

New Race

A Journal of Integral Studies



Golden Jubilee Souvenir
1964-2014

*Institute of Human
Study*

I am with you because I am you or you are me.
I am with you, that signifies a world of things,
because I am with you on all levels, on all planes, from
the supreme consciousness down to my most physical
consciousness. Here, in Pondicherry, you cannot
breathe without breathing my consciousness.

The Mother

PHOOLASHREE DEORAH SEVA KOSH

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New Race

blessings



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From the Editor's Desk...

I still remember the day when my father, V.Madhusudan Reddy, had brought a bounty of the Mother's blessings in 1964! He was beaming with delight trying to articulate his gratitude to Her who had showered on him Her grace and love in the form of "Institute of Human Study"! The Institute opened up a new vision, a new mission and my father was too eager to return to Hyderabad and lay the foundation of his future work.

My father had asked the Mother for the name of a journal which could become the messenger of the Institute's vision and mission. And She surprised him with the name "New Race" – a name that conjured up the vision of earth's future, a name that connected the future to the present! My father being a futurist by nature, the name of the journal threw a big challenge to his understanding and his imagination of the new destiny that awaits man. It was to become a journal of future studies – a journal that would study Sri Aurobindo and the Mother's vision of the future!

The first volume of "New Race" was brought out with articles from Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. A new voice and message was heard in the domain of journalism; a new journal heralded the future race of the sons of god. It was as if the Mother herself had sent out a clarion call and invitation to

The radiant children of Paradise

Clarioning darkness' end.

Sri Aurobindo, "A God's Labour"

It may take centuries for the new race beyond man to manifest on earth, but it is as if the Mother had reassured the golden future of mankind by giving this unique name to the journal. "New Race" is a vision and a promise of the next future.

This journal of Institute of Human Studies has travelled fifty long years from 1964 till date. As any "travel", the odyssey of "New Race" also has undergone many ups and down, but it has successfully established itself as a journal of philosophic research in the light of Sri Aurobindo.

The articles of "New Race" have been more in the line of an exposition of Aurobindonean thought rather than being critical essays. They have covered the visions of the future man, the future world, the future society as well as the travails of the present man and society. The contributors have been great sages and sadhaks, scholars and students, professors of religion and philosophy and practioners of yoga. It has been a rich potpourri of articles reflecting the light of knowledge radiating from Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

It has to march beyond its golden jubilee year and bring to the contemporary society the ways and means to hasten the next future of human kind – that of a new race!

Different editors have contributed their own character to the journal, enriching it with depth and width of vision and understanding.

The cover of “New Race” also underwent immense changes, trying to keep in with the demands of time and theme. In fact, the present cover is a “modernized” version of the very first cover design of the first issue of “New Race” that was sent to the Mother.

As the demand of the present is for “Freedom of self-expression”, so too “New Race” seeks the freedom to don a new mode of “self-expression”: henceforth, from 2015, it will be published as an e-journal so that it may reach a worldwide readership. Although this journal has been registered with the office of the Registrar of Newspapers of India, Reg. No. APENG/2000/2014. It is now going to take a “new body” to meet the demand of the time!

I take this opportunity of celebrating the golden jubilee of “New Race” to thank all its chief editors, assistant editors, contributors and the different press managers who printed this journal which came out mostly as a quarterly or as a bi-annual journal, depending on the availability of the articles. Surely we do not forget to thank our subscribers and “free-readership” who has supported this journal for the past fifty years.

To mark the Golden Jubilee of “New Race” this souvenir comprises of selected articles from its old volumes. We have put together some visions of the future as against the reality-sketches of the present. Of course, the editorial-board of “New Race” thanks those individuals, firms and companies who have donated to the publication of this special issue.

Ananda Reddy

There are many profound truths which are like weapons dangerous to the unpractised wielder. Rightly handled, they are the most precious and potent in God's armoury.

Sri Aurobindo

MEDITATION

Sri Aurobindo

What exactly is meant by meditation in Yoga? And what should be its objects?

The difficulty our correspondent finds is in an apparent conflict of authorities, as sometimes meditation is recommended in the form of a concentrated succession of thoughts on a single subject, sometimes in the exclusive concentration of the mind on a single image, word or idea, a fixed contemplation rather than meditation. The choice between these two methods and others, for there are others, depends on the object we have in view in Yoga.

The thinking mind is the one instrument we possess at present by which we can arrive at a conscious self-organisation of our internal existence. But in most men thought is a confused drift of ideas, sensations and impressions which arrange themselves as best they can under the stress of a succession of immediate interests and utilities. In accordance with the general method of Nature much is used as waste material and only a small portion selected for definite and abiding formations. And as in physical Nature, so here the whole process is governed by laws which we rather suffer than use or control.

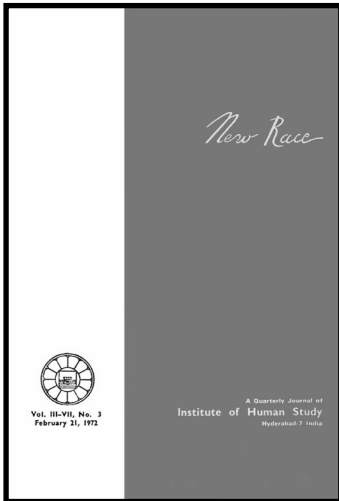
The concentration of thought is used by the Rajayogins to gain freedom and control over the workings of mind, just as the processes of governed respiration and fixed posture are used by the Hathayogins to gain freedom and control over the workings of the body and the vital functions.

By meditation we correct the restless wandering of the mind and train it like an athlete to economise all its energies and fix them on the attainment of some desirable knowledge or self-discipline. This is done normally by men in ordinary life, but Yoga takes this higher working of Nature and carries it to its full possibilities. It takes note of the fact that by fixing the mind luminously on a single object of thought, we awaken a response in general Consciousness which proceeds to satisfy the mind by pouring into it knowledge about that object or even reveals to us its central or its essential truth. We awaken also a response of power which gives us in various ways an increasing mastery over the workings of that on which we meditate or enables us to create it and make it active in ourselves. Thus by fixing the mind on the idea of Divine Love, we can come to the knowledge of that principle and its working, put ourselves into communion with it, create it in ourselves and impore its law on the heart and the senses.

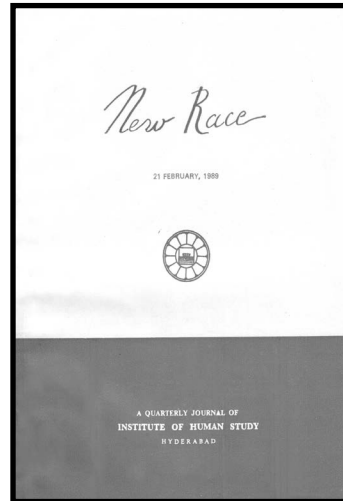
In Yoga concentration is used also for another object, - to retire from the waking state, which is a limited and superficial condition of our consciousness, into the depths of our being measured by various states of Samadhi. For this process contemplation of the single object, idea or name is more powerful than the succession of concentrated thoughts. The latter, however, is capable, by bringing us into indirect but waking communion with the deeper states of being, of preparing an integral Samadhi. Its characteristic utility, however, is the luminous activity of formative thought brought under the control of the purusha by which the rest of the consciousness is governed, filled with higher and wider ideas, changed rapidly into the mould of those ideas and so perfected. Other and greater utilities lie beyond, but they belong to a later stage of self-development.

In the Yoga of Devotion, both processes are equally used to concentrate the whole being or to saturate the whole nature with thoughts of the object of devotion, its forms, its essence, its attributes and the joys of adoration and union. Thought is then made the servant of Love, a preparer of Beatitude. In the Yoga of knowledge meditation is similarly used for discrimination of the True from the apparent, the Self from its forms, and concentrated contemplation for communion and entry of the individual consciousness into the Brahman.

An integral Yoga would harmonise all these aims. It would have also at its disposal other processes for the utilisation of thought and the mastery of the mind.



1972



1989

ON SUFFERING

The Mother

Why is there suffering? How to cure suffering?

For a long time quite recently, that is to say, for days together, there was a very acute, very intense, very clear perception that the action of the Force translated itself externally by what we call “suffering” because that is the only kind of vibration which can pull Matter out of its inertia.

The supreme Peace, the supreme Calm are deformed and disfigured into inertia and into *tamas*, and precisely because this was the deformation of true Peace and Calm, there was no reason why it should change! A certain vibration of awakening — of reawakening — was necessary to come out of this *tamas*, that could not pass directly from *tamas* to Peace; something was needed to shake the *tamas*, and that is translated externally by suffering.

I am speaking here of physical suffering, because all the other sufferings — vital, mental, emotional sufferings — are due to a wrong working of the mind, “and these... may simply be classed together as Falsehood, that’s all. But physical suffering gives me the impression of a child being beaten, because here, in Matter Falsehood has become ignorance; that is to say, there is no bad will — no bad will is there in Matter, all is inertia and ignorance: complete ignorance of the Truth, ignorance of the Origin, ignorance of the Possibility and ignorance even of what is to be done in order not to suffer physically. This ignorance is everywhere in the cells, and it is only the experience, the experience of what is translated in this rudimentary consciousness as suffering, which can awaken, bring forth the need to know and to cure, and the aspiration to transform oneself.

It has become a certainty, because in all the cells there is born the aspiration, which is becoming more and more intense and which wonders at the resistance; but they have observed that whenever something goes wrong in the working (that is to say, instead of being supple, spontaneous, natural, the working becomes a painful effort, a struggle against something which takes the appearance of a bad will, but is only a reticence that does not understand), at that moment, the intensity of the aspiration, of the call, is tenfold, becomes constant. The difficulty is to remain at that state of intensity. Generally everything falls back, I cannot say into a somnolence, but a kind of relaxation: you take things easy; and it is only when the inner disorder becomes painful that the intensity grows and remains permanent. For hours — hours together — without slackening the call, the aspiration, the will to be

united with the Divine, to become the Divine, is maintained at its maximum. Why? Because there was externally what is called a physical disorder, a suffering. Otherwise, when there is no suffering, from time to time one soars up, then one falls back into a slackening; again another time one soars up once more, there is no end to it. That lasts eternally. If we want things to go fast (relatively fast according to the rhythm of our life), this smack of the whip is necessary. I am convinced of it, because as soon as you are within your inner being you look upon that with contempt (as regards oneself).

But then, all of a sudden, when there comes this true Compassion of the Divine Love, and when one sees all these things that appear so horrible, so abnormal, so absurd, this great pain which is upon all beings and even upon all things... then there takes birth in this physical being the aspiration to soothe, to cure, to remove that. There is in Love, at its Origin, something which is translated constantly as the intervention of Grace: a force, a sweetness, something like a vibration of solace spread everywhere, but which an illumined consciousness can direct, concentrate on some points. And it is there, there itself that I saw the true use one can make of thought: thought serves as a kind of channel to carry this vibration from place to place, wherever it is necessary. This force, this vibration of sweetness is there in a static way upon the world, pressing in order to be received, but it is an impersonal action. And thought — illumined thought, surrendered thought, thought which is no longer anything but an instrument, which tries no longer to initiate things, which is satisfied with being moved by the higher consciousness — thought serves as an intermediary to establish a contact, a relation, and to enable this impersonal Force to act wherever it is necessary, upon definite points.

It may be said in an absolute way that an evil always carries its own remedy. One might say that the cure of any suffering coexists with the suffering. So instead of seeing an evil “useless” and “stupid” as it is generally thought to be, you see that the progress, the evolution which has made the suffering necessary — which is the cause of the suffering and the very reason for its existence — attains the intended result; and at the same time the suffering is cured, for those who are able to open themselves and receive. The three things — suffering as a means of progress, progress, and the cure of suffering — are coexistent, simultaneous; that is to say, they do not follow each other, they are there at the same time.

If at the moment when the transforming action creates a suffering, there is in that which suffers the necessary aspiration and opening, the remedy also

is taken in at the same time, and the effect is total, complete: transformation, with the action necessary to obtain it, and, at the same time, cure of the false sensation produced by the resistance. And the suffering is replaced by something which is not known upon this earth, but which is akin to joy, well-being, trust and security. It is a supersensation, in a perfect peace, and which is obviously the only thing that can be eternal.

This analysis expresses very imperfectly what one would call the “content” of Ananda.

I believe it is something that has been felt, experienced, partially and in a very fleeting manner, through all the ages, but which has just begun to concentrate and almost concretise itself upon earth. But physical Matter, in its cellular form, has, one cannot say fear or anxiety, but a kind of apprehension of new vibrations, and this apprehension naturally takes away from the cells their receptivity and assumes the appearance of uneasiness — it is not suffering, but an uneasiness. When, however, this apprehension is counterbalanced and cured by aspiration and the will for total surrender and by the act of total surrender, then this sort of apprehension, having disappeared, becomes a supreme well-being.

All this, they are as though microscopic studies of the phenomena of consciousness, free from mental intervention. The necessity of using words to express oneself brings this mental intervention, but in the experience it does not exist. And it is very interesting, because the pure experience has a content of truth, of reality, which disappears as soon as the mind intervenes. There is a savour of true reality which altogether escapes expression because of that. It is the same difference as between an individual and his portrait, a fact and the story told. It is like that. But it is much more subtle.

And then, to come back to what we were saying just now, when one is conscious of this Force — this Force, this Compassion in its essential reality — and when one sees how it can act through the conscious individual, one has the key to the problem.

He who has done even a little good to human beings, though he be the worst of sinners, is accepted by God in the ranks of His lovers and servants. He shall look upon the face of the Eternal.

Sri Aurobindo

A GLOBAL HUMANITY

Nolini Kanta Gupta

A global view of humanity is becoming more and more insistent, unavoidable and inevitable. It is being forced upon the normal consciousness of mankind so that the ordinary life itself has to be conducted and lived according to the demands of that view. It is this that humanity is one, that mankind as a whole is a single organism. Even like an individual being, the collective being too is a unit, a close-knit living unit. As the individual has different parts and limbs, organs and systems, so is humanity composed of nations and races, cultures and religions. And as the parts of the “body natural” do not exist by themselves, independently of one another, each for its own sake without regard for others, so do the various human aggregates that form the “body politic” live and move intimately together, for a common purpose in a united functioning.

There is an aim, a goal to which humanity moves in obedience to a cosmic purpose, in accordance with a cosmic law. The principle of evolution has* given an expression of formula to this cosmic law and purpose, although it is more or less an outward expression and in reference to an outward phenomenon.

The different limbs of an organism are held together and they work together harmoniously. The whole world, as we are finding it today, is indissolubly one. There is an interrelation and interaction that compel them all to stand together or fall together. This is, however, a static unity and harmony, a harmony that is in the being, in essence. For in the outward working there is always a play of discord—quarrels and rivalries, competition and conflict, struggle and battle. Indeed this seems to be the rule, the other seems more an ideal than a fact. This unity that is found actually is rather the unity of a locked fight. Within the individual the same thing is there. There is a mal-adjustment among the organs and limbs, not only physically but also psychologically. But all the same beyond and beside this play of discord there is an inherent and overruling unity and harmony which creates the personality or individuality of the human person. The characteristic of the human person is his forward-looking gaze—he has a purpose in life. This is exactly the dynamic element, the something more that is needed for the fulfilment of the organic unity. The element is what we know as the principle of progress which is the psychological name for evolution. In other words, there is in man and in the world not only a static unity and harmony in essence,

but a progressive unity and harmony in manifestation. The individual moves towards the health and growth of the body and mind and the spirit. If one life is not sufficient for the purpose as some seers declare, several lives are at the disposal of the individual to achieve it. In what sense can the same or something similar be said of the collective or group life?

There is the view, an old-world view, of eternal recurrence. That is to say, creation is ever the same; it goes through a cycle of changes, but the cycles repeat *ad infinitum*. There is no progress, no forward movement towards a more and more perfection. Indeed, the cycle of creation is a closed circle. The idea of progress was very much in vogue at one time. It was born under the auspices of Romantic Idealism; it was fostered and strengthened by youthful Science in the first enthusiasm of her early discoveries, especially that of the fact of biological evolution. There has, however, been a setback since, when it was found that the original picture of evolution —the emergence and growth of species in the course of a few thousand years is far from being true, that evolution means not thousands but millions of years. And when archaeologists discovered that men could build hygienic cities, run democratic states, discuss and argue acutely on recondite problems of life and philosophy, women knew the use of ornaments and jewels of consummate beauty and craftsmanship in epochs when they were expected to be no more than wild denizens of the cave or the forest, the belief in human progress, at least along a steady straight line, was very much shaken.

Yet an imperious necessity of the idea, almost as an inevitable ingredient of human consciousness, always exists and constantly makes its presence felt. If recurrence is the law of creation, this idea with its will to fruition is also a recurrent phenomenon. A modern form of it has been given a very dynamic drive in the Marxian gospel. A socio-economic progress, however, is and can be only a part, in fact, a result of a wider and deeper progress.

We say then that the fraternity and unity of mankind has been a constant dream and aspiration, a settled ideal. And in the circumstance of today it is becoming more and more evident that the idea is a secret fact of existence and that there is an overwhelming urge in Nature to bring it out and establish it as a manifest and concrete reality. If we review the history of mankind once again, not measuring it by its centuries but by its millenniums, not by its apparent habits and outward forms but by inner forces and attitudes, we shall discover that it is the story of the unfoldment of a collective fulfilment, of an ascension in grades of consciousness towards an ever higher and vaster truth and reality.

Viewed as a progressive growth of consciousness and transformation of nature, man's advance has been marked out in a few very definite stages. The first was the purely animal man—*Pasu*—when man lived merely as a physical being, concerned solely about his body. Then came *Pisacha*, the man of vital urges in their crudest form, the man of ignorant passions and dark instincts who has been imaged in the popular mind as the ghoul. At the next state with a further release of the consciousness, when the larger vital impulses come into play man becomes the *Rakshasa*, the demon. Egoistic hunger for possession, enjoyment, enlarged and increased appetite are his characteristics. Next came the *Asura*, the Titan, the egoistic mental man in his earlier avatar seeking to emerge out of the purely vital nature. Ambition and pride are his guiding spirit. Prometheus is his prototype. There are still two higher types which have been established in the human consciousness and in the world atmosphere as dynamic ideals, if not as common concrete facts of the material world. The first is the ethical man, who seeks to govern his life according to some principle of light, and purity, such for example, as unselfishness, altruism, chivalry, self-abnegation, rectitude, truthfulness etc. He is the *Sattwic* man, as known in India. There is also a still higher category, where consciousness endeavours to go beyond mind, enters into the consciousness of the Spirit; then we have the spiritual man, the saint and the sage. Beyond lie the supra-mental domains formed of the consciousness of the gods.

Man, individually and collectively, has passed and is passing through these steps of evolution. The last one is his goal at the present stage. To be a saint, seer or sage is not enough for man. He must be a god. Indeed when he has succeeded to be a god then only would it be possible for him to become what a saint or a seer or sage has to be in order to fulfil himself totally and integrally. The human race as a whole is progressing along the same line towards the same consummation. That is the secret purpose and end of Nature, to evolve a growing developing material form housing, embodying higher and wider ranges of consciousness, integrating all elements into a more and more intimate and inviolable unity and harmony.

