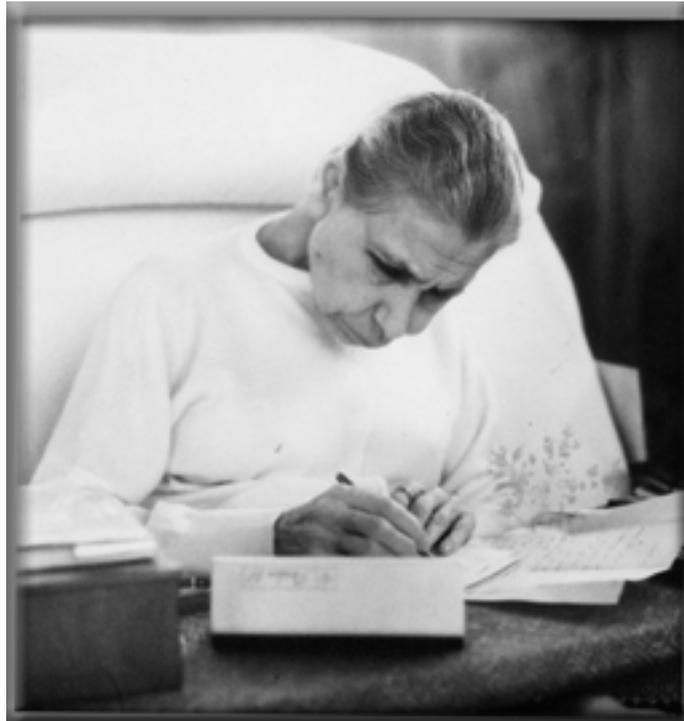


# THE CALL BEYOND

Volume 41 // No. 12 // 15 Dec 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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*Is the Mean Always Golden?*

*Here must the traveller of the upward way –  
For daring Hell's kingdoms winds the heavenly route –  
Pause or pass slowly through that perilous space,  
A prayer upon his lips and the great Name.*

SRI AUROBINDO (*Savitri*, Book 2, Canto 7, p. 210, SABCL Edition)

Excess of everything is bad, and moderation is the golden mean. This is conventional wisdom, and suits particularly a conventional society like ours. But all progress depends on questioning conventional wisdom. Moderation in food, work and speech is understandable, but how about being just moderately good. Is there anything wrong with being better than the average? This question is not as irrelevant to spirituality as it may look.

Spiritually speaking, all creation is a manifestation of the Divine. But all creation manifests its inherent divinity to varying degrees. Human beings also manifest only a small fraction of it, but are unique among creatures on earth in having the urge and the capacity to express more of it during their lifetime. Expressing divinity to the extent of becoming one with the Divine is the goal of yoga, and the ultimate goal and destiny of all human beings. What this union requires is that the body and the mind should act entirely in light of the soul, which is our divine essence. But this apparently simple proposition is rendered difficult by a thick veil that separates our surface being from the soul; what guides the body and the mind is the ego, a rather autonomous and delinquent deputy of the soul. Soul also has a faithful deputy, rather its dynamic companion, the psychic being. Discovering the psychic being, and consciously letting it prevail in day to day life, is a major component of integral yoga of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother. Through this process, the veil that separates the soul from the surface keeps getting thinner; thinning of the veil leads to the spiritual evolution of the individual. Finally, the veil becomes transparent. At this point, the contact with the psychic being becomes spontaneous and constant, and life is organized entirely around this awareness. Reaching this point is the goal of yoga. Reaching the goal of yoga is more than a lifetime's job for most of us. But the progress made in one lifetime is not a waste. Where we reach at the end of a life is the point from where we begin in the next life. The result is that individuals arrive in the world at different stages of spiritual evolution, or different levels of consciousness. As in any such process, the majority are born at the average level of consciousness. The level of consciousness is reflected in the person's basic nature and behaviour. Those at a level distinctly lower than the average are perhaps our criminals; those distinctly above the average are the saintly types.

It is because of the tendency of the society to treat the average as normal, and as a corollary, any marked deviation from the average as abnormal that the saintly people get isolated, and sometimes even persecuted and punished by the society. The person at a high level of consciousness may disregard conventions and listen rather to the voice of her deepest Self, the psychic being. Further, being driven by universal love, she may go beyond the call of duty, lose time or money, and forgive rather than seek revenge. These acts are judged by the average person as stupid. She may vehemently discard religious symbols and ceremonies, which earns her the title 'stubborn'. She may be only moderately involved in the family, but spend considerable time outside home helping others. She may be doing it for the joy of giving, but the family thinks she is 'self-centred', and is doing it for building up a good image in society. The irony is that strangers admire her while those close to her criticize her.

This is simply because what she does has either a favourable impact, or no impact, on the lives of these strangers. Everybody knows in the heart of hearts what is good, and therefore these strangers admire her. While those close to her also see this goodness, they do not appreciate it because this very goodness has a negative impact on them, materially or on their social standing. In short, for the society in general, spiritual people are easy to admire from a distance, but difficult to have a close relationship with.

For the spiritual seeker, more important than changing others or running away from them is to look within. The biggest difficulties and challenges for the seeker are from within rather than from the people around him. The seeker should make sure that he is not impatient; is conscious of his own weaknesses such as ambition, anger, greed, lust and attachment, and is willing to work on them; is not distracted by tempting side lanes such as astrology, reiki or past life regression; and is not blindly following a fake 'guru'. If the person keeps clear of the pitfalls on the spiritual path, he can go on doing, as the Mother says, what is right with simplicity and sincerity without bothering about the reactions of others. For the 'others', the mean is golden, and they do not care for anything better than gold.

