SWADHARMA BULLETIN

March 2021

JOURNEYING ONWARD...

Here's a photo taken by Manoj during one of the community cycling trips through the Auroville bio-region

CYCLE RIDES INTO THE AUROVILLE BIO-REGION

Early March folks from the Swadharma community geared up for another cycle trip round the bio-region. We were led by our Lalit who also shared a lot of his nuggets of wisdom & knowledge about the surrounding farmlands and villages during the journey.

CYCLE RIDES INTO AUROVILLE BIO-REGION

The scenery and landscapes were pristine and quite breathtaking. To step into this kind of nature was a real nourishment for the soul, a luxury that Auroville offers.

GROUND REALITIES OF FARMERS

Towards the end of the trip we bumped into a farming household and started a conversation with them. The lady was cleaning up leftover urad dal (idly) grains to feed their cow. The first thing she said was that she felt bad she couldn't offer us anything to eat as the fresh batch of urad grains had just been cleared out (despite having knee pain from working for a long time).
Lalit pointed out how grounded these people were. The farmers had a real connection to the earth and had an innocence about them.

Lalit gave us more food for thought. Farmers have incredibly uncertain livelihoods, fighting against mother nature, from soil to rain patterns. No real security at all. Those who work on the ground, they get meagre returns.

There hasn't been an improvement in these people's lives
Middle men (agents) get more money in the name of marketing or brand, just packaging. The person growing food is not rewarded, but is exploited

GROUND REALITIES OF FARMERS

The way we relate to food is somewhere not in harmony, we don't really know how it is coming to us, whether all that are involved are taken care of. It is this food that converted to our being - the body, the mind and the emotions. Food that has within it the pain of the farmer.

This reflects an unhealthy society which is disconnected from food and the earth. A deeper awareness is called forth in how we relate to food. Can we see how and where the food is coming from? How are the living conditions of the farmers ?

Farmers markets, NGOs and farmer rights are some of the ways farmers can be supported. Rural tourism and farm visits need to be promoted in order to connect people with the farmers and the soil. We need to create more platforms which are non-exploitative with honest and holistic people entering farming sector. And we need stories to connect people back to the farmers and their food.

Anyone interested in a deeper exploration please have a look at the Down to Earth magazine by CSE India who are doing great work in this field.

CELEBRATING UTSAV AND SMRATI

Smrati from batch 8 of Swadharma chose the path of nourishing souls through her cooking and Utsav from batch 1 chose farming, the magic of growing from seed to plant. Food was their common ground. Their paths intertwined and now they decided on forever.

Together they aspire to weave beautiful memories, remove a bit of suffering and bring a touch of soul to the world. They decided to begin their sacred journey in Auroville.

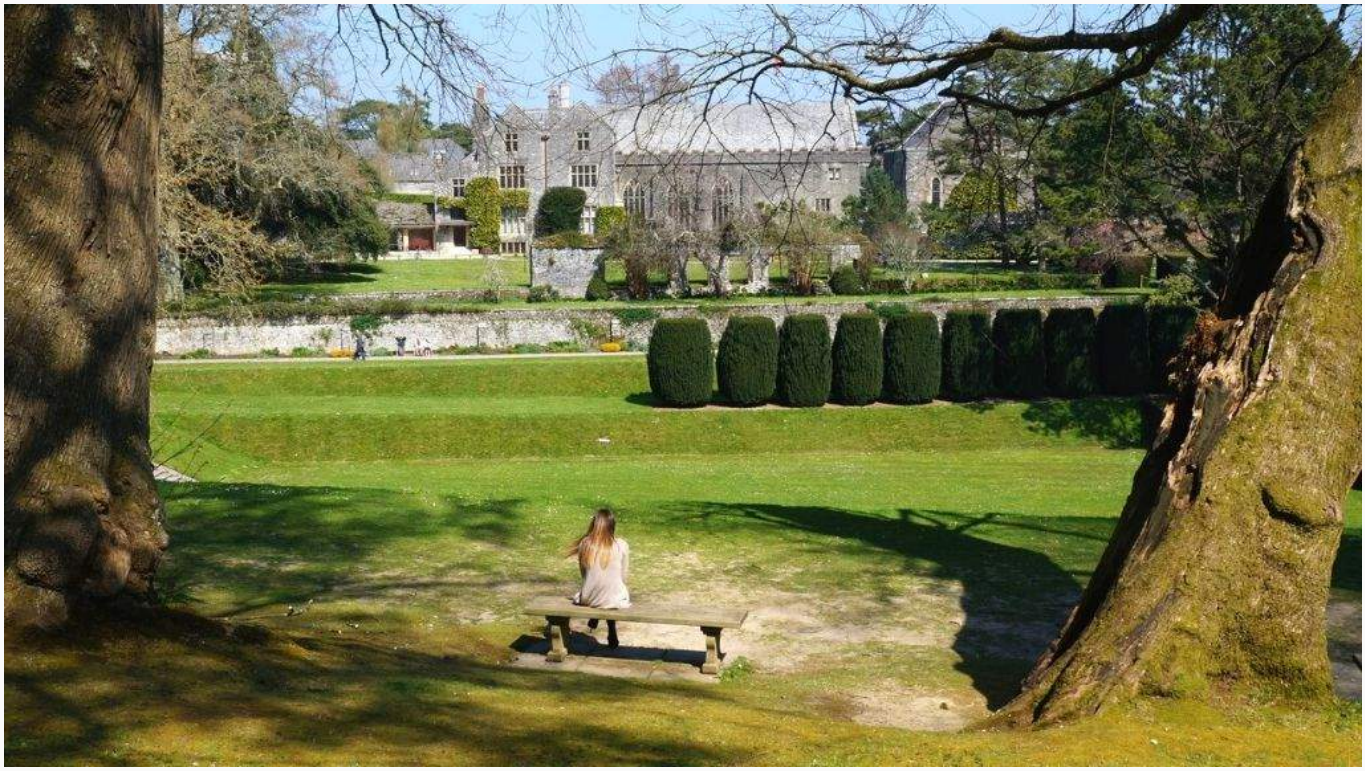
On Auroville's birthday, we had a very special ceremony to celebrate and bless the union of our dear Utsav and Smrati. Near and dear ones from the Swadharma community gathered for the Blessing Circle at Kalpana Amphitheater to shower their love on the couple.