This progress towards ever higher and wider consciousness means also in man's social or collective life the formation of larger and larger aggregates, unification of mankind in ever widening groups. From man the solitary animal, through the family, the clan, the tribe to the nation the race has been increasing the circle of its sympathy and kinship. The birth of the modern nation out of regional and local grouping is a triumph of the emerging

consciousness in humanity pointing to another signal and supreme triumph, the emergence of the global sense in man that is to bind humanity as a single indissoluble indivisible unity in actual life.

The aggregates are meant to express, apart from the growing unity, a diversity of achievements in the collective consciousness marking and enriching that unity. The highest, the largest aggregate attained at the present moment is, as I have said, that of the nation, the lower and lesser aggregates have been subsumed under it. The principle of integration in its graded course is precisely this that the new unity absorbs the previous lesser units as its components, some find their place in it in a transmuted form and function— those that are of use in the new disposition—others that had truth only for the past disappear or remain as vestings of an extinct reality. The clan and the tribe have practically disappeared as living realities; the family has been maintaining itself still as a functioning unit, but it has considerably changed its features and in recent times it has been undergoing revolutionary transmutations. The rigours of the system prevailing in the old world have all but gone, they have been reduced to the minimum: the system has become more or less a mere outline, the substance and the details have become very vague and fluid. It may come out with quite a new connotation in the not very distant future. The nation, then, as the living unit of aggregation today, is on the move again towards a yet more enlarged aggregate. Empire was a blind and violent attempt at this greater aggregation. The Commonwealth of more recent times was a conscious, deliberate and healthier endeavour towards the same goal. The various trials with regard to a league of nations is also a conscious and deliberate, although somewhat groping experiment in the same line.

Man's attempt to surpass himself and establish a superhuman race is a conscious and deliberate process and the attempt can be successful only through such a willed discipline, *sadhana*. In the same way, a supranational human unity will be possible as a parallel eventuality to the same process of individual discipline.

Humanity is evolving and developing the various groupings to manifest fundamental aspects of its cosmic person. Ancient Egypt, for example, brought us in contact with an occult world and a subliminal consciousness. We know also of the nature of the Hebraic genius, the moral fervour, the serious, almost grim spirit of Righteousness that formed and even now forms a major strain in the European or Christian culture and civilisation. The famous "sweetness and light" of the Hellenic mind supplied the other strain.

The Roman genius for law and government is a well-known commonplace of history. Well-known also India's spirituality. All these modes of consciousness are elements — forces, energies and personalities—that build up the godhead of humanity. Peoples and races in the past were the scattered limbs of the godhead—scattered and isolated from one another, because of the original unconsciousness and sharp egocentricity out of which Nature started its course of evolution. The *disjecta membra* are being collected together by a growing consciousness.

Such then is the destiny of man and mankind—man to rise to higher heights of consciousness beyond mental reason that are not governed by the principle of unity, identity, mutuality and totality. In other words, he will take his seat in the status of his soul, his inner and inmost being, his divine personality where he is one with all beings and with the world. This is a rare and difficult realisation for man as he is today, but tomorrow it will be his normal nature. The individual will live in his total being and therefore in and through other individuals; as a consequence the nature too in each will undergo a divine transmutation, a marvellous sea-change.

Humanity as a race will then present the figure of a homogeneous unit— it will be a unity of many diversified elements, not simply, however, a composition of discrete individuals, but of varied aggregations of individuals— even the body is not merely composed of cells, but also these cells are collected in aggregates forming various limbs and systems, each again with its own identity and function. Indeed, the cosmic or global humanity is very likely to be pyramidal in structure—not a flat and level construction. There will be an overall harmony and integration containing a rich variety of gradations— gradations of consciousness, as even now there are: only the whole will be more luminous, that is to say, more conscious and more concordant; for at the top, on the higher levels, new lights will show themselves and men embodying those lights. They will radiate and spread out, infiltrate into the lower ranges something of their enlightenment and harmony and happiness which will bring about a global purification and a new dispensation; even the material world, the vegetable and mineral domains too may be taken up into this luminous consummation and earth become the Garden of Eden that it once was, suffused with a new glory.

God's servant is something; God's slave is greater.

Sri Aurobindo

CHARACTER OF THE NEW AGE

A. B. Purani

Everywhere today there is the idea of the New Age. What kind of v v Age is it likely to be? There is the physical aspect of it mainly due to the scientific progress that has brought about changes in the outer, and consequently some in the inner, life of man. The question is, is the 'atomic age' the new age? It is true that the atomic age has opened a new chapter in man's mastery over matter.

There are some outer signs of the new age. (1) Man has come nearer to man than he ever was before. (2) Nations have come together for good or evil. (3) Though there is general feeling current today for peace and for the unity of mankind, our cultural patterns are so complex that no single group finds it easy to realise them. The little pamphlet "Meditation group for the New Age" says: "Nearly all feel that they have so much to do, their lives are so complicated, there is so little privacy today and the demands of work and family leave so little spare time or energy, that although they realise the value of a time of meditation each day, they feel that they cannot undertake it. These difficulties are real. The whole organisation and machinery of modern living takes no account at all of the rights of the inner life and so the whole trend at present is against it. But in spite of these formidable problems, if we feel the value of inner life strongly enough and really intend to give it some time, we can usually find a way of making room in a day for at least a short meditation." (p.11) It says further: "It is plain, however, that it is impossible to have ideal conditions for this in modern life." (p. 12)

It is clear from these quotations that "modern life" does not allow us to usher in the "new age." It answers the needs of those who believe that the new age would be an age of material prosperity and of increasing complexity. The measures which the "Group for the New Age" suggests are: (i) Concentration—although you have hardly time for it as the pamphlet says, (ii) Simplification of life. This is to be brought about by reducing vanity, giving up artificiality and pride and hypocrisy in one's life. Even if one models one's life according to these measures, they will be only palliatives, for they do not go to the root of the problem.

The idea of the "New Age" started after the two World Wars which, shook the psychological foundations of western culture. Before the two world wars there was no need for a New Age because Europe claimed to bear the white man's burden. It never occurred to its leaders and thinkers that there was a

flaw somewhere in the culture that was being built on the basis of economic prosperity and political power. Progress in science is the victory of mind over matter. There is nothing wrong with science. What was wrong was the use of science by man, for he used it mainly for satisfying collective greed and ambition.

The second factor that has brought the New Age near is the effective organisation of collective life. This marked a great advance, for it gave humanity democracy, individual freedom and industrial revolution which promoted commerce on a colossal scale. The mistake made then was to put a premium on economic life rather than on ethics, idealism, religion and spirituality.

The problem is how to put economy and science in their proper place in the collective life of man and how to restore and make active the higher values in modern culture. The important question to consider is: would mind, the human intellect, be able to solve these problems? Has mind in the past solved any problem?

Secondly, so many efforts are being made by mankind today to 'do something' by way of bringing an inner change in man. They are all well-intentioned and good as far as they go. But they do not go far enough. Should we be satisfied with palliatives? Every one has to decide this question according to the aspiration within himself.

Thirdly, we have to consider whether man is only mind, intellect, or is he only the life-force, the vital being? Has man no greater potentiality within himself?

"New Age," yes. But what kind of new age? Will the 'New Age' be the age in which man continues his futile efforts and remains self-satisfied with palliatives? Is there a radical change possible or not? All the upsurge that we see today, the crisis through which humanity has passed and is even now passing, the situation in Vietnam and in many other places on the globe,—the ideological crisis—all these are symptomatic of a deeper urge, a more radical need.

The nature of the 'New Age' will not be, it seems to me, materialistic. It will not merely be an age in which man tries hard to maintain peace (as he is doing now). Peace for what? For survival? Is survival the highest goal of humanity? After all his great achievements in poetry, social organisation and science, is man struggling only to survive? Somehow that does not seem worthy of man's dignity. It does not justify history, —all his past efforts and achievements. We may be told that 'peace' is needed for "Progress." In

what does man's progress consist? That is the question. The Western world proudly proclaimed that it had attained a height of progress unattained by any other culture. It affirms that it is "progressive." How half-true and deceptive the belief is we all now know. It is the crisis that was brought about by this "progress" that shook the foundations of the modern world and produced a great psychological unrest.

In that deep psychological churning some individuals turned to science as a liberating power,—science 'rationally' applied to life. But who was to persuade man to become rational? How was science to be applied to life? These questions were never considered.

Some people turned to Agnosticism. Others went in for Existentialism. Some stress the Eternal in the Present and do not accept the continuous unrolling of the Timeless Eternal in everlasting time. Is it not the Eternal that projects itself into the future through the present? Are these lines of force tending towards the future only unreal mental abstractions, mere suggestions without any substance in them? If the present is the only segment of time that is real, then it would mean that thoughts, emotions, feelings and impulses will be the only real and final content of the Eternal. If the closed physical consciousness is all that man can experience, then man is reduced to a lump of matter. Is there no projection of the spirit of man into the future? Is there no current flowing towards him from heights beyond mind, life and body?

The content of the New Age must be psychological. It must, be something inner. It must involve a radical change in human nature,—not in the whole of humanity at one bound, but somewhere in some men it must begin. Then again the question arises; has man got within him untapped potentialities beyond body, life and mind?

The average man refuses even to think about these questions. He is content to take life as a mystery, a riddle to which no one has found an answer. What he proposes to do may be good for him, in the sense that he can't do anything better,—he even does not want to think about it. I have seen many people going up to the top of high buildings — hotels and restaurants, and looking down on the vast expanse of modern cities with a kind of justifiable pride in the growth of collective consciousness, and in man's power of organisation of life for decent living. They feel: how great is man! how great we are! It hardly occurs to them to ask: Where will all this lead to? What is the essential spirit of man? Is he only mind struggling in a world of unconscious matter to gain his sustenance, to make

life comfortable? Is man only the life-force trying to satisfy itself by matter and by fulfilling its own desires and ambitions? Is man only the body that is born and dies?

When I was at Cambridge, in England, in 1935, I told a group of “friends” (Quakers) that Cambridge and King’s College had the distinction of giving to the world great discoverers like Newton and Faraday and other who have influenced powerfully the life of humanity in its dealing with matter, or material energy. Here in King’s College was another discoverer from India, Sri Aurobindo, who gave to the world a new dimension of the spirit, of man’s higher spiritual potentialities, the Supermind or the Truth consciousness. It is a great inner truth which is bound to revolutionise man’s life in due course.

In India the name given to one who gives to humanity a vision of the Truth, is *Rishi*, the seer. Rishi is one who gives to his age the vision of the Truth that is trying to manifest in humanity, so that man may be able to remould his life in order to receive the Truth and embody it in life. Sri Aurobindo’s great vision of man’s higher potentiality and his great spiritual achievement, usher in the New Age. Great discoveries are not always recognised by contemporary men—especially if the discoverers happen to be much in advance of the times. The crisis today is an inner crisis worsened by the progress of material science. It is, really speaking challenge to the spirit of man.

Sri Aurobindo envisages the New Age as an age of the growth of the human spirit in all its fullness from the spiritual to the material plane. According to him the New Age will not consist in mere material progress or only in space conquest. The New Age will consist in man’s reaching the Higher Plane of consciousness beyond Mind and living his individual and collective life from the new level of Truth-consciousness. In the New Age the two powers, Matter and Spirit, that now stand in opposition to each other, will be thoroughly reconciled for Matter is nothing but the mask of the Spirit, a mould for its expression, a field for its manifestation.

In the New Age the structure of life will undergo great changes. Modern culture will undergo many radical changes, not in its outer forms but in its sense of values. If the New Age is to become a reality, then the idea of man mainly as an economic unit of collective life must change. The culture that is seen today is not helpful to the New Age because its tendency is to grind man under its materialistic pressures.

Therefore, the New Age must begin by creating a new mould of life in which awakening the higher potentialities of man will be the central dynamic urge. What is required is not the restoration of past religions, ideas, and forms but an active effort to make spirituality an experience, especially by an attempt to rise to a higher plane of consciousness through a new form of life in which the material progress achieved by man will act as a great help. To create such a new mould of life will be the most important function of the New Age.

This is not an easy task. It presupposes in the human spirit a steady determination for the higher life. Though the task is difficult it is not impossible, particularly because Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have made a great spiritual Power available to man. The New Age is already at work as a seed-idea in many places in the world. The mould created by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother at Pondicherry can serve as an inspiration and a model.

MYSTIC MOTHER

Amal Kiran (K. D. Sethna)

Seeing you walk our little ways, they wonder
That I who scorn the common loves of life
Should kneel to You in absolute surrender,
Deeming Your visible perfection wife
Unto my spirit's immortality.

They think I have changed one weakness for another,
Because they mark not the new birth of me—
This body which by You, the Mystic Mother,
Has now become a child of my vast soul!
Loving Your feet's earth-visitation,
I find each heart-throb miraculously flower
Out of the unplumbable God-mystery
Behind dark clay; and, hour by dreamful hour,
Upbear that fragrance like an aureole.

NEW CREATION

Madhav P. Pandit

An experience, particularly a spiritual experience, is usually true and valid only for him who gets it. He does not need any proof of its reality; he experiences it. But to others his experience is not true in value unless they take it from him on faith or themselves experience some results of it, unless something of that experience touches them in a distinctive manner. Thus if someone experiences or realises a state of Peace, it has value and is true to him by itself. But to others it has no meaning or value unless they too feel some impact, some vibration of the Peace proceeding from him. Thus it is through an effect, a working of its power, force, that any experience, any development in the inner consciousness can connect itself overtly with the objective order of things. Only so can it hope to be recognised and accepted by others.

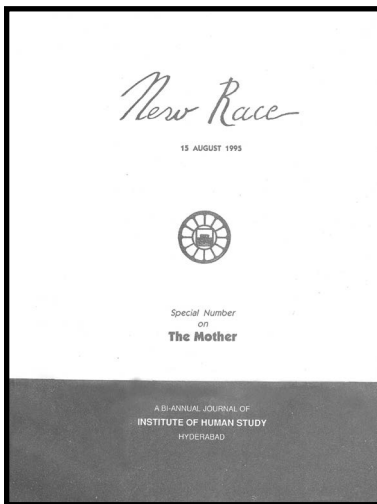
And it is through this aspect of Power that the advent of Supramental Consciousness is manifesting in its initial phase. For Power is first needed to protect this infant Light in the ocean of obscurity and darkness that is the material universe. And as this creation grows and takes shape, it is making itself felt through Power, through the power it has to control and direct the movement of forces in the universe. Forces of life and death, harmony and strife, knowledge and ignorance, begin to feel the impact of a greater Power which quickens the growth and enlarges the field of the constructive and diminishes the hold and scope of the destructive elements in Nature.

It is only after this phase is sufficiently advanced that the other aspects of Delight, of Harmony, of Knowledge can begin their characteristic manifestations. They are, of course, there even now, but more as the basis of the frontal Power than as overtly active participants in the emerging creation.

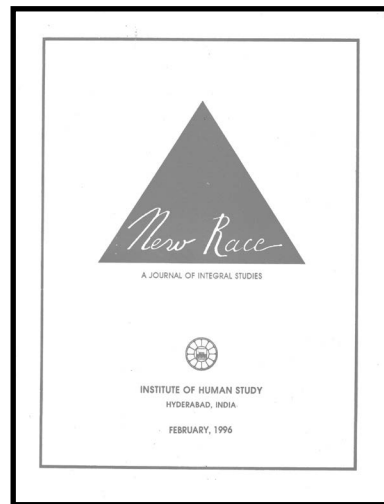
But this Power, warns the Mother, is not to be invoked or sought to be made active in oneself unless there is a sufficient measure of equanimity, equality in the aspiring being. Even a little of it were to come into a consciousness that is still turbid, still tossed between the extremes—like and dislike, then the system can only break. Therefore She enjoins upon all who seek for the reign of the Supramental to first acquire a state of equality in the being. This equality can only be built up by elimination of the ego, a complete surrender and purity. Neither is the Power to be

pulled by impatient effort. The right way is to increase one's receptivity, give oneself in totality and keep open so that the Consciousness may choose its own moment—which is the right moment—to respond and enter the system that is ready for it.

It was the 29th February 1960, the first anniversary of the descent of the Supramental Force on Earth. Devotees had gathered at the Ashram from all parts of the world to participate in the celebrations and receive the Mother's Blessings on the occasion. A special enclosure had been prepared for the Mother to sit and receive the devotees one by one. All had been told not to touch Her but only receive from Her in their hands what She gave. The function commenced in the evening. One by one people went up to Her and received the special symbol badge which She distributed. But one visitor, disregarding the instructions, touched Her hands. The next moment he fell down unconscious and had to be removed for medical attention.



1995



1996

TOWARDS A NEW WORLD

Sisirkumar Mitra

Man is at this moment on the threshold of a New Age and will be looking towards a new world. Mystic experience affirms its birth. It marks a fulfilment of the purpose of Nature in the evolution of man. Man, so long considered the last term in this process, has now the chance to transcend himself and rise to a higher stage. The mental man must break out of his old prison-house of half-lit consciousness and ego-driven life, and emerge into the infinite Light, Delight and Power of the supramental consciousness for which Nature has been working, step by step, all down the ages. His preparedness today for this divine destiny may be presumed to be an indication of his having attained the highest possibilities of the mind. Powers that have ever been beyond his mind are now within his reach to help him attain his inherent perfection. The call has come and is awaiting his response. It is for him to respond.

Now is “the hour of God”, says Sri Aurobindo, “the hour of the unexpected,” the hour “when the breath of the Lord is abroad upon the waters of our being.” Hence his warning: “Unhappy is the man or the nation which, when the divine moment arrives, is found sleeping or unprepared to use it, because the lamp has not been kept trimmed for the welcome and the ears are sealed to the call. But thrice woe to them who are strong and ready, yet waste the force or misuse the moment; for them is irreparable loss or a great destruction.”¹

What the Vedic Rishis had glimpsed as a distant light of heaven was seized and realised more concretely by Sri Aurobindo as a creative light of the Supreme, called by him the Supermind. And he declared: “As there has been established on earth a mental Consciousness and Power which shapes a race of mental beings and takes up into itself all of earthly nature that is ready for the change, so now there will be established on earth a gnostic Consciousness and Power which will shape a race of gnostic spiritual beings and take up into itself all of earth-nature that is ready for the new transformation.”²

This he had said during the first world conflagration in 1914-18. The dawn was then behind the clouds. In 1934 he was positive: “The supramental Force is descending, but it has not yet taken possession of the body or of matter—there is still much resistance to that.” But he assured: “I know this descent is inevitable—I have faith in view of my experience that the time can be and should be now and not in a later age.”

And this came to pass in 1956—the greatest event of the century, the greatest ever in human history. It has come down as a Force of the Supreme's Grace not only to save the world from self-annihilation but to transform the human into a divine world.

The manifestation 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. (The Mother)

The manifestation took place on February 29, 1956 and the Mother made this historic declaration on April 24, 1956, the occasion being the thirty-sixth anniversary of her final arrival at Pondicherry. The other Message given by the Mother on the same occasion was:

A New Light breaks upon the earth.

