



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. 13, No. 2

February 2024

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

त्वयैतद्धार्यते विश्वं त्वयैतत् सृज्यते जगत् ।

त्वयैतत् पाल्यते देवि ! त्वमत्स्यन्ते च सर्वदा ॥४॥

You bear this universe, you create this world (from your power), and you sustain this creation, O Devi (through your power), and finally you merge this creation within you, always.

- *Tantroktā Rātri Suktam 4*

**Sri Aurobindo Ashram (Delhi Branch)**

Sri Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi 110 016

011-2656 7863

[www.sriaurobindoashram.net](http://www.sriaurobindoashram.net)

# Ongoing & Forthcoming Events

## February 2024

### Meditation & Satsang venue : Meditation Hall

Monday – Saturday

7 – 7:30 pm

Collective Meditation

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

Feb 04	<i>Manav Jeevan ke Vikaas mein Dukh ki Bhoomika</i> (The constructive role of sorrow in Human Life) Musical offering	Dr. Aparna Roy  Dr. Mithu Pal
Feb 11	<i>The Synthesis of the Disciplines of Knowledge</i> (Based on Sri Aurobindo's <i>The Synthesis of Yoga</i> , Pt 2, Ch 6) Musical offering	Dr. Mankul Goyal  Ms. Basudhara Munshi
Feb 18	<i>Concentration and Expansion</i> (Based on Mother's prayer dated 2 April 1914 in <i>Prayers and Meditations</i> ) Musical offering	Dr. Mithu Pal  Dr. Mithu Pal
Feb 25	<i>The Mental View of the Supramental</i> Musical offering	Dr. Ramesh Bijlani  Ms. Sowmya Narayanan

### CLASSES by Shri Prashant Khanna

Tuesdays: 06,13,20,27	11:30 am	Room for SAAM – 'Knowledge'	Nourishing the Soul
Thursdays: 01,08,15,22,29	5:00 pm	Room for SAAM – 'Knowledge'	Savitri
Fridays: 02,09,16,23	11:30 am	Room for SAAM – 'Knowledge'	Bhagvad Gita

All classes ONLINE also. Please contact Amit Arora (+91 95600 88456)

### CLASS by Dr. Aparna Roy

Tuesdays: 06,13,20,27	5:30 pm	Room for SAAM – 'Knowledge'	Looking Within (in Hindi)
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## श्रीस्मृति Sri Smriti

(Memorabilia of the Mother)

OPEN

Tue, Thu: 10am-12noon, 2-4pm

Wed, Fri: 10am-12noon

Sat : 2-4pm

Sun : 11am-1pm

Darshan Days: 10am-3pm

(Monday Closed)

Contact : 91-11-2656 7863



## Ashram Library (Knowledge)

**Tuesday to Sunday Timings : 10:00 am – 4:00 pm**  
**(Monday closed)** **Contact : 011 2656 7863**

## ART FOR ASHRAM, 2023 – EXHIBITIONS

<u>Theme</u>	<u>Timing</u>	<u>Venue</u>
'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

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


## Physical Practices of Yoga

Mon/Wed/Fri	11 am–12 noon	<i>Yogasana</i> class	Ms. Vidya Mundhra
Mon/Wed/Fri	10 am–12 noon	Individual sessions	Shri Deepak Jhamb

# Important Days in the Ashram 2024

**12 February Foundation Day Anniversary of Sri Aurobindo Ashram (Delhi Branch)**

**Mother's message for the Foundation Day**

<p>12-2-56 <i>Opening of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram Delhi branch</i></p> <p><i>Let this place be worthy of its name and manifest the true spirit of Sri Aurobindo's teaching and message to the world.</i></p> <p><i>With my blessings</i></p> 	<p>12.2.56 Opening of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram Delhi Branch</p> <p>Let this place be worthy of its name and manifest the true spirit of Sri Aurobindo's teaching and message to the world.</p> <p>With my blessings</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>The Mother</i></p>
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**21 February 146th Birth Anniversary of the Mother – Darshan Day**



To walk through life armoured against all fear, peril and disaster, only two things are needed, two that go always together – the Grace of the Divine Mother and on your side an inner state made up of faith, sincerity and surrender. Let your faith be pure, candid and perfect. An egoistic faith in the mental and vital being tainted by ambition, pride, vanity, mental arrogance, vital self-will, personal demand, desire for the petty satisfactions of the lower nature is a low and smoke-obscured flame that cannot burn upwards to heaven. Regard your life as given you only for the divine work and to help in the divine manifestation. Desire nothing but the purity, force, light, wideness, calm, Ananda of the divine consciousness and its insistence to transform and perfect your mind, life and body. Ask for nothing but the divine, spiritual and supramental Truth, its realisation on earth and in you...

