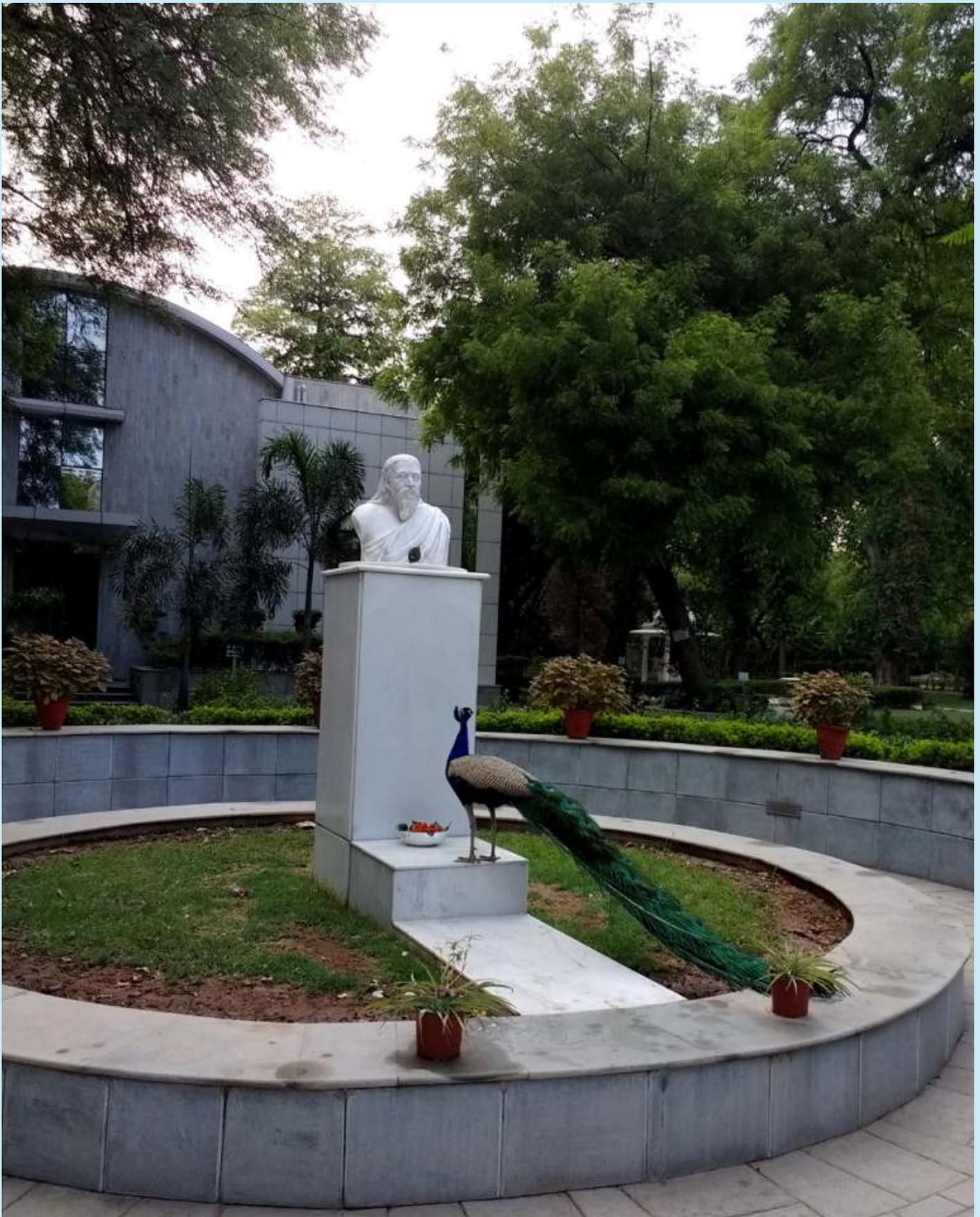


THE CALL BEYOND

Volume 46 No. 1

15 January 2021

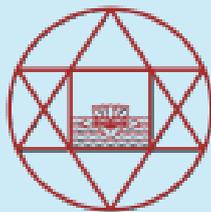


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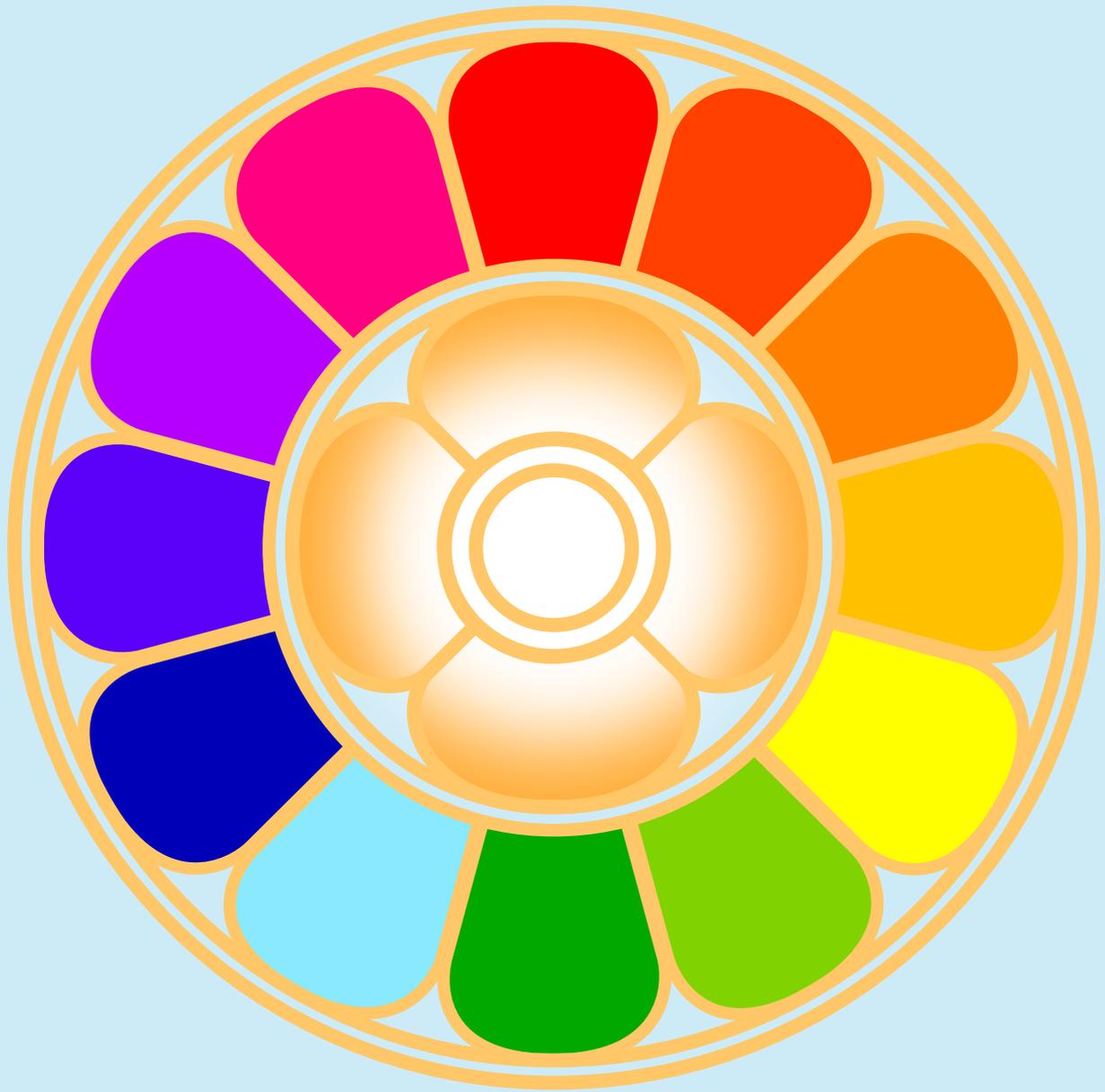
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An Online Publication of
SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM - DELHI BRANCH



The central circle represents the Divine Consciousness.