A New World is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.

In yet another Message the Mother said : "A New Light has dawned.; Wake up to it."

Some time after, in another context, the Mother said : "The greatest: thing that can be, the most marvellous thing since the beginning of creation, the miracle has happened... A new world, yes, a completely new world is born and is here."

This 'miracle' as said before, took place on February 29, 1956. On February 29, 1960, its first leap-year celebration, the Mother gave her own record of it:

During the Common Meditation on
Wednesday the 29th February, 1956.

This evening the Divine Presence, concrete and material, was there present amongst you. I had a form of living gold, bigger than the universe and I was facing a huge and massive golden door which separated the world from the Divine.

As I looked at the door, I knew and willed, in a single movement of consciousness, that "the time has come," and lifting with both hands a mighty golden hammer I struck one blow, one single blow on the door and the door was shattered to pieces.

Then the supramental Light and Force and Consciousness rushed down upon earth in an uninterrupted flow.

In a subsequent explanation the Mother said: “It is interesting to note that the words—‘The time has come’—which express what I simultaneously know and willed when I found myself in front of the massive door on whose other side was the world, were heard by me in English and not in French. It was as if Sri Aurobindo had spoken them...The pouring of the Light is constant...The manifestation in the universal atmosphere is in the subtle physical. In the outer physical there is nothing apparent yet. Nature did not reject the Supermind—it could not reject it; but the Supermind has not got engulfed and has to work itself out. Everything, however, has changed, radically changed. Previously the working of Light was under pressure of the Mind of Light. Sri Aurobindo had secured that victory. Now it is the Supermind that directly guides and governs. Here, too, Sri Aurobindo has been instrumental. And his presence is in me always.”

How will the New Light affect the life of humanity? Says the Master:

The presence of the liberated and now sovereign Supramental light and force at the head of evolutionary Nature might be expected to have its consequences in the whole evolution. An incidence, a decisive stress would affect the life of the lower evolutionary stages something of the light, something of the force would penetrate downwards and awaken into a greater action the hidden Truth-Power everywhere in Nature. A dominant principle of harmony would impose itself on the life of the Ignorance; the clash of struggle, the abnormal vicissitudes of exaggeration and depression and the unsteady balance of the unseen forces at work in their mixture and conflict, would feel the influence and yield place to a more orderly pace and harmonic steps of the development of being, a more revealing arrangement of progressive life and consciousness, a better life-order. A freer play of intuition and sympathy and understanding would enter into human life, a clearer sense of the truth of self and things and a more enlightened dealing with the opportunities and difficulties of existence...³

In the rapidly changing world of today are there not signs enough of the initial action of the New Force visible to an ordinary eye?

It will be interesting to recall how the ancient religious traditions of the world had prophesied the advent of a New World, a New Age, how those prophets were more or less the same in spirit and, in some instances almost the same in form, and how they agree, above all, about the time of its starting.

Ancient traditions everywhere speak of the Age of Gold to be and all great epochs of cultural or spiritual resurgence go down in history as precursors of the golden age, leading to a culmination in which the consciousness of man will be illumined for ever by golden light, the light, as it is now given to us to know, of the supramental consciousness whose manifestation is announced by the Mother.

It is generally known that the four Ages—Satya, Treta, Dwapara and Kali—into which the ancient Hindus divided Cosmic History are the four Ages of Gold, Silver, Bronze and Iron, known as such also to the Greeks, the Romans and the early Christians. This sliding scale showed a gradual decline in the culture of the peoples concerned.

It was however the night before a dawn. The downward curve meant no retrogression. It was veiled progress in the sense that man as an individual or a collective body needed varied experiences for an integral development and perfection of his capacities, potential and actual. Besides, the earliest Ages of Simplicity, Truth and Purity were the childhood of the race from which it was to grow into the complexities of manhood. The Age of Iron, or the Kali Yuga, as the Hindus call it, is the 'Dark Age' that marks the downward curve of progress and with it a degeneration from which man by his own effort can never save himself.

Such crises in evolution call for the appearance of Incarnations, Avatars or Vibhutis of God, to help him up to a higher level of consciousness. The great work of the Avatar says the Mother, "is to manifest the Divine Grace upon earth."

Ancient religious traditions also prophesied divine advents to usher in the Dharmarajya or 'the Kingdom of Righteousness of Sri Krishna' s vision, 'a new world of peace and harmony of the Maitreya Buddha,' Laotse's ideal world of 'Grand Harmony,' the Christ's 'Kingdom of Heaven,' 'a new Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven.'

A most striking fact about all these splendid visions of the Future of mankind is that they indicate their fulfilment in a period of human history which, from all points of view, seems to take its start from the Present. Sri Aurobindo calls this a significant period, 'the divine-moment,' the moment for man to be ready for the next higher stage of his evolution.

The Buddhistic tradition has it that the Maitreya Buddha would bless the earth by his advent 2500 years after Gautama, the Buddha. In 1955 was observed the 2500th anniversary of the Buddha. The return of the Jews to Palestine—now an accomplished fact—was predicted in the ancient cabba

writings of the Jews as a condition for the coming of the Messiah who would establish 'the earthly Paradise,' 'the heavenly Jerusalem.' Islamic traditions say that fourteen centuries after Mohammad a Mehdi or 'Redeemer' would appear on earth and after vanquishing Antichrist, establish 'a regime of equality, justice, and a brotherly love on the earth.' The date, according to the Islamic calendar, coincides with the present age. The Hindu Puranic tradition of Ten Avataras or 'Divine Incarnation,' announces the coming of Kalki, the tenth and last Avatara, who would overthrow the old order—the existing human-animal structure of consciousness and ways of life—and bring in the new.

Apart from the point of time, the tradition describes vividly the general conditions of the present age as the rise and dominance of a worldwide scientific materialism heightening the ease and comfort of life, yet at the same time threatening death to all life. Such would be the prevailing state of the world before the advent of Kalki. Other traditions, particularly Buddhistic, Christian and Germanic, unanimously affirm that like Kalki, the Incarnation or the Saviour of the present age, would come riding a white Horse. This symbolic expression means a manifestation of pure energy, or a creative power of Heaven.

The common conclusion of all these religious traditions is that the present is that sacred and momentous hour in human history when, as the consummation of the evolutionary process, a mighty change will come about in the life of man, created by a new Force of God.

If religions are so many doors to the One Divine Mansion that the Earth is now going to be—and this is supported by the perfect accord of their prophetic visions—it can be taken as certain that the new world of the morrow will have no religions but one, if it can at all be called so, the religion, rather, the Sovereign Rule of the Spirit. That this shall be has been previsioned by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. The Mother has now categorically declared that the Light that would bring into birth the new world has dawned on earth and is in constant action. And her latest declaration is : "The time of religions is over. We have entered the age of universal spirituality, of spiritual experiences in its initial purity."

The conflicts and confusions that prevail almost everywhere in the world today are among the signs of this coming spiritual change in the life of man. Mystics and prophets of all ages and climes have averred that the brightest Dawns are always preceded by the darkest Nights.

"The end of a stage of evolution," says Sri Aurobindo, "is usually marked by a recrudescence of all that has to go out of the evolution." That the clock of

human destiny has struck the fateful hour is attested not only by the ancient religious traditions quoted above but also by the visions of the seeing minds of the human race which are now catching the first golden glints of a dawning glory. They have begun to feel that out of the present painful throes a new world is slowly coming to birth.

Gerald Heard, the British thinker, says that the conditions in the life of man today seem to be making it inevitable for his evolving consciousness to attain a higher one which alone can save man from the crisis with which he is faced. Gaston Berger, the leader of the 'Prospective' movement in France, believes that man today is capable of transforming himself into a future which will be something altogether new and not a mere continuation of his past. Arthur Koestler, the Hungarian scientist and thinker, speaks of the possibility of man's 'emergence into a new type of cosmic consciousness,' of 'some unexpected discovery in the field of extra-sensory perception; providing man with a new spiritual insight, a new basis of our metaphysical beliefs, a new intuition of our ultimate responsibilities.' Pierre Teilhard De Chardin, the French biologist, holds that 'evolution is an ascent of consciousness' and that 'we are experiencing the first symptoms of an aggregation of a still higher order,' 'the Future Universal and Hyper-Personal life.' Julian Huxley, the British scientist and thinker, declares that 'a vast New world of uncharted possibilities awaits its Columbus... The human race, in fact, is surrounded by a large area of unrealised possibilities. The human species can, if it wishes, transcend itself...Human destiny is to participate in the creative process of development, whereby the universe as a whole can realise more of its potentialities in richer and? greater fulfilments.' This he calls 'the new evolutionary vision.'

This is how through the higher mind of the race the soul of humanity is awakening to the truth and light of the New World whose birth in the occult world of basic forces has been proclaimed by the Mother. And before long its action will be more and more generally felt till the most ignorant, the most unbelieving will be forced to admit the Truth.

References:

1. Sri Aurobindo: *The Hour of God*, p. 3.
2. Sri Aurobindo: *The Life Divine*, Vol. II, Part 2, p. 1028.
3. Sri Aurobindo: *The Life Divine*, Vol. II, p. 1030-31.

THE NEW RACE

Rishabhchand

Since man evolved his intelligence and culture, he has never ceased dreaming of a higher order of existence, a Platonic Utopia, or a Kingdom of Heaven on earth. Rise however high he might, acquire whatever power and possession he could by his intellectual ingenuity and industry, he has never been able to rest on his laurels and enjoy in contented tranquillity the fruits of his mastery of physical Nature. A divine discontent ever dogs his Steps. He yearns for a higher and purer kind of existence, a greater and more infallibly beneficent power, a clearer light in his consciousness than his reasoning mind can command, a more unfettered employment of his developing faculties, and an increasing perfection in his life and nature. It appears as if there was ingrained in him an irrepressible urge to surpass himself and attain to an absolute of everything he conceives as desirable. He chafes against the bonds of the relative, the conditioned, and the limited.

This overmastering urge towards self-transcendence is the secret purpose and significance of his earthly existence. There seems to be no assignable limit to his advance, no terminus of his chequered journey. Nothing in the objective world can satisfy him for ever. History proves the inexhaustible power of his awakened will and the tenacity of his life's quest. He stumbles only to rise up and stride forward with a greater speed and a clearer sense of direction and security. His apparent defeats, even his dismal failures, end only by spurring him on in his pursuit of the Unknown and the Illimitable. His common-sense may mock his dreams, his practical prudence may strive to clip his wings, and his reason may frown upon his spirit of adventure and threaten to damp his ardour. But he is an incorrigible visionary, a hunter of unseen treasures, a seeker of the Absolute, whom nothing visible and palpable, limited and relative can hold in thrall for long. He oversteps all limits, breaks beyond all barriers, and unfurls his wings of imagination towards heights his mortal eye cannot perceive. The very dangers of the adventure and the apparent absurdity of the chase whet his spirit and impel him on. For, he is a pilgrim of eternity, who can find no rest till he rests in the heart of eternity.

When the Vedic Rishi proclaimed his message: "Let us create a divine race on earth," he was not indulging in an idle vision or airing a lofty brand of pious humanism. He was only revealing the ultimate destiny of mankind. When Christ prophesied the advent of the Kingdom of God on earth, he was only pointing to the dawns of glory, to a vision of which many a prophet before

him and after has borne inspired testimony. In all countries of the cultured world and in all times of human history and pre-history, this persistent dream has nourished man's high aspirations and self-exceeding endeavours. But for it, he would have remained a mere animal in human form, fully engrossed in his material interests and living a sterile life of primitive appetites and creative comforts.

But what is it we mean by the evolution of a new race on earth? Plato's Republic has an undertone of socio-political progress achieved by the austere self-discipline and dispassionate following of high principles by an enlightened class of individuals. Christ's Kingdom of God has been understood as a universal prevalence of righteousness and the dominance of ethical values. Even the farsighted aspiration of the Vedic Rishis has been stripped of its spiritual content and made to bear a religious and ethical sense, symbolised by Rama Rajya. The more or less same vision or dream voiced by the ancient seers of Chaldea, Egypt and Sumeria or the adepts in the Greek Mysteries and Alchemy has undergone the same fate of being distorted or diluted by the half-lit mind of man. Perhaps there was a certain vagueness in the very expression of the dream and the vision. Perhaps a more lucid perception of the way and the goal was not possible in the then state of earthly evolution. But there can be no gainsaying the fact of its unbroken persistence down the countless centuries of human existence. No materialistic negation, ever so strident, no rationalistic *bravura* in the form of sceptical or agnostic denial has been able to blot it out of human consciousness. Rather in the darkest hours of frustration and anguish, man's instinctive faith in the coming of the Golden Age or Satya Yuga has flashed forth afresh and sustained him through the crisis. Today, the bleeding heart of humanity cries out for an urgent reaffirmation of the ageless dream of the evolution of a new race on earth. The gloomiest hour invokes the brightest dawn. The direst challenge evokes the most potent force of new creation. The new race is the collective apocalypse whose advent we hail with bated breath from the supreme Heavens.

The new race will be a new consciousness embodied in a transfigured human body. What is this new consciousness? We know that, following the upward gradient of evolution, life has emerged from Matter, and Mind from Life. In man mind has reached a degree of development unparalleled in the animal kingdom. But in spite of its phenomenal development, mind, as it functions in man, is a shortsighted cripple. Its knowledge is, even at its best, a hypothetical construction of thoughts and ideas, uncertain, ill-coordinated

and imperfect. It is an ignorance seeking for knowledge, but never attaining to it. This basic ignorance is further accentuated by its inveterate incapacity to conceive of the unity or totality of existence. Being constitutionally partial and fragmentary in its working, it can deal successfully only with parts and segments of the objective reality. It analyses them, atomises them as much as it can, and then makes aggregates of them to arrive at a synthetic or syncretic unity. But what it really obtains by this arduous process is only a superficial knowledge of sense objects, divided and parcelled out, and of the way they outwardly behave and act. It knows something of the outer or, even of somewhat subtler processes, but reality with its indivisible unity always escapes its grasp. This divisive, segmenting mind cannot be the finest flower of evolution. Its very incompleteness and imperfection stimulates the evolutionary urge in man and launches him upon the quest of the Infinite, the Absolute, the One.

This quest of the Infinite need not be an exclusive quest which jettisons all its previous gains in evolution in order to lighten its transcendent flight. An intelligent study of the fundamental process of evolution reveals the triple method of its movement ascent and expansion, integration, and harmony. Life, emerging from Matter, has not sloughed off Matter from itself, but vitalised it and taken it up in order to make of it a field for its own unfolding play. Mind, emerging from life, has not shaken itself free from the energies of life, but impregnated them with something of its own substance and way of working. It has, to some extent, mentalised life, as one can very well observe in some of the life movements of higher animals and human beings. This particular action of the mentalised life forces can be called the life-mind or the vital mind. This is, therefore, the fundamental process throughout the whole course of evolution—*ascent and expansion, integration and harmonisation*. There is no reason, then, why the mind, as soon as it develops the higher intelligence and begins to aspire for a higher than normal human existence, should abandon the instruments which have served it so far and seek to get away from the field of evolution by the ascetic path of an exclusive inward tension and head straight towards an utter extinction in the Nihil or in the featureless, incommunicable Brahman. Here too, as before, the same triple method can be followed for the attainment of a harmonious perfection and integral fulfilment. The consciousness of man, breaking out of the brilliant shell of the mind and soaring up to its own higher dimensions, can as well—and this is its destined work—expand itself and integrate and harmonise all the elements and energies of Life and Matter round a higher centre of

being. It can reach the Higher Mind, the Illumined Mind, the Intuition, and the Overmind, which are the four distinct ranges of the spiritual mind, as classified by Sri Aurobindo, and effectuate in man a remarkable reversal of his consciousness and being. But even the Overmind, which has governed the earthly evolution and bestowed spiritual perfection on man during the ages of his growth and culture, is not the highest creative Consciousness. It is only the highest range of the spiritual mind, as I have already said, where unity of existence toils out its inherent multiplicity. The One is there, a living, eternal, constant truth of existence, but the stress of the Overmental consciousness falls more on diversity than on unity—it tends to lean with an increasing insistence towards a diffusion of its self-formations, towards an immersion in the Many. Though there is no ignorance, no avidya, here, no perception of and dealing with the parts to the exclusion of the whole, it can yet be called the first parent of avidya. Sri Aurobindo's quest, which was for the supreme creative and transformative Consciousness, could not naturally stop short at the Overmind. The riddle of the universe was not solved there. He went beyond, not in trance or a suspension of the waking consciousness, but by a progressive ascent and expansion of his consciousness in a perfectly waking and observing state. When he reached the Supermind, the Rita-Chit of the Vedic, and the Vijnana of the Upanishadic terminology, he found that the highest creative principle, the Truth-Consciousness he had been seeking for was there. The Vijnana or the Supermind is, according to the Upanishad, the eternal home of the Truth-Consciousness, the abode of the Light of all lights, and the womb of the whole universe, *visvasya yonih*. What the Overmind has failed to accomplish in the material world, it can do by the invincible sovereignty of its creative Light and Force. It can transform Matter, Life and Mind into its own image, for it has deployed them out of itself. It can divinise earthly existence, for it has created it in and out of itself.

Regarding the inadequate achievement of the Overmind, the Mother says “...one can say that the old world, the creation of what Sri Aurobindo calls the Overmind, the Overmental, was in a characteristic way the age of the gods and therefore the age of religions. The follower of man's effort towards that which was higher than him gave birth to numerous religions, to a religious relation between the souls of the select few and the invisible world, and at the summit of all that, as an effort towards a still higher realisation, was born this idea of the unity of religions, of something that is unique, which is behind all manifestation— and this idea was really the ceiling of human aspiration. This conception is on the borderland; it is something which still belongs wholly to

the overmental world; to the overmental creation, and from there seems to look at another, something of which it has only a presentiment; which is a new creation it tries to attain but is unable to seize. To seize it, what is needed is a reversal. One must come out of the overmental creation. But for that, the new creation, the supramental creation must have had taken place.

“And now all those old things seem so old, so antiquated, so arbitrary, such a travesty of the true truth!”

“In the supramental creation there will no more be religions. All life will be the expression, the flowering in forms of the Divine Unity manifesting in the world. And there will no more be what men now call the gods.”

