and during the meditation visualize the person whom you dislike. Think of at least one good quality, or virtue, that this person has. Meditate on this virtue. Then visualize this person walking towards you, and you offering the person a flower with a smile. The person is astonished, because he never expected it from you. But see the way he grabs this opportunity to make amends, and becomes so sweet to you. When you come out of this meditation, you are equipped to forgive. You are ready to face this person and turn a new leaf in your relationship. During the meditation, you offered him a flower; when you meet him, you are ready to offer a hug. It is that simple. Forgiveness is difficult; forgiveness can be simple.

Also available on Speaking Tree website: <http://www.speakingtree.in/blog/forgive-forget-give>

*Bearing ill-will to none, and having friendship and compassion for all beings, free from egoism and I-ness and my-ness, even-minded in pain and pleasure, and **forgiving**, the Yogin who is ever content, self-controlled and firm-willed, and whose mind and reason are given up to Me, he, My devotee, is dear to me.*

The Gita, 12:13-14

article

Did Sri Aurobindo Take the Easy Way Out?

SHISHU

Sri Aurobindo was in Alipore Jail from 1908-1909. Soon after his release, in a speech delivered at Uttarpara on 30 May 1909, he gave more than a hint of the divine intervention that had convinced him that he should step out of the freedom struggle, and that the mission of his life was to give to the world the wisdom that it was going to need very soon. This article goes into facts which he, out of modesty, could not have talked about himself, and concludes that moving from the freedom struggle to purely spiritual pursuits was not an escape but a necessity for working out the design of the Divine for the world.

Sri Aurobindo was sent to England at age seven for ‘further studies’, and returned to India in 1893 at age twenty one. His full-time engagement with the struggle for India’s freedom was restricted to a short period (1906-1910), of which one year (1908-1909) was spent in prison. In April 1910 he went away to Pondicherry, after which he dedicated himself exclusively to spiritual pursuits. From a superficial examination of these facts it is easy to conclude that he found in the safe havens of spirituality an escape from the rough and tumble of the freedom struggle. In his famous Uttarpara Speech, delivered soon after his acquittal in 1909, Sri Aurobindo gave hints of the radical departure in the focus of his life, and attributed it to the ‘dialogue’ he had with the Divine, whom he saw as Krishna. “Give me Thy Adesh. I do not know what work to do or how to do it.”, asked Sri Aurobindo, exactly as Arjuna had asked. The answer that he got had in it “two messages”.

The first message was, “I have given you a work and it is to help to uplift this nation... ..”, and the second message was, “... speak to your nation always this word... I am giving them [Indians] freedom for the service of the world...”. In short, Sri Aurobindo was told that the freedom of the country was sure to come, that he was not indispensable for it, and that his work was to speak to the nation the “word”, which would help the world. Why did the Divine have to intervene to pull him out of the freedom struggle, and what was the word that he was uniquely equipped to speak to the world? Strictly speaking, only the Divine can answer this question. But even to attempt a human answer a few additional facts are necessary.

Fourteen years in England (1879-1893)

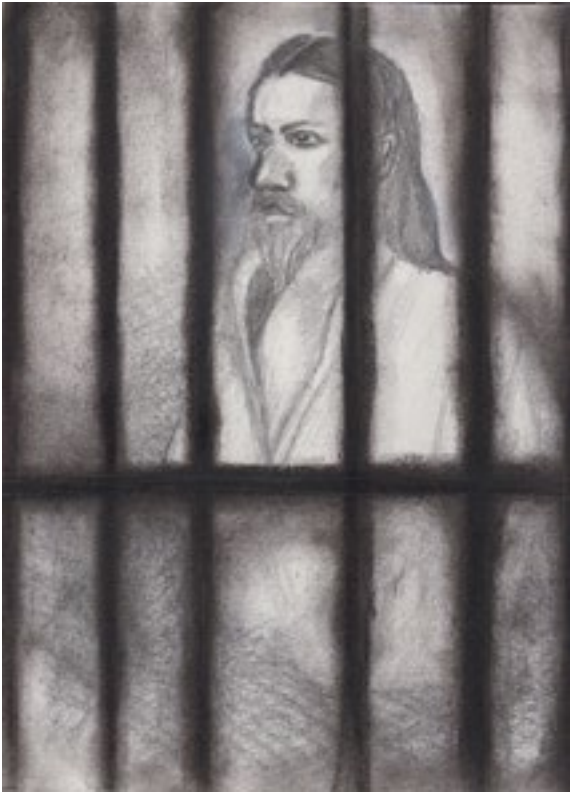
During the fourteen years that he spent in England, he mastered the English language and learnt several other European languages; he had stood first in Greek while at Cambridge. He also understood and examined critically the Western history and culture. He had a sharp intellect: in England, he won many prizes and scholarships; at age 17 he participated in debates on topics such as the ‘inconsistency of Swift’s political views’ and turned a piece from Greek into English verse. One of his Professors at King’s College told Sri Aurobindo, “I have examined papers at thirteen examinations and I have never during that time [seen] such excellent papers as yours”.

