

# THE CALL BEYOND

Volume 45 No. 1

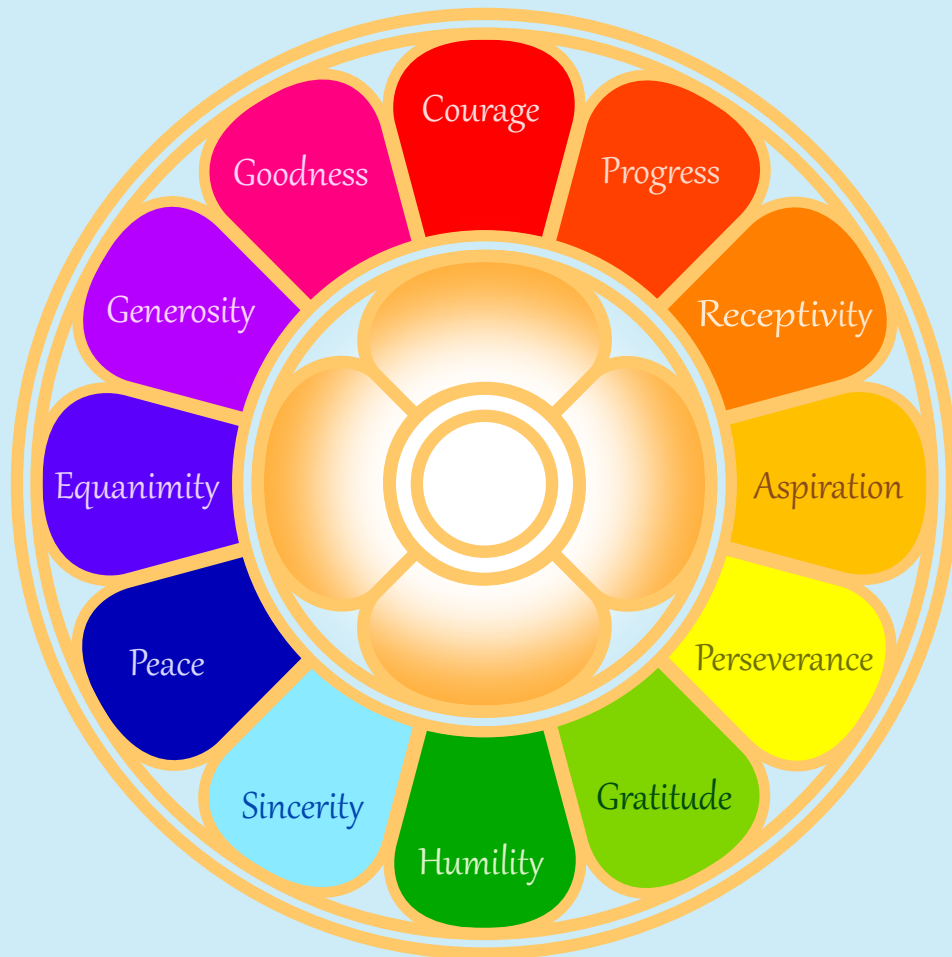
15 January 2020



## Sincerity

*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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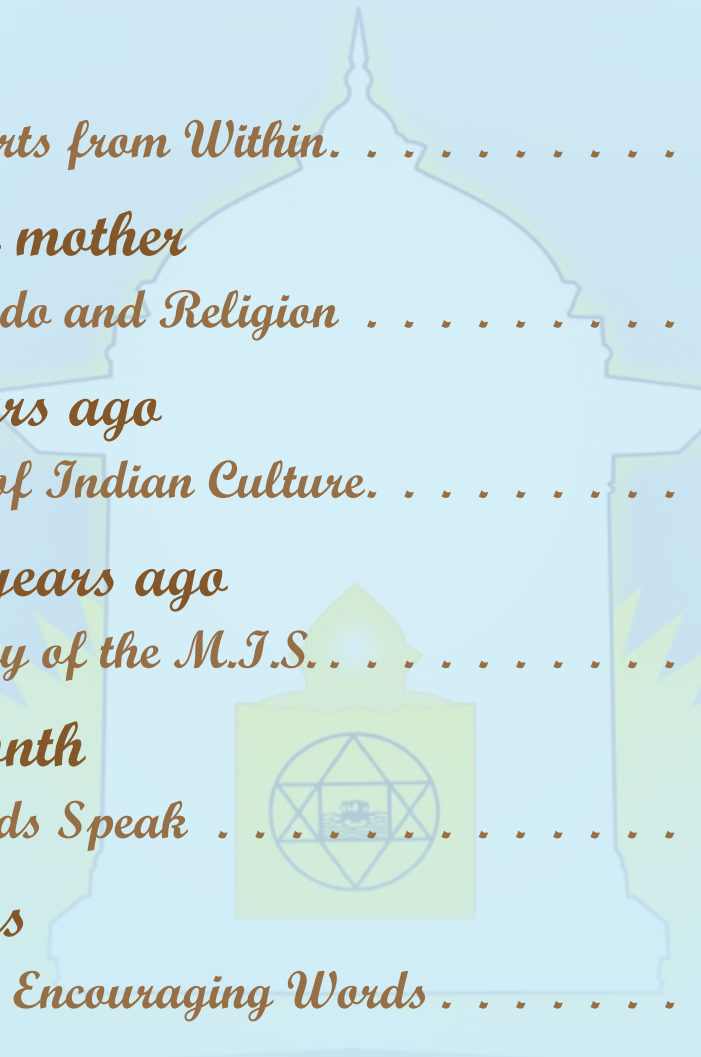
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## A New Year, A New Beginning

