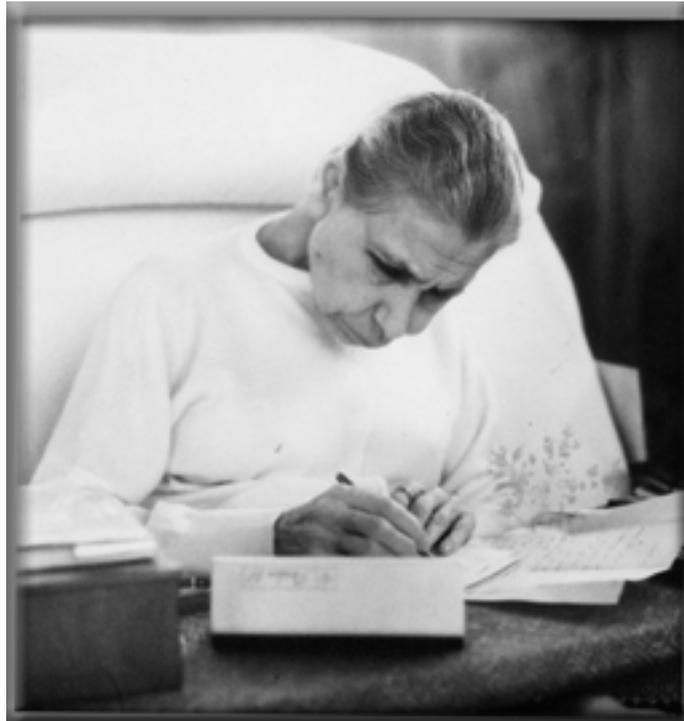


THE CALL BEYOND

Volume 41 // No. 9 // 15 Sept 2016



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

Sri Aurobindo

Savitri, Book 11, Canto 1, p. 689

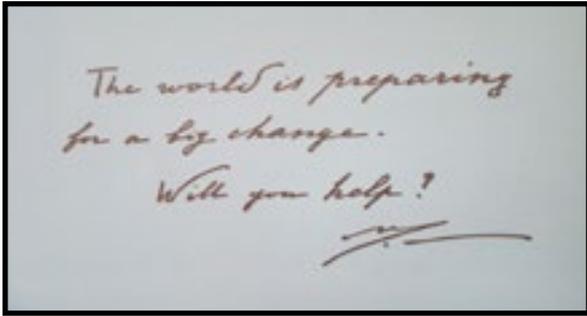
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The Ultimate Solution



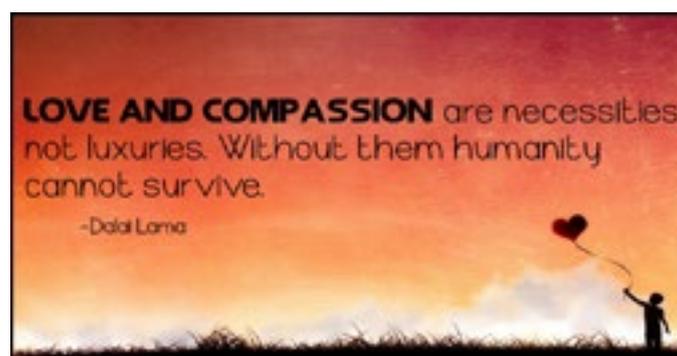
*The rolling cycles passed and came again,
Brought the same toils and the same barren end,
Forms ever new and ever old, the long
Appalling revolutions of the world.*

SRI AUROBINDO (*Savitri*, Book 10, Canto 4, p. 643)

