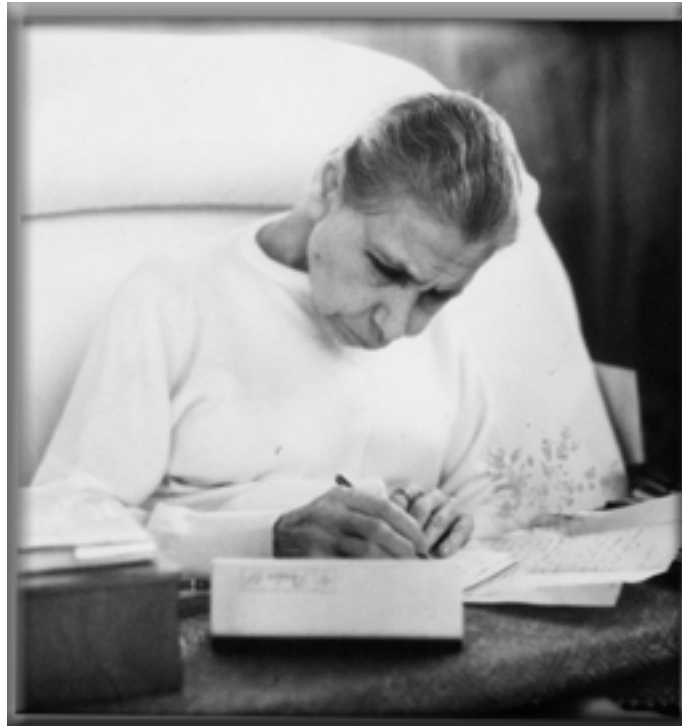


THE CALL BEYOND

Volume 41 // No. 7 // 15 July 2016



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

Sri Aurobindo

Savitri, Book 11, Canto 1, p. 689

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guest editorial

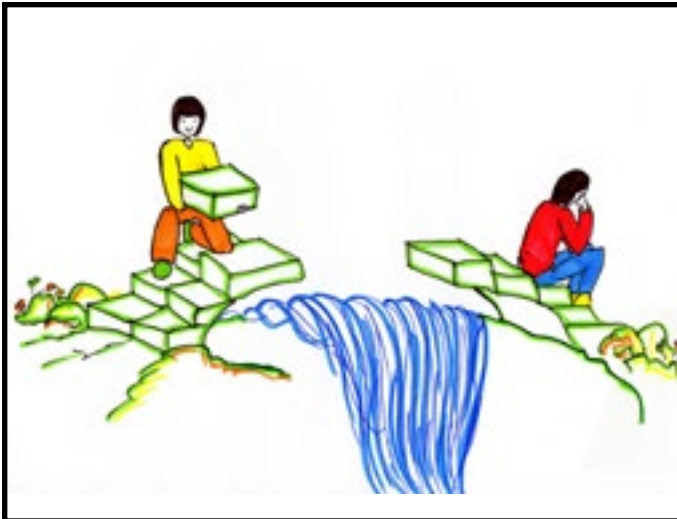
Bridges

MANISHA JACOB

Building bridges is quite a task. But we all do a bit of it every day, each in her unique way. We build our bridges to forge our way, bravely into this world. In doing so, we fortify new relationships and make gateways into lives and build our own colourful worlds. My questions here are: How willing are we to build bridges? How often is the gap just too big? When do we give up on people? Do we give up even on the people we love? I don't have the answers; so please don't look for them here.



All relationships complete some part of us. Even in the smallest measure they come together in forming that unique space which you or I fill in our head. What I don't like about relationships is that sometimes there is no more space left. This is when all hell breaks loose for me. I think this happens when both parties take each other for granted. I can say that for the relationship I share with some people who are biologically very closely related to me. Sometimes I feel like I have no place to run and at other points they seem to enter even my mind space. Anyway, I don't want to elaborate on the numerous arguments and 'discussions' I've had with them. I love them but sometimes I have to confess that we are on different pages or we tug at the same rope from opposite ends!



When it comes to my friends there have been those who've stuck around and there are those who didn't seem too bothered when it came to moving on. I wonder why though? Shouldn't friendships matter more in a world which, although it boasts of being a village, is growing more apart! As I am growing up even I am turning into one of those who is happy to live 'suspended' in my own space, making it harder and harder for people to get into my reality so to speak. I can't even explain why but I try to fight against it. However, there are at least a few people who've seen me mature into the person I am, and who stick around as friends. It means a lot to me. So I will try and build more bridges. *Two things I have found help the most in building bridges: apologizing and forgiving.* I have decided to do both without delay whenever warranted. I want to be a better 'bridge builder'. I want to bridge the gaps, be a happier person, and spread happiness around.

readers write

Namaskar. Wonderful edition. It was nice to read about importance of ‘forgiveness’. I personally aim for inculcating this value. Feel it is extremely important in our social world.