The year 2020 marks the centenary of a momentous event in the spiritual history of the world. It was on 24 April 2020 that the Mother arrived in Pondicherry for the second time, not to leave it physically till she left the body in 1973. The 53 years that she spent there in flesh and blood were a boon to mankind in ways more than one can enumerate. Just to mention a few, at Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, She gave a practical shape in the modern world to the ancient Indian life-embracing view of spirituality that She and Sri Aurobindo both wanted to re-introduce to the world. She answered with infinite patience the questions put to her by the seekers in the Ashram, thereby creating a precious resource for posterity to bank upon while walking the adventurous path of integral yoga. She brought to the systems set up in the Ashram the perfection in outer life, which is the hallmark of the West, while at the same time providing a foundation for the outer life in a high, wide and deep inner life, which is the hallmark of the East. While deeply immersed in the outer life of the Ashram, she also found time for Her own inner journey aimed at bringing down to the world a new level of Consciousness, the Supramental, which is essential for the next leap in evolution that would make the world a much better place to live in than it has been for thousands of years. She continues to be the most dependable and approachable source of Light, Love and Power to Her children, and Her children include all who turn to Her because "The whole world could take refuge in her single heart," as Sri Aurobindo says in 'Savitri'.

It was in 1926 that Sri Aurobindo decided to go into seclusion to concentrate on inner work, and He requested the Mother

to take care of the Ashram. The Ashram then had only about 25 residents; the number had grown to more than a thousand when the Mother left the body. Thus, the Ashram was essentially the creation of the Mother. Soon after the Mother took charge of the Ashram, in 1928 Sri Aurobindo wrote a small but very powerful booklet titled 'The Mother', and also designed the Mother's symbol. In the book, Sri Aurobindo described the three pillars of sadhana – aspiration, rejection and surrender – and the four aspects of the Mother – Maheshwari, Mahakali, Mahalakshmi and Mahasaraswati. In the Mother's symbol, as explained by the Mother, "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." In 1934, Sri Aurobindo specified the colours for the twelve petals in the outermost circle in the Mother's symbol that would best symbolize the power of manifestation for which the petal stands. As Brad Waites says, "For most of us, the outer circle will hold the most practical utility, as its twelve petals represent the attitudes we must cultivate to translate the Mother's powers into daily action in our lives." What we will do this year is to take up one of these petals each month. Let us resolve that we will not only discuss the attitude represented by each petal, but also reflect upon it and try with utmost sincerity to bring the attitude into our lives.

## **PETAL OF THE MONTH: Sincerity**



## Sincerity

*Sincerity means more than honesty. It means that you mean what you say, feel what you profess, are earnest in your will.*

*Sri Aurobondo*

When we end a letter with ‘yours sincerely’, it is almost a reflex. Rarely do we give a thought to what it means, how difficult it is to be sincere, and therefore, how rare total sincerity is. In ordinary day-to-day affairs, sincerity means saying what we mean, and doing what we say. Sincerity implies lack of all pretensions. Lack of sincerity is a subtle form of deception. Like charity, sincerity begins at home. We have to first learn to be sincere with ourselves. Suppose I smoke, and I decide to give up smoking. What determines my success is how sincere I am about the desire to give up smoking. Insincerity is likely to express itself through reasons: I want to give up smoking, but ‘my life is full of stress’, ‘to give up smoking is very difficult’, ‘my will-power is weak’, ‘my friends don’t let me do it’, and so on. If I am sincere, I will consider all these reasons to be mere excuses, and I will acquire the will-power to overcome all these difficulties.

