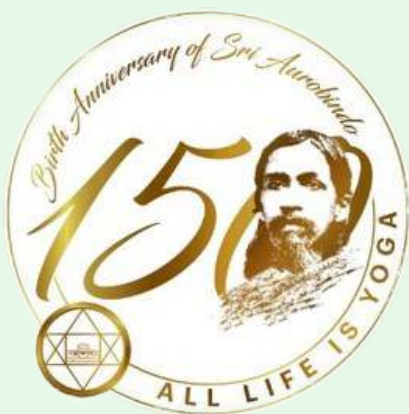




The Call Beyond





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An Online Publication of
SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM - DELHI BRANCH

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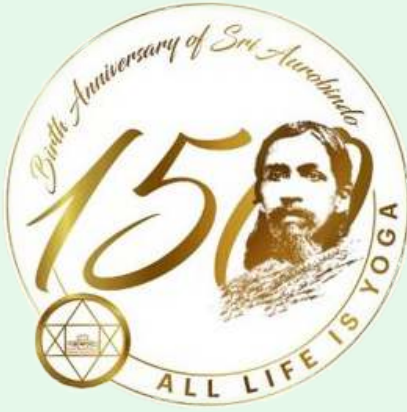
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Celebrating 150 Years of Sri Aurobindo (1872-2022)



Who was Sri Aurobindo? A freedom fighter, who shook the British Empire within five years? A poet, who could give poetic expression to whispers from the heavens? A writer, who would have honoured the Nobel Prize for Literature, if it had been conferred on him? A linguist, who raised the level of the English language to that of Sanskrit, and deciphered the symbolism of

the Veda? A yogi, who gave the world Integral Yoga, a powerful synthesis that incorporated the major traditional systems of yoga, and went beyond all of them? A rishi (a seer) and a muni (a thinker) rolled in one? Or, a spiritual master, radical, rational and revolutionary, far ahead of his times, who is today the Guru to millions in the world?

Sri Aurobindo was all this, and more. Due to our limitations, *The Call Beyond*, however, will concentrate on Sri Aurobindo, the writer. In the category of spiritual literature rooted in the Indian tradition, the original of which was written in the English language, Sri Aurobindo's works belong to a class apart, both in quantity and quality. In his works, Sri Aurobindo has given nothing short of a prescription for sculpting humanity into a new shape that would be beyond recognition. Even through the works that have their origin in the *Arya*, which were written over a period of just six years (1914-1920), he has created enough homework for the world to stay busy with for several centuries.

The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo (CWSA) run into 36 volumes. The humble offering of *The Call Beyond*, however, would be limited to bringing you every month just the glimpses of one of the works of Sri Aurobindo.



Letters on Yoga



Sri Aurobindo's works include two precious resources on integral yoga: *The Synthesis of Yoga* and *Letters on Yoga*. *The Synthesis of Yoga* was originally written as a series of monthly articles in the *Arya* from August 1914 through January 1921. On the other hand, *Letters on Yoga*, now compiled into four volumes of the *Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo* (Volumes 28-31) were written between 1927 and 1950, most of them in the 1930s. Thus there is a gap of about ten years, and in some cases even

more, between the articles published in the *Arya* and the letters. Hence, the basic philosophy and vision remaining the same, there are differences in the approach to sadhana in integral yoga between *The Synthesis of Yoga* and *Letters on Yoga*. **This raises three questions.** First, what was Sri Aurobindo's view on maintaining consistency over long periods of time. Secondly, why there are differences between the two resources, and finally, what those differences are.

On the first question of consistency, it is interesting that a collection of articles that Sri Aurobindo wrote in the *Karmayogin* during the period 1909-1910 were published as a booklet in 1937. A disciple wrote a review of the booklet and sent it to Sri Aurobindo. In the review, the disciple had stated that Sri Aurobindo had "thoroughly revised" the articles (which was not true, but the disciple perhaps considered it a harmless lie), and that Sri Aurobindo's views in 1937 were exactly the same as in 1910. The disciple thought that the 'revision' and 'consistency' would enhance the appeal of the book. Perhaps he also expected from Sri Aurobindo a pat on the back! But instead, he got a gentle rebuke. Sri Aurobindo responded to the disciple's review of the booklet as follows:

"Yes, I have seen it [the disciple's review], but I don't think it can be published in its present form as it prolongs the political



Aurobindo of that time into the Sri Aurobindo of the present time. You even assert that I have “thoroughly” revised the book and these articles are an index of my latest views on the burning problems of the day and there has been **no change in my views in 27 years (which would surely be proof [of] a rather unprogressive mind)**. How do you get all that? My spiritual consciousness and knowledge at that time was as nothing to what it is now—how would the change leave my view of politics and life unmodified altogether? **There has been no such thorough revision**; I have left the book as it was, because it would be useless to modify what was written so long ago—the same as with Yoga and its objects [*The Yoga and Its Objects*]. Anyway the review would almost amount to a proclamation of my present political views—while on the contrary I have been careful to pronounce nothing—no views whatever on political questions for the last I don’t know how many years.”

