



गुरुर्ब्रह्मा गुरुर्विष्णुः गुरुर्देवो महेश्वरः।  
गुरुः साक्षात् परंब्रह्म तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः॥

**Guru is Brahma (the Creator), Guru is Vishnu (the Preserver), and Guru is the god Maheshwara (the Destroyer). Unto that Guru who is truly the manifest Parabrahman, I bow down with reverence.**

# Realization

Vol. 12, No. 7

July 2023

An e-magazine of Sri Aurobindo Ashram-Delhi Branch

अयं हि सर्वकल्पानां सध्रीचीने मतो मम ।

मद्भावः सर्वभूतेषु मनोवाक्कायवृत्तिभिः ॥२४-१६॥

Indeed, I consider this process — using one's mind, words and bodily functions for realizing Me within all living beings — to be the best possible method of spiritual enlightenment.

— The Uddhava-gita 24-19

**Sri Aurobindo Ashram-Delhi Branch**

Sri Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi 110 016

011-2656 7863; [www.sriurobindoashram.net](http://www.sriurobindoashram.net)

# Ongoing & Forthcoming Events

## July 2023

### Meditation & Satsang venue : Meditation Hall

Monday – Saturday

7 –7:30 pm

Collective Meditation

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

|         |                                                                                                                                                 |                                                |
|---------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| July 02 | Kabir Sung Sumiran (Remembering the Divine with Kabir)<br>Musical offering                                                                      | Ms. Monica Gulati<br>Mr. Rajkumar              |
| July 09 | True Attitude in the Face of an Error<br>(Based on the Mother's prayer of 24 March 1914 in <i>Prayers and Meditations</i> )<br>Musical offering | Dr. Mithu Pal<br>Dr. Mithu Pal                 |
| July 16 | The Divine Work<br>(Based on Sri Aurobindo's <i>The Synthesis of Yoga : Part 1, Ch 12</i> )<br>Musical offering                                 | Dr. Mankul Goyal<br>Aditya & Arunima           |
| July 23 | Bal Gangadhar Tilak<br>(Based on Sri Aurobindo's <i>Bankim-Tilak-Dayananda</i> )<br>Musical offering                                            | Dr. Ramesh Bijlani<br>Ms. Basudhara Roy Munshi |
| July 30 | Does Focus on Monetizing Work Endanger What Matters?<br>Musical offering                                                                        | Dr. Srividya<br>Ms. Sowmya Narayanan           |

### CLASSES by Shri Prashant Khanna

|                           |                  |                       |              |
|---------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| Thursdays: 06,13,20,27    | 5:30 pm          | Reception Back Office | Savitri      |
| Fridays: 07,14,21,28      | 11:30 am         | Meditation Hall       | Bhagvad Gita |
| Sundays: 02,09,16,23,30   | 5:30 pm          | Reception Back Office | Bhagvad Gita |
| Saturdays: 01,08,15,22,29 | 11:00 am–12 noon | ONLINE                | Savitri      |

Online contact Sri Satya Prakash (+91 88007 61046)

### YES (Yoga, Education & Spirituality) Online Talks on Saturdays

|         |                                                      |                   |
|---------|------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 01 July | The Circle of Abundance                              | Ms. Shlpa Ajwani  |
| 08 July | Storytelling                                         | V. Anand          |
| 15 July | Emotional Intelligenc                                | Ms. Mansee Vahist |
| 22 July | Creative Math Strategies – Integrating Art with Math | Ms. Monica Kochar |
| 29 July | The Music of Monsoon                                 | Ms. Richa Sharma  |

For queries contact Ms. Arunima Pathak at: <simply.arunima@gmail.com>

Zoom link : <<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6082144500?pwd=dHJLWUNqcTlJR25JTnBJYzdjVG5OQT09>>

Meeting ID: 608 214 4500; Passcode: 8kPJG6

Scheduled Time: 6 pm IST

## 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 : 2656 7863



## Ashram Library (Knowledge)

Tuesday to Sunday Timings : 10:00 am – 4:30 pm  
(Monday closed) 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>                                                   |
| Micro Website | : | <a href="http://sriurobindoashram.net/Mirra100/">http://sriurobindoashram.net/Mirra100/</a>                                 |

