



ध्यान मूलं गुरोर्मूर्तिः पूजामूलं गुरोः पदम् ।  
मंत्रमूलं गुरोर्वाक्यं मोक्ष मूलं गुरोः कृपा ॥

The focal point of meditation is Guru's form, the core of worship are Guru's feet,  
the soul of mantra is Guru's utterance, the source of salvation is Guru's grace.

# Realization

Vol. 12, No. 12

December 2023

An e-magazine of Sri Aurobindo Ashram (Delhi Branch)

अशरीरं शरीरेष्वनवस्थेष्ववस्थितम् ।

महान्तं विभुमात्मानं मत्वा धीरो न शोचति ॥२२॥

Realising the Bodiless in bodies, the Established in things unsettled, the  
Great and Omnipresent Self, the wise and steadfast soul grieves no longer.

- Katha Upanishad 1-3-22

Sri Aurobindo Ashram (Delhi Branch)

Sri Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi 110 016

011-2656 7863

www.sriaurobindoashram.net

# Ongoing & Forthcoming Events December 2023

## Meditation & Satsang venue : Meditation Hall

Monday – Saturday

7 –7:30 pm

Collective Meditation

### Sunday Meditation & Discourses 10:00 – 11:30 am

|        |   |  |
|--------|---|--|
| Dec 03 | <i>Sri Ma ka Rupantarkari Yog</i> (The Mother's Transformative Yoga)<br>Musical offering  | Dr. Aparna Roy<br>Ms. Basudhara Munshi |
| Dec 10 | Concentration<br>(Based on Sri Aurobindo's <i>The Synthesis of Yoga</i> , Pt 2, Ch 4)<br>Musical offering                       | Dr. Mankul Goyal<br>Ms. Monidipa Ghosh |
| Dec 17 | Taming the Monkey Mind<br>Musical Offering  | Ms. Monica Gulati<br>Ms. Richa Sharma  |
| Dec 24 | His Presence is Enough<br>(Based on Mother's prayer dated 30 March 1914 in <i>Prayers and Meditations</i> )<br>Musical offering | Dr. Mithu Pal<br>Dr. Mithu Pal         |
| Dec 31 | Discovering the Unity Behind Multiplicity<br>Musical Offering   | Dr. Aditi Kaul<br>Dr. Maitreyee Karak  |

### CLASSES by Shri Prashant Khanna

|  |                  |                             |                     |
|--|------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| Tuesdays: 05,12,19,26                              | 11:30 am         | Room for SAAM – 'Knowledge' | Nourishing the Soul |
| Thursdays: 07,14,21,28                             | 5:00 pm          | Room for SAAM – 'Knowledge' | Savitri             |
| Fridays: 01,08,15,22,29                            | 11:30 am         | Room for SAAM – 'Knowledge' | Bhagvad Gita        |
| Sundays: 03,10,17,24,31                            | 11:45 am–12:45   | Room for SAAM – 'Knowledge' | Savitri             |
| Also ONLINE, contact Amit Arora (+91 95600 88456)  |                  |                             |                     |
| Sundays: 03,10,17,24,31                            | 5:00 pm          | Room for SAAM – 'Knowledge' | Bhagvad Gita        |
| Saturdays: 02,09,16,23,30                          | 11:00 am–12 noon | ONLINE                      | Savitri             |
| Online contact Sri Satya Prakash (+91 88007 61046) |                  |                             |                     |

### Ashram Library (Knowledge)

Tuesday to Sunday Timings : 10:00 am – 4:00 pm

(Monday closed)

Contact : 011 2656 7863

## श्रीस्मृति Sri Smriti

(Memorabilia of the Mother)

**OPEN**

**Tuesday to Saturday**

**10am-12noon, 2-4pm**

**Sunday**

**11am-1pm**

**Darshan Days**

**10am-3pm**

**(Monday Closed)**

**Contact : 011-2656 7863**



## **Yoga Retreat – Seeing Through Life for Adding Meaning to Life**

At The Mother's Integral Health Centre, Sri Aurobindo Ashram (Delhi Branch), New Delhi - 16  
**22 – 30 December 2023**      **Option : Residential or, Non-residential**

**Activities include : Physical Practices of Yoga;  
Talks on the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother;  
Music & Meditation, Christmas Celebration, Heritage walk**

