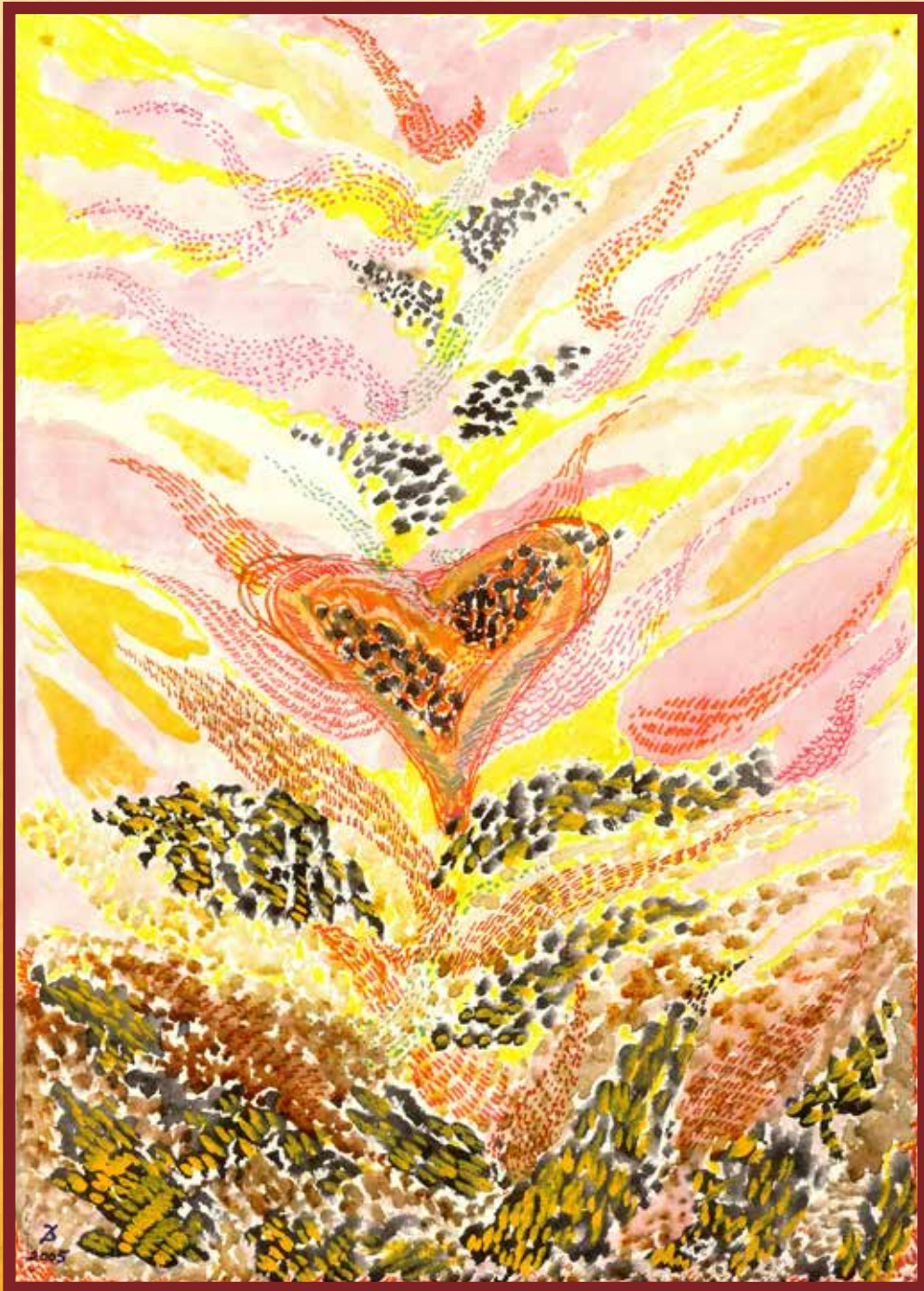


New Race

A Journal of Integral and Future Studies



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blessings
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From the Editor's Desk...