– Sri Aurobindo

**दर्शन (Darshan)**

**29 February 17th Cycle of Supramental Manifestation upon Earth**

*Is this not the first time that the Supramental has come down upon earth?*

It is certainly the first time [29 February 1956] that the Supramental has come down as a general force of transformation for the whole earth. It is a new starting-point in the terrestrial creation.

But it may be that once before the supramental force has manifested partially and momentarily in an individual as a promise and an example.

26 October 1964

– The Mother

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

## THE SUPRAMENTAL MANIFESTATION UPON EARTH

A materialistic philosophy would admit of no possibility of a divine life in Matter; but even a philosophy admitting a soul or spirit or a spiritual terminus of the evolutionary movement here could very well deny the capacity of earth for a divine life: a divine existence could only be achieved by a departure from earth and the body. Even if cosmic existence is not an illusion or Maya, a divine or a completely spiritual being is likely to be possible only in another less material world or only in the pure spirit. At any rate, to the normal human reason the odds seem to be heavily against any early materialisation on earth of anything divine...

Fundamentally, physical science regards evolution as a development of forms and vital activities; the development of a larger and more capable consciousness is a subordinate result of the development of life and form and not a major or essential characteristic or circumstance and it cannot go beyond limits determined by the material origin of mind and life. Mind has shown itself capable of many extraordinary achievements, but independence of the material organ or of physical conditions or a capability for any such thing as a power of direct and absolute knowledge not acquired by material means would be beyond the conditions imposed by Nature. At a certain point therefore the evolution of consciousness can go no further. Even if a something definite and independent which we call a soul exists, it is limited by its natural conditions here where Matter is the basis, physical life the condition, mind the highest possible instrument; there is no possibility of an action of consciousness apart from the body or surpassing this physical, vital or mental Nature. This fixes the limits of our evolution here...

Light has often tried to descend upon the earth, but the Light remains unfulfilled and incomplete; man may reject the Light, the world is still full of darkness and the advent seems to be little more than a chance; this doubt is to some extent justified by the actualities of the past and still existing possibilities of the future. Its power to stand would disappear only if supermind is once admitted as a consequent part of the order of the universe. If the evolution tends from Matter to Supermind, it must also tend to bring down Supermind into Matter and the consequences are inevitable...

This world is, no doubt, based ostensibly upon Matter, but its summit is Spirit and the ascent towards Spirit must be the aim and justification of its existence and the pointer to its meaning and purpose. But the natural conclusion to be drawn from the supremacy and summit existence of Spirit is clouded by a false or imperfect idea of spirituality which has been constructed by intellect in its ignorance and even by its too hasty and one-sided grasp at knowledge. The Spirit has been thought of not as something all-pervading and the secret essence of our being, but as something only looking down on us from the heights and drawing us only towards the heights and away from the rest of existence. So we get the idea of our cosmic and individual being as a great illusion, and departure from it and extinction in our consciousness of both individual and cosmos as the only hope, the sole release...

But if supermind exists, if it descends, if it becomes the ruling principle, all that seems impossible to mind becomes not only possible but inevitable...

If we disregard our present ideas of evolution, all changes, — if we can regard consciousness and not life and form as the fundamental and essential evolutionary principle and its emergence and full development of its possibilities as the object of the evolutionary urge...

In this vision of things the universe will reveal itself in its unity and totality as a manifestation of a single Being, Nature as its power of manifestation, evolution as its process of gradual self-revelation here in Matter. We would see the divine series of the worlds as a ladder of ascent from Matter to supreme Spirit; there would reveal itself the possibility, the prospect of a supreme manifestation by the conscious and no longer a veiled and enigmatic descent of the Spirit and its powers in their fullness even into this lowest world of Matter...

