

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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Three Dangerous Distortions – II

... everywhere is the impress of the three great formulas, the chain of Karma, escape from the wheel of rebirth, Maya.

Sri Aurobindo ('The Life Divine', SABCL Edition, p. 416)

The Indian psyche is dominated by a life-negating interpretation of three great Vedantic ideas: 'karma, moksha and maya'. Sri Aurobindo laments this because of the degeneration of worldly life that such interpretation has led to. Last month, we discussed karma; this month, we take up the second of these ideas, Moksha.

The life-negating tilt of Vedanta that has got deeply entrenched in the Indian mind over the last one thousand years is the result of excessive emphasis on the Reality of Brahman, the Divine, and the unreality or illusory nature (maya) of the world in which we live. Disproportionate emphasis on these grand ideas has created a contrast between Reality and unreality, and the next logical step is to treat the compulsion of living in the midst of unreality as a curse, and escape from the unreality as the goal of life. The escape is called moksha, or liberation. Moksha is not just escape from this life through death. Moksha also implies not having to come back to the earth again for another miserable life. **In short, in the popular mind, moksha means escape from the cycle of birth and death. Suffering sandwiched between birth and death is the law of planet Earth. The only escape from suffering is to become eligible for permanent residence in some other blissful world. Gaining this eligibility is considered the highest aim of life.**

The *moksha* that we hanker for may be the terminal station, but what we forget is that the field of action we get for moving towards the terminal is a series of lives on this planet, the Earth. It is how we live between birth and death on Earth that determines the rest of the spiritual journey. It determines the environment we will get between death and the next birth on Earth; it determines the conditions and circumstances we will get in the next life on Earth; it also determines how soon the soul would complete its journey, thereby eliminating the need for getting born yet once more on Earth.

While escaping the cycle of birth and death is possible, it is tempting to look for a similar liberation on Earth, and this search is in some ways unique to the teachings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. *First*, liberation from bondage is possible right here in this world. Our attachment, particularly to possessions and relationships, is because of dependence on things and people for our happiness. The spiritual path, by showing us an inner source of happiness which is independent of external circumstances, liberates us from this dependence. Any dependence is bondage; freedom from dependence is liberation (*moksha*). That is the *moksha* available without dying. *Secondly*, the Earth might have been a place characterized by misery and suffering for thousands of years, but that does not mean it is destined to be so for ever. **Evolution is a deeper law of the planet Earth than suffering.** Unfinished evolution is the cause of suffering. Further evolution will raise the average level of human consciousness, and that will wipe out suffering on Earth. Human beings can collaborate with nature by contributing to evolution of consciousness, and thereby accelerate the process. *Finally*, even souls that have become eligible for

permanent residence in some other blissful world need not stay there permanently; they might choose to get embodied and return to Earth. By returning to Earth, they can take on the role of spiritual masters to inspire and guide others. Further, they can also enjoy having a new type of experience of going through life on Earth. The experience now will be for them blissful because they can observe all the happenings on Earth from a higher plane of Consciousness. From that plane of Consciousness, all happenings can be enjoyed like a drama. Just as the suffering of characters seen on the screen in a film does not affect us, the suffering on Earth does not make a person with a high Consciousness miserable. This does not mean that the person is indifferent to the misery of others. How it is possible to be empathetic and yet not suffer may be understood from an analogy given by Oliver Goldsmith in his poem 'The Village Preacher'. The village preacher, a spiritually evolved person, had an ear for everybody's problems but did not suffer because he is like a tall cliff that is higher than the clouds. The base of the cliff is surrounded by storms and clouds but its peak always has sunshine. Here are a few lines from the poem:

*As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm,
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.*

*An exit is shown, a road of hard escape
 From the sorrow and the darkness and the chain;
 But how shall a few escaped release the world?
 The human mass lingers beneath the yoke.
 Escape, however high, redeems not life,
 Life that is left behind on fallen earth.
 Escape cannot uplift the abandoned race
 Or bring to it victory and the reign of God.*

Sri Aurobindo ('Savitri', Book 6, Canto 2, SABCL Edition, p. 448)

Next month, we shall discuss the grandeur of 'Maya', as well as its pitfalls if given a life-negating tilt.

If you missed the last month's issue in which the concept of 'Karma' was discussed, please send an e-mail to callbeyond@aurobindoonline.in asking for the 15 April 2019 issue of The Call Beyond.

