

# THE CALL BEYOND

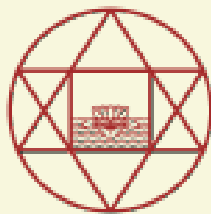
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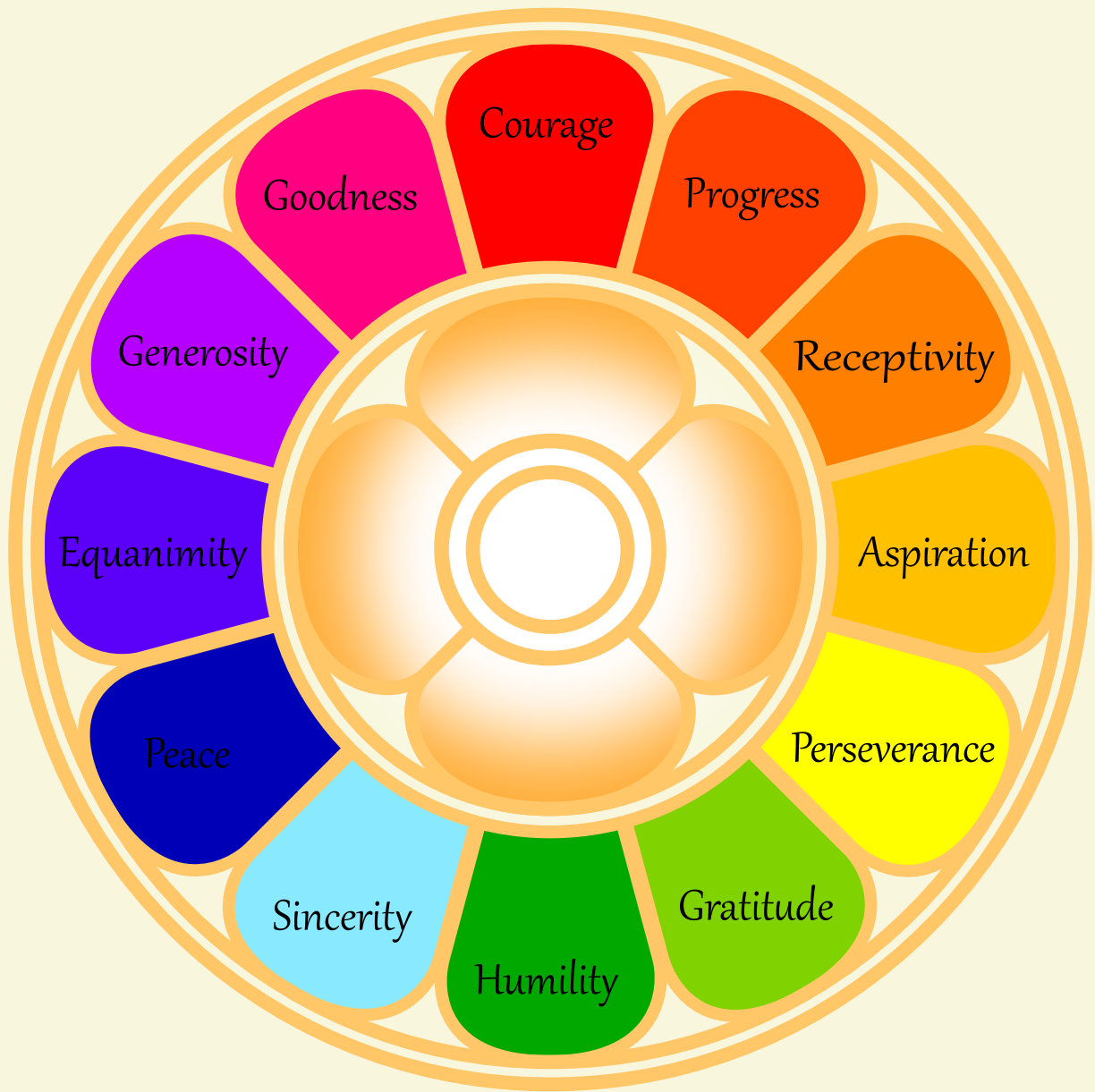
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*The central circle represents the Divine Consciousness.*

*The four petals represent the four powers of the Mother.*

*The twelve petals represent the twelve powers of the Mother manifested for Her work.*

A stylized signature or flourish consisting of a horizontal line with a vertical stroke intersecting it from above, and a diagonal stroke extending from the intersection point towards the right.