**SINCERITY** is the one thing that is needed the most also on the spiritual path. We generally know what to do or keep away from while on the spiritual path. Sincerity helps us put the knowledge into practice. A gram of practice is worth a kilo of knowledge. In fact, one who has the knowledge but does not translate it into practice is much worse than someone making the same mistakes because he does not have the knowledge. Let us examine the role of sincerity in the three pillars of sadhana: aspiration, rejection and surrender.

ASPIRATION for spiritual growth should be sincere. Sincerity of aspiration means that I should be interested in the Divine for the sake of the Divine, not for the satisfaction of the ego or some worldly desires, or as a pretense because spirituality is the in-thing among the rich and fashionable. Spiritual aspiration is not a casual affair; it has to be intense. Its intensity should be comparable to the intensity with which a drowning man yearns for air. *Sincerity lends intensity to the aspiration.* The spiritual path is fraught with difficulties and dilemmas; hurdles, obstacles and pitfalls, which can weaken or even kill the aspiration. *Sincerity lends persistence to the aspiration.* The spiritual path is long, and there is no short-cut. The seemingly unending journey can wear out the aspiration. *Sincerity lends patience to the aspiration.* Spiritual progress is not a linear process that, once begun, moves forward at a steady pace. There are periods of rapid progress followed by long periods of stagnation and even sliding down. *Sincerity makes the aspiration calm.*

REJECTION requires saying 'no' to whatever is likely to lower the consciousness. The inner voice, emanating from the psychic being tells us clearly what to say 'no' to. But what we are told to reject may be very tempting, comfortable and familiar. Calculations of worldly gain and loss are sure to supply many reasons why the authentic voice of the psychic being should be ignored or suppressed. To reject what can deflect us from the spiritual path, therefore, needs a strong commitment. *Sincerity gives us the unflinching commitment to reject easily, willingly and happily what must be rejected.*

SURRENDER is a voluntary subordination of personal will to the Divine Will. The intellect knows many tricks for ignoring, subverting and twisting the Divine Will, and even for making personal will look like the Divine Will. Sincerity

protects us from falling a prey to these tricks. **Surrender is impossible without sincerity.**

In short, sincerity sustains and nourishes the flame of aspiration, the fire of purification as well as the sweetness of surrender.

Even when a person is able to overcome attachment to sensory pleasures, all negative emotions, and considerations of worldly gain and loss, sincerity can be corrupted by the pursuit of gains 'other-worldly' and gains 'other than worldly in this world'. To desire disciples in a dozen countries or millions of followers on social media is just as egoistic as wanting to be a millionaire. Even the desire for rapid spiritual growth, or the curiosity to monitor spiritual progress, are refined expressions of the ego, and actually slow the progress down by corrupting sincerity. As the Mother has said, "the effort for progress must be made for the love of the effort for progress. ... .. As soon as we think of the result we begin to bargain and that takes away all sincerity from the effort."

Total sincerity takes time to cultivate. But at least a person on the spiritual path should not be "fundamentally insincere," to use an expression of Sri Aurobindo. Being conscious of insincerity is itself a step forward, because it implies a desire to get rid of the insincerity. A person who is not even conscious of his insincerity is, according to the Mother, not insincere but wicked. To him, sincerity is an alien concept.

The Mother has called sincerity "the key to the divine gates". The Divine is within us as well as all around us, and yet we do not see it because 'a locked gate' conceals the Divine from us. The analogy comparing sincerity with the key that can unlock the gates tells a lot. Like a key, sincerity does easily what is otherwise difficult. Like a key, sincerity unlocks the



gate silently. Like a key, sincerity unlocks the gate to the Divine from within, rather than by hammering at the lock from outside. Approaching the Divine involves sincere and silent inner work. The work consists of listening carefully to the dialogue between the head, the heart and the soul; and when there is a conflict, acting upon the voice of the soul. The work also consists of using the uneasiness that follows every lapse as an opportunity for sincere inner churning that culminates in the resolve to be sincere in future. That is why sincerity is indispensable for spiritual growth. *As the Mother has summed it up, "Sincerity is the safeguard, the protection, the guide, and finally the transforming power."*



*SIMPLE SINCERITY: The beginning of all progress. Aster amellus (White)*

*Sincerity in the vital is the most difficult to have and the most needful.*

*Sri Aurobindo*

*True sincerity consists in following the way because you cannot do otherwise, in consecrating yourself to the divine life because you cannot do otherwise, in striving to transform your being and emerge into the Light because you cannot do otherwise, because it is the very reason for which you live.*

*The Mother*

## Change Starts from Within

Chris Cade

Across all eras, cultures, religions, and spiritual traditions, the greatest sages and leaders have all agreed on one Universal principle: **Change starts from within.** There are **many reasons** for this, and we'll explore several.

