



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. 11, No. 12

December 2022

An e-magazine of Sri Aurobindo Ashram-Delhi Branch

न तत्र सूर्यो भाति न चन्द्रतारकं नमा विद्युतो भान्ति कुतोऽयमग्निः ।  
तमेव भान्तमनुभाति सर्वं तस्य भासा सर्वमिदं विभाति ॥१०॥

There the sun shines not, nor the moon nor stars. These lightnings also do not shine there; how can this fire (then do the same) ? He shining, all shine after Him; His light illumines these all.

– Mundak Upanishad 2-2-10

**Sri Aurobindo Ashram-Delhi Branch**

Sri Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi 110 016

011-2656 7863; www.sriurobindoashram.net

# Ongoing & Forthcoming Events

## December 2022

Meditation & Satsang venue : Meditation Hall

**Monday – Saturday**

**7 – 7:30 pm**

**Collective Meditation**

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

<b>Dec 04</b>	<b>Levels of Consciousness</b> (Based on <i>Prayers &amp; Meditations</i> , Prayer of 13 March 1914) Musical offering	<b>Dr. Mithu Pal</b>
<b>Dec 11</b>	<b>The Ascent of the Sacrifice-II</b> (Based on <i>The Synthesis of Yoga</i> , Part 1, Ch 6) Musical Offering	<b>Dr. Mithu Pal</b> <b>Dr. Mankul Goel</b>
<b>Dec 18</b>	<b>Sri Aurobindo: Prophet of Nationalism</b> Musical offering	<b>Dr. Maitreyee Karak</b> <b>Mr. Mohit Bansal</b>
<b>Dec 25</b>	<b>Historical Snippets around Christmas in the Ashram</b> Musical Offering	<b>Ms. Monidipa Ghosh</b> <b>Dr. Ramesh Bijlani</b> <b>Dr. Mithu Pal</b>

### CLASSES by Shri Prashant Khanna

<b>Fridays: 02,09,16,23,30</b>	<b>11:15 am–12:15 pm</b>	<b>Meditation Hall</b>	<b>Bhagvad Gita</b>
<b>Sundays: 04,11,18,25</b>	<b>5:30–6:30 pm</b>	<b>Meditation Hall</b>	<b>Bhagvad Gita</b>
<b>Thursdays: 01,08,15,22,29</b>	<b>11:15 am–12:15 pm</b>	<b>ONLINE</b>	<b>Bhagvad Gita</b>
		Online contact Dr. Sonia Gupta (+91 98103 05078)	
<b>Saturdays: 03,10,17,24</b>	<b>11:00 am–12 noon</b>	<b>ONLINE</b>	<b>Savitri</b>
		Online contact Sri Satya Prakash (+91 88007 61046)	

### FREE ONLINE COURSE on 'Human Identity as the Doorway to Human Unity'

**Saturdays & Sundays: Dec 3,4,10,11,17,18**      **Timing: 4.00 pm Indian Standard Time**

**Facilitators: Drs. Ramesh Bijlani & Aditi Kaul**

Zoom link : <<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6082144500?pwd=dHJLWUNqcTIJR25JTnBJYzdjVG5OQT09>>

Meeting ID: 608 214 4500; Passcode: 8kPJG6

**Questions? Email to <[aditikaul9@gmail.com](mailto:aditikaul9@gmail.com)>**

### ADVANCE NOTICE

Online YES (Yoga, Education & Spirituality) .04 course on *Lifestyle Diseases*

**FREE** six-week course starting 12 January 2023

Facilitator: Prof. Ramesh Bijlani

**For details, contact : Dr. Aditi Kaul ([yes.aditik@gmail.com](mailto:yes.aditik@gmail.com))**

## श्रीस्मृति Sri Smriti

(Memorabilia of the Mother)

