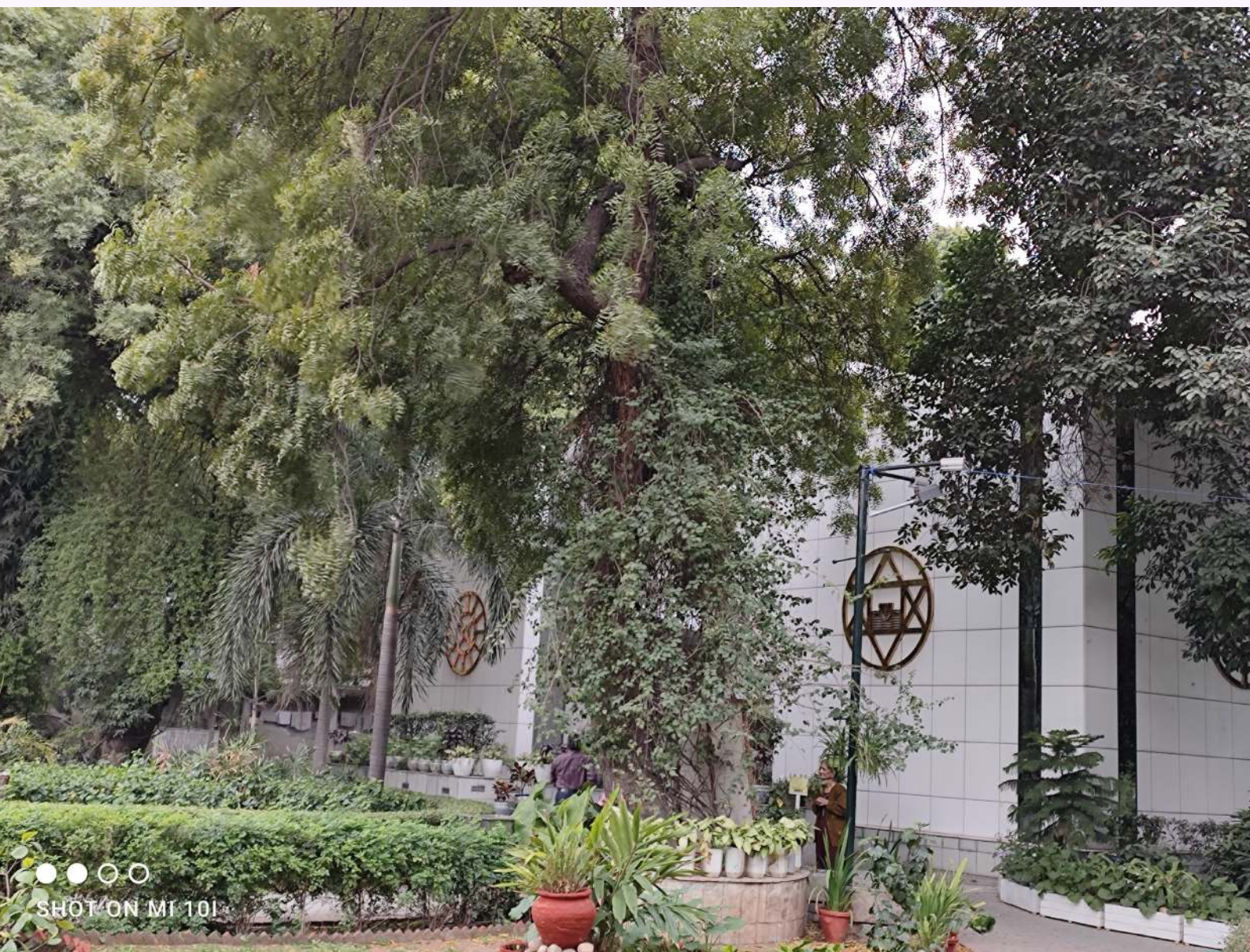


The Call Beyond



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Second Thoughts on the Second Line

