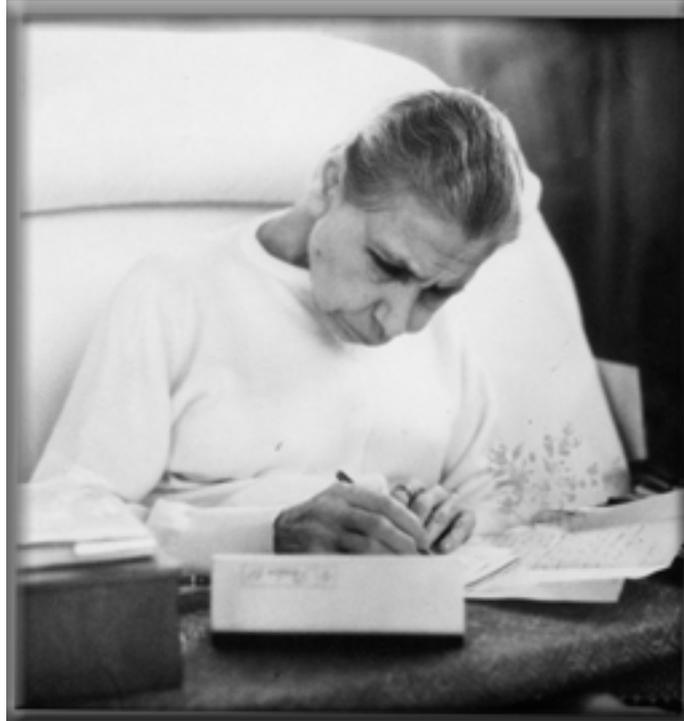


THE CALL BEYOND

Volume 41 // No. 2 // 15 February 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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www.sriarobindoashram.net

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12.2.56
 Opening of The Sri Aurobindo Ashram
 Delhi branch
 Let this place be worthy
 of its name and manifest
 the true spirit of Sri Aurobindo's
 teaching and message to
 the world.
 With my blessings



The Mother's message on the opening of the
 Sri Aurobindo Ashram - Delhi Branch

to the call a life in prisons; and the intellect would argue against the wisdom of a rash decision that crushes the career and neglects the family for the sake of an uncertain outcome in an unpredictably distant future. It is only the psychic being that would not care for any such thing, and simply say that that is the only right thing to do. But who cares for the faint whisper of the psychic being when pitted against the clamour of the mind and the intellect. But Chacha-ji was one of those who responded to Gandhiji's call positively, in spite of opposition from his own family. He joined the freedom struggle, stayed with it till the goal of independence was realized, and during the intervening almost 30 years faced the lathis and bullets of the British police while participating in several demonstrations, and went to jail several times where he was tortured with fetters and beatings, the scars of which he carried on his ankles and the back all his life. But during these 30 years, starting almost penniless, he also initiated a business. God helps those who help themselves. The business flourished, and that is how he acquired in the 1930s, the land on which the Ashram stands today. The land was also used for serving the cause of the freedom struggle, but to cut a long story short, when the country became free, Chacha-ji faced another dilemma, whether or not to continue with politics. He responded to the faint whisper of the psychic being once again, and decided not to. This time the choice was easier, because in 1939 he had discovered his true calling. In 1939, an 'unplanned' visit to Pondicherry led to his discovery of The Mother, a discovery that he calls in his memoirs, "the Supreme Discovery of my life, the miracle of Pondicherry where I lost my heart and won the soul and the real life". His dedication to The Mother after 1939 was total, as it had been to the freedom struggle since 1919. The commitment that he made in 1939 finally culminated, with the permission and blessings of The Mother, in the establishment of the Ashram on 12 February 1956, the date chosen by The Mother, with its name 'Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch' also given by The Mother.

It may be more than a coincidence that in February 2016 it will be sixty years since the Mother declared the descent of the Supramental, and also the foundation of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch. The founder of the Delhi Branch was Shri Surendra Nath Jauhar, popularly known in the Ashram as Chacha-ji (uncle). Chacha-ji was a remarkable man, who at age 16 (in 1919) responded to a call addressed to the youth of India by Mahatma Gandhi to interrupt for a few years whatever they were doing to join the struggle for the freedom of the nation. Seems simple, but it is not easy. The mind would see in responding positively



Chacha ji, in an ecstatic mood (1957). With the Ashram and The Mother's International School established in 1956, and the Relics of Sri Aurobindo expected for enshrinement in the Ashram in December 1957, his mood is quite understandable.

The establishment of a branch of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, in the national capital, highly significant though it was, was soon followed by yet another event even more significant for the world as a whole, on 29 February 1956, a date that we get to commemorate as the Golden Day only once in four years. On the Golden Day in 1956, The Mother had an experience, which she recorded as follows:

“This evening the Divine Presence, concrete and material, was there present amongst you. I had a form of living gold, bigger than the universe, and I was facing a huge and massive golden door which separated the world from the Divine.

As I looked at the door, I knew and willed, in a single moment of consciousness, that ‘the time has come’, and lifting with both hands a mighty golden hammer I struck one blow, one single blow on the door and the door was shattered to pieces.

Then the supramental Light and Force and Consciousness rushed down upon earth in an uninterrupted flow.”