## ART FOR ASHRAM, 2023 – EXHIBITIONS

| <u>Theme</u>                               | <u>Timing</u>          | <u>Venue</u>               |
|--------------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|
| 'All Life is Yoga'                         | 10 am–12 noon & 2–4 pm | Prasad Block, Ground Floor |
| 'Divine Signature' (Life of Sri Aurobindo) | 10 am–12 noon & 2–4 pm | Prasad Block, First Floor  |

Contact 011-2656 7863

## The Mother's Integral Health Centre Activities

Phone 88005 52685, <[tmihc2000@gmail.com](mailto: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)   |
| Thursday         | Dermatology                                 | (2:30– 3:00 pm)       |
| Thursday         | Ophthalmology                               | (11:00 am–12:00 noon) |
| Friday           | Psychiatry                                  | (1:00 pm–3:00 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–1:00 pm)    |
| Tue, Sat         | Ayurveda Consultation                       | (12:00 noon–3:00 pm)  |
| Mon-Sat (6 days) | Ayurveda Treatment                          | (10:00 am–4:00 pm)    |

### Ongoing activities venue: ONLY on SKYPE (ID: tmihc2000)

|          |              |                       |           |                  |
|----------|--------------|-----------------------|-----------|------------------|
| Monday   | 4:00–4:45 pm | Vivekachoodamani      | Discourse | Dr. Tarun Baveja |
| Tue/Thu  | 4:00–4:45 pm | Aparokshanubhuti      | Discourse | Dr. Tarun Baveja |
| Wed/Fri  | 4:00–4:45 pm | The Supreme Knowledge | Discourse | Dr. Tarun Baveja |
| Saturday | 4:00–4:45 pm | Bhagvad Gita Sadhana  | Discourse | Dr. Tarun Baveja |

### 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 |

## ASPIRATION : IMPEDIMENTS FROM PHYSICAL AND VITAL

Aspiration is to call the forces. When the forces have answered, there is a natural state of quiet receptivity concentrated but spontaneous.

\*

One has to aspire to the Divine and surrender and leave it to the Divine to do what is true and right with the *adhara* once it is perfected.

\*

It depends on the stage which one has reached. Personal aspiration is necessary until there is the condition in which all comes automatically and only a certain knowledge and assent is necessary for the development.

\*

Aspiration should be not a form of desire, but the feeling of an inner soul's need, and a quiet settled will to turn towards the Divine and seek the Divine. It is certainly not easy to get rid of this mixture of desire entirely – not easy for anyone; but when one has the will to do it, this also can be effected by the help of the sustaining Force.

\*

If there are good desires, bad desires will come also. There is a place for will and aspiration, not for desire. If there is desire there will be attachment, demand, craving, want of equanimity, sorrow at not getting, all that is unyogic.

\*

As for working, it depends on what you mean by the word. Desire often leads either to excess of effort, meaning often much labour and a limited fruit with strain, exhaustion and in case of difficulty or failure, despondence, disbelief or revolt; or else it leads to pulling down the force. That can be done, but except for the yogically strong and experienced, it is not always safe, though it may be often very effective; not safe, first, because it may lead to violent reactions or it brings down contrary or wrong or mixed forces which the sadhak is not experienced enough to distinguish from the true ones . . . Or else it may substitute the sadhak's own limited power of experience or his mental and vital constructions for the free gift and true leading of the Divine. Cases differ, each has his own way of sadhana. But for you what I would recommend is constant openness, a quiet steady aspiration, no over-eagerness, a cheerful trust and patience.

\*

The impatience and restless disquietude come from the vital which brings that even into the aspiration. The aspiration must be intense, calm and strong (that is the nature of the true vital also) and not restless and impatient, – then alone it can be stable.

\*

Naturally, the more one-pointed the aspiration the swifter the progress. The difficulty comes when either the vital with its desires or the physical with its past habitual movements comes in - as they do with almost everyone. It is then that the dryness and difficulty of spontaneous aspiration come. This dryness is a well-known obstacle in all sadhana. But one has to persist and not be discouraged. If one keeps the will fixed even in these barren periods, they pass and after their passage a greater force of aspiration and experience becomes possible.