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*Please see also the Article 'The Middling Meddling Middle' and the column 'may i help you' in this issue.*

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## article

### *The Middling Meddling Middle*

SHISHU

*To be the common man they think the best,  
To live as others live is their delight.  
For most are built on Nature's earthly plan  
And owe small debt to a superior plane;  
The human average is their level pitch,  
A thinking animal's material range.*

SRI AUROBINDO (*Savitri*, Book 11, Canto 1, p. 689, SABCL edition)

Staying in an Ashram has over the years made me acutely aware of an uncomfortable dilemma faced by those consciously trying to walk the spiritual path. The dilemma is created because they are either not understood or misunderstood, most of all by their near and dear ones.

Imagine a girl doing well in school and college declaring to her parents that she neither wants to look for a regular job nor get married because she is deeply troubled by a social evil (say, corruption, dowry, or child labour), and wants to spend the rest of her life trying to eradicate the evil from the society, or at least ameliorate its worst effects. The parents would treat it as almost a tragedy. The only thing worse than that would perhaps be that she finds a Guru and decides to live in an Ashram. In that case, the parents may even conclude that their daughter needs psychiatric help. Things are only slightly better if similar tendencies are shown by a boy.

The above scenario is an extreme, which is clearly seen by the family as a crisis. Much more common is the cold war that goes on in families because the husband wants to give up a lucrative job because the job involves being a party to some unethical practices which are the norm in his company, or the wife decides to volunteer at an NGO rather than do a job. If she does not want to do a job, she is expected to at least look after the house and her family. A young woman may shield her children from her mother-in-law for fear of her children getting inspired by the mythological tales told by their grandmother. A boy's parents may wonder why he is not full of bitterness towards his wife who has spoiled his life. A girl going through a divorce may surprise her parents by her not being interested in extracting maximum possible money from her husband who has ruined her life. A husband may feel jealous of a Guru with whom his wife seems to have a strong emotional bond. A young person who is not interested in partying, and when somehow trapped in a party finds the conversation there a waste of time, is considered snobbish, or at least a simpleton. The person who sticks to his work rather than participate in office gossip about the boss, pay scales and promotions is a 'bore'. The examples assume many forms, but what is common to them all is an odd individual who looks at life differently as compared to those around him, and therefore makes choices that appear stupid to his near and dear ones. The most charitable view that this odd individual gets is that he is too idealistic, and therefore a misfit in the real world.

### **Why does it happen?**

The conflict between a person who is basically very good, in fact, much better than the average, and those who are close to him, love him, want to see him happy, results primarily from the choices that this good person makes, and how those choices are viewed by those around him. The choices that we make in life come from one of three levels: feelings, thinking, and a deep inner voice that may be called the voice of the soul. Feelings push us towards choices that would make us feel good right here and now. Thinking involves looking at pros and cons of the various choices available. It draws up a sort of balance sheet of profit and loss, immediate and long-term gains, risk and benefit, etc. After a laborious analysis, it guides us towards choices that are, on the whole, the most profitable and least risky. The soul pulls us towards choices that emanate from selfless love. These are the choices that give joy, lasting mental peace, a sense of fulfillment, and spiritual growth. But these are the choices that also involve a loss, may be loss of money or time, and may involve a risk such as that involved in entering a burning building to rescue survivors who may be trapped inside. We might say that the choices of the soul are based on our finest and purest feelings. Thus the choice is essentially between raw unrefined feelings, purified feelings, and the intellect. The choices based on raw feelings are quickly dismissed as silly, short-sighted or evil. Hence the conflict between the good person and his well-wishers is essentially the conflict between purified feelings and the intellect. Paying heed to the purified feelings makes us lose money or time, which can be measured; but it also makes us gain the joy of giving, lasting mental peace and spiritual growth, none of which can be measured. That is why, when the well-wishers of the good person use mental calculations to judge him, they can easily see, and prove, what he has lost, but fail to appreciate what he has gained. They can only see the happiness that comes from physical comforts or a big bank balance. They fail to appreciate the joy of giving, which feels better and lasts longer than the happiness of getting. That is why most parents also want their child to be good, but not too good. They want him to be good enough to avoid going to jail, but not so good as to give up his wealth, power or position for the sake of doing something that will make this world a better place. Their argument is that he will waste his life but the world will continue to be a wretched place. They are right in that the world may not change, at least not much, but what they miss is that their child would actually fulfilled the very purpose of his life.

## Why are the choices different?

The choices that we make are a function of our consciousness. To put it simply, all of us have a soul, the source of an inner Light that can guide us the best. A person who makes all choices in life based on the voice of this infallible guide is a saint. But most of us are not normally aware of this infallible guide. We use primarily our feelings and the intellect (the surface mind) as our guides. But the division of the guides is not complete. A veil separates the soul from the surface mind. However, light from the soul can filter out of the veil and illumine the surface mind. The amount of light that can filter out depends on the thickness of the veil. The veil in the good person is thin; most people around him have a thicker veil. Another way of putting it is that the good person is at a higher level of consciousness than those around him. That is why the choices made by him do not make sense to the majority.