Fourteen years in Baroda (1893-1907)

Although Sri Aurobindo’s participation in the freedom struggle became more visible after the partition of Bengal in 1905, and he resigned from the Baroda service in 1906, he maintained some links with Baroda till 1907. While Sri Aurobindo returned from England as a scholar in European languages and culture, he was very conscious of his profound ignorance about India. He used his stay in Baroda to make up for this by teaching himself Sanskrit, and going into the ancient Indian literature in its original. As a result, he became a unique synthesis of the East and the West. In 1907, with a few instructions from a yogi, Vishnu Bhaskar Lele, it was in Baroda that Sri Aurobindo experienced within three days his mind becoming full of eternal silence, an experience that only a rare few might get after years of yogic discipline.

One year in prison (1908-1909)

After the experience of the eternal silence in 1907, it was in prison that Sri Aurobindo had some more very significant spiritual experiences. During the year in prison, the first question Sri Aurobindo asked was why God had brought him there. After all, he was engaged in the important and noble task of working for the freedom of the country. The answer that he got was that he was not indispensable for the freedom struggle, and that God had broken for him the bonds (i.e. attachment to the work connected with the freedom struggle) that he himself could not break. Then he saw Vasudeva (Krishna) in everything – the walls of the prison, the trees, the bed; and in everybody – the jailors, other inmates, the prosecution counsel, the defense counsel, and the judge. He could now have a dialogue with Krishna, and receive directions from Him. Over the period of one year in prison, through his experiences and these interactions with the Divine, he reached the conclusion that there were so many persons of great heroic courage and remarkable moral strength in the country that the freedom of the country was a foregone conclusion; that he was not needed for the freedom struggle; and that his mission was to give to the world the word that it was going to need very soon.



The Divine intervened, it seems, not only by sending Sri Aurobindo to prison and by giving these experiences and directions to him, but also by ensuring his acquittal. Of all the forty-odd persons arrested in 1908, Sri Aurobindo was the most prominent, and the one whom the British Government feared the most. Therefore, it was he whom the Government was most interested in getting convicted. In spite of that, he was acquitted because The Divine seems to have made sure that the officials concerned make at least two foolish mistakes. First, they allowed midway through the trial the defense counsel to be changed. The defense counsel whose appointment they allowed was none other than Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das, himself a great patriot, and a great friend of Sri Aurobindo. Even more foolish was to appoint as the judge for the case Mr. C.P. Beachcroft, who was Sri Aurobindo's classmate in England. This was not secret information; there was no scarcity of judges; and anybody could have visualized that the judge might have a soft corner for Sri Aurobindo. When a judge sifts through hundreds of pages, his conclusion may depend considerably on his subjective

interpretation of the evidence. After going through all the material, Mr. Beachcroft concluded that the evidence was not enough to convict Sri Aurobindo; hence, he was acquitted.

The voyage to Pondicherry

Sri Aurobindo now knew the mission of his life, but staying in India would have meant being continuously hounded by the Government, whereas what he needed for his spiritual pursuits was peace. Some of his companions suggested that he go away to France. But then came the divine command that he should go to Pondicherry, which was a French colony, and therefore the British could not easily persecute him there. With the help of his companions, a plan was made for his secret departure, because if the British Government came to know about his leaving the country, he was sure to be intercepted. Although the plan failed due to some human errors, he succeeded in reaching Pondicherry with a few of his companions on 4 April 1910. Or, one might say, the human plan (Plan A) failed; what took him safely to Pondicherry was Plan B prepared by the Divine, because that was the only plan that could take him there undetected by the British Intelligence.

Does the divine intervention make sense?