The four petals represent the four powers of the Mother.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized, cursive name.

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Looking Back and Forth

In the year just gone by, we focused on the Mother's symbol, looking at the virtues embodied in the outermost circle, one petal at a time. Two of them stand out because they either embody many other virtues, or from them many other virtues follow automatically. One of them is GRATITUDE and the other is SINCERITY. It takes Courage, Goodness, Humility and Generosity to be grateful. Neither a person with a giant-sized ego, nor one who lacks in truthfulness or Sincerity can be grateful. Sincerity is a key virtue because the difficulty in life is generally not ignorance of what should be done or not done, but either the unwillingness to do what is right, or the temptation to do what is wrong. The remedy for both – the unwillingness and the temptation – is Sincerity. Sincerity is the fundamental requirement for a valid Aspiration. Without Sincerity, the Aspiration can neither be intense nor steady. Sincerity sustains and nourishes the flame of aspiration, the fire of purification as well as the sweetness of surrender. Without a sincere aspiration, it is impossible to have the Perseverance for staying on the path, and consequently impossible to develop the necessary Receptivity. Hence, without a sincere aspiration, Progress remains a distant dream. Without Progress, how can one expect to grow in Courage, Goodness, Generosity, Equanimity or Peace? And, without Equanimity and Peace, how can we be happy? That is why the Mother has said, "The moment you feel unhappy, you may write beneath it: 'I am not sincere'." Sincerity is thus a key virtue, and yet one of the most difficult to cultivate. Sincerity is the one virtue we can always do with a little more of.

With Sincere Gratitude to the Mother, we embark on the journey of the New Year with a resolution for being more sincere.



From Comparison to Compassion

Chris Cade

An important topic that comes up in our daily lives, and especially in our personal growth, is comparing our experiences to other peoples' experiences. After I shared how scared and helpless I felt when my websites went down, I received a TON of emails. Every person who wrote me was positive and supportive. Some shared their own challenging stories. But a few people pointed out that I didn't "have it as bad" as other people. *This is interesting because it points to a part of our psyches that is always comparing. The thing is, this kind of thinking can be very detrimental to our happiness.* The reason is that when we compare our experience, we are actually not fully being Present. We're using somebody else's experience to make ourselves feel better about our own situation. Perhaps you've had a relative who is always "one-upping" you? You share about a tough day, and then their response is "You think that's bad? Wait until you hear this..." Or perhaps on the positive side, you share about a great day, and the first response from somebody is "That's not nearly as cool as the time I went to Hollywood and..."

I think you get the picture. Most of us feel rubbed the wrong way when that happens, and for good reason: because that person isn't seeing us as the Divine person that we are. That person isn't acknowledging us. As a result, we can feel unseen when that happens.

Actually, that external example is not the real concern. It's just that: an example. *The real concern is when we do that to ourselves silently.* For example, when we see another person have a wonderful experience, and we think to ourselves: "I'll never have that" or "I wish I could have that." Immediately that pulls us out of the present moment. I'm not just talking about objects, *relationships, or people either.* What about spiritual experiences?



For those of us who go to meditation groups or workshops, it's easy to compare ourselves to others. Maybe we feel like OTHER people had the deeper meditation. Maybe we can feel like OTHER people get to feel the "Universal Oneness." Maybe at a telekinesis workshop we get frustrated that somebody else could bend the spoon and we feel like we never will. Or, maybe, we see how "loving" somebody else is and feel bad about ourselves... like we could "never be that loving." Those experiences are ways that we punish ourselves and simultaneously pull us out of the present moment. And they hurt us. We feel pain every time we do that to ourselves.