The Mother's experience was a major milestone in the unprecedented joint spiritual project undertaken by Sri Aurobindo and The Mother. The goal they had visualized was to accelerate the next leap in evolution which would take life on earth beyond the mental consciousness. The peak of mental consciousness has been achieved in man. But, even man's consciousness expresses only a small fraction of the Supreme Consciousness of the Divine. The separative ego, around which the human life is ordinarily organized, is at the root of evil and misery that characterize human existence. The final solution to these problems resides in the next leap of evolution. The descent of the Supramental Consciousness on 29 February 1956 on earth has created the possibility of that leap. As that possibility is realized, the population of human beings with a qualitatively different and higher consciousness will increase. When this population reaches a critical mass, the affairs of the world will be conducted from a higher plane, where oneness will prevail over divisiveness. That is when earth will become heaven. With the certitude that this dream will be realized, and in not too distant a future, enjoy the fab festive Feb, wherever in the world you are!

readers write

Dear Ramesh,

I feel very honored to have my travelogue printed in *The Call Beyond*. It helped me to read it again. Again, I am touched by the warmth and wonder of the people of India. I read the others who had reviews. The Ashram is so lucky to have you as a teacher, and I am sure you would say, that you are lucky to be able to teach there.

We probably both believe that everyone is our teacher, and there were so many at the Ashram. The wonders of laughing together with Simone who did laughter yoga. That got me to connect with many more loving people. Some whose names I remember, many who I just remember their smile.

I think of Hansa Patel, the Notre Dame drop out. I saw a number of people come in looking for a hand out. Hansa was there for them with love. She told of an honest man, who was always cleaning up in the Ashram. He had found a lost 1,000-Rupee note, and he turned it in. The woman [Archana], who seemed in charge of food distribution, feeding the many with love and all the women working with her. The children from [Kechla], Orissa; bright angels with sweet voices. Then there was the perpetual pilgrim Sheela and her spiritual adventures to Tibet and the shrines of the Himalayas.

Oh yes, and my great guide, teacher and friend Jogi.

Each person was heart touching and mind opening.

Thank you again for letting me be a part of the *The Call Beyond*.

Gratefully,

Tom Zimmermann
Austin TX, USA
(in an e-mail dated 16 January 2016)

Dear Friends,

Thank you very much for *The Call Beyond* and articles. Fond memories of my stay at the Ashram in Delhi and especially Tara. A hug to all the disciples of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

With my best thoughts,

Prashânt
Barcelona, Spain
(in an e-mail dated 16 January 2016)



A Mental View of the Supramental

SHISHU

*Earth by this golden superfluity
 Bore thinking man and more than man shall bear;
 This higher scheme of being is our cause
 And holds the key to our ascending fate;
 It calls out of our dense mortality
 The conscious spirit nursed in Matter's house.*

SRI AUROBINDO (*In: Savitri Book 2, Canto 1, p. 99*)

If there is one word that is unique to Sri Aurobindo's spiritual philosophy, it is 'supramental'. 'Supramental' refers to a level of consciousness, which is a significant milestone in the evolutionary process. When the all-knowing all-powerful chose to manifest as matter, it was an act of drastic self-limitation, or involution. In the process of involution, the Supreme Consciousness of the Divine did not disappear; it merely hid itself. Thus matter, which seems to lack consciousness, actually has the Supreme Consciousness in a dormant form, exactly as the plant lies dormant in the seed. The creation of matter was followed by evolution, which is the opposite of involution. The process of evolution may be viewed as a progressively better expression, or revelation, of the Supreme Consciousness hidden in matter. The first major milestone in evolution was the appearance of life on our planet. A little better expression of the Supreme Consciousness was achieved through the evolution of the mind. Structure kept pace with the evolution of consciousness. Mental consciousness expressed itself through the brain. As the mental consciousness became richer, the brain grew larger and more complex. It was as if the Master Craftsman kept coming up with better processors in its quest to improve the performance of its computers. Mental consciousness has reached its peak in human beings. But even human consciousness expresses only a very small fraction of the Supreme Consciousness of the Divine. However, looking at the trend of evolution so far, it is only to be expected that man will give way to a creature with a still higher level of consciousness. Human consciousness is not only higher than animal consciousness; it is also radically different in one respect. A human being can rise in consciousness during its lifetime, at least partly through his own efforts. Not only he can rise, he aspires to rise in consciousness. It is as if the evolutionary urge of the Divine, which has so far been worked out entirely by nature, has been planted in a corner of the human mind. That this is not fantasy has been shown by the phenomenal rise in consciousness that has been experienced by Yogis, Sufis and Mystics across religious and spiritual traditions. The highest level of expressed consciousness, as visualized by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, is the Supramental consciousness. Between the ordinary human consciousness and the Supramental, there are many intermediate planes, viz. higher mind, illumined mind, intuitive mind, and over-mind. What do these planes signify in terms of our awareness? The ordinary human consciousness makes us perceive the world as a collection of separate objects and living beings. Plurality and differentiation are the hallmark of mental consciousness. The progressively higher levels of consciousness lead to a perception that the division, as ordinarily seen, is only part of the reality.



Behind, above and beyond the reality characterized by division is a higher Reality characterized by unity. The perception of unity is rooted in the fact that the Supreme Consciousness inherent in all forms of manifestation – living and non-living – is identical; it is only the expressed fraction that is different. The highest level of consciousness expressed on earth till recently was the over-mind consciousness. Sri Aurobindo and the Mother's goal was to bring the Supramental Consciousness down on earth. Their efforts bore fruit on 29 February 1956, exactly 56 years ago. It was on that day that the Mother saw the door guarding the Supramental, and She used her force to release it. What it means is that the earth's atmosphere is now charged with Supramental consciousness.

