

THE CALL BEYOND

VOLUME 43 NO.7

15 JULY 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 ASRHAM - DELHI BRANCH
www.sriurobindoashram.net

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Cover painting: Shri Hrishikesh Kumar

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When Less is More

Ascetic methods are things like repeated fasting, compelling yourself to endure the cold... in fact, to torture your body a little. This indeed gives you only a spiritual pride, nothing more. It masters nothing at all.

The Mother

Austerity is commonly used as the English equivalent of what has been called Tapas in the Indian tradition. Austerity bears a superficial resemblance to tapas, but the two are not the same; there is perhaps no word in English that conveys the exact meaning of tapas. A life characterized by austerities is an extremely simple life. The simplicity is the result of self-denial, which in turn may be based on a philosophy of life that believes in reducing desires. Austerities may also be a type of self-imposed suffering, which in turn may be penance for a sin, or a religious practice aimed at a life higher and nobler than the ordinary. Tapas, on the other hand, is concentration of energies on something important. If we consider something to be important, we would like to pay more attention to it. This would require finding more time for it. Time is something we cannot manufacture or buy from the market. Each of us has available exactly twenty-four hours in a day; in this respect at least, all of us have equal opportunities! Therefore, when we feel strongly that something needs more time, we cut down on the things that we do not consider really important. Taking away from our lives what is less important helps us

concentrate on what is more important. That is how the word is used also in chemistry. If we wish to concentrate a sugar solution, we heat it so that the water evaporates. Taking water away leaves behind a more concentrated solution, a sweeter solution of sugar. We are interested in sugar, not in water. By taking away water, we get a more concentrated solution of sugar. The more water we remove, the more concentrated the solution becomes. If we remove all the water, we will be left behind with only the sugar. In the same way, a stage may come when we cut down so much on the 'unimportant' that our lives are filled exclusively with what is important to us. That would also be a life of self-denial, a life full of austerities, but it has been arrived at by a different route, and for different reasons. In the Indian spiritual tradition, and in all other mystic traditions, some rare individuals have considered finding the deepest Truth of existence extremely important. Since this Truth is not easy to realize, those who have made it their mission in life have gradually lost interest in things such as food, sex, clothing, shelter, etc. which an ordinary person considers quite important. This voluntary change in lifestyle makes it possible to concentrate intensely on the one issue that is important to the person. That is why it is called tapas. A student, who has his board exam coming, may give up sports, TV, movies, gossip, etc. for a few months so that he can do his best in the exam. This is also a form of tapas!

What is important to realize is that austerities are not a virtue in themselves. They involve giving up the lower for the sake of a higher goal. The motive behind the austerities is at least

as important as the austerities. If the austerities are treated as a virtue in themselves, they may lead not only to needless suffering but also arrogance. Greater the self-imposed torture, greater may be the arrogance. Further, total denial is easier than moderation. Based on these principles, the Mother has talked of austerities involving different parts of the being. **Physical austerity** includes appropriate exercise for the body; diet, which is healthy and just right in quantity; good quality sleep, which is also just adequate in duration; work, done with interest and dedication; and sexual continence. **Emotional austerity** involves purification and refinement of emotions to an extent that they translate into enthusiasm and dynamism of action. The emotion of love should be retained but the love should be universal, unconditional, and should not expect anything in return. **Mental austerity** should consist of speaking less. Speaking only as much as is necessary all the time is more difficult, but also more fruitful, than observing total silence for even a whole day. These austerities are the result of adopting union with the Divine as the goal of life. With that motive, these austerities become not a hardship but a joy because minor things have been given up for the sake of the highest and widest goal of life.

Please see also the related article, 'In Praise of Moderation' on Page 8

We Love to Hear From You

It was a pleasure reading through the latest issue. It carries the freshness of the youthful writers and the simplicity of the Truth and the true spiritual life. It is a delight to observe the blossoming of souls in such a loving environment.

Larry (Seidlitz)
(in an e-mail dated 16 June 2018)

Very positive and impressive articles. Opened a completely new horizon for thinking about the world and myself. I am happy that I had joined Sri Aurobindo Ashram's programme. It has helped me in taking proper decisions and managing stress, which is very common in today world.

Ayush Jain
IIT Delhi
(in an e-mail dated 16 June 2018)

This month's The Call Beyond and Realization are both exceptionally addressed to the myriad confusions of different humans at different levels. When I read them and sometimes share them with my friends, I find, strangely enough, it has something for everyone, just as Sri Aurobindo and the Mother had something for even the animals that lived in the ashram atmosphere. Each issue creates a greater longing for the next one.