With regards

Dr. Richa Awasthy

(in an e-mail dated 12 June 2016)

I congratulate you on bringing out yet another insightful issue of *The Call Beyond*..... Great service at Her feet.

Charan Singh

(in an e-mail dated 12 June 2016)

Thank you for mailing the latest issue of *The Call Beyond*

Each time I receive it I am reminded of a beautiful quote..we are not human beings having a spiritual experience but spiritual beings having a human experience!

Thanks also to the entire team who have put it together!

Warm regards

Seema Sekhri

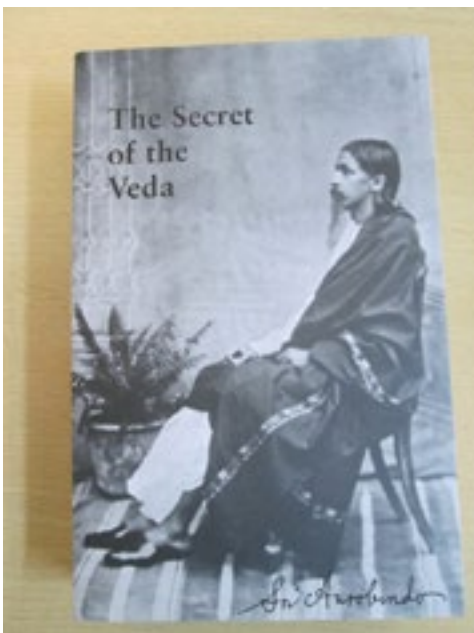
(in an e-mail dated 15 June 2016)

article

Soma - The Divine Delight

UDHAV SUREKA

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



The Soma wine has a very important place in the Vedas. A host of Vedic deities like Indra, Vayu, and the Ashwins are closely associated with Soma and its preservation, and this imagery is consistent throughout the Rig Veda. In *The Secret of the Veda*, Sri Aurobindo explains how Soma and these deities represent psychological experiences of the Rishis as they worked in the Truth-consciousness or the supramental consciousness.

The Soma wine is the Vedic symbol for Ananda - *the divine delight of being, inflowing upon the mind from the supramental consciousness through the Ritam or Truth (1)*. While an ordinary mind derives happiness from sense-objects and sense-experiences, a mind turned towards the Truth – the Truth of one's own being, one's own immortality – experiences permanent and limitless bliss or Ananda. The Soma wine symbolises the replacing of our ordinary sense-enjoyment by the divine Ananda.

Numerous Vedic mantras are dedicated to Soma. The ninth book of the Rig Veda is entirely dedicated to Soma alone. Sri Aurobindo interprets a few of these hymns to bring out its inner meaning:

*Eṣa dhiyā yātyaṇvya śūro rathebhiraśubhiḥ gachan indrasya niṣkrtama
Eṣa purū dhiyāyate barhate devatātaye yatrāmrtāsa āsate – R.V. IX.15.1, 2*

“Soma advances, heroic with his swift chariots, by the force of the subtle thought, dhiyā aṇvya, to the perfected activity (or perfected field) of Indra and takes many forms of thought to arrive at that vast extension (or, formation) of the godhead where the Immortals are.”(2)

In these mantras, it is evident that Soma is entirely associated with the mind – the word *dhi* means the intellect or thoughts. Soma advances because of the subtle thought-powers of a pure mind, represented by Indra.

Indra is the Vedic symbol for the Illumined Mind – a mind which is turned towards the Light of Truth. He is presented as the lord of Swar – the third Vedic vyāhrti (bhu, bhuvah, swah). The word *swar* is akin to *sūra* and *sūrya*, i.e. sun, and it means luminous. Indra represents the unobscured or pure mind which is thus fit for receiving the divine delight of Soma.

Along with Vayu, Indra is seen as the constant partaker of the Soma wine in the Veda. Vayu is associated with the Prana or Life-Energy. The Illumined Mind is accompanied by the regulated Prana represented by Vayu. They work together to awaken human mentality to the inflow of Ananda.

SriAurobindo summarily presents their working as follows: “They receive them into the full plenitude of the mental and nervous energies, cetathāḥ sutānām vājīnīvasū. The Ananda thus received constitutes a new action preparing immortal consciousness in the mortal and Indra and Vayu are bidden to come and swiftly perfect these new workings by the participation of the thought, āyātam upaniṣkrtam makṣūdhiyā.”(3)

This is how one is to understand the symbols and imagery associated with the Soma wine in the Veda.

REFERENCES

- (1) *The Secret of The Veda*, p. 74, Line 12
- (2) *The Secret of The Veda*, p. 85, Line 36
- (3) *The Secret of The Veda*, p. 74, Line 20

hundred years ago

*One in all, all in One**



Thou has granted me the grace of Thy repose in which all individual limits are dissolved, in which one is in all and, more clearly still, all is in oneself. But the mind, merged in this divine ecstasy, cannot yet find any power of expression.

