



Did You Know...

1. Tapovan means forest of spiritual practice.

It comes from two Sanskrit roots: *tapas* (austerity, inner heat, spiritual discipline) and *vana* (forest). Together, Tapovan is the forest where one performs austerities. Long before cafés and guesthouses, this was dense jungle, where sages withdrew to burn karma in silence. The name itself is a reminder that beneath today's noise, the ground here still carries the memory of stillness.

2. The Lakshman Jhula bridge was built only in the early 20th century.

Before its steel frame, pilgrims crossed the Ganga on ropes and boats, often at great risk. The bridge didn't just connect two riverbanks — it connected generations of seekers to a sacred passage, opening Tapovan to the wider world while carrying the weight of countless footsteps of devotion.

3. Beatles Ashram (Chaurasi Kutia)

In the late 1960s, foreigners came here esp. to Chaurasi Kutia (the Beatles Ashram) to study meditation (TM etc.). That ashram is in the Tapovan region. It brought global attention. Before that, these areas were known more locally for pilgrimage and small spiritual retreats.

4. Rapid Change Over Time (less documented but perceptible through local stories)

Locals say that even as late as 20–30 years ago many parts of Tapovan were rice fields or forest clearings; only a handful of guesthouses and local dhabas. Steps, roads, hotels etc. came gradually, and in the last decade accelerated. (This is more anecdotal, but matches what people who've lived here a long time say.)



Yogi Says

🙏 Krishnamurti:

"The problem is not sex but the mind that uses sex for its own gratification, ambition, escape."

Osho:

"Sex is raw energy. It is the seed; if you suppress it, it becomes perverted — if you transform it, it becomes love, even prayer."



RISHIKESH GOES DARK: EVERYONE TURNED INTO PHONE-CHARGING NOMADS



Phones on 1%, Prayers on 100%: The Great Rishikesh Blackout

Darkness in the Valley, but Bright Screens
Wherever Plugs Were Found

Rain continues, no season yet



Locals gave up predicting the weather.

Clothes remain damp, umbrellas remain lost.

Rafting season still uncertain

Guides shrug, tourists ask daily: "When when when?"



The river smiles in silence.

Monkeys in hibernation? zzz

Their absence is noted. Locals wonder if they too joined yoga school.



Tapovan Times delayed by 2 days, readers waiting anxiously

Due to computer glitches & some amount of laziness we absolutely make no promises of no delays in the future.



Are we ready for the crowds?

The calm before tourist season, Cafes stock up on almond milk; residents stock up on patience.



TTC girls protest: "Why not more male students?"

Apparently even yoga equality has its gender



TTC students spending more time planning post TTC activities

THIS WEEK'S WEATHER

WHY EVEN BOTHER?

We were going to give you predictions — sunshine, rain, cloud cover, all that scientific stuff. But honestly? Tapovan laughed at our charts.

Monday: Rained when it was supposed to be sunny.

Tuesday: Sunny when everyone carried umbrellas.

Wednesday: Both at the same time.

Advice from Tapovan Times: It might rain. It might shine.
Tapovan Times: It might do both together.



Advice from Tapovan Times: wear slippers, carry chai money, and stop asking. Even the gods outsource their weather app here.



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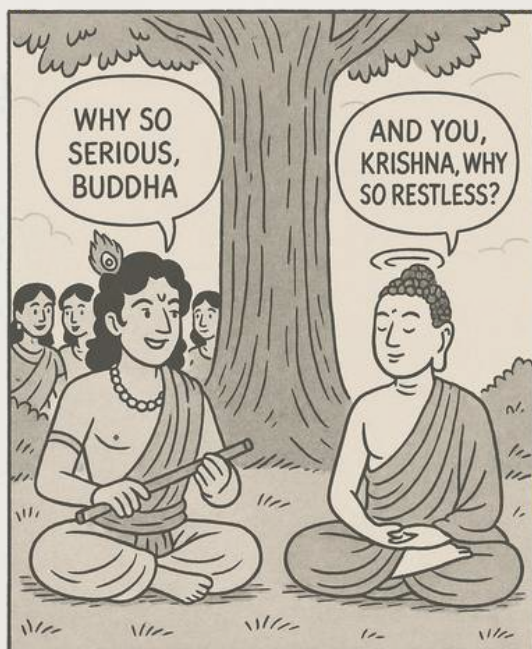
Limited: One-time offering next week only at Aavya.

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KRISHNA vs BUDDHA THE ETERNAL BANTER



Krishna vs Buddha: The Eternal Banter ☺

Scene: A banyan tree at twilight. Krishna leans on his flute, Buddha sits steady in meditation.

Krishna: "Buddha, why so serious? You sit still while life dances around you."

Buddha: "And you, Krishna, why so restless? You keep chasing gopis while silence waits within you."

