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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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One Birthday, Two Remarkable Lives



Smt. Dayawati Jauhar

The publication of this issue of *The Call Beyond* coincides with the birthday of Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, the former President of India, who passed on to his heavenly abode recently. We are honoured to pay him a tribute in this issue in the article, 'From News-vendor to News-maker'. However, October 15 happens to be the birthday also of another remarkable person who has a special place in the hearts of those associated with Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch: the person is Srimati Dayawati Jauhar, the partner of Shri Surendra Nath Jauhar, the founder of the Ashram. Although the founder is referred to more often as Chacha ji than by his name, for some obscure reason his wife is not called Chachi ji, but that is how we shall address her here.

Strange are the ways of destiny. The fact that Chachi ji's village, Khewra, had a railway station was responsible for whom she got married to. Wahalee, the village to which Chachaji belonged, had no railway station. Hence his sister frequently came to Khewra to catch a train. Sometimes she had to spend the day or the night in Khewra. She spotted Dayawati there, and developed a fascination for her. She then went to her parents, and extracted from them the promise that their daughter would be her bhabhi (brother's wife). That is how the two, who had never met



Smt. Dayawati Jauhar, soon after her release after six months of imprisonment in 1933

each other till then, were united in wedlock. Dayawati was just 15, a child bride by today's standards, and the bridegroom was ten years older when they got married. Their families were traditional families of rural pre-partition Punjab, families in which conventional morality was strictly followed without question. For example, when she went with Chachaji's father to meet Chachaji when he was in the Multan Jail in 1930, Chachaji could not even see her face because she observed purdah. However, Chachaji had already rebelled by joining the freedom struggle. He rebelled yet again: when they moved to Delhi, he persuaded Chachaji to give up purdah. Soon Chachaji realized that he had met his match in Chachaji. She also started working for the Congress Party to help with the freedom struggle.

In 1932, leaving two little children at home, she went to participate in a procession in Chandni Chowk. She was arrested and sent to the Central Jail in Delhi. The next day she was sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for six months, and transferred to Lahore because there was no female ward in the jail at Delhi. Her parents were in Lahore, and imagine their surprise when they learnt that their daughter, now a mother of two, was in jail. At the end of six months, she returned home, "loaded with garlands and bouquets, appreciation and acclaim." That "demolished whatever superiority I had pretended to possess over her", says Chacha ji in his memoirs. He continues, "This parity brought about a new relationship between us – now we became friends. We started going out to functions, cinemas and on social calls. Every morning



*Smt. Dayawati Jauhar being blessed by the Mother.
Accompanying her is Shri Surendra Nath Jauhar*

we would go out together for a walk". However, she did not stop there. It was as a mother of five that she studied for the Hindi Rattan examination of Punjab University (equivalent to matriculation), and cleared it.

After Chacha ji discovered the Mother (his supreme discovery, as he called it), he started visiting Pondicherry frequently and left some of their children in Pondicherry. Chachi ji not only accompanied him and cooperated with him, she also carved out a

niche for herself in the Ashram. She had a direct and special relationship with the Mother. She helped with the activities of the Ashram's Dispensary, making bandages and gauze pieces. But when she became too weak for that, she made blessing packets. Although Chachaji had surrendered his will to the Mother's will, at least on one occasion she surpassed him. Once Chachiji said that she wanted to go to Kashmir. While arrangements were going on for the trip, it occurred to her that they should first seek the Mother's permission. Chachaji was very angry, and told her that no permission was required for such a trivial issue. But Chachiji put her foot down, and said that she would not go to Kashmir without the permission. Remember, this was in spite of the proposal for the trip being hers to start with. Chachaji anyhow wrote about the whole incident to the Mother. The Mother replied, telling Chachiji to ask Chachaji whether the Mother had ever gone to a hill station since her arrival in Pondicherry (She had not; in fact, neither Sri Aurobindo left Pondicherry after arriving there in 1910, nor did the Mother leave Pondicherry for even a single day after her second and final arrival there in 1920). From the Mother's reply, it was obvious that she did not want the Jauhars to go to Kashmir. Chachiji said to Chachaji, "Did I not tell you that that the Mother's permission in every matter was essential? Who can say what would have happened had we gone?" It goes without saying that they did not go.

Chachiji was a generous soul. She was always ready for guests, always ready to feed them. She was resourceful enough to put together in virtually no time something delicious from virtually nothing for virtually any number of guests. She was an excellent cook. Her gulab jamuns literally melted in the mouth. She could also make a variety of Bengali sweets. She never wasted food. She could use leftovers very creatively to turn out acceptable, and even supremely delicious dishes. Chachaji, with his characteristic sense of humour, often 'accused' her of feeding the family 'adulterated' food (i.e. fresh food adulterated with leftovers). Chachaji was also highly innovative. For example, she could create a tandoor from an empty round tin ('Dalda' tin). With a life span stretching over almost a century, she never stopped growing, never refused to change. For example, so many of her children did not get married, but she did not pressurise them. When Chaman Lal Gupta ji came up with solar cookers, she was not only one of the first ones to use them, but also used them for making kishmish (raisins) from grapes.

Chachiji's had a long and productive life. She played her multiple roles – as a householder, as a freedom fighter, and as a disciple of the Mother – cheerfully, and with dedication. She had more than her share of the vicissitudes of life, but she did not let adversity shatter or embitter her, and did not let prosperity go to her head. There is a lot that generations to come can learn from her example.