**Principal Facilitators : Dr. Ramesh Bijlani, Dr. Aditi Kaul**

**Details at Ashram Reception : 011-2656 7863**

**And at : aurocamps@aurobindoonline.in ; rambijwork@gmail.com**

### **ART FOR ASHRAM, 2023 – EXHIBITIONS**

| <b>Theme</b>                               | <b>Timing</b> | <b>Venue</b>               |
|--|---------------|----------------------------|
| 'All Life is Yoga'                         | 10 am–4 pm    | Prasad Block, Ground Floor |
| 'Divine Signature' (Life of Sri Aurobindo) | 10 am–4 pm    | Prasad Block, First Floor  |
| 'The World Stair'                          | 10 am–4 pm    | Prasad Block, First Floor  |
| 'Paintings on Spiritual Themes'            | 10 am–4 pm    | Prasad Block, First Floor  |

Contact 011-2656 7863

### **Sri Aurobindo Ashram (Delhi Branch)'S SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS**

|           |   |   |
|-----------|---|---|
| YouTube   | : | <a href="https://youtube.com/sriurobindoashramdelhibranch">https://youtube.com/sriurobindoashramdelhibranch</a>             |
| Facebook  | : | <a href="http://facebook.com/sriurobindoashramdelhibranch">http://facebook.com/sriurobindoashramdelhibranch</a>             |
| Instagram | : | <a href="https://www.instagram.com/sriurobindoashramdelhibranch">https://www.instagram.com/sriurobindoashramdelhibranch</a> |
| Twitter   | : | <a href="https://twitter.com/sadelhibranch">https://twitter.com/sadelhibranch</a>   |
| Website   | : | <a href="http://sriurobindoashram.net/">http://sriurobindoashram.net/</a>   |

## **The Mother's Integral Health Centre Activities**

Phone 88005 52685, <tmihc2000@gmail.com>

### **Speciality Clinics – By Appointment Only**

|                  |   |                         |
|------------------|---|-------------------------|
| Mon-Sat (6 days) | Allopathy- Integral Health                  | (10:00 am–12:00 noon)   |
| Mon-Sat (6 days) | Physiotherapy                               | (10:30 am–12:30 pm)     |
| Wednesday        | Dermatology                                 | (2:30– 03:30 pm)        |
| Thursday         | Ophthalmology                               | (11:00 am–12:00 noon)   |
| Friday           | Psychiatry                                  | (1:00 pm–03:00 pm)      |
| Tuesday          | Gynaecology                                 | (10:30 am–11:30 am)     |
| Wednesday        | Surgery                                     | (10:00 am–12:00 noon)   |
| Mon, Wed, Fri    | Homoeopathy (Online only; Call 88005 52685) | (11:00 am–01:00 pm)     |
| Tue, Sat         | Ayurveda Consultation                       | (12:00 noon–03:00 pm)   |
| Mon-Sat (6 days) | Ayurveda Treatment                          | (10:00 am–4:00 pm) Tue- |
| Wed, Sat         | Accupressure                                | (10:30 am–01:00 pm)     |

### **Physical Practices of Yoga**

|             |                |                     |                   |
|-------------|----------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Mon/Wed/Fri | 06:45–07:45 am | Yogasana class      | Ms. Priya Gupta   |
| Mon/Wed/Fri | 11 am–12 noon  | Yogasana class      | Ms. Vidya Mundhra |
| Mon/Wed/Fri | 10 am–12 noon  | Individual sessions | Shri Deepak Jhamb |

# Important Days in the Ashram 2023

**5 December** Anniversary of Sri Aurobindo's *Mahasamadhi* Day



Sri Aurobindo left his body  
on 5 December 1950

**5 December 1957**  
Sri Aurobindo's Sacred Relics enshrined  
in Sri Aurobindo Ashram (Delhi Branch)



**9 December** Anniversary of Sri Aurobindo's *Samadhi* Day



Samadhi at Pondicherry Ashram

To Thee who hast been the material envelop of our Master, to Thee our infinite gratitude. Before Thee who hast done so much for us, who hast worked, struggled, suffered, hoped, endured so much, before Thee who hast willed all, attempted all, prepared, achieved all for us, before Thee we bow down and implore that we may never forget, even for a moment, all we owe to Thee.