We Love to Hear from You

I am a spiritual seeker aspiring for spiritual progress. I wait for this magazine as so many questions get answered and I better myself as a human being. The article written by Ritisha Nadia James was well written. Each word of this magazine I treasure. My tuition work with the visually challenged students is teaching me also to appreciate their positivity.

Poonam Gambhir
 (in an e-mail dated 22 April 2019)

Management from the Perspective of the Bhagavadgita

Pragya Taneja

Man is the first syllable in management, which speaks volumes on the role and significance of man in a scheme of management practices. In the words of the founder of modern management, Peter Drucker, “Management is a systematic way of doing all activities in any field of human effort. It is about keeping oneself engaged in interactive relationship with other human beings in the course of performing one’s duty. Its task is to make people capable of joint performance, to make their weaknesses irrelevant.” Thus Management is a process in search of excellence to align people and get them committed to work for a common goal towards maximum social benefit. Management applies to various sectors, such as home, office, factory and government; and has many aspects, such as management of time, resources, personnel, materials, finances and policies.

State of the world

In the face of globalization, liberalization and privatization, hunger, homelessness, oppression, unemployment, illiteracy, disease, etc. have fallen out of collective conscience, and the world has truly become a monstrous supermarket. Business Management is plagued with attributes such as fierce competition and survival of the fittest. *Surplus and maximum profit for the owners/top management are the criteria of managerial excellence.* The illusion of unlimited power fuelled by impressive scientific and technological

achievements has produced the illusion of mistaking wealth and power as substitutes for peace and happiness.

Whither India?

A research study done on the students of IIM (Indian Institute of Management), Ahmedabad, found that the sampled respondents had minimal emotional connect with their own culture. Most of them were products of western literature. This is largely because of our colonial hangover and the resultant popular and long-held belief that anything western is progressive and anything indigenous is primitive. Nowadays, even business ethics is taught in Business Schools as a routine matter instead of being a commitment to social and ecological awareness. *As is the case with management studies in the rest of the world, in India too, while management has certainly drawn much from the interdisciplinary researches of social and natural sciences, ethics still remains largely ignored.* In spite of many organizations coming up with innovative business models and creating best practices, corporate scams and bankruptcy haunt the business world.

Modern principles of management and the need for an alternative paradigm

Modern management practices and theories were developed during the last 150 years in the wake of the establishment of industrial organisations in the West. Apart from an existing disconnect between quality of life and work life, sustenance of firms and the environment, criminalisation of institutions, social violence, exploitation and such other vices are big issues facing the world of management. *The western management models, therefore, deal with the problems at*

superficial, material, external and peripheral levels and their insufficiency has made them reach a turning point.

Recently, management gurus in India have started discovering profound principles of management theory and practice in our ancient literature. Such an awakening is a promising sign that paves the way for a welcome shift in paradigm. This is also seen in the Western world which has seen a transition from the mechanistic view of life to a systems view, which emphasises people instead of the product.

The modern manager is expected to be more creative and innovative and his/her creativity is incentivised through the stimulus of reward in cash or kind. It has been seen, on the other hand, that **all artistic, spiritual, scientific and moral progress comes from those who didn't work for rewards.** Achieving progress while accommodating this aspect of well-being for all has been the most challenging task for the world of management. But this issue has been addressed very well in the Bhagavadgita.

The Gita's perspective on management

As opposed to modern management theories that deal with external factors such as manpower, finances, infrastructure, etc., Gita deals with internal factors and emphasises the importance of managing oneself and the strategic role that self-management plays in the well-being of the individual and the society (*sarvabhutahitharata*, welfare of all beings). This goal is more sublime, much superior to the western ideal of 'greatest happiness of the greatest number', as it emerges from the realisation of the Self as opposed to arising from self-glorification and self-assertion.

An attempt has been made to present below an account of the valuable insight that the Gita stands to offer with regard to the various aspects related to modern management.

1. Utilisation of Available Resources

To succeed in any project, the first lesson in management science is to wisely choose and optimally utilise the scarce resources. In the Mahabharata war, Duryodhana chooses Krishna's large army. But Arjuna wisely chooses Krishna, and makes optimal use of His wisdom in the battlefield. The result of Arjuna's choice was not only his victory in the battlefield, but also the Gita, which has had a universal appeal for about three thousand years because of its powerful message.