\*

It is a suggestion of the tamasic forces that insist on the difficulty and cre-

ate it and the physical consciousness accepts it. Aspiration is never really difficult. Rejection may not be immediately effective but to maintain the will of rejection and refusal is always possible.

\*

The physical consciousness is always in everybody in its own nature a little inert and in it a constant strong aspiration is not natural, it has to be created. But first there must be the opening, a purification, a fixed quietude, otherwise the physical vital will turn the strong aspiration into over-eagerness and impatience or rather it will try to give it that turn. Do not therefore be troubled if the state of the nature seems to you to be too neutral and quiet, not enough aspiration and movement in it. This is a passage necessary for the progress and the rest will come.

\*

You are finding it still difficult to bear the interval periods when all is quiet and nothing being done on the surface. But such interval periods come to all and cannot be avoided. You must not cherish the suggestion that it is because of your want of aspiration or any other unfitness that it is so and, if you had the constant ardent aspiration, then there would be no such periods and there would be an uninterrupted stream of experiences. It is not so. Even if the aspiration were there, the interval periods would come. If even in them one can aspire, so much the better - but the main thing is to meet them with quietude and not become restless, depressed or despondent. A constant fire can be there only when a certain stage has been reached, that is when one is always inside consciously living in the psychic being, but for that all this preparation of the mind, vital, physical is necessary. For this fire belongs to the psychic and one cannot command it always merely by the mind's effort. The psychic has to be fully liberated and that is what the Force is working to make fully possible.

\*

It is the psychic that gives the true aspiration – if the vital is purified and subjected to the psychic, then the vital gives intensity – but if it is unpurified it brings in a rajasic intensity with impatience and reactions of depression and disappointment. As for the calm and equality needed, it must come down from above through the mind.

\*

That is the psychic aspiration, the psychic fire. Where the vital comes in is in the impatience for result and dissatisfaction if the result is not immediate. That must cease. It is in the nature of the unregenerated vital part of the surface to do like that. The true vital is different, calm and strong and a powerful instrument submitted to the Divine. But for that to come forward it is necessary first to get this fixed poise above in the mind – when the consciousness is there and the mind calm, free and wide, then the true vital can come forward.

\*

There can be an intense but quiet aspiration which does not disturb the harmony of the inner being.

\*

One should be satisfied with what one gets and still aspire quietly without struggle, for more – till all has come. No desire, no struggle – aspiration, faith, openness – and the grace.

– Sri Aurobindo

## Activities during May 16 – June 15, 2023

### ‘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 for 11 rural schools from under-privileged regions of India. A total of 38 teachers: Karnataka 5, West Bengal 4, Odisha 10, Uttarakhand 2, Rajasthan 4, Arunachal Pradesh 4, Tamil Nadu 4 and Chandigarh 5, attended the workshop from May 16-22, 2023. Tara Didi inaugurated the workshop by lighting a diya and reading a passage from the writings of the Mother on Light. The workshop consisted of multiple sessions on chanting, yogasana, shramadaan, sports and games, rhymes and songs and meditation. The participants were introduced to Integral Education philosophy in its various facets and garnered conceptual knowl-



edge 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, Maths and English was carried out. Participants were given a project ‘Water’ 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 Akshardham temple, a film ‘Sri Aurobindo – An Indian mystic who worked for Human Unity’ was screened. Resource persons included:

Yoga – Priya Gupta; Integral Education: Minati Pradhan, Rasmita Pradhan, Swapnika Ready and Baren Raul; NEP – Baren; English language: Swapnika; Hindi language: Rasmita; Chanting: Minati, Maths: Srinath and Minati, Project – Water : Minati, Rasmita, Aruna Jain and Baren; Sports and Games: Kamlu Paraja, Indra Arya, Babita Arya and Baren; Rhymes: Minati and Rasmita; Reflective session: Rasmita and Baren, Life story of



Sri Aurobindo and the Mother: Dr. Ramesh Bijlani.