**Open: Tuesday to Sunday**

**Timing: 10 am – 12 noon**

**(Monday Closed)**

Contact : 2656 7863



Precautions to minimize the spread of coronavirus to be observed

## Ashram Library (Knowledge)

**Tuesday to Sunday Timings : 10:00 A.M. – 4:30 P.M.**  
**(Monday closed)**

Contact : 011 2656 7863

## Sri Aurobindo Ashram-Delhi Branch'S SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS

YouTube	:	<a href="https://youtube.com/sriaurobindoashramdelhibranch">https://youtube.com/sriaurobindoashramdelhibranch</a>
Facebook	:	<a href="http://facebook.com/sriaurobindoashramdelhibranch">http://facebook.com/sriaurobindoashramdelhibranch</a>
Instagram	:	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/sriaurobindoashramdelhibranch">https://www.instagram.com/sriaurobindoashramdelhibranch</a>
Twitter	:	<a href="https://twitter.com/sadelhibranch">https://twitter.com/sadelhibranch</a>
Website	:	<a href="http://sriaurobindoashram.net/">http://sriaurobindoashram.net/</a>
Micro Website	:	<a href="http://sriaurobindoashram.net/Mirra100/">http://sriaurobindoashram.net/Mirra100/</a>

## 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)	<b>Allopathy- Integral Health</b>	(10:00 am-12:00 noon)
Mon-Sat (6 days)	<b>Physiotherapy</b>	(10:30 am-12:30 pm)
Thursday	<b>Dermatology</b>	(1:30 – 2:30 pm)
Thursday	<b>Ophthalmology</b>	(11:00 am-12:00 noon)
Tuesday	<b>Counselling (Online/Offline)</b>	(10:00 am-12:00 noon)
Friday	<b>Psychiatry</b>	(1:00 pm-3:00 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</b>	(11:00 am-1:00 pm)
Tue, Sat	<b>Ayurveda Consultation</b>	(12:00 noon-3:00 pm)
Mon-Sat (6 days)	<b>Ayurveda Treatment</b>	(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 <i>Sadhana</i>	Discourse	Dr. Tarun Baveja

### Physical Practices of Yoga

Mon/Wed/Fri	6:30–7:30 am	<i>Yogasana</i> class	Ms. Priya Gupta
Tue/Thu/Sat	8:00–9:00 am	<i>Yogasana</i> class	Ms. Anushree Jain
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

### Advance Notice: Dhanwantari Ayurveda Residential Camp

At Sri Aurobindo Ashram-Delhi Branch

January 9–15, 2023

Focus : Graceful Ageing (Age Group: 40 years & above); Limited Seats

Activities : Yoga classes & meditation; geriatric healthcare & harmony; 3 Ayurvedic therapies; Recreational games; Fun & cultural evening; Havana & chanting; Personal consultations

Facilitators: Dr. Surinder Katoch, Dr. Mukta Katoch Arora

Coordinator: Oindrila

Contact: 98117 74751 / 97111 12609

Email: [aurocamps@aurobindoonline.in](mailto:aurocamps@aurobindoonline.in)

### DHANWANTARI EYE EXERCISE CAMP

December 17–18 (Sat, Sun), 2022

Timing : 9 am – 12 noon

Facilitators: Dr. Pardeep Kaur & Dr. Mukta Katoch Arora

Contact : 88005 52685 (Health Centre); <[tmihc2000@gmail.com](mailto:tmihc2000@gmail.com)>

## Important Days in the Ashram

**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 2023

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

## THE DELIGHT OF BEING

If Brahman were only an impersonal abstraction eternally contradicting the apparent fact of our concrete existence, cessation would be the right end of the matter; but love and delight and self-awareness have also to be reckoned.

The universe is not merely a mathematical formula for working out the relation of certain mental abstractions called numbers and principles to arrive in the end at a zero or a void unit, neither is it merely a physical operation embodying certain equations of forces. It is the delight of a Self-lover, the play of a Child, the endless self-multiplication of a Poet intoxicated with the rapture of His own power of endless creation.