**The least of these is that we cannot control others.** We can only control ourselves. When we try to control others, we are pushing against the current of life. We are trying to mold the world into how we feel it should ideally be. Yet with 8 billion people on the planet, how can any of us presume to individually know what is best for another person? We can't. No more than we can expect others to know what is best for us. This is one reason why so many people who try to "change the world" end up frustrated or angry.

Sure, some of them make a difference. Some make a huge difference. **Those who make the biggest difference are coming from a solid foundation within themselves.** Generally, they aren't fighting out with anger towards an unjust world. They aren't trying to conquer the world. In a way, they're trying to conquer themselves and the world is changed as a consequence of who they become in that process.

That leads into another challenge we often face. **Many people who want to change the world do so out of a sense of lack.** There's a part of them that feels deficient or lacking and they don't want to feel that experience. Instead, they subconsciously hope that if they can get everybody else in the world to change and be like them, then they won't have to feel their own deficiencies. The quiet hope is that by projecting all of their

attention and energy outwards towards others, they won't have any energy to focus attention inwardly at their feelings of shame, inadequacy, futility, or helplessness. Nobody wants to feel those difficult and sometimes painful emotions, yet they miss the hypocrisy inherent when they try to get others to change those experiences when they are unwilling to do it for themselves.

When thinking about emerging victorious in life, it's also important to understand the nature of change...

**Change is rarely revolutionary.** The "large leaps" in consciousness are extremely rare. More often than not, they are preceded by many small steps. Hundreds. Thousands. Maybe millions. All small steps leading towards a particular outcome. Those small steps start from within. When we try to only change the outer world, we're skipping those small steps. We're trying to get other people to "do the work" for us.

The thing to understand is this:

**When we reach a roadblock or challenge, something that "knocks us back," it will knock us back to our highest and strongest foundation that we've developed. We can either be a slave to this universal law, or we can leverage it to our advantage.**

If you are going for the "big jump," you are creating a big space in which you can be knocked back. If you're trying to change the world without changing yourself first, then the result of getting knocked back can actually throw you off course completely.

If your inner foundation isn't solid, you might even be unable to continue forward. This is because there was no foundation to fall back on. No grounding. You just have a giant canyon

between where you are and the last solid step you took. On the other hand, If you've taken small incremental steps, and specifically created an inner foundation, then challenges don't have as far to knock you back. You get metaphorically knocked back by a few feet instead of several miles. At worst, you might have to step back over a crack or large hole, though fortunately not a canyon. **Each small inner step creates that solid foundation from which you can launch into the next small step.**

Most people believe that the biggest changes happen because of what you do. This is one of the biggest limiting beliefs that cause us to act out in the world when we want things to be changed.

This is where people often start, and it's...Backwards.

**While it's true we usually need to take action to impact others, the biggest changes happen in the world because of who you are.** They happen because of the Presence you bring to the world. People can sense your energy, intention, and internal state. This energy you put out significantly affects how people will respond to you. If you really get this, if you live it, then it's possible to inspire change in the world without doing anything other than being yourself. (That's not to say action doesn't matter. It does. It's just inherently limited.)

For example, when you are angry and forceful, when you are frustrated and trying to force the world to change, people can feel that. If not consciously, deep down they know it. This activates their inner defence mechanisms. They become defensive because anger and hostility are present. They want to avoid the unconscious threat they are perceiving, and so they will actually create resistance against whatever changes you're trying to get them to make. This makes it very difficult to change the world.

On the other hand, if you've done the inner work to create a space of peace, calm, and compassion within yourself, people also sense that. They understand that when you make recommendations or seek to change the world, you're coming from a place of compassion and positive intentions. They can sense that what you want is for the best of everybody, including others, and including them specifically. This helps people open up and be receptive to the changes you want to bring forth in the world because they feel safe.

