

THE CALL BEYOND

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Equanimity

After granting me the joy which surpasses all expression, Thou hast sent me, O my beloved Lord, the struggle, the ordeal and on this too I have smiled as on one of Thy precious messengers.

The Mother ('Prayers and Meditations', Prayer dated 22 June 1920)

Highlights

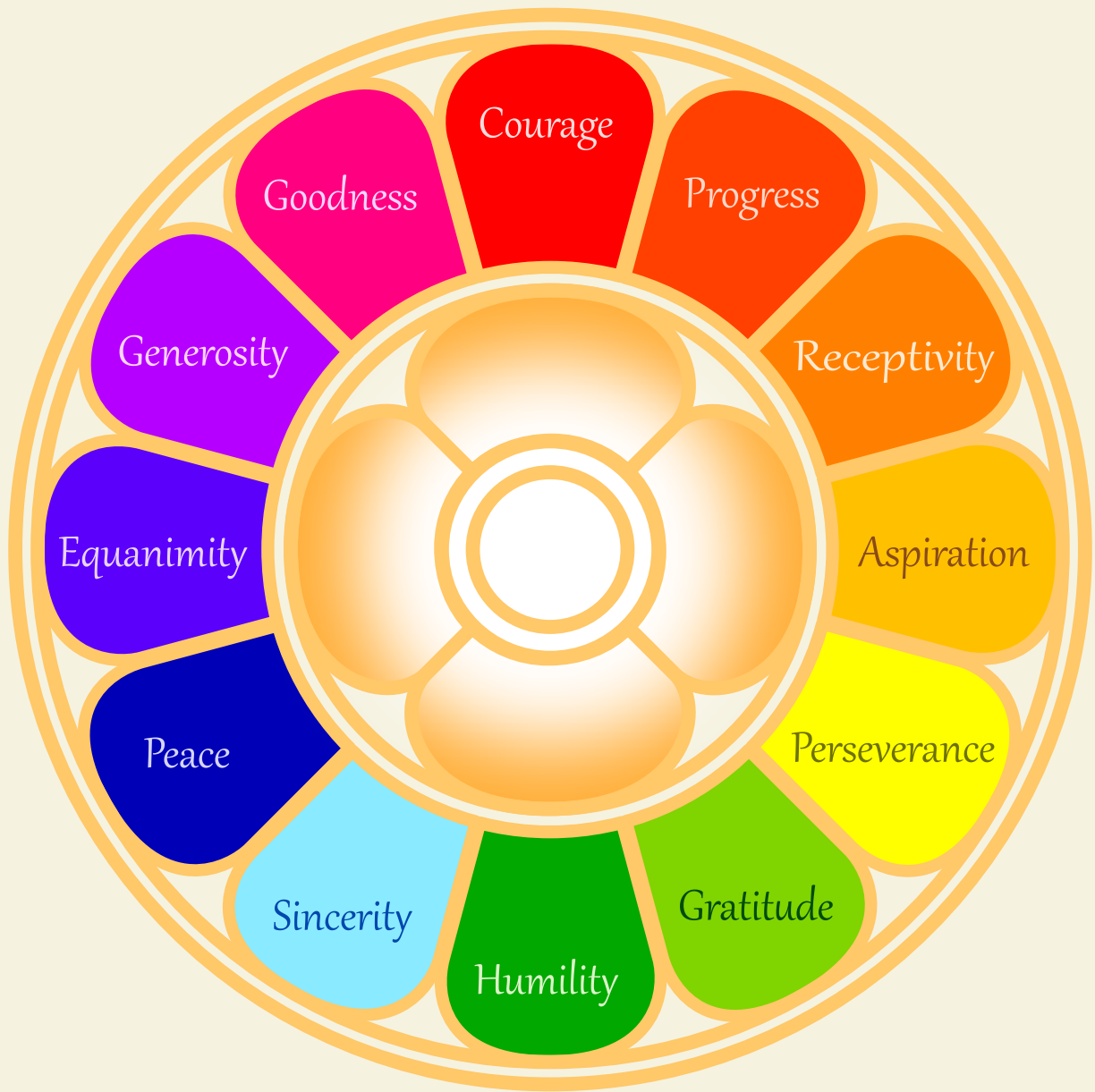
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SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM - DELHI BRANCH



The central circle represents the Divine Consciousness.

The four petals represent the four powers of the Mother.

The twelve petals represent the twelve powers of the Mother manifested for Her work.

