

The Call Beyond

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

Sri Aurobindo
Savitri, Book 11, Canto 1, p. 689

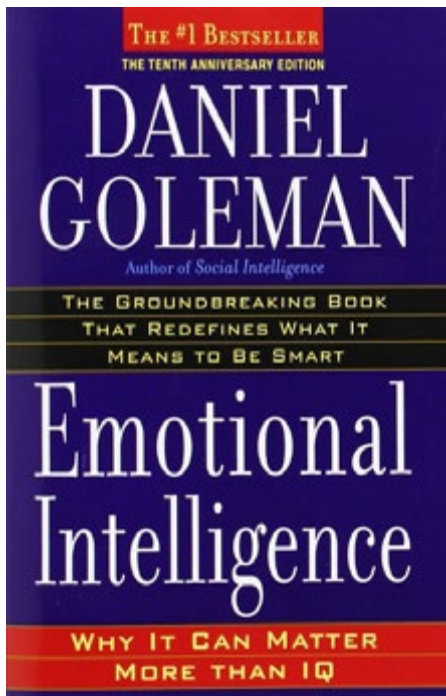
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The Secret of Success



Besides hard work, if you think intelligence is what makes for success, think again. Those who succeed are not stupid, but they are not necessarily the most intelligent people around either. What is it that makes so many with only modest intelligence succeed even better than those blessed with peak intelligence? Daniel Goleman went into this question, and came up with the answer that success depends on a set of abilities far more comprehensive than those measured by the IQ (intelligence quotient) tests (1). He fit these abilities into a grid comprising ‘awareness’ and ‘management’ of ‘self’ and ‘others’.

Self-awareness, or awareness of one’s own emotions, helps the person choose the type of work that the person enjoys. To be successful, the person should excel in his work. Excellence depends not only on intelligence, or even the ability to do the work well. More than ability, excellence needs passionate involvement in the work, finding joy in the work, and it needs one more thing often forgotten: the work should be ethically sound. **Unmixed joy can never come from work that is unethical, no matter how well the work is executed.** Awareness of one’s own emotions thus helps the person excel in his work, and excelling in work leads to success.

Self-management is essentially about self-control. There may be joy in the work, but the joy may not be immediate. In fact, what comes immediately in much of worthwhile work is need for discipline, a mechanical routine, and plenty of drudgery. On the

other hand, the work might compete for time and attention with something that brings an immediate but fleeting pleasure. **Choosing delayed gratification consciously needs self-control.** Without such self-control, sustained attention to work, which is essential for success, becomes difficult.

‘Others’-awareness, or awareness of the emotions of others, translates into empathy. Putting oneself into the position of the other person, understanding and even feeling the emotions of the other person, caring for the feelings of the other person, and doing something concrete happily and spontaneously to express the empathy, is required as much by a young person at the beginning of the career as by the not-so-young person at the peak of his career. Further, an empathetic young person is likely to move faster towards the summit.

‘Others’-management, or managing the emotions of others, is what builds relationships. Being sensitive to the emotions of the other person enables us to behave in a way that the other person feels loved, understood, trusted and cared for. This behavior elicits reciprocal response from the other person, leading to lasting relationships that contribute to success. **Lasting relationships are difficult to build but can be destroyed very easily.** The greatest enemy of lasting relationships is anger. **In retrospect, anger invariably looks stupid and unwarranted.** The key to good relationships is to realize this before the anger is expressed. The dictum one should keep repeating to oneself is to stop and wait before acting on impulse. Take ten deep breaths before getting angry is a classic prescription;

chances are pretty high that the breaths will halt anger in its tracks. But if anger has been expressed, next best to stopping it in time is to apologize sincerely. If the other person values the relationship equally, which he should, he would respond with genuine forgiveness.

Emotional Intelligence and Spirituality

Emotional intelligence is not about being a spiritual person, or even a good person, it is primarily about being a successful person. But it is not difficult to see that emotional intelligence follows as a corollary from the spiritual worldview. The qualities that make up emotional intelligence will therefore come to a spiritual person spontaneously; he need not put in special effort to put on these characteristics for the sake of being successful.



Self-awareness implies being conscious of one's *swabhava*, and choosing the work accordingly. Doing only what is ethically right needs conscious contact with the psychic being (our deepest Self), and paying heed to its clear and unambiguous guidance.

Self-management needs self-control. Successful self-control (*samyama*) needs overcoming our negativities such as desires, greed, anger and impatience, and replacing them with their opposites: contentment, forgiveness and fortitude.

'Others'-awareness' automatically translates into empathy because in spirituality, as Maharshi Ramana said, "there are no others". At the deepest level we are all one. Therefore, a spiritual person should know, understand and feel the sorrow of another person without having to make any special effort.

'Others'-management', or building relationships becomes difficult primarily because of the separative ego, which expresses itself through feelings such as 'I am better, I am correct, I deserve more', and the intellect is pressed into service to justify these feelings. **The antidote to ego is love, which in turn is a corollary to the spiritual view of oneness.** The feeling of oneness breeds love and intimacy, which are at the root of a good and healthy relationship.

Closing thoughts

Intelligence might secure top positions in exams, it might even help in getting a good job, but it takes more than intelligence, and something other than intelligence, to get appreciation, recognition and promotions. Moreover, intelligence is a given. Neither have we any control on the intelligence with which we are born, nor can we do anything to enhance native intelligence. But the spiritual qualities that enhance emotional intelligence can be cultivated through our own efforts. Since it is emotional intelligence that is a better determinant of success than the IQ, success is largely in our own hands. Once the well-known industrialist, Adi Godrej was asked what he would expect from his children. He said that he would like them to be good, happy and successful, in that order. This brief answer shows great insight. A spiritual person is a good person. Being good makes us happy, and a good person also has a high emotional intelligence. High emotional intelligence, in turn, leads to success. Hence, it is enough to be good; happiness and success follow as by-products.