(Publisher’s Note, Karmayogin, CWSA Volume 8, pp. v-vi)

Turning to the second question, why there are differences in the approach between *The Synthesis of Yoga* and *Letters on Yoga*, this could be due to a variety of reasons. *First*, the long gap between the two. *Secondly*, the difference in the context. *Arya* was an exposition for a readership whose spiritual as well as intellectual development were expected to be of a high order. On the other hand, letters were written in response to letters received from a large number of disciples, each different in his or her own way. Sri Aurobindo’s reply was perhaps guided by not only what the question was, but also who had asked the question. *Thirdly*, the topics were also guided by the questions received. In the *Arya* articles, Sri Aurobindo did not expend much effort on writing about the tantric concepts of chakras, the significance of spiritual experiences, the role of techniques such as meditation or *japa*, science, health issues, relationships, obstacles on the path of *sadhana*, etc. But if a disciples asked questions on these topics, Sri Aurobindo had to reply. Therefore, the range of subjects in *Letters on Yoga* is much wider than in *The Synthesis of Yoga*.



Fourthly, for most of the period that Sri Aurobindo was writing the *Arya* articles, the Mother was either in France or in Japan, not in Pondicherry. It was only on 24 November 1926 that the Mother took full charge of the Pondicherry Ashram. Finally, Sri Aurobindo's views also perhaps changed regarding what to tell, how much to tell, and how to tell the average disciple. Correspondingly, we find that the language in the letters is simpler, and personal effort required on the part of the disciple less intimidating.

Now, the third and last question: what were the differences between the guidance provided in *The Synthesis of Yoga* and *Letters on Yoga*. At the cost of oversimplification, one might say that in the letters there is a shift from knowledge towards work and devotion as the principal tools of *sadhana*. Of course, Sri Aurobindo has never demarcated the three streams of the yoga of the *Gita* into rigid compartments, and has always warned against getting lost in metaphysical speculation, but in the letters, there is a shift towards the simple and safe approach of working as an instrument of the Mother, and sincere devotion and total surrender to the Mother, whose Grace will take care of the seeker's progress on the spiritual path. Further, in the letters, the psychic being, the importance of its being brought forward, and in case of any doubts, placing total reliance on what the Mother says, are some of the things that do not find much mention in *The Synthesis of Yoga*.

It is quite obvious that, if one has to choose, the guidance available in *Letters on Yoga* is more relevant to the practice of integral yoga than that in *The Synthesis of Yoga*. The type of questions and difficulties that the seekers had then are exactly the same as those that the seekers have even today. Although no two seekers' temperament and circumstances can be the same, and each individual has to carve out his or her own path in integral yoga, there are in *Letters on Yoga* plenty of guidelines and clarifications for all seekers, the relevance of which has not changed one bit with time.



Selections from Letters on Yoga*

Three Aspects of Life

The spiritual life (*adhyātmajīvana*), the religious life (*dharma jīvana*) and the ordinary human life of which morality is a part are three quite different things and one must know which one desires and not confuse the three together. The ordinary life is that of the average human consciousness separated from its own true self and from the Divine and led by the common habits of the mind, life and body which are the laws of the Ignorance. The religious life is a movement of the same ignorant human consciousness, turning or trying to turn away from the earth towards the Divine but as yet without knowledge and led by the dogmatic tenets and rules of some sect or creed which claims to have found the way out of the bonds of the earth-consciousness into some beatific Beyond. The religious life may be the first approach to the spiritual, but very often it is only a turning about in a round of rites, ceremonies and practices or set ideas and forms without any issue. The spiritual life, on the contrary, proceeds directly by a change of consciousness, a change from the ordinary consciousness, ignorant and separated from its true self and from God, to a greater consciousness in which one finds one's true being and comes first into direct and living contact and then into union with the Divine. For the spiritual seeker this change of consciousness is the one thing he seeks and nothing else matters.

-Sri Aurobindo (CWSA Vol 28, *Letters on Yoga – I*, p 419)

Method of Integral Yoga

The sadhana of this Yoga does not proceed through any set mental teaching or prescribed forms of meditation, mantras or others, but by aspiration, by a self-concentration inwards or upwards, by self-opening to an Influence, to the Divine Power above us and its workings, to the Divine Presence in the heart, and by the rejection of all that is foreign to these things. It is only by faith, aspiration and surrender that this self-opening can come.

-Sri Aurobindo (CWSA Vol 29, *Letters on Yoga – II*, p 20)



The State of Grace

I should like to say something about the Divine Grace—for you seem to think it should be something like a Divine Reason acting upon lines not very different from those of human intelligence. But it is not that. Also it is not a universal Divine Compassion either, acting impartially on all who approach it and acceding to all prayers. It does not select the righteous and reject the sinner. The Divine Grace came to aid the persecutor (Saul of Tarsus), it came to St. Augustine the profligate, to Jagai and Madhai of infamous fame, to Bilwamangal and many others whose conversion might well scandalise the puritanism of the human moral intelligence; but it can come to the righteous also—curing them of their self-righteousness and leading to a purer consciousness beyond these things. It is a power that is superior to any rule, even to the Cosmic Law—for all spiritual seers have distinguished between the Law and Grace. Yet it is not indiscriminate—only it has a discrimination of its own which sees things and persons and the right times and seasons with another vision than that of the Mind or any other normal Power. A state of Grace is prepared in the individual often behind thick veils by means not calculable by the mind and when the state of Grace comes then the Grace itself acts. There are these three powers: (1) the Cosmic Law, of Karma or what else; (2) the Divine Compassion acting on as many as it can reach through the nets of the Law and giving them their chance; and (3) the Divine Grace which [p.168] acts more incalculably but also more irresistibly than the others. The only question is whether there is something behind all the anomalies of life which can respond to the call and open itself with whatever difficulty till it is ready for the illumination of the Divine Grace—and that something must be not a mental and vital movement but an inner somewhat which can well be seen by the inner eye. If it is there and when it becomes active in front, then the Compassion can act, though the full action of the Grace may still wait attending the decisive decision or change; for this may be postponed to a future hour, because some portion or element of the being may still come



between, something that is not yet ready to receive.

