

NAIROBI CENTRE – NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2011

Dates to remember:-

1st February 2011 – Tuesday – Prosperity Day Meditation at 6.30 p.m. at the Bhavan.

21st February 2011 – Monday – The Mother's 133rd Birth Anniversary Meditation at the Bhavan at 6.30 p.m.

Every Saturday: 5.15p.m. to 6.30p.m.: Meditation, "SAVITRI" studies, readings from "GROWING WITHIN".

Every Sunday: 11.00a.m. to 12.30p.m.: Readings from "The Synthesis of Yoga"

Shrine: Sri Aurobindo's Shrine at Sri Aurobindo Bhavan is open from 8a.m. to 7p.m. You are welcome. It is a place for silent meditation.

NEWS

On 17th December 2010, at Sri Aurobindo Bhavan, Nairobi Centre presented 2000 booklets in ten different titles to The Karen Hospital which has got the main hospital and two satellite clinics in Nairobi. The booklets will be kept in all the main reception areas for the patients and some will be distributed to the hospital staff.

On 20th December 2010, two members of Nairobi Centre, Sri Aurobindo Society visited the Physically Disabled Society of Kenya, Nairobi. They were welcomed by the Deputy Director and other officials. After a brief introduction on the aims and activities of Sri Aurobindo Society, 2000 booklets (in ten titles) were presented to PDSK. The booklets will be kept in main outlets of the society in and around Nairobi.

A Polite Request

Dear Friends, though there is no subscription as such for this Newsletter, Shs. 1000/= per year helps to cover postage, printing and other expenses. Contribution by way of cheque may be sent to:-

Sri Aurobindo Society, Nairobi Centre,
P. O. Box 42099, 00100 GPO NAIROBI

The following message is taken from the Monthly Newsletter (December 2010) of Sri Aurobindo Society, Puducherry:

Important Note for Branches and Centres

It has been noticed that not much attention is paid to the poems of Sri Aurobindo while studying His works. It is advised that the list of poems listed below, which cover various aspects of Sri Aurobindo's yoga, are studied with care and devotion. **List of Sri Aurobindo's poems for study:**

- *Invitation*
- *Baji Prabhou*
- *Who*
- *To The Sea*
- *Fear of Death*
- *God's labour*
- *Life*
- *Transformation*
- *Silence is All*
- *Is This the End?*
- *Dwarf Napoleon*
- *Divine Sense*
- *Golden Light*
- *Because Thou Art*
- *Infinite Adventure*
- *Hell and Heaven*
- *Stone Goddess*
- *Krishna (page 150 of the collected poems)*
- *The Word of Silence*
- *The Divine Worker*
- *Surrender*
- *Moments*
- *Adwait*
- *The Mother of God*
- *The Meditations of Mandavya (special attention page 89, 90)*
- *On Her Birthday*

(All the articles taken in this newsletter are from **Special Number on Food and Eating** published by **All India Magazine – December 2010**).

Purpose of Consecrating Food to the Divine Before Eating

Physically, we depend upon food to live – unfortunately. For with food, we daily and constantly take in a formidable amount of inconscience, of *tamas*, heaviness, stupidity. One can't do otherwise – unless constantly, without a break, we remain completely aware and, as soon as an element is introduced into our body, we immediately work upon it to extract from it only the light and reject all that may darken our consciousness. This is the origin and rational explanation of the religious practice of consecrating one's food to God before taking it. When eating one aspires that this food may not be taken for the little human ego but as an offering to the divine consciousness within oneself. In all yogas, all religions, this is encouraged. This is the origin of that practice, of contacting the consciousness behind, precisely to diminish as much as possible the absorption of an inconscience which increases daily, constantly, without one's being aware of it.

THE MOTHER (CWM Vol.4,pp334-35)

Remedy for Desires and Greeds

The ordinary life is a round of various desires and greeds. As long as one is preoccupied with them, there can be no lasting progress. A way out of the round must be discovered. Take, as an instance, that commonest preoccupation of ordinary life – the constant thinking by people of what they will eat and whether they are eating enough. To conquer the greed for food an equanimity in the being must be developed such that you are perfectly indifferent towards food. If food is given to you, you eat it; if not, it does not worry you in the least; above all, you do not keep thinking about food. And the thinking must not be negative, either. To be absorbed in devising methods and means of abstinence as the *sannyasis* do is to be almost as preoccupied with food as to be absorbed in dreaming of it greedily. Have an attitude of indifference towards it: that is the main thing. Get the idea of food out of your consciousness, do not attach the slightest importance to it.