Organizers gratefully acknowledge support from a generous grant by the Foundation for World Education (FWE) of New York, USA, which made the accomplishment of this program possible.

### AYURVEDA AND YOGA RETREAT MAY 26-JUNE 1, 2023

The Mother's Integral Health Centre organized a Ayurveda and Yoga retreat at Madhuban, a Himalayan Centre of Sri Aurobindo Ashram-Delhi Branch in Talla Ramgarh, Uttarakhand, from May 26 to June 1, 2023, for 28 individuals in the age group 32-75. General activities for each day consisted of *Brahma Muhûrtam. Prabhât Pheri* – a 20 minute walk in the morning with chanting followed by one-hour *Ashtânga* Yoga class, both activities were led by Dr. Surinder Katoch; Shramadâna in the forenoon and early afternoon, traditional Indian games/trekking in the late afternoon and Meditation in the evening. The day ended with a stroll around the campus under a brilliant sky scintillating with stars and moonshine.



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Other activities included interactive sessions on multiple topics: by Drs. Surinder Katoch & Mukta on 'Group Activity on Ayurveda and Yoga'; Q&A sessions by Drs. S. Katoch & Mukta on 'Myths & facts around Nutrition' and 'Life, Living and Wellness'; by Dr. Surinder Katoch on 'Introduction to AYSOL', on 'Concept of Health & Diseases in Ayurveda'; on '*Trayopastambha* – The 3 Pillars of Health' and 'Ayurvedic Nutrition', on 'Know Yourself Test', 'Rule-of-4-for-4', 'Your Kitchen is your Factory', 'Bhagvad Gita in Daily Life' and 'Dinacharya and Ritucharya'; by Dr. Mukta Katoch on 'Ashtang Ayurveda and Panchakarma' and 'Understanding Eye Diseases with Ayurveda', and a talk by Tara Didi.

Two *Panchakarma* Therapies i.e., one Whole Body Massage and one Head & Foot Massage along with two *Âyurvedic* Eye Therapies i.e., *Akshi Seka* and *Pindi* were done for each participant. Extra therapies (14) were also done for other residents/visitors of Madhuban as per slot availability. A total of 97 Therapies were done during the retreat period. The organizers had stock of both *Âyurvedic* and Allopathic First-Aid Kits for any medical needs. Each participant was also given a free consultation by Dr. Surinder Katoch. In



addition to this, *Neem* twigs and *Anu Tailam* were distributed to all participants. *AYUSH Kwatha* – a herbal immuno-booster and *Saktu* – a summer drink were sponsored by Katoch’s Holistic Health Centre for all participants,



ashramites and guests. Special emphasis was given to the making of food and lifestyle one’s preferred medicine. Sloka chanting, Havan, cultural evening and a valedictory session were the other highlights of the retreat. Resource persons for the retreat included Dr. Surinder Katoch, and Dr. Mukta Katoch Arora and Oindrila (camp co-ordinators), Velayudhan K.M. & Zareena Khatoon (Panchakarma therapists) and Punita.

Feedback comments included: “I’m leaving with a small but comprehensive understanding of Ayurveda as a science and also practical ways in which I can use this knowledge in my day-to-day life” (S.M.); “All sessions, knowledge, practices were very deep and powerful. I am taking treasure with me” (S.H.); “Excellent programme. Very informative. The style & contents of the programme are wonderfully designed and very well explained in good humour” (R.S.); “Very innovative camp on Ayurveda and Yoga conducted with great enthusiasm, dedication and commitment” (V.A.); “Excellent program... provided the perfect support and guidance to achieve balance in life” (K.V.S.); “Well organised, relevant and useful content, well presented in an interesting manner. Some study material and a session on Aurobindo Philosophy may be included” (Dr. M.R.A.); “It’s an eye opener. I would definitely change my lifestyle slowly.” (P.S.)