Anybody who becomes a somebody at fifty starts thinking of building a second line. Most such attempts fail, but that does not stop repeated attempts which end up repeating history. The reason for these desperate attempts, and the disappointment and despair that follow the failures is a firm belief that the person is doing something vital in a manner that is so unique that the legacy needs to continue, may be with a little modification, but the work is too good to die with the person. The one who wants a second line forgets that the work that he is proud of is not the result of his playing second fiddle to his predecessor. Why then should he expect that someone else who is competent and has the potential for achieving excellence in something that the world needs should settle for becoming his second line? There is obviously a subtle form of the ego at work, and may be condoned as one of the lesser evils that characterise human nature.

While attempts at building second lines have generally failed, the world still goes on, and nothing vital has collapsed because of the failures. Obviously, the Divine knows what the world needs to survive and thrive, and creates the instruments required to keep the show going. That does not mean that one should be indifferent to the potential of younger colleagues. Inspiring them through example, encouraging them and sharing with them the wisdom gleaned through experience is the responsibility of the generation on its way out. The talented ones should also be praised, promoted and projected to accelerate their development. But the push should be free of any expectation that the generation next will be mere competent copycats; it should instead be accompanied by the freedom that allows flowering of their creative genius and full expression of their originality.



The Dangers of Spiritual Bypassing

R Nithya

If you've lived long enough, you must have said this to someone one time or another – "Everything happens for a reason," "It is for the best," or "It is a blessing in disguise." We said these phrases or something on these lines because we wanted to offer some insight or comfort, or both, to someone who was struggling. We meant well.

Since only we are in the true knowing of what we meant, it may serve our own spiritual growth to ask ourselves the purpose of such statements. Did we truly offer someone comfort with these phrases? Did we say these phrases because we're socially conditioned to say something on these lines? Or, did we want to come across as the more spiritually mature person who sees things objectively and dispassionately? The new-age trend is to now do this to our own selves. We may show no tolerance for any negative thought or emotion because "the universe is listening."

So, if we find ourselves dipping our toes into this good-vibes-only culture, where we push ourselves and others to "rise above" emotions without really working on them, then we might be using spirituality as a denial mechanism, better called 'spiritual bypassing.' **Transpersonal psychotherapist and Buddhist John Welwood first used the 'spiritual bypassing' in the early 1980s and defined it as a "tendency to use spiritual ideas and practices to sidestep or avoid facing unresolved emotional issues, psychological wounds, and unfinished developmental tasks."**

A few tangible signs of spiritual bypassing can look like:

- Denying or repressing emotions and needs
- Dismissing other people's emotions or problems
- Avoiding responsibility



- Toxic or cruel positivity
- Judging others, or projecting your negative feelings over others
- Turning every traumatic situation into a “learning experience”
- Justifying suffering or victim-blaming (with phrases like “you attracted it”)
- Spiritual superiority complex

This puts a spiritual seeker in a difficult spot.

Does this mean that we shouldn't consider our life challenges as 'life lessons?' Shouldn't we find in our spiritual practices the will and hope to keep going? Aren't we supposed to rise above the human emotions to attain spiritual equanimity and embody in us the transcendental love for all?

This is where spiritual integrity comes into the picture. **Taking a moment to inquire into our spiritual seeking is never a bad idea.** It's okay to ask if our spiritual life is humbling us or turning us into a spiritual narcissist. By the way, spiritual narcissism is a valid stage in the spiritual growth of many seekers, and is acceptable so long as it is brief, and triggers further evolution that would inevitably terminate this stage. After all, to grow spiritually, we need to be strongly rooted in our human-ness, and we can do that only when we are not sidestepping our human wounds to prematurely jump to a spiritual conclusion. While we too can recall the times when *in hindsight* we felt that a particular traumatic event was truly a blessing in disguise, or when we surprisingly found ourselves rising above a difficult situation. We need to honour and celebrate this organic process of realisation and growth.