2. Notion of time

Given their skewed perception of the notion of time, modern organizations suffer from extreme levels of 'short-termism'. This only makes the organisation less equipped for the future. In the Gita, Krishna's first lesson to Arjuna (2:11-13) is to train his mind to the notion of time that is essentially long term. This perspective can help managers feel less pressurized by short-term performance targets and instead engage in activities/decisions that seek to create a balance between short term and long term goals. It also equips them to manage change better, as they develop faith in the fact that people come and go but good principles and ideas must remain and drive choices in organisations.

3. Performance Metrics and Assessment

Modern Management approaches performance assessment in two ways. First, it uses the lens of duality: good vs bad, desirable vs undesirable, performer vs non-performer, etc. Accordingly, expectations are set pertaining to the positive

aspects alone. Second, they leave no scope for negative outcomes of good work done by good workers. Managers begin to develop a false expectation that only good things should happen. Consequently, they develop no skills to face negative outcomes, understand why these happen, and deal with them. As a result they experience stress at the workplace and often also ill-treat their subordinates and colleagues in the process. The Gita offers a great understanding of the risks involved in living in the world of duality and also prescribes effective solutions to tackle these and rise above them. In the Gita, Krishna teaches Arjuna the value of equanimity (2:48), and how it can be achieved in the world of dualities.

4. Work and Efficiency

The Gita stands to offer to managers a deep insight into the ideas of work and efficiency. Krishna articulates four aspects related to the definition of work: (a) a person is entitled only to work; (b) the person is not entitled to insist on a particular outcome, and therefore should not be attached to the outcome; (c) the doer has no control over all the factors that determine the outcome of an action; and (d) yet inactivity, or giving up work is not an option.

Managers may get extremely uncomfortable with the idea of doing work but having, at the most, highly imperfect control over the outcome. But experience should teach them that they really cannot control the outcome as well as they would like to. The Gita teaches how to accept success and failure in work with equanimity, why to accept it, why to still do the work to the best of one's ability, and how to enjoy the work irrespective of the outcome. Realizing that one is not the doer, but only an instrument of God, makes all the difference. Taking the entire credit for a good outcome leads

to arrogance and conceit. Similarly, if the result of sincere effort is failure, then too the entire blame does not accrue to the doer. This attitude prevents excessive despondency, demotivation and self-pity. Thus the attitude taught by the Gita protects the person from psychological vulnerability, which is behind the host of maladies facing the modern managers.

5. Management by Objectives (MBO) and goals

Modern Management does not always clearly distinguish between the concepts of goals and objectives. The objectives may be objective, concrete, limited and material. But they are not the goal. According to the Gita, the goal of life is moving closer to God. Moving closer to God is impossible without taking care of the welfare of all beings in all our endeavours. This final goal should never be overlooked while laying out the various objectives for any programmes and activities undertaken by the management.

6. Planning by Vision

Planning is a process by which we decide our goals and objectives and the ways and means to achieve them. Every management is an inseparable part of bigger organizations such as society, nation, world, natural environment and ultimately of the universe. According to the Gita, ideal means planning, organizing, leading, controlling, executing, and performing all activities and programmes in conformity with wisdom and vision of *Purushottoma* consciousness. So the Gita advises us to make our short-term and long term planning in harmony with the divine traits which develop awareness of belonging to the universe. An important concept relevant to this context is that of sacrifice (*yajna*). Sacrifice, in broad terms, is not a ritual, but the basic truth of give and take. We are able to make an offering, which is an act of giving, only because we have

received. The entire universe is sustained by the principle of give and take, and is thus a mahayajna (a great sacrifice). The *mahayajna* has been possible because there was One original giver, who need not take anything because It has everything; rather It is everything. Putting on the vision and wisdom of the One original giver is the Purushottama consciousness.

7. Work Ethics/Culture

Work culture means vigorous and arduous effort in the pursuit of a given or chosen task. When Krishna rebukes Arjuna in the strongest words for his imbecility in not tending to his righteous duty, it is a loud and clear call for incorporating the highest work culture. In Chapter 16, Krishna elaborates on two types of work ethics namely: *Daivisampat* or divine work culture and *Asurisampat* or demonic work culture. Led by *Sattva* (the principle of knowledge and harmony), *Daivi* work culture refers to fearlessness, purity, self-control, sacrifice, straightforwardness, self-denial, calmness, gentleness, modesty, absence of greed, envy and pride. Led by *Tamas* (the principle of ignorance and inertia), *Asuri* work culture is fraught with egoism, delusion and desire, and is not driven by an attitude of service.