The Divine intervened by interrupting Sri Aurobindo's involvement in the freedom struggle by landing him in jail. The Divine intervened by becoming visible and audible to Sri Aurobindo so that he could discover the true mission of his life. The Divine intervened by keeping him in prison as long as it was necessary for him to discover the mission of his life; not a day more, not a day less. The Divine intervened to ensure his acquittal when the purpose for which he had been sent to jail had been accomplished. The Divine intervened to tell him where to go to get the necessary peace for spiritual pursuits. The Divine intervened to work out for him a foolproof plan for sailing to Pondicherry, undetected by the very vigilant British Government.

Is there something to justify this rather unusual scale of divine intervention? The justification is that Sri Aurobindo was a unique being who was here on earth with a unique mission for which his surface life had equipped him. He spent fourteen years in the West, and fourteen years in the East, both periods spent, with his razor sharp intellect, on seriously studying, understanding and evaluating both these cultures, and placing them in a historical context and visualizing their roles in the future of the world. Added to this intellectual feat was phenomenal spiritual capacity. This combination is unprecedented in human history, and is unlikely to be repeated in the near future. Such a combination was not created to be battered and bruised by the batons and bullets of the British Police, to languish in jails, and to get incarcerated at the Andaman Islands. Such a combination had come to earth to meet the spiritual hunger of the world.

Was the mission accomplished?

Sri Aurobindo has given to the world spiritual literature, based on the ancient Indian tradition but couched in terms of today's world, the original of which was written in the English language. In this category of literature, his works remain unsurpassed to this day in both quantity and quality. What he has written, very few can read in a lifetime. His language is not only flawless but also elegant; even his prose reads like poetry. His literature includes translations and extensive brilliant commentaries on the Gita, several Upanishads, and sections from the Vedas; in-depth works on yoga and spiritual philosophy; and Savitri, which may be considered an Upanishad in the English language. He has made a very powerful case for life-affirming spirituality, which can transform human life. Apart from this, he has touched just about every subject under the sun – culture, education, art, history, sociology, psychology, health, science and politics – and he has given every subject that he has touched an inimitable timeless spiritual orientation. Just the literature that he has created would earn him a very special place in the spiritual history of the world. But even more important, although difficult to see, is the work that he did for raising the collective human consciousness so that the world would be a better place to live in.

Why was Sri Aurobindo's mission important?

It is easier to see today the significance and timing of Sri Aurobindo's mission than it was a hundred years ago. India is free and, because of the political freedom coupled with the economic progress we have made since independence, today India counts. On the other hand, the West, having achieved phenomenal success in science and technology, and having tried different systems of government and ethical codes such as humanism, has realized that none of these has been able to wipe out evil, injustice, misery and suffering from the world. Having exhausted the possibilities of rationality, the West is now looking for supra-rational spiritual wisdom. Both because India today counts, and because the West needs what India has, the West today has a very high degree of receptivity for ancient Indian spiritual wisdom. And, Sri Aurobindo's literature offers the best of what the West today needs. Sri Aurobindo had foreseen the limitations of the Western civilization, and the role India was destined to play as the vishwa guru (guru to the world). He has written the best text books on topics that the world wants to learn from India. Sri Aurobindo's work is no less important for India. For at least about a thousand years, the Indian psyche has been dominated by the idea that spiritual life and worldly life are incompatible with each other. Sri Aurobindo tried hard to drive home the idea that worldly life can be enriched and ennobled by spirituality. Further, in his Ashram at Pondicherry, the Mother demonstrated that transforming worldly life through spirituality is not mere philosophy; it can be given a practical shape.

Closing thoughts

Sri Aurobindo was an unprecedented combination in history – a perfect synthesis of the East and the West, and had on top of that a remarkable intellect and phenomenal spiritual capacity. He was given these gifts and circumstances by the Divine for a mission which only he could accomplish. Hence, when there was a possibility of his mission getting blocked by his involvement in the freedom struggle, the Divine created the circumstances that would make him discover his true mission, and also the circumstances that would enable him to fulfill it. As the Mother has said, “No human will can finally prevail against the Divine’s Will”.

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K.R. Srinivasa Iyenger: Sri Aurobindo – A biography and a history. Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, Fifth Edition, 2006.

...the mind is incapable of judging spiritual things.