THE MOTHER (In *Prayers and Meditations*, prayer dated 5 December 1916)

*Title given by the editor

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

hundred years ago

The Synthesis of Yoga

THE RELEASE FROM THE HEART AND THE MIND



The characteristics of Life are action and movement, a reaching out to absorb and assimilate what is external to the individual and a principle of satisfaction or dissatisfaction in what it seizes upon or what comes to it, which is associated with the all-pervading phenomenon of attraction and repulsion. ...The Prana is everywhere in us supporting not only the action of our body, but of our sense-mind, our emotional mind, our thought-mind; and bringing its own law or dharma into all these, it confuses, it limits, it throws into



discord their right action and creates that impurity of misplacement and that tangled confusion which is the whole evil of our psychological existence. In that confusion one law seems to reign, the law of desire. As the universal Divine Being, all-embracing and all-possessing, acts, moves, enjoys purely for the satisfaction of the divine Delight, so that the individual life acts, moves, enjoys and suffers predominantly for the satisfaction of the desire. Therefore the psychic life-energy presents itself to our experience as a sort of desire-mind, which we have to conquer if we mean to get back to our true self.

Desire is at once the motive of our actions, our lever of accomplishment and the bane of our existence. If our sense-mind, emotional mind, thought-mind could act free from the intrusions and importations of the life-energy, if that energy could be made to obey their right action instead of imposing its own yoke on our existence, all human problems would move harmoniously to their right solution. The proper function of the life-energy is to do what it is bidden by the divine principle in us, to reach to and enjoy what is given to it by that indwelling Divine and not to desire at all. The proper function of the sense mind is to lie open passively, luminously to the contacts of Life and transmit their sensations and the rasa or right taste and principle of delight in them to the higher function, and not become an instrument of pain and pleasure.

...The real psychic entity is an instrument of pure love, joy and the luminous reaching out to fusion and unity with God and our fellow-creatures. This psychic entity is covered up by the play of the mentalised Prana or desire-mind which we mistake for the soul; the emotional mind is unable to mirror the real soul in us, the Divine in our hearts, and is obliged instead to mirror the desire-mind.

So too the proper function of the thought-mind is to observe, understand, judge with a dispassionate delight in knowledge and open itself to messages and illuminations playing upon all that it observes and upon all that is yet hidden from it but must progressively be revealed, messages and illuminations that secretly flash down to us from the divine Oracle concealed in light above our mentality whether they seem to descend through the intuitive mind or arise from the seeing heart. ... As is said in the Upanishads, our whole minded-consciousness is shot through with the threads and currents of the Prana, the Life-energy that strives and limits, grasps and misses, desires and suffers, and only by its purification can we know and possess our real and eternal self.

... Thus a division is created between the mind that thinks and wills and the mind that observes and the Purusha becomes the witness only; he sees, he understands the process and laws of his thought, but detaches himself from it. Then as the master of the sanction he withdraws his past sanction from the tangle of the mental undercurrent and the reasoning intellect and causes both to cease from their opportunities. He becomes liberated from subjection to the thinking mind and capable of the utter silence.

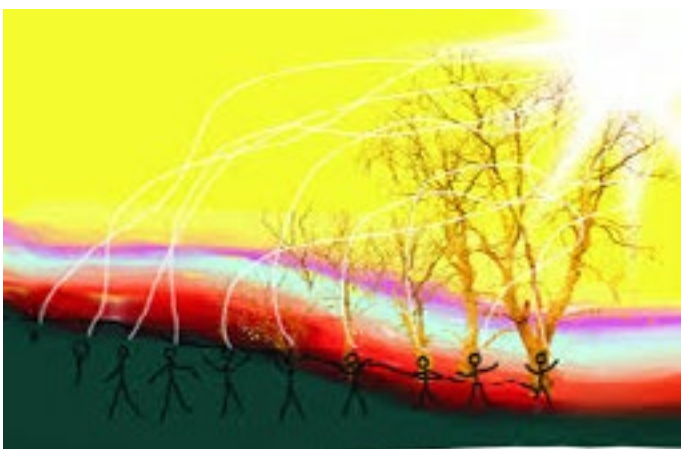
For perfection there is necessary also the resumption by the Purusha of his position as the lord of his Nature and the will to replace the mere mental undercurrent and intellect by the truth-conscious thought that lightens from above. But the silence is necessary; in the silence and not in the thought we shall find the Self, we shall become aware of it, not merely conceive it, and we shall withdraw out of the mental Purusha into that which is the source of the mind. But for this withdrawal a final liberation is needed, the release from the ego-sense in the mind.

SRI AUROBINDO (In the *Arya*, Vol. 2, No.12, 15 July 1916)

twenty-five years ago

Education as the Growth of Consciousness

NOLINI KANT GUPTA



All knowledge is within you. Information you get from outside, but the understanding of it? It is from within. The information from outside gives you dead matter. What puts life into it, light into it is your own inner light.

