

# THE CALL BEYOND

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*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)*



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### *Highlights*

- *Is Life a Game? ... Page 4*
- *My Meeting With Nirodbaran ... Page 9*
- *Money ... .. Pages 19 and 21*

# Contents

## *editorial*

- *Is Life a Game?* . . . . . 4

## *article*

- *A Shelter and A Station in Life* . . . . . 6
- *My Meeting with Nirodbaran* . . . . . 9

## *words of the mother*

- *Religion: Not Divine but Human* . . . . . 15

## *hundred years ago*

- *A Defence of Indian Culture.* . . . . . 16

## *twenty five years ago*

- *I Looked into the Eyes of a Child* . . . . . 18

## *may i help you*

- *How Much Money Do We Need?* . . . . . 19

## *poetry*

- *Richness Beyond Reason* . . . . . 21

## *appreciations*

- *Feedback & Encouraging Words* . . . . . 23

## *notice board*

- *Contact us* . . . . . 31

## Is Life a Game?

*An aimless life is always a miserable life. ... on the quality of your aim will depend the quality of your life. Your aim should be high and wide, generous and disinterested; this will make your life precious to yourself and to others.*

*The Mother*

That life is a game, is a cliché, but it does not say much. A game may be taken lightly or seriously. The outcome of a game may depend on effort or on chance. Winning or losing a game may or may not matter. What type of a game is life?

If life is taken too lightly, it may be wasted. If it is taken too seriously, it may become unbearable. Therefore, wisdom lies in moderation.

The outcome of life depends both on effort and on chance. Chance we cannot control. Therefore, wisdom lies in focusing on effort. But what should the effort focus on? That depends on what outcome we want. Do we want material progress? Are we interested in intellectual satisfaction? Or is our aim spiritual growth? Any of these is at the expense of the other two. Selection should be based on knowing which outcome would lead to fulfillment, that is, the feeling that 'I have everything'. The knowledge is available, but we find it difficult to apply it because the knowledge is based on somebody else's experience. Knowledge can be applied only if it becomes a part of our own experience. Gaining experience is a step-wise process. One cannot experience the summit without climbing. Material progress is the first floor. It leaves us wanting more, and can keep us busy for ever. Intellectual satisfaction is the second floor. It fails to satiate, but one can always find more

to explore. Spiritual progress is the third floor. It promises the feeling that 'I have everything'. This experience confirms the knowledge we already had. Now we are ready to apply it. But getting to the stage of applying it comes the hard way. Few are those who learn it even the hard way. That is why they continue to suffer. The solution lies in willingness to revise the aim of life.

Does winning or losing the game of life matter? Yes, it does matter because the loser is condemned to repeat it. He is condemned to repeat not only the game, but also the suffering.

Yes, life is a game. It is a game with multiple score boards. Victory depends on choosing the right score board.

*Life is a puzzle, a riddle, a test, a mystery, a game — whatever challenge you wish to compare it to.*

— Richelle E. Goodrich

*Posted earlier as a blog on the Speaking Tree website on 10 April 2017*

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*For an example of a life played well, see 'My Meeting with Nirodbaran' on page 9*

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# Life is a Game!

## A Shelter and A Station in Life

An Ashramite

*Earth needs a place where men can live away from ...  
social conventions, self-contradictory moralities and  
contending religions,  
a place where human beings, freed from all slavery to the past,  
can devote themselves wholly to the discovery and practice of  
the divine consciousness  
that is seeking to manifest itself.  
The Mother*

One day a group of school students, around age 12, came to visit Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch. I asked them what their image of an Ashram was before they came. One of them said that he had imagined a place in a forest, where people would be staying in huts. To that one might add that a widely prevalent image of an Ashram is that it is inhabited by old people who want to, or are compelled by circumstances to, spend the evening of their lives there. Further, it is believed that life in an Ashram follows a rigid routine, and much of the time is spent on devotional music, religious rituals, prayer and meditation. In short, the image that the word Ashram evokes is similar to that of an old age home, where life is peaceful, simple and inexpensive, but regimented. In contrast with this image, visitors to Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch discover that it is in the heart of the city, has an imposing eco-friendly architecture, and is furnished with modern amenities such as wi-fi connections. Moreover, it has a huge population of young people, and the place is abuzz with activity. The activities are quite similar to those seen in the outside world, such as education and healthcare, and yet the place has an

intensely spiritual atmosphere. To understand the contrast between the popular image of an Ashram and the Ashrams of today such as Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch, it is necessary to go a bit into their history and evolution in India.

