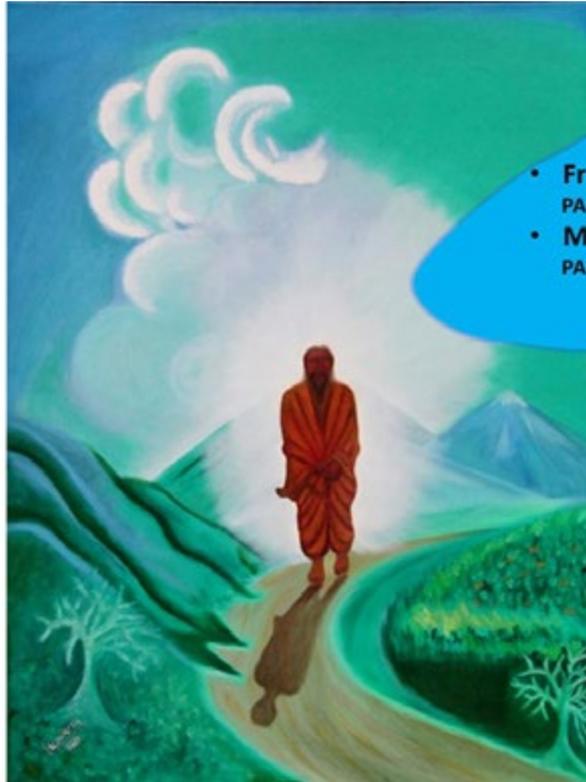


The Call Beyond

Volume 42 // No. 11 // 15 Nov 2017



- Freedom and Flexibility
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*Heaven's call is rare, rarer the heart that heeds;
The doors of light are sealed to common mind,
And earth's needs nail to earth the human mass,
Only in an uplifting hour of stress
Men answer to the touch of greater things:
Or, raised by some strong hand to breathe heaven-air...*

Sri Aurobindo

Savitri, Book 11, Canto 1, p. 689

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editorial

Freedom and Flexibility

Although there is some truth to the adage that the least governed is the best governed, one consistent lesson that history has taught us is that human evolution has not yet reached a point where man can be trusted to govern himself, using the instincts of his own soul as the sole guide. Hence, various laws, rules, ethical codes and religious codes have been used for regulating and moderating the wayward tendencies of man. The rules can be rigid and dogmatic, or so flexible as to become ineffective. The religious rules of the Hindu tradition, called Shastras, have erred on the side of flexibility. The guidelines of the Shastras have taken into account the individual variation in temperament and abilities, the requirements of different phases of life, and the inevitable changes that passage of time and place entail. Further, there has been no bar on individuals creating a new Shastra from time to time. That is what makes the Shastras multiple, voluminous, and complex. Acharya Navneet has given the readers of 'The Call Beyond' a glimpse of this complexity through a series of articles that have been published every month since July 2017. This issue carries the concluding article of the series. Not only has the Hindu tradition given individuals the freedom to frame new codes of conduct, but also the total freedom to question the scriptures and go on an individual spiritual quest to find their own answers to the fundamental existential questions. Some of the individuals who went on such a quest and found the answers through spiritual experiences have left behind the records of what they 'saw'. These records constitute the Upanishads. Taittiriya Upanishad incorporates not only the seer's experiences but also some dos and don'ts, which Acharya Navneet has quoted. There are more than 100 Upanishads that have survived, and there is no bar on a 'rishi' (literally, one who has 'seen') creating yet another Upanishad even today. Sri Aurobindo created not one, but two Upanishads – one, 'Sriarabindopanishad' in Sanskrit, and another, 'Savitri', in English.

And, Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, while giving the spiritual seekers immense freedom to carve their own path, have also given them enough guidelines while answering the questions that the disciples asked them. Thus, the four volumes of Sri Aurobindo's 'Letters on Yoga', and several volumes based on The Mother's question and answer sessions, can be used as 'Shastras' by anyone seriously interested in walking the spiritual path, till he feels entitled to depend solely on the Inner Guide, the Psychic Being. Between rigid rules and total freedom is the reasoned flexibility that is the hallmark of the Hindu tradition. Total freedom is also a part of the same tradition. As the Gita says, "Abandon all Dharmas and take refuge in Me alone" (18:66). But this total freedom comes only towards the end of the Gita, which indirectly means that only he who has lived what comes in the Gita before that is entitled to it. Even as late as Chapter 16, the Gita says, "Let the Shastra be for thee the authority to determine what ought to be done and what ought not to be done" (16:24). Between the unbending rules that bind and the spiritual freedom that liberates are pragmatic principles that understand the human being and the conditions under which he lives.

For a 10-minute video talk on 'Are Hindu Moral Codes Unchangeable' by Dr. Bharat Gupt, you may go to:

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?tab=wm#inbox/15eca852e065c707?projector=1>



THE LAST WORD...