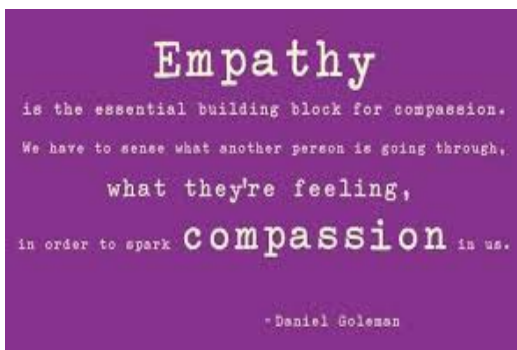
REFERENCE: 1. Daniel Goleman. *Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ*. New York: Bantam Books, 1995.

Please read the article on Emotional Intelligence by Lopa Mukherjee on the next page

Emotional Intelligence

LOPA MUKHERJEE

At the beginning of 2016, I joined a big and reputable software company. After having done many years of startups, I was happy to find that the new company had a proper training program. My earlier assignments were like being dropped in the middle of a sea without a floatation device. The training was structured in bite-sized modules with challenging questions at the end. While doing technical trainings I found a module on ethics. I was curious. I thought it would be a training on sexual harassment or on “how not to peek at someone else’s printouts”. But the large heading on the screen puzzled me. Emotional Intelligence. Wasn’t ‘Emotional Intelligence’ an oxymoron?



What I found was that *Emotional Intelligence* is the ability to read the other’s emotions. It is a kind of intelligence, since people can react better if they understand the other person’s emotions. Training can improve emotional intelligence, and it can be measured with a quotient – the *Emotional Quotient*, or EQ, just like IQ. There were statistics proving that a person with higher EQ would outdo someone with a lower EQ, both professionally, and in relationships. This is understandable, because professional life is a lot about interpersonal relations. How one sells, how one treats one’s

employees, one’s dealings with the media, one’s social image, team work, customer confidence, diplomacy... these are all people-to-people interfaces. The training also showed brain charts of people who are empathetic. In empathetic people, the “right” brain “lights up” more often than in other people. With the discovery of brain imaging technologies, thoughts and feelings have become the subject of material science. These scientific facts lure people into the domain of the not-so-obvious facts.

Conventional wisdom tells us to control the impulsive part in us and shine the guiding light of the intellect on it. The rational is the saving grace of man. Otherwise we would be savages tearing each other apart, harming ourselves in the process. Rationality was the backbone of the European Renaissance, which in turn led to the Age of Discovery and the Industrial Revolution. Until recently, rationality was supreme. Surely things have changed, because here is intelligence sharing power with emotions, and to top it all, I was learning about it from an Industry. We are bridging a big divide, we are harmonizing a great gulf – the gap between the head and the heart.

I further discovered that *Emotional Intelligence* has been around since a book with that title was written, by Daniel Goleman, a psychologist and science journalist (1). This was two decades back, in 1995. Now many American educational institutions have courses teaching it, and corporations are introducing it as part of their training program. It explained why I was taking my EQ test in my high-tech industry workplace. But how is it that this was the first time I was hearing about it? Maybe some of you are better informed. The concept though was not new to me. Its role in corporate life was. I heard of it in my school at Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry. There it was called *Vital Education*.

VITAL: WHAT AND WHY

For the readers who may not be familiar with the terminology, the mind has two aspects: feeling and thinking, corresponding to the emotional part of the being and intellect respectively. Sri Aurobindo and The Mother have used the term 'vital' to describe the emotional part of the being. They have called it vital, because not only is it essential for survival in animals (since the basic needs of food and sex are linked to it), in humans it has acquired another important dimension. Nothing great or worthwhile happens in the human world without emotions. Everything worth doing involves some difficulties, hardships, risks and obstacles, and we go through these problems only when we are passionately involved in an activity. *Bhakti*, or devotion, which is a part of every spiritual path, is also an emotion. Thus emotions are behind the greatest of human achievements. On the other hand, emotions can lead us astray and are also behind the worst of crimes. Therefore, emotions should not be rejected or killed, but they need to be regulated, purified and educated. Education of the vital aims at transformation of the emotional part of the being so that it is illuminated by the Light of our divine essence (the psychic being). The psychic being guides us towards choices that are based on loving, giving, caring and sharing. These choices bring immense joy and lasting mental peace. As the vital gets transformed, it realizes that the joy of giving and sharing feels much better than the happiness that may come from fleeting sensory pleasures. This realization makes the vital a collaborator of the psychic being. In short, education of the vital transforms the vital, and transformation of the vital makes the person more loving and compassionate. And, this does not involve giving up happiness. It does not involve suppression of emotions. It involves opting for a higher version of happiness than that which may tempt raw, unrefined, uneducated emotions.