#### **ANNIVERSARY OF RELICS ENSHRINEMENT AT VAN NIWAS**

Sacred Relics of Sri Aurobindo were enshrined at Van Niwas, the Himalayan Centre of Sri Aurobindo Ashram-Delhi Branch in the Kumaon Himalayas at Nainital, on May 29, 1989. Commemorating the event in Delhi Ashram with a Bhajan Sandhya, Dr. Mithu Pal made an offering of devotional music consisting of bhajans dedicated to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother in the Meditational Hall. *Prasad* was distributed to all attendees at conclusion of the program.

#### **VEDANTA AND AYURVEDA RETREAT JUNE 2-8, 2023**

The Mother’s Integral Health Centre organized a Vedânta and Âyurveda retreat at Madhuban, a Himalayan Centre of Sri Aurobindo Ashram-Delhi Branch in Talla Ramgarh, Uttarakhand, from 2–8 June, 2023, for 40 individuals in the age group of 17-83. General activities for each day consisted of Brahma Muhûrtam. Prabhât Pheri – a 20 minute walk in the morning with chanting followed by one-hour Ashtânga Yoga class, both activities were led by Dr. Surinder Katoch; Shramadâna in the forenoon and early afternoon, traditional Indian games/trekking in the late afternoon and Meditation in the evening. The day ended with a







stroll around the campus under a brilliant sky scintillating with stars and moonshine.

Other activities included interactive sessions on multiple topics: Acharya Navneet on ‘The K Story’, ‘What do we Know about the Vedas’, ‘Modern Psychology and Happiness’, ‘The Teachings of the Upanishads’, ‘The Teachings of the Bhagvad Gita’ and ‘Religion vs Spirituality – The Confusion’; Dr. Surinder Katoch on ‘Group Activity on Ayurveda and Yoga’, ‘Ashtang Yoga’, ‘Introduction to AYSOL’, ‘Rule-of-4-for-4’,



‘Trayopastambha – The 3 Pillars of Health’ and ‘Self-Health Care through Ayurveda & Yoga’; Q&A session with Acharya Navneet and Dr. S. Katoch on ‘Life, Living and Wellness’ etc.



Two *Panchakarma* Therapies i.e. one Whole Body Massage and one Head & Foot Massage were done for each participant. Extra therapies (5) were also done for other residents/visitors of Madhuban as per slot availability. A total of 90 *Panchakarma* Therapies were done during the retreat period. The organizers had stock of both *Āyurvedic* and Allopathic First-Aid Kits for any medical needs. Dr. Dinesh Chand Katoch promptly attended to anyone requiring medical attention and managed them through *Āyurvedic* medications. In addition to this, *Neem* twigs and *Anu Tailam* were distributed to all participants. *AYUSH Kwatha* – a herbal immuno-booster and *Saktu* – a summer drink were sponsored by Katoch’s Holistic Health Centre for all participants, ashramites and guests.

Sloka chanting, Havan, cultural evening and a valedictory session were the other highlights of the retreat. On 7 June, the anniversary of Relics Enshrinement at Madhuban, in a special function Tara Didi read relevant passages and a group meditation was held in the forenoon. Resource persons for the retreat included Acharya Navneet & Dr. Surinder Katoch, Dr. Mukta Katoch Arora and Oindrila (camp co-ordinators), Velayudhan K.M. & Zareena Khatoon

(Panchakarma therapists) and Punita.

Feedback comments included: “Awesome management of daily schedule & programmes including all information... Learnt a lot. In short will be willing to come over second time with my husband” (Dr. M.S.); “My age is 67 years... Never ever I have been to such a spiritual camp. This has demystified many myths and very helpful in choosing the right kind of food & culture” (S.C.B.); “I had never been into such an excellent holistic camp. Would love to visit again & again” (A) “Excellent programme and good food” (S.S.); “Excellent life-time learning” (J.K.); “Nature is actually heaven, so we enjoyed it while alive. Camp arranged superbly” (S.S.); “Excellent arrangement & beautiful narration of Ayurveda, Yoga and Vedanta. Hopefully we will come again.” (S.S.).