All education, all culture means drawing this inner light to the front. Indeed the word 'education' literally means, 'to bring out'. Plato also pointed to the same truth when he said that education is remembrance. You remember what is imbedded or secreted within, you bring to the light, the light

of your physical mind, what you have within, what you already possess in your being and inner consciousness. Acquisition is not education. Indeed a miser is not a rich man, rich is he who knows how to utilize his wealth, even so as possessor of much information is only a carrier of loads.

True education is growth of consciousness. It is consciousness that carries the light and the power of light. We are born upon earth with this consciousness at the centre of our being. And a growing child is nothing but a growing consciousness. Growth of consciousness means an increasing intensity and an increasing amplitude or wideness of the light. Unfortunately, placed as we are under the circumstances of life as it is, this light of consciousness is not allowed to grow in its natural and normal way. The external demands of life and the world put a pressure upon it which turns it away from its straight path. Things are demanded of this light or consciousness which do not belong to its nature, which are not an expression of its nature. As though it is twisted, tortured or smothered under utilitarian necessities.

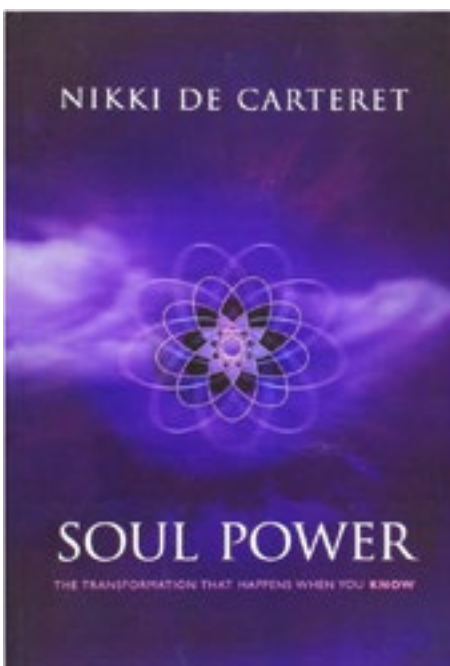
The brain should be a flowering of this consciousness, a developing vehicle for the expression of the increasing consciousness. For that a guidance is needed so that one may always turn within and look for that consciousness, feel it growing, and with one's will and thought and act help its growth and development. A brain is not developed by the mass of information that may be pressed into it. Facts are necessary but they should be presented in such a way that they serve as fuel, helpful fuel to the mounting fire; they must not be merely piled upon and around the fire or be as so many wet faggots crushing it down with their weight. A true learner is the one who seeks sincerely this inner consciousness which is one's own; the true teacher is one who knows how to lead the learner towards this inner light.

Reproduced from *The Call Beyond*, Vol. 16, No.3, 1991, p. 29

book review

Soul Power: the Transformation that Happens When You Know by Nikki de Carteret.
O Books, Hants, UK, 2003. ISBN 978-1-903-81636-3. Price: \$ 14.95 in the USA.

SHISHU



Amidst all the chaos, crime and killings that characterize the modern world, one reassuring ray of hope is the rapidly growing number of self-help books based on the spiritual approach to life. A valuable addition to this body of literature is *Soul Power* by Nikki de Carteret. Based on her own experiences as a spiritual seeker and guide, she has constructed in this book a pattern that spiritual progress characteristically follows.

The book starts with a turning point in the author's life. At age twenty-two, she was seriously injured in a car accident in Paris while returning from a wedding party. Although she survived, when she saw her face in the mirror while brushing her teeth she saw that her right eye, although intact, was closed, and walled in by a mound of protruding flesh and ugly scars. Scared by the prospects of having a scarred face for life and getting abandoned by her boyfriend in Canada, she went into deep introspection that culminated in a mysterious reassuring spiritual experience.

She ‘saw’ a Being that filled her with Light and Love. The Being, she finally knew, was God. This was the beginning of a long spiritual journey. She calls it Stage One: the stage of ‘Awakening’. The details may differ, but almost everyone who is consciously walking the spiritual path can recall this stage, the stage that typically begins with a crisis in life. The next thing that happened was a change in surroundings. She was in London, working for the BBC, where she took up a project on reincarnation for a TV show. Research on the project took her to a house in North London where “women yogis” (Brahmkumaris) taught Raja Yoga. That is how she found her Guru. At the stage of awakening, the disciple is ready, and then such twists and turns of apparently ‘unplanned events’ lead to the ‘chance discovery’ of the Guru.

The author goes on to describe in the book eight more stages that follow the initial awakening. Stage Two is ‘Spiritual Knowledge’. After getting some knowledge at the mental knowledge from her teachers during the stage of awakening, the author developed a thirst for experiential knowledge. One day her aspiration reached such intensity that she told God that she was sitting down in meditation, and would not get up till she has seen Him. As in the case of Sri Ramakrishna, her persistence paid, and she saw Him.