THE MOTHER

First posted on the Speaking Tree website as a blog on 1 May 2015

(source: <http://www.speakingtree.in/blog/did-sri-aurobindo-take-the-easy-way-out>)

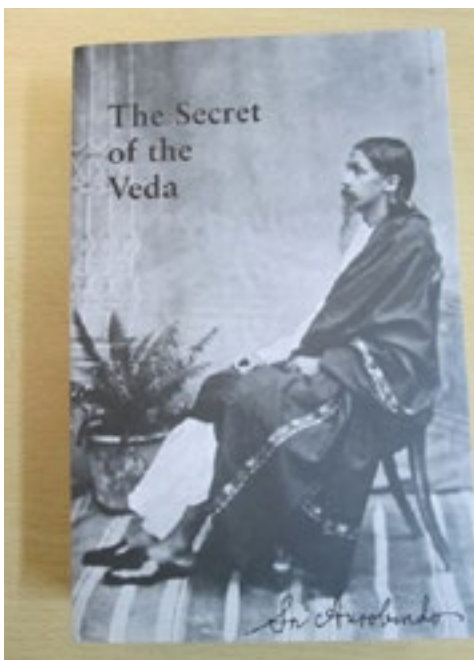
Picture of Sri Aurobindo in Jail drawn by *Rajashree Pal*, a student of *The Mother’s International School*

article

Saraswati – The Goddess of Inspiration

UDHAV SUREKA

The article is seventh in a series based on Sri Aurobindo’s ‘The Secret of the Veda’



Saraswati is among the few Vedic deities who are well-known even today. She is revered today as the goddess of knowledge, art, and creativity. However, she symbolized something more specific and profound in the Vedas. Sri Aurobindo reveals the original meaning of Saraswati in his work *The Secret of the Veda*.

In the Vedas, many symbols were taken from the physical world to represent specific aspects of our mind and mental activities. Saraswati, which was also the name a river in the Vedic times, symbolized Inspiration. The word ‘saraswati’ means, “*she of the stream, the flowing movement*”(1) and is therefore a suitable name both for a river and for the inflow of inspiration. Let us understand her full significance.



The Vedas were composed when the Rishis received “*an eternal truth and an impersonal knowledge... that came vibrating out of the Infinite to the inner audience of the man who had previously made himself fit for (it)*” (2). The Vedas are therefore called *śruti*, the heard. The words that the mind of the Rishis heard, their speech merely repeated. Saraswati represents this inflow from the plane of Truth-consciousness.

Sri Aurobindo explains, “*She (Saraswati) is the current which comes from the Truth-principle, from the Ritam or Mahas and we actually find this principle spoken of in the Veda,—as the Great Water; maho arṇas,—an expression which gives us at once the origin of the later term, Mahas.*” (3)

*Maho arṇaḥ sarasvatī, pra cetayati ketunā:
dhiyo viśvā vi rājati – R.V. I.3.12*

“*Saraswati by the perception awakens in consciousness the great flood (the vast movement of the Ritam) and illumines entirely all the thoughts.*”

Ignorance is removed and all thoughts are illumined, i.e. directed by Truth, by the inflow of Inspiration, the gushing luminous stream descending from the Truth-consciousness. Saraswati is therefore referred to in the Veda as the secret self of *Indra* – the symbol for the Illumined Mind.

“*Truth comes to us as a light, a voice, compelling a change of thought, imposing a new discernment of ourselves and all around us. Truth of thought creates truth of vision and truth of vision forms in us truth of being, and out of truth of being (satyam) flows naturally truth of emotion, will and action. This is indeed the central notion of the Veda.*” (4)

The Vedas describe this phenomenon as the great flood which inundates the entire mental being with luminous streams of thoughts and opens the passage to Bliss, Ananda or Mayas.

“*It is by the dawning of the true or infinite consciousness in man that he arrives out of this evil dream of pain and suffering, this divided creation into the Bliss... For the Vedic Rishi Truth is the passage and the antechamber, the Bliss of the divine existence is the goal, or else Truth is the foundation, Bliss the supreme result.*” (5)

REFERENCES

- (1) *The Secret of The Veda*, p. 93, Line 28
- (2) *The Secret of The Veda*, p. 10, Line 28
- (1) *The Secret of The Veda*, p. 99, Line 14
- (2) *The Secret of The Veda*, p. 100, Line 12
- (1) *The Secret of The Veda*, p. 97, Line 3&9



hundred years ago

The Demands I Make Upon Thee are Modest*



Since Thou hast permitted it, O Lord, I have once again begun to come to Thee daily, freeing myself for a few brief moments from an activity of which I know the complete relativity, even while I am engaged in it. Thou hadst plunged me back into action and the ordinary consciousness, and now Thou grantest me the possibility of regularly taking my flight again to Thee, to soar awhile in the immutable Silence and eternal Consciousness.