We may speak of the Supreme as if He were a mathematician working out a cosmic sum in numbers or a thinker resolving by experiment a problem in relations of principles and the balance of forces: but also we should speak of Him as if He were a lover, a musician of universal and particular harmonies, a child, a poet. The side of thought is not enough; the side of delight too must be entirely grasped: Ideas, Forces, Existences, Principles are hollow moulds unless they are filled with the breath of God's delight. These things are images, but all is an image. Abstractions give us the pure conception of God's truths; images give us their living reality.

If Idea embracing Force begot the worlds, Delight of Being begot the Idea. Because the Infinite conceived an innumerable delight in itself, therefore worlds and universes came into existence.

Consciousness of being and Delight of being are the first parents. Also, they are the last transcendences. Unconsciousness is only an intermediate swoon of the conscious or its obscure sleep; pain and self-extinction are only delight of being running away from itself in order to find itself elsewhere or otherwise.

Delight of being is not limited in Time; it is without end or beginning. God comes out from one form of things only to enter into another.

What is God after all? An eternal child playing an eternal game in an eternal garden.

## MAN, THE PURUSHA

God cannot cease from leaning down towards Nature, nor man from aspiring towards the Godhead. It is the eternal relation of the finite to the infinite. When they seem to turn from each other, it is to recoil for a more intimate meeting.

In man nature of the world becomes again self-conscious so that it may take the great leap towards its Enjoyer. This is the Enjoyer whom unknowingly it possesses, whom life and sensation possessing deny and denying seek. Nature of the world knows not God only because it knows not itself; when it knows itself, it shall know unalloyed delight of being.

Possession in oneness and not loss in oneness is the secret. God and Man, World and Beyond-world become one when they know each other. Their division is the cause of ignorance as ignorance is the cause of suffering.

Man seeks at first blindly and does not even know that he is seeking his divine self; for he starts from the obscurity of material Nature and even when he begins to see, he is long blinded by the light that is increasing in him. God too answers obscurely to his search; He seeks and enjoys man's blindness like the hands of a little child that grope after its mother.

God and Nature are like a boy and girl at play and in love. They hide and run from each other when glimpsed so that they may be sought after and chased and captured.

Man is God hiding himself from Nature so that he may possess her by struggle, insistence, violence and surprise. God is universal and transcendent Man hiding himself from his own individuality in the human being.

The animal is Man disguised in a hairy skin and upon four legs; the worm is Man writhing and crawling towards the evolution of his Manhood. Even crude forms of Matter are Man in his inchoate body. All things are Man, the Purusha.

For what do we mean by Man? An uncreated and indestructible soul that has housed itself in a mind and body made of its own elements.

## THE END

The meeting of man and God must always mean a penetration and entry of the divine into the human and a self-immersion of man in the Divinity.

But that immersion is not in the nature of an annihilation. Extinction is not the fulfilment of all this search and passion, suffering and rapture. The game would never have been begun if that were to be its ending.

Delight is the secret. Learn of pure delight and thou shalt learn of God.

What then was the commencement of the whole matter? Existence that multiplied itself for sheer delight of being and plunged into numberless trillions of forms so that it might find itself innumerably.

And what is the middle? Division that strives towards a multiple unity, ignorance that labours towards a flood of varied light, pain that travails towards the touch of an unimaginable ecstasy. For all these things are dark figures and perverse vibrations.

And what is the end of the whole matter? As if honey could taste itself and all its drops together and all its drops could taste each other and each the whole honeycomb as itself, so should the end be with God and the soul of man and the universe.

Love is the keynote, Joy is the music, Power is the strain, Knowledge is the performer, the infinite All is the composer and audience. We know only the preliminary discords which are as fierce as the harmony shall be great; but we shall arrive surely at the fugue of the divine Beatitudes.