Living every dimension of our life spiritually is very different from spiritually whitewashing the good and the ugly parts of our human existence. Life, although simple, is hard for all living creatures. Being human is a messy experience. A life-affirming spirituality, like that encouraged by Sri Aurobindo



and the Mother, teaches us how to make peace with this mess instead of simply dismissing it.

As the Zen saying goes, “Before enlightenment, chop wood and fetch water. After enlightenment, chop wood and fetch water.” Even if deep down we know “everything is *maya*” and “everything is one”, we will still experience heartbreaks, we will still get a cancer diagnosis, we will still be stuck in a traffic jam, we will still lose our parents, we will still have memories of childhood abuse, and we will still find ourselves being beaten black and blue by an abusive spouse. Even when we know that everything we are going through on this planet is only relatively important, it is still important enough to matter. If our own pain didn’t matter, then what would be the point of transcending our human existence and embodying the universal, unconditional love to serve as a balm for a stranger’s pain? **The idea of Absolute Truth cannot be immaturely substituted for relative truth.** Because if we do, then all we’ve done is substitute one idea with another, and we’ve failed to truly live either.

We can sincerely ask ourselves: are we practising one-sided spirituality where we’ve split the Divine into absolute and relative, unmanifest and manifest, spirit and form, detachment and feeling? Have we created opposites? Do we consider one superior to the other?

While positive affirmations and mantras have their place and help a person build their psycho-spiritual immunity, we cannot and must not bypass pain or trauma simply because we cannot bypass life. Brené Brown writes in ‘The Gifts of Imperfection’, “We cannot selectively numb emotions; when we numb the painful emotions, we also numb the positive emotions.” Working on ourselves holistically amplifies our growth potential.

We cannot be enlightened by skipping to the supposedly good part. We cannot be enlightened without showing light into our darkest corners. If we deny our shadows, we



unconsciously act them out and often in possibly harmful ways. It's not uncommon to see some spiritual gurus surrounded in controversies because their shadows finally caught up with them. They tried to "rise above" without truly "rooting" themselves in their humanity. **Sincere spiritual work calls for constant self-inquiry.** It calls for integrating the light and the shadow. It calls for an unconditional acceptance of our raw human-ness – our egos, our delights, our traumas, our pain, our hopes, and our fears. This is not an argument for staying forever at the level of existential anxieties and wounds, and never rising. This is simply a reminder that in our flawed human-ness, we may *use* God to compensate for the sense of lack that we feel because of a disconnection with God in the first place.

If we're adamant about seeing only the One, we miss the Many. And, where, in fact, do we ever see the One if not in the Many?

See also the related passage by Sri Aurobindo, 'Deceptive Excuses That Fail to Deceive', on page 11



Every state of existence has some force in it which drives it to transcend itself.

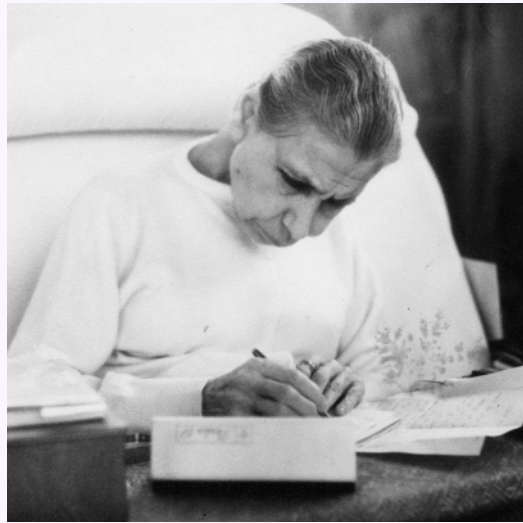
Sri Aurobindo (CWSA Vol 12, 'Essays Divine and Human', p. 109)

The human first touches the divine and then becomes the divine.