*She made herself the diligent serf of all,
Nor spared the labour of broom and jar and well,
Or close gentle tending or to heap the fire
Of altar and kitchen, no slight task allowed
To others that her woman's strength might do.
In all her acts a strange divinity shone:
Into a simplest movement she could bring
A oneness with earth's glowing robe of light,
A lifting up of common acts by love.*

SRI AUROBINDO (In: Savitri, Book 7, Canto 1, p. 470)

readers write

Dear Editor,

It is indeed a proud moment to welcome The Call Beyond on my email id. The section on prayer is very impressive and words of The Lord and The Mother in reader friendly format is something most appreciable. I pray I continue to be a part of call beyond.

Warm Wishes to the Team of The Call Beyond.

Mahua Bhattacharjee

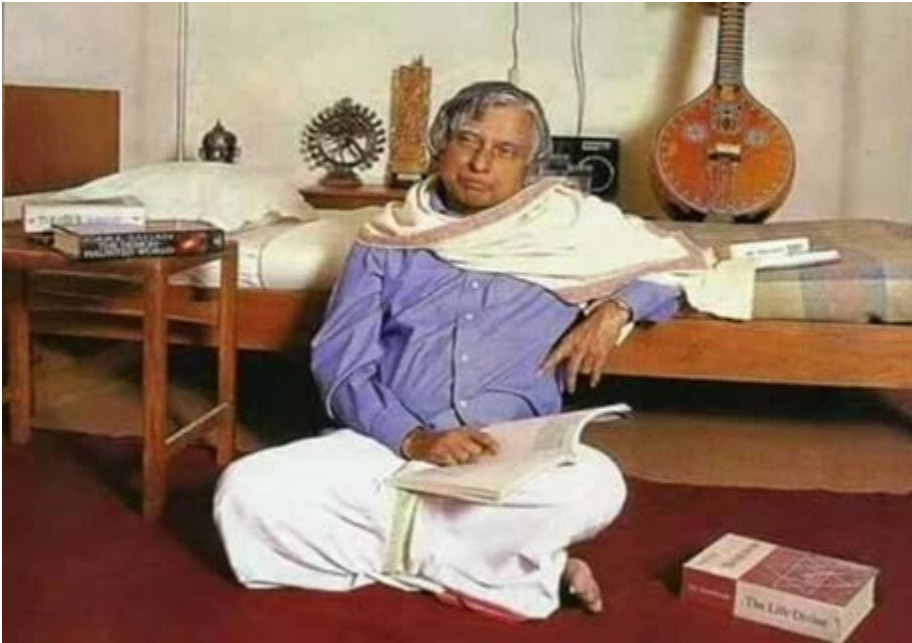
(in an e-mail dated 16 Sep 2015)

From News-vendor to News-maker

The Spiritual Biography of Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam (15 October 1931 - 27 July 2015)

If you want to shine like a sun, first burn like a sun.

A.P.J. ABDUL KALAM



Dr Kalam with The Life Divine.

Anyone indulging in the interesting pastime of trying to make sense out of life by going over the past is seldom totally disappointed. One is awestruck by the confluence of circumstances that lead to success, and enlightened by the hidden meaning behind failure. Life seems to proceed uncontrollably, but hindsight reveals that it is not uncontrolled. Let us use the benefit of hindsight to make sense out of the life of the people's President, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, who left for his heavenly abode on 27 July

2015.

Dr. Kalam was born on 15 October 1931 in a family that had once plied boats to ferry men and goods between Pamban island, on which they lived, and the mainland and Sri Lanka. The work was lucrative, and the family had grown prosperous. But after the construction of the Pamban bridge in 1914, the fortunes of the family had dwindled. Dr. Kalam's father ferried Hindu pilgrims back and forth between Rameswaram (on the Pamban island) and the now uninhabited Dhanushkodi, which brought only a meagre income. As a result, the family lived in poverty, and young Abdul Kalam, the youngest of five siblings, distributed newspapers to supplement the family income. Besides being a boatman, his father was also the Imam of the local mosque. As a young person, Abdul Kalam observed that his father had discussions on matters concerning their island with the priest of the local temple and the priest of the local church every evening over a cup of tea. This was an early lesson in syncretism, which led to his reading not only the Quran but also the Gita and the Bible, and his being a vegetarian by choice. His wealthy ancestry perhaps gave him the courage to dream big, his deprived present the incentive to fulfill the dreams, and the religious environment the values within the framework of which he pursued his dreams.

At school, Abdul Kalam was an average but hardworking student who was very keen to learn. He retained his love for learning all his life; among his very few personal possessions were 2500 books. In college, he studied physics and aerospace engineering, after which he wanted to become the pilot of a fighter plane. But in the selection test he finished ninth; he was rejected because the seats available were only eight. Deeply disappointed by his missing the ambition of his life by such a narrow margin, he wandered into Sivananda Ashram at Rishikesh. There, after hearing his sad story, Swami Sivananda told him, “Forget this failure, as it was essential to lead you to your destined path”. These turned out to be prophetic words, because without this failure, the trajectory of his life would have been very different.

Until we know *the* essential thing we are intended to do, we must therefore find a temporary occupation which will be the best possible manifestation of our present capacities and our goodwill.