Once it has begun, all must unavoidably and perfectly manifest and all parts of Nature must tend towards a greatest possible luminousness and perfection. It is this certainty that authorises us to believe that mind and humanity also will tend towards a realisation that will be far beyond our present dreams of perfection. A mind of light will replace the present confusion and trouble of this earthly ignorance; it is likely that even those parts of humanity which cannot reach it will yet be aware of its possibility and consciously tend towards it; not only so, but the life of humanity will be enlightened, uplifted, governed, harmonised by this luminous principle and even the body become something much less powerless, obscure and animal in its propensities and capable instead of a new and harmonised perfection. It is this possibility that we have to look at and that would mean a new humanity uplifted into Light, capable of a spiritualised being and action, open to governance by some light of the Truth-consciousness, capable even on the mental level and in its own order of something that might be called the beginning of a divinised life.

– Sri Aurobindo

\* \* \*

#### *The Mother :*

The manifestation [on 29 February 1956] of the Supramental upon earth is no more a promise but a living fact, a reality.

It is at work here, and one day will come when the most blind, the most unconscious, even the most unwilling shall be obliged to recognise it.

– 24th April 1956

Last night I had a vision of what the supramental world would be like if people were not sufficiently prepared. The confusion that now exists on earth is nothing in comparison with what might happen. Just imagine an extremely powerful will with the capacity to transform matter according to its liking! If the sense of collective unity did not grow in proportion to the growth of power, the resulting conflict would be even more acute and chaotic than all our material conflicts.

– 15 February 1958

To celebrate the birth of a transitory body can satisfy some faithful feelings.

To celebrate the manifestation of the eternal Consciousness can be done at every moment of the universal history.

But to celebrate the advent of a new world, the supramental world, is a marvellous and exceptional privilege.

– 21 February 1958

## Activities during December 16, 2023 – January 15, 2024

### YOGA RETREAT, 22–30 DECEMBER 2023

A Yoga Retreat titled *Seeing Through Life for Adding Meaning to Life* was conducted by The Mother's Integral Health Centre, a unit of Sri Aurobindo Ashram (Delhi Branch), from 22-30 Dec 2023 under the guidance of Dr. Ramesh Bijlani, who was joined by Dr. Aditi Kaul as the principal facilitator. The retreat was attended by 15 participants, nine from India, three from the UK, one from Spain, one from Brazil, and one from Hong Kong. Since most of the participants already had a fair exposure to Integral Yoga, and some of them were yoga teachers, the program



focused on several major works of Sri Aurobindo, namely, *Essays on the Gita*, *The Life Divine*, *Savitri*, and *The Human Cycle*; and The Mother's *Words of Long Ago* and *Prayers and Meditations*. In addition to Dr. Bijlani and Dr. Aditi Kaul, several sessions were conducted by Shri Prashant Khanna, Dr. Mithu Pal and Dr. Srividya. A recently made film on Sri Aurobindo by the Ashram was screened for the participants during the retreat. One particular talk was devoted to the Mother and her attributes signified in her 12-petal sym-



bol. An hour long session in the late forenoon gave a taste of various styles of Physical Practices of Yoga (asanas and pranayamas) by Ms. Priya Pranav Gupta, Ms. Monica Chand, Ms. Vidya Mundhra, Ms.

Ruchi Arora and Dr. Ramesh Bijlani. Other activities of the Retreat included a conducted tour of the Ashram premises, a visit to Sri Smriti and other exhibitions in the Ashram, and evening meditation. The spiritually-charged Christmas cel-



celebration in the Ashram combined fun with tranquillity and festivity. A heritage walk to the Archaeological Park near Qutub Minar conducted by Mr. Aditya Pathak was a unique experience for everybody. Participants received several books which may be of help in furtherance of their journey on the path of yoga and self-finding. Many positive comments by the participants made it quite evident that they felt highly satisfied with the know-how, insights and experiences that the Retreat had provided them.

## INTEGRAL EDUCATION AND EXPERIENTIAL MATHEMATICS WORKSHOP

A comprehensive Integral Education & Experiential Mathematics workshop was conducted at Sri Aurobindo Ashram (Delhi Branch) under its Social Initiative Program between December 23rd to 29th, 2023 for 50 teachers of 22 schools from remote regions across India: from Uttarakhand, 7 teachers of 3 schools; from Andhra Pradesh, 1 teacher; from Karnataka: 4 teach-



ers of 2 schools; from Rajasthan, 6 teachers from 2 schools; from Odisha, 17 teachers of 7 schools; from Assam, : 2 teachers from 1 school; from Ladakh, 2 teachers from 1 school; from Gujarat, 2 teachers from 1; from West Bengal, 4 teachers

of 2 schools; from Tamil Nadu, 2 teachers of 1 school; and from Jharkhand, 2 teachers of 1 school. The objective of the workshop was to make mathematics interesting for the students and teachers and to provide them with hands-on techniques of learning



so that they can feel and experience the captivating beauty of mathematics.