Sri Aurobindo (CWSA Vol 12, 'Essays Divine and Human', p. 111)



The Positive and Negative Sides



Ah, my child, you have certain faults, you know, things which prevent you from progressing. So, the negative side is to try and get rid of your defects. There are things which you have to be, to become, qualities which you must build in yourself in order to realise; so this side of construction is the positive side.

You have a defect, for example, a tendency not to speak the truth. Now this habit of falsehood, of not seeing or not speaking the truth, you fight against it by rejecting falsehood from your consciousness and endeavouring to eliminate that habit of not speaking the truth. For the thing to be done, you must build in yourself the habit of speaking only the truth. For the thing to be done, you must build in yourself the habit of perceiving and always telling the truth. One is negative: you reject a fault. The other is positive: you build the quality. It is like that.

The positive side is to increase one's aspiration, develop one's consciousness, unify one's being, to go within in order to enter more and more into contact with one's psychic being; to take up all the parts, all the movements, all the activities of one's being and put them before this psychic consciousness so that they fall into their true place in relation to this centre; finally,



to organise all one's aspiration towards the Divine and one's progress towards the Divine. That is the positive side.

At the same time the negative side consists in refusing methodically and with discernment all the influences which come from outside or from the subconscious or inconscient or from the environment, and stand in the way of spiritual progress. One must discern these influences, suggestions, impulses, and systematically refuse them without ever getting discouraged by their persistence and ever yielding to their will. ... That is the negative side.

The Mother ('The Great Adventure', pp. 74-75)

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>



Self-love means caring for ourselves enough to forgive people in our past so that the wounds can no longer damage us – for our wounds do not hurt the people who hurt us, they hurt only us.

Caroline Myss ('Anatomy of the Spirit', p. 204)

Healing begins with the repair of emotional injuries. Our entire medical model is being reshaped around the power of the heart.

Caroline Myss ('Anatomy of the Spirit', p. 207)



Deceptive Excuses That Fail to Deceive



For the way that humanity deals with an ideal is to be satisfied with it as an aspiration which is for the most part left only as an aspiration, accepted only as a partial influence. The ideal is not allowed to mould the whole life, but only more or less to colour it; it is often used even as a cover and a plea for things that are diametrically opposed to its real spirit. Institutions are created which are supposed, but too lightly supposed to embody that spirit and the fact that the ideal is held, the fact that men live under its institutions is treated as sufficient. **The holding of an ideal becomes almost an excuse for not living according to the ideal; the existence of its institutions is sufficient to abrogate the need of insisting on the spirit that made the institutions.** But spirituality is in its very nature a thing subjective and not mechanical; it is nothing if it is not lived inwardly and if the outward life does not flow out of this inward living. Symbols, types, conventions, ideas are not sufficient. A spiritual symbol is only a meaningless ticket, unless the thing symbolised is realised in the spirit. A spiritual convention may lose or expel its spirit and become a falsehood. A spiritual type may be a temporary mould into which spiritual living may flow, but it is also a limitation and may become a prison in which it fossilises and perishes. A spiritual idea is a power, but only when it is both inwardly and outwardly



creative. Here we have to enlarge and to deepen the pragmatic principle that truth is what we create, and in this sense first, that it is what we create within us, in other words, what we become. Undoubtedly, spiritual truth exists eternally beyond independent of us in the heavens of the spirit; but it is of no avail for humanity here, it does not become truth of earth, truth of life until it is lived. The divine perfection is always there above us; but for man to become divine in consciousness and act and to live inwardly and outwardly the divine life is what is meant by spirituality; all lesser meanings given to the word are inadequate fumbings or impostures.

Sri Aurobindo ('The Human Cycle', CWSA Vol. 25, pp. 262-263)

See also the related article, 'The Dangers of Spiritual Bypassing', on page 5



In order that there should be any real relation, it must be a relation between two realities.

Sri Aurobindo ('The Synthesis of Yoga', SABCL edition, p. 352)

For integral self-possession we must be one not only with the Self, with God, but with all existences.