That the world is a place of sorrow and misery is generally agreed, but that has not prevented mankind from making repeated attempts to find a solution to suffering. Among the oldest attempts are the various religions. But rather than offer solutions, they have justified suffering by saying that we deserve it because of our sins; or that it is good for us because it makes us turn to God; and as a ray of hope they have promised us lasting relief from suffering in some other world after death, provided we behave well in this one. The justification and the hope have helped man go through the difficulties of life with less suffering, and that is why religion has been called the opium of the masses. Now let us turn to some recent attempts, particularly in the West. During the European Renaissance, the West went through a conflict between science and religion, and in the conflict science emerged triumphant by the eighteenth century. The euphoria generated by the rapid advances in science, and the revolutionary changes its technological applications brought about in our lives by reducing the necessity for physical labour, and making transport and communications rapid, made science the new religion. It was fondly hoped that science and technology would bring an end to suffering by wiping out all problems of human existence. When that did not happen, the same tool that had helped in the growth of science and technology was pressed into service for solving the problems of human existence – the tool was ‘reason’. The causes of human suffering were analysed, and rational solutions offered in the form of new systems of education and new systems of government, such as democracy and communism. Revolutions, such as the French Revolution and the Russian Revolution overthrew monarchies to install governments based on these rational approaches. The impact of all these approaches was however, less than expected, and did not last long. Suffering returned with a vengeance, with the only difference that the exploited classes became the new exploiters. The finest product of rationality was a system of ethics, humanism. But humanism has remained an ideal that is easy to admire but difficult to practice. Sri Aurobindo has discussed in his twin works *The Human Cycle* and *The Ideal of Human Unity* why all such noble and well-intentioned attempts have failed, and would continue to fail. The basic reason resides in human nature, which in turn is a product of the average level of human consciousness. The present level of human consciousness is essentially mental. Mental consciousness looks upon individual existence as a final truth. Therefore, mental consciousness is a separative consciousness. Hence the human personality is typically ego-driven; that is what we call basic human nature. So long as this continues, any system, no matter how rational, when implemented by the average man, tends to create highly privileged and underprivileged members in society. The privileged members continue to corner more and more of the available resources, and are also able to justify it because reason is such a versatile tool! The result is gross inequality and injustice, and consequent misery and suffering. Sri Aurobindo has not only explained the problem but also offered the solution and a ray of hope.

That the attempts based on rationality have failed has also served a purpose. The failures have taught us what does not work. They have taught us the limitations of reason. While reason has given us the power to land a man on the moon, it has failed to wipe out misery and suffering from the world. Sri Aurobindo had foreseen that after all such failed experiments, the West would start looking at tools based on a plane of consciousness higher than the mental. In his terminology, the West would enter the supra-rational subjective age. In order to find tools based on the supra-rational approach, the West would turn to ancient Indian wisdom, and that is what we find happening today. There is an unmistakable exponential rise in the appetite for ancient Indian wisdom in the West, as shown by the rapidly growing popularity of yoga, including its spiritual foundation.

When it comes to the application of the ancient Indian wisdom embodying the supra-rational approach, it has two interrelated aspects: its place in the life of the individual, and its collective role. At the level of the individual, it implies organizing one's life around the inner Light, emanating from the dynamic aspect of the soul, called the psychic being by Sri Aurobindo and The Mother. Doing so leads us to choices based on oneness rather than division between individuals. These are choices that express love for our fellow beings. Making such choices leads to joy, lasting mental peace, psycho-spiritual transformation of the mind and intellect, and spiritual growth. Further, an individual whose life is organized around the psychic being looks at all events and circumstances of life, including the so-called tragedies and traumatic events, as opportunities for spiritual growth. That is how this individual is able to overcome suffering. This person has gone through an inside-out revolution. An inner change has got reflected in his outer life, and that is what has eradicated suffering from his life. This is the theme of the article, '[Inside-out](#)' by [Lopa Mukherjee](#), in this issue of *The Call Beyond*. But just a select few using this approach does not change the basic character of the world, and the world continues to be a place full of misery and suffering. That is where Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have given us hope. If a large number of individuals start living at a level higher than reason, it will generate a critical mass of people driven by love rather than the ego. Then such people will be able to dominate the affairs of the earth. And, such a change in the character of the world is round the corner because the world is poised for the next leap in the evolution of consciousness. Individuals, by consciously engaging in the process of raising their consciousness, can contribute to this process. If more and more people start doing so, they can accelerate the process. Thus, Sri Aurobindo and the Mother's yoga is not just for individual salvation; it is aimed at making a contribution to the collective consciousness of the planet. Let us all consciously live a life based on love and compassion. That will not only bring joy and peace to us as individuals, but will also be a contribution to the ultimate solution for the misery and suffering that have characterized human life since times immemorial.



