

Foundation Course for Facilitators

June to December '99
Facilitated by Amesta Mehra



On 26th June, a small group of students for the Foundation Course for Facilitators left Delhi for Binsar Valley, with the Gnostic Centre team.

The idea behind the Retreat at Binsar was to guide these students for facilitation in their chosen areas of research, in the light of the educational philosophy of Sri Aurobindo. Topics of research included were:

- Training the Mental Faculties
- Silence, Receptivity, Offering: Facilitation in Work
- Attitudes, Skills, Training: Foundations of Good Management
- How to Realise my *Dharma*
- The Vital Education
- A Curriculum for Vital Education for 5-8 year olds
- A New Paradigm in the Legal System: Person oriented rather than System oriented
- Parts and Planes of the Being



Facilitation sessions

Binsar Valley proved to be an ideal place for work of this sort. Situated more than 5000 feet above sea level, the area is marked by scenic beauty, cottages, surrounded by pine trees and mountain flowers. The valley itself, situated a little ahead of Almora, was surrounded with meditating mountain tops covered with clouds, mist and intermittent rain - an ideal place for meditation, intensive planning and study, long walks and pony rides.



The retreat in the mountains

The meditation room was situated on a lone peak, far from the cottages below and had an air of quietude that lent itself to reflection. As one climbed the stone steps leading to the top, collecting flowers on the way, one stopped often to get back one's breath and take in the breathtaking view around.



There was a deep feeling of sharing, understanding and cheerfulness amongst each other - such that arises when people share a common noble aim.

A typical day began with meditation, facilitation by Ameeta on the principles of Integral Education as taught by Sri Aurobindo and The Mother. Participants would ask questions, discuss and share their impressions. Then there would be individual sessions with Ameeta, where each person discussed her project work. The Gnostic Centre members, Anuradha, Yogita, Aditi and Ritika had carried a lot of reference material from the library and these books really helped each of us.

The whole day passed in study and planning one's own facilitation based on the principles of True Teaching. As one listened to the facilitation of each topic, it seemed to be practically applicable in one's daily life and work. New interesting methods of application in chosen areas of work were devised and shared, yet the whole ambience was one of cheerfulness and newness.

Ameeta, with her personal example, knit the group varied in age and profession, so that no one felt any pressure of work.

The retreat ended all too soon on 1st July, but in a way it never ended; for now the work continues in the new perception that we gained and carry to work each day... each day is a facilitation in one's own inner work and towards our chosen areas.

✍ Jayashree Singh



To dream the impossible dream... (a singing session)



A walk and a climb in the mountains



The journey back... breathtaking view - touching the clouds....