CELEBRATING UTSAV AND SMRATI

The space was decorated with a special kolam for the couple by Aishwarya from batch 1 of Swadharma. The blessing circle included a chant by Manoj, a reading of the Mother's words on marriage by Divyanshi and a song by Surya.

A MESSAGE ON SCHUMACHER COLLEGE BY ISHAN

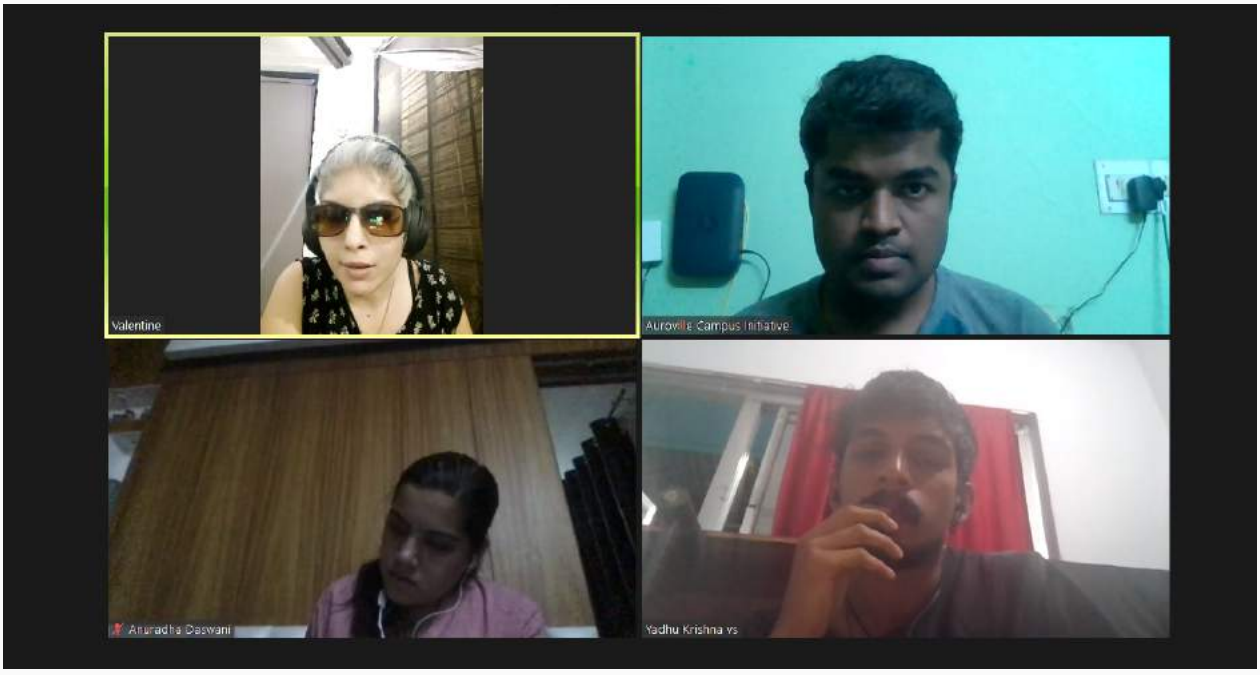
Hey everybody, the last few weeks that I've been here I've had many people be curious about Schumacher college and the program I am studying there. To give better insight, as I don't think I've done a great job explaining in small conversations, thought I share this nice invigorating piece by my teacher if it interests any of you :) Practicing place-fullness