## The purpose of life

The really important point is that the level of consciousness need not remain the same throughout life. Actually, the purpose of human life is served only if life is used for rising in consciousness. To rise in consciousness, while making choices in life, we should pay heed to the voice of the soul. If we do that often enough, the veil that hinders the light of the soul from reaching the surface mind keeps getting thinner, and the consciousness keeps rising. Rising in consciousness is also called spiritual growth. Accepting spiritual growth as the purpose of life is not difficult because the choices that lead to spiritual growth give us just about everything that we are looking for – joy, lasting mental peace, absence of conflict, a sense of well being that is independent of external circumstances, good health, and a sense of fulfillment. However, all these gains are subjective. The good person can feel them within but his near and dear ones cannot see them. Since they have not experienced these joys, they cannot even understand them. They have spent their life pursuing happiness in goals that are concrete, palpable and measurable. Even if achieving some of these goals has not given them the joys that they were looking for, they persist in inventing new goals of the same type in the hope that more of the same will do it. Labouring under this illusion, they have no hesitation in imposing their yardsticks of success and achievement, and their ideas about sources of happiness, also on their near and dear ones. Since most of their near and dear ones are also at the same level of consciousness, they respond favourably. It is only the rare odd one out, who may be younger in age but far ahead in level of consciousness, who turns out to be the inconvenient stupid fellow who refuses to see reason. Yes, truly he does not care for reason because he is paying heed to something higher than reason. The soul is higher than reason but does not work in the same way as reason. Reason calculates and guides us to gains that are measurable and objective. The soul guides us to gains that cannot be measured and are subjective. *Reason may justify temptations that make us waste life. The soul tempts us to joys that fulfill the purpose of life.*

## What can the spiritual seeker do about it?

What the spiritual seeker can do in such situations is to use this difficult situation also as an opportunity to look within, and then, if necessary, reset the button of his relationships.

### *Looking within*

The seeker should make sure that his aspiration is sincere. Is his aspiration based on a genuine call from within, or does he see in spirituality an opportunity for an achievement more respectable than wealth, power and position? Is it an aspiration which is spontaneous, which he has lived with for a long time, or is it a 'fit of renunciation' precipitated by unrequited love or failure in business? Having made sure that the person is looking upon spirituality neither as an easy way to greatness nor as an escape from difficulties of life, he should do what he is doing with conviction without caring much about what others think.

### *Dealing with others*

The person may decide not to care about what others think of him, but he still has to deal with them. Here are a few useful tips the seeker can use for dealing with the people around him with minimum harm to relationships and maximum spiritual growth for himself and others.

1. Be humble. The spiritual seeker may be ahead of the people around him on the spiritual journey, but looking at how much distance even he has to cover, and the jerky nature of the journey, there is no justification for even the least bit of arrogance..

2. Laugh at yourself. One of the best ways to express humility is to miss no opportunity to laugh at oneself. If someone calls you stupid, it saves time and much bitterness if you agree readily and laugh it away than if you get into a debate.

3. Be understanding. The spiritual seeker may not agree with those around her but has to understand them. Further, she has to understand them without expecting to be understood. If she is truly living at a higher plane of consciousness, it should be easy for her to understand herself as well as others. The view from a height includes what lies below. The view from any level does not reveal much of what lies above. Therefore, it is the spiritual seeker who has the capacity to understand herself as well as others. The others around her can understand each other but cannot understand her.

4. Accept things as they are. Once you understand why you are in conflict with your well-wishers, you can accept the situation better. Then you realize that you cannot please everybody. Moreover, you do not have to please everybody.

5. Love them even if you do not like them. You may not like them; you may reject their advice; but love them for their intentions. Their intention is to see you happy. Even more importantly, love them as manifestations of the Divine. They may be slightly more imperfect than you, but they are also branches of the same tree.

6. It is give and take. Loving those whom we do not like, and seeing the Divine in them, is a challenge, and meeting that challenge is our opportunity for our own spiritual growth. Thus, having a few such people in life is a blessing; they are giving us an opportunity for progressing on the journey of life. On the other hand, the spiritual seeker's positivity may influence others; this is their opportunity to take something from the seeker. Thus people with varying levels of consciousness can exchange with one another opportunities for spiritual growth. That is why they are brought together so often.

7. Do not try to change others. The majority of mankind consists of what the Mother calls "the favourites of nature". They live primarily at the physical-vital level, and love the way they live. They have difficulties and come out of them, but they are not interested in going to the root of the difficulties. Their life has a rhythm of its own, and it is better not to disturb that rhythm.

8. Be ready for the price. A certain degree of isolation is a small price to pay for being different from the majority. But the quality of the goal before the seeker is enough compensation and justification for the price.

9. Forge new relationships. The isolation of the spiritual seeker is not complete. Many encounters, some seemingly accidental, bring her in contact with people who understand her. The activities organized by spiritual organizations play an important role in this process. They bring 'like-minded' people together at one place. That is how a spiritual seeker discovers at such places people who are at a similar level of consciousness, and therefore interested in similar activities. The result is that the person may feel isolated within her biological family; friends may distance themselves from her; but she now gets incorporated into a new family, which may be called her spiritual family. The new relationships that emerge have been called 'spiritual partnerships' by Gary Zukav. Spiritual partnership is different from a friendship. *Friends celebrate joys together and help each other navigate through difficulties. Spiritual partners help each other use joys and sorrows for spiritual growth.*

10. Create a distance, if necessary. Only as a last resort should one consider creating a geographical distance from inconvenient near and dear ones; but that is also an option that might have to be used. Whether to use this option depends on the balance between the level of spiritual development of the seeker and the degree of negativity around her. The higher the spiritual development of the seeker, the more she develops a spiritual armour that shields her from her surroundings. The greater the negativity in the surroundings, the more difficult it is to remain unaffected and undisturbed. If the balance is such that the seeker's spiritual armour is not strong enough to shield her from the negativity around her, it may become necessary to create a geographical distance from the surroundings. But it should be done without bitterness towards those from whom she is moving away. If they feel bitter towards her, that is their business. She is the one who is looking at the scene from a higher level. Therefore, she is the one who has to understand them, and her understanding will arouse in her compassion for them, not bitterness.