In ancient India (starting from at least 5,000 years ago till about 1,000 years ago), an ashram was a place where disciples stayed with a guru as members of his family. But over time, schools replaced ashrams as places of learning, and ashrams became essentially old age homes. Coincided with this shift also a shift in the attitude to spirituality. In ancient times, spirituality permeated every aspect of life. But over time, there developed in the Indian psyche a dichotomy between worldly life and spiritual life. Spiritual life came to be looked upon as something lived by a select few in ashrams located in forests and mountains. For the rest, it was worldly life, at least till old age. In old age, if one liked, one could leave home for living in an ashram to lead a spiritual life. In the ordinary householder's life, spirituality came to be equated with a few religious rituals to be performed on special occasions such as birth, marriage and death. This dichotomy led to a degeneration in worldly life, which made it possible for other countries to enslave India, which in turn led to further degeneration. Thus, when Sri Aurobindo emerged on the scene, India was going through one of its most decadent phases. Sri Aurobindo and the Mother were pioneers in making a strong case for reviving the life-affirming version of spirituality. In keeping with this, in the Ashram that they established at Pondicherry (now Puducherry) in 1926, they restored the ancient character and spirit of the ashram where young disciples stayed with the guru as members of his or her family.

But over time, the world had changed, and the idea of associating spirituality with life-negation had become deeply

ingrained. Therefore, Sri Aurobindo Ashram in Pondicherry became a laboratory to examine whether and how spirituality could be brought into everyday life in the modern world. It was the Mother who gave the idea of life-affirmation a practical shape. She established the various departments of the Ashram and set up the systems that would create the environment for bringing spirituality into the kitchen, the clinic, the printing press, the workshop, the playground, and last but not least in the school that She established in 1943. She was a Mother to the disciples who lived in the Ashram, taking care of their physical needs, and was also to them a Guru who answered all their doubts, difficulties and queries with infinite patience.

While connecting spirituality with renunciation of life continues to dominate the Indian psyche, the pioneering work of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, and their illustrious contemporaries such as Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi, has had an impact on Ashrams in general. Today, there are so many Ashrams, and other spiritual organizations, that engage with the outside world, and are involved in worldly activity, particularly education and healthcare.

The word, Ashram, is also used in another context, as one of the four phases of twenty-five years each into which human life has traditionally been divided in India. At first, the two meanings given to the same word seem illogical, but it is not impossible to find a rationale. Ashram, literally, means a shelter. The place where disciples live with the guru is, of course, a shelter. But during the four phases of life, a person takes refuge under a different set of values, goals and people, even if there is not necessarily a change in the roof under which the person lives. In fact, if the significance of this division into four phases is understood and accepted, one is likely to live under a different roof too during each of these

phases. Now, what are these four phases of life. The first is Brahmcharya ashram, which lasts till the age of twenty-five. This is the preparatory phase of life, most of which is spent as a student. The next is Grihastha ashram, which comprises the householder's life, from age twenty-five through fifty. After age fifty begins the Vanaprastha ashram, during which a person may engage with the world, but has a detached attitude. Vanaprastha lasts another twenty-five years. After age seventy-five begins the Sannyasa ashram, which lasts till the person lives. During Sannyasa, the person gives up all attachment to relationships and possessions, and tries to live with a constant awareness of the Divine. While the duration of twenty-five years is arbitrary and approximate, the sequence and direction of life suggested by the four ashramas makes perfect sense even today.

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*The 'Siddhi Day', 24 November 1926, is considered the formal beginning of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry*

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## **My Meeting with Nirodbaran**

Sukhendu Roy Chowdhury

*Dr. Nirodbaran (17 November 1903 - 17 July 2006), popularly called Nirod-da in the Ashram, went to Edinburgh to study medicine in 1924. Although soon after his return in 1930, he went to Pondicherry, he felt that he was not made for spiritual life, but simply for "karma yoga." He became a successful medical practitioner in Rangoon, and material progress sent spirituality as well as karma yoga into oblivion. The awakening came when the police searched his house, possibly because in their records he was still a suspicious character because, as a young boy, he had served a two-month sentence in jail due to his involvement in the*

*freedom struggle. Soon after that he lost his job, and things went from bad to worse. After two years of struggle, he finally decided to take refuge in Sri Aurobindo and the Mother at Pondicherry. After Sri Aurobindo had a fracture of the leg in 1938, Nirod-da not only took care of him as a medical person, but also became the scribe to whom Sri Aurobindo started dictating 'Savitri'. His work as a scribe continued till 1950 when Sri Aurobindo left the body. After 1950, the Mother asked Nirod-da to teach in the school, where he taught French, English and Bangla. He kept himself in good health even in his nineties, was humble, and always available as an elder brother to all those who were in the Ashram or visited the Ashram.*

*(Based on Sunayana Panda: 'Seven Dedicated Lives' pp. 2-8)*

At first sight Nirodbaran looks an ordinary man. You may not



feel encouraged to meet him. He is unassumingly simple. Outwardly he behaves in a very restricted manner. But you need to reach into the depths of the heart of this frail man of advanced years to find a pearl as in an oyster.