-Sri Aurobindo (CWSA Vol 29, Letters on Yoga -II, p 169)

Assent of The Sadhak is Crucial

The Divine Grace and Power can do everything, but with the full assent of the sadhak. To learn to give that full assent is the whole meaning of the sadhana. It may take time either because of ideas in the mind, desires in the vital or inertia in the physical consciousness, but these things have to be and can be removed with the aid or by calling in the action of the Divine Force.

-Sri Aurobindo (CWSA Vol 29, Letters on Yoga - II, p 171)

Quiet, Calm, Peace and Shanti

The words “peace, calm, quiet, silence” have each their own shade of meaning, but it is not easy to define them.

Peace—śānti.

Calm—sthīratā.

Quiet—acañcalatā.

Silence—niścāla-nīravatā.

Quiet is a condition in which there is no restlessness or disturbance.

Calm is a still, unmoved condition which no disturbance can affect—it is a less negative condition than quiet.

Peace is a still more positive condition; it carries with it a sense of settled and harmonious rest and deliverance.

Silence is a state in which either there is no movement of the mind or vital or else a great stillness which no surface movement can pierce or alter.

-Sri Aurobindo (CWSA Vol 29, Letters on Yoga - II, p 137)

Conditions for Spiritual Progress

The inner spiritual progress does not depend on outer conditions so much as on the way we react to them from within—that has always been the ultimate verdict of spiritual experience. It is why we insist on taking the right attitude and persisting in it, on



an inner state not dependent on outer circumstances, a state of equality and calm, if it cannot be at once of inner happiness, ongoing more and more within and looking from within outwards instead of living in the surface mind which is always at the mercy of the shocks and blows of life. It is only from that inner state that one can be stronger than life and its disturbing forces and hope to conquer.

To remain quiet within, firm in the will to go through, refusing to be disturbed or discouraged by difficulties or fluctuations, that is one of the first things to be learned on the Path. To do otherwise is to encourage the instability of consciousness, the difficulty of keeping experience of which you complain. It is only if you keep quiet and steady within that the lines of experience can go on with some steadiness—though they are never without periods of interruption and fluctuation; but these, if properly treated, can then become periods of assimilation and exhaustion of difficulty rather than denials of sadhana.

A spiritual atmosphere is more important than outer conditions; if one can get that and also create one's own spiritual air to breathe in and live in it, that is the true condition of progress.

-Sri Aurobindo (CWSA Vol 30, Letters on Yoga - III, pp 7-8)

Towards Spiritual Transformation

Transformation is a word that I have brought in myself (like supermind) to express certain spiritual concepts and spiritual facts of the integral Yoga. People are now taking them up and using them in senses which have nothing to do with the significance which I put into them. Purification of the nature by the "influence" of the Spirit is not what I mean by transformation; purification is only part of a psychic change or a psycho-spiritual change—the word besides has many senses and is very often given a moral or ethical meaning which is foreign to my purpose. What I mean by the spiritual transformation is something dynamic (not merely liberation of the self, or realisation of the One which can very well



be attained without any descent). It is a putting on of the spiritual consciousness dynamic as well as static in every part of the being down to the subconscious. That cannot be done by the influence of the Self leaving the consciousness fundamentally as it is with only purification, enlightenment of the mind and heart and quiescence of the vital. It means a bringing down of Divine Consciousness static and dynamic into all these parts and the entire replacement of the present consciousness by that. This we find unveiled and unmixed above mind, life and body and not in mind, life and body. It is a matter of the undeniable experience of many that this can descend and it is my experience that nothing short of its full descent can thoroughly remove the veil and mixture and effect the full spiritual transformation. No metaphysical or logical reasoning in the void as to what the Atman “must” do or can do or needs or needs not to do is relevant here or of any value. I may add that transformation is not the central object of other paths as it is of this Yoga — only so much purification and change is demanded by them as will lead to liberation and the beyond-life. The influence of the Atman can no doubt do that — a full descent of a new Consciousness into the whole nature from top to bottom to transform life here is not needed at all for the spiritual escape from life.

-Sri Aurobindo (CWSA Vol 30, Letters on Yoga - II, pp 403-404)

The Witness Attitude

There is a stage in the sadhana in which the inner being begins to awake. Often the first result is the condition made up of the following elements:

- (1) A sort of witness attitude, in which the inner consciousness looks at all that happens as a spectator or observer, observing things but taking no active interest or pleasure in them.
- (2) A state of neutral equanimity in which there is neither joy nor sorrow, only quietude.
- (3) A sense of being something separate from all that happens, observing it but not part of it.



(4) An absence of attachment to things, people or events.

- Sri Aurobindo (CWSA Vol 30, Letters on Yoga - III, pp 241-242)

Opening of the Psychic Being

Then only can the psychic being fully open when the sadhaka has got rid of the mixture of vital motives with his sadhana and is capable of a simple and sincere self-offering to the Mother. If there is any kind of egoistic turn or insincerity of motive, if the Yoga is done under a pressure of vital demands, or partly or wholly to satisfy some spiritual or other ambition, pride, vanity or seeking after power, position or influence over others or with any push towards satisfying any vital desire with the help of the Yogic force, then the psychic cannot open, or opens only partially or only at times and shuts again because it is veiled by the vital activities; the psychic fire fails in the strangling vital smoke. Also, if the mind takes the leading part in the Yoga and puts the inner soul into the background, or, if the bhakti or other movements of the sadhana take more of a vital than of a psychic form, there is the same inability. Purity, simple sincerity and the capacity of an unegoistic unmixed self-offering without pretension or demand are the conditions of an entire opening of the psychic being.