### **Closing thoughts**

The crux of the issue is that there is an average in every sphere of life, and the majority hovers around that average. That is why that level is the average for the society! Those who deviate significantly from the average are, in the language of statistics, outliers. The average is considered 'normal'; the outliers who are significantly below the average are considered dull and useless while those significantly above are called geniuses and achievers. This applies to fields such as literature, science, music or sports. But in those fields this type of distribution of talent does not create any major problem because even those at the average level can relate to the deviations from 'normal' in terms of their understanding and experience. A similar distribution (statisticians call it the bell-shaped distribution) exists also in the level of consciousness. But this is a field somewhat foreign to ordinary understanding and experience. Therefore, the outliers who are at a level significantly above the average are either not understood or misunderstood. Since the majority are close to the average, they understand each other, and declare the outlier as 'abnormal'. Their easy, and very logical but flawed defense lies in arguments such as 'if so many think so, they must be right'; 'this person alone cannot be right'; 'this person does not listen to anybody because he thinks too much of himself'. The result is that, as in other fields, in spirituality also the average is equated with 'normal', but here a level distinctly higher than the average is called 'abnormal', especially when the higher level of consciousness starts getting reflected in outer life. The average person's zest for life comes from a list of pending desires; one of his joys is the pursuit of unfulfilled desires; and fulfillment of a desire is to him an occasion for celebration. But he cannot understand the joy of consciously 'not wanting', the ecstasy of overcoming a pending desire, and the fulfillment that follows giving something as an expression of true love. Almost impossible for the average person is to understand how anybody can celebrate an incurable disease or a disastrous marriage as an opportunity for spiritual growth. No wonder, the 'normal' middle has a tendency to drag their 'abnormal' near and dear one into their fold. To do that, they meddle with her life with a sense of self-righteousness. That poses for the spiritual seeker the dilemma whether to conform and fit in, or to rebel at the risk of damaging the relationships to which the seeker still feels emotionally attached. Sometimes the seeker even starts questioning whether her path is truly better than the well-trodden path of the majority, the path that her well-wishers want her too to walk. That is the muddle which the middling and meddling middle creates.

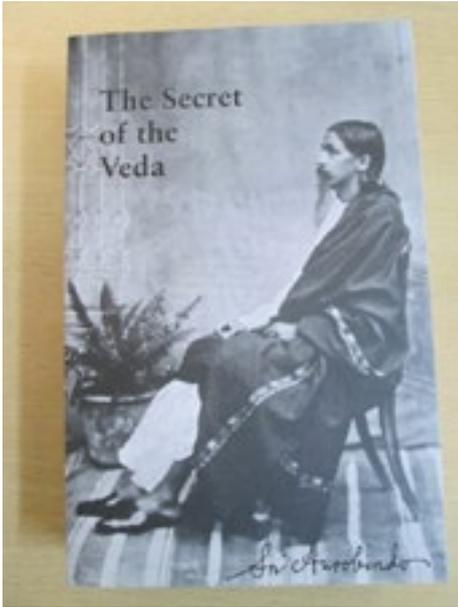
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*Please see also the Editorial 'Is the Mean Always Golden' and the column 'may i help you' in this issue.*

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## Conquest over the Dasyus

UDHAV SUREKA



*The article is the thirteenth and final in a series based on Sri Aurobindo's 'The Secret of the Veda'*

We have tried to unravel many secrets of the Veda in the past few articles and have now reached the end of the series. We have understood not to take the Veda as merely a book of rituals for the fulfilment of human desires but as the foremost book of spiritual knowledge, a profound expression of the Rishis, seers of the Truth. We have learnt to look beyond the words of the Veda and their common meaning and comprehend their deeper, psychological import. And thus, we have come to see the Veda as a representation of the ascent of consciousness from the darkness of Ignorance to the Infinite Truth and Beatitude of the Supramental Consciousness.

In this representation, the Veda made *yajña*, the physical act of sacrifice, as its centrepiece and medium for invoking a wide spectrum of deities such as Agni, Indra, Saraswati, Brihaspati, etc. which are all symbols of psychological phenomena of an illumined consciousness. Sri Aurobindo writes:

*“The sacrifice is the giving by man of what he possesses in his being to the higher or divine nature and its fruit is the farther enrichment of his manhood by the lavish bounty of the gods. The wealth thus gained constitutes a state of spiritual riches, prosperity, felicity which is itself a power for the journey and a force of battle.”(1)*

The battle here is the ongoing inner battle between the pure, illumined mind and life Powers, the *devas*, which continuously seek an ascent towards the Truth-consciousness, and the powers of ignorance, the *daityas* (called *dasyus* in the Veda), which constantly limit and obstruct one's progress. While the gods are the children of Aditi, symbol of Infinity, the undivided supreme consciousness; *dasyus* are the sons of *Diti*, of duality, of a divided consciousness.

*Dasyus* are known by various names such as Vritra, Pani, Atri, Rakshasa, Sambara, Vala, Namuchi, etc. They are all “*powers of division and limitation, Coverers, Tearers, Devourers, Confiners, Dualisers, Obstructers, as their names indicate, powers that work against the free and unified integrality of the being.*” They are in strict opposition to everything pure and good that the gods and the Aryan seers stand for. The seers have the will to act, *kāru*; the gods perfect their action, *sukratu*; but *dasyus* oppose both and are *akratu*. The seers find the sacred Word, the mantra or brahma, they are its singers, *brahmā*, the gods are invoked by it and they uphold it, *giravāhas*; but *dasyus* are haters and destroyers of the Word, *brahmadviṣaḥ* (2).

The gods are magnanimous givers of Light, *dasyus* are its withholders. This withholding is sometimes symbolized by the kidnapping of cows by the demon Pani, sometimes by the obstruction of waters by Vritra – both cows and waters being symbols of Light of the Truth. The gods must constantly fight the *dasyus* to recover the lost Light. This is the ongoing battle within the human mind and the Vedic sacrifice is its profound representation.