Nirodbaran's journey from medical science at Edinburgh to spiritual science in Pondicherry, from rational to suprarational, paid him rich dividends in terms of spiritual gain. Since his coming to Pondicherry in the early thirties in search of a quiet spiritual life, he never looked back: he burnt his boats. The inner spiritual world of Nirodbaran is shrouded in mystery. My effort to bring out his hidden spiritual experiences met with but little success.

The grace of his *Guru* Sri Aurobindo came upon Nirodbaran in a very peculiar way. Just before the 1938 November

*Darshan*, Sri Aurobindo met with an accident. He needed special care and Nirodbaran was called upon to serve him in his capacity as a physician. By this time he had already built up an intimate relationship with Sri Aurobindo through correspondence with him. And now a new vista of life's realisations opened up. For twelve long years he served his Master with unflinching devotion and steadfastness. In his own words, "knowledge, love and bliss which intermittently poured out from Sri Aurobindo was sufficient reward he accorded to us for the humble services we rendered."

Apart from mystic poetry written under Sri Aurobindo's inspiration, Nirodbaran has a number of books to his credit that reveal different facets of Sri Aurobindo's divine personality.

Nirodbaran's room is in an enviable location, overlooking Sri Aurobindo's *Samadhi* where hundreds of devotees offer their obeisance to the Divine.

Proper utilisation of time has always been high on his agenda. If one wants to meet him one has to face a barrage of questions before he is invited. He is like a tortoise who comes out of the shell only when a friendly signal is given.

With an expectant mind I approached him for an interview. He tried to impress upon me the futility of such interviews, but I was able to convince him of their usefulness for the readers.

#### Excerpts from the interview:

*Q. You have been a close associate of Sri Aurobindo. Do you feel a vacuum due to his physical absence?*

*A. I do feel a vacuum at times. At other times I feel his divine Presence which gives me peace, calm and a sense of joy.*

*Q. Can you recollect your first meeting with Sri Aurobindo?*

A. There was no meeting, my friend. I had a darshan of Sri Aurobindo in 1930. Sri Aurobindo, as the Mother said, was an Avatar of Supermind. When I saw him I felt that he possessed a great Power and could do anything he wanted. At the same time, he was very simple, majestic, calm and loveable, giving me the impression of Lord Shiva.

*Q. You are one of the Old Guards of Sri Aurobindo's era. What is your assessment of the progress of the Ashram since Sri Aurobindo's Mahasamadhi?*

A. Things have progressed a lot, internally as well as externally. It is the inner development to which we are giving top priority. The Ashram exists not so much by the outer as by inner growth. In this respect it is different from secular institutions. It is growing from strength to strength. The inner growth is not a thing that one can see through the mind or the physical eye. Though the Mother and Sri Aurobindo are not present physically, the Ashram is packed with their divine Presence and Power.

*Q. How far, in the light of Sri Aurobindo's teachings, have you succeed in transforming your ordinary nature and gained control over your instincts?*

A. Transformation of the personality and things like that seem to be a distant goal. If I had no control over my natural instincts how could I remain here without getting disturbed by various temptations? I have been invited to Calcutta and Delhi a number of times but I declined to go. I have taken up work and I have been doing it; that is all.

*Q. How do you view the collective sadhana that is being practised here in the Ashram?*

A. These are very private things. In fact you should see for yourself the life here. There is so much freedom. People are impressed by what they see. They have not seen children so happy anywhere else. There is so much discipline. Children live here as brothers and sisters, as the Mother's Children – that is so patently clear. Not that the system is perfect, but everybody is happy to see such a harmony in the Ashram without any apparent control. Here boys and girls mix freely but not in the way of the world. I am talking of the inmates of the Ashram. But there are plenty of outsiders who are also devotees of the Mother and who have settled here. Those who visit the Ashram see only the outside – they have no inner eye to see the Truth. They go by superficial signs.

*Q. Do you think that the books written by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother are sufficient for spiritual aspirants to do the integral yoga unaided by a living guru?*

A. I have told you that although physically they are not here, subtly they are present – we do get indications from them. If you are sincere, you get their directions as and when you are in need of it.

*Q. Renunciation is a very important aspect of traditional yoga. But here I find that this aspect is missing, at least outwardly. Don't you think that without renunciation common people may misunderstand the principles of sandhana?*

A. Let me tell you that it is the inner renunciation that is needed for doing Sri Aurobindo's yoga, not the outer. In that sense his yoga is new. Since we have accepted his yoga,

naturally the emphasis is on inner renunciation. It does not mean that outwardly we will enjoy life and say we have renounced. Everything is done in the inner being. It is not the renunciation of the Sanyasin. Do you follow?

