

The Call Beyond





Highlights

All Work is Not Worship Page 4

The Dilemma of Balancing Individual Freedom with Collective Development ...Page 11

Ever-Welcome Blessings Page 14

Cover picture: Interior of the Meditation Hall, Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch.



An Online Publication of
SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM - DELHI BRANCH

Contents

Editorial

- *All Work is Not Worship* 4

Article

- *Impersonal Work for Personal and Collective Growth* . . . 5

Words of the Mother

- *Perfect Sincerity* 10

Words of the Master

- *The Dilemma Of Balancing Individual Freedom With Collective Development* 11

Twenty-five years ago

- *See the Perfection* 13

Poetry

- *Ever-Welcome Blessings* 14
- *Acceptance* 15

May I Help You

- *Don't Be Shocked* 16

Notice Board

- *Contact us* 18



All Work is Not Worship

To work for the Divine is to pray with the body.

The Mother

That all must work is the injunction issued by Sri Krishna in the Gita (3:20-22), and to set an example, He also works although He need not. That does not automatically mean that all work is worship. What makes work worship is the attitude with which it is done, the spirit in which it is done. Work becomes worship when done with the attitude of being not the doer, but merely an instrument of the Divine. Since the Divine has neither a shortage of instruments, nor is the Divine in a hurry, it is a privilege to be chosen as an instrument. While working, it is good to remember that the ability to do the work was given to us by the Divine, the circumstances that honed the ability were created by the Divine, and the opportunity to use the ability for the work was also provided by the Divine. All work is initiated, sustained and carried to fruition by the Divine. Therefore, all work should be offered to the Divine. And, although one may expect a particular outcome from the work, one should not insist on an outcome, one should not be attached to the outcome. In fact, one should not be attached even to the work. It is good to be a sincere and willing worker of the Divine, but one should also be ready to quit when no longer needed. The Divine reserves the right to judge how long an instrument is needed, and to decide when it is time to get a new model. And, yet the work should be done with one's heart and soul into it because first, it is a privilege to be chosen as an instrument of the Divine, and secondly, the work should be fit to be offered to the Divine. It is this attitude that transforms work into karma yoga. And, it is work done with this attitude that becomes worship.

The editorial is one of the more than 250 essays in the book, 'Spiritual Wisdom in Small Doses'. The book is available for free download on <https://yespirituality.wordpress.com/books/>



Impersonal Work for Personal and Collective Growth

Srividya

What is Impersonal work? Can work ever be impersonal? Isn't work a part of our identity? If it's part of our identity, then how can work be impersonal? Why should work be impersonal? But understanding, and doing impersonal work is very important for a spiritual seeker. The Mother's advice to all of us is to do at least one impersonal act every day.

Let's first understand what impersonal work means. **It means some work, product, service or offering that is not going to bring you any concrete, measurable or visible benefits such as money or social standing.** It may give you joy and satisfaction, and I guess that's acceptable. Because if it is something you will do even when it does not give you any returns, and if you choose to do it on your own – it is not imposed upon you – somewhere, it will be an expression of who you are. Now, if it is an expression of who you are, it will necessarily give you some joy. Perhaps that much of 'the person' in 'impersonal' is ordinarily unavoidable, and therefore acceptable.

Now, the Mother says that even this impersonal work does not come without obstacles. This is where it gets a bit daunting, and also very real. **Here you are trying to do something for the benefit of the other without seeking any rewards, and yet you meet with obstacles.** Why does this happen? Have you ever seen it happen in your life? Let's take a concrete example.