What's the answer?

Compassion for ourselves and others.

To not minimize somebody else's experience. Just to acknowledge it. To say "I hear and see you. Yes, I see how that can be painful. And I'm here for you."

When we compare, we separate. With separation comes pain. We all hurt when we compare, even if we're not conscious of it.

Next time you find yourself silently comparing to other people's objects or experiences, try shifting your attention towards appreciation. See the gifts in the other person. See the gifts in their experience.

Then as Byron Katie says: turn it around. See the gifts in you and your experience.

When we shift from comparing to compassion...

When we shift from objectifying to unifying...

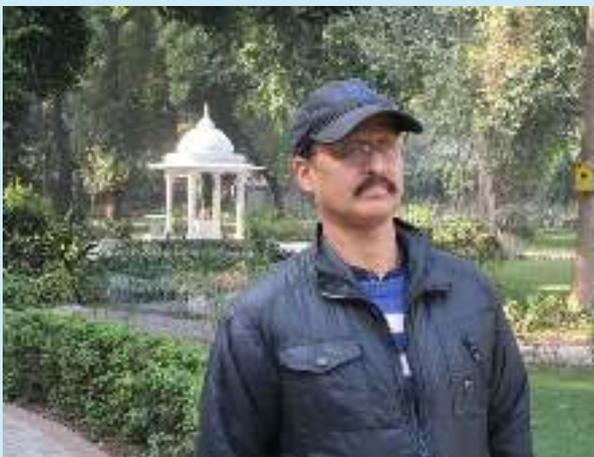
That's when miracles happen in our lives.

*Chris reaches hundreds of thousands of people worldwide in over 150 countries.
Chris Cade can be reached on chris@chriscade.com*



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

Sandip Nandi Travels Full Circle



Sandip Nandi was a familiar friendly face in Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch till the lockdown. Come lockdown, and he became a part of the Ashram family. Not many in the Ashram knew that for him it was like homecoming. What brought him to the Ashram for the first time in

1991 at age 22 was his elder brother, who was already here as a vocational trainee, but had sustained a fracture while playing. Sandip came to take care of his brother. His brother went back after the training, but Sandip didn't. Sandip was in the middle of his graduation when he came to the Ashram, but decided to drop out to join the Ashram. Strange are the routes by which man meets his destiny.

Sandip joined as a vocational trainee in the electrical department, and stayed put even after the course. Over the next four years, he worked in just about every department of the Ashram except the kitchen. Since he was an accomplished sportsman, he was given the charge of guiding and supervising the sports activities of the youngsters of the Ashram. He was sent several times as the leader of the National Integration Camps conducted at Van Niwas, the Nainital centre of Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch. After



he had spent 4 years in the Ashram, seeing his multiple talents, and his qualities of head and heart, in 1995 he received a job offer from S.N. Sunderson & Company, the business established by Shri Surendra Nath Jauhar (commonly called Chacha-ji), the founder of Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch. Sandip, now ‘settled’, got married in 2001, and got a daughter in 2003.

Sandip stuck to the Company for 25 years, and then came the lockdown. Due to the slump in economy, Sandip became the victim of a layoff. It was natural for him to turn to the Ashram for refuge. That is how he landed in the Ashram once more in 2020. While with the Sunderson Company, his main job was to go to wholesale markets of Delhi for all sorts of purchases. But, since he was a willing and versatile worker, he kept getting more and more work of great variety, and he did all of it with a smile. His sense of loyalty prevented him from looking for a job elsewhere. He is proud of the fact that in 25 years, he never applied for a job, never appeared for any job interview – all the more remarkable because loyalty has become such a rare commodity these days.

