

Nairobi Centre of Sri Aurobindo Society
Newsletter March 2014
<https://sites.google.com/site/savitrinairobi/>

Dates to remember:-

1st March 2014 – Saturday – Prosperity day – readings from Savitri and Collected Works of the Mother.

29th March 2014 – Saturday – marks the centenary of the historic day of the world when the Mother first arrived in Puducherry and met Sri Aurobindo. To celebrate this day, to reiterate our conscious collaboration in Their work, the Society is taking out a Souvenir.

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Every Saturday: 5.15p.m. to 6.30p.m.: Meditation, "SAVITRI" studies, readings from "COLLECTED WORKS OF THE MOTHER – De Luxe Volume 17.

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.

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NEWS

31st January 2014 – Nairobi Centre of Sri Aurobindo Society presented five hundred booklets of Ideal Child, Ideal Parent, Ideal Teacher to Oshwal Academy Junior School. The booklets will be distributed among the children and the staff of the school.

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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,
P. O. Box 42099, 00100 GPO NAIROBI

The following article is taken from NAMA – The Journal of Integral Health, January 2014.

What is death?

In 1968, while a reorganisation of the school was taking place, Mother declared that she was ready to reply to any questions that the students wished to ask her about interesting subjects of study. When someone asked her to choose a subject, she replied: “Death.”

This offer was made to all the students. The following work represents the response of a French class to Mother’s offer.

In the course of each session, the questions were formulated by each student individually and sent together to Mother.

(The students wrote to Mother, asking to be allowed to work with her on a study on death. Mother gave these instructions orally to the teacher.)

The subject is: What is death?

How should you begin? You must look into yourself, look inside; do not try to know by reading books or to find out what is happening in the vital and the mind: what you feel, what you think about death.

The research should be carried out exclusively on a material plane: what is death, from the physical point of view?

You must concentrate and find the answers in yourself. Don’t make any speeches. Say only one sentence. The more intelligent you are, the less words you need to express yourself.

27 April 1968

(The students’ replies to the question, “What is death, from the physical point of view?”:

“All circulation of blood in the brain cells stops.”

“When the brain stops functioning and the decomposition of the body begins, that is death.”

“The cessation of all physical activity due to the absence of the energy source, or soul.”

“The actual fact of death makes me think of an experience in which one is projected with increasing force into space.”

Mother wrote to the class:)

I read what you sent with interest. And here is my reply:

Death is the phenomenon of decentralisation and dispersion of the cells which make up the physical body.

The consciousness is, by its very nature, immortal, and in order to manifest in the physical world, it assumes more or less lasting material forms.

The material substance is in course of transformation in order to become a multiform and increasingly perfect and lasting mode of expression for this consciousness.

18 May 1968

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(This time, Mother gave separate replies to the questions and sent them to the teacher:)

Here are my replies to your students' questions. I hope they will be able to understand.

If a cell becomes conscious of its own personality, is it not liable to act only in its own self-interest, taking no account of the collective interest?

What is the self-interest of a cell!

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Does the decentralisation occur all at once or by degrees?

Everything does not disperse all at once; it takes a long time.

The central will of the physical being abdicates its will to hold all the cells together. That is the first phenomenon. It accepts dissolution for one reason or another. One of the strongest reasons is the sense of an irreparable disharmony; the other is a kind of disgust with continuing the effort of coordination and harmonisation. In fact, there are innumerable reasons, but unless there is a violent accident, it is above all this will to maintain cohesion which abdicates for one reason or another, or without reason. It is this which inevitably precedes death.

Must each cell be conscious of its oneness with the centre?

It is not like that. It is still a semi-collective consciousness, it is not an individual consciousness of the cells.

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Does decentralisation always occur after death, or can it start before?

It often starts before.

Do the cells disperse in space or in the body itself? If they disperse in space, the body must surely disappear with the cells?

Naturally, the body dissolves after death, but that takes a long time.

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In the expression “dispersion of the cells”, doesn’t the word “dispersion” have a special meaning? If so, what is it?

I used the word dispersion of the cells in its most concrete sense.

