

The Call Beyond





Highlights

Evolution of Personal Reflections on “Nothing can be Taught” ... Page 6

The Only Truly Effective Attitude Page 8

Maturation of the Spiritual Impulse Page 9



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Contents

Editorial

- *Nationalism Plus* 4

Article

- *Evolution of Personal Reflections on “Nothing can be Taught”* 6

Words of the Mother

- *The Only Truly Effective Attitude* 8

Words of the Master

- *Maturation of the Spiritual Impulse* 9

Twenty-five years ago

- *The Majesty of Mountains* 10

Poetry

- *Silence* 11

May I Help You

- *Instant Justice?* 12

Appreciations

- *Feedback and Encouraging Words* 13

Notice Board

- *Contact us* 15



Nationalism Plus

Love has layers, and so has loyalty. A lover of the planet earth can have a special corner in his heart for the country in which he was born. **Love for one's country is patriotism; if the patriotism is based on an ideology, it becomes nationalism; if the nationalism is coupled with awareness of something unique that one's country can offer to the rest of the world, nationalism merges seamlessly with internationalism.** That is the type of nationalism Sri Aurobindo adopted and practised. What India can offer to the rest of the world is timeless spiritual wisdom that gives us the foundation for a meaningful life which is full of love, peace and fulfilment. The materially saturated but spiritually starved West has been receiving that wisdom with increasing vigour for about a hundred years. From the spiritual angle, we are all diverse manifestations of the one Divine. However, it is only the expression that is diverse, not the essence. Hence, spiritual wisdom can create a sense of fraternity, a sense of universal brotherhood and sisterhood, on which can be founded global unity on the psychological plane. The outer expression of a sense of psychological unity can be a World Government. The World Government based on psychological unity will be very different from the empires of the past, which were based on military conquest, and tried to impose the conqueror's culture on the colonies in order to achieve uniformity. **It was lack of psychological unity and futile attempts at achieving uniformity that were the downfall of all empires.** The World Government based on psychological unity will respect diversity. It will not even try to impose uniformity. Thus, in Sri Aurobindo's vision, expounded at length in his work titled 'The Ideal of Human Unity', Indian nationalism was the fountainhead of internationalism, and for this to happen, an independent India was a pre-requisite. Thus, he wanted India to be free so that it could play its legitimate



role in the world. **Only a free country can be a great country, and only a great country counts in the world.** As Sri Aurobindo said in his Uttarpara speech in 1909, “She [India] does not rise as other countries do, for self or when she is strong, to trample on the weak. She is rising to shed the eternal light entrusted to her over the world. India has always existed for humanity and not for herself and it is for humanity and not for herself that she must be great.” Sri Aurobindo’s ideas were rooted in a deep and discerning contact with what the West had to offer to the world as well as with what India could. But unfortunately, what India had to offer had been eclipsed by the glitter and glamour of the West. Sri Aurobindo had studied and reflected upon the history and culture of both the West and the East for about fourteen years each. Having done that, his approach as an Indian was neither that of uncritical transplantation nor that of outright rejection, but one of critical assimilation of inputs from the West. Like Gandhiji, he kept his windows open to ideas from everywhere but refused to be blown off his feet. This has been the Indian tradition since the Vedic times: “Let noble thoughts come to us from every side (*Rigveda*, 1.89.1).” India’s nationalism has never stopped India from treating the world as one family (*vasudhaiva kutumbakam*), which it once again did very recently when it made available chloroquine and corona vaccine to the world.

Published earlier in the ‘Speaking’ Tree column of ‘The Times of India’. Available on: <https://www.speakingtree.in/article/can-nationalism-treat-the-world-as-one-family>

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

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



Evolution of Personal Reflections on “Nothing can be Taught”

Sanjeev Ranganathan

I have chosen to reflect upon my interpretation, at different times as a teacher, of Sri Aurobindo’s statement that “The first principle of true teaching is that nothing can be taught.”

When I started teaching I wanted to be a good teacher. I planned my classes, used many resources and Teaching Learning Material (TLM), had many classes with activities, attempted to open the minds of children, and took a lot of notes. A workshop called “Stewardship for New Emergence” helped me notice my growth as a teacher and capture the fleeting insights – it helped me be more patient and capable of listening to children. **At this time, I interpreted the first principle of teaching as referring to the learning I was going through so as to become a better teacher and a better person through my experience.** I took the principle to refer to spiritual experiences that are our own. For example, in a typical class I would teach different points of view, or look at something to support diversity or handle misconceptions, and the children would work with TLM and at times the computer.