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The Widest Angle View

*His height of being lived in the still Self;
His mind could rest on a supernal ground
And look down on the magic and the play
Where the God-child lies on the lap of Night and Dawn
And the Everlasting puts on Time's disguise.
To the still heights and to the troubled depths
His equal spirit gave its vast assent:
A poised serenity of tranquil strength,
A wide unshaken look on the Time's unrest
Faced all experience with unaltered peace.*

Sri Aurobindo ('Savitri', Book 1, Canto 3, lines 502-511)

The quality of a picture can sometimes be improved enormously merely by a slight change in the angle of the camera. In the same way, the situation remaining the same, its emotional impact can be minimized when the situation is viewed from a different angle. This we are particularly interested in doing when a situation makes us upset, angry, anxious or depressed. When viewed from a different angle, it is generally possible to accept the situation without getting miserable. This is what we call positive thinking. Thus, positive thinking promotes equanimity.

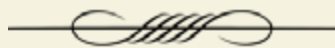
One of the mental devices that helps us get a positive view of a situation is perspective. As the perspective widens, the emotional impact shrinks. That is why, the older a person gets, the less he is shocked by tragedies and calamities; he is also less elated by triumphs and achievements. He has seen life, and learnt from life that first, ups and downs are an inevitable part of life; and secondly, in the long run, nothing matters. Hence, an event which is a major upheaval when viewed in terms of its immediate impact becomes a minor

ripple when viewed in terms of the panorama of life. The terrible and the terrific are both relative. Thus, relativity is the key to equanimity.

Spirituality looks at an event or situation in the context of the Absolute Reality which is Infinite, Imperishable, and Constant. The spiritual view is neither an adjustment in the angle nor a panoramic perspective. It is the widest angle view, a three hundred and sixty degree view with a vision extending to infinity. With that vision, the terrible and the terrific become two sides of the same coin. Hence, the spiritual view gives more than equanimity. It gives equality, or acceptance of all happenings with equal delight.

In celebration of the Centenary of The Mother's final arrival in Pondicherry on 24 April 1920, this month we shall focus on the eleventh petal in Her symbol. The petal symbolizes the virtue of equanimity, which emerges as one of the most visible and valuable products of spiritual progress.

PETAL OF THE MONTH: Equanimity



Equanimity and peace in all conditions, in all parts of the being is the first foundation of the yogic status. Either Light (bringing with it knowledge) or Force (bringing strength and dynamism of many kinds) or Ananda (bringing love and joy of existence) can come next according to the trend of the nature. But peace is the first condition without which nothing else can be stable.

Sri Aurobindo

Equanimity Comes from Acceptance

Equal to friend and enemy, honour and dishonor, cold and heat, pleasure and pain, he who, free from attachment, is equal to praise and blame, who is silent (restrained in speech), content with whatever comes, with no attachment to any home, firm in mind, full of devotion, is dear to Me.

The Gita (12:18-19)



*Candytuft (Botanical name: Iberis)
Spiritual significance given by
The Mother: Equanimity
Immutable peace and calm.*

When we are upset by an untoward happening, we wish we could control our feelings and stay calm. We tend to think of someone who is always calm and peaceful, and wish we could emulate him. Equanimity is a very useful quality to cultivate because when we are angry, we lose the capacity to think, and therefore generally

end up making a fool of ourselves. On the other hand, when we are sad, depressed or worried, we torture ourselves without making any difference to the situation. A constructive response to adverse circumstances is possible only in a state of equanimity. In general, young age is associated with a volatile temperament. The inevitable ups and downs of life confer some immunity to the emotional impact of further ups and downs. Therefore, aging is generally associated with growing equanimity. As a corollary, equanimity is considered to be a sign of maturity. Besides maturity, equanimity also comes from philosophical indifference. Philosophy gives us an understanding of life, and the understanding gives us the capacity to accept the vicissitudes of life coolly and calmly. Beyond a point, we stop bothering about what is happening, we become indifferent to the fluctuations of fortune. To some

extent, equanimity may be just put on. A person may have a raging storm within, and yet maintain an unruffled exterior. Such equanimity, achieved by suppression of emotions, may make us socially more acceptable, but may give us a disease such as high blood pressure or an ulcer in the stomach. Thus, equanimity is a heterogeneous quality, achieved through different routes and with varying implications. *However, the best type of equanimity, in which the person is at peace within as well as without, comes from spirituality.*