Inside-out

LOPA MUKHERJEE

*If Mind is all, renounce the hope of bliss;
If Mind is all, renounce the hope of Truth.*

SRI AUROBINDO (*Savitri*, Book 10, Canto 4, p. 645)

What hands are here! Ha, they pluck mine eyes out. Hands with no callus to mark hard labour, no reflex to defend themselves, no habit of joining in supplication. Hands used for delicate tasks such as writing, eating and playing games. Hands used to clap for the man above and slap the man below. Middle class hands born into privilege. And oftentimes they itch. Itch to slap the man above and clap for the man below. They itch to right the numerous sins of man against humanity. They itch to do something worthwhile. And tempt the mind to utter a rebel's cry:

*What hands are here! Ha, they pluck out mine eyes.
Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood clean from my hand?
No, this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
Making the green one red.*

But unlike Lady Macbeth there is no regret to shed blood for a righteous cause. The resources at my disposal, the innate capacities, the opportunities offered by society, demand a nod of gratitude. A little more than a nod, in fact. A pledge, an activism, a body to stand behind a picket line, hands to brandish a banner, voice to protest, spirit to fight. I am the middleman in the commerce between haves and have-nots. An outsider who has the luxury to pause and think. So, before plunging in let me step back awhile and be a student of history.

The world has seen men struggle. Only too many times. From armed revolt to passive resistance. Ideas and solutions have been tried, leaving room for more to be tried. Some have called out for educating the weak to let them know their rights. Others have countered that the weak have no rights. They need to create them by force. So, the weak fought and sometimes got those rights. Rights gave them the power to create new rights. These new rights excluded some people who then clamored for rights. A new struggle was born. Then one day the weak of yesteryears found themselves on the wrong side of the picket line. They had become the new enemy of the people.

When we enlarge our scope from individual causes to the global field, we see certain trends. Revolutions have liberated some people, some have prospered and have even been content. But has humanity progressed? True progress that does not need indexes and charts to prove its growth. The kind that makes man more noble, more caring, more universal. Mighty endeavors have traced circles around where they began. Yet messiahs have encouraged, "Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached."

But can you tell a man pinned under another's boots to arise and awake? Rather address the wearer of the boots, since he can best set the man under him free. The man on top can see farthest. Let him then be empowered to use his power rightfully. Educating him is a more urgent need than the man he is crushing under his boots. Not the knowledge he already has – how to outsmart his fellowmen. But another kind that will make him embrace his fellowmen. And, for a rapid and vast change he needs to stir up a movement. One that will not be bottom up, but top down. Some men of goodwill can set it rolling and others will catch on. The devolution of power will follow and the blessings of civilization will reach the oppressed.

Let us pause once again. Can a rich man voluntarily distribute his holdings to the needy? Can he at least share his surplus with them? Even if he will never get around using it in his lifetime? Should he do it? What if his beneficiaries grew in power and wealth, and some day surpassed him? Should he not fear this end and do everything to prevent it? Alternatively, what if he were an optimist? What if he knew he has enough, and does not worry about anybody trying to make off with his property? Is this asking too much, since we don't even know what is 'enough'? Trust people in a free market society to drop their self interest? Where is that agency that safeguards everybody's interest? That notion of a munificent government? What a dream! As though government was not made of people prone to the same vices as the governed!

And yet this too was done. Men having reached the pinnacle of achievement created channels to benefit the poor. But not many caught on and neither did the challenges of the world yield themselves to easy solutions.

So, is harmony amongst men an empty hope? I would like to believe it is not. Past revolutions have pruned the poison tree. Now it is time to cut it from its roots. The stuff that makes man a fearful, selfish, belligerent creature needs to be transmuted, his darker self annihilated. Then can he be truly emancipated. He must arise, awake and listen to the call of the Spirit. This force of the soul within him can transform the hard crust of his outer nature. And it asks him to rebel against his lower self.