Nilanjana (Moitra)
(in an e-mail dated 18 June 2018)

In Praise of Moderation

Bhavna Dewan Bhatia

The idea of moderation can easily be segregated into two parts. One is to do with oneself – the avoidance of extreme behaviour, the practice of self-restraint, self-control, self-discipline and balance. The other aspect of moderation is in terms of behavior towards others comprising fairness, leniency and temperance.

We live in a society full of judgment. We are so quick to condemn the actions or lives of others. We are judging relentlessly, all the time - liking someone, disliking someone; loving something, hating something – mired in the duality of *raaga-dvesha*. In fact, it is the people closest to us whom we hurt the most with our harsh judgment. But that judgment is normally more about us than them. This judgment stems from lacunae in our inner self, our own insecurities, or our compulsive need to control others. The arrogance and pride of our own ways make us blind to the merits of other ways of living.

With a spiritual attitude we get in touch with our real Self. With a deeper understanding, we allow ourselves to follow our *swadharma* – live a more authentic life. Life moves on from being in a state of constant comparison to a state of constant acceptance and growth. This empowers and enables us to accept others with all their differences. Having opinions is a mark of a thinking person but so is being open to opinions and ways of life other than our own.

Accepting the spiritual worldview entails recognizing each and every creature as a manifestation of the Divine. There is no place for divisive arrogance, ego or pride in this. Extremism excludes, while moderation accepts and includes. It is moderation that will sweeten relationships and build a more positive community and society.

At the personal level, moderation is an essential part of spirituality. For those in the *grihastha ashram*, inculcating the values of restraint, control and discipline is the only way to move on the spiritual path. Only holding the bar of moderation can help one balance on the tightrope that a householder's life is.

Moderation has been preached by many, in many parts of the world. Lord Buddha gave us the middle path. Moderation is one of the gems in the Chinese Taoist philosophy. Ancient Greek temples have inscriptions such as 'Nothing in Excess', from which we probably got the English proverb, 'excess of everything is bad'.

Moderation has been preached extensively but in practice it is very hard to come by. Look around you and you see all kinds of extremes. People are in so much pain due to a loss of balance in their lives. Some eat too much, some too little; some exercises too much, some too little; some do not care for the family, some are too attached to it.

Moderation is not popular today. The modern work culture demands long working hours with no time left for oneself and the family. The extreme working hours find release in extreme eating, drinking, and sleeping over the weekend.

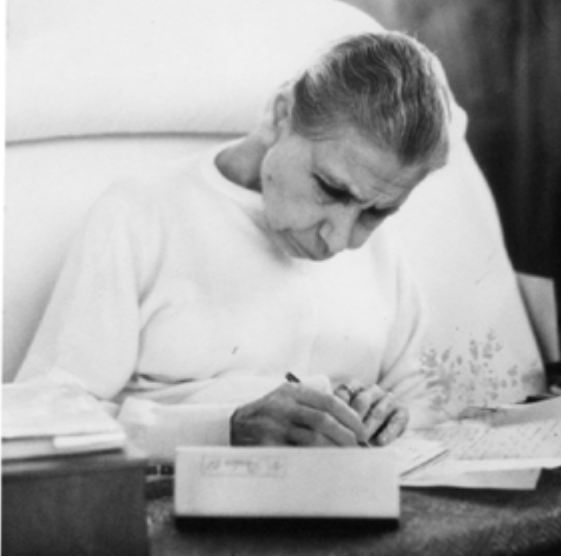
Not succumbing to this culture earns labels such as ‘a misfit’, ‘lacking in ambition’, and a ‘failure’. The popular culture makes us believe that moderation cannot lead to success. But nobody wants to stop to think, ‘successful at what’, ‘how long the success lasts’, and ‘does the success bring fulfillment?’ Moderation is not weakness. It takes great strength to ride against the tide.

Religious extremism is shaking the foundations of the modern world. There is a great need for moderate opinions to counter this. There is room in the world for my God and yours. We may not understand each-other’s ways but we can give each other room to practice. On scriptures from other religions, Sri Aurobindo writes in *Essays on the Gita*, “... for when we reject passionately, we mean simply that we cannot appreciate and explain.” A spiritual attitude would help one understand that the human condition is all the same, poverty affects them the same way, mobs and majority affect them the same way, and power affects them the same way. Moderate thinking needs to replace the passionate extremism that is tearing humanity apart. Then one’s interactions with fellow humans would be full of love and reverence. Then the words exchanged would never be the sharp arrows of judgment meant to hurt but a salve of comfort, warm with the touch of one’s own inner riches.