A lot of us emphasise feeding the poor and the destitute as suitable impersonal work. Let me share a personal example of feeding the poor. I decided to serve food to the poor at a temple on my father's death anniversary. I am not a ritualistic person; feeding the poor seemed to be a good non-ritualistic remembrance of my



father. So, we paid for the food, and reached the temple on the appointed date and time. We were allowed to serve the hundreds of people who came. I was given large buckets of rice, sambhar and vegetables to serve. That was the first obstacle! While lifting a bucket, bending and serving, I realised the bucket was too heavy for me. So, I sheepishly gave the bucket back to the people who regularly served at the temple as I couldn't do it beyond one row of people. It was mid-summer and so very hot. After about half an hour of standing, it got very tiring. And then I saw the way the people came in, demanded food with a sense of entitlement and authority, brought boxes to fill up and take home, and how the temple authorities dissuaded them. In the drive back home, I was very tired and silent. I wasn't sure why I wasn't feeling very good despite the impersonal act. Incidentally, I did click a few pictures with the idea of sharing them with friends and showing them what a great thing I had done. **That is where 'the person' got into the 'impersonal' work.** Realising that, I stopped myself. I shared the pictures only with my sister and mother, just to tell them how we had paid regards to our father who had left over two decades back. As I share this, now I am not even sure whether it was an impersonal act in the first place. But it really brings out the point that if we try to do something good and impersonal, there is a good chance we will meet obstacles or opposition. And these obstacles happen because of our own imperfections, anything that is manifest in physical form has imperfections. As the Mother says, "Since we are made up of an imperfect substance, we cannot but share in this imperfection. ... the very fact that it [our inmost being] incarnates in a physical body gives rise to obstacles to the purity of its manifestation." Now we are met with an irony of sorts. We are spiritually being guided to engage in impersonal work so we can elevate our consciousness. However, the very nature of our physical nature creates obstacles in our path. **Now this may sound counterintuitive, but you will see it in all aspects of whatever we work towards, at least initially.**



So, we are all given a physical body that we are born with. Through this space we exert ourselves in this world and try to create a unique identity or a sense of who we are. This is the pursuit of all humans on this planet. We try to be successful, to be known, to be heard, to become visible, etc. etc. So even when we do an impersonal act, the same tendencies of trying to be at the centre of the act and gain all the recognition or be in the limelight comes in our way. Even great philanthropists often give with the objective of getting fame, press coverage, awards or recognition. They want all of these irrespective of how much in the news they already are. In fact, celebrities are perhaps the most insecure people. It takes a moment of reflection, a pause, an understanding that we are merely taking a step on a path that we need to walk on so that we gain humility and start giving from the heart rather than getting caught with calculations of giving and getting. **When work is done in the spirit of giving for the sake of giving and nothing else, it becomes truly impersonal work.**

Many of us have done seva voluntarily in one form or another? Why do temples, ashrams and NGOs attract people to come and give their time? There is an energy that volunteers derive from doing work without a focus on the what they will get out of it. Now this is a journey and a process. If you were to spend a little time consistently on something voluntarily without any personal interest, wouldn't it change you just a little bit? And here we face our next obstacle, which is again inherently present in Matter. We ourselves put shackles on our progress; we don't allow ourselves to flow and grow in the space our impersonal work gives us. We fear losing our identity as well as our comfort zone.

The Mother says, our second tendency that serves as an obstacle "is an excessively conservative spirit, a fixity of the whole nature – intellectual, moral and physical – which makes it impossible for us to transform ourselves as rapidly as we should to be always in harmony with the law of universal progress." The law of



universal progress takes us closer to a universal consciousness, an awareness of our place in the universe, and how all our prior attachments to position, role, social position, etc. have no meaning in that wider picture. What is more meaningful is to give and grow alongside the impersonal work that we are engaging with. We somehow fear that maybe our skills and talent will be lost in the world, maybe our ideas will be stolen and exploited, maybe we hold back and don't give as much as we can anymore. We forget that our talents or skills are not ours, they are gifts given to us from the universe and we don't really own them; we need to use these skills to serve and do our bit in the spaces we populate or occupy. This does not mean that we are not different or unique in our skill-sets or personality. We are definitely different; however, we can work only in spaces that allow us to integrate ourselves with people and the environment around us. **As the Mother says, "Differentiation does not mean division."**