– The Mother

**25 December**

**Descent of Light**

**31 December**

**Welcome New Year 2024**

Program details will be available on <[www.sriarobindoashram.net](http://www.sriarobindoashram.net)>

If we want to progress integrally, we must build within our conscious being a strong and pure mental synthesis which can serve us as a protection against temptations from outside, as a landmark to prevent us from going astray, as a beacon to light our way across the moving ocean of life.

Each individual should build up this mental synthesis according to his own tendencies and affinities and aspirations. But if we want it to be truly living and luminous, it must be centred on the idea that is the intellectual representation symbolising That which is at the centre of our being, That which is our life and our light.

This idea, expressed in sublime words, has been taught in various forms by all the great Instructors in all lands and all ages.

The Self of each one and the great universal Self are one. Since all that exists from all eternity in its essence and principle, why make a distinction between the being and its origin, between ourselves and what we place at the beginning?

The ancient traditions rightly said:

“Our origin and ourselves, our God and ourselves are one.”

And this oneness should not be understood merely as a more or less close and intimate relationship of union, but as a true identity.

Thus, when a man who seeks the Divine attempts to reascend by degrees towards the inaccessible, he forgets that all his knowledge and all his intuition cannot take him one step forward in this infinite; neither does he know that what he wants to attain, what he believes to be so far from him, is within him.

For how could he know anything of the origin until he becomes conscious of this origin in himself?

It is by understanding himself, by learning to know himself, that he can make the supreme discovery and cry out in wonder like the patriarch in the Bible, “The house of God is here and I knew it not.”

That is why we must express that sublime thought, creatrix of the material worlds, and make known to all the word that fills the heavens and the earth, “I am in all things and all beings.”

When all shall know this, the promised day of great transfigurations will be at hand. When in each atom of Matter men shall recognise the indwelling thought of God, when in each living creature they shall perceive some hint of a gesture of God, when each man can see God in his brother, then dawn will break, dispelling the darkness, the falsehood, the ignorance, the error and suffering that weigh upon all Nature. For, “all Nature suffers and laments as she awaits the revelation of the Sons of God.”

This indeed is the central thought epitomising all others, the thought which should be ever present to our remembrance as the sun that illumines all life.

That is why I remind you of it today. For if we follow our path bearing this thought in our hearts like the rarest jewel, the most precious treasure, if we allow it to do its work of illumination and transfiguration within us, we shall know that it lives in the centre of all beings and all things, and in it we shall feel

the marvellous oneness of the universe.

Then we shall understand the vanity and childishness of our meagre satisfactions, our foolish quarrels, our petty passions, our blind indignations. We shall see the dissolution of our little faults, the crumbling of the last entrenchments of our limited personality and our obtuse egoism. We shall feel ourselves being swept along by this sublime current of true spirituality which will deliver us from our narrow limits and bounds.

The individual Self and the universal Self are one; in every world, in every being, in every thing, in every atom is the Divine Presence, and man's mission is to manifest it.

In order to do that, he must become conscious of this Divine Presence within him. Some individuals must undergo a real apprenticeship in order to achieve this: their egoistic being is too all-absorbing, too rigid, too conservative, and their struggles against it are long and painful. Others, on the contrary, who are more impersonal, more plastic, more spiritualised, come easily into contact with the inexhaustible divine source of their being. But let us not forget that they too should devote themselves daily, constantly, to a methodical effort of adaptation and transformation, so that nothing within them may ever again obscure the radiance of that pure light.

But how greatly the standpoint changes once we attain this deeper consciousness! How understanding widens, how compassion grows! ...

What value have our impulses and our desires, our anguish and our violence, our sufferings and our struggles, all these inner vicissitudes unduly dramatised by our unruly imagination—what value do they have before this great, this sublime and divine love bending over us from the innermost depths of our being, bearing with our weaknesses, rectifying our errors, healing our wounds, bathing our whole being with its regenerating streams?...

If ordeal or fault has cast you down, if you have sunk into the nether depths of suffering, do not grieve—for there indeed the divine love and the supreme blessing can reach you! Because you have passed through the crucible of purifying sorrows, the glorious ascents are yours....