We do not set examples. It is our own life that we have to live. There is no scope for pretension. **Sincerity is the question. Everything depends on that.** Don't you think that to become sincere is so easy! Sincerity has to be practised. Secondly, Sri Aurobindo himself has said that his yoga is new – he is not following the traditional path. This newness lies in the acceptance of the life and world in a modified way – not the path of the Sanyasins who have rejected the world and have gone away to the Himalaya or to lonely retreats. The Mother and Sri Aurobindo, by accepting the world, want to change it. So the dangers and pitfalls may be there but we have to face them and try to conquer them. The help of our Gurus is with us. So this yoga is an inner movement and not an outer one. That is why we give so much importance to inner renunciation.

*Q. Those who want to do Sri Aurobindo's yoga, what advice would you give them?*

A. The Mother has said that you must feel the Call for this yoga. You must be sure of it. Then all the rest will follow.

*(Reproduced from The Call Beyond, Vol. 18, No.3, 1993, pp.25-26)*

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*17 November is Dr. Nirodbaran's Birthday*

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## Religion: Not Divine but Human



Religion belongs to the higher mind of humanity. It is the effort of man's higher mind to approach, as far as it lies in its power, something beyond it, something to which humanity gives the name God or Spirit or Truth or Faith or Knowledge or the Infinite, some kind of Absolute, which the human mind cannot reach and yet tries to reach. Religion may be divine in its ultimate origin; in its actual nature it is not divine but human....

The articles and dogmas of a religion are mind-made things and, if you cling to them and shut yourself up in a code of life made out for you, you do not know and cannot know the truth of the Spirit that lies beyond all codes and dogmas, wide and large and free. When you stop at a religious creed and tie yourself in it, taking it for the only truth in the world, you stop the advance and widening of your inner soul.

*The Mother ('The Great Adventure', p. 22)*



## A Defence of Indian Culture

... .. the principle, the essential intention of Indian culture was extraordinarily high, ambitious and noble, the highest indeed that the human spirit can conceive. For what can be a greater idea of life than that which makes it a development of the spirit in man to its most vast secret and high possibilities, conceives it as a movement of the Eternal in time, of the universal in the individual, of the infinite in the finite, of the Divine in man, or holds that man can become not only conscious of the eternal and the infinite, but live in its power and universalise, spiritualise, divinise himself by self-knowledge? What can be greater aims for the life of man than to grow by an inner and outer experience, till he can live in God, realise his spirit, become divine in knowledge, in will and in the joy of being? And that is the whole sense of the striving of Indian culture.

It is easy to say that these ideas are fantastic, chimerical and impracticable, that there is no spirit and no eternal, and nothing divine, and man would do much better not to dabble in religion and philosophy, but rather make the best he can of the ephemeral littleness of his life and body. ... .. The whole aim of a great culture is to lift man up to something which at first he is not, to lead him to knowledge though he starts from an unfathomable ignorance ... ..

... .. every civilisation presents a mixed and anomalous appearance and can be turned by a hostile or unsympathetic observation which notes and exaggerates its defects, ignores its true spirit and its qualities ... into a mass of barbarism ... .. each [civilisation] has achieved something of special value for humanity ... .. Greece developed to a high degree the