* * *

“When the physical substance will be supramentalised, to be born on earth in a body will not be a cause of inferiority, rather the contrary, there will be gained a plenitude which could not be obtained otherwise.”²² There is another point which should be considered here in connection with Sri Aurobindo’s theory of evolution. Evolution, he says, presupposes involution. -Unless there is something involved, nothing can possibly evolve. Evolution cannot proceed out of a blank zero or a vast, gaping Void. What is it, then, that is involved here? The Veda describes the state of involution in its famous Nasadiya sukta or verse, and in the Upanishad one comes across a graphic portrayal of the successive emergence or evolution of Matter, Life and Mind, and what is beyond mind. But if it is the Superconscient that is involved, as the Veda and the Upanishad affirm, the full emergence of the Superconscient cannot but be the denouement, the consummating accomplishment. Therefore, it stands to reason that evolution cannot stop till it has delivered out of itself the final flower of the Superconscient. It cannot stop short at the mind, for the mind is anything but superconscient. However enlightened and intelligent it may be, it is still a seeker and not a possessor of knowledge. It lives and acts in ignorance and deals only with superficial sections and slices of reality whose essential nature and indivisible unity always remain to it an unsolved mystery. The psychological knowledge it endeavours to acquire with an admirable technique of introspection and diligent experimental research turns out to be nothing better than shallow and nebulous, for, as in the field of Matter, so in that of the inner workings of human nature, modern science leans almost exclusively on external evidences and tackles discrete elements and energies of material life, which it does not know how to integrate into a harmonious, organic whole. It does not know that, in order to study an object, whether it is an inner movement or outer; the

subject must get beyond the object and command an overall penetrating view of it. Unless modern psychology presses beyond the normal frontiers of the mind and comes in close touch with something subtler, something genuinely spiritual, its discoveries and remedial measures must perforce remain superficial and crude. The ignorant, dividing, fumbling mind has to be overpassed, if unity has to be realised—unity of existence, unity of consciousness, unity of knowledge, unity of Truth, unity of will and force, and unity of the delight of existence. The infinite Superconscient which is submerged here must fully emerge. It is the next inevitable step of creative evolution, however Utopian or fantastic it may appear to our human mind of dusky light. Man must rise from his mind to the Supermind and inaugurate the new age of a new race, the supramental race, on earth. A dispassionate study of evolution in the material world cannot but lead to this consummation— an epiphany of the Divine in Matter and the establishment of the Divine Life in the material world. “As there has been established on earth a mental Consciousness and Power which shapes a race of mental beings and takes up into itself all of earthly nature that is ready for the change, so now there will be established on earth a gnostic Consciousness and Power which will shape a race of gnostic spiritual beings and take up into itself all of earth nature that is ready for this new transformation.”³

Human mind works on the basis of the sense data, on the basis of its contacts with the finite and the fleeting. It moves from object to object and lives in the divisions of Time and Space. But the characteristic action of the Supermind is on the basis of the Infinite. All diversity, all proliferating multiplicity, and all changes and modifications, even what appear to the mind as contraries or antinomies, are viewed by the Supermind as various self-representations of the One, figures and facets of the manifold Unity. Its will, ideas, thoughts, feelings and sense perceptions all move on the inalienable basis of oneness. It sees itself in all and all in itself. Beauty and ugliness, greatness and smallness, saintliness and viciousness, darkness and light, all it knows as being itself, and feels them as developing aspects and attributes of its flowering potentialities in the universe.

Supermind possesses a power of self-determination, absolute in its dynamism, by which it can hold back its all-knowledge in itself and put forward only what is needed at a particular stage of evolution. It is bound neither by its unity nor by its diversity, neither by its infinity nor by its finiteness. It is this unfettered power of self-determination by which it

has created even what appear as its very negation—ignorance, limitation, darkness, and death. “He is the Truth and He is the falsehood, He is life and He is death,” says the Upanishad. All possibilities inhere in the All-power of the Supermind, and its Laws are but rhythms of its free creation, unconditioned by Time and Space, which are only its own multiple, hierarchical dispensation.

The supramental man will be what Sri Aurobindo calls “the consummation of the spiritual man.” He will be the divine Man, one with the Divine in all the ways of his being—not only in his soul and spirit, but in his mind, his heart, his life and its energies, and even in all the cells of his body. No part of his composite nature will be excluded from the ecstasy of the divine embrace, for it will have been transformed into the supernature. He will have been liberated not only in his soul but in his whole nature. Matter will no longer be the impeding clod it is, but will be transmuted into the very substance of the Spirit. Life will no longer remain a field of hurtling desires and passions, and a heaving channel of turbid energies, but will become a thrilled dynamo of the radiant forces of the Spirit. And mind will cease to be the perpetual fumbler in obscurity that it is, but will be transformed into a silent and tranquil vehicle of the lightning revelations of the supramental knowledge. This free and plenary action of the Supernature in the Supramental man will be the very seal and stamp of the divinity of his being. It will be the fruit of his double liberation and integral transformation.

The supramental man will be the complete individual, having carried the complex work of individuation to its utmost perfection. His individuality will be a centre without a circumference. Egoless and desireless, it will be only a focus and prism of the Transcendent Person, the Purusha of the Veda and the Upanishad, or the Purushottama of the Gita. He will “individualise the Transcendent,” his divine Archetype. He will live in a dynamic simultaneity of the triple status of the Divine Being—transcendent, universal and individual. The walls which normally separate the subjective from the objective in mental beings will have been razed to the ground, and his whole being will be one with the universe and what is beyond the universe—of a piece and organically, harmoniously creative.

This is, in short, the type of the supramental individual who will comprise the new race on earth. Obviously, all men cannot be raised to this spiritual perfection overnight. The various steps of the ladder of evolution will remain, as they have remained till now. Along with the

most mentally developed and enlightened men, there are innumerable millions today who have hardly gone beyond the rudimentary stage of mental evolution. There are even some who approximate more to the brute and the vegetable stage than to the mental. Similarly, along with perhaps a handful of supramental men, there will be a growing number who, falling short of the supramental fulfilment, will nevertheless attain to the higher grades of the Mind, the Higher Mind, the Illumined Mind, the Intuition, and the Overmind. Those who will stop short at these higher mental ranges will become something like supermen (not supramental men) possessing a higher than mental knowledge, a greater and more effective power born of the knowledge, a surer force and drive of the will, and a purer delight of existence, poised above the harassing alternations of pleasure and pain. The reign of the Supermind on earth, to howsoever small a sphere it may be restricted in the beginning, will exert an irresistible influence on the whole life of humanity, and create conditions and forces which will contribute to a general expansion of peace and harmony everywhere. Even material Nature will not escape its purifying and harmonising influence. It will be like the advent of the spring in the midst of the bleak desolation of the winter. Whatever the present struggle between the entrenched forces of darkness in the material world and the transformative Light of the Supermind, between the spell of the past and its accredited norms and the new ideals and forms of the future, the birth of a new race is as inevitable as the rising of tomorrow's sun. Evolution cannot be balked of its crowning achievement.

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2. *Bulletin of Physical Education*, November, 1957.
3. Sri Aurobindo: *The Life Divine*, Chapter XVII

In our ignorance we are like children proud of our success in walking erect and unaided and too eager to be aware of the mother's steadying touch on the shoulder. When we wake, we look back and see that God was leading and upholding us always.

Sri Aurobindo

NEW MAN

Vinayak Krishna Gokak

“Are you the New Man?” asked Kuntala. “Yes” said Manimoy” I am the New Man. The New in the Old and the Old in the New. I play hide-and-seek with you. I hide myself in the Old. And I am sought after in the New.”

Manimoy’s Message

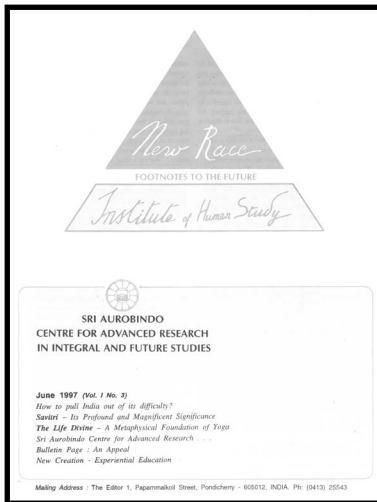
They brought from far worlds
Things miraculously fair.
They brought them,
The men with matted hair
And unmatched lustre of body,
Souls in bliss, immortals
And handsome gods intensely young.
They brought costumes of varying dyes,
Auras from the subtle-physical,
Simmerings of sapphire,
Festoons of emerald.
Creepers of lightning
And backdrops of pearl.
They brought dreams pure as topazes
And memories rich as rain-clouds.
All this was dipavali to my eyes.
My heart melted
And I lost my soul to this beauty.
It was as though Kubera, god of wealth,
Had flung open his treasures
And the atmosphere drank their radiance.
I wondered what I was to do.
And a voice whispered in my ears:
“Go and bathe in the well of Brahma,
Plunge into its rejuvenating waters,”
There lay the pure sheet of water
Snow-fringed and clear, an enchanting pool
And I turned towards it.
In a corner of that plateau swung
A cradle between the earth and sky

And a golden child lay in the cradle,
Lost in self-play.
Ah, I said to myself,
This is the flute-player of Brindavan,
Flame-born in prison!
This is Christ uncrowned as yet,
Discovering his head in a manger!
This is Ranga, the eternal child,
Afloat in the ocean on a banyan leaf!
This is the lonely Self of All
Reclining on his endless python-bed!
And I stood gazing at the child.

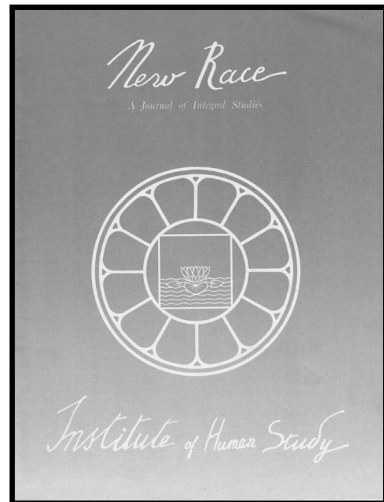
The lofty peak in whose palm the cradle moved—
The palm of Ancient Earth—
Spoke in clear and limpid tones:
“I raised my head out of the hooded sea
And yielded my limbs to the breeze of dawn.
But when sylphs and sirens came and called me
To amorous dance and wanton masque,
I said: No, I’ll be a mother soon.
I carry within my womb
The seed that saves the worlds.
To you romance and faerie living.
I know the penance that makes my motherhood.
The jewelled lotus that folded its petals for millennia
Has a millenarian unfolding.”

“The statesmen said to me:
In you lies the origin of all wealth and well-being.
The technologists said to me:
You are the mine of many inventions.
The seekers have said:
You are the home of all learning
And haven of ail perceptions.
The adventurers said:
You are the mother root of Adventure itself.
And so I took to this new doing

And new delight.
Behold! I fondle in my arms
Man Divine more precious than the Koustubh.
Life will be fashioned anew from now on.”
Mother Earth then turned to the little Babe of Splendour
And greeted his coming with moving words:
“ You are the law-giver,
The Manu of a new creation!
You are the Vikram of a new era,
The crest-jewel of a new life
And the ecstasy of new living!
In your voice are syllabled the Vedas!
Round your finger turns the disc of luminous vision!
The nectar of immortality
Streams from your heart!
Blessed is this womb that bore you
And delivered you to the world
For its own precious deliverance.”



1997



1999

INTEGRAL YOGA PSYCHOLOGY

V. Madhusudan Reddy

[i]

Man by his very nature is spiritual. He is a dynamic psyche ever evolving, always integrating with the universe around him. He is a self-conscious mode of the infinite and the eternal though at present limited because of the compulsions of Nature's evolutionary process. He is a dual expression of both Being and Becoming, and manifests simultaneously the static and dynamic aspects of Reality. The static truth of his inmost existence—the impersonal eternal dimension—sanctions and supports, as it were, his creative nature, the historical dimension. The two dimensions, though distinguishable, are in fact inseparable. Integral Yoga Psychology aims at integrating the two dimensions with a view to intensify and advance the present evolutionary process. It attempts to bridge the gap between the distant ideal and the present human reality,—between the Superconscient wholeness and the existing limited self-awareness. According to Sri Aurobindo, this needs the intervention and supporting action of a cosmic and supra-cosmic consciousness-force, the Supermind. It is the Truth-Consciousness above that can unify this uniqueness of the individual with the relatedness of the universe in an ever glowing splendour of the transcendent. The three dimensions of the Divine—the individual, the universal and the transcendent, are harmoniously and integrally effectuated in the action of the supramental. It is the goal of Nature's evolutionary endeavour to promote this triple effectuation, and Sri Aurobindo sees clearly that only the supramental has the integrative power to bring about this radical transformation.

The ever-growing hunger in man for the whole is indicative of the intimacy that the universal needs to forge with the individual, for man is essentially the microcosm struggling to realise his own nativity. In addition, man is also a self-transcending phenomenon, always reaching out to a greater truth, more expressive and more real. This urge for self-exceeding seeks expression in various ways — social, cultural and spiritual. An integral self-transcendence demands an integral self-surrender, a total self-offering to the Supreme within. Integral Yoga Psychology envisages and seeks such a consummation by helping the seeker to become more and more receptive to the action of the consciousness-force of the omnipotent supramental. The Integral Yoga Psychology of Sri Aurobindo

is the outcome of his profound ontological experience of the Omniscient Reality, of the integral truth of life and existence. Reality for him is multi-dimensional and integral, both Being and Becoming, Omniscience and Omnipotence, Shiva and Shakti. The supreme Being, Purushottama, is perceived as at once infinite and eternal on the one hand and an endless creative flow of time on the other. He is simultaneously the individual, universal and transcendental, One and Many, One in Many and Many in One. Such is the core experience presented in his magnum opus, *The Life Divine*.

Integral Yoga Psychology connotes in a specific way the psychological states and processes implicit in the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo. It is the integral fulfilment of the long Yoga-tradition of Indian psychology. It is the most intimate and intuitive study of the nature of the total human personality and not merely of the surface mentality and external behaviour. It takes into cognisance the entire range of consciousness including the inconscient, the subconscious, the circumconscient and the Superconscient; it embraces the whole emotional history of the human phenomenon. Its processes are the manifold mechanisms of Nature itself, and its goals the harmony of the superconscient supernature of the Infinite and the Eternal. Yogic seekings and meditative methods of inner discoveries mark its steps on the upward journey to the realisation of a totally observant and infinitely participatory creative consciousness. Observation of the surface mind and the concomitant behavioural phenomena is absolutely inadequate for its purposes; observation of the human phenomenon from inside as well as an indepth yogic introspection of the subconscious with a view to enter the Superconscient is its way. Integral Yoga Psychology, following the ancient Indian Yogic tradition, attempts to give us an integral perspective of the human personality.

While the different schools of psychology make characteristic assumptions in regard to the mechanics of our mental life (based exclusively on one or more aspects of human nature), Integral Yoga Psychology is founded upon the integral view of human personality. Unlike others, it accepts all the various states of consciousness as aspects of an integral self-awareness. Viewed and pursued exclusively, these states can only lead to partial, erroneous and misleading concepts of life. For example, as an American integral psychologist once very succinctly put it, "behaviourism gives particular attention to the visible phenomena of behaviour and the learning processes which govern such manifestations,

psychoanalysis, on the other hand, stresses the instinctual components of personality, the impressibility of the human organism during early years, and the influence of social conventions and institutions. Existential psychology places high value upon freedom, individuality, consciousness of both life and death, and the person's acceptance of the need to make responsible choices. Hence existential psychology pays close attention to observing states of everyday waking consciousness. Humanistic psychology esteems individual creativity and self-development; so it chooses to deal more with the person's potentials than with pathology. Transpersonal psychology focuses upon para-psychological and psychedelic experiences and spiritual paths; accordingly it provides, in several ways, a broader base for understanding human life than do many other schools of psychology."

[ii]

Man is essentially a psychological phenomenon. If psychology has to study man, it should reach and comprehend all the levels of his being, both inner and outer, and not limit itself to the mind. It is the Yogic approach to the phenomenon of man that gives an adequate account of human personality and carries with it a clarity and a certitude of its own. Man is not limited to his physical existence alone, he is beyond body, life and even mind. Psychology should therefore not restrict itself to the observation of his superficial nature. A whole world of supra-physical and spiritual phenomena have to be discovered and brought under control before psychology can hope to be a perfect and dynamic science. Our surface existence is only a part of our being, there are many other planes below and above that support and succour our external personality. For below our conscious nature is the massive Inconscient out of which life emerges. The Inconscient is much vaster, larger and deeper; it is the womb of our surface existence and its workings. Also, behind our frontal ego-nature is the kingdom of the subliminal with its manifold powers and provinces that determine and dictate our doings.

Integral Yoga Psychology is founded upon the experience of the integral self as the harmonious and indivisible unity of uniqueness, relatedness and transcendence. The basic insights of Integral Yoga Psychology as set forth in the writings of Sri Aurobindo include:

The integral fullness or wholeness of the human-personality.

The widest spectrum of experience ranging from the Inconscient to the Superconscient.

The synthesis and fulfilment of all yogic methods in the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo.

The crowning vision of Integral Reality, and the realisation of the supreme potential of man.

The experience of the many planes or levels of consciousness reflecting the different dimensions of Reality.

The dynamic and creative union with the Supreme being resulting in the mounting self-manifestation of the Spirit.

The substitution of the negative urge of renunciation and withdrawal from the world by a positive freedom and joy to express the Integral Will of the Divine. The urge for world negation is thus successfully substituted by the process of world-transformation.

[iii]

Integral Yoga Psychology neither believes in the dichotomy of Nature and Spirit, nor of body and mind. Unlike Indian psychology which believes body and mind to be the two forms of the manifestation of the same creative energy of Prakriti, Western psychology treats them as two absolutely heterogeneous substances interacting with each other. It is only in the Yoga psychology of Patanjali that Purusha and Prakriti, Spirit and Nature are thought of as, essentially, different from each other. Integral Yoga Psychology transcends this traditional dichotomy, and treats Prakriti as the Prakriti of Purusha. For Sri Aurobindo, man is a body-mind-spirit continuum, for Spirit and Nature are essentially one.

Ancient Indian Vedanta recognises four phases of human experience: waking, dream, deep sleep and transcendental experience—jagrit, swapna, susupti and turiya. However, ontological primacy is bestowed upon the experience of transcendental self-realisation as against the other three, as these are supposed to belong to the realm of reality and ignorance. But for Integral Yoga Psychology all the four phases are equally real aspects of man's personality. Body, life and mind are equally real constituents of human nature as, the Spirit or Self.

Yoga essentially aims at the individual's union with the truth of himself, with his own true self. This implies the dissolution of his ego, the liquidation of Ignorance, avidya. It also implies the integration of all the different aspects of his personality, the different planes and parts of his being — the mental, vital, physical, and the psychic. It is the integration of the spiritual self with the empirical self, the transcendental self with the instrumental nature. Unlike the traditional Yoga systems which deem the empirical self to be the

offspring of an ignorant Prakriti, Integral Yoga Psychology thinks of mind, life and matter as the inferior terms of the supreme triology — *Sat-Chit-Ananda*. Union with the transcendental self gives the seeker the necessary omnipotence and omniscience to participate in the process of transformation of the instrumental nature. The yogi, who is integrally united with the Divine, alone can bring the love, light, power and peace from above and finally change the earth-nature.

Integral self-realisation is therefore the goal of Integral Yoga Psychology; it is the realisation of the universal and the transcendental self. It is the emergence of a new centre of consciousness capable of manifesting progressively the truth and splendour of the Divine upon earth. Traditional Vedanta overemphasizes the transcendental aspect of the Self, whereas the materialist existentialist ignores it. The individual is a creative mode of the Divine capable of realising his oneness with the universe. He is an integral part of the cosmos as well as the cosmic whole. He is an evolving mode of transcendental freedom and universal love.