(Bhavna Dewan Bhatia was a student in the course on Teaching Yoga conducted by the Ashram in 2017. This article was an assignment submitted by her as a part of the requirements for the course.)

Please see also the related editorial, ‘When Less is More’ on Page 4

One Dreams of Miracles



One dreams of miracles when one is young, one wants all wickedness to disappear, everything to be always luminous, beautiful, happy, one likes stories which end happily.... Children should be taught, “Yes, this is what you must try to realize and not only is it possible but it is *certain* if

you come in contact with the part in you which is capable of doing this thing. This is what should guide your life, organize it, make you develop in the direction of the *true reality* which the ordinary world calls illusion.”...

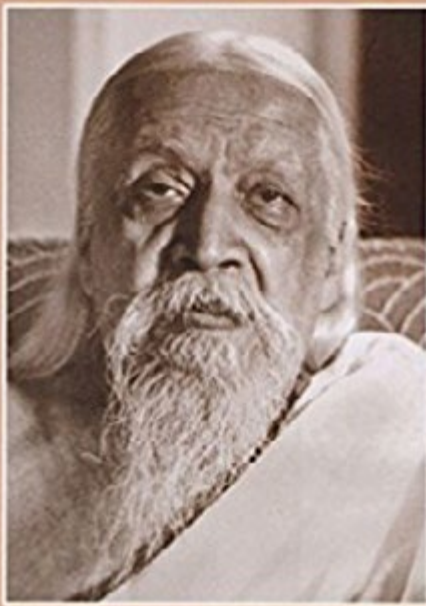
When a child is full of enthusiasm, never throw cold water on it, never tell him, “You know, life is not like that!” You should always encourage him, tell him, “Yes, at present things are not always like that, they seem ugly, but behind this there is a beauty that is trying to realize itself. This is what you should love and draw towards you, this is what you should make the object of your dreams, of your ambitions.”

A child’s imagination often runs ahead of what seems realistic or rational. The Mother here is sounding an important caution to parents and teachers not to dismiss off-hand the child’s dreams. The child’s psychic being is wide open, and it is that which may be the source of knowledge or possibilities that seem too wild to an adult. “If God wanted man to fly, He would have given him wings”, said once a Bishop. A few decades later, the Wright brothers invented the aeroplane; the Bishop was their father.

The Synthesis of Yoga

The Way of Devotion

The Synthesis of Yoga



Sri Aurobindo

Bhakti in itself is as wide as the heart-yearning of the soul for the Divine and as simple and straightforward as love and desire going straight towards their object. It cannot therefore be fixed down by any systematic method, however, the more intimate yoga of **Bhakti resolves itself simply into these four movements, the desire of the Soul** when it turns towards God and the straining of its emotions

towards him, **the pain of love** and the divine return of love, **the delight of love** possessed and the play of that delight, and **the eternal enjoyment of the divine Lover which is the heart of celestial bliss**. These are the things that are **at once too simple and too profound for methodising or for analysis**.

All Yoga is a turning of the human mind and the human soul, not yet divine in realisation, but feeling the divine impulse and attraction in it, towards that by which it finds its greater being. Emotionally, the first form which this turning takes must be that of adoration. In ordinary religion

this adoration wears the form of external worship and that again develops a most external form of ceremonial worship. This element is ordinarily necessary because the mass of men live in their physical minds, cannot realise anything except by the force of a physical symbol and cannot feel that they are living anything except by the force of a physical action. The aim of Yoga being union, its beginning must always be a seeking after the Divine, a longing after some kind of touch, closeness or possession. When this comes on us, the adoration becomes always primarily an inner worship; we begin to make ourselves a temple of the Divine, our thoughts and feelings a constant prayer of aspiration and seeking, our whole life an external service and worship. It is as this change, this new soul-tendency grows, that the religion of the devotee becomes a Yoga, a growing contact and union.