So, psychologists are catching up with the notions The Mother and Sri Aurobindo taught a hundred years back. The vital needs to be refined and given scope to enlarge. It is an ally, helps us concentrate, keeps us healthy, helps us excel in studies, brings love in social life and harmony at work. At the end, it makes us better human beings. The Emotional Intelligence program teaches compassion – compassionate listening, compassionate parenting, compassionate leadership. It teaches about social harmony, conflict resolution, and meditation. Corporate philanthropy is one of its fruits. Industry leaders who are compassionate are kinder to their customers, they give back to the community, they are more conscious of the environment. **And they profit more too.** Here is the rationale: employees are treated well. Happier employees deliver better products, and quit less. Better products bring higher sales. Customers are happier. It is a win-win situation for all. **Happiness increases when it is shared.**

Google gives grants to innovators, Facebook and Salesforce have started hospitals, Microsoft Foundation reaches out to the poor in Asia and Africa. The employees of these companies volunteer in their community – from constructing homes to installing software. These four companies are just some of the bigger givers. Corporate philanthropy is the new brand name. And it is about time, we would think, the biggest polluters should begin repairing the earth. The biggest takers can be the biggest givers. Those with the loudest voices should speak out against injustice. When the CEOs of philanthropic companies speak out against a social issue such as racism or gender inequality, their opinions spread speedily around the world, and become ideas that translate into action. And all this is happening. Although there are a lot of companies for whom the bottom-line is still the bank balance, and aggressive businessmen exist, their numbers are shrinking. True change is happening.

The Mother was five years old when she started training herself in Emotional Intelligence. The Mother was not fortunate enough to have parents to guide her, but she was an extraordinarily awakened child. After a quarrel with her friends, she used to sit on a stool alone in a room and ponder. She reasoned thus: “Why am I feeling bad? It was the others who were mean. It is they who should feel bad”. And then she felt better. She had become so strong emotionally that when she forbade someone they obeyed her. She ordered her father to stop spanking her brother when she was just a child. Her father immediately stopped, and never again beat his son. In the same way she put school bullies in their place. She taught a boy who used to fly into a temper, that every time he had the urge, he should stuff his hands in his pockets and count to ten.

Self-help gurus articulate it this way now – take deep breaths, use the SOCS method – *What is the Situation? What are the Options? What are the Consequences to the above mentioned Options? And what one Solution will you choose?* Daniel Goleman speaks about a similar experiment conducted by Walter Mischel in 1990. Kindergarten kids were brought in a room which had some sweet treats. The kids were told that they could have one sweet whenever they wanted, but if they waited till the instructor returned, they would get two sweets. The instructor left the room and a camera recorded what happened in the room. In the next 15 minutes, some kids gave in and ate one sweet. Some managed to distract themselves away from the treats. The kids were tracked through their schooling years and into their personal and work life. It turned out the kids who could delay gratification were consistently better performers in adult life. ‘Delaying gratification’ is the same thing as ‘controlling impulses’. In the Integral schools that have been inspired by The Mother’s teachings these values are taught early on. And childhood is the right time to teach, before the ego jumps in and claims a certain habit as its defining marker. Daniel Goleman has subsequently written on *Social Intelligence*, *Primal Leadership* and *Ecological Intelligence*, all topics stemming from compassion.

The act of being conscious of others around us, of being able to empathize with them, feeling part of a whole... were deeply ingrained in the Hindu tradition. In the Upanishads it is said you can be free of fear and delusion when you realize everything is You. You can truly love when you realize it’s all the same Self. In other religions too there are variations of the Golden Rule and the parable of the Good Samaritan. In native American cultures there was no concept of private property. The pre-digital era had fables, fairy tales, panchatantras, puranas to teach Good and Evil to children. Imagine if these same tender brains are given war videogames, what kind of monsters they will grow up to be! I am glad schools have an emotional literacy program, sometimes called Self-Awareness. Parents are also coached, which I think is an important step. While growing up our handbook was The Mother’s *Ideal Child*. There is also a handbook *Ideal Parent*. It makes me smile to see how the antipodes are catching up, because the Golden Light is working, despite all.

This year when a big technology company had its annual conference, which attracts a million customers to San Francisco, one day out of the four days was dedicated to Compassion. The speakers ranged from entrepreneurs to monks, world leaders whose talks were on the world wide web. There was Leila Janah, who has started a company called Sama to bring equality to impoverished people. She has brought a slice of the digital economy to the Africans who were previously wading through gutters to collect metals they sold to recycling firms. There was Melinda Gates whose Foundation, along with her husband Bill Gates, the founder of Microsoft, has touched millions of lives in the Third World. There was Rich Fernandez who quit Google and started *Wisdom Labs*, which teaches compassionate leadership to businesses. There was the filmmaker, Marc J. Francis, who is making a film on the Buddhist teacher, Thich Nhat Hanh, called ‘Walk with Me’.

There were the nuns and monks of Thich Nhat Hanh's monastery who brought mindfulness talks and chants to the busy conference. There were two disciples of Neem Karoli Baba –Dr Larry Brilliant and Dr Daniel Goleman. Dr Brilliant started by eradicating smallpox in India and in the world, then gave eyesight to millions. Now he works in the Google Foundation. There was the pediatrician Nadine Burke Harris, who is trying to bring awareness in society on “Adverse Childhood Experiences”. Data shows childhood abuse or trauma maims a person for life. These children are more prone to eating disorders, depression, poor immune system, lung and heart diseases, asthma, attention deficit disorders. They become prey to alcohol, drugs, guns, and violence. There was Dr Mark Dybul of Global Fund, an organization that cures epidemics. He said the real epidemics were not due to germs; they were because large portions of the human population are ignored, even hated. They are squeezed into ghettos with poor hygiene and nutrition. Reminds us of war refugees? Yet these are people who live in our cities. Unless we welcome, love and embrace them, our own existence will remain precarious. They will get us, as terrorists or as carriers of viruses.