Sri Aurobindo explains, “*the Vedic idea was that the subconscious darkness and the ordinary life of ignorance held concealed in it all that belongs to the divine life and that these secret riches must be recovered first by destroying the impenitent powers of ignorance and then by possessing the lower life subjected to the higher... by the penetrating action of the Light and the Truth the powers of the ordinary ignorant sense-activity become subject to the Aryan.*”(3)

The release of the cows and the waters is like the advent of the divine Dawn and with it comes the release of the Sun of Truth. The Light then ascends the hill of being, the lower realms of body, *prana*, and mind, and makes way to “*the luminous upper ocean of the divine existence*”(4). This ascent to the home of the Sun, to *swar*, is the ascent to the state of Immortality. So is born from the Truth the supreme state of Ananda to which the Rishis aspired by the sacrifice.

With this, we conclude the series. Our aim was to present some of the most important portions of Sri Aurobindo’s masterwork, *The Secret of the Veda*, to help the readers get a glimpse of the spiritual significance of the Veda. Our selection and summary cannot do justice to the original. However, it may inspire some readers to read the original work and delve deeper into the mysteries of the Veda.

#### REFERENCES

- (1) *The Secret of the Veda*, p. 242, Line 25
- (2) *The Secret of the Veda*, p. 234, Line 10
- (3) *The Secret of the Veda*, p. 238, Para 42
- (4) *The Secret of the Veda*, p. 244, Line 24

## hundred years ago

### *The Inscrutable Incurable Mind\**

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



My mind was worried about being so constantly turned towards such petty things, moving in so narrow a circle of practical and immediate thoughts.

It has learned to see Thee in everything, Lord, and in the least thing it is aware of Thee and rejoices in Thee. But even while delighting in Thee thus and recognising Thee in the most futile things and activities as well as in the vastest and noblest, it wonders why these prevail over the others. Many a time during these last months has it tried to react against this tendency but always in vain; is it because Thou findest it well thus, or because it is incapable of being otherwise? It put the question to Thee, and as always Thy smile came to comfort it; but the precise answer has not made itself heard.

Now for this mind the least object becomes an unfathomable mystery, and everything is a constantly renewed cause for wonder.

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

\*Title given by the editor

## *The Synthesis of Yoga*

### *THE DIFFICULTIES OF THE MENTAL BEING*



There are two kinds of realisation of Self or Sachchidananda. One is that of the silent passive quietistic, self-absorbed, self-sufficient existence, consciousness and delight, one, impersonal, without play of qualities, turned away from the infinite phenomenon of the universe or viewing it with indifference and without participation. The other is that of the same existence, consciousness, delight, sovereign, free, lord of things, acting out of an inalienable calm, pouring itself out in infinite action and quality out of an eternal self-concentration, the one supreme Person holding in himself all this play of personality in a vast equal impersonality, possessing the infinite phenomenon of the universe without attachment but without any inseparable aloofness, with a divine mastery and an innumerable radiation of its eternal luminous self-delight-as a manifestation which he holds, but by which he is not held, which he governs freely and by which therefore he is not bound. ...

If it were easily possible to elevate ourselves to the supramental plane and, dwelling securely there, realise world and being, consciousness and action, outgoing and incoming of conscious experience by the power and in the manner of the divine supramental faculties, this realisation would offer no essential difficulties. But man is a mental and not yet a supramental being. It is by the mind therefore that he has to aim at knowledge and realise his being, with whatever help he can get from the supramental planes. ...

Realised mental being and realised spiritual being are really two different planes in the arrangement of our existence, the one superior and divine, the other superior and human. To the former belong infinite being, infinite consciousness and will, infinite bliss and the infinite comprehensive and self-effective knowledge of supermind, four divine principles; to the latter belong mental being, vital being, physical being, three human principles. In their apparent nature the two are opposed; each is the reverse of the other. The divine is infinite and immortal being; the human life is limited in time and scope and form, life that is death attempting to become life that is immortality. The divine is inattainable self-bliss and inviolable all-bliss; the human is sensation of mind and body seeking for delight, but finding only pleasure, indifference and pain. ...Between the two there are for the human being a veil and a lid which prevent the human not only from attaining but even from knowing the divine. ...

If we seek mentally to realise Sachchidananda, the mind will dwell on its aspect of the pure existence, Sat, and consciousness and bliss are compelled then to lose themselves or remain quiescent in the experience of pure, infinite being which leads to the realisation of the quietistic Monist. Or it will dwell on the aspect of consciousness, Chit, the existence and bliss become then dependent on the experience of an infinite transcendent Power and Conscious-Force, which leads to the realisation of the Tantric worshipper of Energy. Or it will dwell on the aspect of delight, Ananda, and existence and consciousness then seem to disappear into a bliss without basis of self-possessing awareness or constituent being, which leads to the realisation of the Buddhistic seeker of Nirvana.

Or it will dwell on some aspect of Sachhidananda which comes to the mind from the supramental knowledge, Will or Love, and then the infinite impersonal aspect of Sachhidananda is almost or quite lost in the experience of the Deity which leads to the realisations of the various religions and to the possession of some supernal world or divine status of the human soul in relation to God. ...

But the sadhaka of the integral Yoga has to harmonise all so that they may become a plenary and equal unity of the full realisation of Sachhidananda. Here the last difficulty of mind meets him, its inability to hold at once the unity and the multiplicity. The mind may even extend its experience of this Unity to the multiplicity so as to perceive it immanent in the universe and in each object, force, movement in the universe or at the same time to be aware of this Existence-Consciousness-Bliss containing the universe and enveloping all its objects and originating all its movements. It is difficult indeed for it to unite and harmonise rightly all these experiences; but still it can possess Sachhidananda at once in himself and immanent in all and the continent of all. But with this to unite the final experience of all this as Sachhidananda and possess objects, movements, forces, forms as no other than He, is the great difficulty for mind. Separately any of these things may be done; the mind may go from one to the other, rejecting one as it arrives at another and calling this the lower or that the higher existence. But to unify without losing, to integralise without rejecting is its supreme difficulty.