To put it in a different perspective, when change is focused purely on the outside world, most often that's coming from a place of selfishness. Selfishness is based on feelings of lack, fear, and insecurity. On the other hand, when you come from a place of inner stillness and connection, when you change within yourself the aspects of the world you don't like, you're coming from a place of selflessness, confidence, and safety. You're sending a message to the world that there is enough and you're going to step into life courageously. From that place, you can be an example for others. You can be a literal model that they learn from and seek to become like.

And, above all else, you're putting out into the world the energy you want to receive back: Love, support, compassion, and wishes for us all to co-create a better world. Not just for yourself, but for everyone. And when everybody is on board with change, it makes the successes that much sweeter... :)

Be the miracle you want to see in the world.

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*Received in an e-mail dated 2 December 2019. Reproduced by permission. Chris reaches hundreds of thousands of people worldwide in over 150 countries. Chris Cade can be reached on [chris@chriscade.com](mailto:chris@chriscade.com)*

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## Sri Aurobindo and Religion



You only have to read all that Sri Aurobindo has written to know that it is impossible to base a religion on his works, because he presents each problem, each question in all its aspects, showing the truth contained in each way of seeing things, and he explains that in order to attain the Truth you must realize a synthesis which goes beyond all mental notions and emerge into a transcendence beyond thought.

...When we speak of Sri Aurobindo there can be no question of a teaching nor even of a revelation, but an action from the Supreme; no religion can be founded on that.

But men are so foolish that they can change anything into a religion, so great is their need of a fixed framework for their narrow thought and limited action. They do not feel secure unless they can assert this is true and that is not; but such an assertion becomes impossible for anyone who has read and understood what Sri Aurobindo has written.

*The Mother ('The Great Adventure', p. 24)*

## A Defence of Indian Culture

The theory of ancient Indian art at its greatest – and the greatest gives its character to the rest and throws on it something of its stamp and influence – is of another kind. Its highest business is to disclose something of the Self, the Infinite, the Divine to the regard of the soul, the Self through its expressions, the Infinite through its living finite symbols, the Divine through his powers. ... ..

A seeing in the self accordingly becomes the characteristic method of the Indian artist and it is directly enjoined on him by the canon. He has to see first in his spiritual being the truth of the thing he must express and to create its form in his intuitive mind; he is not bound to look out first on outward life and Nature for his model, his authority, his rule, his teacher or his fountain of suggestions. Why should he when it is something quite inward he has to bring out into expression? It is not an idea in the intellect, a mental imagination, an outward emotion on which he has to depend for his stimulants, but an idea, image, emotion of the spirit, and the mental equivalents are subordinate things for help in the transmission and give only a part of the colouring and the shape. A material form, colour, line and design are his physical means of the expression, but in using them he is not bound to an imitation of Nature, but has to make the form and all else significant of his vision, and if that can only be done or can best be done by some modification, some pose, some touch or symbolic variation which is not found in physical Nature, he is at perfect liberty to use it, since truth to his vision, the unity of the thing he is seeing and expressing is his only business. The line, colour and the rest are not his first, but his last preoccupation, because they have to carry on them a world of things which have already taken spiritual form in his mind.

Sri Aurobindo (In the *Arya*, Vol. 6, No. 6, 15 January 1920, pp. 350-366)

## Extracts from Shri T.N. Seshan's Speech on the Annual Day of the M.I.S.



*Shri T.N. Seshan (the then Chief Election Commissioner) writing in the Visitors' Book of The Mother's International School (M.I.S.). With him is Mrs. Indu Pillay, the then Principal of the school. Mr. Seshan's comments in the Visitors' Book: "To be able to be here one is twice blessed. Blessed is the company of children. The company of good children in a good atmosphere is divine."*

I am extraordinarily well-qualified to speak to parents as I have no children of my own. All the children I see are mine. ... ..

I want to make a plea that this country deserves far more schools of the kind which you run here. What about the 400 million children we have? What answer do we give them? Who gives them the answer? When do they find the ability to do extra-curricular activities and co-curricular activities and athletics, and practice honesty, integrity, sincerity for which you instituted awards and gave them. ... .. It is no wonder that

the school is excellent because it is running in the name of the Mother. But I want parents to think of the millions of people out there whose children will probably not see any school at all, leave alone a high class school ... .. I want to plead with both parents and teachers – for God’s sake give this country a set of people whom we can honestly call leaders in their own respective places. ... ..