It is almost impossible to pass from the mental being – even the most perfect and most remarkable – to the true spiritual life without having realized this ideal of moral perfection for a certain period of time, however brief it may be. Many people try to take a short-cut and want to assert their inner freedom before having overcome all the weaknesses of the outer nature; they are in great danger of deluding themselves. The true spiritual life, complete freedom, is something much higher than the highest moral realizations, but one must take care that this so-called freedom is not an indulgence and a contempt for all rules.

There is only one thing that gives you the right to go straight on your path without caring for anything: that is if you have been set going, set in motion by a higher truth. But you must be sure of that. You must not take your desire for the higher truth, you understand, because one very easily makes a mistake. You must know it, and have solid proofs to support it, and know that it is usually something which does not touch you personally. If you are in the least interested in it, one way or another, be on your guard and think twice before being convinced that it is the higher will and the expression of a truth.

THE MOTHER ('The Great Adventure', pp. 318-319)

article

What is My Duty as per the Hindu tradition? (Part 4)

ACHARYA NAVNEET

One who would break the law must be above the law. One who would ignore conventions must be above conventions. One who would despise all rules must be above all rules. And the motive of this liberation should never be a personal, egoistic one: the desire to satisfy an ambition, aggrandize one's personality, through a feeling of superiority, out of contempt for others, to set oneself above the herd and regard it with condescension.

THE MOTHER ('The Great Adventure', p. 317)

Summary of the articles on the same theme in the previous issues

*Spiritual life is not bound by rules, but willingly and happily follows the Inner Guide that is more exacting and demanding than rules, laws and ethical codes. The preparation for spiritual life passes through ethical codes that are mental constructs inspired by the high consciousness of sages and saints. The Hindu tradition has ethical guidelines rather than a rigid ethical code. These guidelines, further, vary with time, place, person and phase of life. The previous articles (starting with the 15 July 2017 issue) have focused, besides general guidelines applicable to all, on variations in these guidelines for different categories of people during different phases of life. In the August issue, the focus was on the guidelines for individuals in whom *tamas* is dominant, *rajas* is substantial, and *sattva* is negligible. Such an individual is lazy, ignorant, and when he does get active, the activity is likely to be mechanical, executed imperfectly, and motivated by confused or perverted thinking. This is the category the author has called Category 4. In the September issue, the focus was on guidelines for individuals in whom *rajas* is dominant, *tamas* substantial, and *sattva* is negligible. Because of the dominance of *rajas*, the person can sometimes get passionately involved in vigorous activity. But because of negligible *sattva*, the activity may be self-seeking and unscrupulous. On the other hand, substantial *tamas* means that the person may also have bouts of laziness. This is the category the author has called Category 3. In the October issue, the focus was on guidelines for individuals in whom *rajas* is dominant, *sattva* substantial, and *tamas* is negligible. Because of *rajasic* dominance, the person works hard, but has his eye primarily on what he will get out of it. To him, work is the means to fulfill desires and satisfy passions. His thinking is clear; he can distinguish between good and evil, but does not always use this ability to do what is good. Being greedy and in a hurry, he may be deliberately choose what he knows is evil. But since his *rajas* is tempered by substantial *sattva*, he has a strong sense of duty and responsibility. This is the category the author has called Category 2. In this issue, the focus will be on the guidelines for the category that the author has called Category 1.*

There are individuals in whom sattva is dominant, rajas is substantial, and tamas is negligible. Sattva is the principle of knowledge and harmony. Therefore, a person in whom sattva is dominant is enthusiastic, but works in moderation, and shows a good deal of thought behind his actions. He has a strong sense of duty, responsibility, and morality. His motives are pure and selfless, and he is neither overjoyed by success nor depressed by failure. He is typically contented and at peace. People for whom this description is broadly true may be termed category 1.

CATEGORY 1

A person of this category is calm, rather quiet and yet very energetic, and alert. He is a sharp observer; a penetrative, critical, innovative and intuitive thinker; often a seer or a philosopher, and generally wise, austere and compassionate. Such people are the think tanks of the society in which they live. Scientists, researchers, policy makers, teachers, judges, consultants, advisors and priests come under this category. In the ancient context, the most exalted among them used to be called 'rishis' (literally, one who has seen). It is obvious that their dharma was to use their natural traits for the benefit of the society.

Traditionally, all the components of Basic Dharma took a subtle overtone for this category of people. For example, the component ahimsa meant nonviolence even at the level of thoughts, in addition to nonviolence at the level of deeds and words. Similarly, tapas (austerity) meant austerity observed in thoughts, words and deeds. More emphasis was laid on a simple lifestyle in terms of food, clothing and items of comfort. The person could receive a lot of wealth but s/he was supposed to distribute all the wealth to the society except what was needed for one samvatsara (one lunar year). The strictness of rules and severity of austerities were such that no one would like to *become* a person of this category – either they are like that or they are not, no question of becoming.