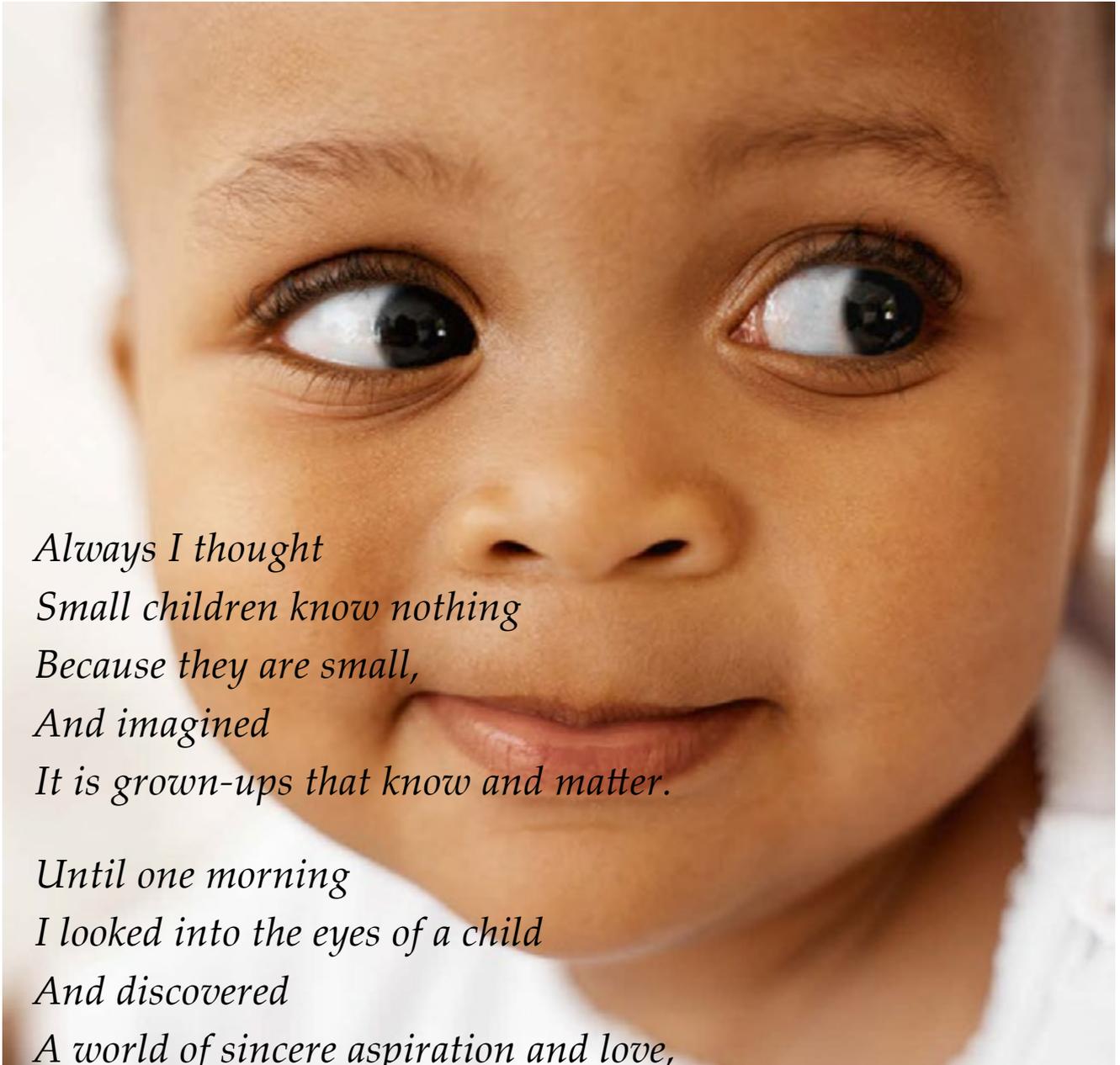
intellectual reason and the sense of form and harmonious beauty, Rome founded firmly strength and power and patriotism and law and order, modern Europe has raised to enormous proportions practical reason, science and efficiency and economic capacity, India developed the spiritual mind and working on the other powers of man and exceeding them, the intuitive reason, the philosophical harmony of the Dharma informed by the religious spirit, the sense of the eternal and the infinite. The future has to go on to a greater and more perfect comprehensive development of these things and to evolve fresh powers, but we shall not do this rightly by damning the past or damning other cultures than our own in a spirit of arrogant intolerance. We need not only a spirit of calm criticism, but an eye of sympathetic intuition to extract the good from the past and present effort of humanity and make the most of it for our future progress.

*Sri Aurobindo (In the Arya, Vol. 6, No. 4, 15 November 1919, pp. 220-232)*



## I Looked into the Eyes of a Child

Sandhya



*Always I thought  
Small children know nothing  
Because they are small,  
And imagined  
It is grown-ups that know and matter.*

*Until one morning  
I looked into the eyes of a child  
And discovered  
A world of sincere aspiration and love,  
An innocence and pure delight  
Grown-ups can seldom attain,  
And knew that it is the soul that really knows  
And it is its sweetness and beauty that matters.*

Reproduced from *The Call Beyond*, Vol. 19, No. 4, p. 40, 1994

*In this column, we try to answer three types of questions: 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 asking 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).*

## How Much Money Do We Need?

**M wants to know:**

*How much money is essential in life?*

**Answer**

I hope you really mean 'How much money is essential in life?' and not 'How essential is money in life?' Because if the question is 'How essential is money in life?' the answer is simple: Money is essential in life. Poverty is a curse.

But to the question, 'How much money is essential in life?' the answer is not simple. The answer is difficult because no single figure can be given as the amount that is essential. The amount essential is best understood in relation to our desires. If we understand the value of limiting our desires; appreciate the fact that unless limited consciously, desires can be endless; and have experienced that desires bring misery even if fulfilled; very little money is enough. On the other hand, if we let the desires free to multiply, no amount of money will be enough. The difficulty therefore arises when we have to specify which of our desires is a necessity, which is not a necessity but is reasonable, and which is purely an indulgence that is best avoided. The practical answer to the dilemma is twofold. **First**, let not money be the primary goal of life; that is possible only if we understand the true purpose of life, which is higher than

the satisfaction of the needs of the body and the mind. **Secondly**, earn as much money as you can by means that are legally and morally permissible, and then limit the desires to the extent that your money can buy. A Hindi proverb expresses it very well: '*jitni chaadar ho, utne hi pair failao*' (do not spread out your feet beyond the boundary of your bedsheet).