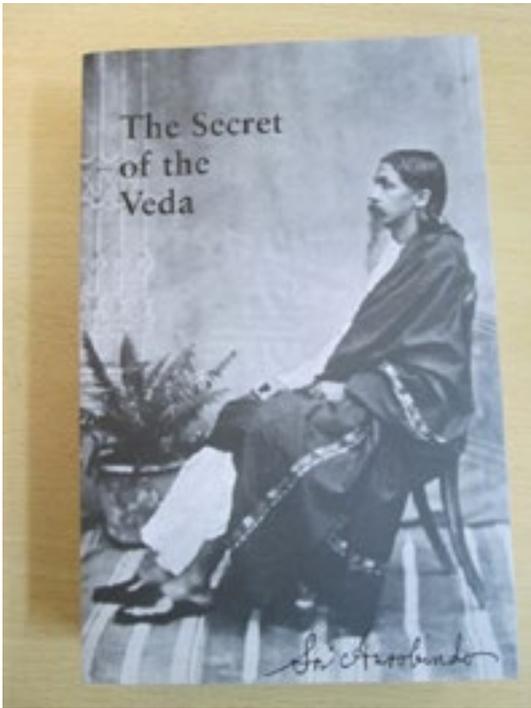
What are the practical implications of the descent of the Supramental on earth? It has created the possibility of the next milestone in the evolution of consciousness. Supramental consciousness will not be simply a much

higher level of consciousness than any that our planet has seen; it will be a radically different kind of consciousness. According to Sri Aurobindo, the difference between the present mental consciousness and Supramental consciousness of the future will be much greater than that between animal consciousness and human consciousness. Therefore, it is difficult for us humans to visualize what the new consciousness will be like. But one thing seems clear. In contrast with mental consciousness which is rooted in division, Supramental consciousness will be rooted in oneness. Oneness implies collapse of the separative ego. Collapse of the separative ego implies elimination of selfishness and greed. That will be the ultimate solution to all human problems. That will be the beginning of a new world full of love, peace and joy. As Sri Aurobindo has said, "The power of love, of truth, of right will be there, not as a law mentally constructed but as the very substance and constitution of the nature..." The key to the new world order in the Supramental age will be a fundamental change in human nature. Now that the earth atmosphere is charged with the Supramental, we have the choice of waiting for the slow process of natural evolution to work out the next leap of consciousness, or to accelerate it through our efforts. The process of evolution can be accelerated by us because human beings have the capacity for rising in consciousness. If a sufficient number of persons work for raising their consciousness, they would also contribute to building up the critical mass of people that is necessary for influencing positively the way the world runs. Thus each of us can contribute to ushering in a new world order based on compassion, cooperation and contentment. As the Mother said, "The world is preparing for a big change. Will you help?"

Human Aspiration for the Divine Truth

UDHAV SUREKA

[The article is third in a series based on Sri Aurobindo's 'The Secret of the Veda'](#)



The Upanishads speak of a *Truth*, knowing which everything here is known. They say, knowledge of this high, all-encompassing Truth is the goal of man's life, the door to his freedom.

Man thinks of himself as a mortal being, subject to birth and death; he thinks of himself as a limited being, one limited entity in this vast universe. This is his Ignorance. The Truth of his being, if known, will free him from this limited conception of self and lead him to his Immortality - *amṛtam*.

Sri Aurobindo explained that this idea is not only found in the Upanishads but is also at the very heart of the Veda:

"In the early Vedantic teaching of the Upanishads we come across a conception of the Truth which is often expressed by formulas taken from the hymns of the

Veda, such as the expression - satyam ritam brihat, - the truth, the right, the vast. This Truth is spoken of in the Veda as a path leading to felicity, leading to immortality."(1)

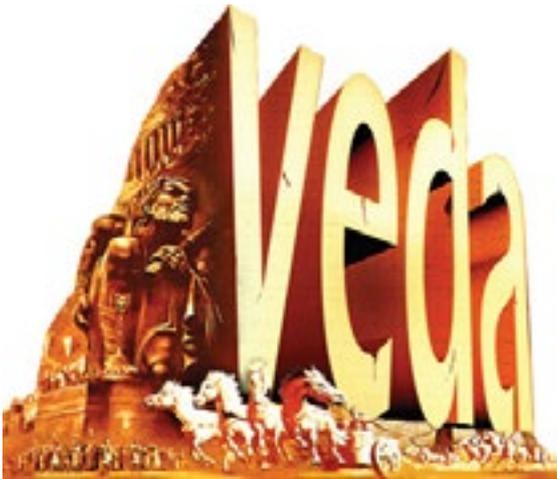
The expression, '*satyam ritam brihat*', as also the individual terms, occur throughout the Veda. It is deeply embedded in the flow of Vedic hymns. Understanding it is fundamental to understanding the inner meaning of the Vedas.

Satyam or Truth is *"the truth of divine essence, not truth of mortal sensation and appearance."*(2) It is not the truth that one speaks of in general parlance but a higher, spiritual knowledge that removes Ignorance and reveals man's essential immortality.

Ritam is the right activity of mind and body, regulated by the knowledge of this *Satyam*. It is a life founded on the knowledge of Truth.

Brihat conveys the unrestricted, infinite vastness of this Truth. Since it is the Truth of everything and nothing is excluded from it, it is vast in the absolute sense.

"The consciousness that corresponds to it (the Truth) is also infinite, brihat, large as opposed to the consciousness of the sense-mind which is founded upon limitation... Whoever is in possession of this truth-consciousness or open to the action of these faculties, is the Rishi or Kavi, sage or seer."(3)



The entire scheme of Vedic symbolism and imagery is woven around the search for this luminous Truth. Man's life is described as a journey whose destination is this Truth-consciousness. It is a struggle, a battle, against the Darkness of sense-mind which keeps us from seeing the Light of Truth.