-Sri Aurobindo (CWSA Vol 30, Letters on Yoga - III, p 349)

Extraordinary Way of Reading Ordinary Literature

One can say generally that newspaper reading or novel reading is not helpful to the sadhana and is at best a concession to the vital which is not yet ready to be absorbed in the sadhana—unless and until one is able to read in the right way with a higher consciousness which is not only not “disturbed” by the reading or distracted by it from the concentrated Yoga-consciousness but is able to make the right use of what is read from the point of view of the inner consciousness and the inner life.

-Sri Aurobindo (CWSA Vol 31, Letters on Yoga - IV, p 67)

Intelligence is a Quality of the Mind

Intelligence does not depend on the amount one has read, it is a



quality of the mind. Study only gives it material for its work as life also does. There are people who do not know how to read and write well who are more intelligent than many highly educated people and understand life and things better. On the other hand a good intelligence can improve itself by reading because it gets more material to work on and grows by exercise and by having a wider range to move in. But book knowledge by itself is not the real thing; it has to be used as a help to the intelligence, but it is often used only as a help to a loquacious stupidity or ignorance—ignorance because knowledge of facts is a poor thing if one cannot see their true significance.

-Sri Aurobindo (CWSA Vol 31, Letters on Yoga - IV, p 70)

Anger Comes from Outside

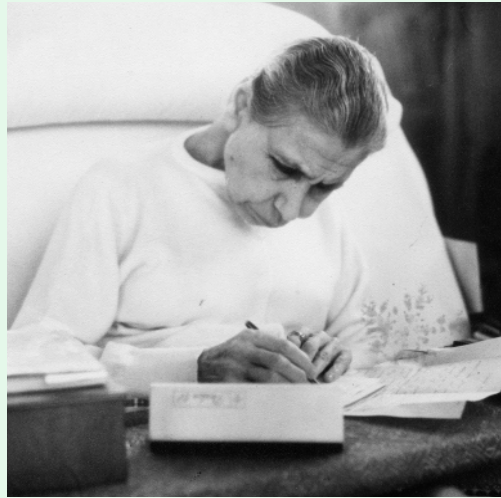
The fact that the anger comes with such force is itself enough to show that it is not in you that it is, but that it comes from outside. It is a rush of force from the universal Nature that tries to take possession of the individual being and make that being act according to the will of this outside force and not according to the will of the soul within. These things come in the course [p.271] of the sadhana because the sadhak is liberating himself from the lower nature and trying to turn towards the Mother and live in her divine consciousness and the higher nature. The forces of the lower nature do not want that and so they make these rushes in order to recover their rule. It is necessary when that comes to remain quiet within remembering the Mother or calling her and reject the anger or whatever else comes, whenever it comes or however often it comes. If that is done, then these forces begin to lose their power to invade. It is easier if one clearly feels them to be outside forces and foreign to oneself; but even if you cannot feel that yet when they enter, still the mind must keep that idea and refuse to accept them as any longer a part of the nature.

-Sri Aurobindo (CWSA Vol 31, Letters on Yoga - IV, pp 270-271)

**Titles added by the editor*



Abandon All Mental Conceptions



When you come to the Divine, you must abandon all mental conceptions; but, instead of doing that, you throw your conceptions upon the Divine and want the Divine to obey them. The only true attitude for a Yogi is to be plastic and ready to obey the Divine Command whatever it may be; nothing must be indispensable to him, nothing a burden. Often the first impulse of those who want to live the spiritual life is to throw away all they have; but they do it because they want to be rid of a burden, not because they want to surrender to the Divine. Men who possess wealth and are surrounded by the things that give them luxury and enjoyment turn to the Divine, and immediately their movement is to run away from these things, – or, as they say, “to escape from their bondage.” But it is a wrong movement; you must not think that the things you have belong to you, – they belong to the Divine. If the Divine wants you to enjoy anything, enjoy it; but be ready too to give it up the very next moment with a smile.

The Mother ('The Great Adventure', p. 47)

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



The Yoga of Learning Sanskrit

Wilfried

When I wrote to Vyaas Houston, Director of the American Sanskrit Institute, requesting him to send me whatever material might be helpful for writing this article, he responded very soon. I received a copy of his Newsletter, the text of his interview with Yoga International and his compilation titled “What is Sanskrit”.

I first read the interview in which a number of interesting points are discussed with great clarity and style. Just take, for example, Houston’s response to the question as to what he means by resonance (to which he refers very often) and why it is so important: “All language creates vibration and resonance, but Sanskrit allows you to vibrate to the maximum, to vibrate as much as it is possible to vibrate using a language. By chanting Sanskrit, you set up vibrations through which you can expand into the universe. And the response that comes back is dialogue between your body and what’s outside your body. Ultimately you come to realize that all vibration and resonance are one.”

Houston points out in the interview that he teaches Sanskrit “for the sake of healing,” All suffering resides in the mind, he says, and Sanskrit “reconverts the mind into pure energy. Another name for this process is Yoga. For me, Sanskrit and yoga are one and the same.” And this highly developed language with its special qualities can only be properly learned by applying the principles of yoga to classroom teaching. There must be no stress of comparing oneself with others, of “getting it right” or “getting it wrong”, but a yogic attitude and atmosphere of mutual support. In fact, he has developed a whole philosophy of teaching the language—not without success: during the past two years, he has had 700 students, either directly through total immersion courses or indirectly through his specially prepared courses with cassettes.