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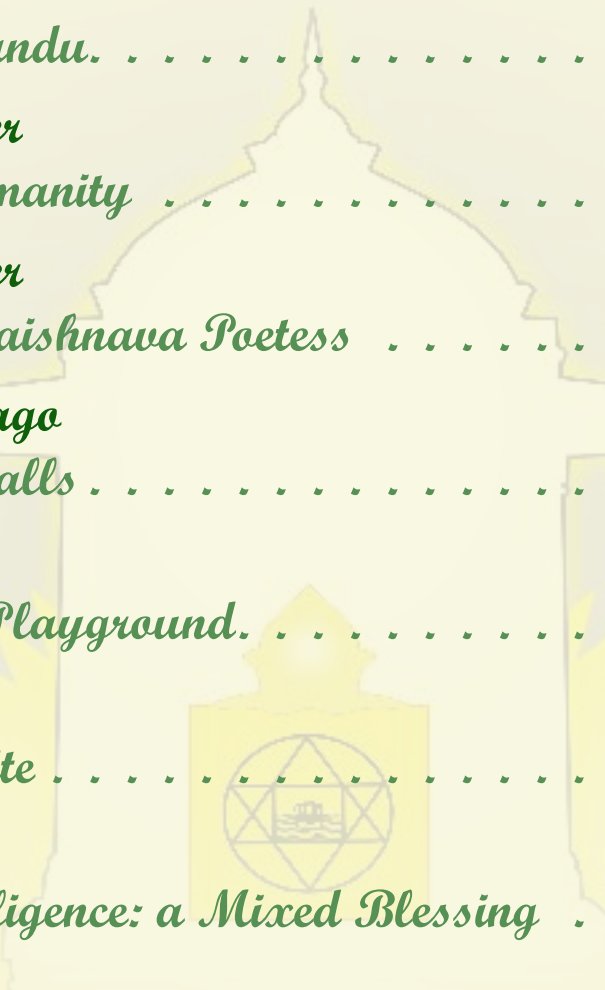
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## The One Whom We Adore As The Mother

*The One whom we adore as The Mother is the divine Conscious Force that dominates all existence, one and yet so many-sided that to follow her movement is impossible even for the quickest mind and for the freest and most vast intelligence.*

*Sri Aurobindo ('The Mother', pp. 27-28)*



*The Mother (and Sri Aurobindo)*

*(A painting by Dakshina, an American disciple at Sri Aurobindo Sadhana Peetham, Lodi, California, USA)*

The Mother, born Mirra Alfassa, on 21 February 1878 in Paris to affluent parents, had a very comfortable childhood. Her father was a banker, and her mother had a passion for excellence but no spiritual leanings. But Mirra was an introspective child, not interested in frivolous activities like visits to a circus. Her serious and reflective look worried her mother who once asked her, "Why do you sit thus with a set face, as if the whole world were pressing upon you?" Mirra replied, "Yes, indeed, I do feel the weight of the world's miseries pressing upon me!" When she was about thirteen, she had a unique dream which kept returning almost every night for about a year. In this dream she saw herself in an enormous golden robe extending in a huge circle and sheltering a town like an umbrella. To take shelter under it came old, sick and unhappy people. As soon as they touched the robe, they got better and felt better. Thus, by the time Mirra was thirteen, she knew that her mission in life was to relieve the misery of many. Further, she had been seeing in her dreams since the age of eleven the face of a being who was giving her the discipline required for the fulfillment of her mission. It was a face Indian in its looks, whom she named Krishna, and whose sketch she



had already drawn in her mind. Later, it turned out that the face had a remarkable resemblance to that of Sri Aurobindo.

### **Meeting Sri Aurobindo**

Mirra's first meeting with Sri Aurobindo in Pondicherry was the result of a series of remarkable events, too well-timed to have been the result of human planning. It seems that a twin consciousness, separated physically by thousands of miles, was independently going through a preparatory phase for a common mission. As soon as the preparation was over, some worldly happenings, too close and too many to be pure coincidences, had to happen in quick succession to bring them geographically closer. Sri Aurobindo moved to Pondicherry in 1910. Mirra's husband, Paul Richard, while on a visit to Pondicherry on an electioneering mission in the same year, met Sri Aurobindo. Duly impressed by his stature, Paul returned to Pondicherry in 1914 with Mirra. On 29 March 1914 took place that historical meeting in which Mirra and Sri Aurobindo, who were in the world for a common mission, actually met on the physical plane. There was instant recognition on both sides. No words were spoken; no words were necessary. Yet, both knew that a new chapter in their terrestrial life had begun. Paul and Mirra, along with Sri Aurobindo, planned publishing a journal, the *Arya*, which would explore the deeper truths of existence and work out a synthesis of religious and spiritual traditions of the world. The first issue of the *Arya* was published on Sri Aurobindo's birthday, 15 August 1914. But the first World War broke out in 1914, and the Government of France wanted Paul back in France to join the Reserve Army. Therefore, he and Mirra went back in 1915. However, publication of the *Arya* continued till January 1921. The *Arya* is the source of most of the major works of Sri Aurobindo, the trigger for which was Mirra's visit in 1914. Mirra returned to Pondicherry on 24 April 1920, this time clearly with the intention of never going back;



and she did not. This year, on 24 April, is the 101st Anniversary of this momentous event.

## **Building Up The Ashram**

Sri Aurobindo Ashram had its beginnings in Pondicherry with the two rented houses in which Sri Aurobindo lived with a handful of disciples. On 24 November 1926, Sri Aurobindo had a very significant spiritual experience, after which he decided to go into seclusion. The care of the Ashram was left entirely to Mirra, who then became to the residents of the Ashram, The Mother. On 24 November 1926, the residents of the Ashram were just 25; when the Mother left her body in 1973, the number had grown to more than a thousand. Thus, the Ashram was a creation of the Mother.