It is time we begin this inside-out revolution. And like the past revolutions this will also demand unflinching enthusiasm and wholehearted dedication. But the best part is that one is not waiting for someone else to act. One's field of action is one's own self. When one realizes this, one is already on the road to freedom. The rest is a race to high heaven.

(Please see the related editorial, [The Ultimate Solution](#), on page 3)

All world would change if man could once consent to be spiritualised; but his nature mental, vital and physical is rebellious to the higher law. He loves his imperfections.

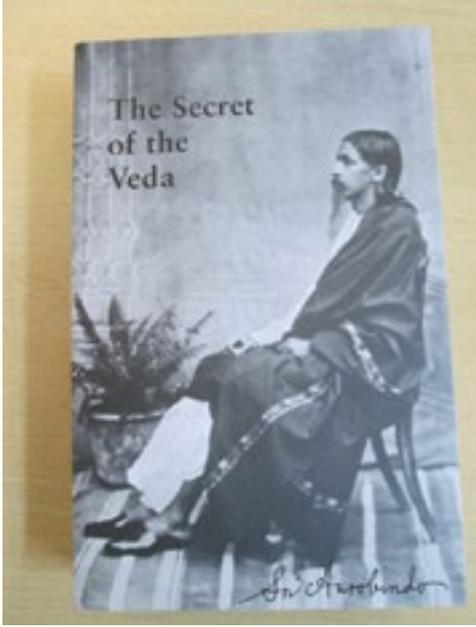
The spirit is the truth of our being; mind, life and body in their imperfection are its masks, but in their perfection should be its moulds. To be spiritual only is not enough; that prepares a number of souls for heaven, but leaves the earth very much where it was. Neither is a compromise the way to salvation. The world knows three kinds of revolution. The material has strong results, the moral and intellectual are infinitely larger in their scope and richer in their fruits, but the spiritual are the great sowings.

SRI AUROBINDO (Thoughts & Glimpses)

The Legend of the Lost Cows

UDHAV SUREKA

The article is tenth in a series based on Sri Aurobindo's 'The Secret of the Veda'



“The image of the Cow is the most important of all the Vedic symbols.”(1)

- Sri Aurobindo, The Secret of the Veda

In the Rig Veda, there is often the mention of lost cows, lying concealed in a dark mountain cavern. These cows have to be recovered by the gods, primarily Indra. It may seem odd that the Rishis who are known for highest spiritual accomplishments be so obsessed with this one legend that they mention it repeatedly. They are invoking one deity, then another deity, for the mere recovery of their lost cattle. However, on closer examination of the Veda, one understands that it is not the rescue of any earthly herd of cows that the Rishis demanded, rather the resurgence of an illumined consciousness out of the dark depths of ignorance.

The thing is, cows are symbols of Light in the Veda. While this inner meaning is tightly veiled by the Veda under its elaborate scheme of symbols, it becomes evident in some hymns, where the garb of symbols is momentarily lifted. Many of these hymns refer to the Sun and Dawn and *gau* or cow is mentioned in their close association:

saṃ te gāvas tama ā vartayanti jyotir yachanti - R.V. VII.79.2

“Thy cows (rays) remove the darkness and extend the Light” (2)

Sun or *Surya* represents the Truth in the Veda, and Dawn or *Usha*, the medium for its realization. Thus, their rays, the cows, don't represent just any light, but the Light of the Truth-consciousness.

The legend of the lost cows is also closely associated to another legend in the Veda – the legend of the lost Sun. In fact, the two legends are often spoken of together, in one hymn, in one sentence even:

*yebhiḥ sūryamuśasaṃ mandasānoavāsayoapa darlhāni dardrata
mahāmadriṃ pari gā indra santam nutthā acyutam sadasasa pari savāta*

“Thou (Indra) didst make the Sun and the Dawn to shine, breaking the firm places; thou didst move from its foundation the great hill that enveloped the Cows” (3) – R.V. 6.17.5

ajanayata sūryam vidada gā aktunāhnām vayunāni sādhatta

“He (Indra) brought to its birth the Sun, found the Cows, effecting out of the Night the manifestations of the days.” (4) – R.V. 2.19.3

This understanding especially helps demystify the meaning behind the Vedic Rishis constantly praying for such material prosperity as cows, horses, chariots, gold, food, sons etc.