That is what attracted the respect of all others from the society towards this category of people. On one end of the spectrum, the category 4 people got the least punishment for a given crime because of their low understanding of subtle aspects of dharma. At the other end of the spectrum, the category 1 people got the maximum punishment for a given crime committed by them because this category of people were supposed to be more knowledgeable, and therefore also more responsible. Yet, category 1 people were also *avadhya* - those who could not be killed or executed under any circumstances. These were the people who were watchdogs of the society, people who could even challenge the rulers for their wrong doings. They were supposed to be fearless, having no fear of losing anything. And that is why the society granted them the status of *avadhya*. Rigorous imprisonment for life was awarded instead of capital punishment. (*Editor's comment: This might have been because capital punishment rules out reform, whereas this category may be expected to be capable of radical reform.*)

Dharma Before Marriage

Traditional View

Whatever was applicable to persons in Categories 3 and 2, the same was applicable here. However, for this category, Sandhya Vandanam was compulsory three times a day. This person had to compulsorily learn, at least, one of the four Vedas completely by heart. The study was more rigorous and started at an early age but no later than 12 years of age. This person had to learn one or more subject of interest to teach others rather than just to practice himself. So, that required more skillful handling of the learning process. A very conservative view that was prevalent in the ancient times was that this category of people would not use their knowledge for personal profit – they would pursue their fields of interest only to propagate that field of knowledge.

That is why we have the example of Maharishi Vishwamitra who knew all the Dhanur-Vidya to destroy the demons disturbing his ashram and people around it, but he chose not to use that knowledge himself for that purpose. Instead, he gave the necessary knowledge to Lord Rama and Lakshmana, so that they could use missiles to eliminate the demons.

In the Present Context

The expectations may be the essentially the same as in case of Categories 3 and 2. But the category 1 person should be given more freedom to think freely and exposed to eminent personalities of the society with similar bent of mind. These people may appear misfits in the society at an early age. They need that nurturance which is devoid of judgment using the yardstick by which others are assessed. They can sometimes be spotted only by people who themselves are in Category 1.

Dharma After Marriage

Traditional View

This person was expected to continue with all the daily, fortnightly, monthly and annual rituals prescribed by the Vedas, such as Agnihotra, sandhya vandanam, pitr tarpana, deva tarpana, fasting on 11th day of the moon as well as on full moon and new moon days, special rituals during transit of sun from one constellation to the other, special ritual on eclipses, rituals related to sraaddha paksha (fortnight dedicated to the ancestors), yajnas and pujas during festivals and special days like akshaya tritiya, Holi, Diwali, both the Navaratri, Janmashami, etc. They were also required to perform or participate in the 40 samskaras prescribed in the allied texts of the Vedas. [Reference: 'Hindu Samskaras' by Dr. Rajbali Pandey, 1969, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass]. Apart from this, the person had to perform puja for one's Isha Devata every day, which became more elaborate on a special day every year.

This type of person could be engaged part time or full time in teaching the Vedas and allied texts. Those who were engaged in research, advisory role with the government, as medical experts, etc., pursued their professional roles and also did part time teaching of Vedas and texts which were connected with their profession. Others were engaged full time in teaching Vedas and allied texts – they were also called Upadhyaya. These people would also perform puja, yajnas and other rituals (like the 40 samskaras) for the other category of people – either doing on their behalf, or guiding them through such activities. They also gave public talks to create awareness about Dharma. It goes without saying, wherever teaching is mentioned, learning goes hand in hand – either learning by oneself or with the help of experts in the respective fields.

All the basic components of dharma were applicable to this category of people with hardly any overtone unlike the other categories.

In The Present Context

Learning, teaching, guiding and counseling – these are the common roles of this category of people, no matter in which profession they engage for making a living. There is no place for laziness in the name of being part of an intellectual group. Whatever rituals the Category 2 person follows, the same rituals this person should follow. Similarly, whatever duties are prescribed towards one's family for Category 2 persons, the same are applicable here. This person has to balance his/her time to be available for public good in the area of teaching, research, guiding and policy making. For example, if a scientist is engaged in Stock Market constantly, s/he cannot do justice to the work in hand, nor can s/he motivate or guide his/her subordinates or students. Such a scientist is a Category 3 person, no matter what his/her profession is.

Dharma After Retirement

Traditional View

Leaving home at the age of 50, and complete withdrawal from all formal responsibilities towards the society (sannyasa) at the age of 75 was strongly recommended. This one sentence sums it all.