Krishna: "Not chasing — teaching. The gopis' love wasn't desire, it was devotion. In longing for me, they forgot themselves. That is freedom."

Buddha: "Freedom is not forgetting yourself in another. Freedom is seeing clearly there was never a 'self' to begin with."

Krishna (smiling): "So you renounced a palace, walked away from your wife, left your kingdom... only to discover 'no self'? Sounds like a dramatic way to end up at my flute note."

Buddha (unmoved): "And you fought wars, played tricks, stirred hearts, danced till dawn... only to admit it was all play. Different theater, same emptiness."

Krishna: "True. But tell me, can your monks laugh, love, and still be free?"

Buddha: "And can your gopis let go when the music stops?"

Krishna (playing a soft note, with gopis gathering behind him): "They already did. Their longing burned them clean. Desire became devotion. Devotion became dissolution. Even your monks envy the joy in their eyes."

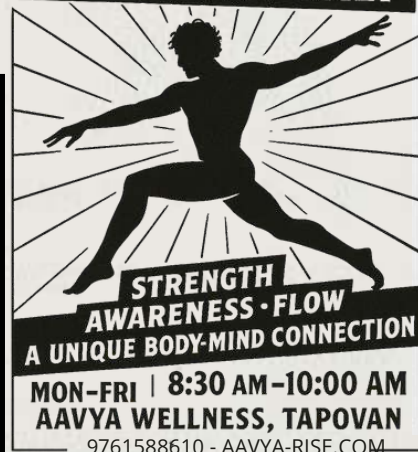
Buddha (pauses, a faint smile): "Perhaps. But silence asks for no company."

Krishna (grinning): "And yet, Buddha, even your silence cannot compete with the sound of a hundred gopis singing my name."

The flute plays. The gopis sway. Buddha closes his eyes again, silent — but this time, perhaps, conceding the last word.

classifieds

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Karma Isn't a Scorecard — It's Your Subconscious on Loudspeaker

Everyone treats karma like some cosmic ATM: put in good deeds, withdraw blessings later. But karma isn't a future pay-out plan. It's your own subconscious, cashing cheques in real time.

The Joke's On You

- Think you got away with that lie? Your subconscious didn't. It filed it under "trust issues" and will serve it back as paranoia later.
- Skip out on discipline? Your subconscious tightens the body before you even step on the mat.
- Do something kind without expectation? Your subconscious relaxes, rewires, and suddenly life feels easier.

No God with a clipboard, no celestial HR. Just you vs. the accumulation of your own habits.

Karma = State of Mind

Every action is a message to your subconscious: "This is who I am." Do it often enough, and the subconscious believes it. That's karma.

- Shout often? You become anger.
- Love often? You become love.
- Scroll endlessly? You become restless.
- Breathe deeply? You become space.

The Wake-Up Call

Karma isn't keeping score — you are. Every choice feeds the subconscious, and the subconscious shapes the reality you walk into tomorrow. Today's mindset is literally yesterday's action plan.

So no, karma doesn't come to bite you in your "next life." It bites you right now — in your thoughts, moods, reflexes, and reactions.

The Punchline

Karma isn't bitchy. It's obedient. It simply reflects what you've been feeding it. Which means the real question isn't "Do you believe in karma?" but "What instructions are you giving your subconscious today?"

Musical Books

Mantra Yoga and Primal Sound
David Frawley

Raga Mala
Ravi Shankar

A life woven through sitar strings. Not just autobiography — a deep dive into how ragas shape a lifetime of devotion and improvisation.

My Music My Life
Ravi Shankar

A slim but timeless gem. Shankar explains the essence of Indian classical music, the structure of ragas, and why music is not entertainment, but meditation.



just A practical, poetic journey into the power of mantras. Explores how sound itself becomes yoga — healing, transforming, and awakening.



Wisdom Corner

"A person who is not disturbed by the incessant flow of desires—that enter like rivers into the ocean, which is ever being filled but is always still—can alone achieve peace".

— Bhagavad Gita



AUM: The Sound You've Been Chanting All Along
Most of us think of "Om" as the starter pistol of every yoga class. One long sound, everyone joins in, then we get on with the asanas. But in the Upanishads, especially the Mandukya Upanishad, Om (or more precisely, AUM) is described as nothing less than the vibration of existence itself.

AUM vs. OM

AUM is not just a ritual chant but a map of consciousness, described in the Mandukya Upanishad as the vibration of existence itself. Unlike the simplified "Om," AUM has three parts:

- A (ahh): waking state, outward life.
- U (oooh): dreaming state, mind's creativity.
- M (mmm): deep sleep, ego dissolving into silence.
- The pause after M represents Turiya, the fourth timeless awareness beyond all states.

Attitude Shapes Experience

How one chants determines its effect: casually it's ritual, with focus it brings stillness, with devotion it becomes prayer, with curiosity it opens self-inquiry.