Hence ensues the battle between devas and *asuras* (gods and demons), which is nothing but the spiritual struggle of every man in his striving for the Truth.

Sri Aurobindo writes, *“The gods I found to be described as children of Light, sons of Aditi, of Infinity; and without exception they are described as increasing man, bringing him light... increasing the truth in him, building up the divine worlds, leading him against all attacks to the great goal, the integral felicity, the perfect bliss.”*(4) The *asuras*, on the other hand, are *“powers of division and limitation... powers that work against the free and unified integrality of the being.”*(5)

And so, too, emerges the Vedic system of lokas:

“The Rishis speak of three cosmic divisions, Earth, the Antariksha or middle region and Heaven (Dyaus); but there is also a greater Heaven (Brihad Dyau) called also the Wide World, the Vast (Brihat)... This “Brihat” is again described as “Ritam Brihat” or in a triple term “Satyam Ritam Brihat”.(6)

It becomes clear now that they were the planes of consciousness through which man must ascend to finally reach the summit – the absolute vastness of the Truth-consciousness.



REFERENCES

- (1) *The Secret of the Veda*, p.64, Last paragraph
- (2) *The Secret of the Veda*, p.65, Line 5
- (3) *The Secret of the Veda*, p.65, Line 9
- (4) *The Secret of the Veda*, p.46, Line 3
- (5) *The Secret of the Veda*, p.64, Line 12
- (6) *The Secret of the Veda*, p.64, Line 1



The description of the status of knowledge to which we aspire, determines the means of knowledge which we shall use. That status of knowledge may be summed up as a supramental realization which is prepared by mental representations through various mental principles in us and once attained again reflects itself more perfectly in all the members of the being. It is a re-seeing and therefore remoulding of our whole existence in the light of the Divine and One and Eternal free from subjection to the appearances of things and the externalities of our superficial being.

Such a passage from the human to the divine, from the divided and discordant to the One, from the phenomenon to the eternal Truth, such an entire rebirth or new birth of soul must necessarily involve two stages, one of the preparation in which the soul and its instruments must become fit and another of actual illumination and realization in the prepared

soul through its fit instruments...

The first necessity of preparation is the purifying of all the members of our being; especially, for the path of knowledge, the purification of the understanding, the key that shall open the door of Truth; and a purified understanding is hardly possible without the purification of the other members. An unpurified heart, an unpurified sense, an unpurified life confuse the understanding, disturb its data, distort its conclusions, darken its seeing, misapply its knowledge; an unpurified physical system clogs and chokes up its action. There must be an integral purity. Love, for example, is the purifier of the heart and by reducing all our emotions into terms of divine love the heart is perfected and fulfilled; yet love itself needs to be clarified by divine knowledge...

By understanding we mean that which at once perceives, judges and discriminates, the true reason of the human being not subservient to the senses, to desire or to the blind force of habit, but working in its own right for mastery, for knowledge...

The first cause of impurity in the understanding is the intermixture of desire in the thinking functions, and desire itself is an impurity of the Will involved in the vital and emotional parts of the being. When the vital and emotional desires interfere with the pure will-to-know, the thought-function becomes subservient to them, pursues ends other than those proper to itself and its perceptions are clogged and deranged. The understanding must lift itself beyond the siege of desire and emotion and, in order that it may have perfect immunity, it must get the vital parts and the emotions themselves purified... Similarly the heart must be freed from the subjection to the cravings of the life-principle and the senses and thus get rid itself of the false emotions of fear, wrath, hatred, lust, etc. which constitute chief impurity of the heart...

The second cause of impurity in the understanding is the illusion of the senses and the intermixture of the sense-mind in the thinking functions. No knowledge can be true knowledge which subjects itself to the senses or uses them otherwise than as first indices whose data have constantly to be corrected and overpassed...

Equally must the sense-mind be stilled and taught to leave the function of thought to the mind that judges and understands...

A third cause of impurity has its source in the understanding itself and consists in an improper action of the will to know... The remedy lies in a perfect equality of the mind, in the cultivation of an entire intellectual rectitude and in the perfection of mental disinterestedness. The purified understanding as it will not lend itself to any desire or craving, so will not lend itself either to any predilection or distaste for any particular idea or truth, and will refuse to be attached even to those ideas of which it is the most certain or to lay on them such an undue stress as is likely to disturb the balance of truth and depreciate the values of other elements of a complete and perfect knowledge.

An understanding thus purified would be a perfectly flexible, entire and faultless instrument of intellectual thought and being free from the inferior sources of obstruction and distortion would be capable of as true and complete a perception of the truths of the Self and the universe as the intellect can attain.

SRI AUROBINDO (In the *Arya*, Vol. 2, No. 7, 15 February 1916)

hundred years ago

The Ecstasy of Divine Action*



Thou hast taken entire possession of this miserable instrument and if it is not yet perfected enough for Thee to complete its transformation, its transmutation, Thou art at work in each one of its cells to knead it and make it supple and enlighten it, and in the whole being, to arrange, organise and harmonise it. Everything is in movement, everything is changing; Thy

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

divine action makes itself felt as an ineffable spring of a purifying fire that circulates through all the atoms. And this flowing spring has brought into the being an ecstasy more marvellous than any it had ever felt before; thus to Thy action there answers the aspiration of that on which Thou workest and the aspiration is all the more ardent because the instrument has seen itself as it really is in all its infirmity.

O Lord, I implore Thee, hasten the blessed day when the divine miracle will be accomplished, hasten the day of the realization of the Divine upon earth.