The Mother was very pleased to have the opportunity to take care of the Ashram because ever since she was a young girl, she had dreamt of creating a place where spiritual seekers could pursue their highest aspirations without having to worry about their physical needs. After the Mother took complete charge of the Ashram, the number of disciples grew, and the Mother's vision started taking shape in the Ashram. With her tremendous spiritual power, exceptional organizational capacity, remarkable leadership qualities, and above all, her unlimited love for all, the Mother soon commanded the dedication of the disciples. As the Ashram population grew, new services were added, departments created, and departmental heads appointed by the Mother. The expansion of activities was guided by the needs of the Ashram and the unique talents of the seekers who joined the Ashram from time to time. Although seekers were in-charge of various sections, the Mother took deep personal interest in every activity. One of the basic principles followed was that the inmates of the Ashram (called Ashramites) expected no



wages, and the activities were not motivated by profit. The Ashram turned into a laboratory for putting into practice Sri Aurobindo's dictum, "All life is yoga," which means that all life is an opportunity for the practice of yoga. In other words, the spiritual discipline called yoga does not necessarily require renunciation of worldly life. Bringing spirituality into worldly life was something that was being revived in India after a lapse of about a thousand years. Hence, to see how far the world-affirming version of spirituality could be put into practice in today's world was an experiment, of which the Mother was the guiding Light. Sri Aurobindo once told a disciple that his ideals would have remained theoretical but for the Mother giving them a practical shape. Although Sri Aurobindo continued to reply to letters from the disciples even while in seclusion, it was the Mother who replied to questions arising in the course of daily life on a one-to-one basis, face to face. She entertained questions, simple and difficult, and sometimes even ridiculous, with infinite love, patience and understanding.

The Second World War brought also some children to the Ashram. To take care of their education, the Ashram school was started in 1943. The Mother, an educationist at heart, used the opportunity to implement an ideal system of education based on Her and Sri Aurobindo's integral philosophy. In 1951, the Ashram school was extended to the level of a University to translate one of Sri Aurobindo's dreams into reality. Sri Aurobindo believed that such a Centre would contribute substantially to transformation of life on earth so that worldly life will be a befitting manifestation of the Divine. Besides several seekers, The Mother herself also taught in the school, talked to the children and teachers, played with the children, and also found time to sort out complaints and quarrels. The result was that she sometimes got hardly an hour to sleep at night.





## Auroville

Auroville, very near Puducherry, is a township inspired by the Mother. The township carries further, in concrete form, Sri Aurobindo's vision of human unity based on divinization of human life. It is one place in the world which no country may call its own, a place which belongs to nobody in particular. The township was inaugurated on 28 February 1968, a week after the Mother's ninetieth birthday. On the inaugural day, handfuls of clay from 124 countries were put in a lotus-shaped urn at Auroville as a gesture to symbolize the unity of all mankind.

The Mother read out the Auroville charter on that day, in which she visualized Auroville as "the place of an unending education, of constant progress, and a youth that never ages," and called it "the bridge between the past and the future." In the more than fifty years of its existence, Auroville has made steady progress in spite of many difficulties from within and without. It has been a unique experiment, in which people from several nations live together in a self-sustaining community, each member contributing to the place according to his or her capacity but never exchanging any money with the in-siders of the community.

## Closing Thoughts

The collaboration between Sri Aurobindo and the Mother had a complementary character, Sri Aurobindo concentrating on the inner work, and the Mother taking care of the outer work. Their life-affirming yoga cannot be complete without both these components. They could together accomplish what is impossible to do with a single body. The Mother's task was extremely difficult because she gave a concrete shape to an idea, an ideal, an idealistic vision. That is always a formidable task because of the inevitable dilution of the spirit



of an ideal when the ideal is given a form; further dilution may take place because of the limitations of the people who translate the form into action. Specially difficult is it to give a practical shape to a philosophy that embraces all aspects of life; prefers inner renunciation to suppression of desires; and does not prescribe one path which all the devotees have to follow, encouraging them to work out their own paths. To allow this flexibility and freedom to inmates who may not be adequately prepared for the inner discipline required, and yet to run the Ashram smoothly is something only the Mother could have done. She presided over the Ashram truly like an all-giving mother. She exuded authority mingled with love. She had a loving heart large enough to accommodate the whole world, and the love showed in her eyes. So many felt this love and were captivated by it instantaneously; many continue to get captivated by it just by looking at her picture. The Mother left her body on 17 November 1973 after about a week of illness. In a celebrated quote, The Mother says, “Be simple, Be happy, Remain quiet, Do your work as well as you can, Keep yourself always open towards me – that is all that is asked from you.” So long as the seekers did their bit, She took care of the rest. At the physical level, She encouraged them to ask for whatever they needed, saying “Am I not your mother who loves you?” Although now she is physically no more, she continues to do the same for all Her children. Her children, scattered all over the world, continue to seek her guidance and indulgence, reveal their deepest thoughts and aspirations to Her, and continue to receive responses full of Her infinite love and abundant grace.

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*An abbreviated version of this essay appeared under the title ‘Who Was The Mother?’ in ‘Speaking Tree’ on 23 February 2020. Link: <https://www.speakingtree.in/article/who-was-the-mother>*

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## Work Unique, New and Important



My children,

We are united towards the same goal and for the same accomplishment – for a work unique and new that the divine Grace has given us to accomplish. I hope that more and more you will understand the exceptional importance of this work and that you will sense in yourselves the sublime joy that the accomplishment will give you.

The divine force is with you – feel its presence and be careful never to betray it.

Feel, wish, act, that you may be new beings for the realisation of a new world and for this my blessings shall always be with you.