Globalization does not mean reaching distant markets, alone. The colonists did it centuries ago. It is being able to share with people in distant places. ‘Distant places’ does not mean distant geographical lands. These are the places we ignore, like those ‘shadows’ in our neighborhood. If you care enough, enough people will be saved. Within a month of the conference we had an in-office training called ‘Press Pause’: learning to wait before reacting. *Wisdom Labs* taught us about Emotional Intelligence, Google's Chade-Meng Tan spoke about compassion and agape, which means selfless love. There were meditation teachers who guided us into mindfulness meditations.

I believe there is reason to hope and be optimistic. That these leaders are speaking spiritual truths of Oneness, is a positive sign. That a technology conference devoted so much time and money to compassion, is another hopeful sign. That so many people are working as volunteers, so many companies are giving away free software, so many institutions are uploading educational lectures on the web... are all signs of the benevolent force in action. And all these signs came to me with my corporate training. The first page of the training material had this quote from the CEO, Marc Benioff – “The business of business is to improve the state of the world”. The new creation, of which The Mother and Sri Aurobindo assured us, is coming. The world is not destined to remain forever a place characterized by misery and suffering.

REFERENCE:

1. Daniel Goleman. *Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ*. New York: Bantam Books, 1995.

Please see also the related editorial, 'The Secret of Success', on page 3

Of all education, the education of the vital is perhaps the most important and the most indispensable. ... With the collaboration of the vital no realisation seems impossible, no transformation impracticable.

THE MOTHER

Surrender

SHISHU

Surrender means a free total giving with all the delight of the giving; there is no sense of sacrifice in it. If you have the slightest feeling that you are making a sacrifice, then it is no longer surrender.

-THE MOTHER



Surrender is one of the pillars of the spiritual path, but it can be easily misinterpreted to justify inactivity and laziness. Therefore, it is important to understand whom to surrender to, and what to surrender. Surrender does not imply surrender to evil or injustice. Surrender implies only surrender to the Divine. Regarding what to surrender, Sri Aurobindo once said that when people are told to surrender, generally the first thing that they surrender is commonsense! What we should surrender is personal will, subordinating it to the divine will. The fear commonly expressed is, what will be left of me if I surrender completely to the divine will. The divine will is not something imposed on me from outside. The Divine is also within me, and the Divine within speaks if I care to hear. Surrender only means that I should not only hear but also listen to what the voice of the Divine emanating from my deepest Self says. I should act on this voice, rather than the voice of the emotional or the intellectual part of the being if either of these is in conflict with that most authentic of all my voices. Subordinating personal will to the divine will thus translates into subordinating the inferior parts of my being to the Best in me, or subordinating my lower nature to my highest nature.

A widely quoted verse of the *Gita* talks about surrendering the fruit of our actions (2:47). This should make us conscious of the imperfect control we have over the outcome. But that does not mean that we need not act at all, or do what we do half-heartedly because the outcome is not in our hands anyway. The *Gita* tells Arjuna to shun not even the war that it was his duty to fight. We should also not do what we do half-heartedly because, in the spirit of the *Gita*, the action should also be surrendered, or offered, to the Divine (3:30), and for that it should be fit to be surrendered. It will become fit to be surrendered only if we put our heart and soul into the work. Thus, like Arjuna, we should fight evil and injustice, and put our heart and soul into the work. However, making the work fit to be offered involves one more qualification. Arjuna is told to fight without hating the Kauravas (The *Gita*, 18:23). Thus, our fight against evil and injustice should also be free of hatred for anyone. As Mahatma Gandhi said, we should hate evil, not the evildoer.

Surrender is a corollary to knowledge or devotion, or both. Knowledge of the glory of the Divine leads to devotion and surrender. Devotion leads to spontaneous surrender, and devotion and surrender both get deeper as the devotee also acquires knowledge. In the *Gita*, devotion and surrender are a corollary to knowledge that Sri Krishna imparts to Arjuna by giving him the divine vision (divya chakshu). The founder of Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch, Shri Surendra Nath, in his youth remarked humorously that his very name was ‘surrender not’. And as a freedom fighter, he never surrendered to the authority of the British rulers. But after he became a devotee, he ended up surrendering completely to the Mother. Complete surrender is a process, not an event.

We get a glimpse of the process from the way the *Gita* develops its argument. To start with, Arjuna is asked to surrender only the fruit of the action (2:47). Then he is asked to surrender not only the fruit but also the doership (3:27, 11:33). Finally he is asked to surrender everything, and is told that if he surrenders completely, he may forget about all guidelines of good conduct (18:66). This verse, which comes towards the end of the *Gita*, can be easily misinterpreted. A person may say that he has surrendered completely to the Divine, and therefore he need not follow any ethical or moral code. But total surrender to the Divine is not easy. It is so easy to be swayed by the emotions or the arguments of the intellect in favour of the voice of the Divine within. We cannot cater to personal whims coming from the inferior and superficial parts of the being, violate moral codes, and then take shelter under the broad umbrella of surrender. If we have truly surrendered to the Divine completely, we will listen only and always to the voice of the Divine within. Only then are we exempt from the usual codes of conduct, because then we will in any case be doing better than any code of conduct imposed on us. But since complete surrender comes at the end of a long process, till we reach the qualifying point, it is better to follow a code of conduct. The verse about forgetting codes of conduct comes only towards the end of the *Gita*, which means that we qualify for the exemption only if we have brought into our lives everything that has been said in the preceding seventeen chapters.