The sound doesn't change — we do.

Role in Yoga

Om at the start of class resets the mind, calms chatter, and prepares the body for awareness in movement.

The pause signals a shift from "doing" to "being."

Common Mistakes

- Rushing it like a cheer.
- Cutting short the "mmm."
- Forgetting the silence afterward.

When to Chant

Traditionally at the beginning and end of practice, but usable anytime: sunrise for alignment, night for dissolving noise. Even one full chant can reset the nervous system.

Why It Matters

The Upanishads say all existence unfolds from Om. Chanting isn't about creating something new, but remembering we are not separate from reality. With the right attitude, Om becomes patience, love, or silence itself — and a reminder that asana is presence, not performance.

Codes of Enlightenment

Code #3:

"What you meet in another being is the projection of your own level of evolution." — Ram Dass

Code #4:

"The moment you think you are spiritual, you are already lost in the ego of it."

THE GREAT SPIRITUAL DEBATE



HOLY AURA vs. HUSTLE CULTURE?
WHO REALLY WINS?

The Great Spiritual Dilemma

By Ashish Khandelwal

I don't know how to begin this without sounding like a hypocrite. Maybe I am one. Maybe we all are. Running Aavya, I've had a front-row seat to the contradictions of the yoga world, and I'll admit — some days it makes me laugh, and some days it makes me want to cry.

I'm not a yoga teacher. I never claimed to be one. But over the last four years, I've met hundreds of teachers who've walked through these hills. And in every conversation — whether whispered over chai or confessed after a class — I hear the same things: the desire to go deeper, the guilt of charging, the worry about whether they're being "too commercial."

One teacher tells me, "I just want to live in silence, Ashish." But then she asks me how to price her retreat. Another says, "It's not about money." And then, two breaths later, "But how do I fill my class?"

I've seen it again and again — this split-screen reality. Teachers who chant of surrender, then panic about sign-ups. Healers who preach letting go, then hustle for collaborations. Yogis who say "stay present," then check their Instagram likes after class.

And before I point fingers, let me admit: I am part of it too. I run a retreat space. I talk about energy and alignment, about creating a sanctuary where people can heal and just be. But at the end of the day, I'm also sitting with bills, debts, staff salaries, negotiations, and ads. Some nights, I feel like I'm holding a mala in one hand and a calculator in the other.

There's guilt in this — guilt that we've dressed up the same human struggles in spiritual vocabulary. City people talk about careers, revenues, salaries. We talk about dharma, energy exchange, abundance. Same struggle, different costume.

And yet... there's also joy. I've seen a teacher tear up when a student finally felt their breath. I've seen a class of three people turn into the most powerful circle because it was the right three people. I've seen collaborations that looked transactional on paper turn into something truly alive.

So yes, it's messy. Yes, it's confusing. And yes, sometimes it feels like a scam even to ourselves. But it's also what we have, and maybe the mistake is pretending the mess doesn't exist.

Maybe the point is not to clean up the dilemma but to live it — lighter, more honest, and without taking ourselves too seriously. Because some nights, we're all just holding a mala in one hand and a calculator in the other.

And honestly? None of us are Osho or Krishnamurti.

And in today's world, even Sadhguru and Sri Sri Ravi Shankar have full Instagram and social media teams. If they need content calendars and hashtags, then maybe we can forgive ourselves for juggling between silence and reels, between mantras and marketing.



Tapovan Times

By Aavya Wellness Retreat

TAPOVAN, RISHIKESH

20th Sep 2025

VOL. 1 ISSUE 3

DEAR DIDI

Because sometimes your asana won't give you answers, but Didi will.



Q: Didi, the rains just don't stop. My clothes are damp, my mood is damp, even my mat smells like fungus. Where is the sunshine?

A: Beta, sunshine is inside you. But till you find it, use Dettol.

Q: Dear Didi, till I didn't agree, he called me 5 times a day. Now that I'm his girlfriend, he doesn't call me even once. What do I do?

A: Beta, you should have never agreed. You should have let him keep calling you five times a day. At least you would be happier.

Q: Didi, everyone keeps telling me to "find myself." Where exactly am I supposed to look?

A: Beta, start with your phone that's where you lose yourself 200 times a day.

Q: Didi, my girlfriend says she loves me but also wants to go on a "silent retreat." Should I be worried?

A: Arre, worry when she asks you to join. Silence is golden, but in couples it can turn into platinum shackles. Let her retreat, you enjoy the noise.

UPCOMING MUSICAL EVENTS

Tapovan & Rishikesh — Music/Kirtan Calendar

Sanghrachana Thursdays evenings (weekly)
— 7pm- 9pm Kirtan & Bhajans

Devi Music Ashram (Upper Tapovan)
Regular Indian classical/kirtan evenings; recent schedules show on
Everyday Tuesdays to Saturdays 6:30–8:00 PM.