As I continued working with children, I noticed that my best classes were not the ones I prepared the most. Some classes had a flow and some, in spite of planning (and a few because of much planning) were hard. An almost identical incident or comment from children that derailed one class would have no impact in another. I noticed that this had less to do with the environment around me or what the children experienced at home and more to do with the environment I was carrying with me to the classroom, and who I was being while I was in the class. **I also noticed children were learning more when I was instructing less.** Practically, this led to my classes getting



more activity-based, with much peer learning, and less lecturing. I often used computers with children, creating projects that help learn the material. I read up on constructivist theory and learned that each child (and adult) builds their own knowledge; I only needed to create an environment to let learning happen. **I noticed that my 'I have a PhD and can show other ways of doing this' ego was coming in the way of learning.** Then I was able to consciously make the choice to let go of 'teaching', and allow opportunities for learning flourish. My interpretation of Sri Aurobindo's first principle was then that it also applies to practical learning through a constructivist approach.

Some time has passed since then, and I no longer see spiritual growth and practical learning as two distinct applications of the first principle of true teaching. **It appears that every true learning is with the engagement of our entire being, and is spiritual, and helps us follow our core.** Now the environment I am working to create at STEM Land is one where sessions with children are about self-discovery. They are not about procedures or underlying concepts, but about the children's experience. The environment offers choice and looks to the children to take responsibility for their learning. I do instruct, and the children do work on projects, but this learning happens when the need comes up from the children.

Sanjeev moved to Auroville in June 2013 to work on educational initiatives. He can be reached at sanjeev.r@auroville.org.in

Source: http://wiki.auroville.org.in/wiki/Teachers%27_reflections

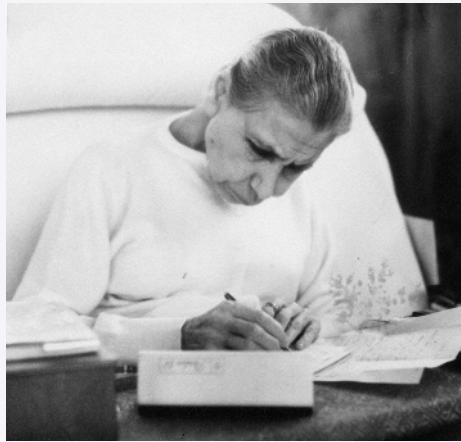


The idea of helping others is a subtle form of the ego. It is only the Divine Force that can help. One can be its instrument, but you should first learn to be a fit and egoless instrument

-Sri Aurobindo (CWSA Vol 31, Letters on Yoga - IV, p 318)



The Only Truly Effective Attitude



Everyone can gauge, from the resistance he meets in his own being, the tremendous resistance which the world opposes to the work of the Grace.

And it is only when one understands that all external things, all mental constructions, all material efforts are vain, futile, if they are not entirely consecrated to this Light and Force from above, to this Truth which is trying to express itself, that one is ready to make decisive progress. So the only truly effective attitude is a perfect, total, fervent giving of our being to That which is above us and which alone has the power to change everything.

When you open to the Spirit within you it brings you a first foretaste of that higher life which alone is worth living, then comes the will to rise to that, the hope of reaching it, the certitude that this is possible, and finally the strength to make the necessary effort and the resolution to go to the very end.

First one must wake up, then one can conquer.

The Mother ('The Great Adventure', p. 58)

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>



Maturation of the Spiritual Impulse



Our first absorbing impulse when we become inwardly aware of something entirely beyond what we now are and know and are powerfully attracted to it, is to get away from the present actuality and dwell in that higher reality altogether.

The extreme form of this attraction when we are drawn to the supreme Existence and the infinite Ananda is the condemnation of the lower and the finite as an illusion and an aspiration to *Nirvana* in the beyond, — the passion for dissolution, immersion, extinction in the Spirit. But the real dissolution, the true nirvana is the release of all that is bindingly characteristic of the lower into the larger being of the Higher, the conscious possession of the living symbol by the living Real. We discover in the end that not only is that higher Reality the cause of all the rest, not only it embraces and exists in all the rest, but as more and more we possess it, all this rest is transformed in our soul-experience into a superior value and becomes the means of a richer expression of the Real, a more many-sided communion with the Infinite, a larger ascent to the Supreme. Finally, we get close to the absolute and its supreme values which are the absolutes of all things. We lose the passion for release, *mumukshutva*, which till then actuated us, because we are now intimately near to that which is ever free, that which is neither attracted into attachment by what binds us now nor afraid of what to us seems to be bondage. It is only by the loss of the bound soul's exclusive passion for its freedom that there can come an absolute liberation of our nature.

(Sri Aurobindo: CWSA Vol. 23-24, 'The Synthesis of Yoga', pp. 507-508)

Title added by the editor



The Majesty of Mountains



*Tall and majestic, looming over all,
Behind whom the sun gives the morning call.
Their magnificence gives them their superiority,
Dwarfing us all with their authority.
Orange and gleaming in the evening sunlight,
Behind them the sun goes to sleep for the night.
Through them, the river flows in all innocence,
Awesome, yet not proud of their magnificence.
At their height, at the feet of God, they have His blessing,
Yet the secret of their goodness, they don't believe in revealing.
But in all their height and greatness and majesty,
They give us another boon--the message of modesty.*

R. Srivaths

Class VIII-A, The Mother's International School

Reproduced from 'The Call Beyond', Vol. 23, No. 1, 1998, p. 46



Silence

Aditi Kaul

Silence!