Next I opened his “Collection of Essays, Articles and Quotes on Sanskrit” and found a long quotation from Sri Aurobindo right



on the first page, a text very well chosen from *The Foundations of Indian Culture*. In this quotation Sri Aurobindo points out that the Sanskrit language is “one of the most magnificent, the most perfect and wonderfully sufficient literary instruments developed by the human mind...”. The same quotation is given once more on p.5 of his essay “Sanskrit and the Technological Age – Mathematics, Music and Sanskrit.” Here Houston writes: “Why has Sanskrit endured? Fundamentally it generates clarity and inspiration. And that clarity and inspiration is directly responsible for a brilliance of creative expression such as the world has rarely seen. No one has expressed this more eloquently than Sri Aurobindo, the 20th century poet philosopher...”

Houston makes some general remarks on Sanskrit as the language of *mantra* and its great sound value. Listening to it or speaking it produces joy, and yet even in India, he says, the common attitude is “it’s too difficult.” As so many other enthusiasts, Houston maintains that “actually Sanskrit is not difficult. On the contrary, there are few greater enjoyments”. Through his own methods the learner is to be given a maximum of support and motivation. “Such a method must take advantage of the fact that Sanskrit grammar is structured by precise patterns, and once a pattern has been noted it is a simple exercise to recognize all the individual instances that fit the pattern; rather than see the pattern after all the individual instances have been learned.”

Houston skillfully addresses the computer mind in his readers telling them that “the precision play of Sanskrit with computer tools will awaken the capacity in human beings to utilize their innate higher mental faculty with a momentum that would inevitably transform the world. In fact, the mere learning of Sanskrit by large numbers of people in itself represents a quantum leap in consciousness, not to mention the rich endowment it will provide in the arena of future communication”. Houston had already referred on pp. 2-3 of this essay to the work done by NASA researcher Rick Briggs who had published an article on Sanskrit



as the ideal computer language in *Artificial Intelligence Magazine* (Spring 1985). In this article Briggs had written:

“Among the accomplishments of the grammarians can be reckoned a method for paraphrasing Sanskrit in a manner that is identical not only in essence but in form with current work in Artificial Intelligence. This article demonstrates that a natural language can serve as an artificial language also, and that much work in AI has been reinventing a wheel millennia old.”

AI research found that it is necessary to create “semantic net systems” to clear up the inherent ambiguity of natural languages for computer comprehension. In this system the actual “natural” language is restructured in such a way that it becomes entirely unambiguous. Most languages deviate considerably from the semantic net, but only Sanskrit has a deviation of zero. Houston repeats this fact in many variants in most of his essays. But we should clarify at this point that the clearness and unambiguity refer only to the structure as such. Otherwise, Sanskrit can be extremely difficult precisely because it is ambiguous due to the multi-meaning of words. In fact, this multi-meaning works out as an advantage in poetry, for instance, allowing the poet to communicate several suggestions through a single well-chosen word. Sri Aurobindo has pointed out in *The Secret of the Veda* how the words were originally more “open” in their significance, less strictly and narrowly confined to a concise meaning, which again can be of great advantage in mystic language. Furthermore, we should remember that there were master *kavis* in later periods who could tell two entirely different stories in a single Sanskrit text. Every student opening a dictionary for the first time knows very well that one word can have so many significances. To remain objective, we should state that this aspect of Sanskrit would actually make it the most difficult for computers to translate. The nominal style with long compounds, whose individual elements the reader has to disentangle by establishing his own logical connections, would also be entirely inaccessible to computer programmes. Nor



do I consider that a disadvantage. Sanskrit is great in itself and does not become any greater by pleasing computer scientists.

However, I agree with Houston that we can duly appreciate this aspect of the language.

A brief essay by K.P. Rajappan titled, “Sanskrit for Computer Processing”, published in the same compilation throws more light on this subject. It refers to the great merits of Panini and the long tradition of research in the area of Phonetics and Philosophy of language. Rajappan suggests that Shastric Sanskrit, the language used by early Indian grammarians in their famous works, might be an ideal Interlingua or intermediate language in automatic computer translation processes.

Appendix

Vyaas Houston in his compilation “What is Sanskrit” has given to the full text of the quotation from Sri Aurobindo special prominence by placing it in the middle of a type sheet size page, without any other text to go along with it:

The ancient and classical creations of the Sanskrit tongue both in quality and in body and abundance of excellence, in their potent originality and force and beauty, in their substance and art and structure, in grandeur and justice and charm of speech and in the height and width of the reach of their spirit stand very evidently in the front rank among the world’s great literatures. The language itself, as has been universally recognised by those competent to form a judgement, is one of the most magnificent, the most perfect and wonderfully sufficient literary instruments developed by the human mind, at once majestic and sweet and flexible, strong and clearly formed and full and vibrant and subtle, and its quality and character would be of itself a sufficient evidence of the race whose mind it expressed and the culture of which it was the reflecting medium.

Courtesy: Mother India/June 1993

Reproduced from The Call Beyond, Vol. 22, No. 3, 1997, pp. 36-37



Kids Are Ready for the World Government

A member of The Call Beyond team recently had a telephonic chat with a 12-year old girl of Indian origin born and brought up in the US, in short an Indian American Kid. The conversation went something like this.

