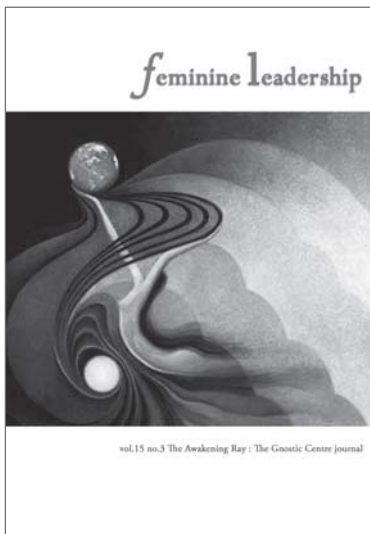


*f*eminine Leadership



vol.15 no.3 The Awakening Ray : The Gnostic Centre journal





THE AWAKENING RAY
vol.15 issue 3

THE TEAM

EDITOR
Ameeta Mehra
CO-EDITOR
Anuradha
PRINTED & PUBLISHED BY
Anuradha Agrawal
OWNER
Ameeta Mehra
on behalf of The Gnostic Centre
PRINTING PRESS
Gokul Offset Private Limited
D-159A, Okhla Phase 1
New Delhi-20
PLACE OF PUBLICATION
The Gnostic Centre
H-401 Som Vihar Apts.
Sangam Marg, New Delhi-22

The views & thoughts expressed in the articles are those of the authors and therefore the editor shall bear no responsibility for them.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust, Pondicherry:
* All quotations from
Sri Aurobindo and The Mother
* Material (including photographs)
from the Ashram publications
* The Awakening Ray image
(artist: Krishnalal)

the awakening ray
v.15, issue 3 : may-jun'2011

• EDITORIAL	<i>Anuradha</i>	4
• THE AWAKENING RAY	<i>The Mother</i>	5
• OF FEMININE LEADERSHIP		
* What kind of organisational structure can promote harmony rather than conflict?	<i>Sumita Ghose</i>	7
* How to create spaces that sustain culture as well as engage with the future?	<i>Revathi Kamath</i>	9
* Creating a larger social good out of a personal crisis	<i>Dr. Shanti Auluck</i>	10
* How can business be integral?	<i>Uma Prajapati</i>	12
* The need to integrate the spiritual	<i>Mina Singh</i>	12
* When everybody wins... sustaining life on earth	<i>Dr. Mallika V Sarabhai</i>	14
* Oneness that includes the feminine & the masculine	<i>Frederick Schulze-Buxloh</i>	15
• HATSHEPSUT	<i>Internet</i>	16
• THE PROBLEM OF DUALITY	<i>The Mother</i>	17
• THE FEMININE PRINCIPLE IN TEACHING & LEARNING	<i>Monica Gupta</i>	23
• WU ZETIAN	<i>Internet</i>	25
• JUNG'S ARCHETYPES AS SOURCES FOR FEMALE LEADERSHIP	<i>Lt Col Prisco R. Hernández</i>	26
• RANI RASHMONI	<i>Internet</i>	32
• EVENTS		33
<i>Picture Credits</i>		33
<i>Advertisements</i>		34



Editorial



Dear Reader,

We are living in times when increasingly it is acknowledged that a more spiritual way of living needs to inform our daily lives. Concurrently, the role of women in creating a paradigm shift as to how the world is run, what kind of future we create together – this too is gaining importance. Combined with this is the widely accepted association of the ‘feminine’ with ‘spiritual energy’ and of the ‘masculine’ with ‘mental energy’. These three together seem to have led to the concept of ‘feminine leadership’.

Many views abound. Some affirming that ‘women managers possessing certain distinct feminine talents and characteristics may be better prepared to cope with the challenges of the future than many traditional males.’¹ Others cautioning that viewing the new paradigm of leadership as feminine, though of some value, ‘may also create a misleading impression of women’s orientation to leadership as well as reproducing stereotypes and the traditional gender division of labour.’²

Indeed, to confine ‘feminine’ traits to women and ‘masculine’ to men is to be blind to the reality one experiences within oneself or around. There are two issues here –

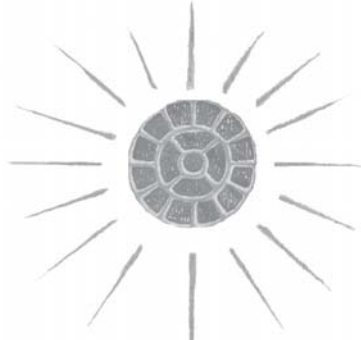
- 1) What is leadership?
- 2) What is feminine?

Only when we have understood these, can we formulate what is ‘feminine leadership’. As you will see, in this issue, we have culled together glimpses into both these aspects, along with varied interpretations of ‘feminine leadership’ and also that which goes beyond these mental concepts and touches upon a deeper truth of Oneness, where duality loses its base. One may view these as complementary aspects – as stages in one’s growth – perhaps towards allowing the ‘feminine’ principles to breathe and express themselves, then, to move towards combining these with the ‘masculine’ traits, and finally to rise beyond both, beyond oneself, into not only Oneness but also Surrender to a higher leadership.

✍ Anuradha

¹ Sarla Sharma, (1990) “Psychology of Women in Management: a distinct Feminine Leadership”, Equal Opportunities International, Vol. 9 Iss: 2, pp.13 – 18. Doi: 10.1108/eb010528

² Due Billing, Y. and Alvesson, M. (2000), Questioning the Notion of Feminine Leadership: A Critical Perspective on the Gender Labelling of Leadership. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 7:144–157. doi: 10.1111/1468-0432.00103



“... women are in principle the executive power. You must never forget that. And in order to receive the inspiration, you can take support from a masculine consciousness if you feel the need for it. There is the Supreme Consciousness which is more certain, but still, if you need an intermediary... But for the execution, it is you who have the power to carry it out in all the details, with all the power of organisation. I am instilling this into our women Members of Parliament—you know, there are women in Parliament, and I am teaching them that: do not be submissive to men. It is you who have the power of execution. This will have its effect.”

✍ The Mother
Conversation dated 11 November 1967

¹ The Mother. *Collected Works of The Mother*. Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram.





of feminine leadership

a circle of experiences



What kind of organisational structure can promote harmony rather than conflict?

SUMITA GHOSE

I grew up in the city of Mumbai and while growing up I did not feel that being a girl was a disadvantage in any way. Then I moved to live and work in a very remote part of the country, right at the border of western Rajasthan at Bikaner. I lived and worked there in remote villages for ten years where it was a totally different world; we couldn't think that it was the same country. Women were and still are in *purdah*, there is a lot of discrimination not just on the basis of male and female but caste and various other discriminations in the villages.



The question was to work towards women's empowerment, women's development. The framework changed from initially providing services to women so that they could better their lives to really changing the framework in terms of empowerment where women would gain more power so that they have a greater say in their lives... providing opportunities to women in areas they did not traditionally have access to – access to education, access to health. We realized that it's one thing to look at what they don't have but there is lots that one can build on from what they already have. For example, the question of health – there were no doctors there, no nurses, but all the villages had village mid-wife who had an amazing repertoire of experiences and knowledge in not just child-birth but other health practices as well. So from there we worked on empowerment of women with mixed results. Very often the same negative power equations that invade any organization – where the power can get centralized, where it's totally in the hands of one or a few people who then use it over others rather than with others – the same kind of issues crept in even in an all-women group. These were some of the dilemmas that we faced.

Note: This write-up is a compilation of sharings from the panel on 'Feminine Leadership' - at The Gnostic Centre, as part of the Seminar on 'A Collective Aspiration can change the course of Events' (26-28 March, 2011)



Much later, I was at a course studying ‘conflict resolution’ and I was trying to figure out what kind of organizations and institutions will promote harmony rather than conflict. In India there are a few people that are ‘shining’ but a lot of people are left out of this shining process, who are just nowhere near that 8-9% growth and this is a potential area of conflict in our country which is erupting.