SRI AUROBINDO (In the *Arya*, Vol. 3, No. 5, 15 December 1916)

## *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.*

Children often pray in schools, and in the prayer they ask God for many things. When asked whether we really get everything that we pray for, they are quick to say “no”. When asked why God does not give us everything that we ask for, some of the answers given by children aged 7-11 years are:

- The prayer may not be sincere.
- What we are asking may not be good for us. God gives us only what is good for us.
- God wants us to make some effort to get what we want.
- We may be greedy asking for too many things. God does not want us to be greedy.

To improve upon these answers would be a challenge for most adults.

## *tip of the month*

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

*Whatever you do, do it in a quiet and composed poise. In peace and silence is the greatest strength.*

THE MOTHER

## twenty five years ago

### Dr. Karan Singh - an Integrated Personality

(An Interview by Sukhendu Roy Choudhury)

*Continued from the previous issue*

Dr. Karan Singh is one of the foremost thinkers of modern India and represents a synthesis of the traditions of the past and the scientific outlook of the present. When I approached him for an interview, he readily agreed.



*Dr. Karan Singh*

*Q. Arnold Toynbee talks about salvation of mankind through the Indian way – what is that way?*

A. The Indian way, as I see it, is the Vedantic way based upon:

*Vasudhaiva kutumbakam* (The world is a family)

*Ishwara sarvabhutaanam* (The Divine is in all human beings)

*Aatmani mokshaarthaaya jagat hitaaya cha* (Work for inner realization and welfare of all)

*Bahujan hitaaya bahujan sukhaaya cha* (Work for the welfare and happiness of many)

and such other universal concepts of Vedanta. I think that is what Arnold Toynbee had in mind while speaking about the Indian way. But for the last several years we have not been going along this way ourselves.

*Q. Taking into consideration the present scenario, do you feel optimistic about India's future? If not, why not? What are the causes of her present state of affairs?*

A. Basically, I am optimistic. I have a certain faith in India's destiny and in the strength of the teachings she has nurtured in her breast for so many centuries. However, the immediate prospect is a negative one. But in spite of the present situation we should be optimistic and then we can perhaps succeed, because if we do not have that then there is no question of success at all.

*Q. What role can the present generation play?*

A. They have to prepare and equip themselves physically, academically, intellectually, morally, aesthetically, and above all, spiritually to play a vital role and to build a new India. We are living in very exciting times; this is a period full of possibility and potential.

Excerpted from *The Call Beyond*, Vol. 16, No. 4, p 37-42.1991.(Concluded).

## poetry

*Death*

SHALINI AGGARWAL

Today I learnt something new about death,  
 I lived my life because of death.  
 I got up each day to work for what if there was no tomorrow,  
 I enjoyed each day for there may be no tomorrow.  
 I learnt, created, invented to leave a name behind,  
 I loved to be remembered by those who are left behind.  
 I prayed because I wanted a life after tomorrow,  
 I helped, gave alms to ease my tomorrow.  
 I made friends to help me with my tomorrow,  
 I helped others today so someone might help me tomorrow.  
 I was not lazy because death was waiting for me,  
 I was a pious person because death was waiting for me.  
 Were it was not for the looming shadow of death,  
 I would waste life seeking pleasures of the flesh.

*Editor's note:* Death is a physical necessity because age-related decline in function eventually takes the body to a point beyond which it cannot stay alive. Death is also a spiritual necessity because if we were assured of immortality in this very body on earth, we would forget the purpose of life, which is rising to a higher level of consciousness.

*One must never wish for death. One must never be afraid to die.*

-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](mailto:callbeyond@aurobindoonline.in)

'A' wants to know:

*I am on the spiritual path but have started fearing that if I continue further, I might get isolated. Is it a valid fear?*

The fear is indeed valid. Almost every person with a strong aspiration for spiritual progress gets a family in which there is, with luck, one more person with a similar aspiration, but most of the time there is none. Why it is so has at least two answers. First, the majority of mankind has no such aspiration, and therefore same is the case with the majority in a family. Second, a strong aspiration for spiritual progress is associated with a high level of consciousness. Why people with widely varying levels of consciousness are put together in the same family is an expression of the divine will, and therefore should have a meaning. Why people with widely varying levels of consciousness are put together in the same family is an expression of the divine will, and therefore should have a meaning.

As Sri Aurobindo has said, “There is a meaning in each curve and line” (1). The meaning seems to be that everybody in the family gets an opportunity to rise in consciousness through this arrangement. Those at the lower level can grow through inspiration from the one at the higher level. And those at the higher level can grow through seeing the Divine even in those at the lower level and thereby becoming non-judgmental and compassionate. Now, why does this arrangement tend to isolate the spiritual seeker? For the simple reason that she is different from the majority. Her tastes, preoccupations, motivations, sources of happiness, in short her choices, make no sense to the rest. The majority is happy to attend a feast, especially if it is free; she is happy to observe a fast, and gives happily in charity the money that could have bought her a dinner in a five-star hotel. But she can still live with the majority quite amicably so long as she does not try to convert them through her sermons.

The spiritual seeker faces a similar isolation among friends. If one of the friends makes a conscious choice to walk the spiritual path, there is a growing uneasiness on both sides leading to a widening gulf. The friends feel that the spiritual seeker has now become too dull and boring. On the other hand, the seeker now starts feeling that her friends are wasting time on partying, gossiping and many other frivolous and superficial activities. Exchanging gifts with such people also becomes very disturbing for her because it looks like a loveless and meaningless interchange in which objects not needed are just being recycled. The result is that she and her friends also start distancing themselves from each other. But luckily the spiritual seeker generally discovers new friends who are more likely to be at a similar level of consciousness. These friendships grow fast, and the intimacy is such that the seeker now has a new family, her spiritual family, with which she feels more at home than with the biological family.