The best place where character is imbibed is either the school or the house. Correct me if I am wrong. Character is imbibed between the ages of 5 and 20 roughly. You can’t imbibe anything before you are five. The child doesn’t know even the distinction between fire being hot and ice being cold. After 20, 21, you are rigidly set. In these 15-20 years you can mould human character into a character of sterling worth. You do this or not. Nobody else can do it. No officer can do it. No politician can do it. No administrator can do it. And you are in an atmosphere which is absolutely spiritual and sacred. And still you have freedom for the children! I had a sample of a few children earlier this afternoon and I said that if I were young, I would have come to Mrs. Pillay for admission and probably she would have refused to give me admission. But she looks like a kind-hearted person. Once upon a time she used to sing very well, and people who sing well are kind-hearted people.

Please, for God’s sake, give me a country of which children are gems. It lies in your hands to do this. Please don’t mix copper and brass and zinc and other base metals with these children. Make them grow into 24-carat gold. And the little we have seen is an indication that this school is really on that path. May the good lord guide you. May the Mother guide you. ... God bless you all!

Reproduced from *The Call Beyond*, Vol. 20, No. 1, p. 58, 1995

## Making Kids Speak

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

Antara Pandit, a writer and a mother of two boys, age 5 and 2, is keen on spending quality time with her children. She found that after she picked up her five-year old from school, if she asked him, "What did you do at school today?" the child's response generally was "Nothing." She has discovered that the following four are great conversation starters:

- What was the funniest part of your day?
- What was the most interesting thing you learned?
- Did anyone or anything make you sad?
- Were you kind to anyone today?

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*For more parenting tips, you may read Antara Pandit's blogs on her website 'The Bubbly Blogcast'. The link is: <https://thebubblyblogcast.weebly.com/>*

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*(Source: 'ParentCircle', November 2019 issue)*

### *Count Your Blessings*

- If you have food in your refrigerator, clothes on your back, a roof over your head and a place to sleep, you are richer than 75% of the world.
- If you can read this message, you are more blessed than over two billion people in the world that cannot read anything at all.
- If you are feeling blessed, repay the blessings bestowed unto you and do something good for others.

*(Excerpted from 'Yoga Life', issue: November 2019. Original source: 30th Anniversary Magazine of the Patanjali Centre for Classical Yoga, UK, issue: June 2019)*



## Feedback & Encouraging Words

### Feedback on the Camp, 'Sourcing Our Oneness'

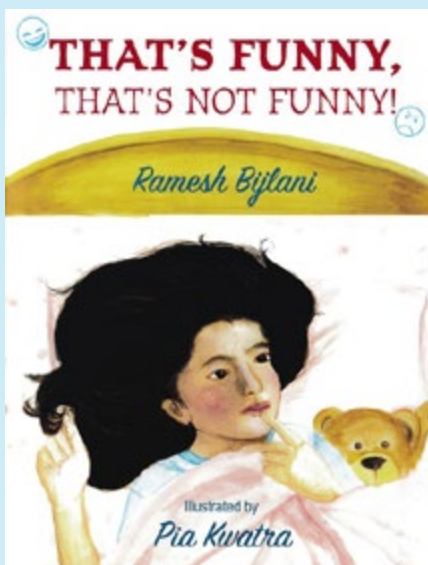
Dear Anju,

This Sourcing Our Oneness program has apart from everything else also given these home points for me – Delhi Ashram, Van Nivas and Madhuban. A soul space in the middle of the capital of India, a foothold in the Himalayas, everywhere she has put Her feet "where She presses Her feet, spring miraculous streams, of an enchanting Ananda." These places are truly like that, and I know that there are many more on Earth. Wherever She has walked through all these lifetimes, the Earth is hallowed.

With lots of love from this very sacred place of Auroville and Pondicherry,

*Jaya (Jorel Berggreen-Clausen)  
Executive, Unity Pavilion, Auroville  
(in an e-mail dated 29 Nov 2019)*

### Feedback on a Book



Just finished reading your book 'That's Funny, That's Not Funny'\* with my daughter, Akshara. Both of us simply loved it!! It's soooo true for our household every morning. Thank you for the gentle reminder for us parents to be careful to stay calm and centered and handle our stress with humour instead of yelling at the child.

*Meenakshi Krishnan  
(in a message dated 23 December 2019)*

\*The book is available in SABDA, the bookshop on the campus of Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch, and as an e-book on amazon.

## 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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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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Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/sriaurobindoashramdelhibranch>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/saadelhibranch>

## Note

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



## Feedback

Please send your feedback to  
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