“For them these material objects were symbols of the immaterial; the cows were the radiances or illuminations of a divine Dawn, the horses and chariots were symbols of force and movement, gold was light, the shining wealth of a divine Sun—the true light; both the wealth acquired by the sacrifice and the sacrifice itself in all their details symbolised man’s effort and his means towards a greater end, the acquisition of immortality.” (5)

Sri Aurobindo tells us to not read words like these in isolation, but instead to look at the Veda as one whole. The Veda itself will reveal their inner meaning in many hymns, and when we find that inner meaning, we must not hesitate to apply it to all other instances of the word. Only then will we be able to understand what the Rishis have conveyed.

Sri Aurobindo concludes:

“By this inevitable conclusion the corner-stone of Vedic interpretation is securely founded far above the gross materialism of a barbarous worship and the Veda reveals itself as a symbolic scripture... the cult of a higher and inner Light, of the true Sun, satyaṃ sūryaṃ, that dwells concealed in the darkness of our ignorance... in the infinite rock of this material existence.” (6)

REFERENCES

- (1) *The Secret of The Veda*, p. 123, Line 23
- (2) *The Secret of The Veda*, p. 126, Line 22
- (3) *The Secret of The Veda*, p. 157, Line 5
- (4) *The Secret of The Veda*, p. 156, Line 33
- (5) *The Secret of The Veda*, p. 139, Line 19
- (6) *The Secret of The Veda*, p. 157, Line 32

hundred years ago

*Power Comes With the Need**

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

This was our conversation today morning, O Lord: Thou didst wake up the vital being with the magic wand of Thy impulsion and say to it: “Awake, bend the bow of thy will, for soon the hour of action will come.” Suddenly awakened, the vital being rose up, stretched itself and shook off the dust of its long torpidity; from the elasticity of its members it realized that it was still vigorous and fit for action. And with an ardent faith it answered the sovereign call: “Here I am, what dost Thou want of me, O Lord?” But before another word could be pronounced, the mind intervened in its turn and, having bowed down to the Master as a mark of obedience, spoke to him thus:



“Thou knowest, O Lord, that I am surrendered to Thee and that I try my best to be a faithful and pure intermediary of Thy supreme Will. But when I turn my gaze to the earth, I see that however great men may be, their field of action is always terribly restricted. A man, who in his mind and even in his vital being is as vast as the universe or at least as vast as the earth, as soon as he begins to act, becomes enclosed in the narrow bounds of a material action, very limited in its field and results. Whether he be the founder of a religion or a political reformer, he who acts becomes a petty little stone in the general edifice, a grain of sand in the immense dune of human activities. So I do not see any realizable action worthy of the whole being’s concentrating on it and making it its purpose of existence. The vital being delights in adventure; but should it be allowed to fling itself into some lamentable adventure unworthy of an instrument conscious of Thy Presence?” – “Fear nothing,” was the reply. “The vital being will not be allowed to set

itself in motion, it will not be asked of thee to contribute all the efforts of thy organizing faculties, except when the action proposed is vast and complete enough to fully and usefully employ all the qualities of the being. What exactly this action will be, thou wilt know when it comes to thee. But I am warning thee even now so that thou mayst be prepared not to reject it. I also warn both thee and the vital being that the time for the small, quiet, uniform and peaceful life will be over. There will be effort, danger, the unforeseen, insecurity, but also intensity. Thou wert made for this role. After having accepted for long years to forget it completely, because the time had not come and thou too wert not ready, wake up now to the consciousness that this is indeed thy true role, that it was for this thou wert created.”

The vital being was the first to wake to consciousness and, with the enthusiasm natural to it, exclaimed: “I am ready, O Lord, Thou mayst rely upon me!” The mind, weaker and more timid, though more docile too, added: “What Thou willest, I will. Thou knowest well, O Lord, that I belong entirely to Thee. But shall I be able to prove equal to the task, shall I have the power of organizing what the vital being has the capacity to realise?” – “It is to prepare thee for this that I am working at the moment; this is why thou art undergoing a discipline of plasticity and enrichment. Do not worry about anything: power comes with the need. Not because thou hast been confined, even as the vital being, to very small activities at a time when this was useful, to allow things which had to be prepared the time for preparation – not because of this, I say, art thou incapable of living outside these smallnesses in a field of action consonant with thy true stature. I have appointed thee from all eternity to be my exceptional representative upon the earth, not only invisibly, in a hidden way, but also openly before the eyes of all men. And what thou wert created to be, thou wilt be.”