Stage Three is ‘Spiritual Practice’. The principal practice that the author recommends is meditation, for which she gives some very valuable tips. She herself has not missed meditating for even a single day in the last twenty-three years. Acknowledging that it is not easy to live a spiritual life while being immersed in worldly activity and being surrounded by negativity, she says that generating positive thoughts on a regular basis is a great aid to spiritual growth. Meditation is not about cessation of thoughts, it is about thinking only the best of thoughts. Just as it is the job of the heart to beat, it is the job of the mind to think. Therefore, we do not have to stop the mind from thinking; what we need to cultivate is enough self-mastery to let only positive thoughts enter the mind. Thus, the type of meditation she recommends may be called the mindfulness type. While giving several sample meditations throughout the book, she gives the reader the freedom to invent more, and also says that even the same person’s meditation could be different on different days. For on one day, the meditation may be on universal love, on another day a prayer for those who are suffering, and yet another day the focus may be on forgiving those who have hurt us.

Section Four, ‘Dark Night of the Soul’, deals with a difficult and painful, but inevitable and necessary stage in spiritual growth. The early period of spiritual growth is ‘easy’, ‘rewarding’ and ‘insightful’. The individual is ecstatic. His only regret is why he did not discover the path earlier. But then comes the realization that there are many weaknesses to work on, many impurities to eliminate, and many pitfalls to guard against. But with the necessary inner work, patience, and divine Grace, one can go through this phase, and emerge at a level of consciousness significantly higher than that before the ‘night’.

Assuming that the seeker has identified his weaknesses, particularly his “fatal flaw” or the Achilles Heel, working on it will eventually lead to transformation. This forms the subject of Stage Five, ‘Illumination’. Knowledge has to go through the trials of experience, often painful, to lead to transforming illumination. Behind the experiences, as well as the illumination, is the hand of God, sometimes seen, but often unseen. The unseen hand generally becomes visible in retrospect. The cycle of knowledge-trial-illumination is a repetitive process, leading each time to deeper and subtler levels at which the seeker can apply spiritual knowledge in everyday life. The repetitive process also paves the way for willingness to “let go”, or surrender, which forms the subject of the next section.

Stage Six, 'Surrender', deals with the process by which the seeker gives up his desire to control situations, and voluntarily hands over the control to the Divine. The handing over of control is in stages. First we hand over only the little things that do not matter much to us. Total surrender comes towards the summit of spiritual progress. That is why, when Sri Aurobindo was asked whether surrender was the first step of his yoga, he had said that yes it was, and had added, that it was also the last! In this section, the author cites a special moment from her own journey: "Dear God", I said, "Release me from my wants." I paused, then said quickly, "No, release me even from that thought. I want not to want anymore" (emphasis added).

Stage Seven, 'Walking the Talk', is a stage when the seeker has reached spiritual maturity, and as a result, achieved an "unassailable internal stability". This may be reached primarily by the active route or the reflective route, but by stage seven a balance is achieved between outer and inner work. Weaknesses may exist, but the seeker knows how to handle them. He may observe negativity in others, but can accommodate it. The author now condenses the spiritual journey up to stage seven into four phases: knowing, connecting, deepening, and demonstrating. Knowing is about getting knowledge; connecting with the Divine comes from experience; deepening comes from working on weaknesses and cultivating virtues. Deepening is a prolonged phase, and continues up to the end. But after deepening has gone to a certain level, the person starts demonstrating the way he has been transformed by the spiritual journey through serving others. The author makes an important point when she says that people often wonder why, if they know something, they cannot put it into practice. Knowledge is not enough to walk the talk. Forgetting the necessity of the phases of connecting and deepening can lead to frustration because one cannot understand why one cannot act on what one knows so well. Knowledge, like timber, needs seasoning.

Stage Eight, 'Bliss', is characterized by total acceptance, feeling the constant presence of the Divine, and a sense of fullness, the sense that there is no gap or void in life. Total acceptance of whatever comes in life, and of everything that goes on in the world around, with love, wisdom and compassion leaves no room for sorrow. When all is accepted, nothing is wrong; rather, nothing can be wrong.

In the next stage, the seeker moves from fullness to selflessness. The person wants nothing, but can still live for others. Stage Nine, which the author calls 'Perfection of Spirit', is characterized by tremendous energy and indefatigability. But the person uses none of this energy for herself. She uses it for others through work that may be visible, and even more through work that is invisible. The invisible work is to spread vibrations of purity in the world, and these vibrations of love can also be directed to specific people. It is not necessary to wait for this advanced stage to do that, but at earlier stages the intention may be less effective. The efficacy of the vibrations of love depends primarily on the degree of inner silence and the degree of purity. The slightest negativity reduces the efficacy by acting like a hole in a pipe: it drains energy.