Hear again: no state was ever more precarious than that of man when he was separated on earth from his divine origin. Above him stretched the hostile borders of the usurper, and at his horizon's gates watched jailers armed with flaming swords. Then, since he could climb no more to the source of life, the source arose within him; since he could no more receive the light from above, the light shone forth at the very centre of his being; since he could commune no more with the transcendent love, that love offered itself in a holocaust and chose each terrestrial being, each human self as its dwelling-place and sanctuary.

That is how, in this despised and desolate but fruitful and blessed Matter, each atom contains a divine thought, each being carries within him the Divine Inhabitant. And if no being in all the universe is as frail as man, neither is any as divine as he!

In truth, in truth, in humiliation lies the cradle of glory!

— *The Mother*

## Activities during October 16 – November 15, 2023

### G.B. PANT UNIVERSITY STUDENTS OFFER *SHRAMDAAN* AT MADHUBAN FARMS

Thirty four third-year students from G.B. Pant University of Agriculture & Technology, Pantnagar (Dt. Udham Singh Nagar), Uttarakhand, offered *shramdaan* at the Madhuban farms during 16-20 October 2023. The group also visited the nearby small holdings that women agriculturists, who were part of the Khushali Livelihoods Initiative of the Madhuban Ashram, cultivated. This period



coincided with the visit of Dr. Ramesh Bijlani from Delhi Ashram who interacted with the students freely and listened to the presentations of their immersive internship experiences. Dr. Bijlani also

joined in meditation and satsang at Prashant Hall with visitors and the students and gave talks encouraging the students to seek greater awareness in everyday life and exhorting with words such as “Awareness is a level, deeper, higher and a wider level gives a view that will help overcome suffering.”

### ‘Integral Education and National Education Policy 2020’ Workshop

Sri Aurobindo Ashram (Delhi Branch) conducted a 7-day workshop on Integral Education and National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) for 10 rural schools from underprivileged regions of India. A total of 35 teachers – Telengana 4, West Bengal 6, Rajasthan 5, Uttarakhand 4, Aurnachal Pradesh 4, Odisha 8, and Chandigarh 4 – attended the workshop from October 21-27, 2023. The workshop



consisted of multiple sessions on chanting, yogasana, *shramadaan*, sports and games, rhymes & songs, and meditation. The participants were introduced to Integral Education philosophy in its various facets and garnered conceptual knowledge





through activity-based learning. A comparative study of Integral Education and NEP also formed an integral part of the workshop. Extended experiential learning on teaching of Hindi and Mathematics was carried out. Participants were given a project, *Human Body*, to work upon. All activities were linked to the vision and goal of National Education

Policy and with the philosophy of Integral Education. Every evening, reflective sessions were conducted to dive deep within to connect with the inner/psychic consciousness. Towards the culmination of the workshop, the group had a sightseeing tour of Red Fort, Parliament of India and Akshardham temple. At their request,



participants were also able to visit Sri Smriti – a collection of the Memorabilia of the Mother on display – and the ongoing Art Exhibitions on the Ashram campus. Resource persons included: Baren Raul – Integral Education, Project work and Games; Minati Pradhan – Chanting and Shlokas; Rasmita Pradhan – Integral Education, Songs & Rhymes, Reflection and Project work; Srinath Maharana – Logical Mental education, Sense development and Mathematics; Chandan Singh – Experiential teaching of Hindi language; Fakira Rana – *Shramadaan*



and Games; Priya Gupta – Yogasanas.

Organizers gratefully acknowledge financial support from New Creation International of Creve Coeur, Missouri, USA, and from India Development and Relief Fund of North Bethesda, Maryland, USA, which made the accomplishment of this program possible.

### ***BHAJAN SANDHYA , 2 NOVEMBER 2023***

In the *Bhajan Sandhya* on 2 November 2023, Ms. Lin Thoi offered a bevy of Mira *bhajans* in her melodious voice in the Meditation Hall. She was accompanied by Shri Santosh Kumar Nanda on *tabla*. The program was put together by Dilipbhai Patel.