The need to be a distinct individual and the need to be part of the collective have both been planted in us, and both have a purpose. The former makes itself felt as the ego, and the latter as love. Ego is a separative principle, whereas love is a uniting principle. Impersonal work is an expression of love. But, no matter how much purity there is in the expression of love to start with, ego has a way of returning from the back door. In impersonal work, ego returns as the feeling of being special, and therefore deserving special recognition. The individual remains the centre of the universe as he conceives it, rather than become an indistinguishable drop in an ocean. In spite of the contamination by the ego, the person experiences some personal growth, and becomes a trigger for collective growth. For example, I know of a person who was very good at football turning into a football coach. He started coaching voluntarily without expecting any returns. However, he ended up multiplying not only good football players but also football coaches who



worked without expecting any returns. That is how he became the trigger for collective growth as well. He became a link in a chain. Once again, the ego returns, and the person feels he is a bigger and better link in the chain. The Mother warns us, “We must be a link in the chain: the link does not grow bigger at the expense of its neighbours.” A cogwheel cannot function if one of the cogs insists on growing bigger at the expense of its neighbouring cogs.

Thus, we see that impersonal work can lead to individual as well as collective growth. But since there are obstacles to impersonal work that originate in the ego, the dilution of the ‘impersonal’ by the ‘personal’ diminishes both individual and collective spiritual progress. However, any love is better than no love at all. Starting with where we are, we can express our love for those around us through impersonal work as best as we can. If we couple the outer work with introspection, or inner work, gradually the love and its expression will become more and more a manifestation of the oneness that is a much higher and deeper truth than the separation that is a visible but superficial truth. Spiritual growth is a journey, a step-by-step process, not an event. Anyone can embark on the journey starting from where the person is, and enjoy the journey without worrying about the destination. That is what would make the person’s life meaningful, and through collective growth, also make the world a better place to live in.

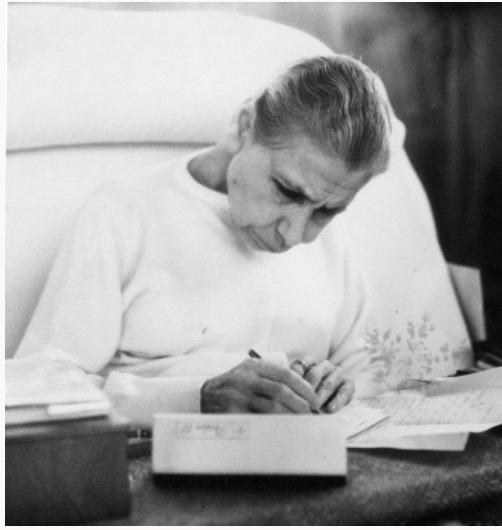
REFERENCE

The Mother: Words of Long Ago. Talks dated 14 May 1912 and 21 May 1912.

Based on two talks by Srividya in the Sunday Satsang series at Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch. The recordings of these talks are available on the YouTube channel of the Ashram. The links are: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G8oeCHCxEz0> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Id3tMtKLW7g>



Perfect Sincerity



Do you know what perfect sincerity is?

Never to try to deceive oneself, never let any part of the being try to find out a way of convincing the others, never to explain favourably what one does in order to have an excuse for what one wants to do, never to close one's eyes when something is unpleasant, never to let anything pass, telling oneself, "That is not important, next time it will be better."

Oh! It is very difficult. Just try for one hour and you will see how very difficult it is. Only one hour, to be *totally, absolutely* sincere. To let nothing pass. That is, all one does, all one feels, all one thinks, all one wants, is *exclusively* the Divine.

"I want nothing but the Divine, I think of nothing but the Divine, I do nothing but what will lead me to the Divine, I love nothing but the Divine."