I had an opportunity of working with Artisans in the past. We have 150 million artisans in our country and after agriculture it is the largest employment opportunity for people here but sadly more and more people are leaving this profession because what they get is very little. On the other hand I knew that there was a strong demand of the products which are handcrafted, which are contemporary, which are beautiful and traditional. So I thought of *Rangсутra* as a kind of tool to connect these two worlds. They are real worlds and not virtual worlds, of rural artisans (many of them are women today in our country) and of people – not market, but people who are interested in these kind of products and the story behind the product. So we founded *Rangсутra* with a thousand artisans and thought it should be like a cooperative but knowing the cooperative in the country, the bureaucracy, the politics that invades it, I said ‘No, it could have the spirit of a cooperative but needs to have the dynamism of the private sector’ – the ability to take risks and make decisions when needed. We formed *Rangсутra* with all parts of the chain on board as shareholders. We have 1200 shareholders now, 73% of whom are rural artisan women and we have some social investors who look beyond just the financial profit and people from the retail chain as well, and it has been quite a struggle. It has been a challenge to have all parts of the craft chain – right from the one who is weaving and spinning to the one who is selling it in the shop – to be a part of this company. Thus, everybody realizes that our future is interdependent and if the artisan is not going to be paid a good amount, a decent amount, she is going to stop, and vice-versa.

I went through a very feminist stage in the middle through which I learnt a lot, and I realized that any ‘ism’ really excludes others. How do we create spaces which are inclusive, which allow for diverse opinions not only in different cultures but in different sections of society to be part of same forum and to work in as harmonious a way as possible?

Sumita Ghose is a Fulbright Scholar – CT and Peacebuilding, and the Manager of Artisans Marketing Company. Sumita is the Founder and Chief Executive of *Rangсутra*. She has close to 20 years of experience of working with rural communities in remote areas of India, in order to bring about social and economic change. From forming women’s health collectives and self help groups aimed at economic self reliance, to mobilizing village communities to run primary education programs for their children, Sumita has worked extensively at the grassroots. Handicrafts and handloom weaving being one of the core competencies of rural communities, she has worked at organizing artisans into collectives and providing professional assistance, in order to get a better deal in the market place.



How to create spaces that sustain culture as well as engage with the future?

REVATHI KAMATH

The journey has been long and the experience so vast and I don't know how to share with you the evolution of an ecological consciousness and the values that govern the architecture that I feel compelled towards. I began with low cost, I began with the pressing issue of the have-nots participating in the activity of building and retaining and nurturing the craft skills of the people that traditional systems have created, and bringing it to the mainstream. There is a populace that enjoys this genre of architecture and patronize it. It is an architecture in which the making



of space is both a continuity of tradition and is also looking into the future. The involvement of the craft traditions in the generation of form and the act of building is paramount. We have built more than 500 buildings from Ladakh to Lakshadweep and from Kohima to Daman and everywhere we have actually evoked the craft that is latent in the area and assimilated it into the building. We have also looked at introducing new materials into it, understanding the craft potential that could be brought to the place, and then making the building an event in an ecological continuum. And ecology does not just mean nature. It encompasses both nature and culture. And when we say culture, it means the culture of the future or the culture that is a sharing of values; it has to be nurturing, it has to be evolutionary and therefore the habitat is really an extension of ourselves. I am not talking about 'one earth' but it is one earth. The civilisational aspect of human being is related to sustaining all life – and, to let it nurture, to evoke the self-healing capacities of the physical universe that we all occupy – to understand and to create a material civilization within that self-healing capacity, with the consciousness of evolution.

All the architecture that we do comes out of this consciousness but at the same time it doesn't mean that we impose this value system on all. The way is to understand the values of those who commission us, to work with them, to work with their consciousness and to use all the positive elements of that consciousness, expose the potential that is possible, to be more ecological and hence to be more complete, and to enable, actually, the self-healing capacities of our physical universe to occur.

So, this is the way we build – we build with community, we build with artisans, we build with clients. It is always participatory, everyone is involved – all of them have to collaborate in an informal way. The point I am trying to make is that all of us have to work in unison and it's only then that you can create jointly, a being or a structure which is harmonious within itself. The sense of infinity, the sense of place is created only when all of us work together and work with nature, be conscious of where every material used is coming from, understand thrift, understand minimalism, understand that these materials and the building



itself is alive, an organism and so what we assume as ‘inert material’ that is going into the making of a building is in reality part of a living system.

In the making of buildings we sustain a lot of life. In our building about 80% of the money is spent on sustaining the craftsperson who is involved, and also enabling everyone to participate. For instance, even though everybody has not opted to live in a mud-walled structure, a lot of people have taken to allowing their walls to be plastered with earth – and that in itself sustains at least 50-60 women in the city of Delhi, maintaining these walls – and they turn up like birds every season. So, there is a certain relationship that is established with the poorest of the poor who live in your extended habitat. That’s the skill they have at the moment – there is no education, but there is so much beauty in their hands.

I don’t have an organization, but there is this virtual community that’s constantly participating in all our efforts, and it is so joyous. It is through the building that you dialogue with the Infinite constantly, because you have to organize material, organize space in a sense that can communicate this sense of infinity and establish connectedness with all the human aspirations around you as well as the material.

Revathi Sekhar Kamath is an urban designer and architect. Along with her husband Vasant, Revathi has handled a wide variety of interesting and challenging projects, in diverse social, economic and geographical contexts. Their work is a creative synthesis of attitudes and technologies into an aesthetic habitat and way of life. Their work has been published and exhibited all over the world. They have more than 150 projects to their credit, including a desert resort in Mandawa in the Shekhawati region of Rajasthan, Kala Aparajita a crafts showroom and their own home. Three of their projects have been nominated for the Aga Khan Award.

Creating a larger social good out of a personal crisis

DR. SHANTI AULUCK

I had my second child in April 1976 and two days after his birth I got to know that he had Downe Syndrome. Downe Syndrome is when the baby has an extra chromosome and due to that the brain development largely gets compromised which means that the person is going to live with intellectual disabilities. It was a crisis in my life. I would be honest in sharing with you – I wanted him to go away from my life. On the one hand I was having such thoughts and on the other hand my inner voice was saying, ‘You thought you were a very kind person and there is an innocent baby and you do not want him to survive. What kind of hypocrisy is this!’ These two voices kept struggling with each other and then I realized that all my distortions and grief were coming from my own attitudes, distortions in my own thinking. I could not see the beauty in existence. The process began to change. The secret voice gradually became more and more dominant in me. One more thought came to me that whatever potential is there in the child should not go





waste because of any lethargy, any lack of interest, any lack of effort on my side. So I started working fully on this.

The child taught me so much – he taught me how much injustice we do to people who are slightly away from the normal. We do injustice because of our own distortions, because of our own egocentric ways of thinking. Here was a child with so much capacity for love and so much capacity to be happy and I had to learn how to reach him and how to teach him many things which will help him in living his life.

I realized that whatever I have learnt I must share with others who are in a similar situation. So in 1982 along with some other parents and professionals we started *Muskaan* and we started working with families and with small children. Then a few years later I realized that people were still more accepting of school-going children, but the society was very non-accepting of adults with disability and that too adults with intellectual disability. They were totally neglected and insulted. That always created a lot of concern and a feeling that this injustice must go. So in 1989 we started an adult training centre. There was nothing around us, no model from where we could learn how to go ahead in providing the necessary training to live the adult life. So we started taking one step at a time depending on how we understood the situation and every step that was taken was so much reinforced by the learning and by the young people with whom we were working, by the joy and by the sense of accomplishment that they were showing, that it kept growing. We never thought of making it into a big ambitious project; just thought that as things come we'll keep doing and remain serious, genuine, and I am amazed at the kind of community support we got. We have every infrastructure today because of the community support – not from big and rich people, but people like us.

Then in 2005 I gave up my teaching because a lot more people would come as college lecturers, but I knew very few people would come to *Muskaan*. Today I am in a totally different world and this world has become so dear to me. I feel so connected with these people whose intellectual functions are slightly impaired. Some of them have serious impairment and some have slight but what human vibrancy is there, what caring, what freedom from prejudices and biases, how much capacity to connect and to love! And that is the world I enjoy being in and feel connected to. I will keep trying whatever more needs to be done and the sky is the limit for that!

Shanti Auluck is the Director (Hon.) / President, and one of the founder members of *Muskaan*, an NGO formed by parents and professionals to provide needed services for improving the quality of life of intellectually challenged children and adults and emotional and informational support to the parents. Dr. Auluck was formerly Reader, Dept. of Psychology, Lady Shri Ram College, Delhi University, where she taught Psychology from 1976 to 2005. She has presented papers on Psychology and Vedanta in several seminars and international conferences. She has also published articles in books and journals. Dr. Auluck took voluntary retirement from the college in 2005 to devote full time to *Muskaan*. Her organization and she herself have received several awards for entrepreneurial work in the social development sector.