Spiritual equanimity has three levels. At the *first level*, equanimity is based on accepting whatever happens as an expression of the divine will. This is a grudging acceptance, because it makes God look like a dictator who can do whatever He does whatever He wants, and we have to reconcile with it because we do not have a choice. The *next level* of equanimity comes from accepting whatever happens as an expression of not only the divine will but also the divine wisdom. God is not only all-powerful, He is also all-wise. If in His Supreme Wisdom, He has done something, there must be something good about it. If I cannot see anything good in what has happened, it is because of my own limitations. The future will show me what is good about it; but for the present, I can live with the ignorance because I trust the wisdom of God. Suppose I go to see a movie, but reach the hall late. When I reach there, I find that the hero is suffering while the villain is having a good time. So, I do not feel like watching it, and come back criticizing the movie. If I had watched the whole movie, by the end the hero would have got the heroine, and the villain would have been either dead or behind the bars. Our life is also like a long movie. In this movie, much of the past we have forgotten, and the future we know nothing about. We look at some recent episodes and make ourselves miserable. The One who is guiding our life knows how to take us towards our ultimate destiny, and if that requires some suffering, He

arranges that too for us. With this attitude, it is easier to accept all happenings with equanimity. *Finally*, the *highest level* of spiritual acceptance goes one step further. It says, “I accept what has happened because it is an expression of the divine will and wisdom. Since the divine wisdom is also behind it, there must be something good in it. I do not know everything that is good in it because of my limitations. *But I do know* at least one thing that is good about it. It is an opportunity for my spiritual growth, which is the purpose of human life. It is because God loves me that He has given me this opportunity for taking a few steps towards the goal of my life.”

Thus, in spirituality, the person believes all events and circumstances to be an expression of God’s will, wisdom and love. Therefore, he accepts whatever happens, whether it seems pleasant or unpleasant, with *equal delight*. The delight in accepting them is equal because everything in life – be it pleasant or unpleasant – is an opportunity for spiritual growth. The delight is equal also because the person knows that we need a mixture of pleasant and unpleasant events for the opportunity to be used. If everything were to go well with life, we would get so absorbed in life that we may forget its purpose. If everything went wrong with life, we would be so depressed as to feel like committing suicide. That is why we need a mixture of cold and heat, victory and defeat, praise and criticism, success and failure. Equality goes one step beyond equanimity. Not only is the person not upset, he is happy, rather at peace, even in adverse circumstances. Being *equally happy* in all circumstances is the purest and highest variety of equal-mindedness, or *samatva*. That is why Sri Aurobindo has translated *samatva* as ‘equality’ rather than equanimity.

Many a bud never bloom for want of care. The country is full of budding young people handicapped by the environment in which they grow up, which prevents them from realizing their full potential. Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch has had the privilege of nurturing thousands of such boys and girls, and also the joy of seeing them bloom. In this column, we shall bring you stories of the difference that the Ashram made to their lives.

From VT to IT Head

Here is the story of Keshar Mehra in his own words:



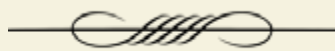
I joined Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch as a Vocational Trainee in the year 1995, right after my graduation. Coming from a small town, I had not really seen the world. My stay in the Ashram exposed me to a new world altogether. In the Ashram I was trained in Typing and Data Entry. *This was the first time in my life that I saw a computer.* I enjoyed working with computers and by the time the course was over, I was proficient in a variety of applications and software. I learned working with word-processors, spreadsheets and image processing applications. After completing the course, I decided to stay on longer in the Ashram to learn more. Soon I became skilled enough to get a job with Messrs. Sunderson & Co. in 1997. Later, I joined The Mother's International School for a couple of years before moving on to the Shri Ram group of schools. I went on to become the Deputy Head of Information Technology (IT) in Shri Ram School. In the year 2007, I joined the Subros Education Society in their new school project in NOIDA, Step by Step School, as the Head of IT. The project has been very

successful and now Step by Step is one of the best schools in the country. I have been working with them for more than 13 years now.

In the meantime, while I was building up my career, I got married. My wife is a sports teacher in The Mother's International School, and we have a lovely teenaged daughter who goes to the same school.

When I look back, I realize that my stay in the Ashram played a vital role in my career and personal growth. My stay at the Ashram made me more grounded. It was the Ashram that taught me the importance of discipline and team work. I was greatly benefited by the interactions with fellow students from various parts of India. Living with people with diverse backgrounds and experiencing community living was a very special experience. Although I left the Ashram long ago, I am still a part of the vibrant Ashram community.

[The account provided by Mr. Keshar Mehra has been edited to refine the language]



You may hear all the insults in the world, people may tell you all possible stupidities; if you are not weak, you may perhaps not smile outwardly, for it is not always good taste to smile, but deep within you, you are smiling, you let it pass, it does not touch you. ... if your mind has formed the habit of being quiet ... you have the perception of truth within yourself, you can hear anything at all. It does not even produce the semblance of a vibration – everything remains absolutely immobile and quiet.