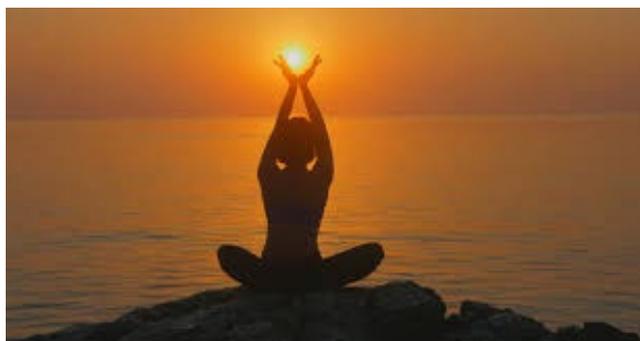
In the Present Context

Leaving the family after retirement and engaging full time in one's spiritual upliftment is as valid today as in the past. If complete sannyasa is not possible, then rigorous vaanaprastha should be adhered to. Most of the activities (as a rule of the thumb, 80%) should be focused on one's spiritual growth – it could be through meditation, japa, study or activities performed selflessly in the true spirit of karma yoga. This comes naturally to Category 1 persons, but it has to be carefully cultivated in other categories.

There is the idea that everyone belongs to a certain type, that, for example, the pine will never become the oak and the palm never become wheat. This is obvious. But that is something else: it means that the truth of your being is not the truth of your neighbour's. But in the truth of your being, according to your own formation, your progress is almost unlimited.

THE MOTHER ('The Great Adventure', p. 329)

(Concluded)



hundred years ago

The Synthesis of Yoga

GNOSIS AND ANANDA



Ananda, the Bliss, is the essential nature of the spirit; there it finds its true self, its essential consciousness, the absolute power of its being. Therefore the soul's entry into the absolute, unlimited, unconditional bliss of the spirit is the infinite perfection and the infinite liberation. This bliss can be enjoyed indeed even on the lower planes where the Purusha plays with his modified and

qualified Nature, on the plane of matter, on the plane of life, on the plane of mind, as well as on or above the gnostic truth-plane of knowledge. Even the **physical soul** in man, the *annamayapurusha*, can reflect and enter into the self of Sachchidanada either by a reflection of the Soul, in physical Nature, its bliss, power in infinity, or by losing itself in the Self within: the result is either a glorified sleep of the physical mind in which the physical being forgets itself or else moves about like a thing inert in the hands of Nature. So too the **life soul** in man, *pranamayapurusha*, can reflect and enter into the self of Sachchidananda by reflection of the Soul in universal Life or by losing itself in the Self within. Here again the result is either the state of sheer self-oblivion or else an action driven irresponsibly by the life nature, the great world-energy in its vitalistic dance, so that the outer being acts either in a God-possessed frenzy careless of itself and the world or with an entire disregard of the conventions and properties of fitting human actions. So too again the **mind-soul** in man, *manomayapurusha*, reflects and enters into the self of Sachchidananda by a reflection of the Soul as it mirrors itself in the nature of pure universal mind or by absorption in the Self within. Here there is either the cessation of mind and action or a desire-free unbound action, that of the soul alone in the world and careless of all human ties, the eremite soul, or that of the soul which lives in relations of pure love and ecstasy with all, the saint-soul.

The **gnostic soul**, the *vijnanamayapurusha*, has the fullness, the sense of plenitude of the Godhead in its action, the free, splendid and royal march of the Infinite transforming all life into a symbol of the eternal Light and the eternal Fire and the eternal Wine of the nectar, – knowledge, power, bliss. It possesses the infinite of the Self and the infinite of Nature. It does not so much lose as find its nature self in the Self of being; for while the other planes of the mental being are those of man finding God in himself and himself in God, the gnosis is rather God self-possessed in the human symbol. Therefore the gnostic soul does not so much reflect as identity itself with and possess the Soul in the truth-Nature.

The gnosis does not indeed reject the realisation on the lower planes, but it possesses them under its own conditions. The gnostic soul is the child, but the king-child; for here is the royal and eternal childhood whose toys are the world and all universal Nature the garden of playing.

Gnosis is the divine Knowledge-Will of the divine Consciousness-Force, Prakriti-Purusha, full of the delight of the divine being; but in the Ananda the knowledge goes back into pure self-consciousness, the will dissolves into pure transcendent force, both are taken up into pure delight of being. What was the basis of the gnostic being, is the self-field of the Ananda.

The Ananda is the true creative principle; from this divine Bliss all takes birth. In the Ananda all law ceases and there is an absolute freedom. It is above all principles and enjoyer of all principles in one and the same motion, above all gunas and the enjoyer of infinite gunas, above all forms and the enjoyer of all forms.