The Mother ('The Great Adventure', p.61)

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 playlist is: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLbJ59iL6vu-UXeufBeKQlUTwGf3GhZ9LJ>



The Dilemma Of Balancing Individual Freedom With Collective Development



Given a full development and free play of the individual mind, the need of freedom will grow with the immense variation which this development must bring with it, and if only a free play in thought and reason is allowed, but if the free play of the intelligent will in life and action is inhibited by the excessive regulation of the life, then an intolerable contradiction and falsity will be created. Men may bear it for a time in consideration of the great and visible new benefits of order, economic development, means of efficiency and the scientific satisfaction of the reason which the collectivist arrangement of society will bring; but when its benefits become a matter of course and its defects become more and more realised and prominent, dissatisfaction and revolt are sure to set in in the clearest and most vigorous minds of the society and propagate themselves throughout the mass. This intellectual and vital dissatisfaction may very well take under such circumstances the form of anarchistic thought, because that thought appeals precisely to this need of free variation in the internal life and its outward expression which will be the source of revolt, and anarchistic thought must be necessarily subversive of the socialistic order. The State can only combat it by an education adapted to its fixed forms of life, an education that will seek to



drill the citizen in a fixed set of ideas, aptitudes, propensities as was done in the old infrarational order of things and by the suppression of freedom of speech and thinking so as to train and compel all to be of one mind, one sentiment, one opinion, one feeling; but this remedy will be in a rational society self-contradictory, ineffective, or if effective, then worse than the evil it seeks to combat. On the other hand, if from the first freedom of thought is denied, that means the end of the Age of Reason and of the ideal of a rational society. Man the mental being disallowed the use—except in a narrow fixed groove— of his mind and mental will, will stop short in his growth and be even as the animal and as the insect a stationary species.

Sri Aurobindo: 'The Human Cycle', CWSA Vol. 25, pp. 211-212



There is nothing mind can do that cannot be better done in the mind's immobility and thought-free stillness.

When mind is still, then Truth gets her chance to be heard in the purity of the silence.

Truth cannot be attained by the mind's thought but only by identity and silent vision. Truth lives in the calm wordless Light of the eternal spaces; she does not intervene in the noise and cackle of logical debate.

Sri Aurobindo

Cease inwardly from thought and word, be motionless within you, look upward into the light and outward into the vast cosmic consciousness that is around you. Be more and more one with the brightness and the vastness. Then will Truth dawn on you from above and flow in on you from all around you.

Sri Aurobindo



See the Perfection

Michael Virat

If the dead leaves fall off the trees, do you sweep them up to be burned? If it is raining, do you call it a bad day? If someone commits a crime, do you consider him a bad person? When the leaves fall from the trees and scatter on the ground, nature is mulching the soil and building compost to provide nourishment for the trees. The water cycle of Mother Earth is a circle from rivers to ocean to clouds to rain to nourish the earth again. All of God's children are created perfect and although they may make mistakes or act foolishly at times, these are errors to be corrected not sins to be punished.

Nature is perfect because it is a circle. Humanity must learn to cooperate with nature's rhythm, not interfere with it. If man cuts down a forest, there will be prolonged drought. If man plants trees and rebuilds the forests, the rains will come again. Which would you prefer?

It is easy to see the perfection in a flower or a tree if you look for it. In the presence of the mountains of the Himalaya one can feel God's perfect stillness. If there is perfection deep within and perfection in all of nature, what is man's problem?

The Mind of man is a bridge, a connecting link between the heart within and nature without. **Judgement and criticism may seem like the right thing to do, but they do not lead to the upward path of evolution.** The simple exercise of SEEING THE PERFECTION will carry you closer and closer to the Divine. It may require forgiveness. It may require compassion. But if you will look for perfection, you will find it, and that is where we are going.

Reproduced from 'The Call Beyond', Vol. 23, No. 2, 1998, p. 24.



Ever-Welcome Blessings



*May God grant you always...
A sunbeam to warm you,
a moonbeam to charm you,
a sheltering Angel so nothing can harm you,
Laughter to cheer you.
Faithful friends near you.
And whenever you pray,
Heaven to hear you.*

-- An Irish Blessing

Picture by Ashutosh Saran



Acceptance

Manisha Jacob

*You cannot catch every raindrop,
But you can be grateful for the ones that fall on you.*

*Sometimes when I'm not looking out of my window,
It rains.*

I wonder – what've I missed?