#### ANNIVERSARY OF RELICS ENSHRINEMENT AT MADHUBAN

Sacred Relics of Sri Aurobindo were enshrined at Madhuban, the Himalayan Centre of Sri Aurobindo Ashram-Delhi Branch in the Kumaon Himalayas



at Talla Ramgarh in district Nainital, on June 7, 2014. The day was celebrated in the Delhi Ashram with a *Bhajan Sandhya*, in which the Ashram choir, led by Ms. Lin Thoi, made an offering of devotional music consisting of bhajans dedicated to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Getting the opportunity to lead the Ashram Choir was vastly gratifying to Lin Thoi who learnt music from Karuna Didi, Premsheela, and other senior musicians of the Ashram. *Prasad* was distributed to all attendees at conclusion of the program.

#### RESIDENTIAL CAMPS FOR CLASS XII GOVT. SCHOOL GIRLS, 5-14 JUNE 2023



The Ashram helped organize 3-day residential camps for three batches of class XII school girls from government schools. The groups were brought to the Ashram by an NGO, ‘Udayan Care’, and were a part of its yearly Udayan Shalini Fellowship Program. The first two batches, from 5-7 June and 9-11 June 2023, were from North Delhi with a total of 57 students. The third batch consisting of 28 students from NOIDA

formed part of the camp from 12-14 June 2023. Primary objective of the camps was personal growth and development with sessions on Personal Space, Pre-



senting Self, Professional Etiquette, Team Building, Mental Health & Well Being, Public Speaking, Gender-sensitization and Theater techniques. Other activities included Shram Daan, Sports, Storytelling and Meditation. Feedback from participants included: “I enjoyed the sur-

roundings, it was the first time that I have stayed in such a quiet place”; “Our schedule made us punctual and my parents are very happy to see changes in my behavior”; “Eating food on time at the Ashram improved my eating habits and my parents also are very happy about the same”; “I thoroughly enjoyed the early morning Shramdaan. It was my first experience with this kind of work, and I found it immensely satisfying”; “This residential camp provided me with the opportunity to live away from my parents for the first time and stay with other students instead. We worked together as a team and immensely enjoyed this unique experience”; “Being a part of this residential camp was an absolutely fantastic experience for me. I gained a wealth of knowledge and skills from the various activities conducted throughout the camp.”



# THE MARVELLOUSLY INSPIRING LIFE OF SRI AUROBINDO

[Excerpted from published material]

## THE NAME SUBLIME

He listens for Inspiration's postman knock  
And takes delivery of the priceless gift  
A little spoilt by the receiver mind  
Or mixed with the manufacture of his brain;  
When least defaced, then is it most divine.

- Savitri

SHAKESPEARE'S oft-quoted words from *Romeo and Juliet*, "What's in a name? That which we call a rose / By any other name would smell as sweet," have sometimes been contested. What can probably be termed as its extreme opposite proposition is presented by an eminent writer of our time, Graham Greene, thus: "There is a magical quality in names — to change the name is to change the character."...

...The name Sri Aurobindo received was unique in the backdrop of the time. That it became immeasurably significant, could be termed chance by rationalists, but those who believe that chance itself is often a pseudonym of Providence, would find behind the moment when the name flashed in the atheist Dr. K. D. Ghose's imagination, an immaculate "Inspiration's postman knock". To the best of our knowledge there was nobody else among the well-known men of the time named Aurobindo (the name was then spelt 'Arabinda'), though there would be a robust crop of Aurobindo's, variously spelt, in the decades that followed.

*Aurobindo* means *Padma*, the lotus. Its import in India's mystic tradition is vast and the first one in its register of symbolism is the mythological depiction of Brahma the Creator emerging from the lotus that had its source in Vishnu's navel. Next, Mahadevi, the primeval Mother Divinity, is depicted as holding in one of her four arms the lotus, the other three symbols held by her being the *Shankha* (Conch), the *Chakra* (Discus) and the *Gadaa* (Mace). In response to a request by Champaklal to write the significance of the white and red lotuses he had painted, Sri Aurobindo wrote for the white lotus "Aditi the Divine Mother" and the Mother wrote for the red lotus "The Avatar Sri Aurobindo".