The Mother

Yoga of Forgiveness ... with Eyes Wide Open

Sehdev Kumar

On 8 June 1972, at the height of war in Vietnam, there was one picture of the barbarism of war that seethed the conscience of the world in a manner rarely before or ever since: it was a picture of a 9-year old girl, Kim, running naked down a country road in the village of Trang Bang, burning from a bath of jellied gasoline from a napalm bombardment, with horror and utter desperation writ large on her scorched body, that was to become forever 'a gnarled forest of scars'.



Kim survived, and entered a new world of hope and forgiveness. Now an honoured citizen of Canada and a goodwill ambassador for UNESCO, in 1996 she met with Rev. John Plummer, a Vietnam veteran, who had ordered the air strike and had wrought such destruction on

Kim and thousands of others. Kim publicly forgave him:

“Forgiveness made me free from hatred. I still have many scars on my body and severe pain most days but my heart is cleansed. Napalm is very powerful, but faith, forgiveness, and love are much more powerful. We would not have war at all if everyone could learn how to live with true love, hope, and forgiveness.” If that little girl in the picture can do it, ask yourself: Can you?

To forgive is one thing; to ask to be forgiven another. What courage, or daring of character, does it take for a person, or a community or a nation, to acknowledge that what it did to

someone, or to a group or a country, was insensitive, vengeful, wrong, hurtful, and even utterly evil and unpardonable? Instead, we deny it, or sweep it under the carpet, trivialize it or rationalize it. And then wantonly obliterate it from our memory, from our own personal 'history books'.

Yet the history of all human beings, to one degree or another, whether real or perceived, is replete with acts of hurt – between two brothers, between a father and a son, a mother and a daughter, a husband a wife, a friend and a colleague – such that their pain can fester and ooze like pus year after year, with an ever-smouldering fire of distance, alienation, grievance and silent suffering. In our grand world of almost 8 billion people, with its 200 sovereign states, massive institutions and corporations, a family – however splintered and broken – may still be the real theatre of war where a brother is slighted and walks away from his brother, not to turn back for years, sometimes never. Estranged cousins and uncles, spouses and lovers meet each other at funerals in cold silence, shielding their hurt innocence ever so cunningly, yet wallowing in it like a corroding addiction.

Who amongst us is ever a part of history books? Who narrates our own 'trivial, ordinary' story in the 'Story of Civilization'? In which grand epic is any one of us really the tormented hero? We may occasionally see ourselves reflected in a play or in a film or in a novel, and proclaim: "See how life imitates art." But in truth who ever knows or cares about our story and our hopes and thwarted dreams, or our suffering that go on in the smithy of our own inner lives, in our own psychic shrines, and in our own hearts and souls?

Could it be that more than anything else – far more than what all is contained in the history books, and in the piercing stones and celebratory statues that dot the long road on our journey, this inner solitary world is what really defines us and reflects us,

and keeps making us what we are and what we ever become? Is this not the 'real' world that we must chisel, re-vision, harmonize and reconcile with all its forces, possibly with the Yoga of Forgiveness with eyes wide open!

A few years ago, on a hot, sultry weekend, some 150 of us had gathered in the city of Toronto in Canada to enter into this cavernous inner world and to see and learn about the debris of some hidden wounds that had piled there over the years and decades, and how it was haunting us in our sleep and in our waking moments, and robbing us of our freedom to be.

As hours rolled by, a frail and nervous woman stood up to open a window into the deeps of her inner world, as many of us had done earlier over the past days. She was 53, and a grandmother. "I have never dared to share this before ... I feel dirty and burdened. I was four when it happened... My grandfather abused me sexually..." she sobbed uncontrollably as she poured out a stream of hot and broken seething words: "It went on for many years... he has been dead for over 20 years... but I see him all the time ...in every man, even in my son... Until now I have never spoken a word about it for fear of humiliation... I have never forgiven him. I have never forgiven myself for keeping silent..."

It was a hot summer day, but a cold, slimy pain seized many hearts, obscuring any sense of life's warmth. For this woman, this dreadful memory and the fear of being humiliated had inevitably travelled through the ever-twisting corridors of her mind for 50 years, and they would surely accompany her to her grave some 20, 30, 50 years hence unless she learnt to break their spell and their power.

But how?

Even as millions amongst us all over the world struggle with dementia, for all of us the most excruciating struggle is to

forget real or perceived ‘unforgivable acts’ of violence, hurts, slights, resentments, disappointments and anger. “Only if I could forget,” we moan again and again.

Only if....