Adoration, before it turns into an element of the deeper Yoga of devotion, a petal of the flower of love, its homage and self-uplifting to its sun, must bring with it, if it is profound, an increasing **consecration** of the being to the Divine who is adored. And **one element of this consecration must be a self-purifying so as to become fit for the divine contact**, or for the entrance of the Divine into the temple of our inner being, or for his self-revelation in the shrine of the heart.

Consecration becomes in its fullness a devoting of all our being to the Divine; therefore also of all our thoughts and our works. **The bhakta offers up his life and all that he is and all that he has and all that he does to the Divine.** This surrender may take the ascetic form, as when he leaves the ordinary life of men and devotes his days solely to prayer and praise and worship or to ecstatic meditation, gives up

his personal possessions and becomes the monk or the mendicant whose one only possession is the Divine, gives up all action in life except those only which help or belong to the communion with the Divine and communion with other devotees, or at most keeps the doing from the secure fortress of the ascetic life of whose services to men which seem peculiarly the outflowing of the divine nature of love, compassion and good.

There is also the consecration of the thoughts to the Divine. There are, supposed by those who systemised, to be three stages of the seeking through the devotion of the mind, first, the constant hearing of the divine name, qualities and all that has been attached to them, secondly, the constant thinking on them or on the divine being or personality, thirdly, the settling and fixing of the mind on the object; and by this comes the full realisation.

This is the ordinary movement by which what may be at first a vague adoration of some idea of the Divine takes on the hue and character and then, once entered into the path of Yoga, the inner reality and intense experience of divine love. This is in essence the power of love itself in the heart and soul turning from earthly objects to the spiritual source of all beauty and delight. There live in this seeking all the sentiment and passion, all the moods and experiences of love concentrated on a supreme object of desire and intensified a hundredfold beyond the highest acme of intensity possible to a human love.

Indian bhakti has given to this divine love powerful forms, poetic symbols which are not in reality so much symbols

as intimate expressions of truth which can find no other expression. It is a living Soul to which the soul of the bhakta yearns; for the source of all life is not an idea or a conception or a state of existence, but a real Being. Therefore in the possession of the divine Beloved all the life of the soul is satisfied and all the relations by which it finds and in which it expresses itself, are wholly fulfilled. All the beauty of joy and existence is seen as his joy and beauty; he is embraced by the spirit in all beings; **the ecstasy of love enjoyed pours itself out in a universal love; all existence becomes radiation of its delight and even in its very appearance is transformed into something other than its outward appearance.** The world itself is experienced as a play of the divine Delight, a Lila, and that in which the world loses itself is the heaven of beatitude of the eternal union.

Sri Aurobindo (In the Arya, Vol. 4, No.12, 15 July 1918)



The Truth I'm Seeking

M.L. Parashar

Continued from the previous issue

We accept life as it is – with all its difficulties and its problems. We are in search of a salvation, a salvation not outside or beyond life, but in it. We can find it only if we realise that our present problems were necessary because by understanding and solving them we will become open to the hidden vistas of progress and fulfilment that life presents to us.

‘Not a blade of grass can move without His will.’ Right. But it is because a leaf has no will of its own. That is not the case with man. There are many wills within him and they are often clashing with one another. This continuous clashing is nature’s way of sifting the husk from the grain. If there is a sincere effort to know the Divine Will, help will come, but much patience and perseverance is needed.

One has to search out and then throw out the obstructions that stand in the way of self- improvement . Surrender is not a passive attitude towards life. It is an active process of growth. It changes our reactions to things and events, and with that change a new personality comes into being.

It seldom appears to me that things are not in their place. Even when calamities come, personal or collective, my nature manages to see some good working itself out through them. To me, progress means a more comprehensive way of looking at things and anything coming out of that understanding.

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

(Concluded)

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.

Meditation vs Work

To work for the Divine is to pray with the body. One can progress through meditation, but through work, provided it is done in the right spirit, one can progress ten times more.

The Mother

(Source: <http://saccs.org.in/texts/mcw-index/mcw-indexed-texts/14-319.php>)

This is an important tip from The Mother, because far more people ask exactly how to meditate than those who ask how to work. Whether the goal of meditation is spiritual growth or relief from mental stress, in either case, meditation **by itself** is of limited value. For spiritual growth, the attitude we have towards our daily work matters much more than 20-30 minutes of meditation. For stress relief, the attitude we have towards the difficulties, problems and traumatic events of life is far more important than meditation. In both cases, meditation can serve as a quiet time to review our attitude to work and difficulties of life. The review can help us discover our mistakes, our strengths and weakness, and the inner work that we need to do. Meditation can also be the time to resolve to do better the next time in a similar situation. But to depend **exclusively** upon meditation as a technique for spiritual progress or as a quick-fix for the difficulties of life is expecting too much from too little. Without a change in our view of life and its problems, meditation **by itself** cannot take us far. With a positive change in our attitude to life and its difficulties, we can go a long distance even without meditation.