THE MOTHER (In *Prayers and Meditations*, prayer dated 22 January 1916)

*Title given by the Editor

twenty-five years ago

Professor Chhote Narayan Sharma
A Torch Bearer

SUKHENDU ROY CHOUDHURY

When Sri Sharma came to Sri Aurobindo Ashram, New Delhi in Oct 1990, I took the opportunity to talk to him at length on various subjects ranging from Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga, Supramental evolution, free progress education and finally the future of India. I present to the readers the record of a very lively discussion that I had with him, which speaks of his grasp of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy and his complete dedication for the cause.

Q. What, in your opinion, has been the impact of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother on the world?

A. Sri Aurobindo and The Mother appeared on the earthly scene as divine incarnations. This world, as we believe, is nothing but self-objectification of the Divine. It is not just a play (lila) but something more because His very substance is involved in this creation. To quote from Savitri:

*“He is the Maker and the world he made,
He is the vision and he is the seer;
He is himself the actor and the act,
He is himself the knower and the known,
He is himself the dreamer and the dream.”*

Q. Could you please tell me the difference between the traditional yoga and the integral yoga of Sri Aurobindo?

A. The traditional yoga has always regarded life as a problem and to be away from the activities and involvement of life would make the situation easy. It has always been a running away from life. The aim is liberation. So the problem of this world remains. According to Sri Aurobindo the earthly life appears to be painful because it is still not perfect but we have been shown the process which is trying to perfect it. When this transformation becomes complete the earthly life becomes 'Life Divine'.

The traditional Yoga disregards life, mind and body but this Yoga tries to purify and transform every aspect of human consciousness and life through ceaseless awareness and total surrender to the divine power, and invite God into the cells of our body. Then only the total transformation that Sri Aurobindo envisaged would manifest.

Q. You have been to U.S.A and France a number of times. Could you tell me how much the Western people have accepted Sri Aurobindo's philosophy?

A. I must say that the more awakened sections of humanity have started feeling a deep hunger, a deep aspiration for spiritual knowledge. The integral yoga of Sri Aurobindo gives the most satisfying and perfect answer to their queries. People who are not involved either in

their selfish interests or with the interests of their clan, but are open to the light have a greater prospect. I have always found the Western people very keen to know the Eastern wisdom that Sri Aurobindo has articulated and advanced.

Q. The present day education, apart from making doctors, engineers, scientists, etc., is contributing very little to the real progress of man. The free progress system in Pondicherry discards traditional means of teaching and instead lets the students grow in all spontaneity and regards teachers as guides to their growth. Could you explain the system briefly?

A. The traditional education stuffs the mind with information. It does not help the growth and power of personality. Integral Education seeks to bring out the hidden power of the soul and utilize it for right activities in life. Traditional education focusses its attention on mental activities. Integral education stresses upon the integrated development of the body, life and mind. It seeks to build-up a balance in the personality, unknown to traditional education. An educated man in the traditional way may not be a moral man; very often he is not. And that is why though most of our leaders are traditionally educated they have not been able to deliver the goods, and are driven by selfish narrow interests. Integral education helps the growth of soul-quality and soul-consciousness.

As long as the talk went on I was transported into the realm of Truth where Light, Ananda, Knowledge reigned supreme. I felt inspired while Shri Chhote Narayan Sharma spoke to me about the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. I felt it is the need of the hour.

Excerpts from The Call Beyond, Vol. 16, No.1, 1991, pp. 38-43.

poetry

Generation Non-gap

ANITA SHARMA

*A long time ago,
I shared some details,
I hid some tales,
Always wondering
Whether ma knows all.
And, she mostly did.
She seemed to me a Goddess,
disguised and wise,
Clairvoyant, and quick to uproot my lies.*

*I still hide what matters a lot,
Tactfully highlighting what matters not.
She asks a question or two
And I know the game is up.
She knew it then,
She knows it now.
They see what the child says not,
They know what the child speaks not,
They give what the child asks not.
Such are mothers.*

may i help you?

GJ has some questions about spirituality in a householder's life

In this column, we shall 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 will be kept confidential. The questions may be sent to callbeyond@aurobindoonline.in

In spite of the vigorous efforts made by Sri Aurobindo, The Mother, and many other recent spiritual masters, the idea of a dichotomy between worldly life and spiritual life continues to dominate the Indian psyche. Spirituality is neither something that can be practiced only in a forest or an ashram, nor does it consist of the observance of ritualistic fasts and reading of the scriptures. GJ's questions, which are just about everybody's questions, help in clarifying many popular misconceptions.

Do you think taking a spiritual path means leaving home?

No, home is a part of our circumstances. Circumstances are the vehicle available to us in the journey of life. The path that the journey follows depends on the goal, not the vehicle. The goal of life should be, according to the Mother, high and wide, generous and disinterested. This is an excellent description of spiritual growth. If spiritual growth is adopted as the goal, any circumstances, including those of a householder's life, can be used for going towards that goal.

In order to bring spirituality into domestic life, should one make a conscious effort to reduce attachment to the family?

Love without attachment is the ideal of the spiritual path. The family is the field available to most of us for most of our lives for practicing this ideal. The knowledge that love brings joy, and attachment brings sorrow is helpful. But the knowledge becomes real to us only when our own experience confirms it. Therefore, one may start with love with attachment. When

experience confirms the knowledge, love continues, but the attachment goes down. Thus the ideal of love without attachment is something that is attained in steps. It is not a one-time event. The important thing to remember is that even love with attachment is better than no love at all.

Does reduction in attachment apply also to the spouse?