Suppose a person earns by means that are legally and morally permissible an amount that is more than what is needed for the fulfillment of his limited desires. Then, this person clearly has an opportunity to experience the joy of giving. That does not mean surplus money is what we need to experience that joy. **First**, money can be given (and is often given) even when not surplus. **Secondly**, it is not only money that can be given. One can give an object, time, knowledge, care, sympathy, or just a smile. The important thing is to give what we have **to someone who needs it**. That is the best expression of love, and the surest way to grow spiritually, which is the same as fulfilling the purpose of life. Further, the expression of love is spiritually most meaningful when given regardless of the biological or social relationship that we have with the person to whom we are giving.

Money is not poisonous. If someone is blessed with the talent and opportunity to make money by the right means, let him make as much as he can. But, as Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have said, let him consider himself to be the trustee of the wealth, not its owner. Let him live with the knowledge that the Divine has trusted him with the wealth so that he can use it to fulfill the purpose of his life by giving it to those who need it. What a comfortable means, and what a comforting end!

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*See also the related poem 'Richness Beyond Reason' on page 21*

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## Richness Beyond Reason

Shishu

*Everybody wants to grow rich,  
And some really do.  
But those who feel rich,  
Are indeed very few.*

*The thrill of earning more,  
Is to all so dear.  
But the joy of needing less,  
Is not so clear.*

*Earning more  
Creates conflicts in the mind.  
Needing less  
Leaves desires behind.*

*Earning more may need  
The conscience to be killed.  
Needing less may leave  
No desire to be fulfilled.*

*The needs are very few,  
But unlimited is greed.  
Greed gets its due  
From ego, a wild weed.*



*Desire and ego:  
A terrible breed.  
The more you feed them,  
The more they need.*

*No ego, no desire:  
The path of sunshine  
For all who aspire  
To discover the Divine.*

*Yoga: a trying road,  
Blocked by ego and desire.  
Every step on the road,  
Lifts a man from the mire.*

*The road is long,  
The goal may be never seen.  
But every step brings along  
Joy in seasons good and lean*

*Joy in every season  
Has a rich feel.  
Richness beyond reason,  
Safety beyond a seal.*



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*See also the related discussion 'How Much Money Do We Need?' on page 19*

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## Feedback & Encouraging Words

### An MIS Alumnus Does Us Proud

Mr. Abhijit Banerjee shared the 2019 Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences with Esther Duflo and Michael Kremer, for their experimental approach to alleviating global poverty. Mr. Banerjee is the co-founder of Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (along with Esther Duflo, his wife). Mr. Iqbal Singh Dhaliwal is the Executive Director of Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab, based at the Department of Economics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Mr. Iqbal Singh Dhaliwal is an alumnus of MIS.

### Feedback from a Visitor from Australia

Dear Friends of Sri Aurobindo Ashram,



I am writing to you with heartfelt thanks for the inspirational and uplifting two weeks [in October 2019] that I spent with you all recently.

I came as an educator on a school exchange program to share and engage our students with intercultural understandings so that they may be prepared as global citizens for the future world. I was partnered with your Mirambika Free Progress School.

During the two weeks I was accommodated as a guest at three of your Ashrams, all of which were beautiful, peaceful environments where I was cared for, and enjoyed a life of simple humility and which enabled me to breathe and feel life freely without limits. I experienced life 'on the ground' and was immersed in learning at the New Delhi Ashram, Nainital Ashram and Kechla School Community – each uniquely

special and true to their context and purpose but each having the same consistent underlying philosophy of love, the priority of life and sustainable living, and a guiding divinity which is the signature of Sri Aurobindo.

I would like to thank Baren Raul especially for the opportunities and time he gave me in the two weeks to fully immerse myself in your community and to feel firsthand how you strive to create the conditions for a better future world, and your staff and teachers of the Mirambika Free Progress School for sharing their work and opening their homes unconditionally to me. The students at this school had truly personalised blended learning opportunities and were able to articulate clearly what and why they were learning, and their future learning goals.

I thank also from the bottom of my heart Aparna Didi for her kindness and compassion, for her company on the journey to the school in Kechla and for teaching me to let go of fears and trust in the divinity of the Mother. From Aparna I learnt how striving for divinity through spirituality is the highest possible reach which goes beyond academic or religious positions. To achieve this I learnt from her that one must do more than think – one must feel.