## ANNUAL DAY FUNCTION OF THE MOTHER'S INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

The Mother's International School celebrated its Annual Physical Demonstration on November 4, 2023 with a performance titled 'Samar: The Rhythm of Valour', showcasing martial arts and dances from around the world. Guru Geeta Chandran, noted Bharatnatyam exponent and singer and Padma Shri awardee, was the Chief Guest and Olympian Harbinder Singh, veteran hockey player, coach and recipient of the Arjuna Award, was the Guest of Honour on the occasion.



Principal Smt. Milan Mala Sarin spoke of the focus on physical culture, its importance, and the need for each student to be physically and mentally fit. The Mother's message on physical culture and the efforts of the School in that direction were highlighted. Guru Chandran encouraged students to pursue the arts as an integral part of education and lauded the efforts of The Mother's International School in inculcating values of inner discipline and all-round development.

The event saw mass participation of 1450 students from classes 4 to 11, marking a return to school tradition after a lapse of five years. Among the performances by students who put in months of practice for this event, were



Kalaripayattu by class 6, Thang Ta by class 7, Chhau dance by class 8, Yoga by class 9 and Capoeira and Maculele by class 11 . Students of class 10 participated in a Marching Drill while the band accompanied them with rhythmic precision.



Curtains were drawn with the Grand Finale, as every participant came to the field to strains of meditative music. Resonating lines from the *Bhagvad Gita* and finally from Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri* provided a befitting conclusion: "Courage their armour, faith their sword, they must walk...Heroes and soldiers of the Army of Light."

### INAUGURATION OF PAINTING EXHIBITION, 10 NOVEMBER 2023

Inspired by Sri Aurobindo's epic poem *Savitri*, an exhibition of 256 paintings depicted by Italian artist, Aghni (from Centro Sri Aurobindo e Mère-Italy),



was inaugurated on 10 November 2023. The exhibition, titled *The World Stair*, shall remain open for the next few weeks in the Prasad Block.

## DIWALI, 11-12 NOVEMBER 2023

In addition to the *Rangolis* and colourful illumination which gave the Ashram a festive look on the evening of 11 November 2023, there was an offering of devotional music by the Ashram Choir as well as Tara Didi's reading of a poem and several passages on Mahalakshmi from the writings of Sri Aurobindo.



On the morning of Sunday, 12 November 2023, the Ashram community, primarily youngsters, engaged in games and sports. In the Sunday *Satsang*, Preamsheela sang a few Ram *Bhajans*, and Dr. Aparna Roy spoke on the inner flame of aspiration, which the lamps that we light on Diwali symbolise. Shri Prashant Khanna's morning class on *Savitri*, and the evening class on the



*Bhagvad Gita* continued as usual, too. Later in the evening, lamps of aspiration were lit near Sri Aurobindo's Shrine by Ashram community, guests and visitors followed by an offering of devotional music by the Ashram Choir and Tara Didi's reading of several passages on Mahakali by Sri Aurobindo.

## GOVARDHAN POOJA, 13 NOVEMBER 2023

On the evening of 13 November 2023, Dr. Mithu Pal made an offering of Krishna *Bhajans* in the Meditation Hall. She was accompanied on *Tabla* by her sister, Triparna.

## BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF PT. BARUN PAL, 14 NOVEMBER 2023

Pt. Barun Pal had a close relationship lasting several decades with Sri Aurobindo Ashram (Delhi Branch) and he was also an ashramite for some years in the past. His Birth Anniversary was celebrated by his disciples by making a



musical offering on the evening of 14 November 2023 in the Meditation Hall in which Shri Ramanan played on the Hansa Veena, the favourite instrument of Pt. Barun Pal, and Shri Shubradeep Paul played on the flute.

### **DHAMMAPADA CHANTING & DHAMMA TALK, 15 NOVEMBER 2023**

This annual event organised by ‘The Light of Buddha Dharma Foundation International (LBDFI)’ under the leadership of Ms. Wangmo Dixey from USA, brought to the Ashram about 40 monks from India, Thailand, Myanmar and Tibet. The program consisted of chanting the entire Dhammapada, one of the best-known scriptures of Buddhism, and a Dhamma talk by Prof. C. Upendra Rao, Professor of Sanskrit and Indic Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi.



The disciplined, synchronised loud chanting created a group consciousness which crowded out stray thoughts and facilitated a meditative mindfulness.