Yes, finally reaching the stage of love without attachment applies also to the spouse. If love for the spouse is coupled with attachment, one is dependent on the spouse for one's happiness. Let me explain it. Well-adjusted happy couples look forward to a retired life: 'after retirement, we will have so much time, we will travel a lot, talk a lot, and do so many things together', and so on. It is not infrequent that in such cases, one of the partners passes away a little before or a little after retirement. Now, the surviving partner is shattered.

The same thing applies to children. The child grows up, and goes to another city or country for college education. The parents, particularly stay-at-home mothers, are shattered – psychologists call it the 'empty nest syndrome'.

In short, if our happiness is dependent on something that will not and cannot last, it is a happiness that is always vulnerable, always susceptible to the inevitable changes in life. How can one get lasting happiness from something that cannot last. And, nothing in the world lasts; everything is perishable. That is why, on the spiritual path, one eventually discovers happiness that is independent of external circumstances.



It is happiness that comes from love without attachment. It is happiness that is based on only one attachment: attachment to the Divine, and the Divine is everlasting. Love for the family, and love outside the family, are both eventually seen as love for manifestations of the Divine.

Should one have expectations from children that they will look after us in old age?

Just as love without attachment is one hallmark of the spiritual path, love without expectation is another. Expectation also brings sorrow, just like attachment. Sorrow may come because the expectation is not fulfilled. Sorrow may come even if the expectation is fulfilled, because the state of fulfilled expectation may not last. Sorrow can come even if the expectation is fulfilled and the state of fulfilled expectation has not come to an end, because of the insecurity: ‘how long will it last’!

Should parents tell the child that he must do something for his parents in their old age just as he is being cared for?

No, for a variety of reasons. First, sermonizing is not good parenting. Secondly, sermonizing does not work. Finally, love coupled with expectations of getting something in return is a bad example for the child. If even parental love is burdened with expectations, where will the child see an example of unconditional love that does not expect anything in return? All that we should work towards is making the child a good human being. If we succeed, the world will get a good citizen, and we will get a good child who will look after us in old age – but that should neither be the reason for bringing children into the world nor the covert or overt aim of parenting.

Does love for the family evolve into love for the community, and even love for those whom we do not know?

Yes, love for the family can, and should, evolve into love for others, but it is not an inevitable consequence. To a person on the spiritual path, family life is good training. It teaches the person to love. Love breaks the ego barrier between him and the family. Breaking the ego barrier means that he learns to look at which need is more important rather than whose need it is. It is no longer my need versus somebody else’s need; it is a pooling of the needs of the family, and addressing first the need that is most important. Family life teaches the person on the spiritual path not only to love, but also to love without attachment, and to love without expecting anything in return. This process, however, does not have to stop with the family. Extending similar love to others is the next higher rung of love. It may be to “the community”, that is the people whom we know. But it should go higher: it can be extended to ‘strangers’. To a person on the spiritual path, there are no strangers because to him all are children of the same God. The process of extending love beyond the family can begin early in life, and sometimes is the sole avenue available for continuing to grow spiritually when the so-called family responsibilities are over, and the family does not need the person any more. To grow spiritually, all what is needed is to be aware of what we can give, and find someone who needs it. We always have something to give – money, an object, time, or at least a smile – and we can always find someone who needs it. We are not helping the person who needs it; he is helping us by giving us an opportunity to grow spiritually, to fulfill the purpose of life. That is how, fulfilling the purpose of life is a life-long agenda; it ends neither with ‘retirement’, nor with ‘getting the children settled and building a house’.

What is the measure of one's spiritual progress?

Spiritual progress cannot be quantified, but there are several indicators; one can, in fact, build up a long list from the *Gita* (See, for example, 2:48, 2:56, 5:10-12, 6:4, 6:10, 6:18, 10:9, 12:13-17, 13:8-12, 14:24-25). To mention just a few, *samattva*, which roughly means equanimity; love, which is expressed by giving selflessly; working with one's heart and soul in it, and yet without attachment to the outcome; and a smiling face reflecting peace of mind, are some of the signs that characterize a person on the spiritual path. As the person progresses, these become more and more pronounced, and therefore more and more visible. But others can get only a glimpse from some visible signs; it is only the person himself who knows best whether he is progressing, and where he stands in relation to the goal. The judgment of others is often exaggerated, sometimes positively, and sometimes negatively. Finally, once a disciple asked the Mother whether he had reached the summit. She told him that if he had reached, he would not be asking this question!

inspirations

Feedback provided by the participants of the Orientation to Integral Yoga, 16-17 January 2016

I was introduced to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother after I got married. The serenity of the Ashrams in Delhi and Pondicherry has drawn me over last 11 years. I tried to read books and understand the philosophy. Sri Aurobindo's books always seemed to be beyond my understanding but I could always relate to the teachings of the Mother. But it was Integral Yoga sessions on 16th and 17th that really gave me the perspective that I was long looking for. It seems to have given me a clarity of thought and understanding that I was long seeking. It is probably the beginning of a new journey.

Thank you Dr. Bijlani for showing the road.

Amrita Dasgupta

Although short (in duration) it was really an enlightening, absorbing and life-transforming program. It has given in a very clear way the meaning and purpose of life. We need to work sincerely and seriously on what we have been enlightened about as one program cannot make a sufficient dent for our life transformation.

I look forward to getting more such opportunities.

Akshaya Kumar

A very well organized orientation program. Three sessions of yogasanas by Mr Debi Prasad were very useful and offered insights into basic asanas and pranayama. Sessions by Dr. Bijlani brought home some difficult concepts in a simple and lucid manner to persons like me who are educated and trained in a certain way based on scientific temper. Concepts of 'What yoga means (beyond asanas)', 'God', 'purpose of life', how each one of us can take few steps towards the purpose, lasting peace/joy being different from temporary/superficial happiness, 'soul', 'ego', etc., got clarified. Need to be more aware of how I live my life and make it a vehicle to practice yoga. My humble thanks to Dr. Bijlani and Mr. Debi Prasad.