24 April 1961

*The Mother*



## The Yoga of the Bhagavad Gita

*Manan Bindal*

*In the Gita there is very little that is merely local or temporal and its spirit is so large, profound and universal that even this little can easily be universalised without the sense of the teaching suffering any diminution or violation; rather by giving an ampler scope to it than belonged to the country and epoch, the teaching gains in depth, truth and power.*

*Sri Aurobindo ('Essays on the Gita', Chapter 1)*



*Source: media.radiosai.org/Google images*

The Bhagavad Gita is a timeless manual of Yoga that is lucidly laid out for all the seekers with an aspiration to know and realize the Divine, and to transcend the inevitable contraries and dilemmas that arise in life. It is a dialogue between the Human Disciple, Arjuna, and the Divine Teacher, who is an Avatar in human form on Earth, Lord Krishna. This dialogue takes place on the battlefield of Kurukshetra where Arjuna is confronted with competing choices, which leave him confused and miserable.

Arjuna has been an ideal warrior so far. He knows that he stands on the right side of Dharma as he perceives it; he is aware of the responsibility that lies upon him and also the role that he is expected to play in the discharge of that



responsibility. As a true Kshatriya, it is not the battlefield itself that he is disgusted with, it is rather the whole meaning of the war itself and the lack of conviction and complete loss of motivation that he stares at.

Having very enthusiastically taken to the battlefield at the start of the war, at what is undoubtedly the most important moment of his lifetime, he shrinks in an all-encompassing recoil and nothing that he has known or experienced in life thus far has prepared him to resolve the predicament all by himself. Arjuna experiences extremes one after another in quick succession – a crest of passion and resolve followed by a trough of utter dejection and depression. First, he experiences an extreme elation and pride to get the opportunity to discharge his role as a defender of truth and justice. Then he is engulfed by a complete loss of perspective and motivation because of what lies ahead on his path if he were to discharge the very same duty.

It is at this stage that he approaches the Divine because he has by now realised that more of the same is not going to work for him anymore. The principles by which he has lived by thus far, and what he knows about himself and the manifested world, have proved inadequate to help him out of the dilemma. Fortunately for him, he has Sri Krishna in the form of his friend, counsellor, and guide. Having realised that it is not a dilemma that he is equipped to resolve by himself, he turns to Krishna for guidance. He shares with Krishna his plight and details out all that he is experiencing and what he is tempted to do guided by his feelings. Then he goes about rationalising what is tempted to do. Although the final outcome of the guidance that Arjuna receives is complete surrender to The Divine, as he is guided towards the finale, some of the most pertinent life lessons are imparted to him.



All paths of Yoga lead to the Divine. The various paths like Karma Yoga, Jnana Yoga and Bhakti Yoga merge progressively into one as we surrender to the Supreme and align all our worldly actions and intellectual pursuits with devotion.

The dialogue of The Gita is spread over about 700 verses. In the first chapter, Sri Krishna patiently listens to what Arjuna has to say and then guides him through a progressively widening dialogue. In the process, he guides Arjuna from ignorance to wisdom. Not only does he systematically address all the concerns of the disciple, the teacher also gives him the eternal wisdom to experientially discover the Eternal Truth. The dilemma of Arjuna and the wisdom imparted to him by Sri Krishna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra finds resonance in every seeker's heart, regardless of the individual context, his position in society and the moment in history.

As we journey together with the dialogue, we begin to sense that what at first appears to be a loss of perspective is in essence a flawed perspective and an incomplete one for sure. The beauty of the scripture is that there is an element of experiential truth for everyone regardless of their disposition, life circumstances, nature of choices envisaged and the possibility of choices yet unseen.

There is a gap between triggers and getting triggered. When we are triggered, we rush out with a response. Watching the gap is the witness spirit. What we are served is what we have to deal with, and deal we must in the right manner, in the right spirit and for the right reasons. When we connect deeper to the truth, we align better to the Divine Will and the Divine Wisdom.

Inner purification and self-knowledge come through a complete surrender to the Divine seated within, renunciation of desire, transcendence of individualising ego and a conscious choice



of aligning with Dharma. Self-knowledge gives knowledge of Svabhava, and in Svabhava is rooted the Svadharma – the unique purpose that is part of the Divine plan for us in this life and the journey we must make to act as a fit instrument of the Divine.

Since childhood, I have had a fascination for the ancient texts like the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Bhagavad Gita. Staying with the Bhagavad Gita has helped me stay the course of life in a more ‘connected’ manner. It has been a living companion on the journey, and it has been a friend and a personal guide. The aspiration to connect deeper with life and all its manifestations has been seeded and nurtured by the experiences in life that I often could relate to some or the other verse in the dialogue between Arjuna and Lord Krishna. I have been particularly drawn towards the wideness of thought and the brilliance of narration that stands out verse after verse and chapter after chapter. I have felt a deep resonance and sometimes I have experienced it with some gravity. Of all the scriptures that I have had some exposure to, it is the Bhagavad Gita that most deeply resonates in my imagination, contemplation, and aspiration.

The dilemma of Arjuna resonates very deeply with many of our own living experiences. We often face conflicting choices and a sense of helpless cluelessness in life. What we all seek are answers to important questions that truly matter and a way to live that will truly be of lasting value and fulfilling. It is in the Bhagavad Gita that we can find what we all seek.