The workshop commenced with lighting of





candles at the lotus feet of The Mother and Sri Aurobindo by Dr Aparna Roy followed by her talk on the philosophy of Integral Education and how it encompasses all levels of being – physical (gross body and matter), mental (thoughts and reason), vital (life force and emotions) and psychic (the divine element).



The resource persons for mathematics were Mr. Narayana Meher with a 17 years experience in the field of experiential mathematics and Mr. Biswajit Sahoo, a retired Mathematics and Science teacher. Their experience and understanding of mathematics helped each participant to enjoy learning difficult concepts.

The notions of number sense, four operations, fractions, decimals, and geometry were covered using manipulatives to deepen conceptual understanding as well as how definitions and rules/algorithms surface in each case.

Hira Das conducted innovative minor games involving mathematical concepts such as the measurement of distance using body parts. *Fire on the Mountain* game was played using four operations, making a clock and fixing time as per instruction by moving the minute hand and

hour hand and making mandalas and different shapes like square, triangle and rectangle.



Other workshop activities included shramadan, yoga classes, meditation and a sightseeing tour of notable locations of Delhi.

Each school was given a set of teaching aids at the end of the workshop.

Organizers gratefully acknowledge financial support from Tata Investment Corporation Ltd. of Mumbai which made the accomplishment of this workshop possible.

## DESCENT OF LIGHT, 25 DECEMBER 2023

Christmas Day was celebrated in the Ashram as the day of descent of light, the day on which



the days start getting longer, bringing hope and cheer. Early in the evening, the youngsters organised several 'novelty games', which rewarded manual dexterity and alertness. Later in the evening, the Ashram choir led by Dr. Mithu Pal made a musical offering. Hymns and carols were interspersed with Tara Didi's reading from the *Mother's Prayers and Meditations*, and her answers to questions on the significance of Christmas, and passages from *Savitri* which make an apparent reference to the crucifixion of Christ.



### **BHAJAN SANDHYA , 28 DECEMBER 2023**

In the *Bhajan Sandhya* on 28th December, Shri Rakesh Joshi, Composer and Artistic Director at Shiva the Indian Youth Choir & Music Teacher at Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan Manchester (England), offered a bevy of bhajans under a program captioned *Matru Vandana* in the Meditation



Hall. He was accompanied by Shri Himanshu Dutt on flute and Shri Fateh Singh on tabla.

### **ADVENT OF THE NEW YEAR, 1 JANUARY 2024**

The New Year was ushered in, as usual, with an almost uninterrupted reading of Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri*, from 31 Dec 2023 to 1 Jan 2024. The reading was interrupted only from 11.45 pm-1.15 am for the New Year meditation led by Tara Didi, and the distribution of the new year calendar.

The youngsters of the Ashram put up a self-directed cultural show on the night of 31 December 2023, which brought out much hidden talent.

### **INTEGRAL EDUCATION, NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY (NEP) AND PROJECT-BASED LEARNING**

A workshop on Integral Education, National Education Policy and Project-based Learning was conducted at Sri Aurobindo Ashram (Delhi Branch) between 1-7 January 2024. for 47 individuals from 12 rural schools across the country with the following distribution: Odisha - school 1, teachers 2; Ladakh - school 1, teachers 9; Uttarakhand - schools 5, teachers 19; Rajasthan - schools 2, teachers 6; Gujarat - school 1, teachers 4; Tamil Nadu - school 1, teachers 3; and



Madhya Pradesh – school 1, teachers 4.

The workshop began with a session on 'reflecting on one's strengths and weak-



nesses' and followed by playing ice-breaking games to introduce and familiarize one to the other. The next few sessions were spent in understanding the philosophy of Integral Education and its need in



our lives and in the education system. National Education Policy was shared with the participants and its implementation in part was carried out with Project-Based Learning. The group worked on the India project and learnt how to integrate Integral Education with other subjects in to a working topic. Other activities of the workshop included shramadan, sports & games, mantra chanting, yogasana sessions, meditation and self-reflection.