As always, Lord, when the voice of the depths fell silent, Thy sublime and all-powerful benediction enveloped me completely.

And for a moment the Master and the instrument were but one: the Unique, eternal, infinite.

THE MOTHER (In *Prayers and Meditations*, prayer dated 8 December 1916)

*Title given by the editor

The Synthesis of Yoga

THE REALISATION OF THE COSMIC SELF



Our first imperative aim when we draw back from mind, life, body and all else that is not our external being, is to get rid of the false idea of self by which we identify ourselves with the lower existence and can realise only our apparent being as perishable or mutable creatures in a perishable or ever mutable world. We have to know ourselves as the self, the spirit, the eternal; we have to exist consciously in our true being. ...

Spirit and material existence are highest and lowest rung of an orderly and progressive series. Therefore between the two there must be a serious relation and principle of connection by which the eternal Brahman is able to be at once pure Spirit and Self and yet hold in himself the universe of himself; and it must be possible for the soul that is one with or in union with the Eternal to adopt the same poise of divine relation in place of our present ignorant immersion in the world. ...

In other words, besides the consciousness of the transcendent Self pure, self-existent, timeless, spaceless we have to accept and become the cosmic consciousness, we have to identify our being with the Infinite who makes himself the base and continents of the world and dwells in all existences. ...

For our real self is not the individual mental being, that is only a figure, an appearance; our real self is cosmic, infinite, it is one with all existence and the inhabitant of all existences. The self behind our mind, life and body is the same self as the self behind the mind, life and body of all our fellow-beings, and if we come to possess it, we shall naturally, when we turn to look out again upon them, tend to become one with them in the common basis of our consciousness. ...

The individual mind, life and body which we recoiled from as not our true being, we shall recover as a true becoming of the Self, but no longer in a purely individual narrowness. We shall take up in mind not as a separate mentality imprisoned in a petty motion, but as a large movement of the universal mind, the life not as an egoistic activity of vitality and sensation and desire, but as a free movement of universal Matter, a cell of the cosmic Body. We shall come to feel all the consciousness of the physical world as one with our physical consciousness, feel all the energies of the cosmic life around us as our own energies, feel all the heart-beats of the cosmic impulse and seeking in our heart-beats set to the rhythm of the divine Ananda, feel all the action of the universal mind flowing into our mentality and our thought-action flowing out upon it as a wave into that wide sea. This unity embracing all mind, life and matter in the light of the supramental Truth and the pulse of the spiritual Bliss will be to us our internal fulfilment of the Divine in a complete cosmic consciousness.

But since we must embrace all this in the double term of the Being and the Becoming, the knowledge that we shall possess must be complete and integral. It must not stop with the realisation of the pure Self and Spirit, but include also all those modes of the Spirit by which it supports, develops and throws itself out into its cosmic manifestation. Self-knowledge and world-knowledge must be made one in the all-ensphering knowledge of the Brahman.

SRI AUROBINDO (In the *Arya*, Vol. 3, No.2, 15 September 1916)

twenty five years ago

Utilitarianism

THE MOTHER



For about a century mankind is suffering from a disease which seems to be spreading more and more, and in our days, it has become more acute, it is what we may call ‘utilitarianism’. Things and persons, circumstances and activities seem to be viewed and appreciated exclusively from this angle alone. Nothing has any value unless it is useful. It goes, of course, without saying that what is useful is better than what is not so. But one must first of all understand what one calls useful – useful to whom, to what, for what?

Indeed more and more, the races who consider themselves civilized have been naming as useful that which serves to bring, to acquire or to produce money. Everything is judged from this monetary angle. That is what I call utilitarianism. And this disease is very contagious, for even children do not escape from it. At an age when one should have dreams of beauty and greatness and perfection perhaps too sublime for ordinary commonsense, but certainly higher than this dull good sense, they dream of money and worry how to earn it.