The joy of life was on his open face.
His look was a wide daybreak of the gods,
His head was a youthful Rishi's touched with light,
His body was a lover's and a king's. (*Savitri*, B V. Canto 2)

These lines from *Savitri* can be applied to Swami Vivekananda equally. His face was radiant and powerful like a lover and king, one who loves god and chooses to work for Him here on earth. Swamiji, a Vibhuti of Lord Shiva had come to the earth to revive this sleeping nation for the future of the world. He prophesied that India would be a spiritual guru of the world and Sri Aurobindo reinforced this with his work and vision. It is a known fact that Swamiji reawakened India which was in slumber. But what exactly was that work? Can we analyse or understand the scale on which he has worked? Can we imagine the austerity and force of a Vibhuti who with a single phrase, "Sisters and Brothers of America" could keep an audience spell bound, applauding for ten minutes? Surely, we understand nothing of Swamiji's stature and his works. For he himself once wrote: "If there were another Vivekananda, he would have understood what Vivekananda has done! And yet, how many Vivekanandas shall be born in time!"

When one reads the life and letters of Swamiji, one is pained to see the suffering he went through only to accomplish the mission for which he had come. He travelled far and wide in India, USA and England, many times on empty stomach and still did not once give up the work. While the world is celebrating the 125th anniversary of his historical Chicago speech at the Parliament of Religions, we here recount, in his own words his message about the world religion and the extent of his work and sacrifice. It is to this magnanimous personality and his splendid work that New Race team pays its homage.

There is another person whose contribution we would like to acknowledge and commemorate, Shri M.P. Pandit. He was a senior sadhaka of Sri Aurobindo Ashram. This year marks his 100th birth anniversary. A prolific writer and speaker, Panditji has to his credit books running over 50 in number which expound the vision of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo in simple language. Simplicity was the mark of his life and writings. Sri Aurobindo Centre for Advanced Research (SACAR), a sister Trust of the Institute of Human Study, was privileged to have Panditji at the ground-breaking ceremony of this place. To commemorate this centenary, SACAR has published a significant article by him. We also share with our readers a photograph of his deep involvement with the proceedings of the ground-breaking ceremony on 29.02.1992.

This issue is a humble offering at the feet of Sri Aurobindo on his birthday.

Shruti Bidwaikar



TRUTH



For there seems to be no reason why Life should evolve out of material elements or Mind out of living form, unless we accept the Vedantic solution that Life is already involved in Matter and Mind in Life because in essence Matter is a form of veiled Life, Life a form of veiled Consciousness.

Sri Aurobindo

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA: “A SOUL OF PUISSANCE”*

Sri Aurobindo

I regard the spiritual history of mankind and especially of India as a constant development of a divine purpose, not a book that is closed, the lines of which have to be constantly repeated. Even the Upanishads and the Gita were not final though everything may be there in seed. In this development the recent spiritual history of India is a very important stage and the names I mentioned [Ramakrishna and Vivekananda] had a special prominence in my thought at the time—they seemed to me to indicate the lines from which the future spiritual development had most directly to proceed, not staying but passing on.

(CWSA 28: 411)

What is it that so many thousands of holy men, Sadhus and Sannyasis, have preached to us silently by their lives? What was the message that radiated from the personality of Bhagawan Ramkrishna Paramhansa? What was it that formed the kernel of the eloquence with which the lionlike heart of Vivekananda sought to shake the world? It is this that in every one of these three hundred millions of men from the Raja on his throne to the coolie at his labour, from the Brahmin absorbed in his sandhya to the Pariah walking shunned of men, GOD LIVETH. We are all gods and creators, because the energy of God is within us and all life is creation; not only the making of new forms is creation, but preservation is creation, destruction itself is creation. It rests with us what we shall create; for we are not, unless we choose, puppets dominated by Fate and Maya: we are facets and manifestations of Almighty Power.

(CWSA 6: 84)

It was in religion first that the soul of India awoke and triumphed. There were always indications, always great forerunners, but it was when the flower of the educated youth of Calcutta bowed down at the feet of a illiterate Hindu ascetic, a self-illuminated ecstatic and ‘mystic’ without a single trace or touch of the alien thought or education upon him that the battle was won. The going forth of Vivekananda, marked out by the Master as the heroic soul destined to take the world between his two hands and change it, was the first visible sign to the world that India was awake not only to survive but to conquer. Afterwards when the awakening was complete, a section of the nationalist movement turned in imagination to a reconstruction of the recent pre-British past in all its details.

(CWSA 8: 62)

The visit of Swami Vivekananda to America and the subsequent work of those who followed him did more for India than a hundred London congress could effect. That is the true way of awakening sympathy,— by showing ourselves to the nations as a people with a great past and ancient civilization who still possess something of the genius and character of our forefathers, have still something to give the world and therefore deserve freedom,— by proof of our manliness and fitness, not by mendicancy.

(CWSA 8: 194)

* Title given by editors.