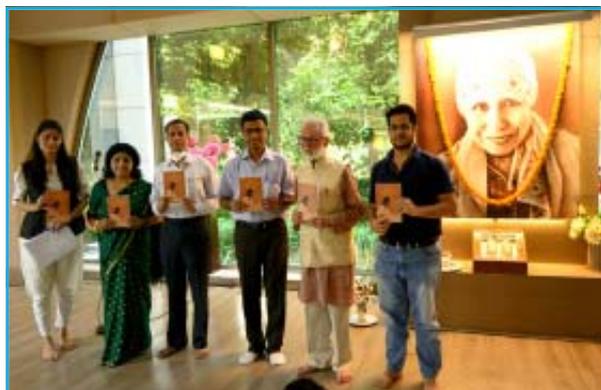
– Sri Aurobindo

## Activities during October 16 – November 15, 2022

### RELEASE OF BOOKS, 16 OCTOBER 2022

Two recent books by Dr. Ramesh Bijlani were released at the Ashram on 16 October 2022.

*Sri Aurobindo for the Young*, has been published by the National Book Trust,



India, as part of the celebrations for the 150<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary of Sri Aurobindo as well as the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of India's Independence. In less than 100 pages, this book gives the young reader an inspiring account of the life and teachings of Sri Aurobindo, a taste of Sri Aurobindo through excerpts from His works, and relates His life-affirming philosophy with the twin impetuses for the youth today – a career and a meaningful life. The book was released by Professor M. Srinivas, Director of the All India Institute of Medical

Sciences, New Delhi.

*What is Spiritual About Being Punctual*, published by Rupa Publications, is not actually a book on punctuality. It has 36 short essays on topics such as Business, Shopping, Management, Leadership, Politics, Marriage, Parenting, and even Divorce, Driving and Photography, which are not generally associated with spirituality; Punctuality is just one of these topics. However, the author has brought out a spiritual dimension to each of these 36 topics as well. The book was released by Professor Bharat Gupt, scholar and an erstwhile professor of English at the University of Delhi.



### OVERNIGHT CAMP FOR CHILDREN OF MIRAMBIKA, 19 OCTOBER 2022

Learning in Mirambika encompasses all-round development of the child to encourage organizing life around the inner Light, the Psychic Being. Spending a night at the Ashram provides opportunities for children to be self-reliant in their daily routines (physical organisation), to stay away from parents and overcoming fear (emotional independence), to learn about life in the Ashram, including its Dining Hall and the Meditation Hall, and learning something from the residents of the Ashram (Mental development towards inner growth). With these objectives, 10 children of the Peace Group (class 5) spent one night accompanied by two teachers in the Ashram on 19 October 2022.

During their stay, they had an enlightening and joyful interactive storytelling session with Dr. Ramesh Bijlani. The children liked the stories very much. Reflections of the children after the storytelling session included, “these were educational stories”, “gave an opportunity to think deeply” and “I learnt to share with the needy”.

Other activities included visits to the Spiritual Art Exhibition, Herbal Center, Hardware Store, Carpentry section, and Electrical workshop. In the evening the children sang shlokas and songs from different states in the meditation hall.

Watching Jupiter and its three moons, and Saturn and its rings through the telescope was a memorable experience for children. They also went for a night walk around the Ashram campus after 9.30 pm without torchlight. This was a “creepy horror walk,” commented the students the next day. All the students except one claimed that they had now overcome their fear of darkness and ghosts. The student who did not make such a claim was made comfortable with an appropriate empathetic and reflective conversation.



### AWARD TO RAMESH BIJLANI, 22 OCTOBER 2022

Swami Kuvalyananda Yoga Puruskar (Prize) of Kaivalyadhama, Lonavala, was conferred on Ramesh Bijlani on 22 October 2022 for his contributions to promotion of yoga and the science of yoga. The award was presented to Dr. Bijlani at Lonavala by Swami Govind Dev Giri in the gracious presence of Swami Vishweshvarananda Giri, Shri O.P. Tiwari (Chairman, Kaivalyadhama) and Shri Subodh Tiwari (CEO, Kaivalyadhama).



