



Mehfil on the Move

...a journey within and without

Here's a chance to explore and experience, within and without, the discovery of self and surroundings. A unique journey (5days, 4 nights: 24th September 2011 to 28th September 2011) to the lush, enchanting hills of Munnar and Alleppey backwaters in Kerala (India), with like minded people. The trips will be interspread with sessions on self-exploration, creative writing, meditation sessions, some fun and of course, the joy of making friends with whom you can share a special vibe and share a slice of your soul. Interested?



PACK UP!

(Oh yes! Only women are invited!)

*Arising
Beckoning
arises
mountains,
skies,
lakes,
rocks
...more,
more,
more,
calls ...*

*Existence
is ready and
eager
to pour.
The body
arises
and
follows the
soul.*

-hk

ONCE UPON A CRAZY TIME...

...an idea started as a seed and an experiment - the experiment worked and the seed is growing! The initial and current aim is to bring some 'special' people together and create a synergy. Then the consciousness of the people brought together creates its own magic. We tried this in the privacy of a home and beautiful friendships, creative work, deep, intense sessions of self-exploration started... we called them '*mehfils*'... which is an urdu word meaning a warm, intimate gathering of friends who share poetry, music and a sense of bonding. This is, if you like, a *mehfil-on-the-move* (if you want to know more, write to me, and I'll send over a history lesson!). The people in the earlier *mehfils* were largely educators, writers and musicians. The role of the place and the sessions is to help facilitate this synergy among the selected group and find a sacred space within yourself.



WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS JOURNEY?

It's a bit creatively-crazy and hard to explain... but will try all the same. Let's begin by clarifying what it is not - it's NOT your run of the mill holiday packages, where you try you book a hotel, or buy a holiday package that promises to jam-pack as many places as it can in limited period. You get your family together (phew!) or your friends if you are lucky and whoaaaa... When you return you are light pocketed and sometimes light headed, in need of another holiday! This also NOT a structured workshop with one workshop leader at a beautiful setting. Yes, I can feel the restlessness... grrrrrrrrrr... what is this????

It's cross between a holiday-trip, a workshop, a retreat... yup! Crazy does it!

THE PLACE AND MANNER OF LIVING

We want people who may not know each other in the beginning to become friends. The people who decide to join should keep this in mind - this not intended to be an exclusivist high-end-ultra-luxury sight-seeing trip as such. We want people to share and get to know each other's creative potential, we want to sit out at night together and listen to the musicians and conduct meaningful sessions. Hope you get the picture!

We wanted nature - trees, birds, animals, water bodies, mountains... oh yes, people too. Hence, we chose Kerala. We feel nature helps us to reconnect with ourselves and to the general matrix of life around us, where we are compelled to pull our ostrich-headed consciousness out of the sand of our small world and become aware of the wider canvas. (Sorry, if this sounds heavy!). We want people to experience the intoxication that only an environment like this can give. And be with people who understand and want an experience of this sort. In other words, official craziness!

(By the way, alcohol and smoking are not permitted. Please let us know if you have any serious health problem which we should make a note of. Keep taking lots of vitamins and try and keep yourself in good shape!)



HOW DO YOU BECOME A PART OF THIS?

If you are fortunate you get an email inviting you to apply/join, please do so immediately, a direct invitation means you are handpicked to join this special group. If you do not get a direct email invite, please don't feel sad or left out - we may not know you just yet, but would love to! So, just read this carefully, fill the form and wait for a confirmatory message/email. If people (mother-daughter, sisters, cousins...) from the same family are interested you still apply *individually*, and if destiny wants you to have this experience, be sure, you'll be there!!

Since the objective is to create a synergy which helps us to bond with ourselves and other like minded people who are creative or seeking to live at a deeper level, we warmly welcome people -

- with enthusiasm to participate, share as well as the ability to go into silence at times.
- who can perhaps volunteer a session - yoga, meditation, creative writing, photography, dance(!), music (we love musicians!), games... you name it! (This is not compulsory - don't be scared!)
- who have the desire to connect to others and adjust with a group.

Form: Please fill in the attached form and email it to harvinder@sriarobindosociety.org.in (alternate email: teachertalk@rediffmail.com) Keep looking at your mail box after that - we'll call you or email you very soon. Please note, seats will be filled on a first come first served basis for all those who receive an invitation to join this group. We are anticipating a VERY enthusiastic response, so if you are invited to join, book your place as soon as you can.

Confirmation of booking: After you get an email inviting you to join, you have to pay the full amount (Rs.12345/- per person) to confirm your place. Please send a cheque in favour of Sri Aurobindo Society payable at Pondicherry. Please make sure you write your name on the reverse side of the cheque.