8. Leadership and Decision making

Krishna tells Arjuna that now that he has imparted Arjuna the direct vision of Truth, he is to ponder over it in the silence of his heart, and then in freedom exercise his free will. Just like Krishna, the modern managers and leaders too should impart their wisdom to their teams, and then leave it to the team leaders to decide what they want to do. The Gita does not impose the teacher's will on the student. But the wisdom imparted is so impeccable that the student is happy to follow what he has been advised to do.

Conclusion

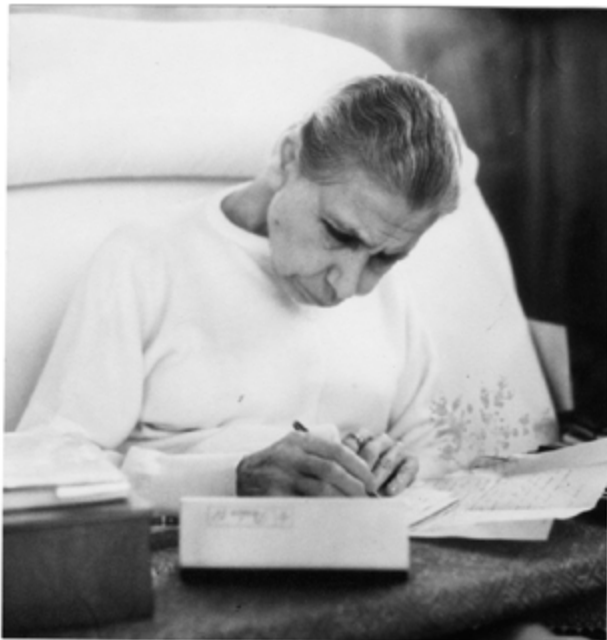
As one can deduce from the brief, although non-exhaustive, account presented above, the Gita holds potential for the rise of a new management paradigm, which stands to ensure economic and social justice; a healthy social and political order in individual nations and the world; and ecological harmony and a sense of belonging to the universe. If this vision were to be followed and institutionalised in our management schools, we can produce enlightened managers and leaders, who stand to transform this world by bringing into it a generation of fearless and selfless individuals



with a righteous and noble character led by eternal wisdom. The idea of this article is to suggest the need for recalibration of excellence-driven western models of efficiency and dynamism to harmonise them with the holistic attitude of *lokasangraha* for the welfare of all, as advocated by the Gita.

Pragya Taneja 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.

Act Without Any Desire



To choose without preference and execute without desire is the great difficulty at the very root of the development of true consciousness and self-control. To choose in this sense means to see what is true and bring it into existence; and to choose thus, without the least personal bias for any thing, any person, action, circumstance, is exactly what is most difficult for an

ordinary human being. Yet one must learn to act without any preference, free from all attractions and likings, taking one's stand solely on the Truth which guides. And having chosen in accordance with the Truth the necessary action, one must carry it out without any desire.

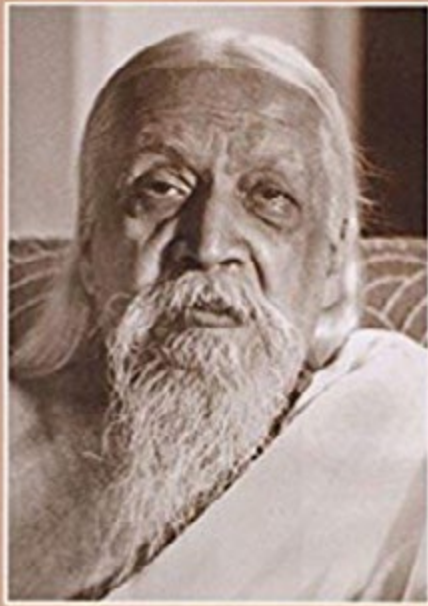
If you observe yourself attentively, you will see that before acting you need an inner impetus, something which pushes you. In the ordinary man this impetus is generally desire. This desire ought to be replaced by a clear, precise, constant vision of the Truth.