Each of the nine sections ends with some very insightful reflective questions, and valuable exercises for spiritual practice. The sequence of the sections is based on the author's own life. She travelled primarily from knowledge to devotion, and from devotion to action. In the Gita, Arjuna travels from action to knowledge, and from knowledge to devotion. A seeker could also travel from devotion to knowledge and action. But keeping these details aside, the book gives the spiritual journey a very plausible, realistic and helpful framework.

To a student of integral yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, what is most significant is that the view of spirituality presented in the book is not only strongly life-affirming, but also has a collective goal. “Spirituality would seem singularly myopic if our goal were solely to reach enlightenment and then to forget the world and everyone else in it.... Uplifting the world through vibrations is not the task of one person alone. An entire army of willing and selfless servers needs to be in place.... Spiritual revival does not happen in isolation, it is a communal act.... This is what modern spirituality is all about. If each of us can tap into our pure energies of soul, and unite as one powerful force for good, we can change the course of the world.”, says the author. The remarkable similarity with Sri Aurobindo’s and the Mother’s vision of a world with a higher consciousness is unmistakable. That the author says so without apparently having read Sri Aurobindo or the Mother makes it even more significant. What it means is that the time for the next leap in consciousness on the planet has come, and we can all contribute to it.

kidz corner

How Many Ice Creams - One or Two?

SHISHU



In the summers, Raghav took ten rupees from his mother everyday for an ice cream. One day he said to his mother, “Please give me twenty rupees today. Today I will eat choco-nut ice cream”. She gave him twenty rupees.

Raghav was very happy. He ran to the ice cream booth, dreaming of the choco-nut ice cream.

When he reached the ice cream booth, he found there another boy, about his own age, but in shabby clothes. This boy was looking at the booth with an expression that told Raghav that this boy also wanted an ice cream. But he was standing at a safe distance from the booth so that he does not annoy the salesman. Obviously, this boy did not have money for the ice cream. Let us call this boy Ramu.

Raghav approached the salesman. As he did so, he also looked back, and at the same time he tried to hide that he was looking back. Raghav could sense that his going towards the salesman quickened Ramu’s desire for an ice cream. Raghav saw in his mind that Ramu’s legs wanted to walk towards the booth, but Ramu was forcing his feet not to move.

Before Raghav could ask the salesman for a choco-nut ice cream, a quick impulse from somewhere deep within crossed his mind. It told him, “Why not buy two ten-rupee ice creams, and give one to Ramu”. He blurted out to the salesman, “Orange bar. Today I want two”. He got two orange bars, and gave one to Ramu. Raghav did not wait for a ‘thank you’ because he did not want one. The joy that he got as he handed over the ice cream to Ramu was sweeter than any ‘thank you’ in the world. However, Ramu’s eyes said “thank you” from the bottom of his heart.

Raghav started walking home slowly. He stopped near a dustbin, and unwrapped the ice cream. He threw the wrapper in the dustbin. He started eating the orange bar slowly as he walked. These were all movements that came to him naturally because he went through these motions every day. But today the ice cream felt much better than usual. As he walked home, Raghav started thinking:

“Why does the ice cream taste better today? I know it is because I gave one also to that boy.

But I missed the choco-nut ice cream. How would choco-nut have tasted?

I am sure today’s orange bar tastes much better than choco-nut.

But supposing that boy comes and stands there every day expecting that I will give him an ice cream.

What will mummy say when I tell her what I did?

She may never give me money for the choco-nut ice cream again.

There are so many poor children in the world. I can’t buy ice creams for all of them. It is sad, but I cannot help it.

Today I spent more, but did not even get choco-nut.

Why didn’t I think of all this before I bought two ice creams?

Thank God I did not. Then I might have just bought the choco-nut and come away fast. I would have felt so guilty eating the choco nut.

Now it is all settled. I did what was right. All other thoughts are useless. They are leading me nowhere.”

By now the ice cream was over, and Raghav was home. His mother said, “How did you like the choco-nut ice cream?” Raghav replied, “I ended up eating something that tasted much better than choco-nut ice cream”. After just a little pause, he continued, in one breath, “There was a poor boy near the ice cream booth. I knew he also wanted an ice cream but did not have the money. So I bought two orange bars and gave one to that boy. The orange bar tasted much better today; even better than choco-nut would have”.



Raghav’s mother said, “Good boy. I am so lucky to have a son like you. Tomorrow I will give you forty rupees so that you can buy two choco-nuts, and give one to that boy if he is there”.

This story is dedicated to Pranav, a child who was happy to see other children get ice creams, although he could not eat them due to his medical condition.

Pranav Gupta (2000-2013) was a student of The Mother’s International School.