Sri Aurobindo ('The Synthesis of Yoga', SABCL edition, p. 353)

Self-knowledge and world-knowledge must be made one in the all-ensphering knowledge of the Brahman.

Sri Aurobindo ('The Synthesis of Yoga', SABCL edition, p. 357)



Without any Maker

Kirschner, the famous astronomer had a scientist friend visiting him. The friend professed disbelief in God. One day, this friend was admiring a working model of the solar system that stood upon a table. By turning a handle, the planets could be made to revolve in their respective orbits around the sun.

"Very ingenious indeed," he remarked. "Who made it?"

"Oh! Nobody in particular," replied Kirschner.

"No, really tell me. I want to know who made it."

"Nobody made it, it just made itself."

The friend began to see the point and was annoyed.

"I see you are trying to be funny."

"Is it not rather you that are funny? You cannot believe that this little model made itself, and yet you can believe that the real sun and moon and stars, the vast universe in fact, came into existence somehow without any maker!"

Reproduced from 'The Call Beyond', Vol. 24, No. 1, p. 45, 1999



Following our intuitive guidance is the highest form of preventive health care.

Caroline Myss ('Anatomy of the Spirit', p. 204)

Healing is possible through acts of forgiveness.

Caroline Myss ('Anatomy of the Spirit', p. 204)



Pavithra Chari Does the MIS and the Country Proud

Forbes on Thursday released its 9th edition of the “30 Under 30 Asia” list, celebrating young entrepreneurs, leaders, and trailblazers under 30, driving innovation and transforming industries across the Asia-Pacific region. The prestigious list also features several Indian entrepreneurs from diverse sectors – from technology and sustainability to logistics and fashion. One of them is Pavithra Chari, an alumna of The Mother’s International School. Pavithra, a trained singer-composer, gained recognition as half of the duo Shadow and Light with Anindo Bose. Their collaboration with the Berklee Indian Ensemble earned a Grammy nomination in 2023. She is also part of the Anirudh Varma Collective, touring the US, and is skilled in Bharatnatyam dance.

My heart is so full of gratitude, joy and borderline disbelief that I’m on Forbes 30 under 30 ASIA list 2024 ✨

It goes without saying that I’m truly



honoured and over the moon with this news, especially with my 30s right around the corner. People who’ve known me closely know how much I have desired this, and to each person who I’ve had the privilege of crossing paths with in all these years, in whatever capacity, thank you from the bottom of my heart ❤️

On to the next one! 🚀

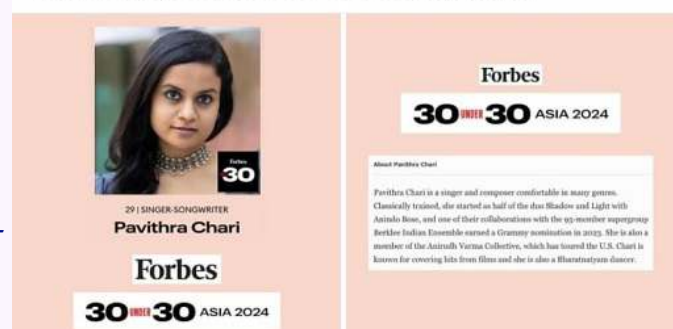
Photo by @rishiroycalcutta

[Forbes, 30under30asia, Pavithra Chari, musician, Arts and Entertainment]

Sources:

<https://www.ndtv.com/feature/forbes-30-under-30-asia-list-out-indians-who-made-to-it-5682131>

and WhatsApp messages





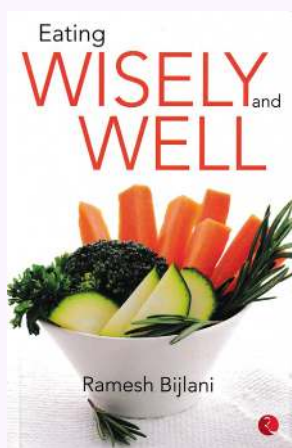
In this column, we try to answer three types of questions: those related to spiritual quest ('aspiring high'); those related to psychological issues ('feeling low'); and those related to physical health ('frailties of the flesh'). It is needless to say that the identity of the person asking the question is kept confidential if the question is about a sensitive issue. The questions may be sent to callbeyond@aurobindoonline.in.