The Mother ('Great Adventure', p. 16)

The Synthesis of Yoga

Purification – The Lower Mentality

The Synthesis of Yoga



Sri Aurobindo

The complete purification of one instrument depends on the complete purification of all the others too, and that is why the question arises of where we are to begin. Since we are the spirit enveloped in mind, a soul evolved here as a mental being in a living physical body, *it must naturally be in mind*, the antahkarana, that we must look for this desideratum.

Each instrument has a proper and legitimate action and also a deformation or wrong principle of its proper action. *The proper action of the psychic prana is pure possession and enjoyment, bhoga.* A really perfect enjoyment of existence can only come when what we enjoy is not the world in itself or for itself, but God in the world, when it is not things, but the Ananda of the spirit in things that forms the real, essential object of our enjoying and things only as form and symbol of the spirit, waves of the ocean of Ananda.

The grand deformation which the psychic prana contributes to our being, is desire. The root of desire is the vital craving to seize upon that which we feel we have not, is the limited life's instinct for possession and satisfaction. It creates the sense of want,-first the simple vital craving of hunger, thirst,

lust, then these psychical hungers, thirsts, lusts of the mind which are a much greater and more instant and pervading affliction of our being, the hunger which is infinite because it is the hunger of an infinite being, the thirst which is only temporarily lulled by satisfaction, but in its nature insatiable.

Desire is the root of all sorrow, disappointment, affliction for though it has a feverish **joy of pursuit** and satisfaction, yet because it is always a straining of the being, it carries into its pursuit and its getting a labour, hunger, struggle, a rapid subjection to fatigue, a sense of limitation, dissatisfaction and early disappointment with all its gains, ceaseless morbid stimulation, trouble, disquiet, *acanti*.

Desire, it is thought, is the real motive power of human living and to cast it out would be to stop the springs of life; satisfaction of desire is man's only enjoyment and to eliminate it would be to extinguish its impulse of life by a quietistic asceticism. The essential turn of the soul to possession and enjoyment of the world consists in a will to delight, and the enjoyment of the satisfaction of craving is only a vital and physical degradation of the will to delight. It is essential that we should distinguish between pure will and desire, between the inner will to delight and the outer lust and craving of the mind and the body.

To rid the prana of desire and incidentally to reverse the ordinary poise of our nature and turn the vital being from a troublesomely dominant power into the obedient instrument of a free and unattached mind, is then the first step of purification. As this deformation of the psychical prana is corrected, the purification of the rest of the intermediary parts of the *antahkarana* is facilitated, and when the correction is completed, their purification too can be easily made absolute.

These intermediary parts are the emotional mind, the receptive sensational mind and the active sensational mind or mind of dynamic impulse. They all hang together in a strongly knotted interaction. **The deformation of the emotional mind hinges upon the duality of liking and disliking, *raga-dwesha*, emotional attraction and repulsion.** Love and hatred, hope and fear, grief and joy all have their founts in this one source. **This habit of the emotional nature gets into the way of the intelligent will and makes it often a helpless slave of the emotional being or at least prevents it from exercising a free judgement and government of the nature.**

The receptive sensational mind is the nervous mental basis of the affections; it receives mentally the impacts of things and gives to them the responses of mental pleasure and pain which are the starting-point of the duality of emotional liking and disliking. ...The active dynamic mind of impulse is the lower organ or channel of responsive action; its deformation is a subjection to the suggestions of the impure emotional and sensational mentality and the desire of the prana, to impulses to action dictated by grief, fear, hatred, desire, lust, craving and the rest of the unquiet brood. **Its right form of action is a pure dynamic force of strength, courage, temperamental power, not acting for itself or in obedience to the lower members, but as an impartial channel for the dictates of the pure intelligence and will or the supramental Purusha. When we have got rid of these deformations and cleared the mentality for these truer forms of action, the lower mentality is purified and ready for perfection. But that perfection depends on the possession of a purified and enlightened budhhi; for the budhhi is the chief power in the mental being and the chief mental instrument of the Purusha.**

Sri Aurobindo (In the Arya, Vol. 5, No.10, 15 May 1919)

The Pilgrim's Progress

Manoj Das

Of a certain sage it is said that when neighbours offered to take him on a pilgrimage (all expenses paid) along with them, he politely denied the offer but suggested that they carry a light parcel from him to all the holy places. Upon their return the sage entertained them to a feast of payasam, but the guests shrank back from swallowing the item after their first eager taste of it.

