

# THE CALL BEYOND

VOLUME 43 NO.6

15 JUNE 2018



*Heaven's call is rare, rarer the heart that heeds;  
The doors of light are sealed to common mind,  
And earth's needs nail to earth the human mass,  
Only in an uplifting hour of stress  
Men answer to the touch of greater things:  
Or, raised by some strong hand to breathe heaven-air...*

*-Sri Aurobindo  
(Savitri, Book 11, Canto 1, p. 689)*



An Online publication of  
SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM - DELHI BRANCH  
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*Cover painting: Shri Hrishikesh Kumar*

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## Religion and Spirituality

Every religion has four components. *First*, and most important is its underlying spiritual philosophy. Religions differ from each other the least with respect to their spiritual philosophies. *Second*, each religion has an ethical code. The ethical code of each religion is what was considered the best by its founder in view of the local conditions at that point in history. Accordingly, there are some differences between the ethical codes of different religions. However, the similarities between the ethical codes of various religions are far more, and far more important, than the differences. *Third*, each religion has some myths and legends associated with it. *Fourth*, each religion has its own rituals and ceremonies. The myths, legends, rituals and ceremonies of each religion are unique, lend the religion its distinct identity and are its most visible part, but these are the least important part of the religion. The most important part of any religion is its spiritual core, which is essentially invisible. Thus, one might say that spirituality is the inner churning aimed at establishing a conscious contact with the Divine. It has no rituals, ceremonies or outer symbols. Spiritual quest and practice are the same in every individual irrespective of the religion the person is born in. A religion, on the other hand, has a lot that is visible outside, and what is visible differs with each religion.

**The approach in spirituality is inside out**, i.e. inner change gets reflected in outer life. The reflection in outer life is that

the person does his work better and with greater dedication, the person becomes more loving and compassionate, and the person does not lose his temper easily. **The approach in religion is outside in**, i.e. the visible religious practices are expected to lead to an inner change.

In short, spirituality is more inside than outside; religion is more outside than inside. Since it is easier to begin with a religion, and then go beyond it to spirituality, religion has been called the kindergarten of spirituality. It is often the absurdity of some religious rituals, the irrationality of many religious practices, and frustration with the divisive and sectarian character of religions that act as triggers which prompt a person to move away from religion towards spirituality.

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*See also the related article, 'Religion Differs from Spirituality' on page 6*

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## Religion Differs from Spirituality

Rachna Bansal

Many do not see a difference between religion and spirituality, or at least confuse the two. Some of the ways in which the two stand apart are as follows.

**Religion** can basically be understood as the tenets of a particular sect. So, if I practice one religion I follow its principles, and it is understood that I reject the conflicting principles of other religions. I might tolerate the practices of other religions, but I feel no need to follow them. For example if my religion says yes to meat, I feel no need to give it up.

I reach my God through the prescribed rituals of my religion. I believe that my rituals and prayers will be rewarded, and my salvation will be taken care of. So, religion is basically separatist or sectarian. People following a particular religion worship 'their' God (even if they believe in one God!), who they believe will look after them.

**Spirituality** on the other hand is holistic and all-encompassing in its outlook. In spirituality everyone and everything is seen as a manifestation of the Divine. The all-pervasive all-penetrating Divine consciousness is there in everything. So, we are all one. Hence, spirituality does not divide people. It is totally non-sectarian in nature. In spirituality we see all human beings as one, all Gods of different religions as one, and there is only one language of love and compassion, and a non-judgmental attitude guides all interactions.

The Divine hand is seen behind all events, good or bad, pleasant or unpleasant, and everything is accepted as the Divine Will. We surrender to the Divine Will and accept everything with equanimity as we believe in the Divine love and wisdom, and we trust that He is taking us to perfection.

We offer everything we do to the Divine. All work is done for the Divine with us as Its instruments. There are no special rituals or ceremonies, but all work is done as an offering, even mundane tasks such as eating and sleeping. When we eat, we eat to nourish the body so that it is fit to do the divine work. When we sleep, we sleep to recharge the body for divine work. Spirituality teaches detachment from our action as all work is offered to the Divine without ego. So when we offer our work to the Divine it does not need a reward. The reward is the excellence that we strive to reach in the work so that the work is fit to be offered to the divine.

Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have further emphasized that spirituality aims at raising the level of the collective human consciousness so that the earth evolves, and life become divine on earth.

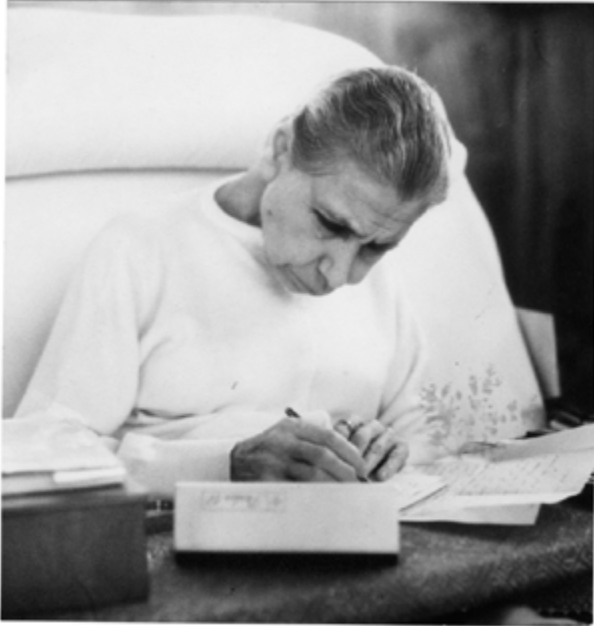
*(Rachna Bansal did a course on Teaching Yoga at Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch in 2017. The above article is based on her answer to a question asked during one of the tests during the course)*

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*Please see also the related editorial, 'Religion and Spirituality' on page 4*

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## We Are Here To Learn

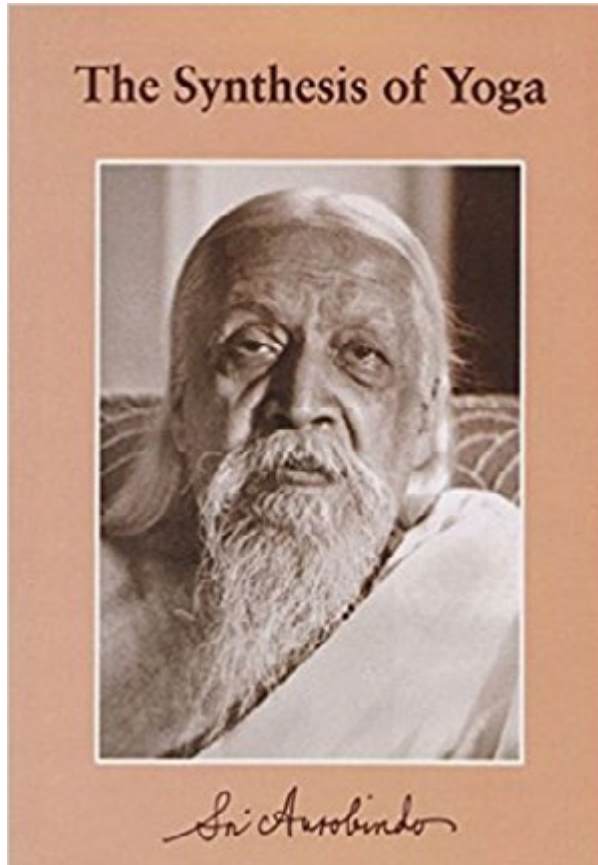


Essentially there is but one single true reason for living: it is to know oneself. We are here to learn – to learn what we are, why we are here, and what we have to do. And if we don't know that, our life is altogether empty – for ourselves and for others.