Among the contributions of the Ashram to his personality, Sandip considers ‘discipline’ to be the most important. It was in the Ashram that he learnt to have a daily schedule, and to stick to it. Coming from a small town in West Bengal to Delhi expanded his horizons. He learnt how to talk, how to behave in a polished manner. It was here that he met so many people from different parts of the country, speaking different languages and having different cultural backgrounds. It was here that he learnt doing his own work himself; at home, he had never done laundry or cleaned a toilet. The three persons who inspired Sandip the most were Tara Didi and Pranjal Bhaiya in the Ashram, and Shri Anil Jauhar ji at the Sunderson Company. Tara Didi encouraged him to learn new things, such as computers, and gave him leadership roles. From Pranjal Bhaiya’s example, he learnt that no work is below dignity irrespective of the position one holds. Further, he



saw that Pranjal Bhaiya did not work by the clock. If there was work, he was ready for it, no matter what time it was. In Anil ji, he observed great simplicity, regularity and punctuality. Sandip came to appreciate him for a predictable routine, and a rare combination of being involved in work and yet staying detached. Anil ji would reach the office punctually in the morning, work in an organized manner till lunch, and then call it a day with, “the rest tomorrow,” no matter how much else remained to be done. Those staying in the Ashram can easily relate to what Sandip says. Anil ji would come to the Ashram punctually for every meeting, and besides that, he would come exactly at the same time every evening to go to the Shrine and to take an evening walk.

Sandip did not become what could be called rich, but he does not mind it. His needs are modest, and he is contented. Therefore, he says he has peace of mind, and after all, that is what really matters in life, isn't it?



You have to grow from the inside out. None can teach you, none can make you spiritual. There is no other teacher but your own soul.

Swami Vivekananda

We are what our thoughts have made us; so take care about what you think. Words are secondary. Thoughts live; they travel far.

Swami Vivekananda

Note: January 12 is Swami Vivekananda's Birthday, and also the National Youth Day



Your Belief and Others' Beliefs



To think that your knowledge is the only true one, that your belief is the only true one and that others' beliefs are not true, is to do precisely what is done by all sects and religions.... The contact which you have had with the truth of things, your personal contact – a contact which is more or less clear, profound, vast, pure – may have given you, as an individual, an interesting, perhaps even a decisive experience; but although this contact may have given you an experience of decisive importance, you must not imagine that it is a universal experience and that the same contact would give others the same experience. And if you understand this, that it is something purely personal, individual, subjective, that it is not at all an absolute and general law, then you can no longer despise the knowledge of others, nor seek to impose your own point of view and experience upon them. This understanding obviates all mental quarrels, which are always totally useless.

The Mother ('The Great Adventure', p. 25)

A page from The Mother's work, 'The Great Adventure', in Tara Didi's voice, is uploaded on the YouTube channel of Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch every day. The link to the channel is: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCcmF6JzAOsBMdqJjZbnmyng>



A Preface on National Education

The first thing needed is to make clear to our own minds what the national spirit, temperament, idea, need demands of us through education and apply it in its right harmony to all the different elements of the problem. Only after that is done can we really hope with some confidence and chance of utility and success to replace the present false, empty and mechanical education by something better than a poor and futile chaos or a new mechanical falsity, by a real, living and creative upbringing of the Indian manhood of the future.

I must be sure what education itself is or should be before I can be sure what a national education is or should be. Let us begin then with our initial statement, as to which I think there can be no great dispute that there are three things which have to be taken into account in a true and living education, the man, the individual in his commonness and in his uniqueness, the nation or people and universal humanity.

It must be an education that *for the individual* will make its one central object the growth of the soul and its powers and possibilities, *for the nation* will keep first in view the preservation, strengthening and enrichment of the nation-soul and its dharma and raise both into powers of the life and ascending mind and soul of humanity. *And at no time will it lose sight of man's highest object, the awakening and development of his spiritual being.*

Sri Aurobindo (In the Arya, Vol. 7, No. 5, 15 January 1921, pp. 349-352)



Where To?