Integral Yoga Psychology is an endless adventure of consciousness. It involves the transcendence of reason as much as its use as an effective instrument of super-reason for the transformation of the phenomenal nature. It is a journey from ignorance to knowledge and from knowledge to greater and higher knowledge. It is the quest as well as the method of widening and deepening and heightening of one's awareness. It is the conquest of the many planes of consciousness—mind, higher mind, illumined mind, intuitive mind and Overmind. It is the heroic culmination of the spiritual ascent to the domain of Truth-Consciousness—the Supermind—the ultimate ground of all existence. The Supermind is the omnipotent and omniscient dimension of the Divine; it is the egoless awareness of the fundamental unity of the all and the universe with the Supreme as well as his Will of effectuation. It is the all-comprehensive and all-powerful consciousness-force of Being. It is beyond all forms, and yet constitutive and supportive of all forms. It is the infinitely free and dynamic oneness with the creativity of Sachchidananda.

Integral Yoga Psychology carries the seeker beyond the level of ego-needs to the world of meta-needs—the love and enjoyment of beauty, truth, goodness and then beyond them to the luminous experience of the universal and the transcendental. This in itself is a revolutionary change of consciousness, it is a totally different dimension of self-awareness—an emergence into the freedom of the Eternal and the Infinite. But this is not its ultimate goal. The seeker of Integral Yoga further realises the identity of

Being and Becoming. Reality is perceived as inseparable from its own creativity, Being as both the Eros and the Logos—Shiva-Shakti. The sadhaka then becomes a collaborator of the Divine, and creatively participates in the supreme fellowship. Liberated from limitation, separation and division he is reborn and recast into the consciousness and nature of the Divine, he becomes integrally united with the superconscient dynamism of the Supreme in which the Superconscient and the Supernature are eternally and inseparably one.

Whereas traditional Vedantic psychology is based upon the trenchant distinction between Nature and Spirit and the final liberation from the bondage of the body by the practice of renunciation. Integral Yoga Psychology avoids both puritanism and asceticism, for it envisions the Supreme Self as the integral unity of the Noumenal and the Phenomenal, Spirit and Matter, Consciousness and Creativity. Reality, for it, is a body-mind-spirit continuum. Starvation and suppression, puritanism and asceticism lead to a distortion of the total truth and to a sort of spiritual blindness to the secret purpose of creation itself.

Ego, mind and instincts of the vital nature have their own place in Integral Yoga. They have a minor and yet a distinctive function in the evolution of the individual. In the initial stages they support his growth-process, and protect him from sinking back into the anonymity of Nature. Mind and ego, even as they help, can also be a bar in respect of higher growth. Self-development consists in the conscious transition from the lower to the higher, 'from the ego-centric to the cosmo-centric outlook'. So, in any assured self-development, ego and mind should neither be destroyed nor deified, they have to be transcended and transformed.

Integral Yoga Psychology sets before itself the ideal of triple transformation: psychic, spiritual and supramental. The awakening to the psychic within and its increasing influence on the mental, vital, physical floods the being with love, light, purity and happiness. It initiates the seeker into the secret joys of the Infinite through perfect self-consecration and self-surrender. The next stage, that of spiritual transformation, brings in peace and freedom. It entails complete freedom from the sense of individual existence, and uplifts the sadhaka into the universal awareness of Being. This is followed by the final phase wherein the total being of the sadhaka is transformed by the omnipotent action of the supramental into the consciousness and nature of the Divine. The sadhaka then becomes simultaneously and comprehensively aware of all the dimensions of the Divine in the context of creation. He is then made ready to consciously and integrally

participate in the creative adventure of life and be a collaborator of the creator in working out His Will upon the earth.

It is by following the inner guidance of one's own self that the seeker can accomplish personal integration, the integration of the mental, vital, physical with the psychic. An immediate awareness of one's own psychic is then the sine qua non of Integral Yoga Psychology. It is the psychic awakening that eventually brings about the threefold transformation that is the goal of Integral Yoga Psychology.

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NEW BIRTH

D. R. Bendre

As I grow in years
Your seed ripens within.
In a memory-rain of tears
I see, may be, imagine
What I would create
Or what creates me.
The curve irrationally parts
From the straight line rational
And meets it when the emergent centre
Shows up, supra-rational
And throws up the mother-O'-pearl
That knows its own priceless pearl,
The pearl that's a baby's doll
On the lap of a girl,
Herself mother-O'-pearl.

A CALL TO THE CITIZENS OF THE NOONS OF THE FUTURE

Sharad M. Joshi

Dear syndicate and senate members, deans of the faculties, teachers and students, ladies and gentlemen and the members of the administrative staff, 'greetings from The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda on the sixtieth independence day of our motherland, India.'

Our esteemed and honourable vice-chancellor Dr. Manoj Soni has conveyed his heartfelt greetings on this sacred day of India's independence to the University Parivar.

Fifty nine years ago, we achieved independence and gained our rightful place in the committee of free nations. Our freedom marked a new chapter in the future 'march of mankind' for it opened up a possibility of immense and untold potentiality for humanity. For with independence, India gathered a new force of rejuvenation. Whereas several civilisations like those of Greece, Rome and Egypt declined and died and are effaced from the face of this earth. India of old outlived the forces of decadence and with achieved independence entered into a phase of revival of her life force and spirit force. After a few millennia of immense labour of a splendid creation of a rich and many sided civilisation and culture, she went to sleep and rest for a thousand years to recoup her life forces and mind forces and with the renaissance in the later part of nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century showed a sign of re-awakening. After half a century of struggle of a unique kind — a struggle on the basis of the principles of non-violence — she was victorious to regain her freedom of choice, to choose her own future and make it accepted by her own children and humanity at large.

With her splendid spiritual culture of a unique kind in the past and the potentiality of an even more splendid culture in the future, she is poised today to make a tremendous choice of the future, a future in which the first dreams of humanity in French Revolution — the dreams of liberty, equality and fraternity — can be made practical and realised in a concrete way in a peaceful and harmonious human race of the future. For this, she is experimenting with the idea of unity in diversity instead of uniformity in place of diversity, in a general political atmosphere of democracy. She must triumph in this experiment and weld the diversity of Indian races into a harmonious unity. But to achieve this, she must first acquire wealth. She, now with her knowledge power gaining credence, is on her way to become

a developed nation. But what will she do with the wealth and development? Will she create another hegemony of her kind like the one prevailing today of which the leaders of the developed nations of today are the torch-bearers? If she does that, she will lose her soul.

India's inner soul is endowed with a living spiritual sense, and if she follows the materialistic aims like those other nations of today, she will lose her existence and will die materialistic death; and that will be an irreparable loss not only to herself but to the world and the fate of humanity.

India has a unique spiritual culture which the other nations of the world need the most today. India must deliver her message of spiritual brotherhood which she is guarding in her soul from the time immemorial.

Today is also the birthday of one of India's most luminous soul, Sri Aurobindo. Today the world does not recognise the significance of the divinely ordained coincidence of these two events. But the mystic meaning of this coincidence carries in its heart the indications of the line of development India must take. Sri Aurobindo's life and his message in his profuse works of thirty five volumes hinge upon one refrain. Man is essentially spiritual, and in the progress march of evolution, now, he is poised to work for the next step in the evolution of a spiritual man leading to the manifestation of a supramental being, the god, the Devmanava.

India cannot but choose to work in this direction. For this, she must not only help establish a lasting and harmonious peace but lead the nations by the deliverance of her own secret message to humanity, help mankind to work towards the realisation of the age old ideal of vasudhaiva kutumbakam, an ideal which the ancient Rishis of India sang in their tapovans and ashrams. On the basis of the realisation of this ideal of universal brotherhood, India must strive with the rest of the humanity to bring about a 'spiritual culture', a new body given to her age old spirituality. The yogis like the Janak and the Kartavirya must adorn the thrones of the world. India must and will become the guru of the world.

Our University is blessed twice for even before its beginning the two luminaries worked here to find themselves and give foundation to their messages to the world. Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad in the administrative and political field and Sri Aurobindo in the political, cultural and spiritual field.

There are three kinds of people in the world. The first kind lament the loss of the past glories but find themselves impotent to work for its realisation in the present or the future. The second kind live in the past glories and strive

for its revival but bogged down by the present turmoil lament because it cannot be revived in its old form. The third kind undeterred by the present confusion absorb and assimilate the essence of the past glories, new-creating their souls and with the light and strength of these new-created souls give a new and splendid shape to the future. *We must not be only the nostalgic children of the past dawns but must also be the citizens of the noons of the future*, (cf. CWSA 19, p. 10)

Immortal India, her civilisation and culture, was created by our ancient fathers, the Rishis of Vedic and Upanishadic times, by the power and light of the intuition pouring its riches into our mind, heart and body and thus enabling her to labour untiringly to forge a civilisation endowed with ultimate and spiritual values. It was sustained again by the intuition and *tapasya* of the yogis, saints and sages. It was summarised in the life of Ramakrishna Paramhansa, intuitively harmonising all the past divergent efforts into a single organic body of spiritual vision.

Our University would have taken a step forward in this universal march of time towards the future, if our workers instead of solely depending on the discursive and uncertain power of intellect recognise the role of higher faculty lying dormant today in our higher state of consciousness. If we utilise this fourfold power and light—of revelation, inspiration, intuition, discrimination, the power and light of the Vedic Goddesses, *Mahi* and *Bharti*, *Ila*, *Saraswati*, *Sarma* and *Dakshina*—we will be empowered to create a thousandfold more useful and effective knowledge endowed with wisdom and power.

Today India is gathering and organising the knowledge-power and is being increasingly recognised for that. With the progressive use of higher powers of intuition in the creation and organisation of our knowledge, we will be enabled and empowered to march with increasing speed towards the goal which the protecting angels of human race have kept fixed for us.

This is the significance we must attach to the celebration of our 'Independence Day' and its relevance to the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda.

I was much plagued by Satan, until I found that it was God who was tempting me; then the anguish of him passed out of my soul for ever.

Sri Aurobindo

GROWTH OF THE PSYCHIC BEING

V. Ananda Reddy

In The Synthesis of Yoga there is beautiful passage in Chapter I of Part I (The Ascent of the Sacrifice-1, SABCL, vol. 20, pp. 146-147) that describes with a great clarity the different stages of the growth of the psychic in our being. In this passage we find an extraordinary description of the psychic pressure and how it moves from stage to stage. In this essay I briefly review these stages and emphasise the ways in which the ascent of the psychic helps gradually transform the outer nature and personality.

The most intimate character of the psychic being is its one-pointed and intimate pressure towards the Divine. However, it is not rigid in its insistence like the mind or the vital. At every moment there is “a supple sureness” in its march towards the Truth. Because it is so very exclusively pointed towards the love of the Divine, it does not lose the direction and yet it has to go slow in its upward growth.

The first stage in its growth is that it leans on “earthly love, affection, tenderness, goodwill, compassion, benevolence, and all beauty and gentleness and fineness and light and strength and courage, on all that can help to refine and purify the grossness and commonness of human nature...” (SABCL, vol. 20, p. 146). This is where religion and ethics come into the picture, when we are taught to practice “goodwill, compassion, benevolence” etc. That is, in fact, the highest ideal given to us. If you want to be a cultured, civilized, religious, ethical, moral person try to develop these qualities— that is what we have been told, and that is what according to Indian terminology, is a sattvic personality. The sattvic realization is only this. From the point of view of the psychic growth this is the very first step, but from the point of view of morality and religion it is the highest step.

We can see how difficult it is for the psychic to pursue in its efforts to move towards the Divine. Ordinarily, we are very crude in our mental and in our vital nature and pretty far away from any true divine feelings, but the very fact that we can respond to affection, tenderness, compassion, goodwill, benevolence, beauty, only means that there is the beginning of the psychic pressure. Otherwise, try as much as we want by our mental or vital consciousness to develop any of these characteristics, it is not possible, because these are not qualities that could be cultivated by outer personality. They have to be born within by the psychic pressure.

The second step is taken once that particular individual begins to respond to that benevolence and compassion and all the so called ‘values’ of our life. This is the second stage in the journey of the psychic. At this level “It is ready and eager to break all the old ties, imperfect emotional activities and replace them by a greater spiritual Truth of love and oneness. It may still admit the human forms and movements but on condition that they are turned to the One alone. It accepts the ties only that are helpful, the heart’s reverence for the Guru, the union of the God-seekers, a spiritual compassion for the ignorant human and the animal world and its peoples, the joy and happiness and satisfaction of beauty that comes from the perception of the divine everywhere.” (p.146)

After relating itself to human beings through benevolence and goodwill and all such qualities, it really cuts off all relations. It goes a little deeper, that is, we become in our outer attitude more profound and deeper. We could say that we become more selective in our actions and our relations—only those that help positively in our inward growth are accepted and the rest are left out.

As is assumed generally, we need not be altruistic to all of humanity and show our sympathy to the whole of the community. That is the first impulse when we go out and expand our consciousness. But then immediately there is an ‘inward-isation’ of the consciousness; it shrinks, as if, and tells you to ‘select your group’. It is no more necessary to expand to all humanity, but just to select a group of our contacts and activities that are helpful for our divine realisation within.

Sri Aurobindo writes that at this time there is a grouping of the god-seekers, there is a grouping of the gurubhais, those that are around the guru. A spiritual community is formed around this common reverence for the Guru. This could be a ‘place’ of one-pointed aspiration which goes under the name of a community or a project or an Ashram – an institution where there is a kind of a central spiritual aspiration. It may be anything, not just Integral Yoga, but any yoga or Ashram, any spiritual institution which has a spiritual foundation. The second step begins here.

The third step is when the psychic “plunges the nature inward towards its meeting with the immanent Divine in the heart’s secret centre and, while that call is there, no reproach of egoism, no mere outward summons of altruism or duty or philanthropy or service will deceive or divert it from its sacred longing and its obedience to the attraction of the Divinity within it. It lifts the being towards a transcendent Ecstasy and is ready to shed all the downward

pull of the world from its wings in its uprising to reach the One Highest...” (pp. 146-147).

It is in a shrinking of its cosmic spread in a group that is aspiring for the same ideal that the psychic finds a greater concentration, and in this concentration “it plunges the nature inward towards its meeting with the immanent Divine...” The meaning of the Ashram is exactly this – one finds the atmosphere congenial for the ‘inwardisation’. That is what was being done in the ancient Ashrams. They provided one an exclusive atmosphere for an inward journey.

Allow me to make a small digression here. At the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, that this ‘inwardisation’ has included all the external action also, because of its integral ideal. It does not mean that we get lost in the politics and ways of the outer world. The external activities are there, but more for the purpose of self-purification. It is easy to go to any traditional Ashram and sit there in meditation for ten hours: no other activity — no laundry, no press, no physical exercises etc. One just meditates, gets into Samadhi if one can. There it is easier to cut off from the works, but here Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have provided a whole plethora of works. At the same time, it is important to remember that the Ashram is not meant to be only a field or kshetra of works. There are varieties of works covering different aspects of nature of work so each one can find his or her work. The different activities in the Ashram are there to help one to find and fulfill one’s own swabhava.

So to come back to our analysis, the third step is the plunging of the nature towards the immanent Divine. Let us look closely at what it means. It could mean, among other possibilities, that the psychic is leading our nature towards the central being. The psychic is now taking itself and us towards the Central being. It is important here to refer to Canto II of Book VII of Savitri ‘The Parable of the Search for the Soul.’ This is a marvelous canto that tells us about the grand unity: about the unification of the psychic being and the Central being. This is the central attempt of this third stage. In the process our entire being is lifted up into an ecstasy and we begin to live in an inner ananda, shedding off all the outer and downward pulls of the ordinary life.

The fourth stage happens when the psychic “calls down also this transcendental Love and Beatitude to deliver and transform this world of hatred and strife and division and darkness and jarring ignorance. It opens to a universal Divine Love, a vast compassion, an intense and immense will for the good of all, for the embrace of the World-Mother enveloping or gathering

to her her children, the divine Passion that has plunged into the night for the redemption of the world from the universal Ignorance.” (p. 147)

This is such a marvelous stage. Once the psychic has reached the Immanent Divine, the next stage is to bring that spiritual power back into the outward human endeavour. This is where Sri Aurobindo’s yoga comes in. One has reached one’s innermost point – the spiritual centre, the central Self, and that consciousness and power is brought back to be showered on the human being’s outer personality as well the surrounding community. It is then that the true Integral Yoga begins.

After the psychic realization the psychic energy, the force, the consciousness of the Central Self is turned to humanity. So the best way to help humanity is to connect it to the divine love and light and compassion. This is not what we practice at the first step, which is vital and mental and emotional — a step towards self-expanding. True help comes in when the Inner Force comes back into action. It is at that time the transformation of Nature can begin.

At this stage our outer nature is not attracted by mental or vital illusions of name and fame, nor is it tied up in the bondage of the mental and the vital being. The psychic being exposes them in its search-light and purifies them to a great extent only “to heal these malformations, to deliver mental, vital, physical love from the insufficiencies or their perversions and reveal them their abounding share of the intimacy and the oneness and the ascending ecstasy and descending rapture.” (p. 147)

This seems to be the whole *raison d’être* of the ascent of the psychic being: to bring down the light and consciousness of the Central being into the mental, vital and physical being and to begin the ultimate transformation of nature. As concluded by Sri Aurobindo: “Only by the ascent to the original Truth can the deformation be healed and all the works of love, as too all the works of knowledge and life, be restored to a divine significance and become part of an integral spiritual existence.” (p. 147)

There are two for whom there is hope, the man who has felt God's touch and been drawn to it and the sceptical seeker and self-convinced atheist; but for the formularists of all the religions and the parrots of free thought, they are dead souls who follow a death that they call living.

Sri Aurobindo

LITERATURE, CULTURE AND THE ACADEMIA

A Possible Spiritualization of Post-Modernism

Sachidananda Mohanty

Despite Plato's exile of poets from his ideal Republic, men have always seen the civilizing mission as central to literature: Culture as the Arnoldian answer to impending anarchy, or Friedrich Schiller's "Republic of Letters", transitional to a civilization where labour blossoms and repression is no more, or the post-Renaissance notion of a "free-masonry or great spirits" (Keats)¹. Even the nihilism of a Kafka, Conrad or Dostoyevsky marks paradoxically our faith in the human possibility, our ability to make moral choice in a meaningful universe. The radical scepticism of Post-Modernism, however, divests Literature of this redeeming quality, even threatening to seal its future as a special category of Knowledge with a unique history and destiny. While some like Alvin Kernan² see literature as "dead", others view the problem of literature as inseparable from the problems of contemporary culture.

These problems could be articulated in a series of questions : How do we determine our individual and collective self-image? How to resolve our allegiance to multiple identities, linguistic, ethnic, national and global, that a participation in a democratic order entails? How is the question of our collective identity linked with our view of the past? How much of the memory of our past shall we retain and how much of the trauma and the nightmare, abandon? How does the Jewish identity, for instance, deal with exile and holocaust, the Black American experience with slavery, or the Hindu psyche with the Islamic invasion of the land?