CB: Where have you been today?

IAK: We went on a safari.

CB: Did you see any animals?

IAK: Yes, we saw tigers, elephants, rhinos, etc. etc.

CB: Tigers and elephants don't normally live in the US. They must have been taken there from some other country, most probably India, and let loose in the forest where you went. Can we call these animals immigrants?

IAK (with a laugh): Yes.

CB: Did you check their passports?

IAK: Animals don't need passports.

CB: Won't it be nice if human beings also did not need passports? The whole world can be just one country, and anybody can travel from anywhere in the world to anywhere else in the world.

IAK: Yes, that will be nice, but there will be conflicts.

CB: Absolutely. There will be conflicts. But conflicts can be resolved. There are two ways of resolving conflicts. One is to make some concessions to one another. The other is to understand one another. Which of the two is better?

IAK: Understanding one another is better.

CB: Absolutely. Understanding one another is possible if we know more about one another. So, first we try to learn more about those whom we call 'others'. We are sure to find some differences. We



acknowledge those differences, and we accept those differences. We can't be all alike, isn't it? Does that make sense?

IAK: Yes, I agree.

CB: However, along with the differences, we will also find some similarities with others. Do you think we will find more differences or more similarities?

IAK: I guess the similarities will be much more than the differences.

CB: And the similarities will be more important, and more basic too than the differences.

IAK: Yes, I agree. After all, all human beings want to be happy, and very similar things make them happy, and what is really right or wrong is seen as right or wrong by everybody in the world.

CB: So, if we focus on the similarities we have with others instead of the differences, the whole world becoming one country should be possible, minus the conflicts, isn't it?

IAK: Yes, certainly, it should be possible.

CB: It is not only possible, it is sure to happen one day. That was the vision that Sri Aurobindo and the Mother had, and they have given the assurance that it will happen sooner than we may think.

Editor's Note: The readers who are school teachers may find in the above conversation material for a 5-minute skit.



Strength, if it is spiritual, is a power for spiritual realisation; a greater power is sincerity; the greatest power of all is Grace.

-Sri Aurobindo (CWSA Vol 29, Letters on Yoga - II, p 172)



The Soldier Within

Aradhana Kumar

*There is hope, there is light,
Fear not, there is a goal post bright,
It's a war of sorts,
It's a war where the enemy is a kin,
It's a war led by the soldier within.*

*Mind is the battlefield,
I-me-myness the enemy,
Problems of life the bugles,
With the dawn within sight,
The forward march has begun.*

*'He' is your army,
'He' is your ally,
'He' is making in-roads,
'He' is firing the bullets,
'He' is facing the enemy.*

*'He' is the one protecting you,
'He' is your Guru within,
'He' is your commander-in chief,
'He' asks for nothing in return,
'He' wants only the transformed you.*

*'He' is the one transforming you,
Be awake to the transforming you,
Be alive to the transforming you,
March with a heart full of Love in you,
Create peace and harmony around you.*

*You have reached the goal post,
You are now a new transformed you,
Ready to meet the flag of Pure Joy,
The flag sways far and wide,
Do you see 'He' is none other than you.*



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.

Why Sex Stands Apart Among Sensory Pleasures

S wants to know:

In general, Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have discouraged ascetic practices. Their approach to the preoccupations and yearnings of the physical and vital is moderate. The aim is inner renunciation achieved by an inner change rather than abrupt and rude outer renunciation achieved by brute force of will power under the pressure of a moral principle. For example, their approach to palatable food is that one may take it when it is available, and enjoy it too, but at the same time realizing that it is only a fleeting pleasure, one should achieve the detachment by which one would not miss the palatable food when it is not available. However, in case of sex, their approach is more strict. The Mother has said that while the spiritual path needs continence, for those who are preparing for supramental manifestation, total abstinence is essential. Sri Aurobindo has also said that even subtle expressions of sex are absolutely forbidden on the path of yoga. Why is their advice so strict in relation to sex as compared to other sensory pleasures?

Answer:

That is a very good question, and very difficult to answer. You are absolutely right; Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's advice on sexual relationships is absolute. In case of sex, their advice categorically rejects the moderate and slow route that they have favoured in case of other sensory pleasures. The slow route for other sensory pleasures passes through limited indulgence, reflection, introspection, inner churning, inner change and inner renunciation, eventually leading to outer renunciation which is



spontaneous and does not feel like renunciation. But in case of sex, even limited indulgence and 'subtle expressions' are totally unacceptable.

The most important reason for this difference seems to be that sexual feelings have an engrossing character. They stay in the background 24 x 7, even while the person is going about his daily routine quite normally. On the spiritual path, this type of 'background noise' should consist of the Divine, and only the Divine. The desire for sensory pleasures such as food is sporadic, comes in fits and starts, waxes and wanes. But unsatisfied sexual desire is constant, and thus dislodges the Divine from the pedestal reserved for the Divine, and the Divine alone.

The second reason for the difference possibly is that the desire for sensory pleasures such as food can be satisfied easily, openly, and without any complications. For example, if a person feels a strong urge to have a dish like tandoori roti and shahi paneer, or rice and rajma, he can go to a restaurant, have the dish, and follow it up with introspection. The introspection confirms what he knows already at the mental level that the pleasure from the dish would have a fleeting character, and would lack the richness of feeling that an act based on universal and unconditional love has. Sexual desire, on the other hand, cannot be satisfied so easily or openly. Secondly, satisfaction of the sexual desire invariably leads to a sense of guilt, even if it is hidden from the society. Finally, sexual indulgence, if discovered, may invite a whole lot of social and legal complications. The net result is that the person is no longer on the path of spiritual progress. Worse, he may now be on the path of spiritual decline. And, the worst result is that spiritual progress made over decades may be wiped out in one stroke. It is perhaps to protect the spiritual seeker from these pitfalls that Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's approach to sex is quite different from that to other sensory pleasures.