Rajiv Suri

It was a mind awakening exercise, a great change from daily monotonous routine, leading to some fulfillment and satisfaction for future.

Seema Bahl



Premsheela singing to the participants of the Orientation to Integral Yoga, 16-17 January 2016.



Some of the participants of the Orientation to Integral Yoga lost in the delight of the Divine as they sing along with Premsheela.

It is a crisp overview of important things in life specially for those who have no exposure to Yoga/Positive Philosophy/Spiritual Delight (expression).

Chandni Behl

Being my first course at Sri Aurobindo Ashram, it was an opportunity for me to be in the calming environs of the ashram. It was a relaxing experience. Dr. Bijlani's explanations were logical and coherent and enabled me to expand my knowledge of spirituality.

Prabhat

I really enjoyed the workshop. This was my first experience with such a session. The program was very balanced, offering exercise for the body as well as the mind, and an understanding of how they help me to be a better person. I specially enjoyed the musical part. The whole program was interactive and conducted in an easy to understand manner. I definitely want to attend more such sessions.

Anvita Malhotra

It was great session to start a change in the life and go towards a spiritual growth for which we have come into life. You have solved major questions which come to our mind making choices in life. Also the feeling of oneness towards all individuals will make life so happy. The fulfillment which we were searching for or rather the door was locked you have given us the key for it. Thank you so much for your generous talk.

Neelam Raghav

Excellent course and great introduction to yoga. The most important aspect of the program is the completely unpretentious and 'basics only' approach. Both Dr. Bijlani and Mr. Debi Prasad are masters of their 'craft', but teach it with compassion and with no judgements or assumptions or expectations. This is possibly the best way to introduce people to yoga.

Neeraj Mohan

I could attend only the second day of the orientation workshop. For some time, I've been asking several questions around existence to my own self and answering them in a limited way with the help of books, blogs and interaction with people from all walks of life. This session today gave me another perspective to look at life and confirmed some of my own understanding along with raising new questions.

Thank you for helping me in my journey.

Prerna Kumar

12 January 2016

Dear Tara Didi

I came to the Ashram to see the Mother

I saw Her on your face,

On Karuna's face,

Inside your silence and Karuna's song.

I've been feeling the Presence of the Mother everywhere in this Ashram.

I can feel the Mother,

I can see the Mother.

In my visions she is wearing white clothes,

There is so much light surrounding Her.

She tells me, "Be Divine! Be Divine, my dear"

She puts her hand on my face and says,

"Do not worry, you are my son,

You are my little child".

And she gives a pretty smile.

God bless us all.

The Mother bless us all.

- A visitor to the Ashram from Brazil

news

Birth Anniversary of Shri Anil Jauhar

January 20, the birth anniversary of Shri Anil Jauhar, Chairman of The Mother's International School, who left his mortal frame two years ago, was observed by the school through a special assembly. "His life was one dedicated to the service of The Divine Mother, one of inner quietude and tranquil surrender. Seeking inspiration from his faith in The Mother's grace, we dedicate this assembly to his memory", said the students.

The following quotes from The Mother and tributes to Anil ji were recited in the assembly:

1. LET Thy Light be in me like a Fire that makes all alive; let Thy divine Love penetrate me. I aspire with all my being for Thy reign as sovereign and master of my mind and heart and body; let them be Thy docile instruments and Thy faithful servitors.

2. O my sweet Master, my divine Lord, tear out from my heart this illusion so that Thy servant may become pure and faithful and faithfully and integrally bring back to Thee all that is Thy due. Chase the shadow from my heart, and let Thy light reign in it, its uncontested sovereign.

3. O LORD, the entire being is ready and it calls Thee to take possession of what is Thine; of what service can be the instrument if the Master will not use it? And whatever be the mode of manifestation, it shall be well, from the most humble, most obscure, most material, most outwardly limited, to the vastest, most brilliant, most powerful, most intellectual. The entire being is ready and waits in a passive silence until it is Thy Will to manifest.

The life Anilji led was one of simplicity, discipline, faith, a calm confidence and stillness of being, shaped by his deep reverence for The Mother's vision. He believed in shunning all luxury, and lived a life of austerity.

A keen sportsman, he exercised everyday to keep himself physically and mentally fit. In his youth, Anilji, who shared The Mother's passion for tennis, had often played with her.

Self discipline and punctuality were an integral part of his nature. Kindness, dignity and grace were the values he had imbibed with such completeness, that they became a part of his being.

He truly followed The Mother's teaching that all wealth belongs to the Divine. Even as a businessman, he was sage-like in his outlook towards wealth creation, eschewing acquisitiveness and using his resources to continue The Mother's work.

His, was a gentle touch. He was always soft spoken and gracious to those around him, and treated everyone, from his staff to his domestic help, as family.

In today's world, where consumerism seems to have made inroads into all walks of life, let us reflect on the values he lived by and emulate at least a few of them so that we emerge stronger, not merely outwardly, but in terms of our inner strength.

The recitation ended with the following lines from Savitri:

*My breath runs in a subtle rhythmic stream;
It fills my members with a might divine:
I have drunk the Infinite like a giant's wine.
Time is my drama or my pageant dream.
Now are my illumined cells joy's flaming scheme
And changed my thrilled and branching nerves to fine
Channels of rapture opal and hyaline*

*For the influx of the Unknown and the Supreme.
I am no more a vassal of the flesh,
A slave to Nature and her leaden rule;
I am caught no more in the senses' narrow mesh.
My soul unhorizoned widens to measureless sight,
My body is God's happy living tool,
My spirit a vast sun of deathless light.*

- Sri Aurobindo

Here is a glimpse of the major events organized in the festive month of February 2016. Drop in for as many of them as you can, or even otherwise, to soak in the peacefully festive fragrance of spring.