Usree Bhattacharya

XII-E, The Mother's International School

*I've surrendered to many a blow,
I've conquered an important few,
But I would give up life to know
Where to, my God, where to?*

*I journeyed through an endless trip,
Just one of the many crew.
I gear up my car, I steer my ship
But where to, my God, where to?*

*I have life that is full and festive,
I know the what, but why do I do?
I must ask, Lord, for my mind is restive,
Where to, my God, where to?*

Reproduced from The Call Beyond, Vol. 21, No. 1, p. 35, 1996



Arise, awake and do not stop until the goal is reached.

Swami Vivekananda



Human Company is Hazardous to Animals

There is an instinct of the species which is an extremely reasonable instinct that regulates all their activities for their own good, and automatically, without knowing it, they are subject to this instinct of the species which is altogether reasonable from the point of view of that species, of each species.

The Mother

Sweet Children of the Sweet Mother,



Humans and animals generally interact on an unequal footing. Human beings may trap an animal to display it in a zoo; or tame an animal to make it perform in a circus; or may, at best, adopt an animal as a pet. In all these situations, human beings have the upper hand. Therefore,

human beings are able to impose on the animal their own habits and standards, which is not always good for the animal even when it may seem like an act of kindness. For example, offering in plenty its favourite food to a pet can make the animal greedy, although by nature animals do not eat out of greed.

The Mother has cited several instances of animals suffering because they were in human company. For example, cows have an instinct for which grass to eat, and which to reject. They sniff the grass, and can make out which grass would be poisonous. The result is that, left to themselves, they never fall sick by eating the wrong type of grass. But cows kept in captivity may eat any grass offered to them by their masters. Once, three cows died in this way in the Ashram at Pondicherry. The Mother has explained why a cow confined to a cow-shed does not reject the grass that she would if it were free to roam around in a meadow. *First*, the cow may lose its instinct in captivity. *Secondly*, the cow may obey



her human master. She obeys him because she may respect him for his superiority. Masters have a way of evoking that type of respect the way the British did to Indians when they were ruling India. *Thirdly*, the cow becomes dependent on getting food and shelter without any personal effort. *The easy way is tempting, but not necessarily the best way.* *Finally*, the cow may be afraid that if she does not do as her master expects her to, she may be beaten. The end result is that she eats whatever grass is offered to her.



A sheep-dog looks after its flock and keeps returning to its master from time to time, but is otherwise fiercely independent. If bitten by a snake, a sheep-dog just sits in a corner and licks its wound till cured. If the same sheep-dog living in human custody is bitten by a

snake, it dies quietly like humans, says the Mother.



A sheep-dog guarding its flock of sheep

Animals living on their own eat only when hungry, and then eat only as much as they need. They do not eat out of greed. If they have more food available than they need, they hide it somewhere for eating later on. But in human company, animals eat not only as much as is served to them, but may eat also

whatever is within their reach. The Mother has narrated the story of a goat kept by a grocer in France. One day the grocer opened a barrel of jaggery, and, by mistake, left the lid open. His goat discovered the barrel and helped itself to the jaggery. The goat found the jaggery very delicious and went on eating more and more of it out of greed. It went on eating “until it literally fell dead.” The Mother says, “a wild animal would never do that.”



Sometimes the animals are wise enough not to pick up the vices of man. The Mother has narrated the story of some officers in Algeria who had a pet monkey. One day they were having wine at dinner, and offered some also to their monkey. The monkey accepted it gratefully and had a full glass, but within minutes it became very sick and almost died. But it did recover and was well again. However, after a few days, one of the officers was stupid enough to place once again a glass of wine in front of the monkey. The monkey grew very angry, picked the glass up and “flung it at the head of the man who had given the glass to it. ... By that it showed that it was much wiser than the men.”