Then we shall give ourselves to this occupation with conscientiousness and perseverance, knowing that it may well be only a stage and that with the progress of our ideal and our energies, we shall certainly one day be led to see more clearly the work we must accomplish. To the extent we lose the habit of referring everything to ourselves and learn more and more to give ourselves more completely, with greater love, to earth and men, we shall see our horizons widen and our duties become more numerous and clear.

THE MOTHER (*Words of Long Ago*, p. 51)

Starting in 1960, he worked with the Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) and the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) for about four decades. Science is neutral: it can be applied for peace as well as war. The contribution that he made to India’s satellite launch vehicle has many uses in peace, but also earned him the title of the missile man of India. Being a sensitive peace-loving person, that made him uncomfortable somewhere deep within, and perhaps that is why, he went out of the way to help develop at least three medical devices. In collaboration with the cardiologist Soma Raju he developed the Kalam-Raju Stent for use in coronary heart disease; the Kalam-Raju tablet for taking healthcare to the villages; and in collaboration with an orthopedic surgeon from Nizam Institute of Medical Sciences he developed super-light calipers, which made life much easier for children with impaired mobility of the lower limbs.

While his contributions to knowledge that could be used in warfare might have made him uneasy, without his involvement in such work he might have never realized his true calling. It was this work that brought him close to several successive Prime Ministers and Defence Ministers of the country. Without this proximity, he might have never become the President

of India in 2002. As the President, he set new standards in his accessibility to the common man, and his concern for the future of the country. That earned him the title of the People’s President. However, even becoming the country’s President was not his true calling. He realized his true calling after he finished with his tenure as the President in 2007. He wanted to reach out to children in schools and the youth in colleges across the country as a teacher. He set the target of reaching 100,000 students; probably he crossed the target manifold because in the eight years that he had before he called it an innings, he had one of the world’s biggest classrooms available to him. This classroom had components direct and indirect; real and virtual. He was a visiting professor at a large number of top institutions of the country; besides, he travelled far and wide to schools and colleges where he interacted with the students. In addition to this direct contact, he taught indirectly through his books, and reached millions across the globe through

the internet. This huge classroom would not have been available to him unless he had become the President of India, and he could not have become the President if the political leadership was not aware of his existence, and the political leadership was aware of him only because he had been the missile man of India. Thus his failure to become a pilot, and his involvement in scientific work related to the defence of the country were steps by which his destiny as a teacher of the masses was getting worked out. The Mother has talked about the temporary occupation of a person before he finds his true calling. For Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, being a scientist and the President were both temporary callings. Till the final calling is discovered, however, the temporary calling is the vehicle that has been given to the person to fulfill the purpose of life, that is, spiritual growth. One might even add that unless a person makes good use of the temporary occupation, he will not discover his true calling. And, Dr. Kalam did use his temporary occupations well. He was a hardworking and conscientious worker; he slept for only about five hours a day. He lived an austere life, did not accept any gifts, and remained unmarried; he was wedded to his work.

Towards the end of his temporary occupations, destiny had started creating another set of circumstances through which he was to scale new spiritual heights. In the year 2001, he met the Pramukh Swami of the BAPS Swaminarayan Sampradaya. It was as if when the disciple was ready, the guru had appeared. Dr. Kalam was immediately drawn to the Swami's simplicity and purity. One incident that moved Dr. Kalam took place the day following the terrorist attack on BAPS' Akshardham temple at Gandhinagar in September 2002. Pramukh Swami prayed for, and sprinkled holy water upon, the sites of all of the deceased, including the terrorists. Eventually Dr. Kalam came to consider the Pramukh Swami his ultimate spiritual teacher and guru.

Dr. Abdul Kalam's vision was that India would become a developed nation by 2020, and for realizing this vision his roadmap was that the country should focus on integrated action in its areas of core-competence. He had identified five such areas: (1) agriculture and food processing; (2) education and healthcare; (3) information and communication technology; (4) Infrastructure: reliable and quality electric power, surface transport and infrastructure for all parts of the country; and (5) self-reliance in critical technologies. A "transformative moment" in his life came when he asked his guru, the Pramukh Swami, how India might realize this five-pronged vision of development. Pramukh Swami's response was to add a sixth area: developing faith in God and spirituality to overcome the current climate of crime and corruption. This area became a passion with Dr. Kalam during the last years of his life, as described in his final book, *Transcendence: My Spiritual Experiences with Pramukh Swamiji*, published just a month before his death. It seems that although Dr. Kalam was a deeply religious man, and belonged to a religious family, like most scientists, he had kept his religiosity in one private compartment, and his honest and dedicated work as a scientist, or as the President, in another. That is why, his 'five-point agenda' had no place for religion or spirituality. But it has been said that religion is the kindergarten of spirituality. He had stayed in that kindergarten long enough, and had in the meantime grown spiritually without realizing it, through his dedication to his work, his morally upright behavior, and his love for his fellow beings. The trigger for his transition from religion to spirituality came through Pramukh Swamiji. Since he was more than ripe for the transition, just a trigger was enough, and after that he took to spirituality as a fish takes to water. In his last book, *Transcendence: My Spiritual Experiences with Pramukh Swamiji*, he made a prophetic statement, as pointed out by his co-author, Arun Tiwari: "Pramukh Swamiji has put me in a God-synchronous orbit. No manoeuvres are required any more, as I am placed

in my final position in eternity.” What a perfect analogy, befitting a space scientist, and what a sublime expression of the premonition of death. Once a person is in the “God-synchronous orbit”, no mid-course correction is necessary, and the person is ready to wind up the journey of life on earth. He wound up the journey the way anybody would like to. He suffered no pain, and gave no trouble to anybody. He was in Shillong on the evening of 27 July 2015 addressing the students of the Indian Institute of Management. Five minutes into the speech, he seemingly collapsed, but actually soared high. While doing what he loved the most, he launched himself into his “final position in eternity”.