How can business be integral?

UMA PRAJAPATI

I am Uma from Auroville. I don't think I have any other identity left now. Sometimes I feel I am fifteen years old because that's the time I have spent in Auroville. Femininity has been a very conscious introduction since I came to Auroville. In the centre of the city we have the place called 'Matrimandir' – temple of the Mother. A city unites around a temple of femininity in the centre of it – that blew my mind! Whenever I thought about it I cried. The sense of responsibility was calling again and again – what it is to be a Female. I came across a line (by Sri Aurobindo or the Mother) – 'Divine in execution is Female'... I went silent. These are a few milestones that have tied me again and again – my early mornings and my late evenings were tied with these lines – sitting in the Matrimandir, the temple of Femininity, the temple of the Mother, and 'Divine in execution is female'.



Every wind which blows the leaf, everything... the flower blooms, a child is born (I am not talking about human child alone) – animate or inanimate matter – it's She.

Leadership is feminine in essence. It cannot be other way. One fine morning I woke up and thought why do we have global warming. It shows a mistake that our leadership was not feminine enough, it turned masculine and the planet has a price to pay and the price is called 'global warming'. We are under a threat - the whole humanity is under a threat. Do we need to debate that? Feminine leadership is the only future. A mother would take care of the family – be it planet, be it a nest, or a human home, or a flower in the garden.

I saw my own decision making process changing. I am a designer, I am an entrepreneur living in Auroville where the growth of consciousness is the only growth we measure. Tsunami hit and we were very close by. Being a designer I searched for a new dimension. The Lord says 'life is divine' and life has to be divine. The yoga is integral, and I was questioning – can business be integral and what that would be?

All my decision making changed – not because I wanted it, not because I was smart enough, not because I was deep enough, but I saw something else was changing and it changed everything. It is a very humbling experience to be in that atmosphere where it does not really matter what you do, but even if you silently witness what is happening through you and allow it fearlessly, not frightened being a business person to make decisions which are not driven by so-called market. We live in a society which is not a wisdom-driven society, we are a business-driven society, we are a market-driven society. Vaishya is dominating the whole society today. How are our decision-making processes driven? Every little decision – whether I decide to drink tea now, or take a big business decision tomorrow, or take a big social level action day after, or make a new design day after after – where it is driven from? Am I making designs which will sell more in the market? Am I making a good business deal which will



bring me the maximum profit? And if I take this environmental action today then what will be the impact on the planet tomorrow? Life became very complicated, very complicated... and this made me silent... Just be silent, every moment, something has to happen because mind is not working; it's too complex. Surrender... learning to allow Her to act through us – a Mother cannot make any other decision – She would make the right decision. For me that is Feminine Leadership.

Uma Prajapati graduated in 1994 as a Fashion designer from NIFT (National Institute of Fashion Technology, New Delhi). Uma worked in New Delhi for two years as a designer and afterwards joined Auroville, an international township for human unity, in south India, in 1996. She founded *Upasana* in 1997 in Auroville and currently heads many social development projects under *Upasana*. Some of them are: Tsunamika, Small Steps, Varanasi Weavers, Kapas. Uma's passion lies in using creative power of design for social change at grassroot level. She is also deeply committed to environmental protection. Projects of *Upasana* are living demonstrations of what is possible when design takes responsibility of servicing People and the Planet.

The need to integrate the spiritual

MINA SINGH

What is that special quality that exemplifies what is feminine? This is what we have to discover for ourselves today because we don't have any models. If we see the long history of our country and our situation we see that there have been very few women leaders that we know of who have been talked about or recorded.

We should pay special attention to the girl child and feel that the single most important challenge before us is the education of the girl child in ways that throw up leaders.

Somewhere the direction in which we are moving, it seems to be opposite to the spiritual and that I think is the biggest danger. In what ways can feminine leadership be such that it doesn't oppose that which is spiritual in our lives?



Mina Singh served as Reader and Head of Department (English), Lady Shri Ram College, Delhi University, before taking early retirement in order to write full time. Ms. Singh was elected Member, Status of Women Committee, of the International Federation of University Women, and was Editor of *Facing the Challenges of Globalization*, published by IFUW, Geneva. She has convened several inter-disciplinary seminars on women's issues in India and abroad.



When everybody wins... sustaining life on earth

DR. MALLIKA V SARABHAI

When Gandhi ji decided to make *charkha* one of the corner-stones of the Independence movement, was he thinking of yarn? Was he thinking of making the best yarn for the textile industry? In '*My Experiments with Truth*' there is a very interesting section where he talks of why he took the *charkha* (the spinning wheel) and he lists fourteen different ways in which the issue had to be looked at and balancing of things. One was certainly yarn, the second was dignity of labour, the third was to bring something that was so grassroots and so fundamental that it could only be a part of the pervading belief system. The fourth was that ecologically it was something you could do without destroying nature. The fifth was that it gave women the possibility of doing something that was economically enhancing without having to disrupt what they normally did and without putting an additional burden on them – and he goes on like this.



When our current ministers decide how India must shine they look at only one thing and that's the GDP. To me Gandhi ji's leadership was an entirely feminist leadership and today it is an entirely male leadership. To me feminist leadership and masculine leadership do not necessary have a cent percent bingo with women and men. I would say Indira Gandhi, Margaret Thatcher, Golda Meir, Mayawati, Jayalalitha, Sushma Swaraj have the most masculine leadership form that one can see. I think that the last national leader who had a feminine leadership was Lal Bahadur Shastri. What for me is the difference? Exactly this – that for masculine leaders life is a zero sum game. If one wins the others have to lose. For feminine leaders everybody needs to win. Everybody has to win – only then can life be sustained in its fullest. You cannot rob one, you cannot rape one, you cannot destroy one for the good of the other. And I think, the state in which we see the world morally, ethically, economically, environmentally, is a direct consequence of our having applauded and lauded the masculine leadership over the centuries. Everything to do with feminine leadership was pooh-poohed as weakness, as not being decisive, as not being competitive, as not having the killer instinct – and look where this killer instinct has brought us, in every way! The need of the hour for everyone – for men and women – is to understand that feminine leadership is the only kind of leadership that will sustain life on earth, whatever life – spiritual life, economic life, educational life, the girl child, the boy child, whatever... there is no alternative and the faster we understand that feminine leadership is not about men being castrated, it's about a different paradigm of living, it's about a different way of thinking, it's about wanting to embrace rather than step upon, the better it is. That's why we need it.

Mallika V Sarabhai is an internationally acclaimed performance artist, social activist, producer and director who has championed the use of arts as an instigator for social change for many

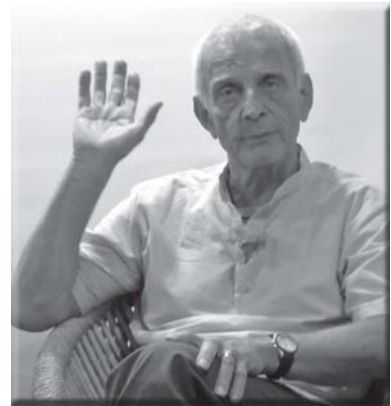


years. Educated as an economist and a business manager from the prestigious Indian Institute of Management–Ahmedabad, since 1978, Mallika has been Director of the *Darpana Academy*, a multi-arts institution in Ahmedabad. Under her leadership, *Darpana* has become one of the leading institutions in creating innovative ways to engage communities in tackling social and environmental issues. Dr. Sarabhai's innovative work has won her many awards and accolades, including the *Padma Bhushan* from the Government of India, and the *Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres* from the Government of France, and many more.

Oneness that includes the feminine & the masculine

FREDERICK SCHULZE-BUXLOH

I grew up in a very severe duality of the German 'fatherland'. And somewhere a deep sadness right from that time on had settled within me. It is a sadness of duality. Whenever there is a fracture or split, there are tears; and whenever something moves towards unifying, there is joy. I must say, that when I landed by boat in 1959 at Apollo Bunder, I knew that that sadness had gone. I reached India and I came to The Mother. I didn't know about The Mother but I knew somehow that time on sadness left me. I returned to Germany but I am an exile still there. So that's my gratitude to India. I can also that say that in my reading, in my experience with The Mother, and a few encounters with Sri Aurobindo at times, that duality was gone.