Which Salt and Which Sugar?

After reading Dr Ramesh Bijlani's book, 'Eating Wisely and Well', SJ has some questions about salt and sugar.

Salt: We have regular salt and Iodized salt. Then Pink Salt (Rock Salt) is becoming popular these days. We also used to have Sendha Namak which I believe is same as Rock Salt. Please advise which one should be used.

Sugar: We have regular refined crystallized sugar. We also have Khaand, which is brown in colour. Then we also have brown sugar and shakkar/burra. I am not including jaggery here as I guess it comes in a different zone.



Answer: To start with, a few general comments. First, it is good that more and more people are becoming health conscious, and making efforts to improve their lifestyles. Secondly, when it comes to food, the focus of most people is primarily on what to eat, much less on how much to eat, and hardly at all on how to eat. Finally, food is only one of the several lifestyle factors that affect health.

Now, coming to your specific questions.

Salt

If the choice is between non-iodized salt (100% sodium chloride) and iodized salt, it is better to take iodized salt. If



a person's diet is otherwise iodine-deficient, iodized salt will make up the deficiency. If the person does not have iodine deficiency, consuming some additional iodine through iodized salt will do no harm.

Different samples of rock salt (sendha namak) are 90-98% sodium chloride. The rest is made up of other minerals such as calcium and magnesium. That is perhaps why it tastes less salty than plain salt. But rock salt does not have much iodine. Therefore, it is not prudent to replace all one's salt intake with rock salt.

Pink salt is an expensive version of rock salt. The least expensive version is blocks of rock salt, which may be crushed at home.

How about the quantity of salt? Modern science says that if one takes no salt at all, still the person will not become sodium deficient because there is enough sodium even in a saltless balanced diet. However, a saltless diet may leave the person iodine deficient. Ayurvedic wisdom says that some salt (not too much) is good to take because the diet should have all the six tastes, of which salty taste is one.

Conclusion: take some salt, preferably iodized salt in moderation, and if you have some fancy for it, take also rock salt in moderation. What happens if one takes much more salt than necessary? It raises the risk for high blood pressure, specially in those who are genetically predisposed to salt-sensitive hypertension. Which are the high-salt foods which one may avoid? Pickles and chutneys are perhaps the worst culprits among the commonly eaten foods.

Sugar

Sugar, in moderation, is acceptable, but is not essential. There is nothing like 'sugar-deficiency disease'. Mankind has lived a healthy life for thousands of years before refined sugar became available. Secondly, one very common error is that people



think that if they stop having sugar, they cannot get diabetes. Along the same lines, they think that if they have diabetes, they should stop having sugar. If they have given up sugar, they think that they need not make any further alterations in their diets. **Why these ideas are wrong needs explanations that are beyond the scope of the present context.**

Refined white sugar is generally derived from sugarcane, is the product of extensive processing, and is 100% sugar.

Khaand, also derived from sugarcane, is less processed, and therefore retains some of the brown colour (due to molasses – the dark brown syrup resulting from heating sugarcane juice) and original flavour of sugarcane. *Khaand* is essentially crushed *mishri*.

Burra is processed even less than *khaand*. *Khand* and *burra*, besides having the brown colour and flavour, have some vitamins and minerals, which could make **some contribution (not an indispensable contribution)** to our dietary intake of these nutrients.

Brown sugar is obtained by adding molasses to refined white sugar. First, it is ridiculous to first discard molasses while making white sugar, and then to add it to make it brown. Secondly, the product does not have the flavour of *khaand* or *burra*.

Gur (jaggery) is made by boiling sugarcane juice till it is very thick, then cooled and left to harden. Since nothing is discarded, jaggery retains the dietary fibre, colour and nutrients of sugarcane.