Thursday , 11 Feb 2016

9:00 am Havan Chachaji's Samadhi

Friday, 12 Feb 2016

Sixtieth anniversary of the Ashram & Basant Panchmi (the advent of Spring)

7:00 am	Invocation by Karuna Didi	Meditation Hall
7:25 am	Release of CD "Satyamayi Parame"	Meditation Hall
9:00 am	Inauguration of Photo Exhibition "Sixty years of the Delhi Branch"	Near the Meditation Hall
9:30 am	Devotional Songs By the students of The Mother's International School (Junior wing)	Hall of Grace
2:00 pm	Film on Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch	Hall of Joy
6:30 pm	Lights of Aspiration	Samadhi Lawns
6:45 pm	"Hansa Veena" recital By Pt. Barun Kumar Pal, with Debojyoti Mukherjee on the Sitar and Shri Subhash Kanti Das on the Tabla	Meditation Hall

Saturday & Sunday, 13 & 14 Feb 2016, 9 am – 5 pm, both days

Registration begins at 8:15 am on Saturday, 13 Feb 2016

Seminar on Better Education in Schools

Venue: Hall of Grace, The Mother's International School

School teachers, B.Ed. and B.El.Ed. students, and all others interested in school education are welcome. If you inform us in advance about your intention to participate, it will be highly appreciated. The information may be sent to Dr. Ramesh Bijlani on rambij@gmail.com

The speakers on Saturday, 13 February 2016 include:

Prof. Shyam B. Menon , Vice-Chancellor, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar University, Delhi

Prof. Manoj Das, Professor of English, Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, Puducherry, and Renowned bilingual (English and Oriya) writer.

Dr. Shirley Telles, Director of Research, Patanjali Research Foundation, Haridwar; Fulbright Fellow

Prof. M.M.Pant, Former Pro-Vice Chancellor, Indira Gandhi National Open University

Mr. Manit Jain, Director, Heritage Schools, Delhi & Gurgaon; Co-Founder and Trustee, Disha India

The speakers on Saturday, 14 February 2016 include:

Acharya Navneet, Alumnus of IIT- Kharagpur & Arsha Vidya Gurukulam (AVG), Anaikatti, Coimbatore

Dr. Deepti Priya Mehrotra, Fellow of Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.

Dr. Shelja Sen, Co-founder, Children First Institute of Child & Adolescent Mental Health

Prof. Santosh Panda, Chairperson, National Council for Teacher Education

Sunday , 14 Feb 2016

Sunday Satsang

10:00 am Looking Back and Forth Meditation Hall

Speaker: Dr. Sunil Chumber

Monday, 15 Feb 2016

6:30 pm Offering of Vocal Music by Shri Kshitij Mathur Meditation Hall

Tuesday, 16 Feb 2016

6:30 pm Musical offering by Smt. Anisha Ray Meditation Hall

Shri Fateh Singh on the Tabla

Wednesday, 17 Feb 2016

2:45 pm Musical Offering by Mirambika students Meditation Hall

6:30 pm Hawaiian Guitar recital by Shri Neel Ranjan Mukherjee Meditation Hall

Violin recital by Dr Ranjan Kumar Srivastav with

Ravi Shankar Singh on the Tabla

Thursday, 18 Feb 2016

9:15 am Tabla concerto offered by the young students of MIS
Shri Karunamoyee Ma Shaktipeeth Ashram (Primary Hall)

Directed by Shri Subhash Kanti Das.

2:00 pm

to Exhibition of Paintings by Mridula Vichitra Hall of Grace

5:00 pm (18-20 Feb 2016)

05:30 pm Kathak dance by

Students of Manjushree Banerjee

Hall of Grace

Friday , 19 Feb 2016

5:30 pm Odissi dance by R. Vani Madhav Hall of Grace

Saturday, 20 Feb 2016

138th Birth Anniversary of THE MOTHER

5:30 am Prabhat-Pheri Starting from Samadhi Lawn

7:00 am Invocation by Karuna Didi Meditation Hall

8:30 am ‘Gratitude’, with Sunilda’s The Shrine
Sanskrit Shlokas in the background
PUSHPANJALI

9:30 am Musical offering by Smt. Suparna Adhikari Meditation Hall

10:30 am “The Role of The Mother in Sri Aurobindo’s Yoga” Meditation Hall
A talk by Shri Prashant Khanna

3:00 pm “Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu”, a Musical Drama Hall of Grace
Chief Guest: Swami Shantatmanand ji
of Sri Ramakrishna Mission, Delhi

6:15 pm March Past & Lights of Aspiration Samadhi Lawn

6:45 pm ‘Four Aspects of The Mother’ by the Ashram Choir Meditation Hall

Sunday , 28 Feb 2016

Sunday Satsang

10 am Glimpses of the Golden Day in Savitri Meditation Hall
A talk by Dr. Ramesh Bijlani

Monday, 29 Feb 2016

6:30 am Invocation by Karuna Didi Meditation Hall

6:30 pm Lights of Aspiration Samadhi Lawns
Musical offering by Karuna Didi and her group Meditation Hall
The Message of February 29: A reading by Tara Didi Meditation Hall
Significance of February 29: A talk by Ramesh Bijlani Meditation Hall

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