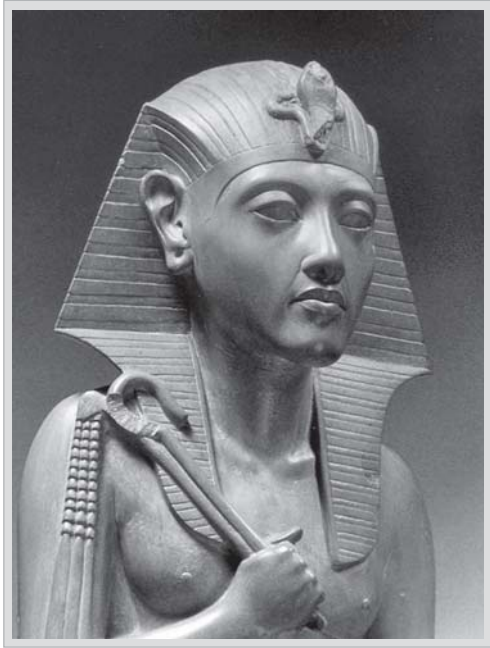


I feel that we have to look at the two words 'feminine' and 'masculine' as not connected with 'female' and 'male' – we have to de-connect them. This feeling has become quite strong in me – maybe because of my beginnings – that it can only be the 'feminine' which can bring that oneness.

I was once travelling to Paris for a meeting where again – like so often we try to manifest something, but the forces of fragmentation are stronger than our aspiration – we were just going to separate the work of Auroville from the work of the *Agenda*, and my heart was really crying out. In the night, I received in my dream a letter from Satprem – 'There is a secret message, put your hand on it.' And the moment I put my hand on it, the secret message came to me... it is still very strong in me: 'We are all tired of duality. It is not uniformity, it is not even unity, it is a fierce burning oneness which is the *raison d'être* of Auroville.' This is actually the truth of Auroville.

I have been present at many deliveries of children, I have gone through birth pains of the mothers. I feel that there is a growing into a oneness – which is truly another space of oneness. We don't have a name for it, our mind-sets are not yet ready to accept it, our consciousness is struggling. That's why in Auroville we keep on... because the *raison d'être* of Auroville is not an amelioration of duality, it is not an accommodation; it is truly to reach that where the feminine and the masculine can be expressed both by the female and the male.

Frederick Schulze-Buxloh first came to India from Germany in 1959 and met The Mother at Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry. He returned to the Ashram in 1966 to settle here permanently. Frederick is one of the earliest settlers of Auroville (the international township for human unity founded by The Mother in 1968), and continues to live and work there.



HATSHEPSUT

Pharaoh of Egypt (1479-1458 BC)

The daughter of a pharaoh and a queen, she married her half-brother the Pharaoh Totmes II and was the real power behind the throne, exercising supreme power when she took over the government as Regent for her husband's six year old son by a concubine. Hatshepsut surrounded herself with men of outstanding administrative and intellectual ability, and when her position was strong enough, she renounced the regency and declared herself

Pharaoh. Her reign was largely peaceful and very prosperous. She initiated a number of impressive building projects, including her superb funerary temple at Deir el-Bahari. She encouraged agriculture and trade, establishing new sea trade routes to replace the long overland journeys. Arts and especially architecture flourished. On her death, her half-nephew/stepson/son-in-law finally became Pharaoh and he systematically smashed all her statues and hid or erased her name from monuments in an attempt to belittle her.



www.biography.com/womens-history/historical-leaders.jsp#zetian



the Problem of *d*uality



the problem of *W*oman

A brilliant exposition on the origin of the divisiveness between man and woman and the ego-play, and a pointer to a future beyond this artificial duality.

I wish to speak to you about the problem of woman, a problem as old as mankind in appearance, but infinitely older in origin. For if we want to find the law that governs and solves it, we must go back to the origin of the universe, even beyond the creation.

Some of the most ancient traditions, perhaps even the most ancient, ascribed the cause of the creation of the universe to the will of a Supreme Absolute to manifest by his own self objectification; and the first act of this objectification was said to be the emanation of the creative Consciousness. Now, these ancient traditions usually speak of the Absolute in the masculine gender and of the Consciousness in the feminine, thus making this primordial gesture the origin of the differentiation between man and woman and at the same time giving a kind of priority to the masculine over the feminine. In fact, although they are one, identical and coexistent before the manifestation, the masculine took the original decision and emanated the feminine to carry it out, which amounts to saying that while there is no creation without the feminine, neither is there any feminine manifestation without the previous decision of the masculine.

We could certainly ask whether this explanation is not a little too human. But, to tell the truth, all the explanations that men can give must always necessarily be human, at least in their formulation. For, in their spiritual ascent towards the Unknowable and Unthinkable, certain exceptional individuals have been able to transcend human nature and identify themselves with the object of their seeking in a sublime and, in a way, unformulable experience. But as soon as they sought to share the benefit of their discovery with others, they had to formulate it, and in order to be comprehensible their formula had, of necessity, to be human and symbolic.

We could also ask whether these experiences and their disclosure are responsible for the sense of superiority which man nearly always feels towards woman, or whether, on the contrary, it is this widespread sense of superiority that is responsible for the form given to the experiences....



In any case, the indisputable fact remains: man feels superior and wants to dominate, woman feels oppressed and revolts, openly or secretly; and the eternal quarrel between the sexes is perpetuated from age to age, identical in essence, innumerable in its forms and hues.

Of course man throws the whole blame on woman, just as woman throws the entire blame on man. In truth the blame should be equally distributed between the two and neither can boast of being superior to the other. Moreover, until this notion of superiority and inferiority is eliminated, nothing and no one can put an end to the misunderstanding that divides the human species into two opposite camps, and the problem will not be solved.

So many things have been said and written on this problem, it has been approached from so many angles, that a whole volume would not be enough to expound all its aspects. Generally speaking, the theories are excellent, or, in any case, all have their own virtues; but the practice has proved less successful and I do not know whether from the point of view of realisation we have made any headway since the Stone Age. For in their mutual relationships, man and woman are at once rather despotic masters and somewhat pitiable slaves to each other.

Yes, slaves; for so long as one has desires, preferences and attachments, one is a slave of these things and of the people on whom one is dependent for their satisfaction.

Thus woman is enslaved to man because of the attraction she feels for the male and his strength, because of the desire for a home and the security it brings, and lastly because of the attachment to motherhood. Man too on his side is enslaved to woman, because of his possessiveness, his thirst for power and domination, because of his desire for sexual relations and because of his attachment to the little comforts and conveniences of married life.

That is why no law can liberate women unless they liberate themselves; likewise, men too, in spite of all their habits of domination, will cease to be slaves only when they have freed themselves from all inner enslavement.

And this state of veiled struggle, often unavowed but always present in the subconscious even in the best cases, seems unavoidable, unless human beings rise above their ordinary consciousness to identify themselves with the perfect consciousness and unite with the Supreme Reality. For as soon as one attains this higher consciousness one realises that the difference between man and woman reduces itself to a purely physical difference.

As a matter of fact, there may have been on earth in the beginning a pure masculine type and a pure feminine type, each with its own special and clearly differentiated characteristics; but in course of time, the inevitable mixture, heredity, all the sons that looked like their mothers, all the daughters that looked like their fathers, social progress, similar occupations—all this has made it impossible today to discover one of these pure types: all men are feminine in many respects and all women are masculine in many traits, especially in modern societies. But unfortunately, because of the physical appearance, the habit of quarrelling is perpetuated, perhaps even aggravated by a spirit of rivalry.

In their best moments, both man and woman can forget their difference of sex, but it reappears at the slightest provocation; the woman feels she is a woman, the man knows he is a man and the quarrel is revived indefinitely in one form or another, open or veiled, and perhaps all the more bitter the less it is admitted. And one wonders whether it will not be so



until there are no longer any men or women, but living souls expressing their identical origin in sexless bodies.

For one dreams of a world in which all these oppositions will at last disappear and where a being will be able to live and prosper who will be the harmonious synthesis of all that is best in the human race, uniting conception and execution, vision and creation in one single consciousness and action.

Until such a happy and radical solution is reached, India remains, on this point as on many others, the land of violent and conflicting contrasts, which can nevertheless be resolved by a very wide and comprehensive synthesis.

Indeed, is it not in India that we find the most intense adoration, the most complete veneration of the Supreme Mother, creatrix of the universe, conqueror of all enemies, mother of all the gods and all the worlds, dispenser of all boons?