Ayurvedic wisdom has it that there are subtle differences between *khaand* and jaggery. *Khaand* has cooling properties, and is therefore recommended in summers. Jaggery is best consumed only in winters. Those who want to stick to unrefined sweeteners should switch to *khaand* in summers.



Ayurveda does recommend all tastes in the diet, including the sweet taste. However, to get the sweet taste, better than any sweetening agent are sweet fruits.

Conclusion: Sweet fruits are better than sweetening agents. No matter how refined or unrefined the sweetening agent is, less the better.

Closing thoughts

Being careful to eat a healthy diet is one thing, being obsessed with it another. A consciously casual attitude that leads to moderation keeps the mind at peace, which is more important for health than the exact chemicals that enter the body. If a person is obsessed with a healthy diet, any violation due to temptation, or imposed by circumstances, would become a source of totally avoidable stress.

The other side of the coin is attachment to food as a source of sensory pleasure, and tolerating the healthy diet only out of fear of disease. In that case, a person may eat fruits and vegetables out of fear of disease and death, but his mind would be dwelling on omelets and cutlets. The stress caused by missing out on the palate-charmers would more than outdo the good that fruits and vegetable can do.

A healthy diet should fit into a spiritual view of life. All sensory pleasures, including food, have a fleeting character. If the person has a higher goal in life, these fleeting pleasures start losing their intensity. The person can enjoy the food that he likes, when it is available. When it is not available, he does not miss it.

That takes us back to the important consideration that along with what we eat and how much of it we eat, of great significance is how we eat. Eating with a sense of sincere gratitude, with focus on need rather than greed, on health rather than taste, and for the purpose of keeping in good



shape the body-mind complex – the equipment we have been given for action in the world – so that we can fulfill the divine will, constitute the spiritual attitude to food. Prayer before eating, and at the end of a meal, can serve as a reminder for practicing the right attitude to food. After all, knowledge is of no use unless put into practice.

Do not trouble your mind about food. Take it in the right quantity (neither too much nor too little), without greed or repulsion, as the means given you by the Mother for the maintenance of the body, in the right spirit, offering it to the Divine in you; then it need not create tamas.

It is much better to eat the meal in silence or at any rate in quietness.

- Sri Aurobindo

*In Search of
The Mother*



For a video titled 'Eating Consciously. The Words of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother in Tara Didi's Voice', please click on the following link:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BS-INCIXs4s>

(Answered by Ramesh Bijlani in consultation with Ayurveda expert, Dr. Mukta Katoch Arora and the ubiquitous consultant, 'Google search')



Feedback and Encouraging Words

Feedback from teachers from Russia



Dear Tara Didi and Prabhjot

Resuming our training, we would like to say big thanks to the Team who has arranged such a wonderful and beneficial study. We see the great outcome. Participants after coming back to Russia have already started using the knowledge in their schools. Also new teachers have shown interest and would like to come for training in October.

Our unplanned journey to Madhuban is highly appreciated! Your flexibility, great hospitality and support made our visit unforgettable.

We consider this first experience will become the beginning of a strong future collaboration.

With great regards,

Oksana and Oleg

(the leaders of the Russian teachers' group)

(in an email dated 1 May 2024)



*How things that thrive on borrowed lustre will forget the
One who loans all lustre!*

Dilip Kumar Roy ('The Immortals of the Bhagavat', p. 123)

No life is life but's dearly won.

Dilip Kumar Roy ('The Immortals of the Bhagavat', p. 132)



Contact us

Our bimonthly magazine in Hindi, '**Sri Aravind Karmadhara**', is also available on-line now, and may be viewed on our website www.sriaurobindoashram.net.

For a free subscription to '**Sri Aravind Karmadhara**', please send an e-mail to sakarmdhara@gmail.com

To get '**The Call Beyond**' online regularly, month after month, please send an e-mail to: callbeyond@aurobindoonline.in

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



Note

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



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