WEED OUT YOUR TOXIC BELIEFS

A GOAL-SETTING WORKSHOP WITH VALENTINE

For the march occurrence of the Swadharma monthly session, Valentine conducted a community workshop on goal-setting. Each attendee was guided to identify a major personal area of discontentment/improvement and articulated the core beliefs behind it. Attendees further investigated the thought behind these core beliefs by means of Socratic questioning. The workshop thus helped in questioning and validating the beliefs that prevent one from achieving their goals.



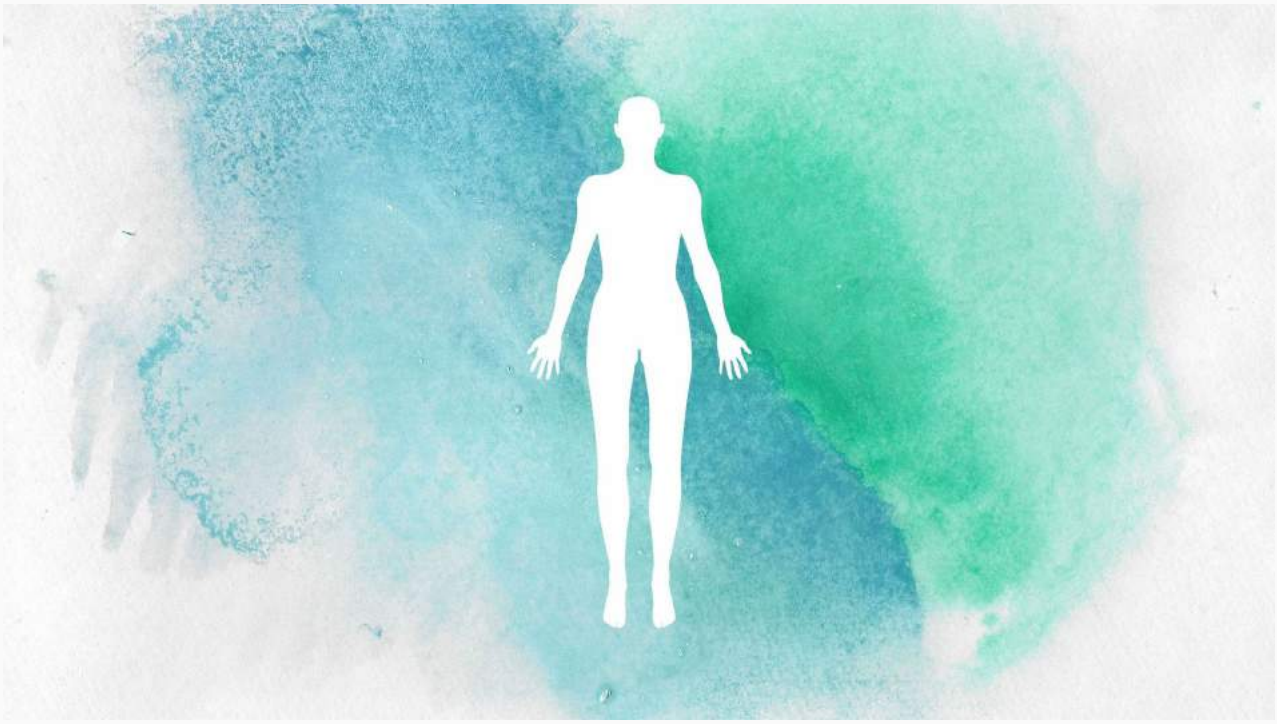
SVADHYAYA 3.0

Svādhyāya 3.0 applications are closing soon! **Deadline for applications is 31st March, midnight.** Svādhyāya invites you to embark on an inner adventure, navigate the landscape of your consciousness, dive deep into the living questions you have been holding deep within, find a soul-community and unleash your soul potential. Few more spots left.

Apply now at svadhyaya.auroville.org

THE THEME OF INTEGRAL HEALTH

The Integral Education Portal newsletter series was launched on August 15. The newsletter is for all lifelong learners of Integral Education. It has a theme of the month on which we send biweekly newsletters. Newsletters consist of videos, practices, quotes and short write-ups. The theme of March was Integral Health. Below is a short text from one of the newsletters:



It is important to be healthy so that we can live life to the fullest and fulfil our aspirations. A healthy body enables us to work hard, a healthy mind guides us in the right direction and healthy emotions give us the enthusiasm to keep going, and also appreciate life. This is one of the most common and practical understandings of the need for Integral Health.