I would also like to thank Pranjal and all staff at the Kechla Community School for the beautiful welcome and inclusion into their school community on every level. The achievements for student learning and the priority for their emotional and social well being in the most remote of contexts is truly uplifting and an example to the world of how it is truly possible to live and learn in harmony with the natural environment, each at our pace. The priorities of language and the arts demonstrated that student achievement can be accelerated and lifted exponentially even in the most isolated of environments. Importantly, this school showed how resourcing the language arts is not a material condition but about utilising the language and the arts from within ourselves – from the inside out.

Students in Kechla showed me proudly their work and lives and personally took me to their family villages where I was welcomed as a sister. They learnt completely through English, transferred learning and language to Hindi seamlessly and spoke proudly in their first language Odiya. These students lived a humble and gracious life, giving service before breakfast, meditating daily and attending school almost 100% of the entire year. They showed how it is possible for tribal children to walk freely in both worlds.

The community is an outstanding example with its rainwater tanks and pumps, solar panelling, edible and medicinal gardens and community kitchen of sustainability in action. Staff at this school demonstrated the art of service leadership committed to the lifelong learning of all students giving of their time and love every minute of the day. In our over-indulgent, over-materialistic and over-entitled world of the West we have so much to learn from your world and our students do too as future global citizens. This for me was the most outstanding experience of my personal and professional life, for which I thank you all. It will remain with me for the rest of my life. With your endorsement I would like to continue to work with Baren and Pranjali to bring this life-wide learning to my staff and students in Western Australia.

I was very nervous of making the trip to India and even more so to the community school in Kechla. I travelled alone and was unsure of the destination or purpose. I do believe now that there is a bigger higher purpose for us all in life, and that we should be guided much more by what we feel is right rather than what we think is right, and not to overthink or overcomplicate a situation. I am so glad that I did go with my feeling and make this journey and chose the road least taken. It has made all the difference.

Ruth Alice Proslmeyer

Principal

Paraburdoo Primary School

Western Australia, Australia

## Feedback from IIT-Delhi

*Twenty-two students doing a course on Professional Ethics and Social Responsibility at IIT-Delhi, accompanied by their teacher, Dr. Sonika Thakral, visited the Ashram on 20 September 2019.*

Dear Sir,



Many thanks for the wonderful session. It is always a pleasure to listen to you. The students were very happy. Some of them asked me if they could visit the Ashram on their own, and I encouraged them to do so. Thanks for sparing your valuable time.

Sonika Thakral  
(in an e-mail dated 23 Sep 2019)

## Feedback on Orientation to Integral Yoga

*Thirty-three participants attended a weekend Orientation to Integral Yoga on 5 & 6 October 2019*



I am a student of Yoga for the last 22 years but this was an enlightening program which expanded my understanding of Yoga in a deeper sense. This short course touched upon the spiritual aspect of Yoga which in general is not

known to yoga students. Also, the stress management and musical program was excellent.

Dharmपाल P. Aggarwal

The session in Ashram is worth experiencing. It's a kind of spiritual cleansing. I loved the service offered here with the pure heart, especially the Bhajans and Breakfast. The atmosphere is very healing because of greenery everywhere. I loved the lectures, which were very simple but gave effective insights on love, ego and stress management. This space is worth visiting again and again. It was a heart-healing experience.

Anjali Dahiya

The Program was concise and well-organised. It made us aware of the purpose of life, how to make life stress free, and the art of living. Yoga exercises made us realise that how important it is to make the body flexible. Overall, the brief program was excellent. Music was really therapeutic.

Shashi Narula

I have a severe issue with regards to calming of mind. As of now, after attending the two-day course, I am experiencing serenity, calmness and confidence to continue my journey on the spiritual path.

Kavita Pandey

The two-day program for me was a wonderful opportunity to understand now Karma yoga and Bhakti yoga can be integrated into a fuller life experience. We need to have a balance in life. On one hand are our duties and on the other hand our desire for everlasting peace. I found that both can go hand in hand.

Rakesh Kumar

First, I decided to join because I felt a misalignment between myself and the surrounding world. I felt controlled by emotions most of the time while being as well limited by my intellect. I had the feeling I need to find again the purpose of life. I am open-minded and all the aspects covered in the program resonated with me. I found things already known but forgotten over the time. Ego vs love is my key thought that I'll take back home.

Damien Micheli

## Feedback on the Workshop for Sports Teachers

*About 50 Sports Teachers from schools all over the country participated in a workshop conducted for them at the Ashram from 25-31 October 2019*



Dear Madam,

I really had a wonderful time there in the Ashram. Those seven days in ashram were the best days of my life. The hospitable manners of the ashram's people were so inspiring. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to learn. The workshop was great; it has given me a clear concept of integral teaching. I will make sure to implement all the things I have learnt in the workshop in more innovative ways.