“Is it not sweet enough?” queried the sage. “That is rather strange!” observed the sage. “For I cooked the item with the contents of the parcel which, my good friends, visited all the holy places in the worthy company. The contents, of course, were nothing but neem leaves. But I wonder how the long pilgrimage failed to transform their bitterness into sweetness.” The humble guests must have appreciated the lesson the sage wished to impart—that a mere ritual pilgrimage could hardly change one’s nature. (That brings to mind lines from Cowper’s ‘Progress of Error.’ How much a dunce that has been sent to roam, / Excels a dunce that has been kept at home!)

But the Indian tradition had always recognised the relativity and many-sidedness of a truth. Pilgrimage, performed with the right attitude, enabled one to make an inner progress and, in any case, it broadened one’s outlook and enriched one’s treasury of the knowledge that matters. An important aspect of the ritual of pilgrimage is, it was not the destination alone that mattered for the traveller. The

journey itself was important, for a pilgrim must not forget for a moment that this was no ordinary travel, but a sacrifice (in the sense of Yajna), an offering, in the course of which he was invisibly accompanied by Indra, as the Aitareya Brahmana informs us. The pilgrim took recourse to several methods to keep himself continuously aware of the special nature of his travel.

Reproduced from *The Call Beyond*, Vol. 19, No. 3, p. 41, 1994

Second Nature

Why is our habitual behaviour called 'second nature'?

At the deepest level we are all divine. Therefore, acts divine should be our first nature. But our deepest Reality, the soul, is screened from the surface. The surface consists of our body and mind, which are imperfect. Because of their imperfection, the behaviour of the body and the mind is less than divine. Hence, so long as the screen does not let the soul illumine fully the surface, our habitual behaviour remains imperfect. But this habitual behaviour is still second nature. If the screen is worn out through spiritual progress, we can recover our first nature. Recovery of the first nature would make acts divine habitual and natural for us.

(Based on Sri Aurobindo's 'The Life Divine', SABCL Edition, p. 939)

The Divine Path

Giti Tyagi



*Overcome by the burden of the passing years;
Faced with the fear of the sparse time at hand,
What path, in which direction one advanced;
All one's life, all these years gone!*

*Slipping time as sand in a tightened fist,
Judged by the achieved, the positions held;
The purpose lost, the being misled,
By the worldly paths, the obvious goals;
The mortal eye at best glimpses the supraphysical!*

*Lost in time it shall all be one day,
There's a lot more that's yet to be known;
No name, no fame, no power, no position,
That the physical being no more shall perceive;
An image clear as a crystal is!*

*Flashes, unveiling the inward eye,
That once envisioned nothing more,
Than the transient sublunary world,
When the inward-upward looking aspiration;
Surrender to the Divine procures!*

*No more misled by the worldly glamour,
Relieved of the weight of the passing years;
The Divine Mother's hand one holds,
For the sunlit path is shown
The good and great path to the Divine!*

Acknowledgement:

Source of image of the Divine Path: Shutterstock

Feedback & Encouraging Words

Feedback on the Orientation to Integral Yoga, 6-7 April 2019



The program will help me to strengthen myself both spiritually and physically. The lecture on the Gita has clarified how to take decisions when you have reached an impasse.

R. Saurabh

I always used to wonder what should be done for a particular case whether to stick professionally or spiritually. After attending this program, I have come to the conclusion to leave it to the Divine. Also, I have come to know how to manage stress. And, in doing any action do to the best possible and expect nothing in return. Simple yoga exercises to give physical fitness and relaxation at the starting of session were really good.

Dr B V Radha Kumari

The sessions were very helpful in breaking the routine of life and gaining extra knowledge about some of the important things in life. The yoga asana classes helped to learn different important postures which if practised daily at home will prove useful in leading a healthy life. The Integral yoga lecture sessions helped to gain theoretical knowledge about the different types of yoga. The lecture on stress management was useful to gain insights about the different ways of managing stress, which will help a long way in leading a mentally healthy life in this stressful era.

R. Padmavati

These 2-day course on Integral yoga gave me an opportunity to work on myself for the sake of my family and the society. The consciousness level rose and I found the stress management class especially useful. I feel grateful to be a part of the session and would love to be linked with the Ashram in future.

Rachna Joshi Tripathy

Excellent Course. I enjoyed the Asanas and found the instruction useful. The theory of yoga was also very helpful, I would like to learn more and have bought some books on the theory yesterday because the topics have piqued my curiosity. The music was magnificent! And inspiring! Unforgettable!