12monks
Friday Open Mic
Saturday Cosmic Disco
Sunday Flow Jam

Aavya Wellness
Saturday Ecstatic Dance with Fire Raja Rani
Move, sweat, and celebrate life together!

Rishikesh Nomads

Sep 27 – Oct 2, 2025 (Navratri) —

Special Navratri Retreat @ Parmarth Niketan

While primarily a spiritual retreat, evenings feature

Devi kirtans/havan/garba—good devotional music vibe during Navratri.

Oct 25 & 26, 2025 — Krishna Das — Benefit Kirtan for Ganga Prem Hospice
2:00–4:30 PM both days, Ashirwad Vatika (Haridwar Rd, Rishikesh).
Official listing + ticket page live.

If you are having a music night, for future editions kindly let us know by
emailing home@aavya-rise.com

Tapovan Construction Chronicles

"We shouldn't build, should we?"

"Well... maybe just a room.

Not a big one — something small,
just enough to sweep with a broom."

"But look across the lane,
the neighbor's gone up two floors!"

"We are shorter than them —
so we must go taller, of course."

"Five feet of breathing space —
such a generous gap."

"Five feet? What a waste!

Two inches is more than enough —
stick your nose out there and breathe. Try it."

"But what about the people?

The windows, the light, the air?"

"People adjust, my friend,
concrete is what's fair."

"Forty cafés already crowd
this single dusty street."

"Yes, but ours will be different —
one dish, one singer, new faces to meet."

"A hundred guesthouses stand,
two-fifty yoga schools.

And why, oh why, should we be different?

Everyone else builds — we can't be the only fools."

"So we agree it's madness?"

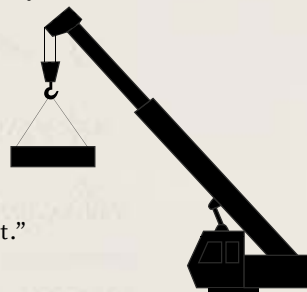
"Yes, we all know it's true.

But if the bandwagon is passing,
we'll climb on it too."

And so the walls creep closer,
the sky a thinner band.

Rishikesh, once wide and open,
is now construction land.

The Ganga ji still flows,
but no longer to be seen
from Tapovan, where she once
was part of the dream.



Spirituality Can be Funnny

Student: "Guruji, what happens if I miss my meditation one day?"

Guru: "Nothing... the same thing that's been happening while you've been
doing it with half your mind."

Why don't yogis ever get lost?

Because even when they take the wrong path... they call it a journey inward.

Teacher: "Empty your mind."

Student: "Done! It's been empty since TTC began."

Fill in the blanks

- There are now _____ yoga schools in Tapovan
(hint: more than cows).
- After chanting Om, most TTC students go straight
to _____.



CAFE



Cafe Crawl with Ashish – Part 2



Lower Tapovan Café Crawl

(Because even yogis need snacks between asanas)

Gaia Smoothie

Run by the ever-charming Nipun, whose smoothies are as good as his hugs. Mango, papaya, pineapple, spinach — whatever you order, you leave nourished twice: once by the fruit, once by the warmth.

Moktan Café

Run by the soft-spoken Kumar, whose coffees are a Tapovan staple. This is the café where you feel the pulse of the season — when the old-timers return, when new faces arrive, when half the people are inside the café and the other half are standing outside. Always buzzing, always familiar.

Bhoomi Café

Run by Parth and the beautiful Aarushi — whose name, like Aavya, carries the same meaning of first light, first rays. Which makes Bhoomi feel personal and lovable, not just for the food (which is amazing), or the garden (perfect for a winter sunny day), but for the warmth behind it. Truly the "in-place" in Lower Tapovan.

Anna's Mess

Perfect, simply perfect. South Indian soul food right here in Tapovan. Dosa, idli, sambhar — everything arrives just as it should, no fuss, no pretense, all heart.

Apologies to the other cafés I haven't covered yet — don't worry, your turn is coming in the next editions. Tapovan is too full of gems to fit into one sitting.

THIS WEEK'S PUZZLE

GUESS THE POSE

I am bending back into the waters, +
my chest rising, throat open,
floating like a fish that
remembers the sky.

I am bending backwards on my knees
palms clutching my heels,
offering my heart to the ceiling
like a desert creature in surrender.

I am hissing, I am sighing,
sometimes I buzz like a bee.
My breath makes more
sound than my thoughts.



Be Featured in the Next Tapovan Times

Got an artwork, a poster, a doodle, or even
a fun ad you'd love to share?

We're inviting the Tapovan community to
showcase their creativity in next week's
edition of Tapovan Times.

Send us your pieces — big or small, playful
or profound — and let's fill these pages
with the spirit of Tapovan.

Email your submissions to
home@aavya-rise.com



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