Literature as "the best imaginative writing" or a body of canonized texts, is one significant way we have always dealt with the experience of the past. However, today, many in the discipline feel that Literature's unique mode of knowledge is increasingly unavailable to us. A host of factors, it is argued, has led to this radical shift. The electronic media have growingly replaced the printed book. The development of the computer keyboard radically upsets our notion of the literary text as fixed, unalterable and archival, its quick transference across vast geographical space and cultural frontiers negates the traditionally axiomatic notion of unique authorship and copyright, latent in the classical and romantic-modernist conception of the art and the artist. The P.C (Personal Computer) revolution is an added complication to challenges that already come from fields as diverse as phenomenology, Marxism, Freudianism and Feminism.

As canonized texts, Literature has been accused of marginalizing the experience of the dispossessed. In 1988, for instance, William Bennett, Conservative Secretary of Education in the US, debated on national television with the President of Stanford University whether traditional intellectual qualities represented by the classics of Literature such as the *Iliad*, *The Republic* and Shakespeare's plays should give way to texts like Simone de Beauvoir's *Second Sex*, with their overriding concern about the social values of equality of gender and race. Edward Said's seminal book *Orientalism* (1978), exposed the politics of representation and the Euro-centric bias latent in much of the traditional and modernist learning. Similarly, Louis Kampt, President of the prestigious Modern Language Association of America, charged in 1971 that "the very category of art has become one more instrument of making class distinctions."³

Philosophically, the attack against Literature has been mounted by continental theories swearing allegiance to some recent and not so recent thinking on the subject : Nietzsche, Derrida, Foucault and Barthes. In place of Euro-centric knowledge there is advocated a cultural relativism traceable to Nietzsche. Such a relativism seeks to valorise every literary cultural experience as of equal consequence, logically opening thereby the floodgates of cultural normlessness.

Similarly, Roland Barthes argues that a text is not a line of words releasing a single "theological meaning" (the "message" of the author God) but a multidimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. "The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from innumerable centres of culture."⁴ Likewise, Michael Foucault contends that the author is an obsolete phenomenon.

The attack has come from other quarters as well. The deconstructionist critique of Derrida destabilizes the Saussurean account of the signifier-signified relationship held axiomatic, for long, in traditional linguistic theory. Discourse, according to Derrida, is an endless deferral of reality, and infinite regress. Nor is the subject regarded as a unified whole, it is disperse or fragmented. It is a linguistic and cultural construct.

II

The new theories have led to heady debates in the academia. Far from facing the issue of literary history and canon formation as ongoing problems, the debate has unfortunately led in many quarters to a demand for wholesale and sweeping demolition of the past, a complete dethronement

of traditional syllabi and texts under the illusion that this will be the best way of redressing historical wrongs. The drive towards Multiculturalism in the academia is often seen as a way of equally apportioning texts, scholarships, teaching and research positions so as to be politically fair to all ethnic and cultural groupings. It is not clear, what role, if any, literary sensibility or aesthetics are to play in such a situation, since aesthetics traditionally seen as apolitical is perceived as an ideological apparatus to uphold an upperclass hegemony.

The espousal of such extreme positions regarding Literature and culture in the academia has often provoked a backlash. For instance Allan Bloom in his book *The Closing of the American Mind* (1987) laments how the American students have fallen victim to mindless destruction by treating all traditional literature as oppressive and reactionary. Similarly, conservative critic E.D.Hirsch in his *Cultural Literacy : What Every American Ought to Know* (1987), regrets the state of academic affairs. "To be culturally literate," argues Hirsch, "is to possess the basic information needed to thrive in the modern world." Today's radical agenda in the University, he continues, denies this possibility to the students in sharing in national culture and is especially detrimental to the culturally disadvantaged sections in society. Apparently unexceptionable, what this line of argument conceals is the faith in the supremacy of White American Culture. If the non-Whites in America are clearly going to overtake the Whites by the year 2080 A.D as the Population Reference Bureau of the US predicts, then should not the academy reflect changing needs in terms of texts and reading material that are native to diverse cultural groupings?

While much of this concern and questioning here is genuine and timely, what is at work and implicitly assumed is a redefinition of Literature and the role the academia is expected to play in setting the goals of acculturation. Indeed, some may not even recognize the new creature as Literature, such is the extent of its radical metamorphosis. The changes may even get out of hand, leading to extreme results. At times, it deflects the attention of learners from important philosophical and cultural goals and promotes the drawing up of the ideological battle lines. It has hardened existing prejudice, led to entrenched positions and resulted in what the critic Gerald Graff has aptly described as the University's paradoxical role in the prevention of culture, i.e. "the structural isolation of individuals, groups and departments that now prevents the possibility of an intellectual community of debate."⁵

III

What portents are there for Literature trapped in such an embattled academia - sandwiched between the conservativeness of the Right and “the political correctness” of the radical Left?⁶ Is Literature truly dead? Is it discredited as its detractors would have us believe? And what is the future of liberal humanism, the parent of traditional Literature that has acted as the repository of Arnoldian wisdom?

What then are the useful lessons of Post-Modernism? First of all, the questioning and scepticism are welcome - if only as a corrective against traditionally authoritarian knowledge systems and their Euro-centric colonial bias. The extremely rich culture and Literature of the non-West cannot be reduced simply as footnotes to the grand volume of the Western tradition. New anthologies like the Norton, with its third edition in 1989 and the recent Heth anthology⁷ have attempted to prove that there are more master writers in American Literature than what has been humorously put as “15 dead White men and Emily Dickinson.”

Secondly, the distinctions between Primitive-Modern, Orality - Literacy and the notions of linear progress, as standards of evaluation in Literature, as indeed in disciplines like History and Anthropology, are artificial. These distinctions and the epistemologies they support are flawed, as most of the recent thinking on the subject amply reveals.

Thirdly, the contribution of new Historicism in contextualizing and historicizing literary texts is a welcome development. Similarly, while we have learnt much from an emphasis on the specificity of cultural experience, we must also attempt to see how the significance of the particular can be harmonized with that of the universal. In other words, we must resolve the simultaneous drive towards integration and fragmentation that characterizes the Modern Age. What is being thought of is not a totalizing master Narrative, monolithic and homogenous, that effaces all differences but a complex and creative relationship between the particular and the universal. For, as Cleanth Brooks declares, far from being irrelevant to today’s issues, the great literary classics address universal question of interest to people of all cultures.

The new culture in the academia believes in democratic pluralism. The main problem of democratic pluralism, as Patrick Hill suggests, “is less that of taking diversity seriously than that of grounding any sort of commonality. It is the problem of encouraging citizens to sustain conversation of respect with others for the sake of their making public policy together, for forging over and over again a sense of shared future.”⁸

Real democratic pluralism, subsumes multicultural education. At the college and University level, it calls for the dismantling of the structures of disciplines currently hierarchical and anti knowledge. True multiculturalism will do away with “windowless boxes of relativism”, disciplinary isolation where marginal perspectives are merely added without touching the priorities and core of the organization. The alternative multicultural perspective calls no longer for separate courses but courses in interdisciplinary and intercultural perspectives. For, only by such boundary crossings can the constancies of human cultures and disciplines be discovered.

True multiculturalism can gain by bringing in hitherto untapped paradigms such as the various spiritual and cultural traditions and ventures of the world. In a context that has witnessed the collapse of the Soviet experiment, as well as the insufficiency of the bourgeois capitalistic model, the search for an alternative spiritualized Multiculturalism that can continue both egalitarianism and solidarity offers unique challenges and opportunities.

IV

A spiritualised Post-Modernism would look at its Literature not as a discrete body of knowledge, insular and aloof, but as an inseparable part of the sister disciplines and traditions of the world. It will not seek to foist a set of axiomatic truths of man, society and the universe as exclusive and inviolable. Rather, it will adopt an approach that offers a unique understanding and opportunities for growth for each individual, group, community or nationality. It will have none of the tyranny of the dogmatic religion, exclusive and sectarian analogous to “the double kind of possessive exclusivism” that Edward Said cautioned us against “the sense of being an excluding insider by virtue of experience (only women can write for and about women, and only Literature that treats women and Orientals well is good literature) and second, being an excluding insider by virtue of method (only Marxists, anti-Orientalists, feminists can write about economics, Orientalism, women’s Literature).”⁹

A spiritualized pedagogy will constantly examine traditional cognitive models but it will not urge a path of historical revenge, to replace one set of literary-cultural exclusivism and tyranny by another. It is dialogical, openminded and inquisitive. It seeks to accommodate and integrate. It recognizes the importance of material forces and circumstances in shaping history but it will not be blinded by the dogma of the materialist or the cult of

scientism. Equally will it reject the one-sided and otherworldly dogma of the ascetic and his refusal to recognize the importance of material life.¹⁰

As part of the collective heritage of mankind, spirituality as a world view is trans-cultural and trans-national in its approach. It is no one's monopoly and therefore will not play the devisive role that organised religions have played in history.

A spiritualized pedagogy will not view the child, as in the ancient patriarchal idea, as the live property of the father, but as Sri Aurobindo remarks, "a soul meant to grow."¹¹ Thus a spiritualized Literature and culture seek a commonality that recognizes and celebrates differences. Its relationship with the past is constantly expoloratory and unendingly creative. Instead of the collective amnesia of the significant cultural legacy of mankind, it restores the collective memory that enriches the storehouse of human wisdom.

To return to the earlier qesiton: Is Literature dead? John Morley who engaged in a lively debate with Edward Augustus Freeman in the 1880s in England regarding whether English Literature ought to form part of University education had disagreed with Freeman's dismissive view that literature is "mere chatter about Shelly." Morley's considered opinion that literature comprises "important writings in their relation to human thought and feeling and the leading facts of human life and society" still retains its validity. Post-Modernism has made us aware of our blindspots. But it has not invalidated the basic goals of liberal humanism : freedom of the individual and the search for an egalitarian social order.

It's time we thought of consolidating our gains. Division of the world into the sacred and profane, the secular and the spiritual is an artifical demarcation that only impoverished our growth. Perhaps it had its justification when science was fighting a battle against obscurantist religiosity. We have always consigned spirituality to the inner domain, conferring upon it an unfair, secondary status. It is time we spoke of a spiritualized Literature. Such a spiritualization, we envisage, will sufficiently recognize, and not ignore, the 'materiality' of literature, culture, text and interpretation much emphasised in Post-Modernism. Materiality, however, is not the obverse of spirituality. And to force all texts not to go beyond what Marxist critic Aizaz Ahmed dismissively terms as "all spirituality and all humbug"¹² can only diminish the value of literature, culture and human life. For indeed, only a spiritualized literature as indeed a spiritualized culture, can be the answer to the challenge of the future.

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It is not the medicine that cures so much as the patient's faith in the doctor and the medicine. Both are a clumsy substitute for the natural faith in one's own self-power which they have themselves destroyed.

Sri Aurobindo

REBIRTH - ITS MYSTERY

Deepshikha Reddy

Today we are going to discuss a subject which cannot be proven by mind or science as it has no observable facts. Therefore, we have to fully rely upon the experience of our gurus, saints and sages and our faith in the Shastras.

Therefore, when we talk about rebirth, in the first place, we take it for granted that we believe in the existence of a soul or a psychic being which takes upon itself a physical form when it is born on this earth. So, when a soul decides to be born or decides to come upon this earth, it has to take a birth through a form, be it human or any other in the creation. Now the question is, why would the soul which is supposed to be peaceful and blissful in its own world up in the upper hemisphere like to descend upon this not so pleasant and beautiful earth? After all, didn't Sri Shankaracharya declare that this existence is all illusion and that the only truth is the Supreme Brahman? Didn't the Buddha too emphasise on Nirvana as the ultimate peace and goal of our existence, as this world we live in is full of misery and constant suffering? Then why does the soul choose the earth for its manifestation?

If we dip a little deeper in this area, we understand that in our birth on this earth, our parents, who are the agents of our birth, have no choice at all in the decision" of our birth. The truth simply seems to be that it is only the soul which holds with him the conscious choice to be born with our physical frame as a vehicle on this earth - none else at all.

It is said in our sacred Scriptures that this creation was made by the Supreme Sachchidananda by his own Delight, for his own Delight. And furthermore, this creation came forth from the very substance of the Supreme Himself. That's how you have heard the *mahavakya*, *Sarvam Khalu Idam Brahmanam*. It is, as though, an extension of Himself in the real sense of the term. If I put it very briefly to you, I have to say that all the *jivatmans* are lodged in the Sachchidananda and when they want to partake of the delight in the creation through evolution, then the soul descends upon this earth to participate joyfully in this process of terrestrial evolution.

This creation follows a principle of hierarchy and it goes from matter upward to life, then to mind and the higher reaches of the mind and so on. The only purpose of the divine Jivatman sending his representative, the soul, into this creation, is to divinise matter slowly and steadily into

spirit one day. The machinery he uses to achieve this purpose is through innumerable numbers of birth and rebirth on this earth, slowly evolving Himself till he journeys back to its source of delight, the Sachchidananda.

This being the soul's main purpose of descent, through the process of rebirth, it evolves into ascending grades of forms i.e. from plants to animals to man using consciousness as its machinery. Mother says that through rebirth, each given life becomes a victory over matter by a greater consciousness.

Now, what do we mean by the word consciousness? In general, it is to be more and more aware of the inner divinity within us. But here in our context we will see that in the Inconscient, which is gross matter, the stones, rocks and minerals, the soul descends just as a mere vibration of consciousness, immobile. Then it grows into a spark, growing into small centres here and there, a little mobile. Next, it can form itself into some kind of a shape and can isolate itself from the formless mass of the Inconscient. They are like small sparks that slowly assume a certain kind of definiteness of both form and function. Slowly from then on they strive towards attaining an individuality and then finally a personality of their own. Mother says it takes innumerable lives to come to that stage of consciousness itself.

So, we now understand that once the soul has taken a decision to descend as a vibration, it has to go through the full gamut of journey till it can return to its own abode. Each one of us sitting here has come through the range of minerals, plants, to animals and finally reached this state of manhood. There is no short-cut in this evolution till this point. Even when the soul reaches the human stage, very often it is in a highly rudimentary form. It requires several births to attain an individuality and yet a long period of time to form itself as an organized consciousness around the central psychic being. So, this in short is the story of how a soul, which descends on this earth, goes back to its origin, gathering experiences through all the lives fulfilling the mission of divinising this manifestation.

Now, let us examine what is this soul like, what are its characteristics? The soul is an individual and also possesses a form though it is nothing like our material physical body. It has an essential form, the form of the form, *Swaroopa* and it has a typical individuality. It is the real individual seated within the individual. In the Upanishads, it is described as *Angushthamatram Ravitulyaroopas* meaning that it is measured as big as our thumb and it has the resplendent splendour as that of the Sun. In the Gita we get one of the best and the clearest definitions of the soul in the second chapter. '*Na Jayate Mriyate va*' it is unborn and never dies- why? It is simple because it was

always existent in the superconscient before it came upon this earth. And after journeying through the inconscient upward to the superconscient, it goes back to its abode. So, it never dies. It is *Avinashi*, indestructible, *Ajo Nitya*, unborn, sempiternal, *Shashwatoyam Purano*, eternal and ancient. No one knows about this mysterious soul as it is totally beyond our comprehension. It is *Abodhyo* not comprehensible.

The only thing we know is that during its course of evolution, it grows in its magnitude or charge or potency through several births. Now that we know that the soul descends for its own evolution through the process of divinising matter through rebirth, let us examine its instruments through which it works in us. Its first instrument is the human body because after a certain point of evolution, the soul can choose and decide the kind of experience he wants to have in its own growth—can choose its own circumstances, family, country and environment—each thing.

This statement clarifies many questions in our minds. We very often pity people with misfortune and various kinds of suffering and blame the Lord as being blind and unsympathetic to the earth. The truth is that all our process of suffering and happiness, misfortune and prosperity are nothing but the experience of our soul in its training, its props, helps and tests and ordeals. Sri Aurobindo says that very often suffering helps the soul to purify in its own struggle to unfold itself. That is how, the psychic being organizes its consciousness around itself to influence the whole personality of our mind, life and body. But it takes a long time. That is why we go to a Yogi for peace and life's solutions as he lives totally in the influence of his soul. He is no more tossed about by the lower influences of the mind and the vital. He is a pure being. It is a very rigorous discipline that one has to go through before one can become conscious of one's soul.

At this point, wouldn't you all be curious to learn about the characteristics of the soul? It is indeed very fascinating to think about it. He is the Real Self residing in our ever-changing bodies. Even though we sometimes do not even experience its existence once in a lifetime, still, when it leaves our body, we get a violent shock. It is only then we understand that this soul contributes the cord of life-force in our body. When it draws itself out, life snaps.

So, this easily establishes the fact that a conscious soul lives in an unconscious body. When it lives with us, within us, for a whole life-time, what are its characteristics? It seems that this Real person enjoys and suffers everything that we go through in our life very palpably and vividly as its own. The only difference is that we live and enjoy through our ego-sense

guiding us and the soul enjoys everything through a mental person who, in the Upanishads, is called, '*Manomaya Prana Saria Ne'ta* 'which maintains the ego-sense as a function that feels its identity in time and not with the timeless- self. Ego brings in attachment and desire and therefore we suffer. The Real person, the soul enjoys everything without any involvement or attachment. So, in truth, He is the witness Purusha, the unchanging Self of this changing Self, which is the Prakriti.

Prakriti is the dynamic aspect of the Purusha. Purusha is always the silent observer. Our life is full of all the actions of the Prakriti but all that Prakriti manifests is basically the Will of the Self or the soul. We have got to understand this secret mystery of rebirth in the right perspective. All that we see happening around us is being executed by the Prakriti only for the delight of the Soul - Delight of the Purusha alone. Without the sanction of the Purusha, Prakriti cannot function, cannot act at all. For example, do you remember the story of the great Sri Shankaracharya changing the very course of the river that was obstructing or somewhere disturbing his Guru's Ashram. All that he did was that he placed his *Kamandalu* at a certain point and ordered the river to change its course. And the river obeyed. How did this happen? I do not exactly remember the story but I understood the spiritual essence. It was the command or the Will of the Purusha, the soul of Sri Shankaracharya, that ordered the river. What is the river? It is the Prakriti. So, she had to obey immediately. But that Will has to be the will of the pure enlightened being like the Guru.

So, in other words, we understand that more and more that it is finally the Purusha who is using our body as an instrument for its own awakening which is absorbed in the universal matter. Sri Aurobindo calls it a matter-shackled soul that has attained a variable degree of humanity in the progressive ladder of life, mind and spirit. So, had this mechanism of rebirth not been there, we would not have reached this stage of evolution we are in now.

If it is the same soul that appears on this earth times without number, each time changing its form, why do we not remember our previous births? We have been coming on this earth so many times, then why, generally, we don't even have any clue to our past experiences? This is partly in the divine scheme that the memory has been kept hidden because this knowledge shall prove to be an obstruction in the future progress. But, there is also a practical difficulty. The instrument of mind is the only channel we have at our disposal for memory and its allied experiences. At the present stage we are in, our mind is not sufficiently advanced or controlled or trained enough

to be pure and luminous. It is only when we have purified our mind and have gone through the rigorous training of full control in all spheres, that we shall be able to remember all the significant god-ward moves of all our past lives. The soul remembers only the essential experiences. It is never interested in our superficial external existence in any way. A fully developed soul remembers its whole journey from the spark to the conscious spirit very vividly. Only when one reaches the top of one's consciousness, one, as though, looks back on the arduous journey and recounts it. So long as one is travelling one cannot look back.