Amrita Dhawan

I am a Bharatnatyam dancer and teacher and the art form that I practice gives me ample opportunity to experience solace. Besides, I have been practicing yoga exercises for the past 9-10 odd years. Yet I needed answers to a lot of questions that bother me internally, creating stress. Once or rather as long as I am dancing or teaching dance I am under no stress but the moment I am out of that zone, stress returns. Therefore, I decided to attend this session on Integral yoga to find answers and perhaps even solutions to those questions. I would like to say that it has proved to be calm, solutions are something one needs to find for oneself depending on the situation or circumstances one is in. Thank you for a lovely morning.

Radhika Ayachitula

Thank you yet again Dr.Bijlani for a simple, clear and enlightening session. I take back from today an honest intention to more consciously apply daily what I have been hearing from you – through your books and today's talk. Most important take home from today's session: which duty is most important? To serve the divine – I will engage more reflectively on this instead of getting lost or caught up in thoughts that waste time and

energy. Thank you for your constant guidance and prayers. With an intention to sincerely serve the arts and education for children while working on myself,

Shruti Krishnan

The two-day session has been a splendid experience particularly the session on stress management as it is the greatest issue before humankind these days. Learnt very practical and feasible solutions to the stressful situations. The beginning session on yoga was a marvellous one – the instructor left an indelible imprint on my mind as she was very proficient and well versed in yoga techniques.

Prabhat Kumar Tripathy

For me, attending your programs, either clean mind or weekly satsangs, is to make a little progress in life. One thing for sure, if I do not come and attend your programs, it appears that my life is at stand still without any progress.

BSG Ramprasad

This was my first attempt in getting to understand yoga. I am glad that I did it. It came at the right time in life when I am facing multiple levels of stress from personal loss and professional problems. The class about yoga and stress management was the right thing I needed and I got it at the right time.

Aneeshkumar Arimbasseri

I am fortunate to attend this programme. This session is helpful in knowing the purpose of life which I was searching for a while. Fulfilment is a really new dimension I came to know about.

Thank you, Tara Didi for suggesting about this program.

Vivek Mittal

The Ashram is a place of complete serenity and divinity. The talks were every much enriching.

Dr. Adwitiya Sinha

Feedback from Students of IIT-Delhi

Seventeen students of IIT-Delhi completed a course designed and conducted by the Ashram titled 'Decision making based on self-discovery' consisting of seven theory and seven practical classes on 19 April 2019.



My take home from the course is that stress control is a temporary solution. We should strive towards the absence of stress itself by adopting a holistic approach and changing the way we perceive things, because

that is what we can completely control. Everything is the manifestation of the Divine and love is the road to spiritual awareness.

Being an atheist, I don't believe in the existence of God. Hence, initially I was resistant to some of the concepts discussed here. But as the course progressed I grew more and more receptive to the existence of the Divine. I don't believe in the existence of God. But the concept of an underlying divinity and we being its manifestations, makes sense to me. This course was really unique in that it helped me open up to ideas which, when earlier presented to me in form of religion, I found repulsive because they were not accompanied by a reasonable and thorough explanation. So, this course has provided me a new perspective. I really enjoyed the course and I hope that more and more people from IIT as well as other places continue to register for it.

Prabhat Kanaujia

I learned through this course what purpose of life could be. Although there are a lot of other things that also I should have learned, but I have been able to pick up only a few things such as how there is an inner voice which is far superior to reason or logic. Or, what do the ancient texts speak about yoga. One thing that I want to do after this course is to read the Gita. In the last class, sir explained to us the meaning of mantras; it was beautiful. I personally feel that many people who chant mantras don't know the meaning. If people could know the meaning, it would be indeed great.

Ankit Akash Jha

I had heard of concepts such as yoga earlier but his course gave me more depth in understanding these subjects. This course also gives insights into self-evaluation and self-discovery. It also gives understanding of uniqueness of the Indian culture.

Himanshu

I learnt that we, as persons shouldn't only focus on our growth in terms of monetary level or status but, the more important thing is that we should become better as persons spiritually, and should know what's happening inside us.

Mihir Raj

I liked the lectures. I found them very clear and well prepared. Yoga classes were good too. I hope to continue doing them on my own. Sri Aurobindo's concept of Integral Yoga is very good. It is one of the best I found. The Ashram is nice too. Professor is good at responding to questions and I like approaching him with my doubts. People these days don't know much about the things discussed in the course, and I appreciate the effort put in to make the youth to understand it.