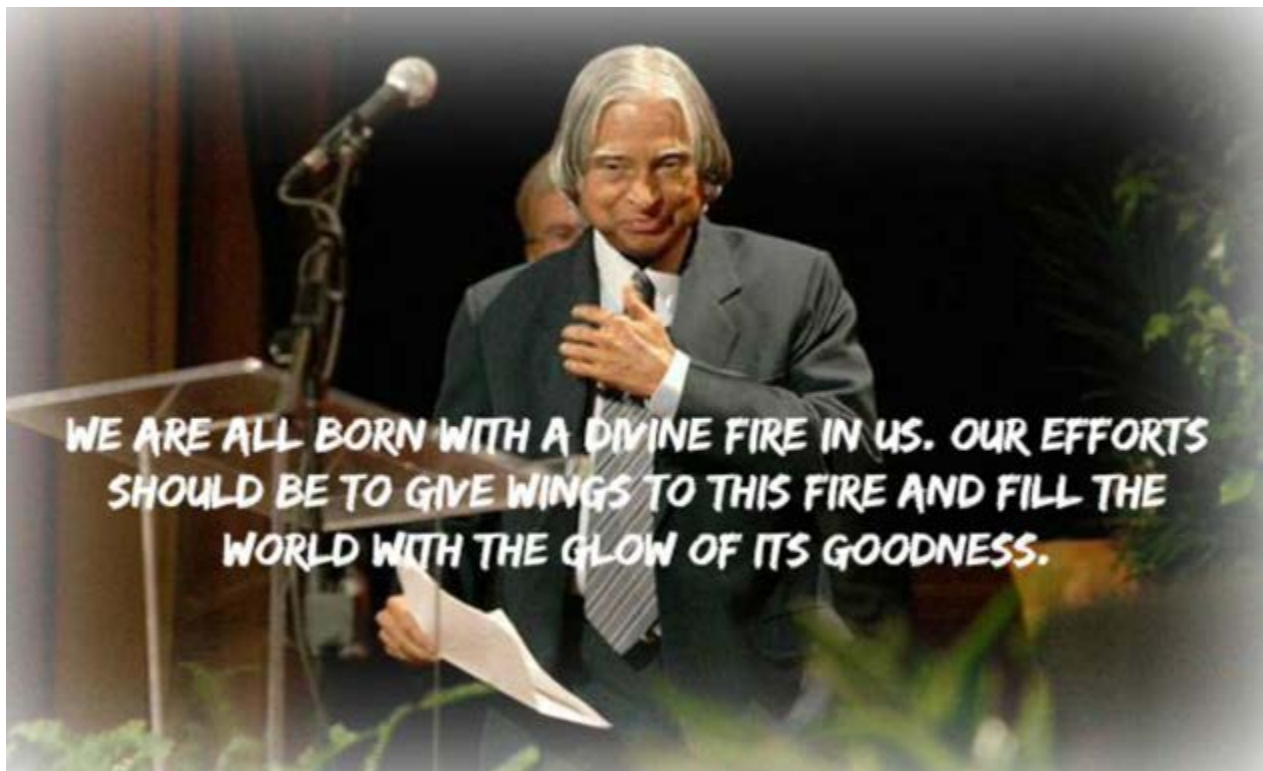
*This world was not built with random bricks of chance,
A blind god is not destiny's architect;
A conscious power has drawn the plan of life,
There is a meaning in each curve and line.*

SRI AUROBINDO (Savitri, Book 6, Canto 2, p. 460)

Acknowledgement

Much of the information in this article is from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A. P. J. Abdul Kalam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A._P._J._Abdul_Kalam)

This article has a lot in common with what the author has also submitted as an invited editorial to the *Indian Journal of Physiology and Pharmacology*, July 2015.



THE MASTER OF THE WORK

The Master of the work reveals Himself only when we renounce our egoism of the worker and in proportion as that renunciation becomes more and more complete; and only when that is absolute are we able to live in His absolute presence and can leave our work to throw itself completely and simply into the mould of His will.

We must remember that the Master of our works respects our nature even when He is transforming it; for through the nature He works always and not by any arbitrary caprice. And this imperfect nature of ours contains the materials of our perfection; therefore it has to be patiently prepared, rearranged, new-moulded, transformed, not hacked at and hewed and slain or mutilated.

This imperfect nature of ours is egoistic and nothing is more difficult for it than to get rid of egoism while yet adhering to action. It is easier to kill the ego by renouncing the impulse to act; it is easier to exalt it into self-forgetfulness immersed in an ecstasy of divine love; but for man the most difficult problem is to attain a divine manhood which shall be the pure vessel of divine action. Step after step has to be firmly taken; difficulty after difficulty has to be entirely experienced and entirely mastered.