In the Gospel of Thomas, we read:

“If you bring forth what is within you, what you bring forth will save you.

If you don’t bring forth what is within you, what you don’t bring forth will destroy you.”

A Maori proverb says: “Turn your face towards the sun, and the shadows will fall behind you.”

How long can we go on being chased by our own shadows?

There are no pills for exorcising these shadows; they must be chastened in the smithy of our own souls, through our commitment to the triumph of life over the sloth of death.

Beyond revenge, beyond our notions of justice and retribution, beyond good and evil, in learning to forget and forgive the others and ourselves, and in daring to ask for forgiveness for the hurt caused to all near and dear ones and indeed to one and all, in the illuminating words of Thomas Hardy, we may begin to see that we all wear “but one mask of many worn by the Great Face behind.”

*If a seed in dark, dingey water
Can blossom into such a beautiful lotus
What might not you and I, my love
Become in our journey to the Moon!*

To err is human; to forgive, divine.

-Alexander Pope

A Perfect Equality



When things happen which are not what we expect, what we hope for, what we want, which are contrary to our desires, in our ignorance we call them misfortunes and lament. But if we were to become a little wiser and observe the deeper consequences of these very same events, we would find that they are leading us rapidly towards the Divine, the Beloved. ...

One must already be very strong, very far along the way, to be able to face success and the little enjoyments it brings without giving way. Those who can do this, those who are strong, do not run after success; they do not seek it, and accept it with indifference. For they know and appreciate the value of the lashes given by unhappiness and misfortune.

But ultimately the true attitude, the sign and proof that we are near the goal, is a perfect equality which enables us to accept success and failure, fortune and misfortune, happiness and sorrow with the same tranquil joy; for all these things become marvellous gifts that the Lord in his infinite solicitude showers upon us.

The Mother ('The Great Adventure', p. 276)

What Equality Means and What It Does Not



Equality means a quiet and unmoved mind and vital, it means not to be touched or disturbed by things that happen or things said or done to you ... not to speak and act in the rush and impulsion of things, always to act and speak out of a calm inner poise of the spirit. ...

Equality means another thing – to have an equal view of men and their nature and acts and the forces that move them ... in ordinary life personal feeling and sensitiveness are a constant part of human nature and may be needed there for self-defence ... But for a sadhak, to surmount them and live rather in the calm strength of the spirit is an essential part of his progress. ...

Equality does not mean a fresh ignorance or blindness, it does not call for and need not initiate a greyness of vision and a blotting out of all hues. Difference is there, variation of expression is there ... But behind the variation we shall always see the Complete and Immutable who dwells within it and we shall feel, know or at least, if it is hidden from us, trust in the wise purpose and divine necessity of the particular manifestation, whether it appear to our human standards harmonious and perfect or crude and unfinished or even false and evil.

Sri Aurobindo

A Preface on National Education

The necessity and unmixed good of universal education has become a fixed dogma to the modern intelligence, a thing held to be beyond dispute by any liberal mind or awakened national conscience, and whether the tenet be or not altogether beyond cavil, it may at any rate be presumed that it answers to a present and imperative need of the intellectual and vital effort of the race. But there is not quite so universal an agreement or common attainment to a reasoned or luminous idea on what education is or practically or ideally should be.

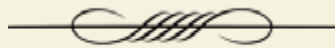
For if we do not know very clearly what education in general truly is or should be, we seem still less to know what we mean by national education. All that appears to be almost unanimously agreed on is that the teaching given in the existing schools and universities has been bad in kind and in addition denationalising, degrading and impoverishing to the national mind, soul and character because it is overshadowed by a foreign hand and foreign in aim, method, substance and spirit. But this purely negative agreement does not carry us very far: it does not tell us what in principle or practice we desire or ought to put in its place. There may be much virtue in an epithet but to tag on the word “national” to a school or college or even a Council or Board of Education, to put that into the hands of an indigenous agency, mostly of men trained in the very system we are denouncing, to reproduce that condemned system with certain differences, additions, subtractions, modifications of detail and curriculum, to tack on a technical side and think we have solved the problem does not really change anything.

I presume that it is something more profound, great and searching that we have in mind and that, whatever the difficulty of giving it shape, it is an education proper to the Indian soul and need and temperament and culture that we are in quest

of, not indeed something faithful merely to the past, but to the developing soul of India, to her future need, to the greatness of her coming self-creation, to her eternal spirit. It is this that we have to get clear in our minds and for that we must penetrate down to fundamentals and make those firm before we can greatly execute. Otherwise nothing is easier than to start off on a false but specious cry or from an unsound starting-point and travel far away from the right path on a tangent that will lead us to no goal but only to emptiness and failure.