So when they think of their studies they think above all of what can be useful to them, so that later on when they grow up, they can earn a great deal of money. And the thing that becomes most important for them is to prepare to pass examinations with success; for it is with diplomas and certificates and titles that they will be able to get good positions and earn much. For them study has no other purpose, no other interest.

To learn in order to know, to study in order to have knowledge of Nature and of life, to educate oneself in order to increase one’s consciousness, to discipline oneself in order to be master of oneself, to overcome one’s weaknesses, one’s incapacity and ignorance, to prepare oneself in order to progress in life towards a goal that is nobler and vaster, more generous and more true... they hardly think of that and consider all that as mere utopia, the only important thing is to be practical, to prepare and to learn how to earn money.

(Bulletin, August 1960, pp. 143-145)

Reproduced from *The Call Beyond*, Vol. 16, No. 3, 1991, p. 30.

Utilitarianism

“...the Greatest Happiness Principle, holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness.”

inspiration

Enlightening Footfalls



Footfalls can now translate into electricity that can light up streets, thanks to a brainwave that Laurence Kemball-Cook had at age 24 while doing a placement year at the energy company Eon just after graduating from Loughborough University, London. His assignment was to work on making solar energy and wind work for street lighting. In London there is more shade than sun, and wind is characteristically whimsical everywhere. But when dedication to the task on hand is total, the universal Mind sends a wave of inspiration like a flash.

Kemball-Cook was struck by such a wave while looking at people walking through the crowded Victoria Station: why not tap the energy inherent in every step taken by the walkers. The result was a tile, which gets depressed a bit as one steps on it. Inside the tile is a flywheel that spins with the pressure on the tile. The spinning flywheel converts kinetic energy into electrical energy through electromagnetic induction. The electricity generated can be stored in batteries, and used as and when required. It took Kemball-Cook only 15 hours to make the first tile, but that was the beginning of a struggle. Neither venture-capitalists nor the government were willing to support developing the idea for large-scale application. But persistence paid, and today tiles made by his seven-year old company, Pavegen, has over 200 installations in 30 countries worldwide.

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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.

Specially relevant for parents and teachers

... a fault confessed must be forgiven. You should not allow any fear to slip in between you and your child; fear is a disastrous way to education: invariably it gives birth to dissimulation and falsehood. Only an affection that is discerning, firm yet gentle and a sufficient practical knowledge will create bonds of trust that are indispensable for you to make the education of your child effective.

THE MOTHER

The Staircase Story

ANITA SHARMA



*The climb uphill
that often challenges,
that often exhausts,
has also resulted
in fabulous rewards,
in unexpected creations,
in dazzling innovations
with each step.*

*The climb uphill
also the interlude fills
with exhilaration and enjoyment,
peace and contentment,
and aspiration for the next ascent.*

Unicorns

MANISHA JACOBS

A poem about waking up each morning and wanting to live and love openly



*Strange, beautiful, infinite dawn,
The unicorns ride the rays
Out into a blue expanse,
Ushering the day with a horse's neigh.*

*Morning, in veiled white
Awaits the warmth to embrace,
To unfreeze every dew drop,
New lanes for a tired human race.*

*What joy is life to bring,
If not tread in truthful light?
When light is trapped in a dark place
The passing phase, called the night?*

*Harder than to understand
Are compassion's humble ways.
Every unicorn rides the sky,
Each heart rides each ray.*

may i help you

Sravan Reddy writes:

I am planning to donate blood. In the context of Yoga, are there any good/bad effects of donating blood? Can one continue regular physical practices of Yoga such as asanas and basic breathing techniques after donating blood?

Dear Sravan,

The specific answers to your questions are:

In the context of yoga, there are only good effects of donating blood. The extent of the good effects, as with everything we do, depends on the attitude with which we do it. The best attitude is to do it in a selfless manner, out of a sense of oneness with the unknown person who will receive the blood, thanking the Divine for the opportunity to take one more step on the path of spiritual growth.