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*(Manan Bindal did a course on Teaching Yoga conducted at Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch in 2018)*

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*Many a bud never bloom for want of care. The country is full of budding young people handicapped by the environment in which they grow up, which prevents them from realizing their full potential. Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch has had the privilege of nurturing thousands of such boys and girls, and also the joy of seeing them bloom. In this column, we shall bring you stories of the difference that the Ashram made to their lives.*

## Charming Chandu



Anyone who has visited the Ashram during the last 10 years is likely to have run into Chandu, and if he also had an encounter with him, would have discovered in Chandu the right mix of politeness, necessary firmness and quiet efficiency. Here is his story, in his own words:

“My name is Chandu Oraon. I am from village Madhya Madarihat in West Bengal. I came to Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch as a vocational trainee in 2011, a few months after my father passed away. For vocational training, I was accepted in the ‘computers and typing’ stream. Soon I realized that as trainees, apart from computers, we get to learn so many more things. I learnt speaking Hindi and English, improved my communication skills and participated in sports, music and meditation. We went on trips and picnics. After the 6-month course was over, I wanted to stay longer, and was





given that opportunity – I now became part of a community called ‘aspirants’. As an aspirant, I was posted at the Ashram Reception, where I still continue to work. At the Reception, I answer the queries of visitors, and the queries made on phone or e-mail. I make room bookings for guests on the computer. I have learnt all the operations – front end and back end – for handling guests. I receive cash and cheques from donors, issue receipts for the donations, and deposit the collections with the Accounts department. I also provide support to the office through typing, photocopying, scanning, etc. whenever required. As a vocational trainee, and later as an aspirant, I also got an opportunity to go on trips from time to time. By now I have visited many places, including Akshardham temple, Agra, Nainital, Dalhousie, Kullu-Manali, Soja, Pondicherry, Auroville, and Aurovalley (near Rishikesh). These trips are fun, and also good learning experiences.

The most important thing I have learnt in the Ashram is discipline. Now discipline has become a habit. Ashram life not only taught me discipline but made me aware of the spiritual aspects of human existence. All these facilities at the Ashram are free. I got in the Ashram a place to stay, food, and a monthly stipend (called ‘prosperity’) for miscellaneous expenses, besides all the learning which cannot be measured in terms of money. The ‘prosperity’ kept increasing as I became ‘senior’. Soon after my coming to the Ashram in 2011, my brother also came, and then came my sister – both as vocational trainees. My brother has gone back to the village and is doing poultry farming. My sister has become a teacher in Prakriti School in NOIDA. Now the Ashram is like home to me. I am really grateful to Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch for all it has done for me and my family. Vocational training is a great initiative for the upliftment of youth from remote areas of the country.” [Edited]



## Service to Humanity



One of the commonest forms of ambition is the idea of service to humanity. All attachment to such service or work is a sign of personal ambition. The Guru who believes that he has a great truth to teach to humanity and who wants many disciples and who feels uncomfortable when the disciples go away or who seizes on anybody that comes and tries to make him a disciple, is evidently following nothing but his ambition. You must be able, if you are ready to follow the divine order, to take up whatever work you are given, even a stupendous work, and leave it the next day with the same quietness with which you took it up and not feel that the responsibility is yours. There should be no attachment – to any object or any mode of life. You must be absolutely free. If you want to have the true yogic attitude, you must be able to accept everything that comes from the Divine and let it go easily and without regret.

*The Mother ('The Great Adventure', p. 30)*

*A page from The Mother's work, 'The Great Adventure', in Tara Didi's voice, is uploaded on the YouTube channel of Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch every day. The link to the channel is: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCcmF6JzAOsBMdqJjZbnmyng>*



## Andal: The Vaishnava Poetess

PREOCCUPIED from the earliest times with divine knowledge and religious aspiration the Indian mind has turned all forms of human life and emotion and all the phenomena of the universe into symbols and means by which the embodied soul may strive after and grasp the Supreme. Indian devotion has especially seized upon the most intimate human relations and made them stepping-stones to the supra-human. God the Guru, God the Master, God the Friend, God the Mother, God the Child, God the Self, each of these experiences—for to us they are more than merely ideas,—it has carried to its extreme possibilities. But none of them has it pursued, embraced, sung with a more exultant passion of intimate realisation than the yearning for God the Lover, God the Beloved. It would seem as if this passionate human symbol were the natural culminating-point for the mounting flame of the soul's devotion: for it is found wherever that devotion has entered into the most secret shrine of the inner temple. We meet it in Islamic poetry; certain experiences of the Christian mystics repeat the forms and images with which we are familiar in the East, but usually with a certain timorousness foreign to the Eastern temperament. For the devotee who has once had this intense experience it is that which admits to the most profound and hidden mystery of the universe; for him the heart has the key of the last secret.

The work of a great Bengali poet has recently reintroduced this idea to the European mind, which has so much lost the memory of its old religious traditions as to welcome and wonder at it as a novel form of mystic self-expression. On the contrary it is ancient enough, like all things natural and eternal in the human soul. In Bengal a whole period of national poetry has been dominated by this single strain and it has inspired a religion and a philosophy. And in the Vaishnavism of the far South, in



the songs of the Tamil Alvars we find it again in another form, giving a powerful and original turn to the images of our old classic poetry; for there it has been sung out by the rapt heart of a woman to the Heart of the Universe.