Cancellation, transfer and refund: If you decide to cancel your participation for any reason:

by 1st July 2011, 75% will be refunded
by 1st August 2011, 50% will be refunded
after that, no refund will be made.

It is possible to transfer your seat if you cannot make it for some reason ***only after*** the approval from Sri Aurobindo Society. Kindly write to us on the email provided, with the details of the candidate whom you are considering for transfer (there will be no transfer charges). Direct transfers will not be considered as we would like to screen candidates.

Costs: You are required to send a cheque of **Rs.12345/-** per person in favour of Sri Aurobindo Society payable at Puducherry. The same can be posted to:

MEHFIL-ON-THE-MOVE-2011, (c/o Shivakumar)
Sri Aurobindo Society,
Beach Office, 11, St Martin Street,
Puducherry 605001
(The form is to be emailed at: harvinder@sriarobindosociety.org.in)

SESSIONS

Apart from walks, discussions, music(!) and visits, there will be focused sessions on -

- understanding ourselves
 - sensitizing to forces of nature
 - creative writing
- (and a few surprises!!)

[NOTE: Certificates of participation will be given to all candidates]

ITINERARY

(PLEASE NOTE: Once all the bookings are finalized and participants confirmed, a more detailed and specific itinerary will be emailed to the candidates, giving an idea of the sessions that we will be having. However, the following travel-agent itinerary indicates all the places we can visit, though we may make a few adjustments if necessary. Participants will be provided comfortable rooms with an attached bathroom, on twin sharing basis.)

DAY 01 - Saturday, 24th Sept 2011 - COCHIN to MUNNAR - 140 KMS / 4 HRS

Arrive at Cochin Airport or Ernakulam Railway Station - as early as you can! After gathering together, you will be transferred to Munnar by road. A 4 hour scenic/picturesque drive to Munnar through hill station. On the way visit Pine Apple Garden, Rubber Plantations, Spice Plantations, Valara Falls, Cheeyappara Falls. Arrival at a place which is called 'nature's lovers paradise'. On arrival at Munnar, check in at Hotel. Overnight at Hotel in Munnar.

DAY 02 - Sunday, 25th Sept 2011 - MUNNAR

Morning depart to enjoy full day sightseeing tour of Munnar visiting Madupetty Dam/Lake, Echo Point, Gundala Lake, Photo Point. Evening Spice/Tea trailing at Munnar. Overnight at Hotel in Munnar.

DAY 03 - Monday, 26th Sept 2011 - MUNNAR

Morning depart to enjoy full day sightseeing tour of Munnar visiting Athukkad Falls, Rajamalai (Eravikulam) National Park - famous for Nilgiri Tahr(Wild goat), Anaimudi Peak - South India's Highest Peak, Tata Tea Museum, International Blossom(Hydel) Park, Pothamedu Sunset View. Evening Spice/Tea trailing at Munnar. Overnight at Hotel in Munnar.

DAY 04 - Tuesday, 27th Sept 2011 - MUNNAR to ALLEPPEY (HOUSEBOAT) - 195 KMS / 5 HRS

Morning proceed to Alleppey. Alleppey a charming village on the Vembanadu Lake. The land which is known for its azure backwaters, swaying palms, and floating houseboats. A 5 hour scenic drives through typical Kerala Village, Paddy Field. On arrival check in at Kettuvallam known as a famous Kerala Houseboat. Lunch at Houseboat. Cruise through the unique web of lakes, lagoons, canals and river. Visit Snake Boat, Historical Church, Paddy Field, Kuttanadan Region the only region cultivate rice below sea level. Enjoy the spectacular sunset. Overnight on board the houseboat at mid of lake.

DAY 05 - Wednesday, 28th Sept 2011 - HOUSEBOAT (ALLEPPEY) to COCHIN - 75 KMS / 2 HRS

Morning disembark from the Houseboat at boat jetty. Visit Alleppey Beach. Proceed to Cochin. Bid farewell to this serene land as your holidays comes to an end as you get transferred to Cochin Airport or Ernakulam Railway Station for your onward journey back to home.

WHY SHOULD GIRLS HAVE ALL THE FUN?

Why not? They deserve it for one! No offense meant to our male friends, but this particular event is reserved for the ladies. There are several reasons - it gives a unique opportunity to a woman who wants to travel but can't find friends or family members at a particular time. It facilitates bonding between like minded people (women) with whom one can spend quality time. Activities that are likely to appeal to such a group are facilitated. So, time, space, interests and simple logistics tilt the scales to making this into an only women's trip!



[Photo courtesy: We would like to thank Ms. Aditi Mehta for sharing her photographs of Kerala. All photographs are original and capture the beauty of Kerala, and the places we would be visiting.]