Therefore, now, after knowing this deep significance of rebirth, what is the attitude we should advocate towards our life? We understand that the universe is the scene and our earth is the stage for our work and experience. Unfortunately human beings consider the life more as a mechanical process than a conscious unfolding of a divine experience. Sri Aurobindo says that the only purpose of rebirth is for a significant ascension to the divine vistas of a growing soul. If we truly understand this purpose, then it should set us seeking for a spiritual self-expansion, for a self-knowledge of our spirit and understanding the divine intention of our existence.

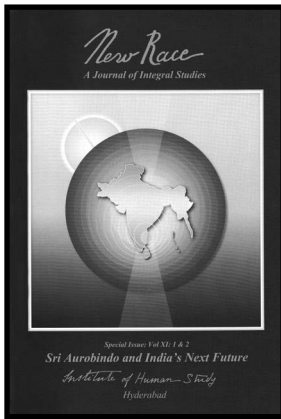
Through our past lives whatever experience we have gained, with an essence of all that we are born today in this life to prepare what we are going to fulfil in our future lives. You will be surprised to know that Sri Aurobindo says, 'not even one single recurrence of useless and irrational decimal is ever there in our life' which only means that each event and each circumstance has a deep meaning and a purpose in our life.

Closely related to this topic, people often ask questions about the theory of *karma* as it is understood, rather very wrongly understood today by most of us. This is a very complex theory and rather a subtle one too, that needs a long time for discussion. So, we shall not touch that part today. Suffice it to say that we should not believe in the fixed predestination of *karma* and remain passive about all the chain of results, believing that we are mere puppets in the hands of this all powerful energy. It is not correct at all. Instead, we must remember that we, each one of us, is a part, a living part of that Supreme Universal Energy and Will that is governing this Universe. If I can aspire to arrive at a greater inner harmony by determining my own will which is only a wave of the Universal Will, why can't I exalt my state of consciousness beyond all the bondage of *karma* to the ultimate freedom? - says Sri Aurobindo.

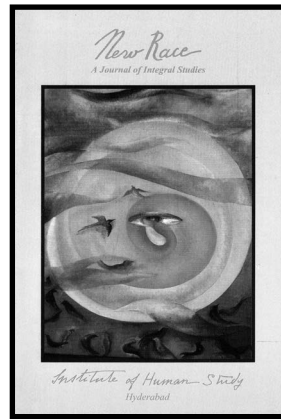
It is all a working rigorously towards heightening one's consciousness to understand one day that there is a conscious Self — the wise, infinite Spirit

that is guiding this Universe and that He is doing it with a definite purpose of fulfilling the evolution of matter. That day we shall understand the true significance of rebirth and *karma*. Then the world will become an eternally developing phenomena for us. Then the spirit's growth shall become the main motive of our life.

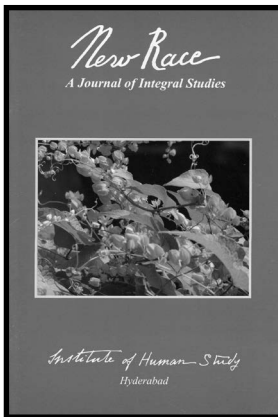
There are many subtle planes of existences in spiritual life which we do not need to understand now at this point. Let us only feel the Supreme Lord as the sole mover and director of this creation and let us try to first understand this mentally, then feel this and finally experience this Truth, be totally convinced by it and then try to surrender ourselves completely at His feet. All knowledge is He. We shall get all that we need to know through Him alone.



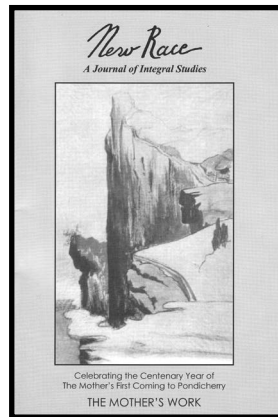
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February - 2012



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THE FUTURE SOCIETY

Beloo Mehra

Sri Aurobindo's social philosophy tells us that a spiritualized society is the future direction for humanity. Humanity is gradually and painstakingly being prepared for a great spiritual turning through its upward spiraling journey from symbolic, typical, conventional, individualistic and subjective stages. The road to a spiritualized society goes through the present evolutionary crisis humanity is facing. Human society, in its present nature – with all its pleasures and pains, abilities and limits, gains and losses, convergences and conflicts, peace and war – is a creation of human consciousness that is in its turn limited by and subject to its present nature. As long as this consciousness remains, all adjustments and re-adjustments, all revolutions and re-organizations, re-thinking and re-planning in the society and its structures – political, economic, cultural – will be devised by the same consciousness that created the earlier structures, and are therefore bound to solve problems facing humanity only for a short period of time, if at all they are able to solve any. A deeper look within and all around us will convince us there is a visible discontent with the present condition of affairs. A new consciousness alone has the key to the present evolutionary crisis that has emerged out of this discontent. A consciousness that is wider, higher, and deeper than the one in which the humanity persists at present. A consciousness which enables the separative, divisive, egoistic tendencies that are presently behind every action and decision we make in our personal, social conduct to transform and evolve into unifying, integrative, harmonizing, and ego-less tendencies.

“The coming of a spiritual age must be preceded by the appearance of an increasing number of individuals who are no longer satisfied with the normal intellectual, vital and physical existence of man, but perceive that a greater evolution is the real goal of humanity and attempt to effect it in themselves, to lead others to it and to make it the recognised goal of the race. In proportion as they succeed and to the degree to which they carry this evolution, the yet unrealised potentiality which they represent will become an actual possibility of the future.” (Sri Aurobindo, *The Human Cycle*, CWSA, vol 25, p. 263). This essay is an attempt to visualize a future society that may result as more and more individuals begin their inward journeys with an aim to evolve in their consciousness. The present analysis begins with a brief description of a few signs we see today that indicate an increasing trend of such inner seeking both on the levels of individual and society. It then proceeds to a general

description of some of the social and economic structures of a future society that has moved beyond the rationalistic-individualistic worldview and is an aggregate of individuals who are seeking their true subjective self. The analysis leads us to the question whether this futuristic subjective society may open the way to a truly spiritual stage of society.

“The subjective stage of human development is that critical juncture in which, having gone forward from symbols, types, conventions, having turned its gaze superficially on the individual being to discover his truth and right law of action and its relation to the superficial and external truth and law of the universe, our race begins to gaze deeper, to see and feel what is behind the outside and below the surface and therefore to live from within. It is a step towards self-knowledge and towards living in and from the self, away from knowledge of things as the not-self and from the living according to this objective idea of life and the universe. ...Subjectivism is in its very nature an attempt at self-knowledge and at living by a true self-knowledge and by an inner strength.” (CWSA, vol 25, pp. 44-46). We live in times when increasing number of people are waking up to the need for a more holistic view on life, for grasping the true nature of reality, and for an inner quest for meaning and purpose of all that exists. We see these initial steps in increasing popularity of “new age” spirituality among people all over the world. Having enjoyed all that the individualistic age of reason has been able to give them in terms of material comfort and security, more and more people are seeking something deeper and higher. In this self-unfolding process these people’s lives are becoming richer with more and more moments of inner joy and contentment and their hardened ego-selves begin to slowly crack making room for more light and truth.

In the intellectual arena disciplinary boundaries are melting, and new epistemologies are giving challenges to the rigid dichotomy between mental knowing (or knowing by logic and reason) and other forms of knowing including experiential, contemplative, and intuitive. Plenty of voices in the field of transformative research and learning guided by a keen passion for social transformation and informed by emancipatory and liberatory approaches such as critical and post-colonial studies, feminist pedagogy, anti-racist education and critical multicultural literature have focused on challenging power relations based on social structures of race, class, gender, or sexual orientation. These approaches might serve as important steps in the path of individual self-discovery and also the spiraling evolutionary paths of social transformation, leading towards deeper inquiry of self and societies,

and gradually moving in the direction of higher and wider realms of individual freedom and liberation. Thoughtful integration of contemplative pedagogies and spirituality-based worldview in intellectual and societal discourse is beginning to supplement these liberatory approaches by incorporating a much deeper understanding of inner freedom.

All these trends are good indicators of the dawn of an age of true subjectivism which may be a pre-condition for the advent of a spiritual age. But we may be certain of having entered a truly subjective age when a substantial mass of individuals would have experienced the inner evolution of consciousness and would be leading their lives in accordance with an inner law of the spirit. Sri Aurobindo describes true subjectivism as a seeking in which “the individual seeking for the law of his being can only find it safely if he regards clearly two great psychological truths and lives in that clear vision. First, the ego is not the self; there is one self of all and the soul is a portion of that universal Divinity. The fulfilment of the individual is not the utmost development of his egoistic intellect, vital force, physical well-being and the utmost satisfaction of his mental, emotional, physical cravings, but the flowering of the divine in him to its utmost capacity of wisdom, power, love and universality and through this flowering his utmost realisation of all the possible beauty and delight of existence.... The second psychic truth the individual has to grasp is this, that he is not only himself, but is in solidarity with all of his kind... That which we are has expressed itself through the individual, but also through the universality, and though each has to fulfil itself in its own way, neither can succeed independently of the other.” (CWSA, vol 25, pp. 46-47). Through such a true subjective seeking, an individual’s law of the spirit leading him or her in a unique direction specifically suited for the individual’s progress would not be in conflict with the life-direction of other individuals on their unique journeys of seeking for true subjectivism. Free-progress of the individual and infinite variation among the individual paths of progress would capture the group consciousness as the underlying deepest truth of human experience. “The society has no right to crush or efface the individual for its own better development or self-satisfaction; the individual, so long at least as he chooses to live in the world, has no right to disregard for the sake of his own solitary satisfaction and development his fellow-beings and to live at war with them or seek a selfishly isolated good. And when we say, no right, it is from no social, moral or religious standpoint, but from the most positive and simply with a view to the law of existence itself. For neither the society nor the individual can so develop to their fulfilment” (p. 47).

In such a society, there would be a wider human tendency to live through and with pain, death and loss as the needed grist for the mill so that individual soul may progress and grow through such experiences. Humanity would recognize that the misery and violence resulting from exaggerated mental, vital and physical ego are crude but necessary steps to a golden future that is evolving through these stumbling efforts. There would be a kinder and more compassionate understanding and acceptance of those dark moments and life-phases that are part of overall human experience, and these would be seen as opportunities for deepening one's transformation. Peace would come from the realization that it is an endless journey to perfection that we are on. Tranquility would come from the knowledge that every little victory along the way is a marker to the countless victories that await us, and every little failure along the way is a sure sign of even more countless victories that await us. Calm courage of the spirit would be the inner guide as individuals move through various stages and phases of life.

Individuals would realize the inherent ideal purpose of their work. Writers' hearts would open wide to receive experiences and realizations that are translated into words and woven in beautiful prose and poetry that avoid unnecessary sensationalism and convey the deepest truths and ideals of human experience. Artists and sculptors would be creating forms that will carry them and their patrons into the realms and imaginations of formless. Musicians and singers would in their music bring forth the stirrings of the depths of their souls and create a bridge between the form and formless for the listeners. Dancers would bring into being deep, wide formless truths through their graceful forms and movements in front of which all purified human hearts would involuntarily bow in utmost humility.

Children would grow with self-discipline that comes from deeper freedom, not with mindless confusion and mind-numbing authority. Parents would discover the true spirit behind the words – "child is the father of man." Teachers and students would be co-learners in their journeys to discover and uncover the truths of the world; they would collaborate in a mutually respectful manner and deeply appreciate and grow from their differences. Education would not be a business, and businesses would be managed through human-centered and consciousness-based approaches. Business leaders would worry less about the balance in their bank accounts but more about the balance in their junior-most employee's retirement accounts. Wealth-generation as an important social activity would have regained its heart and would realize its purpose in creating a warm luxurious reign of beauty, harmony, comfort and

contentment for all. The weakest and poorest sections of the society would be looked after by an enlightened socialistic economic setup where individual freedom and enterprise is just as valued and encouraged as state-run programs and enterprises. A spiritualized ethic of compassion and caring for all creation would guide social action.

In this future society, we may find small, sufficiently self-reliant economic and social aggregates that are freely formed by individuals who have come together because of common interests, backgrounds, and affiliation. These aggregates would encourage people to practice the kind of work that is deeply meaningful and fulfilling, but in the name of self-reliance and self-sufficiency there will be no pressure to cover all needed areas of economic activity. The sphere of economic activity would be determined by the creative potential of the people in a community, and the availability of natural and other resources available to them where they are based. Reasonably regulated exchange of goods and services among the aggregates would be preferred without encouraging mass and unlimited production of goods and services that could lead to unbridled commercialism, industrialism, and rule of the market. A small group of elected officials would use a consensus-based decision making process to manage the necessary administrative functioning of the aggregate. Politics, law-enforcement, and other much-needed administrative and governmental activities would be chosen as life's work by those individuals who see these fields of action as instruments with a deeper purpose to bring forth the ideal of Divine Life on earth. These individuals would work toward increasing transparency in legislative, executive and judicial branches of government.

Such smaller aggregates would be loosely and freely held together by a common spirit that ties them to larger aggregates. People would be relatively freer to move from one social aggregate to another, would be able to make decent living in new places, and this type of migration and assimilation would somehow be smoother because of the already-loosening hold of one's social and cultural egos that could prevent one from connecting to somewhat unfamiliar cultural and social norms. The tendency of political, social and cultural aggregates would not be to dominate or devour the ones that are relatively weaker and poorer, but to aid them to grow and develop with their unique identities and traditions intact and blossoming. Cultural traditions, practices and values would not be marketable items, but there would be a free-flowing exchange of ideas and thoughts leading to new forms of synthesis of a variety of traditions and practices. The larger aggregate would be secure in the unity of its spirit and in the diversity of its forms. With full confidence in such

deep and inner security these aggregates would interact with other large and small aggregates and collectivities in the spirit of mutual respect and peaceful co-existence. Compassionate progressivism, free-spirited interdependence, shared prosperity and a free unity of nations would guide international diplomacy.

Such a vision of future society representing an age of true subjectivism sounds very ideal and a really great improvement over what we have at present. As utopian and difficult to achieve as this vision looks to us at present, it must be remembered that even a truly subjective society is not the end of the journey of a conscious, awake humanity. It is perhaps true that being on the journey itself makes conscious and awake human beings see the glimpses of the perfection that they are inherently capable of creating every moment. But more must be done if an age of true subjectivism has to lead to an age of spirit, if the Truth of a spiritualized society and a divine life based on a supramental consciousness is to be established. “If a subjective age... is to find its outlet and fruition in a spiritualised society and the emergence of mankind on a higher evolutionary level, it is not enough that certain ideas favourable to that turn of human life should take hold of the general mind of the race, permeate the ordinary motives of its thought, art, ethics, political ideals, social effort, or even get well into its inner way of thinking and feeling. It is not enough even that the idea of the kingdom of God on earth, a reign of spirituality, freedom and unity, a real and inner equality and harmony—and not merely an outward and mechanical equalisation and association—should become definitely an ideal of life; it is not enough that this ideal should be actively held as possible, desirable, to be sought and striven after, it is not enough even that it should come forward as a governing preoccupation of the human mind. That would evidently be a very great step forward,—considering what the ideals of mankind now are, an enormous step. It would be the necessary beginning, the indispensable mental environment for a living renovation of human society in a higher type. But by itself it might only bring about a half-hearted or else a strong but only partially and temporarily successful attempt to bring something of the manifest spirit into human life and its institutions... More is needed; a general spiritual awakening and aspiration in mankind is indeed the large necessary motive-power, but the effective power must be something greater. There must be a dynamic re-creating of individual manhood in the spiritual type”

Reference:

Sri Aurobindo, *The Human Cycle*, CWSA, vol 25, pp. 261-262.

INTEGRAL EDUCATION AT THE PRE-PRIMARY LEVEL

Chhalamayi Reddy

Sri Aurobindo was one of the first revolutionaries in the field of education, who conceived the idea of a national system of education and who was responsible in a large measure to found the National College, Calcutta, in 1906. He was a teacher all his life, the first 13 years as a Professor in Baroda College teaching English, French and then as teacher of the nation, editor of *Bande Mataram*, a revolutionary for the freedom of India; and later for 40 years he was a world teacher, pioneering the movement of affirmative spirituality turning a reverse direction from the ascetic tradition of rejection of the world as Maya. He was one of the first thinkers and prophets who pointed out and worked to get mankind to accept that life is real, life has a meaning, all life is a school and the issue is here on earth and not somewhere else in a beyond. His is called an Integral Education for an integral life. He had also a remarkable collaborator, the Mother, coming from France. She had many revolutionary ideas in the cause of liberating women, liberation of men from ignorance, thralldom to suffering and falsehood and liberation of the child from the tyranny of the parents. She lived and worked in India for over 50 years and as a testimony to their endeavours you have the Sri Aurobindo Ashram at Pondicherry with its centre of Education practising and holding as a model a new kind of life.

Integral Education is based on the view that each individual comes into life with an evolutionary purpose and corresponding potentialities. Integral Education implies the allround development of a child consisting of the physical, the vital, the mental, the psychic and the spiritual in him/her. It follows a different pattern of teaching when compared to the regular method which is teacher centred, where they believe the child to be an empty vessel where information has to be loaded from outside or that the child has to be shaped according to preconceived ideas.

Integral education as manifested at the pre-primary or primary level is best fulfilled in the natural form at play. Play as the name itself includes is an integral part of life of any child. Play is marked with freedom and joy. Children at that early age are always inclined to create something new, to invest and to explore. This is possible when they are given freedom to play. It is play that gives them an opportunity to take the initiation and to control

their own inner discipline. What a child is unable to express in words, he expresses through play. Hence the play-way method promotes a holistic or integral development of the child.

Physical Development: Playing is growing. To grow physically, the child should play. Play contributes to the healthy development of the body. During play children will develop large motor skills, small motor skills, courage, to control body movements, control over muscular balance of the body, good healthy habit of eating and sleeping and consciousness about the body. Not only this, it helps him to self control, good sport and a loser.

Hence the kindergarten should be a place where children have space and equipment to run and climb and slide and swing; music to dance and skip and sing; sand and soil to dig and mould; water to play in, float things in, even swim in. The children thus live in direct contact with nature, expose to a world of colour and light, flowers and trees, insects and birds and animals, sun and rain; exploring and discovering and observing either by themselves or with the teacher's help with wonder and concentration.

Vital Development: (Pertaining to the emotions) The Mother has said that "of all education, the education of the vital is perhaps the most important and the most indispensable." The education of the vital has two principal aspects. The first is to develop and utilise organs, the second is to become conscious and gradually master of one's character and in the end to achieve its transformation.

Special importance must be given to the training of the 6 senses; sight, taste, smell, touch, hearing and mind. This can be done through a variety of games and innumerable experiments with every day familiar objects in order to attain precision, power and sensitivity in their functioning. If mind is thus trained first to pay attention, to record and recall accurately the sense data perceived, a child who has developed these qualities has formed in himself the building blocks of a life long education.