Justice

Tara Chazot

*Justice lies in me
Justice lies in you
But to use it, it takes a life time.*

‘Justice’, which the child has used here as a symbol of goodness, is within all of us. But to manifest the goodness totally, consistently, all the time, is more than a lifetime’s job. The poem is a very apt one in today’s world. We see horrors all around us, big and small. Yet, how many of us have the courage or even the inclination to stick our necks out for what is right? More importantly, the notion of justice includes both you and me, as through our actions we may be hurting each other inadvertently, continually. To bring justice into life is a lifelong process.

Trust

Tara Chazot

*I am happy while I seem to be suffering,
I may be laughing when I should be crying,
It is because of the thing called Trust,
And I thank God, He gave it to me.*

I found the above lines when I was losing faith, asking why this had happened to Tara. Through these lines, she reminded me that in our deepest suffering, we must maintain our Trust in the Divine; the Trust that The Divine knows best what is best for us.

These two little poems are by a little girl, Tara Chazot (2001-2014). The poems are followed by comments by her mother, Anju Musafir-Chazot. Tara seems to be one of those highly evolved beings who do not have to suffer the hardships of a long life in this difficult world. It is enough for them to make a brief appearance, stimulate the spiritual growth of their parents, and return to the Source.

Please see also the discussion on 'the good die young' in the May I Help You column, Page 20



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.

Profound Truth

Suman, an undergraduate student at Lakshmibai College, Delhi, asked that on one hand, 'the good die young'; and on the other, 'centenarians are full of love for their fellow beings'. How can we reconcile this apparent contradiction?

There are plausible explanations available for both these statements. Let us take them up one by one.

The good die young

Life on earth is part of a much longer journey of the soul. The soul gets embodied on earth again and again to get an opportunity to evolve, to reach a level of consciousness higher than that which had been reached in the previous life. The result is that some individuals have reached a level of consciousness which is high enough to need only a few more finishing touches, for which a brief stay is perhaps enough. There are some who die during infancy or childhood. One might say that they did not have enough time to do some good karma even for the finishing touches. Even if they did

nothing more, at least they provided their parents and many more around them an opportunity for spiritual growth. In some cases, the parents can be totally transformed by one such traumatic experience. That is the way the child makes its very brief stay meaningful.

Centenarians are full of love for their fellow beings

It has been found that more than diet or exercise, what is common to all those who live to be 100+ is their tremendous love for their fellow beings. They generally outlive their partners, close friends, and sometimes even their children. What keeps them going is the *sabhi apne hain* (everybody is my own) attitude, or as Mahrshi Raman put it, ‘there are no others’. This attitude comes naturally only to a person at a high level of consciousness. These people may also be needing only a few finishing touches in this life. But they do not die young, perhaps to be able to do some good to the world. If all the good people die young, who will do all the good work in the world, and inspire others through example? Therefore, for some good people to have a long life is also a spiritual necessity for the world.

Thus, the good die young, and the good live long, can both be true. As Neils Bohr said, “the opposite of a profound truth may well be another profound truth.”

Feedback & Encouraging Words

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



The course works on many levels and not just the physical body. Through the study of physiology & anatomy, I developed a deeper understanding of the body and its functioning. It was an amazing journey and learning which shall stay life-long with me.

Puneeta Puri

The course was a wonderful opportunity for self improvement, self discovery and self love. Before I joined the course my mind was always restless. I was a highly ambitious person. Having achieved a lot in life, somewhere my ego had become very huge and led to me having high expectations from myself, others, the world, everyone. As a result I used to angry very quickly. I have learned only in the last four months to relax, to reduce my expectations, and to take everything as a gift from the Divine. I also learnt to calm myself down, become more mindful of my posture, and what I need to avoid for reducing back pain. I had a remarkable decrease in my back pain, my sleep is better and I feel much happier now. Nothing externally has changed, but all these positive internal changes, particularly my attitude towards everything has become more positive. My office people have noticed changes in my nature and have said that I am a more relaxed and positive person now. My children (for whom I was a dictator mother) too: I am laughing and joking more with them. I have tried to use most of the things taught in the course to heal myself, and my relationship with my kids and the staff. It's been a life changing experience for me.