Integral Health is essential for our spiritual progress too. Each of us have a sense of purpose and something unique that gives us meaning in life. Focusing on and working towards this requires a harmonious state of being, on which Integral Health is conceived. If the body is sick, most of one's energy goes towards maintaining the body and addressing the sickness, and there is little to no energy left for spiritual progress.

If the mind is not seasoned, if we are slaves of addictions, if we let our emotions sweep us off, we may end up straying far away from our deeper journey, which lies deep within us, waiting to be discovered.

To be truly healthy, disease-free, happy and energetic, we must embrace an approach that is integral. Our hearts can open, our senses can get refined and we can have the joy of living in all that we do every single day, and our mind can function clearly. Embracing an integrally healthy lifestyle is not only beneficial for an individual, but also for the welfare of the society and ecosystem. Both can be made more sustainable, and can help one one another to grow, instead of blindly using resources for the selfish interests of an individual or a corporation.

To read further, you can have a look at the Integral Health newsletters here: https://ie.auroville.org/tag/newsletter/. Here is a video on "Purpose of Integral Health" - that was a part of one of the newsletters and put together by Dr Alok Pandey, Raghav and Archana.

We also just finished a webinar with Dr Alok on *Cultivating Intergral Health*. If you have not subscribed, subscribe at https://ie.auroville.org/#subscribe

SWADHARMA TRIAD COACHING CIRCLE

This March we began the third cycle of the Swadharma Coaching circles, this time a longer journey of 10 weeks with a triad format. The cohort was a marriage of participants from Swadharma, Svadhyaya and Prayoga. Each participant has picked up a project/practice that is truly alive for them and has committed to work on it during these 10 weeks - be it meditation, painting, playing the guitar or physical exercise.

Even though it has been only 2 weeks since we began, it is really humbling and inspiring to witness how each one is taking a baby step ahead, talking himself or herself to keep moving forward, battling various things every single day and yet coming out victorious through sincere perseverance and will. The group's supportive energy to each other is also beautiful to witness.

RUMINGS

Rumings is a podcast started by Abha from batch Swadharma batch 7 along with her friends around mental health and well being

Since 8th of March is Women's Day, we decided to dedicate it to all the strong women out there. In this episode we celebrate the lives of women we relate to onscreen and the beautiful stories they share. We speak about all the women, movies and shots that have left a distinct impression on our minds. The podcast is available for a listen on YouTube and Spotify. Do listen :)

Akash from Swadharma 5 was selected as a winner for getting Incubation Support from the Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs. He was to be felicitated in January 2021. He worked at the Auroville Earth Institute. His friend and roommate from his Swadharma days, Avinash shares his thoughts with us about Akash.

Akash during his Swadharma

Learning that Akash had won this award was like a resurfacing of a wound. As if it somehow made what happened more tragic. I guess it serves as a vindication although he is not here to enjoy it. I can only hope that in some way he does.
It is hard to know what to say about a friend to a larger group. Akash is particularly hard to describe.

His rebelliousness and attitude and yes, sometimes his actions, could put people off. Many people wrote him off. I might have as well, if we didn't live in the same room for many weeks. Those of us that were his friends got to see his complex and conflicting personality. He was a wonderful child-like questioner of the status quo and amusingly adamant believer of alternate and wild ideas. He had a smile that was at the same time innocent and mischievous - he wore it often. He could seem unfocused and yet had a refreshingly great knowledge and passion for his work. He could seem frustratingly ignorant and at times, refreshingly caring and deep. Whatever his faults, if you were his friend, he would be yours. Above everything else, he valued freedom.

If there is any meaning from any of this, for me, it is this - that there is great potential in our lives. Others may not see it, but it is a tragedy when we do not see it ourselves. I'm sorry, my friend, if you had cause to question it. I miss you dearly.

PRACTICE OF THE MONTH

Map Your Work

How does our work evolve as we progress in Consciousness? What is the pathway of Karma Yoga? Divyanshi elucidates on stages of work on the path of Karma Yoga.

After watching this short 15 minutes video about the stages of Work [Handout: Read about the Stages of Work], fill the following worksheet (20 minutes) to map your work.

SHARE YOUR JOURNEY WITH US!

Share with the tribe

We invite you to share with us **Your Learning Journey**, for the Swadharma Blog. Be it your experiences, musings, practices, or breakthroughs, we would love to feature your story. You can share, in the form of articles, poems, photographs, music, art-work, etc whatever you feel is the best way for you to express. General word limit is 500 words. **Share from your heart!**

We would also love to know about your **Initiatives** and the milestones in your journey. Whether it is a new project, website, collaborations, new experiments, ventures or an initiative, share with your tribe.

Write to: swadharmablog@auroville.org.in

Thank you! Swadharma Blog Team