And so, generally, it is better to begin early, for there is much to learn. If one wants to learn about life as it is, the world as it is, and then really know the why and the how of life, one can begin when very young, from the time one is very, very tiny – before the age of five. And then, when one is a hundred, he will still be able to learn. So it is interesting. And all the time one can have surprises, always learn something one didn't know, meet with an experience one did not have before, find something one was ignorant of. It is surely very interesting. And the more one knows, the more aware does one become that one has everything to learn. Truly, I could say that only fools believe they know. That indeed is a sure sign, someone coming and telling you, "Oh! I know all that; oh! I know all that"; he is immediately sized up.

## The Synthesis of Yoga

### *The Godward Emotions*



The principle of **Yoga is to turn Godward**. In the Yoga of Bhakti it is the emotional nature that is made the instrument. Its main principle is to adopt some human relation between man and the Divine Being by which through the ever intenser flowing of the heart's emotions towards him the human soul may at last be wedded to and grow one with him in a passion of

divine Love. It is not ultimately the pure peace of oneness or the power and desireless will of oneness, but the ecstatic joy of union which the devotee seeks by his Yoga.

But in certain religions, the idea of the fear of God plays a very large part, and the Godfearing man is the typical worshipper of these religions. Fear of the gods arose from man's ignorance of God and his ignorance of the laws that govern the world. With such notions no real devotion could arise, except that doubtful kind which the weaker may feel for the stronger.

Even now it is possible for some to believe in a Creator who has made heaven and hell, the two poles of his creation, and has even according to some religions predestined the souls he has created not only to sin and punishment, but to an eternal damnation. It exaggerates the importance of the sense of sin and thereby prolongs and increases the soul's fear and self-distrust and weakness. It attaches the pursuit of virtue and the shunning of sin to the idea of rewards and punishment, though given in an afterlife and makes them dependent on the lower motives of fear and interests instead of the higher spirit which should govern the ethical being.

**To the Yogin action is chiefly important not for his own sake, but rather as a means for the growth of the soul Godward.** Therefore what Indian spiritual writings lay stress upon is not so much the quality of the action to be done as the quality of the soul from which the action flows, upon its **truth, fearlessness, purity, love, compassion, benevolence, absence of the will to hurt**, and upon the actions as their outflowings. **Not fear of him, but love of him and aspiration to the freedom and eternal purity of his being must be the motive.**

**Love is the key of this relation**, and this service, *dasyan*, is in Indian Yoga the happy service of the divine Friend or the passionate service to the divine Beloved. The Master of the worlds who in the Gita demands of his servant, the bhakt, to be nothing more in life than his instrument, makes this claim as the friend, the guide, the higher Self, and describes

himself as the Lord of all the worlds who is the friend of all creatures, *sarvalokamahecwaramsuhr'idamsarvabhutanam*; the two relations must in fact go together and neither can be perfect without the other.

**The life of man is a life of wants and needs and therefore of desires, not only in his physical and vital, but in his mental and spiritual being. When he becomes conscious of a greater Power governing the world, he approaches it through prayer for the fulfilment of his needs, for help in his rough journey, for protection and aid in his struggle.**

**Prayer** helps to prepare this relation at first on the lower plain even while it is there consistent with much that is mere egoism and self-delusion; but afterwards we can draw towards the spiritual truth which is behind it. **It is not then the giving of the thing asked for that matters, but the relation itself, the contact of man's life with God, the conscious interchange.** In spiritual matters and in the seeking of spiritual gains, this conscious relation is a great power; it is a much greater power than our own entirely self-reliant struggle and effort and it brings a fuller spiritual growth and experience.

**But the highest and the greatest relation** is that which starts from none of the ordinary religious motives, but is rather of the very essence of Yoga, springs from the very nature of love itself; it is the passion of the Lover and the Beloved. **He does not ask for heaven or for liberation from birth or for any other object, but only that his love may be eternal and absolute.**

Love is a passion and it seeks for two things, eternity and intensity, and in the relation of the Lover and Beloved the seeking for eternity and for intensity is instinctive and self-born. Love is a seeking for mutual possession, and it is here that the demand for mutual possession becomes absolute. Love is also a yearning for beauty, and it is here that the yearning is eternally satisfied in the vision and the touch and the joy of the All-beautiful. Love is a child and a seeker of Delight, and it is here that it finds the highest possible ecstasy both of the heart-consciousness and of every fibre of the being. Therefore it is here most that the turning of human emotion Godwards finds its full meaning and discovers all the truth of which love is the human symbol, **all its essential instincts divinised, raised, satisfied in the bliss from which our life was born and towards which by oneness it returns in the Ananda of the divine existence where love is absolute, eternal and unalloyed.**