Sri Aurobindo

(In the Arya, Vol. 7, No. 4, 15 Nov & 15 Dec 1920, pp. 268-270)



Spiritual life is not prayer or petition. It is profound devoutness, silent meditation, the opening of the consciousness to the innermost depths of the soul, which connect the individual self directly with the Divine Principle. Those who learn this art do not require any external assistance, any belief in dogma or participation in ritual. They acquire the creative vision since they combine absorption with detachment. They act in the world, but the passionless tranquility of the spirit remains undisturbed. They are compared to the lotus on the lake which is unruffled by the tide.

S. Radhakrishnan (The Bhagavadgita, p. 198)

Few people are capable of expressing with equanimity opinions which differ from the prejudices of their social environment. Most people are even incapable of forming such opinions.

Albert Einstein

The Time Is Now

Dan Millman

If I am not for myself,

Who will be for me?

And if I am only for myself,

What am I?

And if not now, when?

-Hillel the Elder (110 B.C.-10 A.D.)

One night, Socrates did two uncharacteristic things: First, he handed me a pen and some paper and told me to take notes; second, without further explanation, he spoke for as long as I'd ever heard him speak at one time.

"You find yourself here, in the midst of an experiment in human evolution," he began. "What you set in motion now, in your personal life, as a part of the body of humanity, will have farther-reaching consequences than you can possibly imagine. We humans are still children, playing with forces larger than ourselves. But we are growing up fast.

"The challenge and the opportunity of this moment in history are only beginning to dawn on us. We are just waking up.

"You are not here only to grow up and go to schools and work and make money and marry and raise children and retire. These occupations only form the backdrop in the Theatre of Life. They provide the wrapping, but they are not the gift – only the means of your education – important aspects of life, but not the purpose of it, not the whole of it.

"Life develops what it demands. The issues you face are the spiritual weights you lift to strengthen yourself. Your task is to shine through the petty details of your life, not to get preoccupied with them. And when life puts hurdles in your path, my friend, you had better become a hurdler.

“There may come a day when you begin to see beneath the surface of life, and read the meaning between the lines. There may come a day when you welcome the hurdles and obstacles of daily life as the means of your training. Then you will thank Spirit for *everything* that is given, whether you call it good or bad, easy or difficult. Your preferences will begin to drop away, and you will embrace what is.

“Maybe you think you’re too busy just staying afloat, or don’t have the time. When your back hurts or your stomach aches, or when your relationship is in trouble, these concerns can monopolize your attention; you think, I’ve got no time for bliss right now; I have to get this report in by noon tomorrow! So the truth that sets you free gets buried at the bottom of the ‘IN’ box. You look for immediate solutions to life’s little problems. Drowning in a deluge of details, you grab for anything that floats, when, with a simple shift of attention, you could enjoy the water.

“Right now, in this and every moment, you are engaged in a great battle! The shadows of fear and insecurity sing you to sleep, call you into the cocoon. The temptation is strong to put your head in the sand where it’s quiet. Comfort and convenience, dreams and illusions, are the ego’s cushions – false hopes and fairy tales.

“Don’t be caught unaware. This is the time of the greatest growth, the greatest opportunity, and the greatest work. Now, in our lifetime. Now is the time. *Now*.

“And so, I ask you: Where is your commitment? Knowing all this, what will you do? Examine your possibilities; look beyond your imagined limits; see your habits, your addictions, and your fears. Resolve to go beyond them, and then act. Make this commitment to grow beyond yourself the centre of your life. Understand that daily life is more than it seems.

Use it. Find the courage and love to adapt to and live an enlightened life – not because it will ‘get you somewhere’, but because you understand the Way.

“I, and others like me, can serve as a bridge between you and the heart of the universe, until the time comes when you no longer need any bridges – when you realize that you are the universe, and you are the heart.”

Socrates stopped as abruptly as he had begun. A light rain started pattering on the office window as I shook out my hand from taking rapid notes and gathered the papers. I knew he had told me something important, but I didn’t realise how I would share it, until now.

Reproduced from The Call Beyond, Vol. 20, No. 3, p. 30, 1995



The very essence of endurance is that the vital should learn to give up its capricious likes and dislikes and preserve an equanimity in the midst of the most trying conditions. When you are treated roughly by somebody or you lack something which would relieve your discomfort, you must keep up cheerfully instead of letting yourself be disturbed.

The Mother

To cultivate equanimity we practice catching ourselves when we feel attraction or aversion, before it hardens into grasping or negativity.

Pema Chodron

Equanimity is calamity’s medicine.