And is it not in India too that we find the most radical condemnation, the uttermost contempt for the feminine principle, Prakriti, Maya, corrupting illusion, cause of every fall and every misery, Nature that deceives and defiles and lures away from the Divine?

The whole life of India is shot through with this contradiction; she suffers from it in both mind and heart. Everywhere feminine deities are erected on her altars; the children of India await salvation and liberation from their Mother Durga. And yet is it not one of her children who said that the Avatar would never incarnate in the body of a woman, because no right-minded Hindu would recognise him! Fortunately, the Divine is not affected by such a narrow sectarian spirit or moved by such petty considerations. And when it pleases him to manifest in a terrestrial body, he cares very little whether or not he is recognized by men. Besides, in all his incarnations, he seems always to have preferred children and simple hearts to the learned.

In any case, until the manifestation of a new conception and consciousness compels Nature to create a new species which would no longer have to yield to the necessity of animal procreation and thus be under the obligation of dividing into two complementary sexes, the best that can be done for the progress of the present human race is to treat both sexes on a footing of perfect equality, to give them the same education and training and to teach them to find, through a constant contact with a Divine Reality that is above all sexual differentiation, the source of all possibilities and harmonies.

And it may be that India, the land of contrasts, will also be the land of new realisations, even as she was the cradle of their conception.¹

¹ The Mother. *Collected Works of The Mother* vol.12 (first published in *Bulletin*, April 1955). Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram.



of Purusha & Prakriti

A pertinent point that came up during the discussion on Feminine Leadership, (at the Gnostic Centre seminar 'A Collective Aspiration can change the course of Events') was about delinking feminine leadership from male or female – rather, understanding the traits of feminine leadership which could be embodied by anyone (and vice-versa, i.e. a female could embody masculine leadership). Related to this was the need to go beyond duality, towards Oneness. The following extract from The Mother's conversations is of special interest in this context... ..

What is the work of Purusha and Prakriti?

Ah! Once again I have to give the impression that I don't know. (*Mother turns to Nolini.*) Nolini, explain this. (*Laughter*) As for me, I understand nothing at all of this, it does not correspond to any inner experience for me, I have never had this experience; consequently, I cannot speak about it.

If Mother says that Mother does not know, then I must say I am ignorant! (*Laughter*)

The Indian concept I know theoretically, and it is enough to read books to know it—that is not what I call knowing. I can speak to you only about things I have experienced. Well, this does not correspond to anything in me. I have not had that experience. I have had very clearly the experience of a witness looking at things, completely detached from everything, who knows all and does not move, who allows everything to be done and who... I have also had the experience of a will which decides. Naturally, everybody has the experience of a moving force—the force in Nature, in its obscurity, and all that—everybody has that experience. But as for making a clear-cut division in this way and calling one Purusha, masculine, and the other Prakriti, feminine, no, I refuse to do that—I have always objected to it and shall always object. And that is why I prefer not to speak about it.

This seems to me an Asiatic version, or perhaps more particularly Indian, I don't know, of the Chaldean conception of a single, masculine God: you know, the Christian God. This is for me something that comes (pardon me) from a masculine mentality that's a bit warped. That is how I feel about the subject. Now, if you had not asked me, I would never have spoken to you about it!

Mother, you said precisely that you had the experience of this witness who does not move, then that is the Purusha!

Ah! I don't know. (*Laughter*) Purusha, if you like. But I did not find it particularly masculine! You understand, what... what I object to is the male element and female element. Well, I find



that it is not true, and I shall always say: IT IS NOT TRUE. There is an element like this and another like that (*Mother turns her hand from one side to the other*). There is an activity like this and an activity like that. But why on earth do you want one to be masculine and the other feminine? It is not like that. This, this masculine-feminine business is a trick of Nature, it has arranged things here like that. Now, let me tell you: when one descends from above, well, right up there one has no idea of masculine and feminine and all that nonsense; as you come down and arrive here, it starts to become something real. So you tell yourself, “Well, well! That’s how Nature has arranged things.” Good! But what I say is that these conceptions—these very conceptions which make one element masculine and the other feminine—this is a conception which has come from below, that is, has come out of man’s brain which cannot think otherwise than of MAN and WOMAN—because he is still an animal. There you are! And that’s how I feel—I have always felt this, I have said it from the beginning and will repeat it till the very end, and if you don’t want to hear me say so, don’t speak to me about it! (*Laughter*) That’s all.²

the *b*est in Each

Written almost a century ago (in the context of rising feminism and the 1st World War), the following extract still holds true in balancing that which is best in both sexes - moving towards a true leadership... ..

It is certain that purely masculine politics have given proof of incapacity; they have foundered too often in their search of strictly personal interest, and in their arbitrary and violent action. Doubtless women’s politics would bring about a tendency to disinterestedness and more humanitarian solutions. But unfortunately, in their present state, women in general are creatures of passion and enthusiastic partisanship; they lack the reasoning calm that purely intellectual activity gives; the latter is undoubtedly dangerous because hard and cold and pitiless, nevertheless it is unquestionably useful to master the overflow of sentiment which cannot hold a predominant place in the ruling of collective interests.

These faults which would be serious if the activity of women had to replace that of men, could form, on the contrary, by a collaboration of the two sexes, an element of compensation for the opposite faults of men. That would be the best means of leading them gradually to mutual perfecting. To reduce the woman’s part to solely interior and domestic occupations, and the man’s part to exclusively exterior and social occupations, thus separating what should be united, would be to perpetuate the present sad state of things, from which both are equally suffering. It is in front of the highest duties and heaviest responsibilities that their respective qualities must unite in a close and confident solidarity.

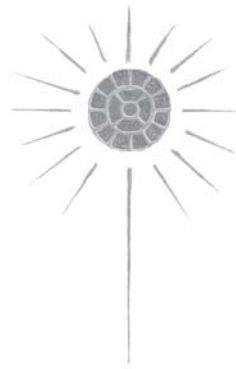
² The Mother. *Collected Works of the Mother* vol.6 (conversation dated 28 April 1954). Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram.



Is it not time that this hostile attitude of the two sexes facing one another as irreconcilable adversaries should cease? ... It is no longer the moment for frail competitions and self-interested claims; all human beings, men or women, must associate in a common effort to become conscious of the highest ideal which asks to be realised and to work ardently for its realisation. The question to be solved, the real question is then not only that of a better utilisation of their outer activities, but above all that of an inner spiritual growth. Without inner progress there is no possible outer progress. ...

And it is in the recognition of this fundamental spiritual equality that can be found the only serious and lasting solution for this problem of the relation of the sexes. It is in this light that it must be placed, it is at this height that must be sought the focus of action and new life, around which will be constructed the future temple of Humanity.³

✍ The Mother



*“Help men, but do not pauperise them of their energy;
lead and instruct men, but see that their initiative and originality remain intact;
take others into thyself, but give them in return the full godhead of their nature.
He who can do this is the leader and the guru.”*

Sri Aurobindo

³ The Mother. *Collected Works of the Mother* vol.2 (‘Woman and the War’ dated 7 July 1916). Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram.



the feminine principle in teaching & learning



When I think of the nature of feminine power, I cannot but think of the countless women whose labour unaccounted for and undervalued by the market economy sustains our society. The power of the feminine is the power to nurture, to persevere in face of difficulties, find innovative ways of utilising the limited resources of money and to create grace and beauty in everyday lives, to be unafraid of caring and feeling deeply.

Interestingly, the capacity to create beauty with simplicity and grace and to use money with consciousness were among the first things that struck me as special about the management of the Gnostic Centre – managed largely by women. Nothing was built that could not be sustained or cared for. The old spaces and the new have been preserved with love and care. Nothing that can be repaired and used is discarded in favour of the new. Each tree and building seems to be imbued with a special spirit of beauty and calm – the blessing of The Mother. Here at the Gnostic Centre I also learned a new pedagogy – a pedagogy that had as its core the capacity to listen to the whispers of one’s soul and to follow its gentle leads and imperative commands.