Did I miss the heavy clouds?

A rainbow perhaps?

What is it that passed me by?

That I will never truly know.

Instead, I can I step out,

And my feet will be wet where I stand.

I will then know that it rained, for sure.

And I will feel it too.

But I cannot ask for the drops under my feet,

To kiss my cheeks.

Just as I cannot ask the ones that fall on my head,

To only caress the underneath of my feet.



Life is always in flux. Everything we think is permanent is actually only temporary and constantly changing. This includes our ideas, our opinions, our relationships, our jobs, our possessions, our creations, our bodies, everything.

Jon Kabat-Zinn ('Full Catastrophe Living', p. 6)



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.

Don't Be Shocked

A teenager does not believe in the existence of God. Her mother wants to know how to handle the situation.

Answer:

First, do not try to convince her that God exists. Secondly, do not be shocked. Many young people are atheists; most of them eventually turn into believers. Many spiritual masters started with doubts about the existence of God; went on a quest to determine whether He exists; and ended up not just believing but knowing that God exists.

However, there is room for impromptu discussions with the child on questions such as 'If something is invisible, does it mean that it does not exist?' For example, air is invisible, but it exists. We can infer the existence of air from its effects. For example, when there is a breeze, we feel it; when the wind blows, leaves start shaking, papers start flying. In short, for any effect that we observe, there is a cause behind it. Are there events in our lives that we cannot explain? What is the cause behind the effects that we call events? When we do not know the cause, can we still give it a name? Can that name be God, or some other name? Just because we do not know the cause, does it mean the cause is also unknowable? If the entity we call God is unknown, it may be knowable. Can we get some guidance from those to whom God is not unknowable? This type of unplanned discussions



are possible if one does not try to impose one's beliefs on the child, and the channels of communication with the child are wide open, which in any case is necessary, specially in case of teenaged children.



In Yoga the whole past progress of humanity, a progress which it holds on a very uncertain lease, is rapidly summed up, confirmed and made an inalienable possession. The body is conquered, not imperfectly as by the ordinary civilised man, but entirely. The vital part is purified and made the instrument of the higher emotional and intellectual self in its relations with the outer world. The ideas which go outward are replaced by the ideas which move within, the baser qualities are worked out of the system and replaced by those which are higher, the lower emotions are crowded out by the nobler. Finally all ideas and emotions are stilled and by the perfect awakening of the intuitive reason which places mind in communion with spirit the whole man is ultimately placed at the service of the Infinite. All false self merges into the true Self. Man acquires likeness, union or identification with God. This is mukti, the state in which humanity thoroughly realises the freedom and immortality which are its eternal goal.

Sri Aurobindo 'Essays in Philosophy and Yoga', CWSA Vol. 13, pp. 21-22.

The supramental Thought is not a means of arriving at Truth, for Truth in the supermind is self-found or self-existent, but a way of expressing her. It is an arrow from the Light, not a bridge to reach it.

Sri Aurobindo



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

To learn about the recent and forthcoming activities through the Ashram's e-magazine, '**Realization**', send an email to: callbeyond@aurobindoonline.in

Please follow a simple two-step process:

1. Subject: *Subscribe*
2. Click on *Send*

If you subscribe either to '**Realization**', or to '**The Call Beyond**', you will start receiving, month after month, both the magazines.

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.



Get in touch with Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch on:

Our website: www.sriurobindoashram.net

YouTube: <https://youtube.com/sriurobindoashramdelhibranch>

Facebook: <http://facebook.com/sriurobindoashramdelhibranch>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/sriurobindoashramdelhibranch>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/saadelhibranch>



Feedback

Please send your feedback to
callbeyond@aurobindoonline.in

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

Sri Aurobindo Marg

New Delhi 110 016

contact@aurobindoonline.in

91-11-2656-7863