This leads to another question. What should a person on the spiritual path do if involved in a relationship that is not entirely



devoid of sexual feelings? First, the person should honestly acknowledge the element of sex in the relationship. The acid test is to answer one question truthfully: is the interaction with the person more enjoyable than a comparable interaction with someone of the same gender. If the answer is yes, the additional joy is obviously due to the element of sex in the relationship. The next step would be to work on oneself, and move to the point where the person can disregard the gender – his own, and that of the other(s) involved in the relationship. As the Mother used to say, forget whether you are a boy or a girl. Just think of yourself as a human being. Then, given that the two persons are at a similar level of consciousness, and both are consciously on the spiritual path, they could become instrumental in stimulating each other's spiritual progress, and also augment each other's vigilance to prevent any spiritual decline originating in the relationship. It is possible through inner work to transmute sexual energy into energy for spiritual progress.

The White Flame of Psychic Love

It is certainly easier to have friendship between man and man or between woman and woman than between man and woman, because there the sexual intrusion is normally absent. In a friendship between man and woman the sexual turn can at any moment come in in a subtle or a direct way and produce perturbations. But there is no impossibility of friendship between man and woman pure of this element; such friendships can exist and have always existed. All that is needed is that the lower vital should not look in at the back door or be permitted to enter. There is often a harmony between a masculine and a feminine nature, an attraction or an affinity which rests on something other than any open or covert lower vital (sexual) basis—it depends sometimes predominantly on the mental or on the psychic or on the higher vital, sometimes on a mixture of these for its substance. In such cases friendship is natural and there is little chance of other elements coming in to pull it downwards or break it.



It is also a mistake to think that the vital alone has warmth and the psychic is something frigid without any flame in it. A clear limpid goodwill is a very good and desirable thing—one has only to consider what a changed place the Asram would be if all had it for each other. But that is not what is meant by psychic love. Love is love and not merely goodwill. Psychic love can have a warmth and a flame as intense and more intense than the vital, only it is a pure fire, not dependent on the satisfaction of ego-desire or on the eating up of the fuel it embraces. It is a white flame, not a red one; but white heat is not inferior to the red variety in its ardour. It is true that the psychic love does not usually get its full play in human relations and human nature, it finds the fullness of its fire and ecstasy more easily when it is lifted towards the Divine. In the human relation the psychic love gets mixed up with other elements which seek at once to use it and overshadow it. It gets an outlet for its own full intensities only at rare moments. Otherwise it comes in only as an element, but even so it contributes all the higher things in a love that is predominantly vital—all the finer sweetness, tenderness, fidelity, self-giving, self-sacrifice, reachings of soul to soul, idealising sublimations that lift up human love beyond itself come from the psychic. If it could dominate and govern and transmute the other elements, mental, vital, physical, of human love, then love could be on the earth some reflection or preparation of the real thing, an integral union of the soul and its instruments in a dual life. But even some imperfect appearance of that is rare.

Here we do not talk of psychic love between sadhaks, for the reason that that comes usually to be employed as a cover and excuse for things that are not at all psychic and have no place in the spiritual life. Our view is that the normal thing is in Yoga for the entire flame of the nature to turn towards the Divine and the rest must wait for the true basis; to build higher things on the sand and mire of the ordinary consciousness is not safe. That does not necessarily exclude friendships or comradeships, but



these must be subordinate altogether to the central fire. If anyone makes meanwhile the relation with the Divine his one absorbing aim, that is quite natural and gives the full force to the sadhana. Psychic love finds itself wholly when it is the radiation of the diviner consciousness for which we are seeking; till then it is difficult for it to put out its undimmed integral self and figure.

P. S. Mind, vital, physical are properly instruments for the soul and spirit; when they work for themselves then they produce ignorant and imperfect things—if they can be made into conscious instruments of the psychic and the spirit, then they get their own diviner fulfilment; that is the idea contained in what we call transformation in this Yoga.

-Sri Aurobindo (CWSA Vol 31, Letters on Yoga - IV, pp 307-308)



To bring into activity the principle of oneness on the material plane or to work for humanity is a mental mistranslation of the Truth—these things cannot be the first or true object of spiritual seeking. We must find the Self, the Divine, then only can we know what is the work the Self or the Divine demands from us.

-Sri Aurobindo (CWSA Vol 29, Letters on Yoga - II, p 6)

Surrender means to consecrate everything in oneself to the Divine, to offer all one is and has, not to insist on one's ideas, desires, habits etc., but to allow the divine Truth to replace them by its knowledge, will and action everywhere.

-Sri Aurobindo (CWSA Vol 29, Letters on Yoga - II, p 67)



Feedback and Encouraging Words

Feedback on the YES Courses

I have attended your classes for YES.01 and am now attending YES.02; sometimes live, sometimes through recorded links. Even though i am not interactive in Q&A sessions, I am a great listener. The sessions are very useful and your PPT and talks are very inspiring and informative. Big thanks to you and your entire team who are working tirelessly to make these sessions a success.