Since the seeker is at a higher level of consciousness, it is her responsibility to understand others around her. She has herself probably passed through the phase when she was not as different from them as she is today. May be, they will understand her better if and when they also grow in consciousness. But right now, her prayer should match that of St. Francis of Assisi: “O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console, to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love; for it is in giving that we receive” (2).

All said and done, a certain degree of distancing from old and cherished relationships, and therefore a feeling of isolation or rejection is inevitable on the spiritual path. That is a small price to pay for the joy, lasting mental peace, and fulfillment that accompany spiritual progress.

#### REFERENCES

1. *Savitri*, Book 6, Canto 2, p. 460 (SABCL Edition)
2. <http://www.catholic.org/prayers/prayer.php?p=134>

*...there is a certain class of men ... [who] find life quite all right as it is and do not care to know if it has a reason or a purpose. They are not troubled by the misery of others and do not see any necessity of progress. Such people you should never try to ‘convert’: it would be a serious blunder. ... They are not ready for an inner life. But they are Nature’s favourites; they have a very intimate alliance with her and this achievement must not be uselessly disturbed.*

#### THE MOTHER (Four Austerities and Four Liberations: the austerity of love)

*Please see also the Editorial ‘Is the Mean Always Golden’ and the Article ‘The Middling Meddling Middle’ in this issue.*

## appreciations

### *Feedback from a group of Yoga enthusiasts from the USA, 7 Oct 2016*

The first session was helpful to learn the history and significance of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Our teacher was open to questions which was great too. Second session was great for philosophy and to reinforce the teachings in such a pragmatic way. Thank you for this opportunity for growth and happiness.

**Sandy Kingsley (Group Leader)**

I found this morning's experience to be centering and grounding. The compound extends a sense of serenity and peace. The discussions were mesmerizing and I found myself wishing for the opportunity to experience them over and over again. I trust the content will surface again often. With gratitude.

**Tracey**

Morning sessions were quite interesting. Found it useful to see more perspectives on life and universality and their utility. Seems the circle of ego and selflessness are too intertwined to break, so best to use them together.

**Hans**

The experience of today will always resonate with me and hopefully enlighten me to a world that we can improve. Thank you. Namaste

**Debi Gershow**

This morning's talk was refreshing and a great reminder that we are given this body to make a difference in this life, by being a light and love, and through finding the joy in giving. This morning's talk was inspiring.

**Tonya Baise**

I was absorbed in the presentation from start to finish. I was intrigued by hearing the history of the spiritual guides of the ashram. The morning talk was filled with insights, wisdom and inspiration that will guide my journey. This driver will drive a better vehicle and will traverse a journey to greater enlightenment and peace. I am grateful to have been here this morning.

**Dalma Grandjean**

I thoroughly enjoyed my experience here today. I heard many concepts that I will meditate and contemplate about over next several days. The vibration inside the walls was beautiful to experience. Thank you. Namaste.

**Kim Scott**

Thank you for a wonderful visit. Lecture and discussion was most illuminating and the grounds were charged with a powerful, tangible spiritual energy. Very grateful. Namaskar.

**Barbara Mersa**

## *Feedback on a Camp at Van Niwas, Nainital, 2-8 Oct 2016*

Respected Tara Didi,

The Divine Mother had hand-picked a quality seed and sowed it and nurtured it. That seed has grown into a big tree and we are reaping its fruits. That tree is called TARA TREE. In turn we can show our gratitude by saying Thank you to you. Really, the rhythm of the Nainital camp from 2-8 October is still reverberating in our hearts.

**Paranthaman and Asha**

Sri Aurobindo Society, Coimbatore

*(in a letter dated 10 October 2016)*

## *Feedback from B.Ed. students from Amity Institute of Education, Saket, New Delhi, 14 Oct 2016*

This visit to Aurobindo ashram has instilled in me a sense of positivity, motivation and inspiration. From the discussions I have learned that life is a beautiful journey and we are the drivers of our own vehicle. I came to know about the qualities one should bear to achieve the goal of life. The sessions relaxed my mind, body and soul. I came to know about our inner voice and soul and how it helps us to move in the right direction. I have learned that inner peace and fulfillment are important to be happy and deal with life. We should always try to give love and happiness to others rather than always getting from others. It was a great experience.

**Ruchika Singh**

It was a powerful and soothing experience because of the wise and beautiful words we got to hear which made so much sense and were so relatable that our minds awakened to values, ideas and basic truths that we otherwise fail to acknowledge in our day-to-day busy life.

The food was another good part of the program. The meal was wholesome and was enjoyed by everyone. I really liked the fact that we all ate together and washed our dishes on our own-giving us a sense of togetherness and independence at the same time.

Thank you so much for this unforgettable experience.

**Annapurna Suman**

It was truly a delight to hear Bhaiya, just wished he wouldn't stop. I really liked the way he talked about the soul and intellect and their constant conflict that we suffer in our daily lives. His ideology of the divine essence really made sense which we were aware of but never thought about it in depth. The session with the principal of the school was equally inspiring and motivating. I could really enjoy the nature outside the meditation hall and hear chirping of birds and the sound of trees. I would thank the teachers of our school for organizing such an activity and the faculty here for such a mindful experience.

**Natasha Tajeja**

The ambience was very peaceful and soothing full of positive vibes. The examples Sir gave to make us understand the concepts were the most interesting part. One thing that was unique in the ashram was that everyone here had a smiling and stress free face. Even the instructions and telling the Don'ts was all said with a smile.

**Sukriti Jain**

The day was very unusual and different as I was full of peace and calm. There was no hurry of anything. The teachings by Sir and Ma'am made me relax and I gave a thought to the deeper meaning of life. Thank you!