Our first absorbing impulse when we become aware of something entirely beyond what we are and know and are powerfully attracted by it, is to get away from the present actuality into that higher reality. The extreme form of this attraction is condemnation of the lower as an illusion and the aspiration to *laya* or *nirvana* in the beyond, – the passion for dissolution, immersion, extinction. But the real *laya* or *nirvana* is the release of all that is bindingly characteristic of the lower into the larger

being of the higher reality. **The Divine attracts the souls by various lures** which are all of them its relative conceptions of bliss; all are the soul's way of seeking for the Ananda. **First** it is the lure of an earthly reward of material, intellectual, ethical or other joy in the terrestrial mind and body; **secondly**, there is the hope of a heavenly bliss, much greater than these earthly rewards, but the conception of heaven rises in altitude and purity till it reaches the pure idea of the eternal presence of God or delightful union with Him; **thirdly**, we get the subtlest of all lures, escape from the worldly or heavenly joys or sorrows and from all phenomenal things, a Nirvana, a self-dissolution in the Absolute, the Ananda of cessation and peace.

And **what would be the bliss nature in man?** **First**, to be one with all beings in bliss of being; and since love is the human symbol of bliss-unity, to approach this oneness by the way of universal love, a human love at first, a divine love afterwards. **Secondly**, to be one in bliss with all the world-play and banish from the soul the sorrow and fear, the hunger and pain of the darkened mental being, **Thirdly**, to get that power of the bliss-freedom in which all the conflicting principles of our being shall be unified in their absolute values; so that all evil shall perforce become good, and universal beauty of the All-beautiful take possession, every darkness be converted into a pregnant glory of the light and the discords which the mind creates between Truth and Good and Beauty. Power and Love and Knowledge disappear on their eternal summit of unity.

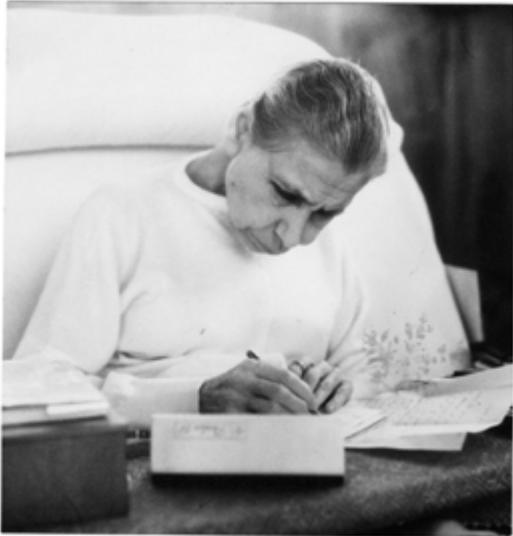
The Purusha in mind, life and body is divided from Nature and subject to her dualities; in the gnosis he is biune with her and finds as master their reconciliation and harmony by their essential unity; in the Ananda he is one with the Prakriti and no longer only biune with her. There is no longer the play of Nature with the soul; but **all is the play of the soul** with itself in its own nature of bliss. **This is the supreme mystery, the highest secret, simple to itself, however difficult and complex to our mental conceptions.** It is the free infinity of the self-delight of Sachchidananda. The play of the divine child, the *raslila* of the Lover are its mystic soul-symbols.

(Emphasis added)

SRI AUROBINDO (In the Arya, Vol. 4, No.4, 15 Nov 1917)

An Unforgettable Night*

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



O my divine Master, who hast appeared to me this night in all Thy radiant splendour, Thou canst in an instant make this being perfectly pure, luminous, translucent, conscious. Thou canst liberate it from its last dark spots, free it from its last preferences. Thou canst ... but hast Thou not done this tonight when it was penetrated with Thy divine effluence and Thy ineffable light? It may be ... for in me is a superhuman strength made all of calm and immensity. Grant that from this summit I may not fall; grant that peace may for ever reign as the master of my being, not only in my depths of which it has long been the sovereign but in the least of my external activities, in the smallest recesses of my heart and of my action.

I salute Thee, O Lord, deliverer of beings!

“Lo! Here are flowers and benedictions! Here is the smile of divine Love! It is without preferences and without repulsions. It streams out towards all in a generous flow and never takes back its marvellous gifts!”

Her arms outstretched in a gesture of ecstasy, the Eternal Mother pours upon the world the unceasing dew of Her purest love!

THE MOTHER (In *Prayers and Meditations*, from the prayer dated April 28, 1917)

**Title given by the editor*

twenty-five years ago

The W.C.

One day an English lady was looking for a room in Switzerland. She asked the local schoolmaster if he could recommend any. He took her to several places and after having decided upon one of them, she started on her way home. Then she suddenly remembered that she had not noticed any water closet (better known as bathroom). She immediately wrote to the schoolmaster to ask if there was a W.C. near the room.

The schoolmaster's English was poor. So he asked the parish priest to help him. Finally, they both came to the conclusion that it must stand for wayside chapel, a stopping place for worship. Therefore the schoolmaster wrote to the English lady as follows:

Dear Madam, I have the greatest pleasure in informing you that the W.C. is situated 9 miles from house, in the centre of a beautiful grove of pine trees, surrounded by wonderful scenery. It is capable of holding 150 people at one time. It is open on Thursday and Sunday of every week. There are a great number of people who attend during the summer months. It, however, is an unfortunate position if you are in the habit of going regularly.