When we behold the Master of our works, it is in four manifestations that we become conscious of Him. First as the Transcendent; we are aware of the One who is beyond all world and all nature and yet possesses the world and its nature and is shaping into something which as yet it is not. Secondly, as the equal inactive Brahman, the Divine not bound by quality who supports impartially all action and energies which the transcendent Will permits and authorizes in the cosmos, and yet by his very passivity and silent presence compels them to travel towards a divine goal and attracts towards the yet unrealized unity. Thirdly, the universal Divine, who is infinite quality and cosmic will and act and universal knowledge and delight, through whom we become one with all existences not only in their essence but in their play of action, see ourself in all and all in ourself, perceive all thought and feeling as of the one Mind and Heart, all energy and action as of the one Will in power and no longer stand separate, but lose our active ego in the universal movement, even as by the Qualities we lose our static ego in the universal peace. Fourthly, the Lord who accepts a personal relation with us, is at once with us as our supreme Self and yet chooses to be different as our Master, Friend, Lover, Teacher, our Father and Mother, our playmate in the world-game who disguises Himself as friend and enemy, helper and opponent and in all relations and in all workings that affect us; by Him we may see in all the One not merely with philosophic calm, but merely with passive or active submission in our works, but with the ecstasy of divine love and divine delight.

For it is not so much knowledge, not so much work as this thing most intimate to us, yet most obscure which keeps for us wrapped in its passionate veil the deep and blissful secret of the transcendent Godhead.

SRI AUROBINDO

(In the Arya, Vol. 2, No. 2, 15 October 1915)

Errors are Stepping Stones*

As a strong breeze passes over the sea and crowns with foam its countless waves, so a great breath passed over the memory and awoke the multitude of its remembrances. Intense, complex, crowded, the past lived again in a flash, having lost nothing of its savour, its richness.

Then was the whole being lifted up in a great surge of adoration, and gathering all its memories like an abundant harvest, it placed them at Thy feet, O Lord, as an offering.

For throughout its life, without knowing it or with some presentiment of it, it was Thou whom it was seeking; in all its passions, all its enthusiasms, all its hopes and disillusionments, all its sufferings and all its joys, it was Thou whom it ardently wanted. And now that it has found Thee, now that it possesses Thee in a supreme Peace and Felicity, it wonders that it should have needed so many sensations, emotions, experiences to discover Thee.

But all this, which was a struggle, a turmoil, a perpetual effort, has become through a sovereign grace of Thy conscious Presence, a priceless fortune which the being rejoices to offer as its gift to Thee. The purifying flame of Thy illumination has turned it into jewels of price laid down as a living holocaust on the altar of my heart.

Errors have become stepping-stones, the blind gropings conquests. Thy glory transforms defeats into victories of eternity, and all the shadows have fled before Thy radiant light.

It is Thou who wert the motive and the goal; Thou art the worker and the work.

The personal existence is the canticle, perpetually renewed, which the universe offers up to Thy inconceivable Splendour.

THE MOTHER

(In Prayers and Meditations, prayer dated 7 November 1915)

**Title given by the editor*

twenty-five years ago

An Encounter with a Sadhak

SUKHENDU ROY CHOWDHURY

In the capital city of Delhi there is a unique institution called Sri Aurobindo Ashram, where Sadhaks experiment with truth, harmony and integral living. A casual visitor may tend to get misguided by seeing the outer activities of this Ashram but there is an under-current flowing through. Here I met a unique personality and his being here is a sufficient proof that there are a few people in this city who still live for the Divine. I had an opportunity to talk to him at length. The excerpts:

Q. How did you come in contact with Sri Aurobindo's philosophy?

A. It was due to my past Karma. In fact, I was destined and the soul had already chosen this path.

Q. Did you ever have a chance to see the Mother?

A. Yes, in 1955 I saw the Mother when I had gone to Pondicherry for the first time. I found her sitting with a few children and talking to them, the atmosphere created by her presence left a great impression on my mind regarding Her Divine nature.

My eyes opened. Since then it was Her grace that is showing me the way.

Q. How did you decide to come to this Ashram?

A. I believe I was brought here by Providence. I sat in the meditation hall not knowing what to do and if I can remember rightly I lost my outer consciousness for some time. I felt a touch of affectionate hand on my head and I opened my eyes. I saw the Mother standing before me and smiling. I do not know how you will interpret this but it was so concrete that I could not deny its reality.

Q. Did you learn meditation from any one, i.e. from any Guru?

A. In my case I was guided by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. In fact meditation is a progressive process. First you sit down and concentrate and then gradually you evolve your own method. It has been my living experience how the consciousness passes through different channels clearing the passage of all impurities. Finally, it got settled at the psychic centre just behind the heart centre.

This is the beginning of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga. From then onwards the transformation of the body starts. Traditional yogas only cut off the link between the lower physical and the psychic centre but do not make an effort to transform the lower physical into higher consciousness.

Q. What is the selection procedure to get initiated into this path?

A. The only qualification one should have is an inner call. It has been my living faith that whosoever comes here (means sadhaks) have been chosen by the Mother, whether they are conscious of it or not. In fact, my stay at this Ashram entirely depends on my collaboration with the forces of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

Q. How do you explain the present happenings in the world where you rarely see any forces of harmony. Is this contradiction also a path of this Yoga?