The challenge for me too has been to find and tap the well-springs of the feminine power within me and use it in my role as a facilitator of learning. There is a set role of an ‘academician’ that university teachers are covertly expected to step into. It is the role of an intellectual who above all is the repository of all the latest body of knowledge that academic community produces and transfers it to students with sufficient objectivity so that they are able to analyse and utilise this information for themselves. I have battled against this expectation and tried to avoid over-intellectualisation of any issue – for I find that by this process one only retains the dead shell of true knowledge and wisdom while the living kernel within often dies or escapes notice. To look within deeply, to personally engage with issues and find their true meaning in real life is what I have found to be the key to an education that attempts to go beyond mere information.

Such a teaching requires moves beyond the faculties that are traditionally valued and emphasised in education – i.e., critical analysis, reasoning and logic. I find that over the years the capacity to open my heart and deeply care for the learning potential in each of my students has been the greatest of my own learnings. For me, it has meant the mobilisation of the subjective resources from within me which to me are more feminine in nature i.e., the capacity to listen actively, to have an openness of mind and a receptivity where there is no hurry to judge immediately a new idea, to have an impersonal and equal love for each of the students,



to collaborate, to step back from mental contradictions and attempt a synthesis from a higher poise of consciousness.

The masculine and the feminine principles together complete the circle of life and both are present in each individual in differing proportions. While the masculine principle has been much valued and structures our contemporary professional world, the feminine principle is in effect missing from professional practice – and this includes the profession of teaching.

The exercise of feminine principle does not mean that one has become intellectually ‘soft’ or lacks the critical consciousness required for ‘tough analysis’ but that the capacity to Love is a great Force that can take us to the Truth that we seek. For it is the way of the psychic being – the sunlit path...

Love and goodwill act like a bridge and have the power to connect the consciousness of two individuals – who may speak a different language, are different in the constitution of their external personalities and even have different value orientations owing to the formative influences of the environment in which they have grown up. It matters not whether the articulated value position of a person is that of an agnostic, an atheist or a believer of the Divine, for instance. Love finds a way of communication that can rise above the false mental constructions and polarised identity assertions. A practice of unwavering goodwill can do and achieve what mental debates and discussions cannot.

Often our discussions are just ‘collective monologues’. Here, when seen from afar, it seems that people are discussing their ideas with each other and learning. However, a closer observation reveals that we all are only busy articulating and defending our own positions and that there is no shared reality that has been created which can lift the group into a higher level of understanding and synthesis. This is not the synthesis that is based on a compromise of deeply valued convictions, but finding a way to articulate those convictions in harmony with the truth of being of each member of the group.

The way of the feminine is then the way of receptivity – to actively listen to the voice of the gentle teacher within and to the voices of our companions with whom we learn and grow. To create, within all the noise and clamour of the mind, a quietness, a consciousness that does not continuously demand or pull but instead offers itself in service of the ideal that we hold most dear to ourselves....

✍ Monica Gupta





WU ZETIAN

Empress of China
(690-705 AD)

The only female in Chinese history to rule as emperor did so during the Tang dynasty. Wu Zetian, born into a rich and noble family, in a time when women did not bind their feet or lead submissive lives, joined the imperial court at thirteen. After years of manipulative and violent moves to eliminate her opponents, she married the Emperor in 655. When he died, she manipulated her sons in and out of power.



In order to challenge Confucian beliefs against rule by women, she had scholars write biographies of famous women, and moved her court away from the seat of traditional male power. In 690, she declared herself Emperor. Her rule proved benign, forward-thinking and prosperous. She replaced aristocratic military men in government with scholars. Attaching great importance to agriculture, she oversaw elaborate irrigation systems and commissioned the compilation of farming textbooks. Local officials were evaluated by how well they cultivated land. Taxes on peasants were reduced, farmers allowed to retain more of their produce. Replacing Daoism with Buddhism as the favored state religion, she invited gifted scholars to China and built Buddhist temples and cave sculptures. In 705, a palace coup forced her to resign and she died that year, aged 82.

www.biography.com/womens-history/historical-leaders.jsp#zetian



jung's archetypes as sources for female leadership¹



*"I shall never forget Her who is the giver of happiness;
She it is, O Mother, who, in the form of the Moon,
Creates the world full of sounds and their meanings,
And again, by Her power in the form of the Sun,
She it is who maintains the world.
And She, again, it is who, in the form of Fire,
destroys the whole universe at the end of the ages."²*

—Tantric Hymn—

Carl Jung (1875-1961) distinguished himself from Sigmund Freud and most of their colleagues in that he recognized the existence and admitted the significance of the intangible elements of the psyche—what many previous thinkers, from Plato to the early Christian philosophers, have called spirit.³ His own spiritual views were complex, unorthodox, and remained open to fresh insights to the end of his long life. Jung recognized and valued those aspects of a person's whole being which were dismissed by modern positivistic science which recognizes only the material world and denies the existence of spirit.

The acceptance of the spiritual dimension allows us to understand character—the complex of beliefs, attributes, and virtues that “make the person”—as a spiritual trait. If we, in turn, understand leadership as a character trait, then it too, becomes amenable to spiritual understanding. Key to this understanding is Jung's concept of the archetype. According to Jung, “The concept of the archetype is derived from the repeated observation that, for instance, the myths and fairy-tales of world literature contain definite motifs which crop up everywhere. We meet these same motifs in the fantasies, dreams, deliria, and delusions of individuals living today.”⁴ ...

Leadership is a complex of qualities that can be instantly recognized in the actions of others, but which elude easy categorization or analysis. Thus, despite its importance to social life, the exploration of the essential elements of leadership is an elusive task. Leadership, defined as the ability to motivate, to cause others to willingly follow, has often been viewed as a special, almost magical ability that some people have and others lack. This ability is what allows special persons to give direction and purpose to human groups.

In ancient times, “natural leaders,” i.e. those persons who possessed the ability to motivate and direct others, rose to positions of authority. When these positions became hereditary, they



were not necessarily occupied by persons capable of meeting the demands of leadership. This has been a characteristic weakness of hereditary leadership systems ever since. To compensate for human inadequacy, some attempts have always been made to educate or train those destined or chosen for positions of leadership. As human cultures have become more complex social roles have followed suit. These roles have also tended to become differentiated by gender. Leadership roles in particular have become increasingly “gendered” to reflect these social realities.

Despite the presence of matriarchal systems, in most cultures, social and political power has been disproportionately exercised by males. Western culture, which evolved within a predominantly Christian context, has its religious sources in the Jewish-Semitic Middle East and the Greco-Roman political and philosophical traditions, both of which are distinctly patriarchal. This means that in the political, religious, and economic spheres the majority of leaders have been male. In those cases where women have been called upon to exercise leadership roles, they were expected to master “trans-gendered” roles and exercise male-like leadership. For example Queen Isabella of Castile was admiringly described by her contemporaries as a *mujer de animo varonil* (a woman of manly temper).

Nonetheless, Western civilization has not been entirely dismissive of the female psychic energies. Other major civilizations, such as those that evolved in a predominantly Muslim context, have been much more restrictive of female leadership and have arguably developed distinctive social pathologies precisely because of this.⁵ In contrast, many Native American societies, despite the predominance of the male Warrior archetype, have accepted and developed a complementary matriarchal social system and accepted and honored female leadership roles. Hindu and Buddhist cultures are also dominated by men in the political sphere but women’s leadership roles in the family are highly regarded. Both of these cultural complexes afford surprisingly equal value to female “Being-ness”—a specifically female sense of self-perception. The powerful symbolism of sexual complementarity afforded by the Chinese Ying-Yang icon, and the uninhibited creative sexuality of many Hindu goddesses, show honor and respect for feminine energy in these cultures.

The four female archetypes of the Faerie, the Wise One, the Lover, and the Queen are found in most cultures and provide insights into female patterns of leadership. As is the case with her male counterpart, the King, **the Queen** is the most complex and mature of the female archetypes. This is because the image of a Queen who serves as a center for the mature ordering of things includes and transcends the other archetypes of the Feminine. Indeed the most powerful embodiment of this archetype is the Great Goddess—The Great Mother. This cosmic image is the equal to that of an all powerful God, the source of complete cosmic power, but at the same time is more accessible, less menacing. Images that may point to such a Great Mother, a supernatural Queen, are among some of the earliest human depictions of a higher power.

On a human scale, a powerful woman who is entirely confident in herself and is capable of serving as role model would necessarily reflect on a more modest scale the attributes of the Queen. However, all the essential attributes of the archetype of the Queen are present in a real woman who plays that role, regardless of the scope her real responsibilities—be she queen of a nation, a clan, or her own family.