A note for parents and teachers

I have created the dilemma ‘one ice cream or two?’ several times while talking to school children, and the result has always been the same, irrespective of age, and in every part of the world. The children’s answer is quick, and it is always ‘two ice creams’. The impulse to do something out of love or compassion comes from our deepest self, often called the soul. If we act on the impulse, we get immense joy in spite of losing something; for example, in this story the child loses the choco-nut ice cream. One of the keys to experiencing this joy is to act on the impulse fast enough. If the action is delayed, the intellect might take over, give reasons against the action, and as a result, we may change our mind. Raghav also experiences this mental process, but fortunately he has already done the right thing. If he had not done it, in spite of finding many reasons in his support he would have felt guilty. By doing what he did, in spite of the reasons which are creating doubts in his mind, he is happy. Thus, we have an in-built reward and punishment system. When we make the right choice, we get joy and lasting mental peace. When we make the wrong choice, or lose the opportunity to make the right choice, we feel uneasy, and recurrent uneasiness may continue to haunt us for a long time. Stories such as this one make the child familiar with the in-built sense of right and wrong, and also the system of reward and punishment that is coupled with it. Parents and teachers should strive to make the child discover this inner guide instead of depending on external rewards and punishments. Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have called this inner guide and judge the psychic being, which is the dynamic aspect of the soul.

inspiration

Babar Ali, the Youngest Headmaster in the World

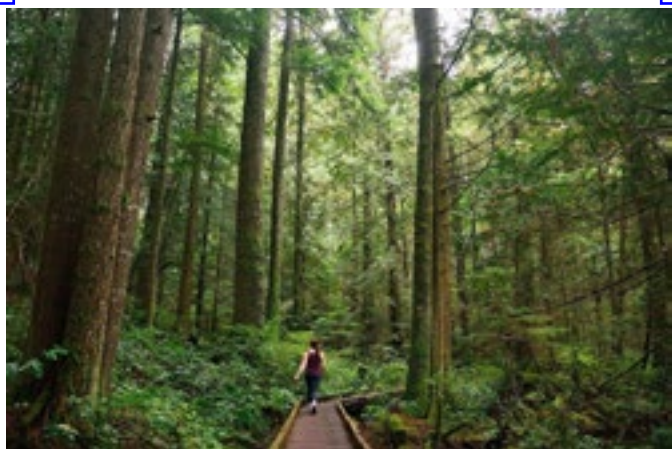


The story goes back to 2002. Babar Ali, a 9-year old boy in Murshidabad, West Bengal, discovered that he had a talent for helping his schoolmates understand difficult subjects. With the idea of helping children in an organized manner, he started a school in the backyard of his home. He named the school Ananda Shiksha Niketan (home of joyful learning). In 2009, BBC did a feature on him and called the 16-year old the ‘youngest headmaster in the world’. Now his school has 300 students, and a ‘staff’ of ten, which includes six former students of the school who have joined as teachers. The school charges no tuition fees, and the teachers offer voluntary service free of charge. The school receives some aid from Ramakrishna Mission by way of books and stationery, and depends on donations.

Babar Ali himself has completed his B.A. and is now pursuing an M.A. in English literature. His role model is Swami Vivekananda. He has received the ‘Real Hero’ award from CNN-IBN, and ‘Indian of the Year’ award from NDTV. Babar Ali figures in the Class 10 CBSE textbook on English and the PUC textbook on English of the Government of Karnataka, and has appeared in the TV show ‘Satyameva Jayate’ hosted by Aamir Khan.

(Source: www.babaraliheadmaster.com)

poetry

Dwarfed
ANITA SHARMA

*Out in the big broad world,
Where there are givers galore,
I feel small when I think
How great I felt one day
When I handed a few coins
To a penniless soul that crossed my way.*

*Each morning I am woken up
By an alluring alarm,
Such sweet sonorous sounds
Made by the magpies and the canaries,
I feel small when I think
How great I felt one day
Deluded that my albums had the best songs.*

*Each day as I experience the radiance
Issuing from people simple and
unvarnished,
I feel small when I think
How great I felt one day
When I read and wrote
To get a good report.*

tip of the month

This column shall carry advice, practices or exercises which can make it a little easier for the spiritual seeker to walk on the path of spiritual progress. Contributions from the readers are welcome, and may be printed at the editor's discretion after editorial revision.

A prayer for mealtimes

AT THE BEGINNING OF THE MEAL

Thank you Mother, for the food.

Thank you Mother, for the capacity to eat and digest the food.

Pray that I may always select the foods that are good for the body.

Pray that I may always eat only as much as is necessary; neither too much nor too little.

Mother, let me eat only for need; save me from eating for greed.

Let the Life Force/Prana ('energy') in the food nourish me.

Let the energy that the food gives me be used for the work for which the Divine has sent me to this world.

Thank you, Mother, for everything.

AT THE END OF THE MEAL

Thank you Mother.