In the Dhamma talk, tracing the history of Buddhist scriptures, Prof. Rao said that the scriptures were compiled about 500 years after Buddha’s advent. During these

centuries, the teachings were preserved by monks through the oral tradition. Prof. Rao further said that Lord Buddha – full of compassion for all, never exhibited anger nor uttered a harsh word to anyone – was a great teacher, and exhorted people to practice detachment as well as shun worldly propensity to greed, jealousy, revenge and falsehood. The detachment comes from realising the impermanence of everything in the world. Buddha’s strictures were, however, graded. Expectations from ordinary householders were less severe than those from the monks. Prof. Rao thanked the LBDFI and the Ashram for the inspiring experience that his visit to the Ashram and the company of the monks entailed for him personally.

# THE MARVELLOUSLY INSPIRING LIFE OF SRI AUROBINDO

[Excerpted from published material]

## LONDON, ENGLAND (3)

It appears quite certain that the three brothers were compelled to live in a very embarrassed financial position in London because remittances from their father at first became irregular and ultimately almost stopped. This is borne out by many references in Manmohan's contemporary letters to Laurence Binyon [noted English poet, dramatist and art scholar], and also by what Sri Aurobindo stated in his memorial to the Secretary of State for India (about being given another chance to appear in the riding test for the I.C.S.) in 1892. He wrote:

**"I was sent over to England, when seven years of age, with my two elder brothers and for the last eight years we have been thrown on our own resources without any English friend to help or advise us. Our father, Dr. K.D. Ghose of Khulna, has been unable to provide the three of us with sufficient for the most necessary wants, and we have long been in an embarrassed position."**<sup>2</sup>

Manmohan's letters to Laurence Binyon support this statement with a wealth of detail. In a letter of July, 1887, from 49, St. Stephen's Avenue, Manmohan wrote: **"My position, by the way, is very hazy just now; I do not know whether after all I shall be able to retain my Scholarship, because my father is in some financial straits, and if he cannot help me, £80 will not be enough to keep me at Oxford... I am going to Oxford next week to find out if I cannot help myself in any way, or find help... I shall try and persuade my father to let me stay in England for good – I am sure with the tastes I have I shall be of no use in India."**

A letter from Manmohan dated July 28 [probably 1887] from 49, St. Stephen's Avenue recounts a story of Dr. Ghose which is worth quoting. The reference is to a piece of news in the *Daily News* of London. The letter is addressed to Laurence Binyon:

**"As for the piece in the *Daily News* about me, it was stuck in simply because it is a Radical paper. We have no family relation to Lalmohan Ghose whatever, but his brother who bears the same name as myself is a great friend of my father's. All the Ghoses came originally from the Punjaub on the Afghan border. The word means "fame", and they were a tribe of the proud warrior caste. But our family has sadly come down; the family house or palace, a very noble building, I believe, not far from Calcutta, is quite in ruins. My father, when a boy, was very poor, living almost entirely by the charity of friends; and it is only thro' his almost superhuman perseverance that we have to some degree retrieved ourselves. – You may be sure I shall try all I can to get to Oxford. But I am in a rather strange position. My father wants me to go out to India and slave as a barrister, and become a great man of the world like himself – a thing which is quite distasteful to my nature. He is just now in difficulties and if he finds he cannot help me at the University he may consent to my staying in England, and trying for some Civil Service appointment (like those in the British Museum), just to earn some money... He is almost sure to want me to try the University."**

The difficulty which Manmohan speaks of was common to the three brothers. There was only a slight modification in Aurobindo's case as he received a scholarship from King's College, Cambridge, and also had an allowance for the I. C. S. probationership. Even so, he was always hard up, particularly because he used to help his two brothers whenever he could.

The period at 128, Cromwell Road was perhaps the most trying of Aurobindo's stay in England. They were all so hard pressed that Benoybhusan had to agree to be an assistant to James S. Cotton, who was Secretary of the Club, for five shillings a week. Cotton's help

to the three brothers in their difficulty is an unforgettable obligation. During this period Aurobindo used to get a slice or two of bread and butter and a cup of tea in the morning and in the evening only a penny saveloy (a kind of sausage). For nearly two years he had to go practically without dinner at that young age. He had no overcoat to protect him from the rigours of the London winter and there was no heating arrangement in the office where he slept, nor had he a proper bedroom...