Participants visited Qutub Minar, Lotus Temple, India Gate, War Memorial, Red Fort and

Participants visited Qutub Minar, Lotus Temple, India Gate, War Memorial, Red Fort and



Akshardham Temple during a Delhi sightseeing excursion.

Resource persons for the workshop were: Dr. Kamala Menon, Dr. Jayanthi Ramachandran, Dr. Aparna Roy, Baren Kumar Raul, Minati Pradhan, Rasmita Pradhan, Sukanti Roul and Priya Gupta.

Organizers gratefully acknowledge financial support from Foundation for World

Education (FWE) of Massachusetts, USA which made the accomplishment of this program possible.

### NATIONAL YOUTH DAY, 12 JANUARY 2024

The National Youth Day (India) was celebrated by the Ashram in the Meditation Hall.

At 5 pm, the program which was attended by about 60 young persons from outside the Ashram, consisted primarily of musical offerings. The function began with Clemence Blanchet, a young guest from France, on

the guitar, who offered an invocation by reciting the *Gayatri mantra* and chanting *Jaya Shiva Shambho*. This was followed by inspirational songs by Dr.



Mithu Pal, a group of young girls – collectively called ‘Shalinis’ – from the Ratan Lal Foundation, Ms.



Monidipa Ghosh, Mr. Aditya Pathak, Ms. Arunima Pathak, Ms. Basudhara Munshi and a neurodiverse young boy, Devansh Chandra, who sang the evergreen song, ‘Kisi ki muskarahton pe honisaar...’. The musical offerings were interspersed with brief elucidation of spiritual implications and ramifications of the songs by Dr. Ramesh Bijlani.



At 7 pm, Dr. Ramesh Bijlani narrated to the Ashram community, which has about 100 youngsters, a few inspiring anecdotes from the life of Swami Vivekananda since

the date of National Youth Day was chosen to pay homage to the remembrance of his birthday, 12<sup>th</sup> January.

# The Marvellously Inspiring Life of Sri Aurobindo

[Excerpted from published material]

## KING'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE (2)

In December 1889 Sri Aurobindo passed the Matriculation examination from St. Paul's. In the same month he also sat for a scholarship examination which enabled the successful candidate to go up to King's College, Cambridge. For this examination, which was open to all eligible students in England, Sri Aurobindo took the papers in the Classical languages i.e. Greek and Latin. He was adjudged the best candidate and won the Senior Classical scholarship which was worth £80 a year. With his own efforts and exceptional abilities, Sri Aurobindo had gained for himself the opportunity of going to Cambridge for further studies.



During 1890, his last year at St. Paul's, Sri Aurobindo prepared to sit for the ICS entrance examination which was held annually in London. After a good deal of pressure, the authorities had agreed to allow Indians of the required age and qualifications to take the examination, but they had to sit in open competition with the British candidates and succeed in a very stiff examination. The ICS career, with its immense prestige, power and rewards, held no attraction for Sri Aurobindo and he sat for the examination only to please his father. Krishna Dhan had high hopes that his son would glorify the country by becoming a brilliant administrator and Sri Aurobindo did not want to disappoint him by refusing to take the examination. When the results came out in 1890, his name was among the successful candidates. He had secured the 11th position, scoring record marks in Latin and Greek. In our talks with Sri Aurobindo in later years one of us made the comment that the ICS examination was regarded as an unusually difficult one to pass, but Sri Aurobindo merely said, [he] 'did not find it so.'

As a probationer in the ICS Sri Aurobindo was now entitled to a stipend of £150 a year. The period of probation was for two years which he could spend at Cambridge whilst pursuing his other studies. In July 1890 Sri Aurobindo left St. Paul's and in October of the same year he joined King's College, Cambridge. He had completed his eighteenth year, two months earlier. As a Senior Classical scholar, Sri Aurobindo studied for the Classical Tripos, the B.A. degree examination in Greek and Latin... except for vacations, he stayed at Cambridge for the next two years.