No doubt you will be pleased to know that many people take their lunch and make a day of it. Others who can't spare the time, travel by car and arrive just in time.

I would especially advise you to go on Thursday, for there is an organ accompaniment on that day. The sound system is excellent and even the most delicate sounds are audible.

It may interest you to know that my daughter was married in our W.C. and it was there that she first met her husband. I remember quite clearly the rush there was for seats that day. There were 10 people on the seats that are usually used, and it was wonderful to watch the expression on their faces.

My father has been there since the day he was christened. A wealthy resident of the district recently erected a bell in our W.C. which rings every time a person goes. A bazaar is to be held there soon, and the proceeds will go towards the purchase of plush seats as the members feel the need of them.

Reproduced from *The Call Beyond*, Vol. 17, No. 3, 1992, p. 38

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 path of spiritual progress. Contributions from the readers are welcome, and may be printed at the editor's discretion after editorial revision.

To speak good words and give wise advice to a child has very little effect if one does oneself not give him an example of what one teaches. Sincerity, honesty, straightforwardness, courage, disinterestedness, unselfishness, patience, endurance, perseverance, peace, calm, self-control are all things that are taught infinitely better by example than by beautiful speeches. Parents, have a high ideal and always act in accordance with it and you will see that little by little your child will reflect this ideal in himself and spontaneously manifest the qualities you would like to see expressed in his nature.

THE MOTHER, CWM, Vol. 12 (On Education), p.10

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.

S wants to know:

What is the relationship between time and destiny?

Time is a resource. We use this resource to make efforts, from which we expect a certain outcome. When the outcome turns out to be different from what we wanted, we blame it on destiny.

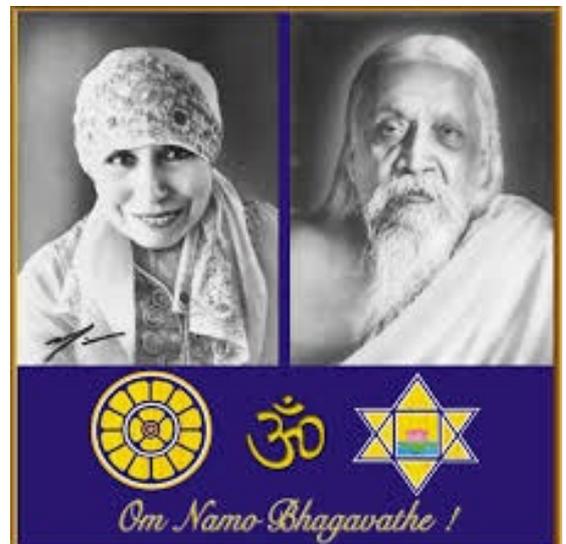
poetry

The Faith

GITI TYAGI

*Moments in digression passed,
Timeless time spent, misspent,
The path of life on crossroads muddled,
Reason withheld, judgement befogged.*

*Encountering the hurdles abound,
Paving way with all his might,
Stumbling, rising, mounting, soaring,
The serpentine course of life meandering.*



*Failing each moment, desires unfulfilled,
Climbing the ladder, stumbling on each rung,
Foundering, alighting; the being in hardships stuck,
Each loss a reminder, each fall a blow.*

*The mind, the intellect failed to respond,
All seemed lost, all appeared drowned,
Drowned in the ocean deep; sorrows profound,
The darkest clouds, no silver lining discerned.*

*Neither amity, nor solace accompanied,
Many a grief unfathomable heightened,
Hapless being in vain thus strived,
All recourse failed, all paths sealed.*

*Whence burdened life trammelled reason,
Once an erudite, no more a sagacious being,
Thence an angel, a Heaven-sent soul came to light,
All obstacles dissolved, within sight was intense delight.*

*Showed a path of Faith, of Surrender, of Love,
Surrender total, Love unconditional and universal,
The ego surrendered, head resting on Their Lotus-feet,
The shaking hand held and led on the sunlit path sweet.*

*A Force manifested deep within,
Casted a light with alacrity filled,
The being, an earthling once in darkness lost,
Became an exuberant and enlightened soul.*

*The Eternal Truth prevails,
The Divine Will never fails!
Credence grows, gratitude deepens,
Unshaken remains THE FAITH!*

(Dedicated to THE MOTHER and SRI AUROBINDO)

appreciations

Tara Didi Receives Auro-Ratna Award

The Overman Foundation, Kolkata, conferred its Auro-Ratna Award on Tara Didi at Van Niwas, Nainital, on 26 September 2017. Here are a few tributes to Tara Didi received on the occasion.