Thankyou

Amita Sonar

Intaya Public School, Roing, Arunachal Pradesh

(in an e-mail dated 5 November 2019)

Dear Tara Didi,

Bonsoir!

Bappu and I have reached Arunachal Pradesh safely and will be starting our workshops with teachers tomorrow. Un grand merci to you and the entire Ashram Sports Camp helpers for giving us an opportunity to participate in the workshops. Thanks again for

giving us the sports kit. We intend showing it to a few principals of village schools in the northeast who are interested, sincere and open to new ideas and approaches in education. Our stay at the Ashram was memorable and we will cherish the beautiful memories.

A bientôt!  
Amicalement,  
Nitu and Bappu  
(in an e-mail dated 1 November 2019)

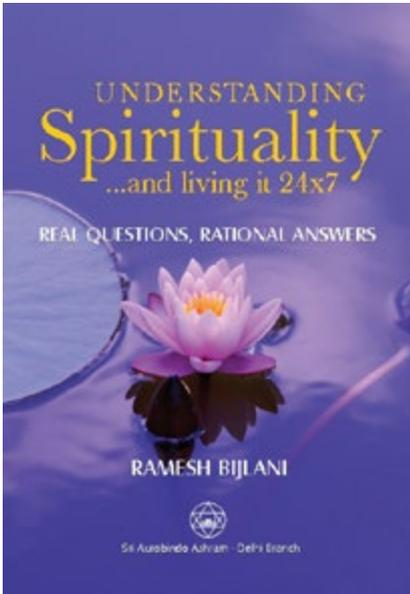
### **Feedback from a coach who taught basketball on the new courts in Madhuban**

Dear Anju,

After almost seven months now, my travels have now finally come to a halt. Time to reflect and dwell on the precious memories I have collected along the way, if only for an instant. Having left Madhuban three months ago almost to the day, I can tell you that I look back on that time in the fondest of ways, and my appreciation for the place has since only grown. Without question, my time spent there has been one of the most profound and transformative experiences of my life and has given the past 7 months the meaning that I set out to find. And even though I left, I carried Madhuban with me each step of the way. Naturally, I lost sight of it once in a while, but I always found my way back home and I'm confident that I always will. I believe I have come a long way on my quest to be at ease within and as part of this universe, and yet it is so apparent, how much more room for growth there is left to fill. I guess that's the beauty of it all. Having said that, I just want to once again pronounce my deepest gratitude to you and the entire Madhuban family for taking me in and allowing me to use this space the way I did. I feel truly indebted to all of you and am very eager to give back in the future!

Henry (Golinski)  
(in an e-mail dated 5 November 2019)

## Feedback on the book 'Understanding Spirituality... and Living It 24x7'



I am relishing each sentence of the book 'Understanding Spirituality.' I am reading it as a coursebook on life! It expresses with such clarity and ease what resonates deeply within me – almost as if this book was written for me! As I write to you, my heart is expanded by its renewed faith in life as a great force of mystery and joy. "And without the feeling that one receives in sharing love, one cannot fully experience this gift that life is," whispers the Wiseheart.

Charnita (Arora)  
(in a letter dated 24 October 2019)

*Editors note: Charnita Arora has completed the manuscript for a booklet titled 'Wiseheart Whispers'*

I gifted the book 'Understanding Spirituality' to my son, Akash. He read it, and he liked it so much that he completed it in three days. He was very happy to read it . It should be very helpful to him.

Asha Kukreja  
(in an e-mail dated 10 November 2019)



## 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).

For a free subscription to *Sri Aravind Karmadhara*, please send an e-mail to [sakarndhara@gmail.com](mailto:sakarndhara@gmail.com)

To get *The Call Beyond* online regularly, month after month, please send an e-mail to: [callbeyond@aurobindoonline.in](mailto:callbeyond@aurobindoonline.in)

To learn about the recent and forthcoming activities through the Ashram's e-magazine, *Realization*, send an email to: [callbeyond@aurobindoonline.in](mailto:callbeyond@aurobindoonline.in)

Please follow a simple two-step process:

1. Subject: Subscribe
2. Click on Send

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## Note

*In view of two major events coming: the Hundredth Anniversary of the Mother's Final Arrival in Pondicherry on 24 April 2020, and the Hundred and Fiftieth Birth Anniversary of Sri Aurobindo on 15 August 2022, the Ashram is expanding its mailing list to reach out to more and more who may benefit from the teachings of the Master and the Mother. To get included in the Mailing List, please go to <http://erp.saaonline.net.in/addcontacts.cfm> to fill in a form, which will take you only a few minutes.*



## Feedback

Please send your feedback to  
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