M.Sai Teja

I learnt that in this world of misery and happiness, the key is to not get attached to materialistic things and keep looking for the Divine. That is own true home; that is where we belong. No love is greater than that of God.

The course was very informative and helpful. This needs to be a course in the school syllabus as well. I will try to inculcate what I have learned.

Daksh Naruka

I got to learn a lot about Yoga and got some idea about meditation, spirituality, and body and mind connection.

Since the content of the course is very vast, we couldn't have detailed discussing and was more of like just skimming through. Maybe just one aspect of the course is chosen and discussed in detail. Or instead, the course can be divided into multiple courses.

Aayush Goyal

I learnt that there are things which are more important than social life, like spiritual growth. Doing certain things truly makes you happy and improves the world around you.

Vikrant Singh

My take home messages: The destination is fixed; it's the decisions that we make along the journey that determines the path. Happiness or success is not the aim of life and will not make up for / fill the void left if we are not a good person.

Divyansh Gupta

For me, the takehome messages were that one should not be a self-centred person, but instead should spread love. One has to remain calm in the case of stressed situations. One has to become aware of presence of God.

Shobit Jain

Feedback from Madhuban



I really liked the scenery and food of this ashram. The company is nice. The flora and fauna here are simply magnificent. I would love to come back here to do voluntary work, and when I do, I would like to do gardening. The trek to the hills was exhausting

but it was beautiful. The pet dog, Tipu, is adorable.

Sumedha Brindhavan

Madhuban was my first Aurobindo ashram experience, and undoubtedly one that I will remember for life. The aura of peace that the whole place exudes is calming for the mind. There is harmony between plant life, animal life and human life and also with the elements of nature – which is very hard to come by in the city. It was also my first experience of meditation – which I enjoyed thoroughly. I will definitely visit again, and stay for a longer time, and will also spend time with the children of the village school.

Sunidhi Brindawan

Peace and tranquility permeate the Madhuban ashram. Great love, plus care of the environment, gardens, food, and visitors is so evident. We were made to feel so welcome, and the generosity plus kindness shown to us has been life-changing. God bless Anju didi and her team for all the efforts they have put into creating an environment which allows one time to contemplate, and be still in a little part of India when the world is becoming more chaotic and angry. The

rooms and food were both spotlessly clean and exquisite. The ashram embraces biodiversity and is working effortlessly towards self-sufficiency.

Gemma Carabine

The place is serene and very peaceful. The sanctity of the place and evening meditation against the backdrop of the beautiful valley and flowing river bring total peace into us. The social work being done and self sufficient maintenance are truly noteworthy. This is the first time my children had an “Ashram” experience and they are already longing to contribute in kind when opportunity permits. I am glad I could inculcate some sense of “giving” back and “Ashram” experience into them at the early stage of their lives. The dining experience their looking onto the hills will remain with them. We will definitely come back for some voluntary activity when opportunity permits. God bless you all for this “meaningful” life!!!

Dr. Sanjeev Sasmith. B

Dearest Anju Didi,

Jai Maa.

I hope you are doing wonderful. After our unforgettable trip to Madhuban, I am back to the U.S. But the silence and quietness, the beauty and harmony I experienced while being there at Madhuban is still present within my heart. I just wanted to write this note to express my deepest gratitude to you, Shubhas, Amar Singh ji, the lady who tirelessly works in the kitchen, and rest of the members of Madhuban for taking such a good care of us and especially for the wonderful service to the Mother and Sri Aurobindo.

While being there, an aspiration grew in my heart to someday come and serve the community at Madhuban on a long term basis. I’m not sure how the Mother will manifest that in life, but

time will tell. In the meantime, I plan to come there at regular intervals bringing small group of intimate friends for retreats. All the other friends who came with me are also deeply touched by the silence, the beauty and simple community living of Madhuban and are hoping to be back soon.

I recorded one of Taradidi's readings with our group and thought of sharing it with you.* I keep listening it during my morning meditation everyday since my return.

In Their loving service,

Amit

(in an e-mail dated 24 April 2019)

**Anyone interested in getting this 10-minute recording may send an e-mail to callbeyond@aurobindoonline.in – the 4 MB audio-file will be sent to you by e-mail.*

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New Delhi 110 016
contact@aurobindoonline.in

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