What is silence?

The absence of sound

Or the presence of calmness,

The end of darkness

Or the beginning of light,

The cessation of suffering

Or the experience of bliss.

Where do you find it?

In the dark corners of self

Or in the vastness of the ocean.

How do you find silence?

Look beyond

Or look within.

Oh, my child!

Silence is something you are born out of,

Finding silence is finding your way back home,

One day you will go back to the place where you belong!

Silence is what grows on you,

Let it envelop your being.



Sincerity means more than mere honesty. It means that you mean what you say, feel what you profess, are earnest in your will. As the sadhak aspires to be an instrument of the Divine and one with the Divine, sincerity in him means that he is really in earnest in his aspiration and refuses all other will or impulse except the Divine's.

-Sri Aurobindo (CWSA Vol 29, Letters on Yoga - II, p 50)



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.

Instant Justice?

R wants to know:

Do unbecoming thoughts/acts lead to immediate punishment, e.g. an accident such as slipping, stumbling on a stone, knocking against a hard object, spilling a liquid, breaking something made of glass, etc.

Answer:

In general, it is not so. God is very forgiving. Otherwise, most of us would not live long. However, it could happen in someone who has developed a close connection between the body, the mind and the psychic being. The "close connection" is an indicator of unification of the being, an index of a high level of spiritual evolution. In such a person, if the mind has an unbecoming thought, the psychic being judges it, and the body gets 'rattled'. The result is a bodily movement that, as if it seeks in the surroundings, an opportunity for punishment. The result may be a fall or some other 'accident'. Thus, the individualized and evolving divine essence of the person, which is what the psychic being is, is not as forgiving as the Divine. It punishes, or at least condones punishment, by the surface instruments, the mind and the body. The mind punishes through feelings of guilt and uneasiness; the body punishes through an 'accident'.

Based on a discussion the editor had a long time ago with Prof. Chandrasekhar Rath, who was a senior scholarly spiritual seeker well-read in the works of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother.



Feedback and Encouraging Words

Feedback on the Course YES.04

I am writing to share my heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Ramesh Bijlani ji for his videos on this series.

The videos were very educational and useful. Great knowledge is being imparted to us through these videos. Thank you very much.

Thanks,

Aswini (Ramachandran Muralidharan)
(in an email dated 23 February 2023)

Heartfelt gratitude to the YES team . Excellent sessions. Gained insight into so many concepts of health, yoga and spirituality . I feel it is because of some good karmas of mine that I got a chance to be part of this program.

Veena Hora
(in Chat)

Thank you so much to the whole team for the wonderful sessions. Have been a life changing experience for me.

Manju Wanvari
(in Chat)

Much gratitude to the team. It was an incredible, beautiful journey with widening of one's horizon. I am indeed indebted for ever.

Manju Arora
(in Chat)

The feedback is for the Course YES.04 on Lifestyle Diseases. The Class Recordings of the course are available on: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLKYy7iXI_Z_1_jcDJhJR8PWmyIvK8BIC



Feedback from a YES Talk Speaker

Dear Sir,

I have been an ardent follower of the YES courses as well as your books, and have always admired the sheer simplicity with which you have been teaching every topic.

As for my session, I was provided with a warm and nourishing environment right from the conception of this session. I really had a wonderful time, and although I do present at other forums, this was a very different experience for me. The audience was very receptive, engaging and encouraging, and I felt equally replenished after the session.

I do look forward to many more such sessions and collaborations of any kind where my qualities could be put to use. It has been an honour and a pleasure truly, and I look forward to more.

Warm Regards,

Richa (Sharma)

(in an email dated 5 March 2023)

The talk by Richa Sharma titled 'Simple Hacks for Mental Well-being' is available on: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jR9tRuYBnkI&t=11s>



Straining and concentration are not the same thing. Straining implies an over-eagerness and violence of effort, while concentration is in its nature quiet and steady. If there is restlessness or over-eagerness, then that is not concentration.

-Sri Aurobindo (CWSA Vol 29, Letters on Yoga - II, p 315)

Disappointed vital desire must bring about suffering. Pain and suffering are necessary results of the Ignorance in which we live; men grow by all kinds of experience, pain and suffering as well as their opposites, joy and happiness and ecstasy.

-Sri Aurobindo (CWSA Vol 31, Letters on Yoga - IV, p 204)



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.

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Note

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



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Feedback

Please send your feedback to
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