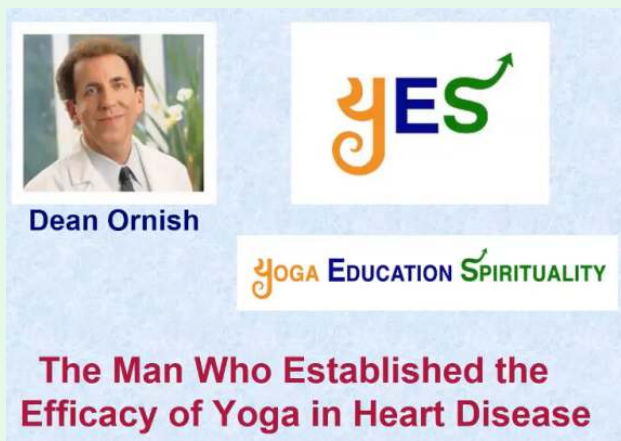
Today's session with Dr Katoch was eye opener. I have had a chronic disease for 10 years for which I have tried many systems of medicine, but not with much success. However, today it was said that you need to first understand your body type and based on it create your diet, routine and medicines to improve immunity and that could increase chances of cure.

Thanks in advance

Vijay Joshi

(in an e-mail dated 16 May 2022)

Dear Ramesh,



I enjoyed your insightful talk on Dean Ornish yesterday. I had not realised he was such a spiritual presence.

I have been following the YES program though, since Indian Standard Time is four and a half hours ahead of GMT, this has been largely by access to

recordings. Congratulations on the programme; it is very good.

I should be honoured to take part in the YES programme. My latest book, which will probably be titled Gut Reaction: the Making and the Meaning of Illness. This book uses Irritable Bowel Syndrome as a model to explore the complexity and



individuality of illness. It focuses on two interfaces: that between the diet, the gut microbiome and the gut immune system and that between an individual's cultural and social background, their life situation and their neuroendocrine responses to explain how the majority of illness is caused by related imbalances in these systems and how that might be addressed. My talk for the YES programme would focus on material from this latest book.

Nick (Read)

*Retired Professor, Gastroenterologist, Counsellor, and Writer Sheffield, UK
(in an email dated 12 June 2022)*

Editor's note: To get information about future YES courses and Talks, and for links to activities already conducted, please send an email to yes.aditik@gmail.com

Feedback on Mirambika and Madhuban

Dear Anju Didi,

It was a great experience to interact with you and get an elaborate insight.

We at Rupantar work towards transforming education, which is a very vast vision. I am just a small part of this mission and your guidance and experience would surely help me to grow.

Madhu Jha

(in an email dated 17 May 2022)

Dear Anju Didi,

Staying in touch with you and learning from your vast experience have been very overwhelming for all of us.

To keep the process going, request you to please suggest some suitable time when we may again connect and take the process forward.

Madhu Jha

DGM - Curriculum and Training

Sri Aurobindo Society - New Delhi Branch

(in an email dated 3 June 2022)



Feedback on Books

Dear Dr. Bijlani,

I am a teacher by profession and a mother by blessings. I am a voracious reader myself and luckily my son, Ardaas, age six, too is an insatiable reader. Our school's Library teacher shared an incident and her learning while reading one of the books by Ramesh Bijlani. I instantly had an urge to get the book issued for my son. So, she gave me two books – *That's Funny, That's Not Funny* and *Kavya Makes Up Her Mind*. These stories were so relatable and so close to our hearts that the messages instantly touched us as family. Then I got hooked to his writings and went on and on with more books such as *How Many Ice Creams, One Or Two?*, *One Book – Two Stories*, *The Story of Ram*, and *A Small Ramayana for Big Boys and Girls*. They all taught not only a 6-year old but a 36-year old too, lessons of life using such simple words and such deep meanings.





I am ever indebted and thankful for the teachings and life-changing experiences that we have received from your writings.

Daakshi Bhide

(in an email dated 27 May 2022)

Editor's Note: All these books, and many more, are available at SABDA, the Bookshop on the campus of Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch. To get books by post/courier, please send an email to: bookshop@aurobindoonline.in



Useless conversation which lowers the consciousness or brings back something of a past consciousness is better avoided. Talking about sadhana also comes under the category when it is merely mental discussion of a superficial kind.

-Sri Aurobindo (CWSA Vol 31, Letters on Yoga - IV, p 83)

The complete immunity from all illness for which our Yoga tries can only come by a total and permanent enlightenment of the below from above resulting in the removal of the psychological roots of ill health—it cannot be done otherwise.

-Sri Aurobindo (CWSA Vol 31, Letters on Yoga - IV, p 559)

It is not Yoga to give free play to the natural instincts and desires. Yoga demands mastery over the nature, not subjection to the nature.

-Sri Aurobindo (CWSA Vol 31, Letters on Yoga - IV, p 260)

It is quite natural to want to meditate while reading Yogic literature—that is not the laziness. The laziness of the mind consists in not meditating when the consciousness wants to do so.

-Sri Aurobindo (CWSA Vol 29, Letters on Yoga - II, p 318)



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.

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For information about Auro-Mira Service Society and the Kechla project, please visit the website www.auromira.in



Note

In view of the Hundred and Fiftieth Birth Anniversary of Sri Aurobindo on 15 August 2022, the Ashram is expanding its mailing list to reach out to more and more who may benefit from the teachings of the Master and the Mother. To get included in the Mailing List, please go to <http://erp.saaonline.net.in/addcontacts.cfm> to fill in a form, which will take you only a few minutes.



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Feedback

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