Lucy Rana

I must say that the course has been the awakening light in my life. I am a person who lives in and with speed, which is just the right recipe for aches and pains that I have been suffering from for a long time. Through this course, I have gained and imbibed a pace, a slower comfortable pace. I understood that my body is an instrument for the purpose of my life, each day, every day.

This course brought me to college again with exams, marks, attendance, friends and breaks/food. Singing, the theory session, songs and bhajans, have helped me reconnect with the energy in the hall.

Anjali

The course is an eye opener. Although I had a vague idea about yoga, I was really enlightened by this course. It changed my attitude towards life.

Gayatri Rath

Feedback on Madhuban

Dear Anju didi

It was indeed a great experience for us to visit Madhuban and feel like have created a bond with the place. Would look forward to further visits and also possibilities of working with you on digital learning for the govt schools adopted by you.

Puneet (Goyal)

iDream Education, www.idreameducation.org
(in an e-mail dated 23 June 2018)

I would like to place on record that our experience in conducting the Yogadarshana workshop at your divine and idyllic Ashram was indeed a memorable experience for all of us . I am mentioning this based not just on my own experience as a coordinator but also on the experience of our respected professors Sri V.N.Jha and Smt. Ujjwala Jha, and also on the feedback received by us from the participants.

Ananth T.N.

(in an e-mail dated 3 July 2018)

Feedback on the Workshop Mythology for Kids (18-29 June 2018)



Anirban learnt a lot from the many stories told during the workshop. This was an excellent initiative to introduce/ reinforce the vast wealth of our mythology to young children.

Aparajita Mishra

Very well conducted. Very informative. My elder son, who is 8, was very eager to go to the class every day. He said “the teacher tells the story in a very interesting way. I don’t want to miss any part of it.” My younger son, who is 4, was very keen to play his “peacock” part.

Parul Priya Srivastava

It was wonderful experience for my child Aadhyan. He was so enthusiastic about the next day because of the fun filled environment. Appreciate the efforts and dedication of the teacher.

Pritha Pandey

Felt proud when my son came to me for doing pranaam. His confidence has risen so high after attending the class and its quiz. He now has thirst for mythology and wants books on it.

Versha Yadav

The class was fun. Kids learnt a lot. Glad they learned Bhajans. Classes aroused interest in mythology. Although I felt Saisha was small to learn all of that but I enjoyed watching her performance.

Ma’am you are awesome, loved the way you taught them to respect elders. Thank you for your support and enthusiasm.

Geetika Aggarwal

It has been an excellent learning experience for my daughter Shagun. It opened up a completely new world for her.

Shruti Rai bharadwaj

I am hopeful this programme leads my child to the very rich world of our culture and mythology.

Alpa Jain

Tara Didi's Birthday, 5 July 2018



Dear Tara didi

The teachers at MIS join me in thanking you for the lovely treat that you gave us yesterday. While the cake and samosas were delicious, what everyone really appreciated was the tulsi plant. It was such a thoughtful gesture.

Thank you once again. Lots of love,

Sanghamitra (Ghosh)

Principal, The Mother's International School
(in an e-mail dated 6 July 2018)

Dearest Didi

Many many happy returns of the day! I am so glad our paths crossed and we were able to share so much love and bonhomie.

Rahul, Jyotika, Nikhil and Madhav

Happy Birthday, Didi

Thank you so much for giving us this beautiful Ashram. Because of this beautiful and calm place, we are able to focus on our goal. You are the medium for us girls to be in this serene and blessed environment. Your persona inspires us very much. We want to be like you.

We are really thankful for the wonderful opportunity you have given us to get connected with the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. We really feel the blessings of the Mother.

Akriti, Deepa, Riya and the other 'Shalinis

Forthcoming Events

Bhajan Sandhya, 19 July 2018



An offering of devotional music will be made in the **Meditation Hall** of Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch by Dr Mithu Pal on **Thursday, 19 July 2018 at 7 pm**. All are welcome to attend.



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.

For a free subscription to *Sri Aravind Karmadhara*, please send an e-mail to sakarmdhara@gmail.com

To get *The Call Beyond* online regularly, month after month, please send an e-mail to: callbeyond@arobindoonline.in

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Please send your feedback to callbeyond@arobindoonline.in

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

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