In our erratic and unpredictable world, surrender to the Divine is a potent and infallible prescription, yet to be improved upon, that saves us from a lot of avoidable stress. Surrender to the Divine is only an acknowledgement of the fact that we are feeble and fallible creatures, mere puppets in the hands of the Divine, and possess only an illusory free will, which has also been planted in us by the Divine. Therefore, true surrender does not belittle us; rather, it enlarges us by making us think and act from a wider, deeper and higher level of consciousness.

First published as a blog on 'The Speaking Tree' website on 14 Sep 2012 under the title 'Giving In'.

A reader, Shri Ashok Kumar Sethi, had requested for articles on Aspiration, Rejection and Surrender, the three pillars of sadhana in integral yoga. This article is the last in the series. Please see the January and February issues of 'The Call Beyond' for articles on Aspiration and Rejection.

Sincere Prayer of a Sincere Devotee

Throughout my life, Sweet Mother,

You have been someone I could look up to and depend on in countless ways.

You have been my friend, someone I could laugh with, someone I could cry with, someone I could share everything with, someone who has always cared for me.

You have been my teacher, and have helped me grow. You have shown me how to be strong and honest and good by being all this yourself.

twenty five years ago

Sri K.D. Sethna: A Man With a Divine Touch

(An Interview by Sukhendu Roy) Continued from the previous issue

Sri K.D. Sethna (1904 - 2011), popularly known as Amal Kiran, was one the foremost and very learned disciples of Sri Aurobindo. A poet, writer and cultural critic, he published more than 40 books.



Q: People are searching for a clue to life's mystery. Could a spiritual Guru help them? What would you say about your life in the Ashram?

*A: People in general are not inclined to look for a Guru. If they look for a Guru, they would like a Guru who would benefit them in their material life. The call for the spiritual life is very rare and that life is not an easy thing. People think it is leaving everything and all cares are gone, you will be troubled no more. In the spiritual life we are trying to swim upstream and that is quite a difficult job. Specially, at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram here you cannot just retire into a room and do your *sadhana*. We have to come out and mix with people. All kinds of people are here. This is a laboratory. Not only intellectuals and highly developed people live here but also people with an ordinary mental capacity. We have to interact with people of different types and that is not very easy. It is like the life outside but on a more concentrated scale.*

Here, if you do not like somebody you cannot run away from him; you have to come in contact with him again and again. The problem that is in you has to be worked out. So life in the Ashram is much more complex than the outside life. Our life is not one of seclusion. We have to be active and in our activities we have to manifest the spiritual consciousness. Whatever is within has to be worked out outside. Sri Aurobindo once wrote, "I have no intention of giving my sanction to a new edition of the old fiasco." The old fiasco means: when you mediate you go within, you feel very fine, uplifted, but when you come out of your meditation and mix with people you are the same old person. No real change has taken place. Sri Aurobindo does not want that. The Mother once gave the example of a man who was very good at meditation. He could meditate hours on end. All that was very fine and uplifting. But once when he was in deep meditation somebody came and knocked at his door. He got up, opened the door and said, "You damn fool, don't you realise what I am doing? How dare you disturb my *Samadhi*?" The Mother remarked that his meditation was worth nothing. The outer life and the inner life have to be in harmony: the same thing manifested in two ways. That is the yoga we are trying to do here.

This is the yoga of life's transformation, that is why it is difficult. But at the same time the *Guru's* grace is very great. When I came here, Purani once told me, "I have no desire to look at the Himalayas after seeing Sri Aurobindo! He is so grand."

Sometimes I would go to the Mother with a few queries of my own, but as soon as I would face her all the problems would get automatically dissolved. You won't know what to ask her. Everything seemed to be all right. Still, life is difficult because the inner and the outer harmonization has to take place. When you read Sri Aurobindo's books and you hear the Mother's talks and receive Sri Aurobindo's letters, theoretically a lot of problems are solved. You know what is the end of life; you know how evolution has taken place and where it is heading to; what is it that survives after death, life after life. All that becomes clear to you, of course mentally. When you have a spiritual experience you begin to know who exactly you are and how the Divine is within you all the time, how the soul in you is a part of the Divine. But what is the soul? The experience I have told you about was of a self-existent bliss. If you have something of that experience then you are free from anxiety, from any kind of animosity and you do things according to the inner guidance. At the same time you will have to practice a kind of equanimity. You remain undisturbed in the midst of everything. Somebody says some harsh word, but there is no reaction. You do not react to anything. That is part of this yoga.

Excerpts from *The Call Beyond*, Vol. 17, No. 1, 1992, p. 31
(To be continued)

hundred years ago

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

Contagious Consciousness*



Thou didst fill my being with so complete, so intense a love and beauty and joy that it seemed impossible to me that this would not be communicated. It was like a glowing hearth whence the breath of thought wafted far many sparks which, entering the secrecy of men's hearts, kindled other similar fires, fires of Thy divine Love, O Lord, that love which impels and draws all human beings irresistibly to Thee. O my sweet Lord, grant that this may not be only a vision of my enrapt consciousness, but indeed a reality, effectively transforming all beings and things.

Grant that this love, this beauty and joy which flood all my being that is hardly strong enough to bear their intensity, may also flood the consciousness of all those I have seen, all those I have thought of and all those whom I have never thought of or seen... Grant that all may awake to the consciousness of Thy infinite Bliss!

O my sweet Lord, fill their hearts with joy, love and beauty.