*Sri Aurobindo (In the Arya, Vol. 4, No.11, 15 June 1918)*



## The Truth I'm Seeking

M.L. Parashar

Love has been and will ever be the law of my life. Quite often I have been led by apparent falsehood but when I look back I find nothing to regret. But the tenor of life can undergo a change and others may feel that I have changed. Love will ever be the basic foundation of my existence.

The whole of last night seems to have passed in a state of drunkenness. In my heart I felt sweetness like that of honey. This is all Grace. The movements of unconsciousness are movements of death. Consciousness is the greatest gift of the Grace and one should be grateful for it.

The purpose of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga is to prepare people for the future in which the Divine, and not the ego, will be the source of all the inspiration. For the mind it is impossible to imagine that state. We should not wonder if people do not attend our meetings in large numbers. As a matter of fact it is the Lord's Grace that is taking the world to its destined goal in spite of man's ignorance.

The joy that one experiences in the love for the Divine is so different from what we ordinarily call joy that it should be called by some other name. It is a bliss which transcends all description and is the basis of all existence. When bliss begins to flow in our veins in place of blood it will mean the beginning of the new creation.

*(Reproduced from 'The Call Beyond', Volume 18, No. 2, 1993, p. 19)*

*To be continued*

## Identity

Shalini Agarwal

*Who defines me? My parents?  
My place of birth?  
My place in society, decided by the society?  
My monetary value?  
The size of my house, or the address?  
My friends and neighbors?  
My school, my teachers?  
My country; developed or developing,  
third world or first?  
My place of worship, however restricting?  
Do my thoughts count?  
For they cry out to be noticed,  
clamour to be heard.  
But I tell them to have patience;  
Assure them: they will be appreciated.  
Someone will notice the glow within;  
The everlasting, indestructible,  
Fount of what is truly me.  
But does it really matter?  
If I know who I am  
Whose validation do I need?*

## Success

Success to me is about Vision. It is the ability to rise above the immediacy of pain. It is about imagination. It is about sensitivity to small people. It is about building inclusion. It is about connectedness to a larger world existence. It is about personal tenacity. It is about giving back more to life than you take out of it. It is about creating extra-ordinary success with ordinary lives.

Subrato Bagchi

*Source: 14 inspiring speeches (on 'The Better India' website). Link:*

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<https://www.thebetterindia.com/11894/greatest-speeches-indians-most-inspirational/>

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## Being Judgemental

*This column shall carry advice, practices or exercises which can make it a little easier for the seeker to walk the spiritual path. Contributions from the readers are welcome, and may be printed at the editor's discretion after editorial revision.*

*Do not dwell much on the defects of others. It is not helpful. Keep always quiet and peace in the attitude.*

*SRI AUROBINDO (Integral Yoga: Sri Aurobindo's Teaching and the Method of Practice, p. 340)*

A judgmental attitude is an almost universal weakness, and one of the most difficult to get rid of. Sri Aurobindo considers “the petty ego” to be at the root of the tendency to talk about the “real or unreal” defects of others.

**When** is it necessary to judge?

Its most legitimate justification is when it is a part of one's official responsibilities

If at all it is necessary to judge, **how** should one judge?

