

Nairobi Centre of Sri Aurobindo Society
Newsletter May 2014

Dates to remember:-

1st May 2014 – Prosperity day – Thursday – Public Holiday – Meditation at the Bhavan at 11.00 a.m.

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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

On 23rd March 2014, Nairobi Centre of Sri Aurobindo Society held a seminar on 'Anger'. Twenty-eight members attended the seminar. The seminar began at 10.30a.m. with The Mother's Prayer of 8th February 1914 followed by collective chanting of Sri Aurobindo's Gayatri Mantra.

The chairman gave a brief sketch on the role of anger in our everyday life, how it affects all parts of our being and some of the methods shown by the Mother and Sri Aurobindo to surmount it and that in Sri Aurobindo's Yoga this emotion is not only to be surmounted but transformed by surrendering to the Divine.

There were ten participants. Each one spoke on the subject giving their personal views, causes and effects of anger in their lives and how they tried to manage it. Aryurvedic, biological, psychological and social aspects were also presented. All were in agreement that anger is a destructive and extremely difficult force to manage and that stepping back, aspiring and praying for help from the Higher forces, forgiving and keeping a positive attitude in life helped to overcome anger to some extent. Some apt quotations of The Mother and Sri Aurobindo were given.

29 March 2014 – The centenary of the Mother's first meeting with Sri Aurobindo at Pondicherry – This day was observed as a special day like other Darshan days at Nairobi Centre of Sri Aurobindo Society. The Mother's Prayer of 30th March 1914 was read out and then the Darshan Message of 29th March 2014 from the Ashram was read out followed by collective recital of Sri Aurobindo's Gayatri Mantra. Thereafter there was half an hour meditation accompanied by Sunilda's music. This was followed by readings on significance of the Mother's first meeting with Sri Aurobindo on 29th March 1914, given by Rishabhchand and how to observe the centenary quoting Sri Aurobindo's words taken from All India Magazine, March 2013. The copies of the darshan message and prasad were distributed to all present.

(The following extractions are taken from – Living Words compiled by Dr. A. S. Dalal. It is a continuation of the April Newsletter 2014.)

Ascension Beyond the Human

Interiorisation

Almost totally, everybody lives on the surface, all the time, all the time on the surface. And for them it's even the only thing which exists – the surface. And when something compels them to draw back from the surface, some people feel that they are falling into a hole. There are people who, if they are drawn back from the surface, suddenly feel that they are crumbling down into an abyss, so unconscious they are!

They are conscious only of a kind of small thin crust which is all that they know of themselves and things and the world, and it is so thin a crust! Many! I have experienced, I don't know how often... I tried to interiorize some people and immediately they felt that they were fallen into an abyss, and at times a black abyss. Now this is the absolute inconstance. But a fall, a fall into something which for them is like a non-existence, this happens very often. People are told: "Sit down and try to be silent, to be very silent"; this frightens them terribly.

A fairly long preparation is needed in order to feel an increase of life when one goes out of the outer consciousness. It is already a great progress. And then there is the culmination, that when one is obliged for some reason or other to return to the outer consciousness, it is there that one has the impression of falling into a black hole, at least into a kind of dull, lifeless greyness, a chaotic mixture of disorganized things, with the faintest light, and all this seems so dull, so dim, so dead that one wonders how it is possible to remain in this state – but this of course is the other end – unreal, false, confused, lifeless!

The Mother (CWM 7:282-83)

Learning to Look at Oneself

... when one thinks of “myself” one thinks of the body. That is the usual thing. The personal reality is the body’s reality. It is only when one has made an effort for inner development and tried to find something that is a little more stable in one’s being, that one can begin to feel that this “something” which is permanently conscious throughout all ages and all change, this something must be “myself”. But that already requires a study that is rather deep. Otherwise if you think “I am going to do this”, “I need that”, it is always your body, a small kind of will which is a mixture of sensations, of more or less confused sentimental reactions, and still more confused thoughts which form a mixture and are animated by an impulse, an attraction, a desire, some sort of a will; and all that momentarily becomes “myself” – but not directly, for one does not conceive this “myself” as independent of the head, the trunk, the arms and legs and all that moves – it is very closely linked.