The Tamil word, Alvar, means one who has drowned, lost himself in the sea of the divine being. Among these canonised saints of Southern Vaishnavism ranks Vishnuchitta, Yogin and poet, of Villipattan in the land of the Pandyas. He is termed Perialwar, the great Alvar. A tradition, which we need not believe, places him in the ninety-eighth year of the Kaliyuga. But these divine singers are ancient enough, since they precede the great saint and philosopher Ramanuja whose personality and teaching were the last flower of the long-growing Vaishnava tradition. Since his time Southern Vaishnavism has been a fixed creed and a system rather than a creator of new spiritual greatnesses.

The poetess Andal was the foster-daughter of Vishnuchitta, found by him, it is said, a new-born child under the sacred tulsi-plant. We know little of Andal except what we can gather from a few legends, some of them richly beautiful and symbolic. Most of Vishnuchitta's poems have the infancy and boyhood of Krishna for their subject. Andal, brought up in that atmosphere, cast into the mould of her life what her foster-father had sung in inspired hymns. Her own poetry—we may suppose that she passed early into the Light towards which she yearned, for it is small in bulk,—is entirely occupied with her passion for the divine Being. It is said that she went through a symbolic marriage with Sri Ranganatha, Vishnu in his temple at Srirangam, and disappeared into the image of her Lord. This tradition probably conceals some actual fact, for Andal's marriage with the Lord is still celebrated annually with considerable pomp and ceremony.

*Sri Aurobindo ('Essays in Philosophy and Yoga', pp. 465-466)*



## The Mother Calls

Vivek

I must have been 9 years old then – way back in 1971, when my father was in business at Madras and I a school-going child there. On one of my holidays, father took me along to the Pondicherry Ashram. The late Navajat-ji, my maternal grandfather, took us one day to the Samadhi, from where I was taken upstairs, and asked to wait near a door.

There was complete silence. Soon the door opened and I was told to enter, all by myself. As I entered, somewhat surprised, I heard someone calling in a sweet voice, “My child, come. I was waiting for you.”

The Mother, as I came to know later, was the one thus calling me. I did pranam and got up when she touched my forehead. She asked me whether I would one day take up business like my father and grandfather. I don’t know whether it was my sanskaras or family upbringing that made me answer emphatically, “No Mother, till my last breath I want to lead a spiritual life and serve you!”

I was fortunate enough to have a few more “*Darshans*” till the Mother left her body in 1973. But none was so dramatic in its impact as the first one described above. Perhaps I was called and chosen that great day of my life!

Even now, whenever I go to the Samadhi at Pondi, I have a feeling of the Mother calling me upstairs!

*Reproduced from The Call Beyond, Vol. 21, No. 1, p. 40, 1996*

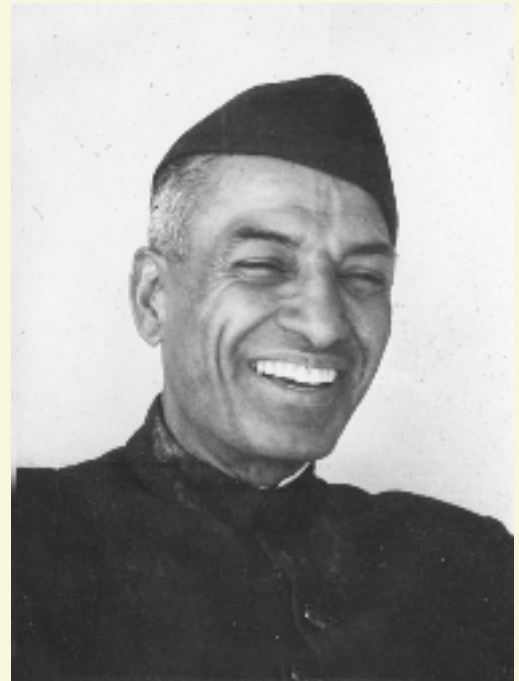


## The Ashram Playground

Anyone who has been to Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, is familiar with 'The Playground', the site of the evening meditation. The playground has served for more than 70 years, not only for games and sports, and of course, meditation, but has also been a classroom and the venue of many celebrations and cultural programs.



*The Mother, standing at the doorway of Her room, watching the children doing physical activities in The Playground.*



*Shri Surendranath Jauhar*

The playground has a special link with Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch because it was the founder of the Delhi Ashram, Shri Surendranath Jauhar (popularly called Chacha-ji) who bought the playground and offered it to the Mother.

### **Here is an excerpt from a recent book:**

“From its inception in 1926 till the 1940s, there were only a few children in the Ashram. Then, during World War II, because of the threat of Japanese aggression in northeastern



India, some devotees living in the affected areas brought their families to Pondicherry to live under the Mother's protection. As more and more children began to arrive, the Mother saw the need to organize the education of the young ones.

One of the houses rented by the Ashram at that time was a one-storey structure on rue Saint Louis ... The Mother decided to use this building to start a school. ... On 2 December 1943, with Sri Aurobindo's blessings, the Mother opened the Ashram school, 'l'École de l'Ashram', with about 42 students.