Sri Aurobindo says, “with sympathy and impartiality”, not “hastily or in a censorious spirit”

## Parental Love

*In this column, we try to answer three types of questions from the readers: those related to spiritual quest ('aspiring high'); those related to psychological issues ('feeling low'); and those related to physical health ('frailties of the flesh'). It is needless to say that the identity of the person sending the question is kept confidential if the question is about a sensitive issue. The questions may be sent to [callbeyond@aurobindoonline.in](mailto:callbeyond@aurobindoonline.in).*

*Shivani Saxena, a B.El.Ed. student who visited the Ashram asked a question, which led to an e-mail correspondence. Since the question, and the dialogue are of general interest, edited excerpts from the correspondence are reproduced below.*

**Question:** *Why is a mother associated with love?*

**Answer:** It is because in the world, a mother's love comes closest to divine love. Divine love is universal, unconditional, and does not expect anything in return. A mother's love for her child is also, in general, unconditional and does not expect anything in return. The only thing is that it is not universal.

A father's love can also be like that of a mother, but a mother's love is generally more so, and that is why the tendency is to consider a mother's love for her child as the best example of true love in human relationships.

**Shivani's response:** *I'm not fully satisfied with the answer yet. In this world every action has equal and opposite reaction. The same applies to the mother's love as well. If she loves you, she definitely wants the same or something else in return, such as she expects you to obey her, secure her future, fulfill her old age needs, etc. I think it is an exaggeration to consider mother's love to be unconditional love.*

**Editor's reply:** Yes, every action has an equal and opposite reaction. The action is that a mother loves her child; the reaction is that the child loves his/her mother.

About a mother's expectations, well they may be there. But if they are not fulfilled, she still, generally, goes on loving the child. In that sense the love is unconditional, and at least not destroyed by non-fulfillment of expectations.

**Shivani's response:** *So true! It is not destroyed if the expectations are not fulfilled, but its essence would definitely change.*

**Editor's reply:** Absolutely. It is not destroyed, but it does not remain the same. From here, one can go in two directions. **One** is to become cynical. The person stops loving the child in the same way as before. In general, the person becomes callous and insensitive. If my child, for whom I did so much, has behaved like this, what can I expect from anybody else in the world. The attitude goes towards '*koi kisi ka nahin*' (there is nobody for anybody). **The other** is

that the intense attachment to the child is weakened. The person is not as partial to one's own child as before. Love without attachment starts becoming more universal. *Apne paraye ka bhed kam ho jaata hai* (the distinction between 'my own' and 'the others' becomes less). The attitude goes towards '*sabhi apne hain*' (everybody is my own). This is spiritual evolution. That is the purpose of life.

Therefore, in a way, the unfulfilled expectations can become triggers for fulfillment of the purpose of life for the parent. For the child also, not coming up to the expectations of the parent becomes sometimes a way of evolving into an individual in her own right instead of becoming a shadow and puppet of the parent. Thus, this tendency of children, beyond the teenage, to rebel, and disappoint parents, has its positive side for both -- the parents and the children.

But a trigger is only an opportunity. An opportunity may be used or wasted. If the parent drifts towards the '*koi kisi ka nahin*' attitude, the opportunity is wasted. If one drifts towards the '*sabhi apne hain*' attitude, the opportunity is used well.

Thank you, Shivani, for engaging in this dialogue. It has helped me too to become more clear about certain facts of life.

## Feedback and Appreciations

### Feedback from an MIS Student

Respected Tara di,

This is Aman Kumar, a child who began his journey with Matri Karuna Vidyalaya (MKV). This school has played a major role in the lives of many, and I am one of them. Academics is my strong point but I have also showcased my talent by participating in various events organised by the Ashram and the school. MKV gave me everything a child asks for: education, teachers and a passion (in my case, Tabla) and most important, an opportunity. The teachers at MKV, Miss Dolly Mandal and Mrs. Mohini Anand, impressed by my performance asked me to sit for the entrance examination of MIS as MKV was till class 5 only. Their belief in me was vindicated as I cleared the exam and got into The Mothers International School (MIS) which is a dream of many a student. The person who helped me to pass this exam was Jayshree di.

In my first year at M.I.S, I was selected for the maths club, was sent for various craft competitions and also played tabla in the school assembly on the days when Intezaar sir was absent.