Thou hast willed, O Lord, that the being should grow wider and richer. It could not do so without entering once again, at least partially and temporarily, into ignorance and obscurity.

The ignorance and obscurity it comes now to lay at Thy feet as the most humble of ordeals. I shall not ask Thee to bestow upon continuously the Consciousness Thou grantest me in these moments of pure and peaceful communion. I shall ask Thee only to make these moments still more peaceful and pure, to fortify and enlighten the consciousness more and more, so that it may return to its daily task with renewed strength and knowledge.

Thou remindest me through these brief moments of ecstatic identification that Thou hast granted me the power of consciously uniting with Thee. And the divine musical harmony captures the entire being.

But the sounds gather in the head as behind a veil and not a word flows from the pen today.....

THE MOTHER (In *Prayers and Meditations*, prayer dated 4 December 1916)

*Title given by the editor

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



hundred years ago

The Synthesis of Yoga

THE RELEASE FROM THE SUBJECTION TO THE BODY



Our first step in this path of knowledge, having once determined in our intellect that what seems is not the Truth, that the self is not the body or life or mind, since these are only its forms, must be to set right our mind in its practical relation with the Self. This is easiest to do by creating a separation between Prakriti and the Purusha. The Purusha has to remember his own nature as the soul that knows and commands; that the body is only a working and only one working of Prakriti; that he is more even than the mind, a



Power which can raise the mental being above itself; that he is the Master, the Transcendent and it is not fit the Master should be enslaved by his own workings, the Transcendent imprisoned in a form which exists only, as a trifle in its own being....

The power to do nothing, which is quite different from indolence, incapacity, or aversion to action and attachment to inaction, is a great power and a great mastery; the power to rest absolutely from action is as necessary for the Jnanayogin as the power to cease absolutely from thought, as the power to remain indefinitely in sheer solitude and silence and as the power of immovable calm. Whoever is not willing to embrace these states is not yet fit for the path that leads towards the highest knowledge; whoever is unable to draw towards them, is as yet unfit for its acquisition.

The seeker of the integral state of knowledge must be free from attachment to action and equally free from attachment to inaction. Eventually, a state arrives when the life and the body perform as mere instruments the will of the Purusha in the mind without any strain or attachment, without their putting themselves into the action with that inferior, eager and often feverish energy which is the nature of their ordinary working; they come to work as forces of Nature work without the fret and toil and reaction characteristic of life in the body when it is not yet master of the physical. When we attain to this perfection, then action and inaction become immaterial, since neither interferes with the freedom of the soul or draws it away from its urge towards the Self or its poise in the Self. But this state of perfection arrives later in the Yoga and till then the law of moderation laid down by the Gita is the best for us; too much mental or physical action then is not good since excess draws away too much energy and reacts unfavourably upon the spiritual condition; too little also is not good since defect leads to a habit of inaction and even to an incapacity which has afterwards to be surmounted by difficulty. Still, periods of absolute calm, solitude and cessation from works are highly desirable and should be secured as often as possible for that recession of the soul into itself which is indispensable to knowledge.

While dealing thus with the body we have necessarily to deal also with the Prana or life-energy. For practical purposes we have to make a distinction between the life-energy as it acts in the body, the physical Prana, and the life-energy as it acts in support of the mental activities, the psychical Prana. For we lead always a double life, mental and physical, and the same life-energy acts differently and assumes a different aspect according as it lends itself to one or the other. In the body it produces those reactions of hunger, thirst, fatigue, health, disease, physical vigour, etc. which are the vital experiences of the physical frame. For the gross body of man is not like the stone or like the earth; it is a combination of two sheaths, the vital and the “food” sheath and its life is a constant interaction of these two. Still the life-energy and the physical frame are two different things and in the withdrawal of the mind from the absorbing sense of the body we become increasingly sensible of the Prana and its action in the corporeal instrument and can observe and more and more control its operations. Practically, in drawing back from the body we draw back from the physical life-energy also, even while we distinguish the two and feel the latter nearer to us than the mere physical instrument. The entire conquest of the body comes in fact by the conquest of the physical life-energy.