An angry monkey

Being bound in an unequal relationship with men may, thus, do immense harm to animals, while humans invariably refuse to learn anything from animals although they could. If instead of making a dog greedy, his master could learn from the dog not to be greedy, it would do some good to both!

We shall continue this dialogue month after month. In the meantime, do two things. *First*, keep your ears open to the whispers of the intelligence hidden in the animals in your surroundings. *Secondly*, if you have any questions, please send an e-mail to

callbeyond@aurobindoonline.in.

With love, CB

(Based on *Whispers of Nature*. Edited by Vijay. Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Society, 1981, pp. 40-41 & 48-49)



What a Year!

What a year 2020 has been! Enforced confinement to homes taught us working from home, and made it acceptable. It taught us that any travel plan could be cancelled without making the heavens fall. It taught us that taking a break from formal education for a year will not bring the world to an end. While there were complaints galore, so was a lot of hidden creativity brought to the fore. Everybody became an amateur videographer. Tech-shy and tech-savvy people alike learnt to create content; craft a picturesque background at no cost; and to record, edit and post the product on the net. Within the family, people took turns at shooting and shouting, and when they ran into technical glitches, the youngest in the family came to the rescue, and lo and behold, the polished product was on the net for all to see. Now the family could stay busy counting the 'views' and the 'likes' that their masterpiece got! In short, the family learnt to behave like a family.

However, a change that has been relatively silent, but is likely to have a lasting and positive impact is the revolution in education. Formal education perhaps suffered, on-line classes notwithstanding. But non-formal education mushroomed at an unprecedented rate, widened its scope, improved in quality, and became accessible like never before. On-line courses, conferences, workshops and webinars, most of them free or very low-cost, became commonplace, because they were so easy to organize. We learnt that to get an expert from another country to speak for an hour, it was not necessary to arrange for his airfare, hotel expenses and sightseeing. We may be able to get him to talk at our event without arranging for even a cup of tea. The same event could have speakers from half a dozen countries and participants from all over the world with nobody moving out of home. Nobody need spend time standing in airport queues, waiting in departure lounges and sitting upright in aircraft seats when it is time to be in bed. In short, knowledge became truly free, and freely available;



and the learners could pick and choose whatever they liked. Exams, certificates and degrees became irrelevant, as the Mother wanted them to be. What mattered, and became very easy, was only the coming together of a genuine seeker of knowledge and a great teacher; and as Samuel Johnson said, when that happens it matters little what transpires between the two.

Although imposed on humanity by necessity, in this transformation of the approach to education there is so much to gain and so little to lose that there will be no going back. It will no longer be necessary to let schooling interfere with education. From a still wider perspective, the 'new normal' in education has added to the one-world feeling. Learning from anywhere in the world needs not even a valid passport, not to speak of security checks and immigration counters! The impact of these astounding developments has done within a year more to take forward the mission of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother to create a world dominated by love and oneness than centuries of the 'old normal' could have.

... to feel love and oneness is to live

Sri Aurobindo ('Savitri', Book 12, p. 724, SABCL edition)



All the powers in the universe are already ours. It is we who have put our hands before our eyes and cry that it is dark.

Swami Vivekananda

The world is the great gymnasium where we come to make ourselves strong.

Swami Vivekananda



This column carries children's utterances that reflect their innate spiritual wisdom. Readers are encouraged to contribute to this column.

Sad but Not Scared

Here is the gist of a telephonic conversation with Aaliya, a 9-year-old girl of Indian origin living in California, USA.

CB: How are you?

A: I am fine.

CB: How is California? We hear there is a sharp surge in corona cases there.

A: Yes, there are many more cases now.

CB: How do you feel about it?

A (very quickly and spontaneously): I feel sad.

CB: Why do you feel sad?

A: Because so many people are dying.

CB: Do you also feel scared?

A: No, getting scared will not make the coronavirus go away.

CB: I like your answers very much. Do you know why?