Then, I entered the senior section and the first thing which dragged my attention was the badminton court but I hardly knew how to hold a racquet. After a year I was winning each and every game I played. Soon I was sent for many badminton competitions and won many trophies. Simultaneously I took chess as my work experience and after 3 weeks I was in the list of top three players of the school. Academically, my percentage was always above 80. But I learnt that now I would have to pay the fees, which was a huge amount for me, but as they say doors open up when you have the will. Miss Dolly Mandal and the respected principal, Sanghamitra Ma'am, helped me and found sponsors who were ready to pay the fees for me. I was relieved and started focusing back on my academics. From class 8th to class 12th, many sponsors have come

to help me and all this has been possible with the help of Miss Dolly Mandal, Sanghamitra Ma'am and Mr. Yogesh Sharma. Neither did my academic performance fell and nor did I lose my grip on co-curricular activities.

Class 10 gave me an option to choose a stream. Fascinated by various aspects of science and technology, I took Physics, Chemistry and Maths with Computer Science and I did not have a computer at home. Challenging it was, because not only computer was a problem, the syllabus of class 11 was at least three times more, and more difficult than that of 10th. With no coaching it was definitely a task but nothing has been easy in my life. I did fail one physics test but soon began to get a grip on subjects. The results were in front of me. Students who had been studying in famous coaching institutes failed but I managed to cross another milestone.

Didi, whenever there seemed to be no way out, the Mother always helped me in some way or the other. Now once again I am waiting for Her to guide me. I want to pursue B.Tech. with Computer Science, which costs a lot of money. I really do not want to stop my journey which started 13 years back at Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch.

Aman Kumar

(E-mail: 001amankumar@gmail.com)

## Well Done, MIS

Dear Tara didi and Devyani,

Tara didi: many congratulations for a brilliant result of the MIS class 12. So wonderful to see the Mother's blossoms delivering such a great performance. It's all due to the values, dedication and the Ashram environment that seeps through our education in the school.

Megha (Bhatia)

(in an e-mail dated 28 May 2018)

## Feedback on the Course on Teaching Yoga conducted from August-December 2017



Thank you Dr. Bijlani for giving me an opportunity to be a part of this wonderful four and a half month 'Integral Yoga' programme aimed at making us yoga teachers. I joined this course half-heartedly since I wasn't sure whether I would be able to carry on with the commitment of more than 4 months.

For the last four and a half years, since I lost my younger son, my life had no discipline. I worked at my own pace, at my own will. Although I was happy (God was showering HIS grace on me in abundance), I was not disciplined. This course brought the element of discipline back into my life. I hardly missed any classes. The atmosphere at the Ashram was full of love and positivity, peace & calmness. We felt burdened at times because of the monthly tests but these tests actually helped us to assimilate knowledge, motivated us to stretch ourselves, our limits, and took away all our fears, making us more confident. For me personally, this course validated the experiences that I had in the last four and a half years, made me realize that I am not different from others; it's just that I am on a different path which is more beautiful than the previous one. There are many people there who will hold my hand and I don't have to now 'fit in'. I have now realized how blessed I am to be put on this path and this course.

Preeti Bhardwaj, our yoga instructor always smiling, cheerful, happy – a teacher you want to learn from. Actually in a play-way manner, we picked up everything in her – the learning just happened. She is just amazing.

Another highlight of the course was our group, 35 beautiful souls under one roof. There was so much to learn from each one of them. The age

group ranged from 18-75 years and, people from different backgrounds, talents, and educational qualifications. Only one thing was common – looking for something different in life, breaking stereotypes, full of love and compassion, willingness to do something for others. It was all so beautiful.

This course has given me my “LAUGHTER” back. Somewhere, I had forgotten to laugh uncontrollably. I use to laugh and smile earlier too but now it is different. It has given me my “childhood back”. We never want to grow up now.

The course has once again connected us to our roots, given us a window to see our true Self and our lives in the right perspective. May God shower his Grace on all of us to fulfill the purpose of our lives.

Priya ‘Pranav’ Gupta

The course is useful for graceful ageing; about not complaining about little issues, by seeing something good in every event. Thank you so much from my heart for whatever valuable things I have got from the course.