### ASHRAM MAIN ENTRANCE ROAD OFFICIALLY CHRISTENED AS SRI AUROBINDO LANE

After a 7-year long effort by Sri Aurobindo Ashram-Delhi Branch founder Shri Surendra Nath Jauhar, the 7 km-long road from Safdarjung Tomb to Mehrauli was named Sri Aurobindo Marg about 50 years ago. Due to the phenomenal expansion and growth of Delhi, it has now become a major arterial road and the traffic on it has increased exponentially. To avoid traffic impediment and any risk of accident, the Ashram therefore shifted its main entrance from Gate No. 3 on this main road to the side road across from Sarvodaya Enclave Colony.

Beginning in April 2011, the Ashram petitioned the

Government to rename this side-road as Sri Aurobindo Lane. It is a pleasure to inform you that in this 150<sup>th</sup> year of Sri Aurobindo's Birth Centenary, this side-road on which the main entrance to the Ashram through Gate No. 6 is presently located has been renamed as Sri Aurobindo Lane, and a sign-board indicating the same was affixed for it on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2022.

### **ICPR LECTURE BY DEVDIP GANGULI, 30 OCTOBER 2022**

A talk titled 'Sri Aurobindo's Vision of India and the World' was delivered at the Ashram by Shri Devdip Ganguli, a member of the faculty of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, Puducherry. In a scholarly, yet simple talk on a complex subject, the speaker highlighted Sri Aurobindo's nationalism as a part of his spiritual vision which celebrates unity in diversity. The lecture was organised by Rishihood University,



Sonipat, as part of a Lecture-Series on Sri Aurobindo's thoughts on Nationalism and Swaraj, sponsored by the Indian Council of Philosophical Research (ICPR) through a grant to Prof. Sampadananda Mishra, Director, Centre of Human Sciences, Rishihood University, amidst celebrations of the 150<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary of Sri Aurobindo and the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of India's independence.

The talk is available on YouTube. The link is:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pd5o6lDbgBw&t=13s>

### **GRATITUDE EVENT, 12 NOVEMBER 2022**

As a part of the celebrations of the 150<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary of Sri Aurobindo and the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of India's Independence, The Satsang Foundation, Delhi Chapter, conducted a two-month program of Yoga for the inmates of Tihar Jail, New Delhi, with support from the Government of India. At the conclusion of the program, to express their Gratitude to the Divine and their spiritual teacher, Sri M, The Satsang Foundation organised an evening of devotional music by the renowned exponent of Carnatic music, Ms. Sudha Raghuraman, at the Ashram on 12 November 2022. Besides the soul-stirring



musical offering by the artiste and her team, members of The Satsang Foundation welcomed the audience, read out a message from Sri M, and felicitated the artistes, and Tara Didi. Dr Ramesh Bijlani, on behalf of the Ashram, briefly alluded to the significance of Sri Aurobindo as a pioneer in making a persuasive case for life-affirming spirituality. He also complimented the Government of India for its support of the program since it has led to meaningful interactions

between various spiritual organizations.

### **VISION IMPROVEMENT COURSE, 12-14 NOVEMBER 2022**

Ten individuals attended the course at The Mother's Integral Health Centre during this period. All expressed their satisfaction at the beneficial effect of the routines taught for vision improvement. The course includes a session on the theoretical aspect of the probability of vision improvement based on Dr. William H. Bates's hypothesis of "how our eyes actually see" which is different from the generally accepted medical paradigm. School for Perfect Eyesight (SPES), a unit of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, developed a regimen of exercise and routines based on Dr. Bates's paradigm of vision which included some routines recommended by Dr. Bates while others were formulated in-house. Sri Aurobindo Ashram-Delhi Branch began conducting similar Eye Courses in 2005 with help of the SPES.

Three practice sessions of the routines and exercises form the practical segment of the course in which the participants can thoroughly learn the routines they are encouraged to continue at home to derive further benefits. Individuals without number have been able to improve their focusing error and many have got rid of the need for spectacles or other external aids. Though the course is designed specifically for potential correction or improvement in refractive error, many other benefits have been observed over the years in various maladies including 'dry eyes', 'cataract' etc.