The Auro-Ratna Award



Tara Didi receiving the Auro-Ratna Award from Shri Nalin Dholakia. Looking on is Shri Anurag Banerjee of the Overman Foundation

Dear Anurag,

I am delighted that the Overman Foundation is honouring Taradi with the Auro-Ratna Award. I have known her for half a century and have learnt much from her. Whenever I see Tara briskly walking in the Delhi Ashram, the Sanskrit term, 'Dhriti' springs to my mind, for her determination to do good, to do the right thing, and to take up new areas for service. It is amazing how she has succeeded in making our Chachaji Sri Surendra Nath Jauhar 's aspirations come true for we have a Golden Ashram now, indeed, a Rose of God.

With affection,

Prema Nandakumar (Dr)

Normally, I do not indulge in eulogies for any sadhaka, either living or one who has passed on. For whatever one has been in one's life and whatever one still has to be is nothing else but the Grace and Glory of the Divine Mother. And there is so much more that is yet to come for all who have turned to Her. The accomplishments of today are but nothing compared to much more that is yet to come. I am sure someone of her stature needs neither any award nor approval of human beings who can hardly see below the surface of life. Still it is good sometimes to share our moments with lives that are inspiring, and who can deny that Tara didi's life is indeed an inspiration for many. It is in this spirit, and also this thought that when we admire someone it is the Divine workings within the person that we truly admire, the Presence without which we are but dust. Having said that, one must admit that it is not easy to speak about the life of someone who has not only achieved so much in a short span of time but more importantly continues to forge ahead in thought and action, vision and work even at the present bodily age of 81. It seems that with Tara di, Time has stopped and age has no meaning. At least they do not create any barriers to the wonderful work she has been engaged in for decades. And what a work, one must say! One is only reminded of this line from Savitri:

*A conscious power has drawn the plan of life,
There is a meaning in each curve and line.
It is an architecture high and grand
By many named and nameless masons built
In which unseeing hands obey the Unseen,
And of its master-builders she is one.*

(‘Savitri’, Book 6, Canto 2, p. 460)

Indeed, as Nolini da remarked, the greatness of the Great is the greatness of the Divine Energy in them. This applies perfectly with regard to Tara di. How she was handpicked by the Mother, trained personally under Her Wings of Glory and Love, is all there in her beautiful books, ‘Growing up with the Mother.’ But what may not be so evident is how the Mother continues to pour Her Love and Grace into this beautifully open and receptive, strong and powerful channel except for those who had the privilege of observing her at close quarters.

I had heard of Tara di years before meeting her. Those from whom I had heard about her were full of awe and hence there arose in me a natural curiosity to meet her sometime if the Mother so Wills. My wish was fulfilled in the mid-nineties when I was posted to Delhi. But what a contrast to the awe-inspiring image I had formed in my mind of a typical sadhika who would be wearing some sort of white sari and for whom smiling would be almost a blasphemy. Here was someone who could be so warm and friendly, so unassuming, not just smiling but also laughing with the carefree laughter given to those who love Her and serve Her with joy in their heart. Even though she was then the sole Trustee of such a big Ashram with its many-sided activities, Sri Aurobindo’s line that describes the superman suited her very aptly:

‘To evolve in the sense of the God is to grow in intuition, in light, in joy, in love, in happy mastery; to serve by rule and to rule by service; to be able to be bold and swift and even violent without hurt or wickedness and mild and kindly and even self-indulgent without laxity or vice or weakness; to make a bright and happy whole in oneself and, by sympathy, with mankind and all creatures.’

At least such was my first impression of hers and an impression which has justified itself over years of knowing her. I am quite sure that what works in her is some power and aspect of the Divine Mother and I suspect that Tara di is quite conscious of the Godhead that moves her. But let me not spill all the beans. To put it more modestly, I can say that among all the karma yogis that I have met none has impressed me as much as Tara di. Of course we all know that Sri Aurobindo's Path is not just a yoga of Works but a grand synthesis, an integral yoga. But there is no doubt a predominant streak of nature, a soul-temperament, a soul-poise that leads the individual journey. In Tara di, it is no doubt the Madonna of Might who leads the way and makes the works that flow through her so grand and powerful, and yet done with such natural ease and grace. In her dealings with people we can see, on one hand, a strong and powerful side that can shake someone to the core, especially if the person has come wearing masks of deception. On the other hand, there is such a sweet and generous side that can go out of the way in her care for those whom she is so moved to do so. A resolute will and a plasticity that keeps the eyes fixed on only one thing – the Work to be done – and leaves the rest to adapt with the flow of Time is a rare combination, and she is indeed blessed to have this. Of course we all know it is Her Grace, and Tara di's beauty is that she has never forgotten this central thing. For without this humility before the Divine one's greatness becomes arrogance, and all one's capacities slowly dwindle off. But in her case as we all can witness there is a constant growth. She would never hesitate to take up a work or project of the Mother, and if she finds someone who can execute it well, then all the rest does not matter for her. What he is in his personal life, what his antecedents are, etc., all become secondary. All that is important is his or her ability to serve the Mother and fulfill Her vision. This single-pointedness towards her aim is something I have personally seen in Tara di and been truly inspired and impressed by it.