In addition to his work for the Classical Tripos, Sri Aurobindo had to study other subjects for his ICS probationership. These included Law and Jurisprudence, Political Economy, Indian History and some Sanskrit. He had also to show a knowledge of his mother tongue, Bengali (which he did not know at all), and learn a little Hindustani because Dr. K.D. Ghose, delighted at his son's success in the ICS examination, had arranged with the help of Sir Henry Cotton to get a posting for Sri Aurobindo at Arrah in Bihar on completion of his probationership. Sri Aurobindo could have avoided the strain of studying so many subjects by taking lightly his classical studies, for after all his career was now assured, but it was not in his nature to do anything superficially. In fact his reputation as a Classical scholar had preceded him at Cambridge and one of the senior tutors, G.W. Prothero, invited him to meet Oscar Browning, a very well-known scholar and

intellectual in the university at that time. There is a very interesting letter from Sri Aurobindo to his father [in 1890] which mentions this meeting:

“Last night I was invited to coffee with one of the Dons and in his rooms I met the Great O.B. otherwise Oscar Browning, who is the feature par excellence of King’s. He was extremely flattering; passing from the subject of cotillions to that of scholarships he said to me “I suppose you know you passed an extraordinarily high examination. I have examined papers at thirteen examinations and I have never during that time [seen] such excellent papers as yours (meaning my classical papers at the scholarship examination). As for your essay it was wonderful.” In this essay (a comparison between Shakespeare and Milton) I indulged in my Oriental tastes to the top of their bent; it overflowed with rich and topical imagery; it abounded in antitheses and epigrams and it expressed my real feelings without restraint or reservation. I thought myself that it was the best thing I had ever done, but at school I would have been condemned as extraordinarily Asiatic & bombastic. The Great O.B. afterwards asked me where my rooms were & when I had answered he said “That wretched hole!” then turning to Mahaffy “How rude we are to our scholars! we get great minds to come down here and then shut them up in that box! I suppose it is to keep their pride down.” [Sri Aurobindo, *Autobiographical Notes*]

During his two years at Cambridge, Sri Aurobindo did not spend all his time on academic studies and except for games, in which he was not interested, he participated fully in the University activities. He continued to be in love with poetry, reading widely as was his habit, but also now writing poems more frequently. Some [sixteen] of these poems were included in his first volume of poetry *Songs to Myrtila* published in 1895 after his return to India. Sri Aurobindo also experimented with translations of passages from Greek and Latin poetry. Later he told us of a significant incident in this connection. Once a class-mate of his, Norman Ferrers, was reading a line from Homer which he thought was one of the poet’s finest lines and, as Sri Aurobindo listened, his ear caught the true rhythm of quantitative metre. As you may appreciate, English is an accented language whereas the sound-structure of Greek and Latin, like Sanskrit is based on quantity i.e. the length of a syllable, so that it is extremely difficult to bring the swing of quantitative metre into English poetry successfully and it had eluded Matthew Arnold and other English poets of the past who had experimented with it. In later years Sri Aurobindo wrote some magnificent poems [including *Ahana & Illion*] in quantitative metre. Here are the opening lines of the long poem “Ahana” which I hope you will read one day.

Vision delightful alone on the hills whom the silences cover,  
Closer yet lean to mortality; human, stoop to thy lover.  
Wonderful, gold like a moon in the square of the sun where thou strayest  
Glimmers thy face amid crystal purities; mighty thou playest  
Sole on the peaks of the world, unafraid of thy loneliness. Glances  
Leap from thee down to us, dream-seas and light-falls and magical trances;  
Sun-drops flake from thy eyes and the heart’s caverns packed are with pleasure  
Strange like a song without words or the dance of a measureless measure.

– From *Sri Aurobindo for all ages* by Nirodbaran

*To be contd.*

His forms he has massed from infinitesimal dust;  
His marvels are built from insignificant things.  
If mind is crippled, life untaught and crude,  
If brutal masks are there and evil acts,  
They are incidents of his vast and varied plot,  
His great and dangerous drama's needed steps;  
He makes with these and all his passion-play,  
A play and yet no play but the deep scheme  
Of a transcendent Wisdom finding ways  
To meet her Lord in the shadow and the Night:  
Above her is the vigil of the stars;  
Watched by a solitary Infinitude  
She embodies in dumb Matter the Divine,  
In symbol minds and lives the Absolute.  
A miracle-monger her mechanical craft;  
Matter's machine worked out the laws of thought,  
Life's engines served the labour of a soul:  
The Mighty Mother her creation wrought,  
A huge caprice self-bound by iron laws,  
And shut God into an enigmatic world:  
She lulled the Omniscient into nescient sleep,  
Omnipotence on Inertia's back she drove,  
Trode perfectly with divine unconscious steps  
The enormous circle of her wonder-works.  
Immortality assured itself by death;  
The Eternal's face was seen through drifts of Time.  
- From *Savitri* by Sri Aurobindo

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