When the concentration which forms the body comes to an end and the body dissolves, all the cells that have been especially developed and have become conscious of the divine Presence within them, are scattered and enter other combinations in which they awaken, by contagion, the consciousness of the Presence that each one has had. And in this way, by this phenomenon of concentration, development and dispersion, all matter evolves and learns by contagion, develops by contagion, has the experience by contagion.

Naturally, the cell dissolves with the body. It is the consciousness of the cells that enters other combinations.

5 June 1968

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When the will of the physical being abdicates without reason, is it without any physical reason or without any reason at all?

The physical consciousness is conscious only physically; the will of the physical being can abdicate without any reason of which it is aware.

What causes the physical being’s disgust with continuing the effort of coordination and harmonisation?

Usually, this disgust occurs when there is, in one part of the being (an important part, either vital or mental), an absolute refusal to progress. And so, physically, this is manifested as a refusal to strive against the deterioration which comes with time.

Where is the connection between the central will of the physical being and the cells established? And how?

The cells have an inner composition or structure which corresponds to the structure of the universe. So the link is established between identical external and internal states.... It is not “external”, but it is external for the individual. That is, the cell, in its internal composition, receives the vibration of the corresponding state in the composition of the whole. Each cell is composed of different radiances, with a wholly luminous centre, and the connection is established between light and light. That is, the will, the central light, acts on the cell by touching the corresponding lights, by an inner contact of the being. Each cell is a world in miniature corresponding to the whole.

15 July 1968

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Is the will for progress enough to prevent the deterioration that comes with time? How can the physical being prevent this deterioration?

That is precisely what the transformation of the body is: the physical cells not only become conscious, but receptive to the true Consciousness-Force; that is, they allow the working of this higher Consciousness. That is the work of transformation.

How does the will, the central light, which is not material, act on the gross matter of the cell?

It is just like asking, “How does the will act on matter?” All life is like that. You should explain to these children that their whole existence is the result of the action of the will, that without will, matter would be inert and immobile and that it is precisely the fact that the vibration of will acts on matter that makes life possible. Otherwise there would be no life. If they want a scientific answer and want to know how, it is more difficult, but the fact is there, it is a fact that can be seen at every second.

20 July 1968

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How does one become conscious of the physical being?

Mankind, nearly all of mankind, is conscious only of the physical being. With education, the number of men who are conscious of their vital and mind is increasing. As for the human beings who are conscious of their psychic being, they are relatively few.

If you mean, “How does one awaken the consciousness of the physical being?”, that is precisely the aim of physical education. It is physical education that teaches the cells to be conscious. But for the development of the brain, it is study, observation, intelligent education, above all observation and reasoning. And naturally, for the whole education of the consciousness from the point of view of character, it is yoga.

Does the central will of the physical being have a particular location in the body?

It is the brain.

Can one experience death without dying?

Certainly. One can experience death yogically; one can even experience it materially, if death is short enough so that the doctors do not have time to pronounce you dead.

After death, which part of the being becomes aware that one is dead?

Any part of the being that survives can become aware that the body is no longer there. It depends.

How can one tell for certain that the physical body is dead?

Only when it decomposes.

How can one control or prevent the process of disintegration?

By carefully maintaining the physical balance.

When one dies, does one necessarily feel physical pain?

Not necessarily.

28 September 1968

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What should we do in our daily lives to stop the process of death?

The method is to detach one's consciousness from the body and to concentrate it on the deeper life, so as to bring this deeper consciousness into the body.

If the sense of "self" has identified itself more with the mind in life, is this the same sense of "self" that has all the experiences after death, that is, that retains at the same time the memories of life? I am asking this about the mind, for it remains formed a little longer than the other parts after death.

It is not true that the mind is more durable. The psychic consciousness which has identified itself with the little physical part leaves this little physical person. Insofar as this consciousness has shaped the life, it remembers what it has shaped and the memory is closely linked to the psychic consciousness in the events. Wherever the psychic consciousness has not taken part in events, there is no memory. And only the psychic consciousness can continue; it is not the mind that retains memories, that is quite incorrect.

1 February 1969