A. Yes unless you pass through a great turmoil and disintegration you can never reach the forces of harmony and peace. Although it is difficult to identify His work in a specific manner. But the end is harmony, truth and beauty – that is God's nature. Do not get disheartened by seeing temporary setbacks. They are part of nature's play.

Q. Could you tell me one incident, apart from the concrete experience you had in the meditation hall, that has stabilized your faith?

A. Yes, in the beginning I never touched the lotus at the Samadhi here. But one day seeing someone doing it I got some inspiration to do likewise. The moment I touched the lotus with my forehead, you believe me, it was like an electric shock but a quite soothing one, ran through my whole body. Since then it has become part of my consciousness.

Q. What is your advice to the new entrants in this path?

A. Surrender, faith, patience. Truth and harmony will prevail. No power on earth can prevent it from settling in the earth atmosphere and transform the whole nature into a divine one. It is as sure as the rising sun of tomorrow.

Excerpts from The Call Beyond, Vol. 15, No. 2, 1990, pp. 40-42.

*All nature dumbly calls to her alone
To heal with her feet the aching throb of life
And break the seals on the dim soul of man
And kindle her fire in the closed heart of things.
All here shall be one day her sweetness's home,
All contraries prepare her harmony;
Towards her our knowledge climbs, our passion gropes,
In her miraculous rapture we shall dwell,
Her clasp will turn to ecstasy our pain.*

SRI AUROBINDO (Savitri, Book 3, Canto 2, p. 314)

May I help you?

In this column, we shall try to answer three types of questions from the readers: 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 sending the question will be kept confidential. The questions may be sent to callbeyond@aurobindoonline.in

Questions on Mind and Brain, posed by 'Inquisitive'

What is the relationship between the mind and the brain?

Mind is a mode of Consciousness. Brain is the structure required for the Consciousness to manifest as the mind.

All creation is a manifestation of the Supreme Consciousness of the Divine. One mode of the manifestation is the body; the other mode is the mind. Body is a gross manifestation of Consciousness, mind is a subtle manifestation. The Supreme Consciousness is infinite, but the manifestation is finite. Thus, the body and the mind manifest only a fraction of the Consciousness.

We find ourselves thus going round and round in a circle: mind is an emanation of body, and body is an invention of mind. Evidently this cannot be quite right, and we have to look for something that is neither mind nor body, out of which both can spring.

BERTRAND RUSSELL (In his essay, 'What is the Soul?')

Although Bertrand Russell does not say so, and would not have admitted, from the spiritual viewpoint, his "something that is neither mind nor body, out of which both can spring" is the Supreme Consciousness of the Divine.

How has evolution affected the mind and the brain?

In the course of evolution, the brain has become more and more complex. From the fish to frog, and from frog to rabbit and then to the monkey and finally man, the complexity of the brain has progressively increased. It is as if the evolutionary urge to express a larger fraction of the Consciousness necessitated a more complex structure, and that is why a more complex brain was designed by the Master Craftsman. It is something like a computer scientist designing a better processor when he wants the computer to work faster, or perform more complex tasks.

Consciousness uses the brain which its upward strivings have produced, brain has not produced nor does it use the consciousness. ... Our physical organism no more causes or explains thought and consciousness than the construction of an engine causes or explains the motive-power of steam or electricity. The force is anterior, not the physical instrument.

SRI AUROBINDO (In: *The Life Divine*, SABCL edition, pp. 85-86)

What happens to the brain when a person grows in consciousness?

That is an interesting question. The brain may not show any obvious change, and yet the person expresses a larger fraction of the Consciousness as he grows in consciousness. How is that possible, you would ask. When a person grows in consciousness, his brain undergoes subtle changes at the level of increase in the number of connections between nerve cells in certain regions of the brain. The tendency of the brain to undergo such subtle changes in response to the way it is used is called the plasticity of the brain. When the number of connections in a certain region of the brain increases beyond a point, it shows not only at microscopic level but also as an increase in the thickness of the cortex (the superficial layer of the brain) in that region of the brain.

What it implies is that the human brain has reached a level of complexity where no gross change in the brain is required for making efforts to express a larger fraction of the Supreme Consciousness. Repeated use of the brain in a certain way can exploit the plasticity of the brain to make it suitable for manifesting more of the Supreme Consciousness. For example, a person who meditates everyday acquires progressively better mastery of the mind. As Lord Krishna tells Arjuna in the *Gita*, by practice and detachment you can control the mind (6:35).

How does the brain of a corporate head differ from that of a yogi?

For simplicity, let us assume the corporate head is not also a yogi. His work requires taking decisions in complex situations. That requires practicing mental skills that would improve reasoning skills, reduce reaction time, etc. Again, at the risk of oversimplification, one might say that practicing these skills would lead to development of the left side of the brain, whereas the yogi's development of self-control and compassion is associated with development of the right side of the brain. Hence, the corporate head is also using the plasticity of the brain to improve his performance, but he is improving the richness of connections in the left brain. Using the language of the *Gita*, cultivating *sattwic* qualities would promote, and be facilitated by, accelerated development of the right brain, whereas a similar relationship would hold for *rajasic* qualities and the left brain. Since a combination of *rajas* and *sattwa* is what gives us a responsible and conscientious man of action, a balanced approach to life is good for the peace of mind of the individual as well as good for the society.

