

## Letter to Pujya Swamiji

Dear Swamiji,

Words cannot describe the amount of gratitude I have towards you and your teachings. Your physical absence has no doubt left an unexplainable void that I am trying very hard (without much success) to replace through your teachings and the various memories I have of interacting with you.

I am thankful to you Swamiji for many things and I am hoping this letter can capture a few of them. I hope it reaches you, wherever you are.

Thank you, Swamiji for being with me through every phase of my life. As a 5 year old, I looked up at you in awe as you started speaking in fluent and understandable English. I wondered if I would ever be a person so adored by many in the future. As a teenage girl, you stopped me from many tantrums and many ridiculous questions that a normal teenager would have come up with. Thanks for being with me in the form of "Teenagers" series of lectures. As a woman who had crossed her brahmacharya ashrama, you made me realize the challenges and importance of grhastha ashrama in the society.

Thank you, Swamiji for enlightening me on the wonder of my Hindu culture. My parents have a huge part in this, but I'm sure my parents themselves owe this to you (Being your students). I was introduced to our itihasas and puranas by my parents at a very tender age in the form of bed time stories. Later on, I listened to your Mahabharata series, where in your own inimitable style, you narrated the great epic. You added your humour, wit and presentation in that. I am safeguarding these invaluable lectures for the future generations too.

Thank you Swamiji for making me realize the importance of performing my duties irrespective of whether I like it or not. Then as my maturity increased, you taught me to like my duties and slowly I was able to thin the line between my duty and my likes.

Thank you Swamiji for teaching me the importance of being with what I do. This is one of the most amazing lessons you've taught me, Swamiji! My level of concentration and the quality in any work I do has increased to a great extent post learning this principle.

Thank you, Swamiji for teaching me the value of values. Even as a 24-year old right now, I shudder at the thought of uttering a white lie. You taught me that lying leads to a split personality and that is the first step towards failure in life.

Thank you Swamiji for being motivating whenever I've met you. I met you before my exams, you told me that I'd do well. I met you before my results, you blessed me that my results would be favourable. I met you after my "favourable" results, you told me that you are proud of me. Well, if this is not down to earth, I don't know what else is. So, thank you Swamiji.

Thank you, Swamiji for giving a great teacher like Swami Paramarthananda ji who has the same amount of clarity and passion towards teaching the advaita Vedanta. As his student, I am ever grateful to you. Much like Lord Krishna in the Mahabharatha who acted as the ferry man for the pandavas (kaivarthaka kesavah) to cross the river of adharma and kauravas, you've been the Krishna to me in the river of the world. Additionally, you've also taught me (and continue to do so) to ferry for myself and cross this challenging yet interesting river of life. Thank you very much, Swamiji. I hope I live up to what I have learnt from you.

-by a devotee of Pujya Swamiji