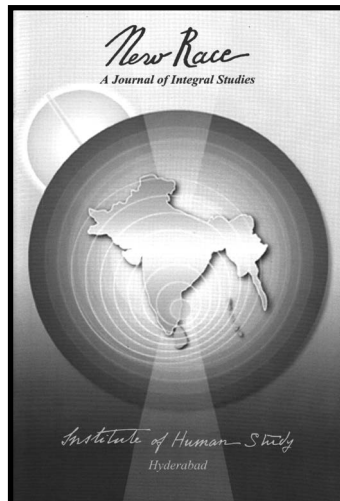
The children must be taught to reject fear, to be brave and fearless not to cry if they fall or cannot do something; instead to call and quietly ask for help. They must also be taught to tell the truth at all times. Thus through play there is an outlet for the surplus energies, if pent, it will make the child tense, nervous, and irritable. Through play a child can express much about his feelings and also make better social adjustments.

The children must be enveloped in an atmosphere of love and understanding, so that they can understand easily when asked to share

their favourite toys, not to hit each other, or to speak one at a time without shouting. They must also enjoy learning to work together.

Mental development: The true education of mind, that which will prepare man for a higher life has 5 principal phases. (1) Concentration (2) The capacity of attention (3) The capacity of express (4) Organisation of ideas, thought control and (5) Development of mental silence. According to Sri Aurobindo “the first step is to make the young mind interact itself in drawing inferences from the facts, and the reasons of the success and of failure. Nothing can be taught to the mind which is not already concealed as a potential knowledge in the unfolding soul of the individual.” The analytic and synthetic kinds of learning as mentioned above can consist of games of vocabulary and memory, puzzles, recognition of forms, board games of all kinds, exercises in logical thinking and logical sequences in space and time; preliminary notions of numbers, relations and rhythmic patterned; a preparation for reading and writing.

Spiritual developments: The aim of education is the growth of the consciousness, in love, duty and truth. Thus it is not simply a life long process but an eternal one. There is a great need to produce moral and spiritual men. It is essential that from a very early age, the children be made sensitive to spiritual values. It is only then that his education can be truly complete.



Aug-Nov 2014

APPRECIATING BEAUTY IN LITERATURE: AN AUROBINDONIAN PERSPECTIVE

Shruti Bidwaikar

Quest for beauty is eternal and Universal. All cultures and civilizations in all ages searched and defined beauty in their own way. Indeed there are differences in the perception of the beauty, but the quest and an eye for beauty has always been there. These days, where the beauty of the natural landscape is becoming a rare sight, there is an attempt to beautify the surroundings through gardens and parks. While the skyscrapers crowd the vision of the sky, there is an endeavour to build titanic concrete and glass structures which are architectural wonders and beautiful and awe inspiring in their own way. While the urban noise tries to deafen our ears, we also come across interesting technological advancements ready to bring to us the subtlest of the sounds played by an instrument. There are different ways and channels to beauty in vision, imagination, rhythm, colour etc. What exactly do we perceive when we perceive beauty? For example when we look at a flower, it strikes us at once with its colour, texture, arrangement, size, pattern and fragrance. It pleases our senses. With a little more receptivity, we are struck by the vital energy it radiates. One might even be able to connect this energy of the flower to some beautiful idea or thought, or relate it symbolically to some spiritual aspect. This suggests that beauty exists and is perceived on different planes. There is a gradation in which the perception moves from the tangible to the intangible. Literature very subtly exemplifies this gradation. The paper studies these gradations in Sri Aurobindo's perspective.

Before taking up Sri Aurobindo's idea of beauty some descriptions of beauty and its correlates may be briefly mentioned here. Appreciation of beauty is often related to truth, perfection, good, strength, delight, love, morality, form and the material it uses. "Beauty is truth, truth beauty" says Keats. For him beauty and truth were synonymous. The Greek idea of beauty lied more in symmetry and perfection of form. Aristotle says, "the essential constituent of beauty are symmetry, order and proportion." (Angraj Chaudhary: 62) Beauty is also close to good. It is assumed that all that is beautiful has to be good and morally correct. Bacon related beauty to strength. According to him, great emperors and kings of the world were very beautiful and also had the strength to conquer the world. The material that an artist uses to beautify a situation or a form need not be beautiful and

refined. He can make use of the crudest of materials to beautify his object. Delight and Love form an eternal relation with Beauty. Indian philosophers and aesthetes always believed that the purpose of art is to give delight and inculcate the love for the Higher power.

Sri Aurobindo makes a distinction between 'aesthetics' and 'aesthesia'. "Aesthetics is concerned mainly with beauty, but more generally with *rasa*, the response of the mind, the vital feeling and the sense to a certain "taste" in things which often may be but is not necessarily a spiritual feeling." (Savitri: 746) According to him aesthetics "belongs to the mental range" and aesthesis to the Overmind. He says, "The Overmind is essentially a spiritual power. Mind in it surpasses its ordinary self and rises and takes its stand on a spiritual foundation. It embraces beauty and sublimates it; it has an essential aesthesis which is not limited by rules and canons; it sees a universal and an eternal beauty while it takes up and transforms all that is limited and particular." (Savitri: 746) By aesthesis he means, "a reaction of the consciousness, mental and vital and even bodily, which receives a certain element in things, something that can be called their taste, *Rasa*, which, passing through the mind or sense or both, awakes a vital enjoyment of the taste, *Bhoga*, and this can again awaken us, awaken even the soul in us to something yet deeper and more fundamental than mere pleasure and enjoyment, to some form of spirit's delight of existence, *Ananda*." (Savitri: 817) His explanation of the difference between aesthetics and aesthesis is a gateway to understand his conception of the beauty on the tangible and intangible levels.

Writing about the 'Suprarational Beauty' Sri Aurobindo gives the gradations in which the beauty manifests itself and is perceived. Essentially the perception moves from the visible to the invisible, from the concrete to the abstract, from the form to the formless, from the material to the soul. On the first level he says, "The search for beauty is only in its beginning a satisfaction in the beauty of form, the beauty which appeals to the physical senses and the vital impressions, impulsions, desires. It is only in the middle a satisfaction in the beauty of the ideas seized, the emotions aroused, the perception of perfect process and harmonious combination. Behind them the soul of beauty in us desires the contact, the revelation, the uplifting delight of an absolute beauty in all things which it feels to be present, but which neither the senses and instincts by themselves can give, though they may be its channels,—for it is suprasensuous,—nor the reason and intelligence, though they too are a channel,—for it is suprarational, supra-intellectual,—but to which through all these veils the soul itself seeks to arrive." (CWSA, Vol 25:144)

These letters have been taken from the Letters on Savitri in the 1993 edition of the Savitri: A Legend and Symbol brought out by Sri Aurobindo Ashram. This volume contains the Epic poem as well as the Letters. Complete bibliographical reference is included at the end.

Each of these three stages of the perception of beauty will now be taken up separately in rest of the paper, along with some appropriate examples. It is my hope that the examples would speak for themselves the levels of beauty they convey. I begin with a few examples to exemplify beauty of form, that which appeals to the senses and impulsions.

S.T. Coleridge's 'Rime of Ancient Mariner' at once brings forth the beauty in form. The description of the hot and bloody sun, the stillness of the sea and the ship draws a picture before us. The sun, moon, sea and ship all at once capture our vision. These physical objects are at once present with their magnanimity. The form which is rigid and unchanging is stable. The idle ship here is compared to a 'painted ship', it gives the sense of stagnation and it is intensified with the growing heat of the sun and the fixity of breath and movement. This description is almost that of an inscription on the wall or of a painting. Just as in an inscription or in a painting one can discern each and every physical object, so do the lines suggest through word picture.

All in a hot and copper sky,
The bloody Sun, at noon,
Right up above the mast did stand,
No bigger than the Moon.

Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, nor breath nor motion;
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.

William Wordsworth's description of the beautiful daffodils also draws a picture before our eyes. The beauty of the flowers is "the beauty which appeals to the physical senses", to the eyes particularly. It is a word painting in 'Daffodils', a description so beautiful that a painter can draw with brush and colour the whole landscape.

I wander'd lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,

When all at once I saw a crowd,
 A host, of golden daffodils;
 Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
 Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.
 Continuous as the stars that shine
 And twinkle on the Milky Way,
 They stretch'd in never-ending line
 Along the margin of a bay:
 Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
 Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

Through the sense of sight the imagination soars high with the clouds and vales and hills. An elegant movement in the nature is described in the lines here. The comparison of the abundance of the flowers to the Milky Way again takes our imagination into the vision of the Universe. Here, however far we imagine, the visual impact is very much there. Unlike in Coleridge's lines, here we find an appeal to the subtle sense of sight with its imaginary wings. This plasticity in vision gives the pleasure and beauty which is a picture drawn before the mind's eye.

Sri Aurobindo's 'Baji Prabhou' is an example bringing forth the impulse of a warrior who is ready to serve his Motherland with the strength of the Divine within and demands nothing in return. His strength and courage and emotions and feelings overpower the consequences of the fierce war that would ask for his life.

And Baji answered him:

“Tanaji Malsure, not in this living net
 Of flesh and nerve, nor in the flickering mind
 Is a man's manhood seated. God within
 Rules us, who in the Brahmin and the dog
 Can, if He will, show equal godhead. Not
 By men is mightiness achieved; Baji
 Or Malsure is but a name, a robe,
 And covers One alone. We but employ
 Bhavani's strength, who in an arm of flesh
 Is mighty as in the thunder and the storm.
 I ask for fifty swords.” (Collected Poems: 283)

Here is a warrior Baji Prabhou who is desirous and impulsive to fight for his Motherland. Desires, emotions and impulses form a part of the vital energies which are very important for life. But the desire, the emotion and the impulse here are for no lower motives. It is the beauty of life-force motivating and encouraging the warrior to go forward and fight. The life-force is so strong that it has risen out of his ego when he finds God in every man and animal. Baji does not fight for the name for he is sure that God's work will be done whether by his own instrumentality or by Malsure's. In these lines and emotions, the beauty lies in uplifting movement of the life-force. There is a force and a will to execute the Bhavani's Will, surrender to the Divine decision. This beauty and force are highly motivating to the reader as well. It immediately stirs one with patriotism and more so motivates one to living the ideal of working for the Divine Will.

From this most tangible and visible level of perception of beauty we move to a level where perception is a little more subtle. As we recall Sri Aurobindo's words quoted earlier – "It is only in the middle a satisfaction in the beauty of the ideas seized, the emotions aroused, the perception of perfect process and harmonious combination." (CWSA, Vol. 25: 144) Again a few examples may be taken to show how literature captures ideas, emotions and harmonizes the inner and the outer principles of life.

There are ideas which are captured like a flash. They make us think and ponder. Such is an idea seized by Keats in his 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' –

"Beauty is truth, truth beauty," - that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

Coleridge also has captured such an idea in 'Rime of Ancient Mariner'

He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small ;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.

Beauty, truth, prayer, and love -- all these are abstract ideas or feelings. Yet Keats and Coleridge have caught the beauty in these ideas and have expressed them in a way which is appealing and convincing. In fact in the former, the poet talks about the high order of aesthesis, a stage where truth is beauty and beauty is truth. Sri Aurobindo writes about this elaborately in

his letters on Savitri. The conclusive lines of Coleridge highlight the beauty of prayer, love and the God's equability to all his creation. This idea at once brings peace and contentment to the reader. Therefore, in the last stanza of the poem the poet remarks that the listener was wiser than before, perhaps because he learnt a greater truth. The beauty is conveyed through the idea of abstract concepts and yet it strikes the reader with conviction.

The memory of a beautiful scene makes one nostalgic and brings back those moments before the mind's eye. Wordsworth who recollects the beauty and emotions in tranquility recapitulates the beauty of the daffodils in solitude and re-lives those moments. In 'Daffodils' he says –

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

In the lines previously quoted from 'Daffodils' we find a suggestion to the physical eye. Here is a recollection of those emotions and visions which soothed the poet once. The poet in a 'pensive mood' re-lives the beauty of the beautiful flowers he saw. They "flash upon that inward eye". The emotions are aroused when the poet recollects it in tranquility; even then the beauty of the sight fills his heart with joy.

The 'harmonious combination' of the inner and the outer principles too brings forth the beauty of creation. Tagore's poetry 'Where the Mind is Without Fear' brings out this beauty and harmonizes the inner and outer principles of life.

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;
Where knowledge is free;

Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls;

Where words come out from the depth of truth;
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;

Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit; Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever-widening thought and action—

Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.

Tagore longs for a perfect country where there is harmony between the inner and the outer principles of Nature. A perfect social, political, geographical and spiritual scenario where there is no place for negative elements and the positives have their own place. He prays that the mind should not go astray while reasoning as is its habit, neither the narrow limits of borders should bind the heart of men. He wishes for freedom and fearlessness – for the inner and the outer freedom. He wants the expansion of consciousness and hails the Lord to help his country awake from this horrifying somnambulism. The poet has very subtly intertwined the inner and the outer and the purport is complete and wholesome. Only a perfect harmony can help a nation progress. This harmony between the inner and outer is the essence of Indian spirituality and here lays its beauty too.

On the next level beauty becomes an expression of the soul. It then stands with truth, delight and tends to express the real beauty through form. Sri Aurobindo says that, “delight is the soul of existence, beauty the intense impression, the concentrated form of delight;” (CWSA, Vol. 26: 254) and the two are inseparable. An example of beauty and delight may be quoted from *Savitri*:

The life of the enchanted globe became
 A storm of sweetness and of light and song,
 A revel of colour and of ecstasy,
 A hymn of rays, a litany of cries:
 A strain of choral priestly music sang
 And, swung on the swaying censer of the trees,
 A sacrifice of perfume filled the hours.
 Asocas burned in crimson spots of flame,
 Pure like the breath of an unstained desire
 White jasmines haunted the enamoured air,
 Pale mango-blossoms fed the liquid voice
 Of the love-maddened coil, and the brown bee
 Muttered in fragrance mid the honey-buds.

The sunlight was a great god's golden smile.
All Nature was at beauty's festival. (352)

This is the mood of Nature just before Savitri is born. The Nature is all happy to welcome Savitri. These lines suggest the delight felt by the Nature. It is in its best moods and colour to welcome the "secret Word". Here is the intertwining of Delight and Beauty, the supreme joy of Nature swaying and smiling at the advent, in turn it has revealed beauty at its best. Every tree, flower and element of Nature has bloomed and expressed itself perfectly. The advent of Savitri is celebrated by trees, flowers, colours, rays and all the members of the Nature.

Beauty and delight are inseparable; similarly truth and beauty also become inseparable when the poetry is written from the intangible heights of consciousness. Its aesthesis perceives beauty and truth as a part of the whole. In one of his letters in Savitri, Sri Aurobindo observes - "Truth is not merely a dry statement of facts or ideas to or by the intellect; it can be a splendid discovery, a rapturous revelation, a thing of beauty that is joy for ever. The poet also can be a seeker and lover of truth as well as a seeker and lover of beauty. He can feel a poetic and aesthetic joy in the expression of the true as well as in the expression of the beautiful." (820) He has exemplified this in Savitri-

A mutual debt binds man to the Supreme: His nature we must put on as he put ours; We are sons of God and must be even as he: His human portion, we must grow divine. Our life is a paradox with God for key. (67)

And also,

He is the Maker and the world he made, He is the vision and he is the Seer; He is himself the actor and the act, He is himself the knower and the known, He is himself the dreamer and the dream.(61)

Sri Aurobindo gives out the deepest and highest truth wrapped in absolute poetic beauty. For the paucity of space the explanation of these lines has been eschewed here, but the reader can surely perceive the level of beauty that is expressed through these lines.

At the sublime height of consciousness, the seer-poet can have the vision of the future. This seer-poet was called Kavi in the ancient times because of this quality of vision. Sri Aurobindo as a seer poet does not only perceive those heights in Vedas and Upanishads, his Savitri is a supreme example of the vision of future. The beauty of vision of future is marvelously explained in his epic poem:

All then shall change, a magic order come

Overtopping this mechanical universe.
 A mightier race shall inhabit the mortal's world.
 On Nature's luminous tops, on the Spirit's ground,
 The superman shall reign as king of life,
 Make earth almost the mate and peer of heaven,
 And lead towards God and truth man's ignorant heart
 And lift towards godhead his mortality. (706)

Through the various examples given in this paper, I hoped to demonstrate the gradations of beauty. The perception of beauty happens mainly on three levels, on the physical level, on the emotional, sensuous and the intellectual level, and on the higher, inner or spiritual level. This paper was an attempt to study the levels of beauty from the tangible to the intangible. Sri Aurobindo's definitions of aesthetics and aesthesis have helped to understand beauty through the mental process known as aesthetics, whereas aesthesis can only be felt and cannot be expressed in words unless one reaches the Overmental heights of consciousness where truth, beauty, knowledge, love and Ananda all become one. The purpose of discerning these levels is to sharpen our sensibility towards the perception of beauty. Appreciating beauty is a process where one can go deeper and deeper and reach a stage where beauty manifests itself. It applies to both the creator and the perceiver. I conclude with Sri Aurobindo's words, "To find highest beauty is to find God; to reveal, to embody, to create, as we say, highest beauty is to bring out of our souls the living image and power of God." (CWSA, Vol. 25: 145)

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The Mother (CWM 13: 218)

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on the contrary, to be free from them.*

The Mother (CWM 13: 219)

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[Faith] is so central and essential a thing that the Gita can justly say of it that whatever is a man's śraddhā, that he is, yo yacchraddhah sa eva sah, and, it may be added, whatever he has the faith to see as possible in himself and strive for, that he can create and become.

Sri Aurobindo, (The Synthesis of Yoga: 743)

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"Living Within" Study Camps

Sri Aurobindo Centre for Advanced Research has started organizing 7-days study camps to explore a new dimension of studying Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's vision in an intense manner. The special features of these camps are the varied choice of subjects, speakers and languages. SACAR, with its lodging-boarding facilities, invites participants, speakers and organizers to come forward to hold a camp here.

The months from August to March are most favourable for the purpose of the camp. Two camps have already been organized in 2014 –

"Concentration and Meditation: Its Process and Purpose" by Ananda Reddy & "Dialogue between Savitri and Death" by Alok Pandey.

New Race

*What happens to us is the Divine's business,
it is not our concern.*

The Mother (CWM 13: 133)



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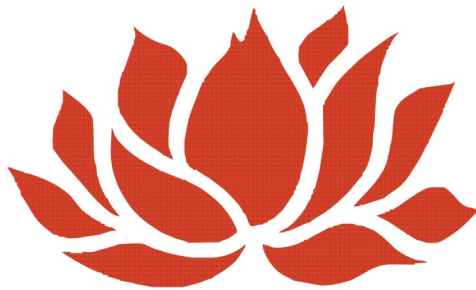
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This is the knot that ties together the stars:
The Two who are one are the secret of all power,
The Two who are one are the might and right in things.
His soul, silent, supports the world and her,
His acts are her commandment's registers.

Sri Aurobindo



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Sri Aurobindo