The purpose of life is spiritual growth, and one of the most helpful practices for fulfilling this purpose is constant awareness of the Divine. The awareness helps in making spiritually uplifting choices in life, in seeing the Divine in our fellow beings, and in seeing the unseen hand of the Divine in all happenings. Till an uninterrupted awareness of the Divine becomes spontaneous and natural, it is very helpful if one structures remembrance of the Divine into the daily routine. We generally eat at least three times in a day. If we get into the habit of praying whenever we start eating and finish eating, we would be remembering the Divine at least six times a day. Further, we can develop the habit of remembering the Divine whenever we start some work, and when we finish it. The important thing is conscious and sincere remembrance; how a person prays is up to the individual. In that sense, the prayer given here is only a sample. So long as the remembrance, the gratitude, and good intentions are there, they may be dressed up in any words, in any language, or in no language at all!

appreciations

Feedback from MIS teachers' camp at Madhuban, 14-17 May 2016



The topics chosen for the workshop served like a capsule course on 'How to lead life well'. A commendable effort by Dr. Bijlani.

The sessions 'Who am I' and the 'Purpose of Life' reminded us to rethink and look at our life afresh, to align our priorities with what it is that matters. Both the sessions on 'Stress Management' were extremely useful. 'Why stress and from where it comes' was just as important as 'how to counter it'. The lectures on the Gita and Isha Upanishad were insightful and helped get things in perspective.

The guided meditation and yoga helped us to

learn how to go about our yoga and meditation practices on a daily basis. They are guidelines which will hopefully last for a long time to come.

The technique and process of meditation was reinforced during the guided meditation sessions later and helped us to imbibe it well.

The session on getting introduced to one another created an atmosphere of positivity and coziness.

Thank you so much for all your efforts.

Ekta Bhalla

Coming to Ramgarh is always a pleasant experience. It gives us an opportunity to relax and to be with oneself, explore and introspect. It gives us time to bond with each other which we are unable to do when we are in Delhi due to our hectic schedule. Some sessions motivated me to look at life with a different perspective.

Anjali Saini

The sessions were enriching and informative. It has given me a new insight to look at life in a different light. I enjoyed the morning yoga classes, stress management and purpose of life sessions to a great extent.

The workshop has made it possible for me to handle my internal stress in a better way and it would surely go a long way to make me a better teacher and a better human being.

Neethu Somarajan

Bijlaniji's sessions were a journey into the different domains of our life. I thoroughly enjoyed his yoga and guided meditation sessions. It brought a lot of calmness and peace within me.

Vineeta Prakash

The sessions rejuvenated me and reminded me to take out time to connect more with my psychic being. The yoga sessions were very pure and I thoroughly enjoyed them. I was calm and could easily concentrate on my breath for half an hour during meditation which I couldn't do earlier. The guided meditation relaxed me and I felt connected.

The stress management sessions gave me a few insights to share with my family. The sessions on 'Who am I', Gita and Upanishads added to my knowledge base. I related to the experiential learning. Thank you once again for reminding us about the purpose of life.

Jyoti

Feedback on a Study Camp at Madhuban

Dear Tara Didi, Dr. Anju Khanna and Oindrilla

I would like to thank you all for giving me the opportunity to conduct the retreat based on Sri Aurobindo and Mother's teachings at Madhuban. All the participants were mesmerized by the beauty and tranquility at Madhuban. I can sense that all of you and other ashramites have put in a huge effort and shram-daan to bring up Madhuban to its present state.

Our stay was pleasant and the staff was very friendly and cooperative. Everyone including the workshop participants, my family and me have carried a lot of positivity back home.

I pray that may The Mother continues to pour Her force and light at Madhuban and it continues to grow.

Pulkit Sharma

Consultant Clinical Psychologist & Spiritual Therapist

(Resource person for the camp)

(in an e-mail dated 22 May 2016)

Feedback from Visitors to the Ashram

Dear Govinda ji:

Students of Sahyadri School, and my colleague Teachers escorting them to their recent Kumaun Himalayas Trek join me in thanking the Ashram for hosting us during our transits through Delhi.

The Students also enjoyed, and I am sure would be benefited by the interesting talk by Dr Bijlani, and the equally interesting book on Youth and Integration.

The story of Kavya [narrated by Dr Bijlani] is indeed a story of each one of us; the children who were gifted a copy have decided to donate it to the School Library.

We were moved by the serenity of the Ashram, and the hospitality and kindness of all at the Ashram.

Shubhang Pandya

(in an e-mail dated 28 May 2016)

notice board

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS

SAES Meeting, 4 August 2016, 5 pm

The next Annual General Meeting of the Sri Aurobindo Education Society will be held on **Thursday, 4 August 2016 at 5 pm** in the 'Hall of Grace' in The Mother's International School. All the members of the Society are requested to please attend.

AGENDA

1. To confirm the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 13 July 2015.
2. To consider and adopt the Report of the Activities of the Society for the financial year 2015-2016.
3. To receive, consider and pass the audited accounts of the Society for the financial year 2015-2016.
4. To appoint auditors for the financial year 2016-2017 and to fix their remuneration.
5. Any other matter with the permission of the Chair.

ASHOK K. ACHARYA

*Secretary
Sri Aurobindo Education Society*

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