Since the archetype of the Queen is the richest, most mature form of the Feminine, it cannot arrive at the pinnacle of life-enhancing majesty without first participating in the attributes of other important feminine archetypes. Just as the King is not born as a King, but must start life as a Prince, the Queen begins life as a Princess. The Princess is called to evolve to the fullness of her potential and must earn her Queenship through a path that necessarily involves trials and suffering as the way to experience and maturity.

If the Prince must normally develop through the path of the Warrior, the Princess develops through that of **the Faerie**. This is the one archetype that is distinctly different for male and female development. Just as the Warrior is the most natural complement to the King and embodies a set of virtues that are necessary to Kingship, the Faerie is the most natural first step on the road to Queenship. The explosive centrifugal energy of the male Warrior archetype is balanced in the cosmic order of things by the attractive, centrifugal energy of the female Faerie archetype. The Faerie is not just a Princess, she is the symbol of all that is fair, all that is beautiful, all that transcends material existence. These concepts are not merely ornamental niceties but are at the very center of Being. ...

Just as the Warrior appears most fully when he gives himself over to death in an act of self-denial, the Faerie appears most fully when she denies herself all intercourse with men. This is the source of her power. She places herself outside any man's power; thus, she has the power to inspire, to attract. Consider the real-life women who have embodied the Faerie—Joan of Arc, known as La Pucelle (The Maid), Elizabeth I “The Faerie Queen,” the Legendary St. Barbara—who is invoked as the Patroness of artillerymen in many armies throughout the world—St. Cecilia—the Christian embodiment of Musica; all eschewed conventional attachment to men. ... Joan of Arc, who like a Valkyrie takes up the arms and armor of a Warrior, is also a Faerie—inspiring many warriors to heroic feats and an entire country to seek freedom. Her words demonstrate the power for active leadership generated by the Faerie archetype: “Go bravely; all will be well. Have no fear. We shall find none who can harm us; indeed, we shall meet with no resistance. I have no fear for lack of men. There will be many to follow me.”

Another path to Queenship leads through the archetype of the **Wise One**. If the Faerie inhabits ethereal regions where all appears as bright and luminous, the Wise One inhabits the shadows. She is at home near the earth, even inside the earth, inside the dark, moist, primordial womb, the source of all fertility. The Wise One is no longer young. She is mature, rooted. She is likely to be old and she is a Mother, or more likely, a Grand-Mother. In contrast to the Faerie, she has once been a companion to the male, she may have even loved a male, but she has now transcended all that and has reached a state of superior wisdom. In contrast also to her male counterpart—the Magician—her subtle mind seeks not to penetrate beneath the surface of things and probe the mysteries of nature, rather, she looks inward into the mysteries of Being. This earthly knowledge extends to the body and more specifically to the very distinct realities of the female body, with its mysteries of fertility and procreation.

Women who knew this much were much respected. They carved out a distinct sphere of knowledge, distinctively feminine, hermetic to the male. Taboos, arose around this type of knowledge. This is the knowledge of the Sybil, of the Oracle of Delphi, of the forest spirits.



In later centuries, patriarchal institutions resented and persecuted this source of feminine power because it lay out of their control and it dealt with many topics which were not well understood and stigmatized because of their inherent feminine nature. Many Wise Women were accused of being “witches” and were cruelly tortured and put to death. Other societies that practiced the subjugation of women, primarily in the Islamic culture, also dishonored the Wise One and rejected her knowledge—and in doing so, impoverished themselves immeasurably.

It is natural for the Wise One to seek separation from her sisters who toil in the world. Her quest for special knowledge requires long hours of solitude for study and reflection. Most often, the Wise One becomes a seer, an advisor. But in some cases, the Wise One may [also] rise to be a Queen.⁶ She may then combine the attributes of the Queen and the Wise One, becoming the Wise-Queen. The Queen of Sheba, the counterpart to Solomon—the Magician King—illustrates this type of leadership.⁷ According to the Biblical narrative the Queen of Sheba came to Solomon as an equal, for she “...traveled to Jerusalem to test him with difficult questions.”⁸ Then, “When she and Solomon met, she asked him all the questions that she could think of. He answered them all, there was nothing too difficult to him to explain.” Satisfied: “She presented the gifts she had brought and returned to the land of Sheba.” In the Story of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba the Wise-Queen meets the Magician-King and she is satisfied. Notice how the Queen of Sheba—the Wise One—does not fall in love even with Solomon—the Magician-King. She is beyond easy infatuation; she is whole within herself, secure in her arcane wisdom. ...

The fourth archetype of the mature feminine is the **Lover**. Even more than in the case of its male twin, the female Lover archetype poses a problem when taken in the context of leadership. The Lover embodies the unrestrained embrace of the life-force. It is a life-affirming and creative archetype but one that eschews order, sacrifice, and rational knowledge. It is not easily reconciled with the orderly world of the Queen and its concept of *noblesse oblige* or inborn sense of duty, and is the polar opposite of the virginal Faerie. It is suspicious of the knowledge of the Wise One, because she has transcended this phase.⁹ And it also is dependent on the other—the Lover seeks to empty herself out and merge or become the Beloved. Could we then conclude that there is no place for the Lover in the spiritual makeup of the female leader? Given the importance of all archetypes to a mature and balanced human existence it would be wise to reconsider the paradoxical relationship of the Lover to the other archetypes. Can there be a Lover-Queen? Is the Lover an element of Queenship? The profusion of mythological images from widely different traditions point to possible answers.

The powerful Ishtar/Astarte/Aphrodite/Venus mythological complex is a strong archetypal current that runs deep from the appropriately named Fertile Crescent through the foundations of Near Eastern and Western Civilizations. India has equally powerful images of female generative power in Shakti, and her three avatars or embodiments of Lakshmi, Sarasvati, Parvati. The Chinese Ying-Yang symbol represents in graphic form the classic Jungian *mysterium conjunctionem*. Thus, the Lover intrudes powerfully into humanity’s collective consciousness. If a leader is enthusiastic, connects with her followers and is capable of inspiring them to accomplish the difficult deeds, she is partaking of the energy made available by the Lover archetype.



The intoxication of love opens an alternate reality with its own truths which separates those in the grip of the Lover from mundane concerns. This power is evident in the song of the Hindu poet Mirabai to Krishna—her Dark Beloved.

Binding my ankles with silver
I danced—
people in town called me crazy,
She'll ruin the clan,
said my mother-in-law,
and the prince
had a cup of venom delivered.
I laughed as I drank it.
Can't they see?—
body and mind aren't something to lose,
the Dark One's already seized them,
Mira's Lord can lift mountains,
He is her refuge.¹⁰

Thus, as is the case with the male Lover, the female Lover gains enormous powers of transcendence but she, and he, are subjected to “the other” and therefore lack the freedom of the other archetypes. This is the power and limitation of the hierosgamos—the cosmic marriage of opposites.¹¹ It is equally apparent that the other virtues resident in the Faerie and the Wise One need to rein-in the Lover's “oceanic” exuberance and desire to transcend all limits in order to allow her energy its life-giving role without creating chaos in the realm. But, in a different sense, if the Lover recognizes the One worthy of her love and subjects herself completely to Him, the results can be amazing. It appears that the Lover is as essential to good Queenship as it is to mature Kingship. . . .

When Lover combines with Faerie, the result can be a Joan of Arc whose last recorded words before she was burnt at the stake were: “I pray you, go to the nearest church, and bring me the cross, and hold it up level with my eyes until I am dead. I would have the cross on which God hung be ever before my eyes while life lasts in me. Jesus, Jesus!”¹² It appears that the Lover is as essential to good Queenship as it is to mature Kingship. It is another valid and fertile archetype for female leadership after all.

What can we learn from the examination of the archetypes of the mature feminine as they relate to leadership? First, female leaders, in order to fulfill their function properly, would do well to embody the best qualities represented by at least one of the archetypes of the mature feminine. When women do this, they model these archetypes for their followers and their example inspires them on the path of virtue. The archetypes are viable because they furnish us with a short-cut, an intuitive way to grasp the essence of a group of attributes that connects directly with the unconscious mind. Instead of patient intellectual analysis of each individual attribute of leadership, the ethos of each archetype is immediately accessible through a complex of cultural resonances which are instantly recognized by others. These archetypes are emotional and spiritual pictures that have an immediate effect on individuals and groups.¹³



This effect is readily apparent when one compares the phrase “The Good Queen” with “a queen who is good, generous, noble, etc.” The first phrase is incomparably richer in context and seems “alive” compared to a listing of adjectives to describe a particular queen. It evokes an instant, almost visual, image that has an immediate appeal. ...