THE MOTHER (In *Prayers and Meditations*, prayer dated 23 January, 1917)

*Title given by the editor

The Antenna That Receives Itself*

O Radiant Love who fillest all my being and makest it festive, art Thou received, art Thou given? Nobody can say, for Thou receivest Thy own self and givest Thyself to Thyself, being sovereignly active and receptive, at once in all things, in every being.

THE MOTHER (In *Prayers and Meditations*, prayer dated 25 January, 1917)

**Title given by the editor*

The Synthesis of Yoga

Oneness

When, then, by the withdrawal of the centre of consciousness from identification with the mind, life and body, one has discovered one's true self, discovered the oneness of that self with the pure, silent, immutable Brahman, discovered in the immutable, in the Akshara Brahman, that by which the individual being escapes from his own personality into the impersonal, the first movement of the Path of Knowledge has been completed. ... When on the other hand, having attained to the freedom and the silence and the peace, we resume possession by the cosmic consciousness of the active as well as the silent Brahman and can securely live in the divine freedom as well as rest in it, we have completed the second movement of the Path by which the integrality of self-knowledge becomes the station of the liberated soul. ...

Sachchidananda is one in Himself in whatever status or whatever plane of existence. We have to see him as one Existence, Being gathered in itself and Being displayed in all existences; as one Consciousness concentrated in the unity of its existence, extended in universal nature and many centred in innumerable beings; one Force static in its repose of self-gathered consciousness and dynamic in its activity of extended consciousness; one Delight blissfully aware of its featureless infinity and blissfully aware of all feature and force and forms as itself; one creative knowledge and governing Will, supramental, originative and determinative of all minds, lives and bodies; one Mind containing all mental beings and constituting all their mental activities; one Life active in all beings and generative of their vital activities; one substance constituting all forms and objects as the visible and sensible mould in which mind and life manifest and act just as one pure existence is that ether in which all Conscious-Force and Delight exist unified and find themselves variously. For these are the seven principles of the manifest being of Sachchidananda.

The integral Yoga of knowledge has to recognize the double nature of this manifestation, – for there is the higher nature of Sachchidananda in which He is found and the lower nature of mind, life and body in which He is veiled, – and to reconcile and unite the two in the oneness of the illumined realisation. We have not to leave them separate so that we live a sort of double life, spiritual within or above, mental and material in our active and earthly living; we have to re-view and remould the lower living in the light, force and joy of the higher reality. We have to realise Matter as a sense-created mould of Spirit, a vehicle for all manifestation of the light, force and joy of Sachchidananda in the highest conditions of terrestrial being and activity. We have similarly to change our sensational and emotional mentality into a play of the divine Love and universal Delight; and we have to surcharge the intellect which seeks to know and will in us the light of the divine Knowledge-Will until it is transformed into a figure of higher and sublime activity.



By the way of this integral knowledge we arrive at the unity of the aims set before themselves by the three paths of knowledge, works and devotion. Knowledge aims at the realisation of true self-existence, works at the realisation of the divine Conscious-Will which secretly governs all works, devotion at the realisation of the Bliss which enjoys all the Lover of all beings and all existences, – Sat, Chit-Tapas and Ananda. Each therefore aims at possessing Sachchidananda through one or other aspect of his triune divine nature. By knowledge we arrive always at our true eternal, immutable being, the self-existent which every “I” in the universe obscurely represents, and we abrogate difference in the great realisation, So Aham, I am He, while we arrive also at our identity with all our beings.

Thus by the integral knowledge we unify all things in the One. We take up all the chords of the universal music, strains sweet or discordant, luminous in their suggestion or obscure, powerful or faint, heard or suppressed, and find them all changed or reconciled in the indivisible harmony of Sachchidananda. The knowledge brings also the Power and the Joy. “How shall he be deluded, whence shall he have sorrow who sees everywhere the Oneness?”

SRI AUROBINDO (In the *Arya*, Vol. 3, No. 8, 15 March 1917)

humour

“My child does not do much of yoga, but he is very good at one asana: *viprita karani* (literally, doing the opposite). He does just the opposite of what you tell him to do”, said the exasperated mother of a teenager to her friend.

Her friend said, “Then it must be very easy to make him do anything. Just tell him to do the opposite of what you want him to do”.

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.

Try to take pleasure in all you do, but never do anything for the sake of pleasure.