Yes, you may continue with asanas and pranayamas after donating blood. However, any strenuous exercises, which may cause dehydration through excessive sweating, should not be done for a few hours after donating blood.

Since this is an important topic, I am using this opportunity to add a few more facts which may answer some frequently asked questions in relation to blood donation.

The amount of blood taken from the body at one sitting during the donation varies from 250 to 500 mL. In India, the amount taken is usually 250-350 mL. The total blood volume of a healthy adult is about 5000 mL (i.e. 5 Litres). So, the amount taken is less than 10 percent of the blood volume. The deficit in volume is made up within a few hours by exchange with the fluid in other compartments of the body. The red blood cells are replaced in less than 2 months. But, to be on the safe side, it is recommended that a person should donate blood again only after a gap of 3 months or more.

If only platelets have been donated, a person may donate them after a gap of one week or more, subject to a maximum of 24 times a year.

Blood may be donated by any healthy person (with a hemoglobin level of more than 12.5 g/100 mL) between the age of 18 and 60 years. If you began donating blood at age 18 and donated every 90 days until you reached 60, you would have donated 50 litres of blood, potentially helping save more than 500 lives!

If you go to a blood bank to donate blood, be prepared to spend up to 100 minutes there. Registration and getting a few preliminary tests done to assess your fitness for the donation may take about 30 minutes. The bleeding itself takes another 15 minutes. After that, you have to sit in the blood bank for 15-20 minutes to avoid the immediate effects of bleeding such as fall in blood pressure. During these 15-20 minutes, you are served some refreshment, which always includes a drink. Avoid driving for a couple of hours after you leave the blood bank.

For more information on the subject, you may visit:

<http://www.friends2support.org/inner/about/blood.aspx>

<http://indianbloodbank.com/donors-guidelines.html>

October 1 is observed as the National Blood Donation Day in India

appreciations

Feedback from visitors to Madhuban

Dear Taradi / Anjudi / The Madhuban Team of Subhash, Mahan and others,

On behalf of all of us (Jagdish, Jatin, Sitara and myself), I would like to express my thanks to all of you for making our stay at Madhuban such a memorable experience. The place is very well maintained and the atmosphere is very conducive to spiritual growth. All the people, Subhash, Mahan, Laxman and others, were very co-operative and helpful, going to great lengths to make us feel welcome. Later on Anjudi also arrived and within no time she made us feel completely at home.

We all enjoyed the march past on the 15th August evening and the Savitri reading in the morning.

Mother willing, we plan to visit Madhuban again next year.

As token of my appreciation, I am attaching herewith some pictures I took at Madhuban. I hope you all enjoy them.

Once again, thank you very much.

With regards,

Anil Puri

(in an e-mail dated 25 August 2016)



Pictures taken by Mr. Anil Puri at Madhuban

Feedback from JNU students

Four postgraduate students from Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) who have enrolled for a course on the works of Sri Aurobindo designed by Prof. Makarand Paranjape visited the Ashram on 1 Sep 2016. They had a long discussion with Dr. Bijlani based on their questions.



Dear Sir,

Namaste!

Thank you so much for your kindness and patience. It is always an enriching experience to be with those who appreciate and live with the grandeur of Satsang.

Thanking You,

Yours sincerely,

Shaan Kashyap

(in an e-mail dated 1 Sep 2016)

Thank you so much, sir, for all your kindness, and your time, which you were so generous with. We had such a beautiful experience at the Ashram, and are so deeply grateful for the opportunity to discuss with someone of your wisdom and depth of understanding the questions we engaged with.

Tarini Awasthi

(in an e-mail dated 1 Sep 2016)

Dear Dr. Bijlani,

I have just heard from my very small class. They enjoyed their Ashram visit so much. Thank you for taking the time and for showing them around. I wish I had been there too, but I will call on you at another time to make up for my loss.

With warm regards,

Makarand Paranjape

(in an e-mail dated 1 Sep 2016)

12-11-2016

In the Proverbs we read:
"He that walketh with the wise, shall be wise."

In the Proverbs we read:

"He who walks with wise men will be wise."

notice board

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Feedback

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