This will be very easy to do once you get into contact with your psychic being, the true soul deep within you. Then you will feel immediately how very unimportant these things are and that the sole thing that matters is the Divine. To dwell in the psychic is to be lifted above all greed. You will have no hankering, no worry, no feverish desire. ...

THE MOTHER (CWM Vol.3,p123)

Follow the Body's Indications

In fact, the best thing is not to think about it but to regulate one's life automatically enough not to need to think of eating. You eat at fixed hours, eat reasonably, you don't even need to think of food when you are taking it; you must eat calmly, that's all, quietly with concentration, and when you do not eat you must never think about it. You must not eat too much, because then you will have to think about your digestion, and it will be very unpleasant for you and will make you waste much time. You must eat just...you must put an end to all desire, all attraction, all movements of the vital, because when you eat simply because the body needs to eat, the body will tell you absolutely precisely and exactly when it has had enough; you see, when one is not moved by a vital desire or mental ideas, one grasps with surety. "Now it is enough," says the body, "I don't want any more." So one stops. As soon as one has ideas or else desires in the vital, and there is, for instance something that you like particularly, because you like it particularly you eat three times too much of it...In fact, this may cure you to a certain extent, because if you don't have a very strong stomach, you get indigestion, and then after that you have a disgust for the thing which has given you indigestion. Still, these are rather drastic means. One can make progress without having recourse to such means. The best is not to think about it. ...

THE MOTHER (CWM Vol.7,p.62)

Fasting

The first thing I tell people when they want not to eat or sleep is that no yoga can be done without sufficient food and sleep (see the Gita on this point). Fasting or sleeplessness make the nerves morbid and excited and weaken the brain and lead to delusions and fantasies. The Gita says, yoga is not for one who eats too much or sleeps too much, neither is it for one who does not eat or does not sleep, but if one eats and sleeps suitably – then one can do it best. It is the same with everything else. How often have I said that excessive retirement was suspect to me and that to do nothing but meditate was a lop-sided and therefore unsound sadhana?

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Not to eat as the method of getting rid of the greed of food is ascetic way. Ours is equanimity and non-attachment.

SRI AUROBINDO (SABCL 24:1470-71)

The Question of Food for Children

... The question of food has been studied at length and in detail; the diet that help children in their growth is generally known and it may be very useful to follow it. But it is very important to remember that the instinct of the body, so long as it remains intact, is more reliable than any theory. Accordingly, those who want their child to develop normally should not force him to eat food which he finds distasteful, for most often the body possesses a sure instinct as to what is harmful to it, unless the child is particularly capricious.

The body in its normal state, that is to say, when there is no intervention of mental notions or vital impulses, also knows very well what is good and necessary for it; but for this to be effective in practice, one must educate the child with care and teach him to distinguish his desires from his needs. He should be helped to develop a taste for food that is simple and healthy, substantial and appetizing, but free from any useless complications. In his daily food, all that merely stuffs and causes heaviness should be avoided; and above all, he must be taught to eat according to his hunger, neither more nor less, and not to make his meals an occasion to satisfy his greed or gluttony. From one's very childhood, one should know that one eats in order to give strength and health to the body and not to enjoy the pleasures of the palate. Children should be given food that suits their temperament, prepared in a way that ensures hygiene and cleanliness, that is pleasant to the taste and yet very simple. This food should be chosen and apportioned according to the age of the child and his regular activities. It should contain all the chemical and dynamic elements that are necessary for his development and the balanced growth of every part of his body.

Since the child will be given only the food that helps to keep him healthy and provide him with energy he needs, one must be very careful not to use food as a means of coercion and punishment. The practice of telling a child, "You have not been a good boy, you won't get any dessert," etc., is most harmful. In this way you create in his little consciousness the impression that food is given to him chiefly to satisfy his greed and not because it is indispensable for the proper functioning of his body.

THE MOTHER (CWM Vol.12, pp13-14)