Archetypes are, by their very nature, universal and indestructible. The complementarity of opposites assures us that, even in patriarchal cultures that are hostile to the feminine, feminine archetypes cannot forever be suppressed. Archetypes are not irrational forms of thought; rather they are supra-rational, beyond the parameters of logical thought and if we accept the idea of the “collective unconscious” as an image for the deep cultural substratum common to humanity, they are universally present—hence their power to move, to affect, to influence. Suppression of an archetype only results in denial of attributes and spiritual resources that we, as humans, need. Therefore, the female leader will, of necessity, model in various proportions the attributes inherent in the four archetypes of the mature feminine. Of these, the Queen is the leader par excellence. But the Queen must encompass other qualities as well. The road to Queenship takes an aspiring leader through the path of the Faerie and/or the Wise One. These two in turn remain puerile or sterile without the life-affirming attributes of the Lover. Thus, if we reflect on the archetypes of the mature feminine they offer aspiring women leaders models that may serve as sources of strength to help them protect, guide, and inspire their followers.

✍ Lieutenant Colonel Prisco R. Hernández

¹ This article expands the concepts explored in “Leadership and the Archetypes of the Mature Masculine” and applies them to the other half of humanity—women. In doing so, we apply the same principles, not in a mechanistic way, but in the spirit of Jungian complementarity, which occurs at the meeting of opposites—the *conjunctio oppositorum*. In other words, these archetypes and the leadership traits that they represent are not necessarily mirror-images of the male archetypes, but are of equal value and complement them in a profound way.

² Tantric hymn to the Goddess Shakti. John Woodroffe, aka Arthur Avalon, ed., *Hymns to the Goddess*, (London: Luzac, 1913), rep. ed. Forgotten Books, 2008, p.17. Accessed at www.forgottenbooks.org.

³ “... Freud’s attitude to the spirit seemed to me highly questionable. Wherever, in a person or in a work of art, an expression of spirituality (in the intellectual, not in the supernatural sense) came to light, he suspected it, and insinuated that it was repressed sexuality. [...] When we speak only of the outside—and that is what Freud did—we are considering only half of the whole ...” Carl G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, ed. by Aniela Jaffe trans. by Richard and Clara Winston (New York: Vintage Books, 1961), pp.149 and 152.

⁴ Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, p.392.

⁵ “Parents and other authority figures imbue the Arab child with the notion of the sinfulness of sex, and the culture as a whole surrounds the individual with an atmosphere which constantly reminds him of the same subject. The segregation of the sexes, the veiling of the women where it is practiced, and all the other minute rules that govern and restrict contact between men and women, have the effect of making sex a prime mental preoccupation in the Arab world. The very taboo of sex creates a kind of fixation on the subject.” Rafael, Patai, *The Arab Mind*, (New York: Hatherleigh Press, 2002), p.126.

⁶ Moore and Gillette, *King, Warrior, Magician, Lover*, pp. 100-101.

⁷ 1 Kings 10: 1-13 and 2 Chronicles 9: 1-12.

⁸ 2 Chronicles 9:1.

⁹ “The Lover energy is thus utterly opposed—at least at first glance—to the other energies of the mature masculine.” His interests are the opposite of the Warrior’s, the Magician’s, and the King’s concerns for boundaries, containment, order, discipline.” Moore and Gillette, *King, Warrior, Magician, Lover*, p.126.

¹⁰ Mirabai, *For Love of the Dark One: Songs of Mirabai*, translated by Andrew Schelling (Boston: Shambala, 1993), p.37.

¹¹ Hierogamos. Sacred or spiritual marriage, union of archetypal figures in the rebirth mysteries of antiquity and also in alchemy. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, p.395.

¹² Trask, ed., *Joan of Arc in her Own Words*, p.144.

¹³ “The concept of the archetype ... is derived from the repeated observation that, for instance, the myths and fairytales of world literature contain definite motifs which crop up everywhere.” Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, p.392.



RANI RASHMONI

1793-1861 AD

Rani Rashmoni of JanBazar, Kolkata was a woman of great strength in the mid-nineteenth century, amidst the male dominated society. Born in a poor family she

was married into a wealthy zamindar family of Calcutta. After the death of her husband the management of zamindari fell on her shoulders and she showed great managerial skill and leadership in her new role. The Rani was an autonomist in her viewpoint and stood by what she measured reasonable and just. Construction of a number of bathing ghats on the river, a road from the Subarnarekha river to Puri for the benefit of the pilgrims and substantial contribution to the then Imperial Library (now National Library) and Hindu College (now Presidency College) bear testimony to her benevolence. Her outstanding social work and philanthropic nature were notable aspects behind a great soul for which people started calling her Rani or the queen. Rani Rashmoni's nationalist outlook brought her in direct confrontation with the British rulers and each time and every time she had her way and the British could not prevail upon her. She took a bold



step to help the fishermen thriving on Hoogli waters, whose livelihood was hampered by the speeding British steamers. Rashmoni blocked the river traffic by iron chains and did not remove it until her demands were met. She was extremely religious and led an austere life. Her spiritual inclination led her to establish the renowned temple on the banks of the Ganges at Dakshineswar. She patronized Shri Ramkrishna Paramhangsha as the guardian of the Dakkhineshwar temple. Rani Rashmoni passed away on 19th February, 1861.

Compiled from the Internet
www.whereincity.com/india/great-indians/women/rani-rashmoni.php
www.bangalinet.com/greatmen_ranirashmoni.htm



Events



ICIS

TALKS ON INDIAN PSYCHOLOGY BY

DR. SUNEET VARMA

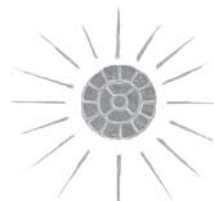
- May 6 : Personal Growth - Reflections
- May 7 : Counselling - Psychological Healing
- May 7 : Transpersonal Approaches to Counselling & Personal Growth
- May 8 : Indian Approaches to Counselling & Personal Growth
- May 8 : The Integral Path to Counselling & Personal Growth



A continuation of the series from previous weekend, these five talks focused on the application aspects in Counselling, Healing and Personal Growth.

SIGN UP FOR THE ONLINE COURSE ON INDIAN PSYCHOLOGY

contact admin@integralstudiescentre.org



“The leaders must always set the example, the leaders must always practise the virtues they demand from those who are in their care; they must be understanding, patient, enduring, full of sympathy and warm and friendly goodwill, not out of egoism to win friends for themselves, but out of generosity to be able to understand and help others.”

*To forget oneself, one’s own likings and preferences,
is indispensable in order to be a true leader.”*

The Mother

PICTURE CREDITS

- pp.5,7,8,10-13,33: The Gnostic Centre archives, New Delhi, India
- all others: from internet
- The Awakening Ray logo, p.3 & later: artist: Krishnalal, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, India
- The Gnostic Centre bird: artist: Neera Goyal, New Delhi, India
- Back cover (The Gnostic Centre photo): Franz Fassbender, Auroville, India



For some, commitment comes from pride.
For us, our commitment is our pride.



*A*t Vatika Group, our aim is not just to live up to our commitments. It is to cherish them. What we promise, we promise with our heart and soul. And our satisfaction lies in seeing it fulfilled to the fullest. Which is why, we believe in building relationships that last a lifetime. We believe in bringing good things to life. And sharing your pleasure in enjoying them. In a short span of 15 years, the group has diversified into real estate and hospitality.

From country living to international townships like Vatika City in Gurgaon and Vatika Infotech City in Jaipur, corporate complexes like First India Place and Vatika Triangle to restaurants like Coriander Leaf and the Fox, to upcoming five star hotels such as The Westin, the group has diversified interests with a market value of over Rs. 20214.8 crores, and has set benchmarks with each project. Today, our commitment to bring you the best stands strong. And our endeavor stays constant. To touch hearts and to always live up to our word.

Corporate Office: 7th Floor, Vatika Triangle, Sushant Lok-1, Block-A,
Mehrauli-Gurgaon Road, Gurgaon - 122 002, Haryana, India.
Tel: +91-124-4177777, +91 9818808866, +91 9818808833
Email: info@vatikagroup.com www.vatikagroup.com

vatika[®]
creating lasting value