THE MOTHER

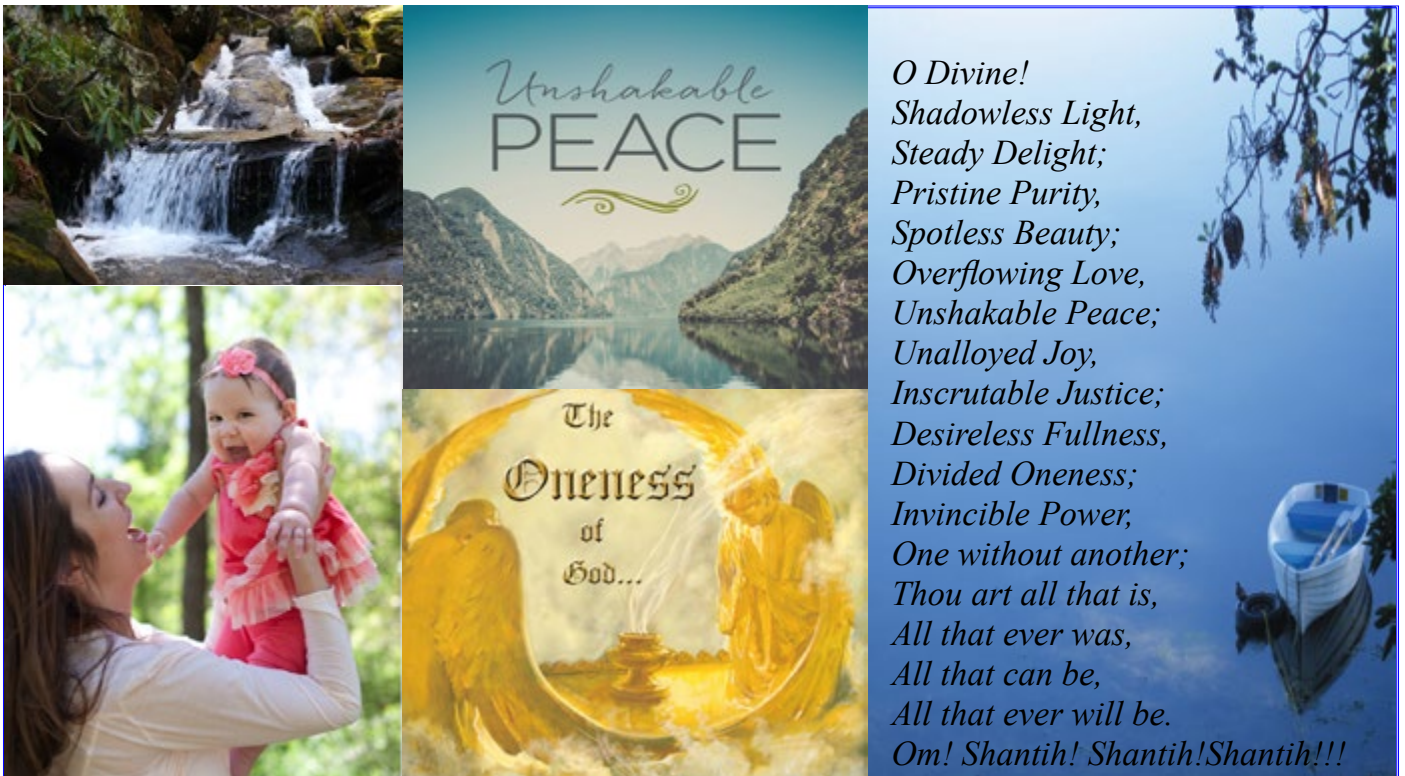
poetry

Delightful Divine

DHVANI

... I do not know whether this chant goes from me to Thee or comes from Thee to me or whether Thou and I and the entire universe are this marvelous chant of which I have just become conscious.

THE MOTHER (*'Prayers and Meditations'*, prayer dated 23 July 1913)



appreciations

Tributes to Karuna Didi

Dear Tara,

Just now got the news that Karunadi has reached the Mother.

On 17th Rangamma phoned and Karunadi also spoke but the lines were not clear. I could only shout how her phone call was a blessing directly from the Mother to reassure me on that difficult day.

A flood of memories swirl around me -- at Delhi, at Naini Tal, at Kurja at Thanjavur, and in this house. She sang soulfully at the Samadhi of Saint Tyagaraja when I took her there: and she sang just the line Rama Rama and the priest who sat and listened asked me: "Who is this royal lady? This is truly the music of the Divine."

These withdrawals do shake me up as never before... and yet make me feel humble and thankful ...I have had the opportunity of all this because of the Delhi Ashram. I can write no more.

Yours

Prema (Nandakumar)

(in an e-mail dated 26 Jan 2017)

Dear Tara didi,

I am not very good at expressing my feelings in writing. So deeply saddened at Karuna didi's going. One memory I have of Karuna Didi was her distinctive flowery handwriting. So beautiful like a work of art.

With love

Bhuvana

(in an e-mail dated 26 January 2017)

Dear Tara Didi,

It was very sad to hear from Bhuvana that Karuna Didi is no more.

My earliest memory of Karuna didi dates back to when I was about five when my grandparents took me to live with them in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in Delhi. Karuna Didi and Nibha Didi looked after me. I must have been often such a troublesome child, and they used to placate me by taking me out and getting me ice cream and such things. I was a fussy eater and I remember clearly even today didi singing, "*Ahahahaanaa, tum nahin khaayaa khaanaa*". So clear I can hear her even today!

I remember singing along with her doing *riyaz* and others around quite amazed that I was able to keep up with her. But sadly I never continued learning music properly. Glad that my daughter Mythili has developed interest. I remember we did a musical play called *pariyon kee khoj mein*. I learnt every part but remember only one small bit today: *Titlee raanee, hamein batao, pariyan rahtee kiskee ore. Pariyan meree sang saheeli, khela kartee uskee ore rukh kar khoj karnaa bhaiyaa ...*

She used to write for Raja Bhaiyaa, a Hindi magazine for children under the pen name 'Anna Didi'. I remember how impressed my friend Asha Pandey was when she heard that I knew Anna Didi! This was probably when I was in the 6th standard.

She gave me a book – a collection of songs – and I used it extensively to sing to Mythili when she was small. I knew many of the songs from the book, thanks to Didi (and later amma who used to sing them at home at satsang).

She visited us in Anna Nagar. She and Rangamma came. She was barely able to walk but insisted on coming and seeing me. I still have the bottle of sandal perfume that she gave me. Use it very very sparingly – just a drop is so refreshing. Of course we met last in Delhi during grandfather's centenary when we had so much ice cream in Faquir Kutir.

Ahana

(in an e-mail dated 26 January 2017)

Dear Family,

Her music and her beautiful spirit is now true to the kindred points of heaven, her new home .