On 1 April 1944, Surendranath Jauhar, a devotee, bought the adjoining piece of land, situated on the corner of rue Saint Louis and rue Law de Lauriston, in the name of Sri Aurobindo and offered it to the Mother. A large house stood on this property. Part of the house was renovated and turned into a boarding for boys and girls. The Mother named it "Dortoir". The rest of the house was also renovated and turned into classrooms. This property soon became known as the Playground. The open area as we see it today was once an unkempt place, full of trees and snakes. It was cleared up by sadhaks and students and rendered fit for the children's sports activities."

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*(Namita Sarkar: 'Memorable Years with the Mother. The Growth of Physical Education in Sri Aurobindo Ashram. Volume 1'. Golden Chain Fraternity/Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust, Pondicherry, 2017)*

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## All Set to Write

Many have made peace with the coronavirus pandemic, instead of complaining. Showing once again that happiness is within you, and not in the circumstances, these people are an inspiration to others.

Prachi Sharma joined a course in literature in Delhi University's Kirori Mal College with the ambition of becoming a writer. She decided to stay in a PG (paying guest) accommodation near the college. Then came the coronavirus pandemic. Her roommate, and many more like her, went back to their homes one by one. Finally, she also did. Her parents stay in Faridabad, and life there was hardly conducive to realising her dreams. So, she took up a job as a content writer with a firm, and moved to be on her own in a single room on the fourth floor in Delhi's cramped locality, Saidulajab. In this room, she has a view of the moon through a curtain-less window. In a sparse but tastefully done up room, she is happy to be alone, and finds the setting just right for realising her dreams. She is happy because she is living life on her own terms, coronavirus notwithstanding. She says, "I do not feel the pandemic because only one breath, and only one touch live here – mine."

*Based on a news item in The Hindustan Times, 2 March 2021*



Source: <https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/delhi-news/delhis-year-of-isolation-101614645559004.html>





## Human Intelligence: a Mixed Blessing

*The unselfish movement, uncalculating, is one of the most beautiful forms of psychic consciousness in the world. But the higher one rises in the scale of mental activity, the rarer it becomes. For with intelligence come all the skill and cleverness, and corruption, calculation.*

*The Mother*

Sweet Children of the Sweet Mother,



If you have ever seen the love of a dog for his master, it is impossible that you have not been impressed by it. What type of love is that? The Mother says, this love is a combination of “admiration, trust and a sense of security.”

The dog admires his master for the ‘difficult and great’ things he can do. The dog trusts that the master will never do him any harm. The dog feels secure that his basic needs like food and shelter will be taken care of so long as the master is around. Not just dogs, the same is essentially true of the love of any other pet, and also of the love of a small child for its parents. The Mother says that unfortunately, this love is also mixed with some fear. The animal or the child does as he is told because of the fear.

What is common to pets and small children? They are both not ‘very intelligent’. What is the difference between pets and small children? The difference is that pets never become very intelligent, but as the children grow up, their intelligence continues to grow till they become intelligent adults. With adult intelligence comes the tendency to calculate, dominate and deceive. An intelligence person evaluates everything in



***Total trust.***

(Source: [petsworld.in](https://petsworld.in/)/Google images)

terms of measurable profit and loss. This “wish to gain by what one has or does is truly one of the ugliest things in the world.” On the other hand, as Sri Aurobindo says, an animal has “a more simple and honest consciousness” as compared to man. In the

company of men, animals may pick up some ability to cheat and manipulate, but these evils never reach human levels because animals are not as intelligent as humans. Children also pick up these evils from the adults around them, and in them these evils can get more vicious and sophisticated as they themselves grow into adulthood.

Does it mean that it is bad to be intelligent? Does it mean that human intelligence should stay at the level of an animal or that of a child throughout life? Does it mean that the Divine made a mistake by creating creatures far more intelligent than animals? These are very valid questions. Let us take them up one by one.

No, it is not bad to be intelligent. Intelligence is only a tool. A tool can be used for good as well as evil. For example, a knife can be used to slice a fruit or to stab a man. The proper use of intelligence is to put it to a noble use.

Keeping human intelligence permanently at the level of a child is neither possible nor desirable. What can be retained throughout life is the simplicity, purity and spontaneity of a child. That is what gives us a childlike adult. It is great to be childlike, but foolish to be childish.



Now, the most difficult of all questions. Did the Divine make a mistake by creating man? The appearance of man on earth after the animals had been around for millions of years was a part of evolution of consciousness. All creatures are different forms of the Divine, expressing a tiny fraction of the Consciousness of the Divine. Man expresses a bigger fraction than animals do. But what man expresses is still only a tiny fraction of the Consciousness of the Divine. However, there is one thing that distinguishes man from all animals. Man has the urge and the capacity to express more of his divinity. In other words, man can help nature carry evolution to the next stage. Thus, the typically intelligent but cunning man is only an intermediate creature between animals and a creature much better than an average man of today. Manifesting more of the hidden divinity, or expressing a bigger fraction of the divine Consciousness, or evolving mean the same thing. The result of any of these processes is a better man, a man who may be very intelligent, but who will not misuse his intelligence to let his love get corrupted by calculation. Evolution of relatively unintelligent animals into intelligent creatures who put their intelligence to noble use perhaps had to pass through man who, as the Mother says, “makes the most vulgar and low use of his intelligence.” Thus, man is not a mistake of the Divine; he is more likely a necessary intermediate step in evolution. There are several examples of men and women making a conscious choice to become better human beings. That is how saints and sages are created.