### **EFFORT TO RENAME PLACES ASSOCIATED WITH SRI AUROBINDO**

On 15th November 2022, Tara Didi and her team met Shri Nitin Gadkari, Hon'ble Minister for Road Transport & Highways, Government of India, to request quicker action on the following points:

1. Expedite the practical formalities in the naming of the road leading to Madhuban in Talla Ramgarh, Dt. Nainital as Sri Aurobindo Sarani [श्रीअरविंद सरणी] which christening has actually been already sanctioned.
2. Support for the appeal to change the name of village Talla Ramgarh in Dist. Nainital to Sri Aurobindo Gram (श्रीअरविंद ग्राम) or as Aurogram (औरोग्राम)
3. Help and support to push for the "peace-zone" around Sri Aurobindo Ashram at Puducherry.

24 October 2022



Dipawali at Ashram in New Delhi



Dipawali at Van Niwas, Nainital

# THE MARVELLOUSLY INSPIRING LIFE OF SRI AUROBINDO

[Excerpted from published material]

## RENASCENT INDIA AND SRI AUROBINDO (1)

When, by the end of the eighteenth century, the foreigner consolidated his power in India, the country was to all appearance a spiritual “waste land”. The Western impact on the Orient had completed the discomfiture of the latter; the old order was seemingly dead, the new one could not be as much as thought of — and only a terrible stupor prevailed, paralysing the secret springs of the nation’s high creative endeavour.

For nearly three thousand years — or more — India had been in the vanguard of human civilisation. She had, almost continuously, thrown out with exuberant self-confidence an amazing variety of literatures, philosophies, schools of painting and architecture and dancing and music, sound systems of government, fruitful traditions in medicine and engineering, and the elaborate sciences of grammar, mathematics, chemistry and astronomy, “One of the oldest races and greatest civilisation on this earth, the most indomitable in vitality, the most fecund in greatness, the deepest in life, the most wonderful in potentiality”, India had taken into itself “numerous sources of strength from foreign strains of blood and other types of human civilisation”, and over a long stretch of years dared gloriously and raced forward adventurously.<sup>1\*</sup> Wave upon wave of invasion had passed over the vast subcontinent, but the stream of Indian culture, deep and broad at once, had pursued its august and serene course, little affected by the periodic spurts of foam or froth on the undulating surface. How, then, was the miracle — for miracle surely it was — of such abundant vitality preserved over so enormous a stretch of time? How did such vitality manage ever to tame the up surging forces of disintegration into submission or to force even out of them new syntheses, new harmonies, new creations? ...

In the days of its plenitude, Indian civilisation took equal note of the primacy of the Spirit and the immediate claims of phenomenal life. Life was a movement, a progression, a battle; and life was complex, and human nature was complex. Whether for individual or collective man, the key to progressive development lay in the realisation of inner unity and the willing acceptance of the play of outer variety. *Âtma-vidyâ*, certainly; but also the minutiae of Dharma — “special for the special person, stage of development, pursuit of life or individual field of action, but universal too in the broad lines which all ought to pursue”.<sup>11</sup> The culture of ancient India was a grand synthesis indeed, a field where patterns of order — like the four graded classes (Varnas) of society and the four successive stages (Ashramas) of a developing human life — permitted abundant variation within them and where heaven found a kin-soil on the earth:

Indian culture raised the crude animal life of desire, self-interest and satisfied propensity beyond its first intention to a noble self-exceeding and shapeliness by infusing into it the order and high aims of the Dharma. But its profounder characteristic aim — and in this it was unique — was to raise this nobler life too of the self-perfecting human being beyond its own intention to a mightiest self-exceeding and freedom... Not a noble but ever death-bound manhood is the highest height of man’s perfection: immortality, freedom, divinity are within his grasp...