Along with the attachment to the body and its works the attachment to life in the body is overcome. For when we feel the physical being to be not ourselves, but only a dress or an instrument, the repulsion to the death of the body which is so strong and vehement and instinct of the vital man must necessarily weaken and can be thrown away. Thrown away it must be and entirely. The fear of death and the aversion to bodily cessation are the stigma left by his animal origin on the human being. That brand must be utterly effaced.

SRI AUROBINDO (In the *Arya*, Vol. 2, No. 11, 15 June 1916)

twenty-five years ago

Youth

SAMUEL ULLMAN (BORN 1840)



Youth is not a time of life; it is a state of mind; it is not a matter of rosy cheeks, red lips and supple knees: it is a matter of the will, a quality of the imagination, a vigour of the emotions; it is the freshness of the deep springs of life.

Youth means a temperamental predominance of courage over timidity of the appetite, for adventure over the love of ease. This often exists in a man of 60 more than a boy of 20. Nobody grows old merely by a number of years. We grow old by deserting our ideals.

Years may wrinkle the skin, but to give up enthusiasm wrinkles the soul. Worry, fear, self-distrust bows the heart and turns the spirit back to dust.

Whether 60 or 16, there is in every human being's heart the lure of wonder, the unfailing childlike appetite of what's next and the joy of the game of living. In the centre of your heart and my heart there is a wireless station: so long as it receives messages of beauty, hope, cheer, courage and power from men and from the Infinite, so long are you young.

When the aerials are down, and your spirit is covered with snows of cynicism and the ice of pessimism, then you are growing old, even at 20, but as long as your aerials are up, to catch waves of optimism, there is hope you may die young at 80.

Reproduced from *The Call Beyond*, Vol. 16, No.3, 1991, p. 18

humour

The Telephonic Call Beyond



An American undertook a tour of the famous churches of the world.

First he went to China. On his first day he noticed there in a church a golden telephone mounted on the wall with a sign that read “\$10,000 per call”. The American, being intrigued, asked a priest what the telephone was used for. The priest replied that it was a direct line to heaven, and that for \$10,000 you could talk to God.

The American thanked the priest and went along his way.

His next stop was in Japan. There, at a very large cathedral, he saw a similar golden telephone with a similar sign under it. He asked a nearby nun about the telephone. She told him that it was a direct line to heaven and that for \$10,000 he could talk to God.

“O. K., thank you,” said the American.

He then traveled to many other countries. In every church he saw a golden telephone with the “\$10,000 per call” sign under it.

Finally, he came to India, and again, in the first church he entered, there was the golden telephone, but this time the sign under it read “One Rupee per call.” The American was surprised. So he asked the priest about the sign. “Father, I’ve traveled all over World and I’ve seen golden telephones in many churches. I’m told that it is a direct line to Heaven, but the price everywhere is \$10,000 per call. How come it is so cheap here?” The priest smiled and answered, “Son, in India it’s a local call”. (Based on an item on the internet.

Source: <http://www.utahkrishnas.org/the-golden-telephones/>)

poetry

New Lessons

ANITA SHARMA

*How many times, on starting a book,
I've thought I could make a better
detective
And, missed someone else's perspective.
How many times, I've switched channels
On cacophony of baseless noise
And, missed that one upcoming voice.
How many times, I've argued with the
gardner,
Pretending to know all about soils and
sands
And, missed his planting skills.*

*How many times I fought with my
siblings
Over a broken geometry box
And, missed their guilt and fear.
How many times I've broken the daily
routine
To wrap up the day real fast
And, missed the moments that last.
How many times, just how many times.
There still are opportunities,
I frisk them, sniff them,
I take my time
And, lose a precious lesson.*

inspiration

Have Your Spoon and Eat It Too



We have all used plenty of plastic spoons feeling tempted by the convenience and low cost, and also guilty for damaging the environment. An Indian, Narayan Peesapathy, has made, and already sold more than a million edible spoons. The spoons are made from the millet jowar, rice and wheat, with some salt and spices to create different flavours. The spoons have a shelf-life of three years. The spoon may be used for taking hot soup, or for stirring sugar in hot tea. When done, it may be eaten up. It may also teach us to eat with consciousness, because biting hard into the spoon absent-mindedly might break it in the mouth.

(From a news item in The Speaking Tree, 17 April 2016. Original source: <http://www.karmatube.org/videos.php?id=7073>)

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