**Muskan Khullar**

The session was very good as so many things which were not familiar to me are now known. I liked the soothing music which was played before starting any session as it brought mental peace and I felt like lost within myself. I liked the meditation done outside in the lawn; it was peaceful and soothing.

**Mansi Goswami**

I think this experience has given me a different perspective on life. An important thing that I learnt from the sessions is that a proper direction is necessary to live life successfully. The story sessions in between were very interesting.

**ChitraWadhwa**

It was a wonderful experience to visit the ashram and I would like to come here again. Sessions conducted by Bhaiya were something I've never heard before. He was telling us the reality and truth of life. The food during lunch break was simple and delicious. A special thanks to the people associated with the ashram kitchen.

**Neetu**

Visit to Sri Aurobindo Ashram will be a non-forgettable day. The place is full of positive energy. The satsang we had in the morning was very inspirational and helped me to look at the problems and circumstances as opportunities in life. I also learnt that giving brings more peace than getting. I could feel the beauty of nature here with chirping of birds, trees and peacocks moving around. The freedom I have seen here is not available anywhere. The last activity done in a circle gave me extreme peace and comfort. I felt that all my pain was gone, I could feel the wet grass and fresh air. It was an awesome and divine experience.

**Karishma Goswami**

### *Feedback for a group of BEEd Students from SPM College, Delhi*

Dear Didi,

Thank you so very much for providing Ashram space for conducting the Integral education session with SPM students. They really enjoyed the Asram space and shared some spell binding insights. Here I have attached the reflection and a small movie for your perusal.

Regards

**Prakash**

*(in an e-mail dated 19 Nov 2016)*

### *Feedback on Learning with The Mother*

Dear Tara,

I just want to tell you how inspired I feel reading Lessons from the Mother. We simply bask in Her presence at every page. I am so grateful that you have carefully put so much together. It is truly refreshing and enlightening. Love to you,

**Richard**

*(in an e-mail dated 6 Dec 2016)*

## *Feedback from Visitors from Austin TX, US, 14 Nov 2016*



Every day I stayed at the ashram I grew to love and appreciate it more and more. It is a deeply spiritual place filled with bird song, singing, laughter, chatter, sewing machines whirring and sometimes silence. I was always glad to come 'home' to the ashram at the end of the day.

I would stay at the ashram and listen to Dr. Bijlani anytime I was in Delhi.

**Barbara Christman**

Dear Dr. Bijlani,

Thank you for very special and precious teachings during the times I spent at the ashram. I have already begun reading the marriage book and can tell it will be valuable.

**Tasha Pera**

Dear Dr. Bijlani,

Thank you for your presence, discussions and the peace you bring. I think I will enjoy your books very much.

Sri Aurobindo Ashram is very beautiful and peaceful. The meals were filling and good for our stomachs! Thank you again for having us as your guests. Om Shanti!

**Sally**

I really enjoyed both the talks by Dr. Bijlani as he brought them to our modern, busy world with relevance. I am inspired by simple ashram living and will give up meat again. I look forward to reading books by Dr. Bijlani and thank you for looking after me when I was sick.

**Om Shanti**

## notice board

### Forthcoming events

The Mother's Integral Health Centre will be organizing several activities in Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Ashram during the year 2017 under the broad title of **CLEAN MIND PROGRAMME**. The program will be inaugurated on 25 December 2016, for which the schedule is given below.

### **DESCENT OF LIGHT** *Sunday, 25 December 2016*

#### **Inauguration of the Clean Mind Program, 9 am**

- |          |  |
|----------|--|
| 9.00 am  | Havan<br><i>Venue: The Mother's Integral Health Centre</i>               |
| 10.00 am | Musical offering by Karuna Didi  |
| 10.30 am | Talk: 'Tranquilizing purification of outer nature' by Dr. Ramesh Bijlani |
| 11.15 am | Musical offering by Karuna Didi<br><i>Venue: Meditation Hall</i>         |
| 11.30 am | Pushpanjali (offering of flowers) at the Shrine Prasad                   |
| 11.40 am | Visit to Sri Smriti  |

**ALL ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND THE ABOVE PROGRAM.  
NO ADVANCE REGISTRATION IS NECESSARY.**

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From 1 Jan 2017 onwards, there will be weekly camps under the CLEAN MIND PROGRAMME every Sunday. For registration and details, please contact:

**The Mother's Integral Health Centre**, SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM – DELHI BRANCH,  
New Delhi 110016

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

Phone: 011-2685-8563, E-mails: [tmihc2000@yahoo.co.in](mailto:tmihc2000@yahoo.co.in), [contact@aurobindoonline.in](mailto:contact@aurobindoonline.in)

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## Other Programs on Sunday, 25 December 2016

- 2.45 pm - 5.00 pm: GAMES (Participation only for Residents of the Ashram; Visitors are welcome to watch)  
*Venue: Hall of Grace*
- 5.00 pm Tiffin
- 6.45 pm Lights of Aspiration
- 7.00 pm Musical Celebration of the Descent of Light: Dr. Mithu Pal  
*Venue: Meditation Hall*

**ALL ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND THE ABOVE PROGRAM.  
NO ADVANCE REGISTRATION IS NECESSARY.**

*We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!*



## Contact us

To get **The Call Beyond** online regularly, month after month, please send an e-mail to:

[callbeyond@aurobindoonline.in](mailto: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](mailto: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.

For information about Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch

Please visit the website [www.sriaurobindoashram.net](http://www.sriaurobindoashram.net)

For information about Auro-Mira Service Society and the Kechla project

Please visit the website [www.auomira.in](http://www.auomira.in)

### Feedback

Please send your feedback to  
[callbeyond@aurobindoonline.in](mailto:callbeyond@aurobindoonline.in)

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