Mr. Prothero [tutor and senior fellow at King's College] had written to Dr. Ghose for money, but without much success. It was only when a few tradesmen threatened to take legal action against Aurobindo that Prothero "succeeded in extracting some money out of him". There was however a humorous sequel to this. After sending the money Dr. Ghose wrote an angry letter to Aurobindo chiding him for being extravagant! While relating this Sri Aurobindo laughed and said, "**There was no money to be extravagant with.**"...

... What Manmohan describes [in a letter dated Feb. 18th, 1888 to Binyon] as his great loss in his own childhood must have been felt as a loss by all the three brothers: "... what to others is the bright portion of their life, its heaven and refuge, was for me bitterly and hopelessly blighted. You will not understand me, unless I tell a circumstance of my life which is unhappily both painful for me to reveal, and for you to hear. I had no mother. She is insane. You may judge the horror of this, how I strove to snatch a fearful love, but only succeeded in hating and loathing, and at last becoming cold. Crying for bread I was given a stone. My father was kind but stern, and I never saw much of him. Thus from childhood I was subject to fits of gloom and despondence which grew with my age" ...

The quotation [above] makes sad reading but it serves to bring into relief a part of the psychological background of the three brothers. It also does much to explain Dr. Ghose's life, including his inability to send money to his sons in England. He had to maintain one house where he was serving and another for his insane wife at Rohini. Young Barin and Sarojini had also to be sent to school. Add to this his generous temperament and one can understand why he was unable to meet the financial needs of his children...

Benoybhusan who was generous by temperament seems to have felt his responsibility keenly, particularly in the beginning when remittances from India became irregular. It is evident that Aurobindo had the same sense of responsibility. Manmohan, romantic and poetic, enamoured of England and English life, a little prone to luxury, felt very strongly the want of a family and parental love. In his correspondence one can clearly see that he was trying hard to stretch out his hands to someone so as to make good this loss. Aurobindo, shy and reserved temperamentally but firm in his will and hard-working, does not express himself with the same emotional exuberance. It seems to me that the difficult circumstances steeled his will to face life with an inflexible resolution...

In spite of what to us appears to be the lack of a sense of parental duty on the part of Dr. Ghose, it is surprising that neither Manmohan nor Aurobindo seems to have had any bitterness towards their father. On the contrary, every time they wrote or spoke of him it was with great admiration and pride. And Dr. Ghose knew very well that Aurobindo was making excellent progress by his own efforts. In a letter (dated 2 December 1891) to Jogendra Bose, his brother-in-law, he writes about his sons:

"The three sons I have produced, I have made giants of them. I may not, but you will live to be proud of three nephews who will adorn your country and shed lustre to your name... Ara, I hope, will yet glorify his country by a brilliant administration. I shall not live to see it, but remember this letter if you do... (He is at King's College, Cambridge, now, borne there by his own ability.)"

– From *Life of Sri Aurobindo* by A.B. Puran

*To be contd.*

## THE FIRE KING AND THE MESSENGER

### THE FIRE KING

O soul who com'st fire-mantled from the earth  
Into the silence of the seven skies,  
Art thou an heir of the spiritual birth?  
Art thou an ancient guest of Paradise?

### THE MESSENGER

I am the Messenger of the human race,  
I am a Pioneer from death and night.  
I am the nympholept of Beauty's face,  
I am the hunter of the immortal Light.

### THE FIRE KING

What flame wearest thou that wraps thee with its power  
Protecting from the Guardians of the Way?  
What wanderer born from the eternal Hour?  
What fragment of the inconceivable Ray?

### THE MESSENGER

It is the fire of an awakened soul  
Aspiring from death to reach Eternity,  
The wings of sacrifice flaming to their goal,  
The burning godhead of humanity.

### THE FIRE KING

What seekst thou here, child of the transient ways?  
Wouldst thou be free and still in endless peace?  
Or gaze for ever on the Eternal's face,  
Hushed in an incommunicable release?

### THE MESSENGER

I claim for men the peace that shall not fail,  
I claim for earth the unwounded timeless bliss,  
I seek God-strength for souls that suffer in hell,  
God-light to fill the ignorant abyss.

– Sri Aurobindo

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