It is only after having thought much, seen much, studied much, observed much that you begin to realize that the one is more or less independent of the other and that the will behind can make it either act or not act, and you begin not to be completely identified with the movement, the action, the realization – that something is floating. But you have to observe much to see that.

And then you observe much more still to see that this, the second thing that is there, this kind of active conscious will, is set in motion by “something else” which watches, judges, decides and tries to found its decisions on knowledge – that happens even much later. And so, when you begin to see this “something else”, you begin to see that it has the power to set in motion the second thing, which is an active will; and not only that, but that it has a very direct and very important action on the reactions, the feelings, the sensations, and that finally it can have control over all the movements of the being – this part which watches, observes, judges and decides.

That is the beginning of control.

When one become conscious of that, one has seized the thread, and when one speaks of control, one can know, “Ah! Yes, this is what has the power of control.”

That is how one learns to look at oneself.

The Mother (CWM 9:310-11)

Individuality – the First Conquest

It is only very gradually, very slowly, through the movements of life and a more or less careful and thorough education that you begin to have sensations which are personal to you, feelings and ideas which are personal to you. An individualized mind is something extremely rare, which come only after a long education; otherwise it is a kind of thought-current passing through your brain and then through a multitude of other brains, and this is in perpetual movement and has no individuality. One thinks what others are thinking, others think what still others are thinking, and everybody thinks like that in a great mixture, because these are currents, vibrations of thoughts passing from one to another. If you look at yourself attentively, you will very quickly become aware that very few thought in you are personal. Where do you draw them from? – From what you have heard, from what you have read, what you have been taught, and how many of these thoughts you have are the result of your own experience, your own reflection, your purely personal observation? – Not many.

Only those who have an intense intellectual life, who are in the habit of reflecting, observing, putting ideas together, gradually form a mental individuality for themselves.

Most people – and not only those who are uneducated but even the well-read – can have the most contradictory, the most opposite ideas in their heads without even aware of the contradictions. I have seen numerous examples like that, of people who cherished ideas and even had political, social, religious opinions on all the so-called higher field of human intelligence, who had absolutely contradictory opinions on the same subject, and were not aware of it. And if you observe yourself, you will see that you have many ideas which ought to be linked by a sequence of intermediate ideas which are the result of a considerable widening of the thought if they are not to coexist in an absurd way.

... Some people, at a rather lower level, know themselves only by the name they bear. They would not be able to distinguish themselves from their neighbours except by their names. They are asked, “Who are you?” – “My name is this.” A little later they tell you the name of their occupation or about their main characteristic. If they are asked, “Who are you?” – “I am a painter.”...

... One lives by a kind of habit which is barely half-conscious – one lives, does not even objectify what one does, why one does, how one does it. One does it by habit. All those who are born in a certain environment, a certain country, automatically take the habits of that environment, not only material habits but habits of thought, habits of feeling and habits of acting. They do it without watching themselves doing it, quite naturally, and if someone points this out to them they are astonished.

As a matter of fact, one has the habit of sleeping, speaking, eating, moving and one does all this as something quite natural, without wondering why or how... And many other things. All the time one does things automatically, by force of habit, one does not watch oneself. And so, when one lives in a particular society, one automatically does what is normally

done in that society. And if somebody begins to watch himself acting, watch himself feeling and thinking, he looks like a kind of phenomenal monster compared with the environment he lives in.

Therefore, individuality is not at all the rule, it is an exception, and if you do not have that sort of bag, a particular form which is your outer body and your appearance, you could hardly be distinguished from one another.

Individuality is a conquest. And this first conquest is only a first stage, and once you have realized within you something like a personal independent and conscious being, then what you have to do is to break the form and go farther. For example, if you want to progress mentally, you must break all your mental forms, all your mental constructions to be able to make new ones. So, to begin with, a tremendous labour is required to individualise oneself, and afterwards one must demolish all that has been done in order to progress.

The Mother(CWM 9:43-46)

“The limitations of the body are a mould; soul and mind have to pour themselves into them, break them and constantly remould them in wider limits till the formula of agreement is found between this finite and their own infinity.”

Sri Aurobindo, Thoughts and Glimpses