How can balanced development of the brain be initiated in childhood?

By engaging, as the Mother has said, the child in a variety of activities. While the study of language, mathematics and science develop the left brain; music, art and theatre develop the right brain. Integral education includes not only balanced development of faculties of the mind but also seeks to encourage using the body and the mind in light of the divine essence of the individual, the Psychic Being.

*Affranchised from the look of surface mind
She paused not to survey the official case,
The issue of forms from the office of the brain,
Its factory of thought-sounds and soundless words
And voices stored within unheard by men,
Its mint and treasury of shining coin.
These were but counters in mind's symbol game,
A gramophone's discs, a reproduction's film,
A list of signs, a cipher and a code.
In our unseen subtle body thought is born
Or there it enters from the cosmic field.*

From a Visitor to the Ashram

Dear Tara didi,

That was indeed a very special lunch with such a fine human being as yourself. One day I hope to be able to spend more time in your company.

How wonderful to have spent all that time with the Mother! How blessed and enlightened that must have been growing up along side her.

You and your father have done so much in the cause of the underprivileged and spirituality.

I bow before you with great humility.

I would very much like to donate Rs. 100,000 every year for as long as I can and will try and do more along the way. I already donate a fair amount to a few other organisations in India on a regular basis.

And separately, my husband would like to sponsor a child for its entire schooling.

I get back to London the day after tomorrow. I will be urging friends and family to come forward too.

Tara didi, once again thank you for making the time and having me over at the ashram to have such a delicious lunch.

Endless blessings on you. In Light and Joy,

Jaleh Namazi

(In an e-mail dated 26 February 2015)

Gratitude on Teacher's Day

Dear Sir,

It was an honour to spend the afternoon with you today. Meeting with you always leaves a sweet fragrance in my heart, a reminder of my True Nature.

Being a fellow traveller with you fills me with immense Gratitude .

My salutations again, on this very beautiful day.

Kusum (Tiwari)

(In an e-mail dated 6 September 2015)

Dear Sir,

It was really lovely to meet you yesterday.

The time I spent to do the Integral Yoga course was one of the most peaceful and enriching times of my life. Learning so much about yoga from you would remain one of my most cherished memories and meeting you yesterday, revived them. Thank you for being an ever inspiring teacher and guide in our lives.

Thank you once again for gifting us your books. I would treasure them forever.

Hope to be able to meet you again soon.

Warmly

Kumud (Adlakha)

(In an e-mail dated 6 September 2015)

Appreciation for the Annual Report of The Mother's International School

Dear Taradi,

Thank you for sending me a copy of the Annual report of The Mother's International School.

I have browsed through it and like every year I am impressed by the range of activities the students engage in, the many different languages offered to them. In spite of the limitations set by a Board you do so much and make your offering to your students so rich!

All best wishes for the future.

Sanjeev

(from Sri Aurobindo Institute of Educational Research, in an e-mail dated 9 September 2015)

Appreciation for Navchetana (Students' Magazine of The Mother's International School)

Dear Tara, Indu and Pranjal,

This morning Vandana gave me Navchetana (2015) when I was at the school. Would you believe I finished reading it from cover to cover in one sitting by the time the lunch bell rang. It is such a delightful happy account of events and doings of MIS kids. Congratulations to them and to each one of you. What long, painstaking passionate strides all of you have taken to reach this far and yet the goal becomes bigger and multifaceted every day! Looking back I was wondering at our first result when I failed at least four times in one go!!

Dear Prajnjal, so happy to learn that you are now the chairman!! New enthusiasm and fresh ideas will blossom through your dedicated efforts, passion and legwork – don't see you sitting as a chairman though!! Praying to the Mother for sustained and incessant success for each one of you and your work. Love,

Chamanlal

(In an e-mail dated 18 September 2015)

A Eulogy for the Breathtaking Beauty of Madhuban

I have been on spiritual and yoga retreats all over the world. From the snow-covered Rocky Mountains of the United States to the rice paddies of Vietnam to the fecund jungles and sun-baked beaches of Kerala; none of these places compares to the breathtaking beauty of watching the early morning pink sun rise over the mist-filled valley of Sri Aurobindo's Madhuban Ashram.

We came from everywhere: Germany, Brazil, France, Sweden, Lithuania, India. We live in capitals of finance and commerce: Dubai, London, Hong Kong, Tokyo. We wanted a respite from our frantic, rajasic lives, to experience the beauty of the Himalayas and the wisdom of Vedanta with our teacher Swami Tattvarupananda. Many of us had known him for years, for others this was their first experience of the "Laughing Swami." He had chosen Madhuban for our sadhana, and none were disappointed with the selection or our decision to attend as his characteristic wit, approachable charm, and Madhuban's tremendous beauty carried us through the teachings of gurus past.

We spent our days practicing asana, discussing Vedanta, singing bhajans, and even playing spirited games of Charades or Swami (Simon) Says. We passed hours in silent contemplation with only birdsong and

the fragrant flowers of Madhuban's many beautiful gardens as distraction; the incessant bleating horns of Delhi were a long distant memory. We hiked in nearby forests and swam in frigid (and exhilarating!) mountain streams. We saw an eagle floating in lazy circles on a current of air; monkeys in distant trees pouted when we stole their bathing spot, fat-bellied frogs croaked in the weeds and grass.