On this first firm and noble basis Indian civilisation grew to its maturity and became a thing rich, splendid and unique. While it filled the view with the last

mountain prospect of a supreme spiritual elevation, it did not neglect the life of the levels. It lived between the busy life of the city and village, the freedom and seclusion of the forest and the last overarching illimitable ether. Moving firmly between life and death it saw beyond both and cut out a hundred high roads to immortality. It developed the external nature and drew it into the inner self; it enriched life to raise it into the spirit. Thus founded, thus trained, the ancient Indian race grew to astonishing heights of culture and civilisation; it lived with a noble, well-based, ample and vigorous order and freedom; it developed a great literature, sciences, arts, crafts, industries; it rose to the highest possible ideals and no mean practice of knowledge and culture, of arduous greatness and heroism, of kindness, philanthropy and human sympathy and oneness; it laid the inspired basis of wonderful spiritual philosophies; it examined the secrets of external nature and discovered and lived the boundless and miraculous truths of the inner being; it fathomed self and understood and possessed the world.

It was a delicate balance, but as long as it was maintained, people lived freely and purposively, participating in the delight of existence, and fairly poised between the kindred points of earth and heaven...

Then came Islam. The Punjab, all North India, and even South India felt the effects of the traumatic impact of invader, conqueror and proselytiser...

At the time of the Muslim advent, the widespread knowledge had already begun to shrink and the Rajputs who were predominantly rajasic occupied the throne of India. Northern India was in the grip of wars and internal quarrels and, owing to the decadence of Buddhism, Bengal was overcome with *tamas*. Spirituality sought refuge in South India and by the grace of that *sattwic* power South India was able to retain her freedom for a long time. Yearning for knowledge, progress of knowledge slowly declined; instead, erudition was more and more honoured and glorified; spiritual knowledge, development of yogic power and inner realisation were mostly replaced by *tamasic* religious worship and observance of rajasic ceremonies to gain worldly ends... Such an extinction of the national *dharma* had brought about the death of Greece, Rome, Egypt and Assyria; but the Aryan race... was saved by the rejuvenating flow of heavenly nectar which gushed from time to time from the ancient source. Shankara, Ramanuja, Chaitanya, Nanak, Ramdas and Tukaram brought back to life a moribund India by sprinkling her with that divine nectar. However, the current of *rajas* and *tamas* was so strong that by its pull, even the best were altered into the worst... In the eighteenth century this current attained its maximum force... Power was not lacking in the country, but owing to the eclipse of the Aryan *dharma* and of *sattwa*, that power unable to defend itself, brought about its own destruction. Finally, the Asuric power of India, vanquished by the Asuric power of Britain, became shackled and lifeless. India plunged into an inert sleep of *tamas*...

The impact of the West, and the subsequent national confusions and disasters, quickened the process of decay and disintegration, and the stream of Indian culture and civilisation was in very truth lost — as if for ever — amidst the brambles and quicksands of the eighteenth century. The wheel had turned and turned and brought the season of drought and difficulty, and for the Indian nation the prospect seemed unpromising in the extreme.

— From *Sri Aurobindo: A Biography and a History* by K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar

*To be contd.*

When God's messenger comes to help the world  
And lead the soul of earth to higher things,  
He too must carry the yoke he came to unloose;  
He too must bear the pang that he would heal:  
Exempt and unafflicted by earth's fate,  
How shall he cure the ills he never felt?  
He covers the world's agony with his calm;  
But though to the outward eye no sign appears  
And peace is given to our torn human hearts,  
The struggle is there and paid the unseen price;  
The fire, the strife, the wrestle are within.  
He carries the suffering world in his own breast;  
Its sins weigh on his thoughts, its grief is his:  
Earth's ancient load lies heavy on his soul;  
Night and its powers beleaguer his tardy steps,  
The Titan adversary's clutch he bears;  
His march is a battle and a pilgrimage...  
In the market-place of Matter's capital  
Amidst the chafferings of the affair called life  
He is tied to the stake of a perennial Fire;  
He burns on an unseen original verge  
That Matter may be turned to spirit stuff:  
He is the victim in his own sacrifice.  
The Immortal bound to earth's mortality  
Appearing and perishing on the roads of Time  
Creates God's moment by eternity's beats.  
He dies that the world may be new-born and live.

–From *Savitri* by Sri Aurobindo

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