In the end what is it that really matters? The worth of a man is not measured by the size of his shoe but by the stature of his soul. And her soul is strong and erect, ever ready and willing and happy to serve Her from whom She has emerged and for whom She is born. Of course I have shared mainly what I have felt about her beautiful soul. But as is the case with Her Vibhuti, her nature too has many beautiful sides. A remarkable photographer, a sportsperson, and one known for her powerful voice reciting Sri Aurobindo's poems, Tara di has an intellectual side that she often tends to deliberately hide. Few may be aware that most of the questions that we find in the Mother's Questions and Answers during Her evening classes were asked by her. In fact she thus became a receptive instrument for so many of us in receiving the Mother's answers through her. Perhaps it is still very much so and we can take it that many of the things she says spontaneously and intuitively are simply inspired by Her and reaching out to many more who need guidance in life. Her tremendous work at the Delhi and Nainital as well as Ramgarh Ashrams is for all to see. That she was born in the illustrious family of Shri Surendra Nath Jauhar is an additional feather in her cap.

I am sure her being, as of anyone who has been touched by Her Grace, holds in the casket of her heart many more gems and jewels than we can fathom. After all the Mother chose her and therein lies her greatest reward and satisfaction, such as that no other earthly gift or recognition can bring. To honour her is in a way to honour the Mother whose precious gift and work of Art Tara didi is. I am sure she has many more things to do and many more works to accomplish, 'miles to go before I sleep', as the poet put it. We can only pray and wish that she remains healthy and strong so that she can serve Her more and more, better and better, for that alone is the true worth of her life and of ours. I am sure the Mother has heard our prayers and of many more who have been touched by Her Grace through Tara di.

Alok Pandey (Dr)

Tara Jauhar is indeed a shining star in Sri Aurobindo's Galaxy! The award and the recognition which are being bestowed on her today are richly deserved.

I have heard and known of Tara as a very special child of our Sweet Mother since my earliest days in Auroville, perhaps first from her book about how the Mother taught French to the children of the Ashram School.

I first met her face to face in February 1982, when I had to be in Delhi for several weeks on Auroville work and enjoyed the privilege of staying in the Ashram and participating in some of the activities there.

The following year, in May 1983, I was able to join one the Himalayan treks which were regularly organized by her in those days. A friend had advised me to join, promising me that it would be a life-changing experience, which indeed it proved to be.

During my successive visits to the Delhi Ashram with Helmut in 1984 and 1996, we were impressed to see how much development had taken place in the Ashram compound and activities – all evidently due to Tara's leadership and guidance. I remember clearly Tara's cordiality, her wisdom, her skill in dealing with people of all ages from young children to elders, her astonishing energy, and her great organizational capacities. These qualities have surely come to her as the fruit of her years spent under the direct influence and guidance of the Mother, who encouraged her adventurous spirit and was always with her, even when she was trekking through the snow in the Himalayas.

She has under her care not only the Delhi Ashram Campus and all the activities which have expanded so spectacularly since our last visit, but also the Centres at Nainital and Ramgarh, all flourishing and spreading the Light and Love of the Mother and the Master. Thousands of people must have been touched and illumined by the rays of their influence through her work. Long may she continue her dedicated service to Them!

Shraddhavan

On hearing Georges Brassens sing the dirge
 Of a lonely white steed
 Heedless of rain or fog, on the verge
 Of despair, it takes the lead,

I fondly ask him, "Mr Brassens,
 Can you not invent at the end
 Rather another glorious suspense
 On which we may depend

For welcoming Tara to the select board
 Of Auro-Ratna, hailing once for all
 The conquering image of Chandi with her sword,
 In the midst of a rejoicing yell?"

While diamond and gold can be measured in carat,
 Compassion is making you measureless, Tara!

Prithwindra Mukherjee

notice board

Forthcoming Events

**Celebrations of the Sixtieth Anniversary of the
 Enshrinement of the Relics of Sri Aurobindo
 at Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch**

2-9 December 2017

A rich program with a focus on Indian culture, Yoga, and Education awaits you at Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch. For details, please visit our website www.sriurobindoashram.net or write to contact@urobindoonline.in

Contact us

Our quarterly magazine in Hindi, ***Sri Aravind Karmadhara***, is also available on-line now, and may be viewed on our website www.sriarobindoashram.net. For a free subscription to ***Sri Aravind Karmadhara***, please send an e-mail to callbeyond@arobindoonline.in.

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