The Madhuban facilities and staff made our two weeks effortless and allowed us to devote all of our time to study, practice, and reflection. Their community works and engagement with local schools and farms inspired us to likewise make a positive contribution to our world. The food was abundant and delicious; the accommodations easily surpassed our expectations. For my part, I was pleased to be introduced to the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother; and look forward to studying them further, perhaps on my inevitable next trip to Madhuban. I think it will be impossible to stay away!

Erik Wennermark

(In an e-mail dated 25 September 2015)

Feedback provided by the participants of the 'Mind-Body Medicine and Beyond' workshop conducted at Madhuban (23-30 September 2015)



Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Madhuban, Ramgarh is one of the very few places I have been to in search of solitude and bliss of being oneself. The very location of the ashram gives us the feel of being in the nature, and the frugal ways of living life has some meaning here. The people/volunteers/workers are very cordial and made my stay at the ashram a memorable experience with lots of values to take back home.

Mind-Body Medicine and Beyond is a totally new concept for me and I found myself enlightened by the very basis of the concept. Dr. Bijlani Sir's lectures about the Mind-Body Medicine relationship have opened an entirely new dimension for a practicing doctor like me who is quite young in the profession.

We developed a connect on the very first meeting with Dr. Bijlani, and his way of connecting spirituality with the current way of life was astounding, and the scientific basis of the connection has really made me to think in that way.

The routine which has been set will be there for my lifetime—Yoga—Bhajan—Nutritious Vegetarian diet—Shramdan—Meditation.

The workshop helped me to understand myself and the needs of the society, and paved the ways to find a proper path in this life time.

All I have learnt in these six days or so is that if there is a problem there is a solution, and the solution can be found only when we are at peace with ourselves and love all.

I will be frequently visiting this place and shall try to inculcate the values in my life.

Dr. Mohan Chandra B

ESI Hospital, Peenya, Bengaluru

Mind-Body Medicine and Beyond, when I first came to know about this subject, I was confused about what it is? Why do we need seven days to know about this subject? But now on the last day of this training my brain



has opened towards the Mind-Body relationship. Our teacher Dr. Bijlani is a gem of a person, who taught us a lot in very less time.

All the staff of the ashram is very cooperative. Food quality is good. The ashram is a very beautiful place with nice rooms, scenic beauty, flowers, fresh air; it was like heaven. I want to come again and again to this place.

Yoga and trekking were a lifetime experience.

*Dr. Varun Jaiswal
ESIC Model Hospital, Indore*

The training camp conducted by Dr. Bijlani was very interesting and educative. His way of teaching was simple and original. The subject Mind-Body-Medicine is very hard but he made it easy and unforgettable.

*Dr. Maninder Singh
ESI Hospital, Rohini, New Delhi*

Sometimes words can't express the feelings, this is how I feel now. When I came here on the very first day I thought how will I spend seven days here. But the first thing that attracts here is the beauty of this place. The entire ashram staff is very nice, the food quality is very good. Dr. Bijlani is not only a good teacher but a very nice and cool person. He has knowledge of many subjects and tries to share it with us as much as possible. I will never lose another opportunity to learn from him again. I look forward to come to the ashram again.

*Dr. Jaikaran Yadav
ESIC Model Hospital, Indore*

Ashram is truly a beautiful place to connect with the Divine and meditate. Program was very well structured and organized. I am really impressed by the way Dr. Bijlani Sir explained 'Who am I' and the 'Purpose of my life'. Overall my experience at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Madhuban, was very good.

Thanks a lot to respected Dr. Bijlani Sir for making us aware of the deeper truths of life. He taught us to have dispassionate or 'Prasad Buddhi', to accept all the situations of life with equal delight, and to always stay connected with the Almighty. He taught us to stay calm and balanced in all situations of life. I wish to attend more such workshops.

*Dr. Sapna Saluja
ESI Hospital, Basai Darapur, Delhi*

The training program arranged by NTA here at Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Ramgarh, was different and new experience. I would like to thank Dr. Bijlani for introducing us to this new concept of Mind-Body Medicine. After listening to his talks on different topics about life, the approach towards different situations will definitely

change and it will be helpful both in personal and professional life.



Yoga classes early in the morning relax the mind and body, and they are simple for people of all age groups.

Ashram is situated in such a place that it is very peaceful and close to nature. All the people in the ashram were good, friendly, approachable and helpful. Subhash has added a lot to our memories by taking us for trekking. It was adventurous and a different type of experience. I am very very thankful to Subhash and all others who are a part of the ashram and training.

*Dr. Rashmi M.R.
ESI Hospital, Peenya, Bengaluru*

Please send your feedback

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www.auromira.in

Feedback

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Kaivalyadhama Yoga Institute, Lonavala
410413 (Maharashtra, India) will be holding
its Eighth International Yoga Conference
from 27-30 December 2015. The theme of
the conference is 'Yoga and Education'.

For Registration and Submission of Abstracts,
please contact

kdhamconference@gmail.com

For more details, please visit

www.kdham.com and

<http://kdham.com/conference-2015/>

Announcement

A self-regulatory body, the Indian Yoga
Association, has been established with the
objective of standardization and coordination
of yoga in the country. The Registered Office
of the Association is in Morarji Desai National
Institute of Yoga, New Delhi.

For membership and any other questions,
please contact

iyayog@gmail.com