As one grieves for a personal community loss, there is yet a sense of peace that she is one with her eternal rhythm .

Ironically this day of 26th January is also the anniversary of Purna Swaraj Diwas of 1930 (the year Karuna Didi was born)

Love,

Anju

(in an e-mail dated 26 January 2017)

From Parent Circle, Chennai

Dear Dr Ramesh Bijlani,

Thank you for your association and for being part of Parent Circle's journey. Together, we are empowering parents to raise happy and successful children through holistic parenting solutions!

We appreciate the credibility and value you bring to each of your contribution. It is our core belief that your knowledge will benefit parents by educating, creating awareness and providing solutions.

It has been a delight to work with you and we look forward to your continuous support in 2017 and the coming years too!

Wish you a very Happy New Year!

Barnali

(in an e-mail dated 3 January 2017)

From a Mother's Blossom

Dear Tara-didi,

I want to thank you for the support and guidance you have provided me over the years related to work in the Ashram. In addition to the things that I am doing in the ashram which I don't think is necessary to enumerate here, we are starting our new group tomorrow.

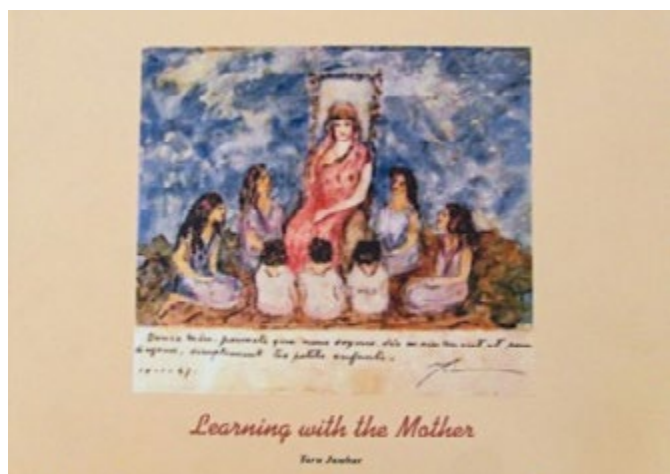
I would like to call this new group "Software development Group or Department". In addition to developing existing software for the Tapasya and Accounts I hope that we can do a lot more software development for other groups/departments in the Ashram. For the first time in the ashram, I will start teaching software development and training to a new person who will eventually help me in the process of software development. There are very few girls with that background who have the possibility to go into software development industry because of the level of complexity involved in software development and lack of right guidance. Thank you for providing this opportunity for her. She probably does not realise this yet but I hope will realise one day what the Ashram is doing for her.

With Love,

Ravi (Narula)

(in an e-mail dated 8 January 2017)

Feedback on Learning With The Mother



Dear Tara di,

Satya gave me a copy of your above mentioned book. It is very absorbing, must read it again. It is indeed a great act of Grace that you were able to receive so much and achieve so much in a life time.

Thanking you and with regards,

J. Dayanand

Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry

(in an e-mail dated 7 February 2017)

Feedback from South Asian University, New Delhi

Dear Dr. Bijlani,

Thank you for providing a wonderful and spiritually enhancing talk. We all enjoyed listening to it and I hope you got the positive vibes during your presence here. The talk was lucid and very practical for a scientific audience. I personally thank you for having accepted to deliver the talk. If there were any shortcomings, I hope you would excuse them.

I hope there will be more chances in the future to interact and listen to you,

Kind regards,

Ravi

(Ravi Shankar Akundi)

South Asian University, New Delhi

(in an e-mail dated 27 January 2017)

Dear Ramesh,

It was great to have you here for a talk.

It is important to expose students to such thoughts. Generally, science students do not read anything except in their field. Your talk was very useful. I particularly enjoyed it.

Rajiv (Saxena)

Faculty of Life Sciences and Biotechnology

South Asian University, New Delhi

(in an e-mail dated 30 January 2017)



notice board

Forthcoming events

Commemorating Karuna Didi's Arrival in the Ashram on 20 March 1966

Monday, 20 March 2017

7 am	Invocation by Joan Allekotte	Meditation Hall
3.30 pm	Musical offering by students	Meditation Hall
6.30 pm	Musical offering by Joan Allekotte and team	Meditation Hall

Observing Karuna Didi's 87th Birthday

Friday, 24 March 2017

7 am	Invocation by Joan Allekotte	Meditation Hall
8.30 am	Havan	Chacha ji's Samadhi
9.30 am	Photo exhibition on Karuna Didi	Samadhi Lawns

6.30 pm **BHAJAN SANDHYA**

Artistes: Dr. Nirmal Pandey, senior music teacher, Birla Vidya Niketan, who will be accompanied by Shri Ravi Shanker Sharma on the Harmonium, Shri Ajay Verma on the Tabla, and Smt. Pushpa Pandey on the Tanpura

Venue: MEDITATION HALL of Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch
(entry through Gate no. 6, opposite Sarvodaya enclave)

Commemorating The Mother's first arrival in Pondicherry on 29 March 1914

Wednesday, 29 March 2017

7 am	Invocation by Srila Didi	Venue: Meditation Hall
6.15 pm	Lights of Aspiration	Samadhi Lawns
6.30 pm	An evening of soulful Ragas by Dr. Pandit Naresh Kumar Malhotra, Who will be accompanied by Dr. Vinaya Mishra on the Harmonium and Sri Sukanta Bajpayee on the Tabla	

Venue: MEDITATION HALL of Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch
(entry through Gate no. 6, opposite Sarvodaya enclave)

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Feedback

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