We shall continue this dialogue month after month. In the meantime, do two things. *First*, keep your ears open to the purity and innocence of the animals in your surroundings. *Secondly*, if you have any questions, please send an e-mail to [callbeyond@aurobindoonline.in](mailto:callbeyond@aurobindoonline.in).

With love, CB



*The emotional being of animals is often much more psychic [closer to the Divine] than that of men who can be very insensitive. There were recently pictures of the tame tigress kept by a family and afterwards given by them to a Zoo. The look of sorrow on the face of the tigress in her cage at once gentle and tragically poignant is so intense as to be heart breaking.*

*Sri Aurobindo*

*(Based on Whispers of Nature. Edited by Vijay. Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Society, 1981, pp. 50-53.)*

*The world is preparing  
for a big change.*

*Will you help?*



*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).*

## **Atma is Like a Drop of Water**

*Bhawana, all of four-years-old asked her grandmother, "What is Atma?" Her grandmother wants to know how to explain it to her.*

### **Answer**

Atma is like a drop of rainwater. The drop comes from a cloud. The cloud sends rain. Rain has many drops of water. God is like a cloud. God sends many Atmas to the world.

Many drops of rainwater reach the ground. Something different happens to each drop. One drop may fall in a garden. It may enter the roots of a plant, and become a part of the plant. Another drop may fall on mud, and get dirty. Yet another drop may find its way to a tap, and you may drink it.

Similarly, many Atmas sent by God reach the world. One Atma may enter a kitten's body and make the kitten alive. One Atma may enter the body of a baby girl and make the baby girl alive. One Atma entered your body when you were still in your mother's tummy. You became alive and started growing in your mummy's tummy. When you were big enough to come out, you came out of your mummy's tummy. That made all of us very happy. We named you Bhawna.

All of us have an Atma. The body is like a house for the Atma. Atma is like a guest in the house. Isn't it nice to have something that came straight from God as a guest?



*For a four-year old the answer could stop here.*

*For an older child, the same analogy can be extended to discuss death and rebirth. Why bring in rebirth? Because, even to an older child, just explaining death may be very depressing.*

A guest goes back one day where it came from. Our guest, our Atma, keeps us alive. Therefore, when the Atma decides to go back, the person dies. It is like drops of water going back to the sky. Then they form clouds. Then they come back again as rainwater. But the drop that left a plant does not come back to the same plant. It may enter another plant, or may enter a shell and become a pearl. Similarly, Atmas also keep coming back to earth. But the Atma does not enter the same body. It enters a new body. In the new body, it may have new parents in a new country. The Atma is still the same, but the body is different. The guest is the same, but it lives in a new house. Having lived in many houses in many lives, the Atma gathers a lot of experience. It has the freedom to use this experience to make its new house worthy of being the residence of a guest that has come straight from God. When the house becomes worthy of the guest, the person housing the guest is called Mahatma.

*To know is good,  
to live is better,  
to be, that is perfect.*



## Feedback and Encouraging Words

### Appreciation from a Sponsor



Dear Shama ji,  
I am in love with Kechla and the kids there. It has been a divine design to be a part of the relationship. Feel humbled if such a small drop of contribution is of some use for the children there.  
With warm regards,  
*Sanjay (Khatri)*  
(in an e-mail dated 1 April 2021)

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*[Kechla is a remote place in the tribal belt of Odisha. We have there a Free Progress School, Auro-Mira Vidya Mandir. We welcome donors who wish to sponsor the education of one or more children there. For details, please write to [contact@aurobindoonline.in](mailto:contact@aurobindoonline.in)]*

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## Unavoidable Restrictions

Due to the current surge in Covid cases, as a precautionary measure, Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch has once again been *closed to visitors w.e.f. MONDAY, 12 April 2021 till further notice*. The *Sunday Satsangs*, including those scheduled for April 2021, have been cancelled, and the *Ashram Library* will also remain closed till further notice.

SABDA (the Bookshop on the campus) will deliver goods only at Gate No. 6 of the Ashram. For placing orders, please call 966 78 56 712 or 931 84 71 644 (WhatsApp) or e-mail [bookshop@aurobindoonline.in](mailto:bookshop@aurobindoonline.in).

TIMINGS: 10 am - 4 pm (for placing orders); 10 am - 5 pm (for delivery of goods); Monday through Saturday (SUNDAY CLOSED).

As you understand, through these restrictions, we are trying to do our bit towards containing the second wave of the coronavirus pandemic. We hope and pray that by the Mother's Grace, we should be able to resume normal activities soon.

To get this type of information at the earliest, please go to <http://erp.saaonline.net.in/addcontacts.cfm>, fill-in a simple form which will take you only a few minutes, and submit it. Then your e-mail will get included in our 'contact management system', and you will be informed about anything important concerning the Ashram as soon as possible.

We regret the inconvenience caused, and wish you all a safe and healthy life.

- *Ashram Management*





## Contact us

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

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

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If you subscribe either to *Realization*, or to *The Call Beyond*, you will start receiving, month after month, both the magazines.

For information about Auro-Mira Service Society and the Kechla project, please visit the website [www.auromira.in](http://www.auromira.in)

Get in touch with Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch on:

**Our website:** [www.sriaurobindoashram.net](http://www.sriaurobindoashram.net)

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## Note

*In view of 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  
[callbeyond@aurobindoonline.in](mailto:callbeyond@aurobindoonline.in)

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