Publilius Syrus

How Did They Know?



“This painting was done by
artist Walter Molino in 1962....
and he titled the painting “Life in 2022”

Look what C.S. Lewis said in 1942. I just read it and got chills, and joy come over me.

C.S. Lewis 1942

Satan: "I will cause anxiety,
fear and panic.
I will shutdown
business, schools,
places of worship
and sports events.
I will cause economic turmoil".

Jesus: "I will bring together neighbours,
restore the family unit,
I will bring dinner back
to the kitchen table.
I will help people slow down their lives
and appreciate what really matters.
I will teach my children to rely on me
and not the world.
I will teach my children to trust me
and not their money and material resources."

Individual Instinct, Collective Intelligence

... what is called 'instinct' in animals is simply obedience to the spirit of the species which always knows what ought and ought not to be done.

The Mother

Sweet Children of the Sweet Mother,



You have all seen ants. You may love them for their hard work, discipline and teamwork, or laugh at them for the stupidity that lands them in a syrup from which they can never swim back alive, or hate them because in no time a whole battalion of ants may occupy a box of your

favourite sweets; but you cannot ignore them. They are very real, and have a way of making their presence felt.

But what everybody knows about ants is only a tiny bit. Experts tell us that there is a large variety of ants, and some of them resemble us so much as to make us feel embarrassed. We grow grass; ants grow fungi. We keep cows to get milk; ants keep aphids to get honeydew – a sugary sticky liquid. Like us, ants have armies that fight wars, manufacture their own chemical sprays which they use as weapons, and capture slaves. They exchange information. Can you guess something that we do but ants don't? Ants don't use smartphones.



One thing that the ants can teach us is how, in a group, to be many individuals and yet be one as a group – not exactly



A few ants with their pet aphids

of twigs becomes necessary, all of them immediately shift to collection of twigs of the size now required. It is as if the entire ant colony is part of a 'WhatsApp' group, and one of them just has to send a message which all of them get instantaneously.

If ants are amazing, their close cousins, termites are astounding. Like ants, there are many varieties of termites too. Their colonies may consist of a few hundred to a few million termites each, with well-defined structural differences to suit clearly identified roles: collection of food, defence and reproduction. Some of the termites have a lifespan of up to 50 years. They construct houses, called nests (the underground part) and mounds (the part visible above the ground), of amazing strength and beauty, complete with columns and arches. Imagine two groups of termites constructing two adjacent columns, one little pellet at a time. After the columns reach a certain height, both the groups start curving their column. The result is that eventually the columns meet and what they get is an arch. How do both groups know when to start curving the column, and to curve it exactly to the same extent at the same pace? *Even if it is some chemicals (called pheromones) that they let into the air and it is the 'smell' of these chemicals that they use for communication, the intelligence involved in decoding a 'smell' in terms of the radius of the arch surpasses all understanding.* Not only is the structure strong, huge and artistic, it is also air-conditioned, with a well-

unity in diversity, but certainly unity in plurality. If the ants have to construct an ant hill for which twigs of a certain size are required, thousands of ants start collecting twigs of exactly that size. And, after the construction of the hill has reached a certain stage, and a change in the size

of twigs becomes necessary, all of them immediately shift to collection of twigs of the size now required. It is as if the entire ant colony is part of a 'WhatsApp' group, and one of them just has to send a message which all of them get instantaneously.

ventilated cool area. Made by blind insects in total darkness, a termite mound is a marvel of engineering, a humbling lesson for human beings.



A termite mound.

A close look at small little insects like ants and termites makes us wonder at the variety of ways in which the Infinite Intelligence of the Creator expresses itself in the creation. Insects are driven primarily by their

instincts. Instincts don't have to be taught. Instinct is an in-built mechanism in each individual, which motivates the individual towards activities and choices that favour its survival, and even more, the preservation of the species. Instinct is intelligent enough, but amazing feats become possible only when the insects work in groups. *One might say that each individual insect is like an organ in a human being.* The lungs, the stomach, and the kidneys have no personal agenda. Each organ is content to play its role to ensure the survival of the individual human being. Each individual human being has a soul. Similarly, individual insects have no personal agenda. They are quite content to contribute to the survival of their kind, and to die leaving behind enough progeny to continue working the way they themselves worked. Since the whole group behaves in a way similar



A termite mound. The giraffe next to it gives an idea of how big the mound is.

to an individual human, they are considered to have a group soul.

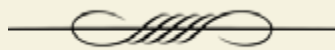
We shall continue this dialogue month after month. In the meantime, do two things. *First*, keep your ears open to the whispers of the intelligence hidden in all the insects in your surroundings – including spiders, wasps and cockroaches. *Secondly*, if you have any questions, please send an e-mail to callbeyond@aurobindoonline.in.