Asha Kukreja

### **Feedback on the Orientation to Yoga (28 & 29 April 2018)**

This was my second session on Integral Yoga at the Ashram and I was not sure if I would derive anything new in particular, but the ambience feels so nice that I decided to participate nevertheless. I must admit that although the content seemed very similar, there was a world of difference in the way I could internalise what was given. It also made me realise about the spiral of spiritual growth, which refers to the fact that we repeatedly encounter similar situations in life that leave us with different experiences with the change in our own consciousness.

The Mother has been kind enough to come up with weird ways in which instruments in the form of people come up to deliver me



from my dilemma. Ms Mithu Pal's session and her emphasis on our attitude towards work came at the exact moment when I was going through some related drama about career choices.

I hope to continue in further sessions and write about different experiences each time.

Nilanjana Moitra

Each time I hear you speak or read your words, I find them very fulfilling. I feel that the philosophy, the ideas, the spirituality that you talk about matches my experience of the world – my own spiritual growth and path, and also all of the books I read on spirituality, psychology, history, science, economics and sociology. This experience, your words and wisdom, encourage and motivate me to continue on my path. I greatly look forward to your future books and my future visits to hear you speak. I also enjoyed the music and singing that was part of the course.

Jemma Penelope

The program helped me focus inwards to understand the purpose of life and the importance of making a good use of my time and efforts to discover lasting mental peace, joy, happiness and fulfillment. I am sure I will be able to make my life better and more meaningful.

I hope I will become a better father to my 3 year old daughter who has just started her schooling in pre nursery at MIS. I hope I will be a better husband, a better human being and a better person.

Vimarsh Bajpai

I have attended very few spiritual lectures I should say, but within these limited experiences, I have understood your lectures better. In other words I get connected to your teachings and can understand them better.

As stress management is an issue I keep encountering in my daily job, your half an hour teaching has given me lot of understanding .

BSG Ramprasad

I found answers to many of my questions which were bothering me. I am glad that there were many people out there who think like me, feel like me and eager to learn more about creation and the Creator.

Dr. Gulnaz Vashist

### **Feedback on Madhuban**

For me, Madhuban is not an Ashram. It's not something where i just hold my yoga and tai chi retreat and then forget about it. For me, Madhuban is home, my family, and something which i trust. In my last 25 years, I have held innumerable retreats all over India but Madhuban is the best Ashram I have ever visited. Everything about it is beautiful. A visit to this place will leave anyone's jaws dropped wide open. People entrusted with the task of looking after this place are trained to turn everything they do into art. I intend to hold my annual retreat here as long as I live.

During my recent visit here, i had an opportunity to hear Tara didi speak, and it was truly a memorable experience. At 82, she showed no sign of slowing down. In fact, the way she spoke about the number of projects that are currently being undertaken and the ones they intend to take up, her bulldozer determination and the commitment to uplift the underprivileged shone through.

It was such an honour and a blessing to see Anju didi, another dynamic personality and a selfless worker who seemed to make tireless efforts to run such a huge ashram in a disciplined way.

Hope they continue carry on their work with passion and compassion. I wish them all the success.

Sensei Sandeep Desai

(in an e-mail dated 15 May 2018)

Dear Taradi,

Was a delight were the stay in Nainital and Alokda's talks. Madhuban was mind blowing. Hope to keep a camp for my teachers and Gita group there, someday.

What Grace to spend time with you! You spoke like a child, innocent and sweet!

Infinite Gratitude,

Anjali (Jaipuria)

Vice Chairperson, Integral Education Society  
Managing Trustee, The Mother's Institute of Research

(in an e-mail dated 29 May 2018)



## Contact us

Our quarterly magazine in Hindi, *Sri Aravind Karmadhara*, is also available on-line now, and may be viewed on our website [www.sriarobindoashram.net](http://www.sriarobindoashram.net).

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For information about Auro-Mira Service Society and the Kechla project

Please visit the website [www.auromira.in](http://www.auromira.in)

## Feedback

Please send your feedback to  
[callbeyond@arobindoonline.in](mailto:callbeyond@arobindoonline.in)

*The Call Beyond* is a publication of  
Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch

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