A: No

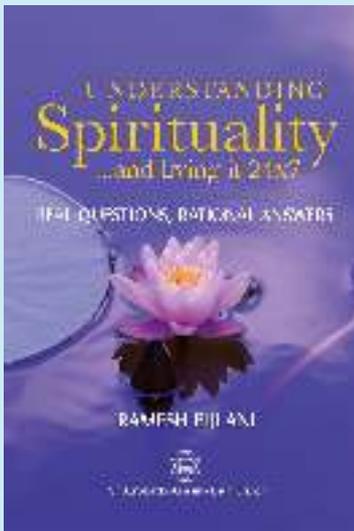
CB: When you feel sad, you are thinking of others. When you feel scared, you are thinking of yourself.

Editor's comment: Thinking of others rather than oneself is the type of behaviour towards which our psychic being guides us. Children have a wide open psychic being, although they may not be familiar with the terminology. What parents and teachers should do is to encourage the child's behaviour guided by the psychic being, and engage the child in a reflective dialogue so that such behaviour is strengthened. That is an important aspect of psychic education, and psychic education is the sine qua non of integral education.



In this column, we try to answer three types of questions: 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 asking the question is kept confidential if the question is about a sensitive issue. The questions may be sent to callbeyond@aurobindoonline.in.

Evaluating Risk-taking



S has a question based on the book 'Understanding Spirituality ... and living it 24x7' by Dr. Ramesh Bijlani. On page 93, the author says taking risk is also a kind of giving. It appears to be linked to the example of the fire fighter who enters a burning building to rescue those trapped in it. Does it mean that entrepreneurs who create start-ups are also giving something as they take lot of risks to create jobs and wealth.

Answer:

That is a very good question. It is true that the statement that 'taking risk is also a kind of giving', is keeping the fire-fighter's example in mind. The same would apply to someone who jumps into the water to save a person who is drowning. However, all risk-taking would not qualify as 'giving'. For example, a thief or a terrorist also takes the risk of being nabbed by the police, but that is 'not giving'. In spirituality, the motive behind the action matters more than the action itself. Whether creating a start-up would qualify as 'giving' would depend on the motive behind the start-up. If the motive is *primarily* to create jobs, and the entrepreneur would act not as the owner but as a trustee of any wealth that is created, the risk involved would be a kind of giving. If the motives are *primarily* egoistic and considerations of worldly gain or loss, the risk involved in the start-up would not qualify as giving.



Feedback & Encouraging Words

Greetings from Lithuania

Dear Ramesh Bijlani,

I am writing to you to say that I am very grateful for your teachings and your knowledge, your time and your books. Also, I want to thank the Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch for everything. I apologize for not being able to thank you in person at the time I was in India.

I attach a few photos from my Yoga classes in Lithuania.

Best regards,

Lukas

(in an e-mail dated 3 January 2021)





Feedback on 'Aspirations', a New Year YouTube Post

I have the utmost gratitude for this video message at this point in time.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G1xb0SiJESk&feature=youtu.be>

For it speaks of the exact qualities of sincerity and gratitude which I was finding it challenging to articulate and express, at the onset of this year. You literally took the words out of my mouth, as they say, which helped me express my thought exactly, for the year gone by and the time to come.

It brought me a great deal lot of joy, irreplaceable memories, hope and fortitude while I was watching this video; and I do look forward to visiting sometime in the future, whenever the time, space and the circumstances warrant. Hopefully, if and whenever things return to some sort of normalcy, I can resume my sojourns in the Ashram.

Happy New Year, to you, and I shall continue looking forward to The Call Beyond, and I hope to see you all soon.

Love, light & warm regards,

Regi (Jenarius)

(in an e-mail dated 3 Jan 2021)



Contact us

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

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

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

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Feedback

*Please send your feedback to
callbeyond@aurobindoonline.in*

*The Call Beyond is a publication of
Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch*

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