With love, CB

(Based on *Whispers of Nature*. Edited by Vijay. Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Society, 1981, pp. 38-41).

For a 4-minute video on the amazing architecture of termite mounds, you may go to the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jbbLCgh6sso&app=desktop>



The more a person is quiet in front of all occurrences, equal in all circumstances, and keeps a perfect mastery of himself and remains peaceful in the presence of whatever happens, the more he has progressed towards the goal.

The Mother

The last gift a parent can give to children is to teach them, through example, how to face death with equanimity.

Irvin D. Yalom

It is equality that is meant by yoga.

The Gita (2:48)

Feedback and Encouraging Words

Feedback from an Alumna of the Course on Teaching Yoga

Dear Sir,

Your regular e-mails and issues of 'Realization' and 'The Call Beyond' provide solace in the perplexity of the present, and reassuring continuity with our time in the Ashram. Not a day goes by without nostalgia, and my recalling some beautiful, heart-warming memory of the Integral Yoga course.

I feel divinely blessed by the Mother and Sri Aurobindo for having been brought into your presence and guidance, and being able to experience it before the world changed overnight! All that theory and practice has helped me immeasurably in adjusting to this changed reality, and the demands it continues to present, by viewing it as an OSG (Opportunity for Spiritual Growth). I feel eternally grateful to Them and you for this enrichment, and being shown the path towards higher consciousness through Yoga.

Ashoka (Bindra)

*An alumna of the Course on Teaching Yoga, 2019
(in an e-mail dated 16 October 2020)*



Feedback from Donors

Dear Ashram Family,

My gratitude to The Mother's International School (MIS) is eternal for having given my child the culturally rich and yet grounded background to her education .

With all good wishes,

Mira Shekhar

(in an e-mail dated 20 October 2020)

Dear Tara Didi,

It was my good fortune that we could make a humble contribution towards all the wonderful work which you are carrying out for children and the society at large. We wholeheartedly appreciate and laud the great job being done by Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch in so many parts of the country.

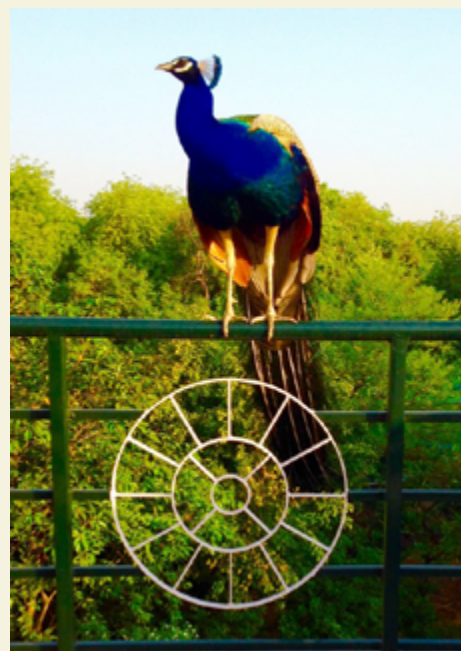
Kindly let us know if we can be of any assistance in your selfless endeavours!

With Kind Regards

Sumita Dutta

Steel Authority of India Ltd.

(in an e-mail dated 26 October 2020)



The Call Beyond (Spanish Edition)

We are happy to share with you that selections from 'The Call Beyond' are being translated into Spanish by a devotee, Mr. Marcelo de Aquino Vicente, and published on-line from Argentina.

Mr. Marcelo de Aquino Vicente, a devotee who has visited the Ashram several times with groups of yoga enthusiasts from Argentina, felt that it was in our Ashram and from 'The Call Beyond' that he got a good and authentic picture of Integral Yoga. He is charged with the passion to share this knowledge with the Spanish speaking world. With this idea, he has decided, to start with, to translate selected articles from 'The Call Beyond' into Spanish.

Mr. Marcelo de Aquino Vicente may be contacted on: thecallbeyond_es@nadabrahman.com.ar.

Website: www.nada.com.ar



Contact us

*Our quarterly magazine in Hindi, **Sri Aravind Karmadhara**, is also available on-line now, and may be viewed on our website www.sriaurobindoashram.net.*

*For a free subscription to **Sri Aravind Karmadhara**, please send an e-mail to sakarmdhara@gmail.com*

*To get **The Call Beyond** online regularly, month after month, please send an e-mail to: callbeyond@aurobindoonline.in*

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

Please send your feedback to
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