But between his first name and the surname, Sri Aurobindo was obliged to carry for some years a label, "Akroyd", an odd if not jarring addition to the inspired word, probably the upshot of an after-thought by Dr. Ghose ("mixed with the manufacture of his brain"?). He bestowed it on his new-born child to perpetuate the proof of his affection for a valued friend of his London days, Miss Annette Susannah Akroyd (1842-1929) who came to India in 1872 soon after Sri Aurobindo was born and lived in the mansion owned by the legal luminary, Manmohan Ghose, Bar-at-Law. (In St. Paul's School record, the name is given as Ghose Aravinda Ackroyd.) Inspired by Keshab Chandra Sen's lectures in England, she founded a school for women in the city...

The indomitable Rajnarain who inspired the young generation of

Rabindranath with the spirit of nationalism, had, however, no chance to influence Sri Aurobindo who spent the first five years of his life at Khulna (now in Bangladesh) where his father was posted as the head of the district medical service. Even though Sri Aurobindo along with his siblings visited their maternal grandfather's house at Deoghar a few times, he was too young to imbibe any ideological influence from anybody, though his love of and reverence for Rajnarain found a candid articulation in his poem, *Transiit, Non Periiit*, written in 1899, at the death of the grand old man.

Hardly anything is known about Sri Aurobindo's days at Khulna on the river Rupsha, gateway to the Sundarbans. The backdrop of the only anecdote of this period of five years is not Khulna but Deoghar. Jogendra, Sri Aurobindo's eldest maternal uncle, once held a mirror before the child Sri Aurobindo and drawing his attention to the reflection, said, "Look, a monkey!" Sri Aurobindo turned it towards him and said, "Look, elder uncle, elder monkey!"...

Dr. K. D. Ghose, "entirely Anglicised in habits, ideas and ideal", as Sri Aurobindo put it, did not like his children to learn — not even to speak — Bengali. They were taught to speak English and Hindustani. There was no question of his children being sent to any local school. Dr. Ghose did not find any school up to his expectation in Kolkata either. He led his three sons to one of the finest places in the country and one of the best educational institutions, the Loreto Convent at Darjeeling. Founded in 1846 by a group of Irish nuns this was the first school in that hill city....

Sri Aurobindo seems to have been quite comfortable at Darjeeling. Mrs. Annette Beveridge, (formerly Miss Akroyd) paid a visit to the hill-city in September 1877 and on the 29th of the same month, made a "zigzag down" to the Loreto Convent. She was keen to see her friend's sons.

"At length a lady appeared and had a long chat with me. She told me that the boys had been sent for but they were very long in coming from the boys' house which is considerably higher. She told me they were very good and industrious and that the little one (Sri Aurobindo) is now quite happy. Then came another lady who is I believe the Rev. Mother but I could not stay longer . . .

Coming up the very steep hill towards home I met the boys — all grown and looking so well-dressed in their blue serge and scarlet stockings. The little fellow had a grey suit, very becoming — and is greatly aged — grown tall and boyish. I was struck particularly by the broadening of his forehead. He was pleased to see me I think but all were quite silent except for an extorted yes! or no! I am going to see them again soon mean time please let the doctor hear this . . . They asked if Mr. Ghose was a Christian and also Mrs. Ghose." [*Diary and Notebooks in India: India Office Records, London.*]

One of the few experiences of his Darjeeling days, as Sri Aurobindo recounted, remains inexplicable, but it is significant in the sense that unusual experiences had begun visiting him:

"I was lying down one day when I saw suddenly a great *Tamas* rushing into me and enveloping me and the whole universe. After that I had a great darkness always hanging onto me all through my stay in England. I believe that darkness had something to do with the *Tamas* that came upon me. It left me only when I was coming back to India."

– From *Sri Aurobindo: Life and Times of the Mahayogi* by Manoj Das

*To be contd.*

## Outspread a Wave burst

Outspread a Wave burst, a Force leaped from the unseen,  
Vague, wide, some veiled Maker, masked Lighter of the Fire:

With dire blows the Smith of the World  
Forged strength from hearts of the weak;  
Earth's hate the edge of the axe,  
Smitten by the gods,

Hewn, felled, the Form crashed that touched heaven and its stars.

– Sri Aurobindo

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