Vivekananda was a soul of puissance if ever there was one, a very lion among men, but the definite work he has left behind is quite incommensurate with our impression of his creative might and energy. We perceive his influence still working gigantically, we know not well how, we know not well where, in something that is not yet formed, something leonine, grand, intuitive, upheaving that has entered the soul of India and we say, "Behold, Vivekananda still lives in the soul of his Mother and in the souls of her children.

(CWSA 1: 662)

You know I was talking about the tail of the Supermind to Y. I know what it is, I had flashes and glimpses of it. I have been trying to Supramentalise the Overmind. Not that the Supermind is not acting. It is doing so through Overmind and Intuition and the intermediate powers have come down. Supermind is above the Overmind (He showed it by placing one palm above the other) so that one may mistake one for the other. I remember the day when people here claimed to have got it. I myself had made mistakes about it in the beginning, and I did not know about the many planes. It was Vivekananda who used to come to me in Alipore Jail and who showed to me the Intuitive plane and for about two to three weeks or so gave me training as regards Intuition. Then afterwards I began to see still higher planes. I am not satisfied with only a part, or a flash of Supermind but I want to bring down the whole mass of the Supermind pure, and that is an extremely difficult business.

(Evening Talks with Sri Aurobindo: 543-44)

I was wondering if you had seen or met Vivekananda somewhere.

No, not in the body. My contact with him was in the jail when he was speaking with me for about 15 days, giving me the first insight into the Intuition plane (not the intuitive mind which is mental and not supramental) as the first opening to Supermind.

21 October 1934 (CWSA 35: 264)

If it is not indiscreet would you ask Sri Aurobindo if it is true that in 1909—in Alipore jail—seven years after his death— Swami Vivekananda came to him, not in vision, but in actual fact, to ask him to continue the work, that he had not yet finished?

Sri Aurobindo says that Vivekananda came to him not in a visible form but as a presence which was with him for a fortnight during which V. spoke certain things about the processes of the higher Truth-Consciousness.

21 December 1938 (CWSA 35: 265)

“I HAD SOME STRANGE POWER”*

Swami Vivekananda



Visits to America

In my first speech this country, in Chicago, I addressed that audience as Sisters and Brothers of America, and you know that they all rose to their feet. You may wonder what made them do this, you may wonder if I had some strange power. Let me tell you that I did have a power and this is it-never once in my life did I allow myself to have even one sexual thought. I trained my mind, my thinking, and the powers that man usually uses along that line I put into a higher channel, and it developed a force so strong that nothing could resist it.

I spoke at the Parliament of Religions, and with what effect I may quote to you from a few newspapers and magazines ready at hand. I need not be self-conceited, but to you in confidence I am bound to say, because of your love, that no Hindu made such an impression in America, and if my coming has done nothing, it has done this that the Americans have come to know that India even today produces men at whose feet even the most civilised nations may learn lessons of religion and morality. Don't you think that is enough to say for the Hindu nation sending over here their Sannyasin?...

* Title given by editors

These I quote from the journals: "But eloquent as were many of the brief speeches, no one expressed as well the spirit of the Parliament (of religions) and its limitations as the Hindu monk. I copy his address in full, but I can only suggest its effect upon the audience; for he is an orator by Divine right, and his strong intelligent face in its picturesque setting of yellow and orange was hardly less interesting than these earnest words and the rich rhythmical utterance he gave them."

(Here the speech is quoted in extenso.) New York Critique.

"He has preached in clubs and churches until his faith has become familiar to us.... His culture, his eloquence, and his fascinating personality have given us a new idea of Hindu civilisation. . . . His fine, intelligent face and his deep musical voice, prepossessing one at once in his favour.... He speaks without notes, presenting his facts and his conclusions with the greatest art and the most convincing sincerity, and rising often to rich inspiring eloquence." (ibid.)

"Vivekananda is undoubtedly the greatest figure in the Parliament of Religions . After hearing him we feel how foolish it is to send missionaries to this learned nation." *Herald* (the greatest paper here). (130-131)

Whatever I had I have left in that country [America]. During the lectures a power used to emanate from this body and would infuse the audience... (346)

On Religion

If there ever is going to be an ideal religion, it must be broad and large enough to supply food for all these minds. It must supply the strength of philosophy to the philosopher, the devotee's heart to the worshipper; to the ritualist, it will give all that the most marvellous symbolism can convey; to the poet, it will give as much of heart as he can take in, and other things besides. To make such a broad religion, we shall have to go back to the time when religions began and taken them all in.

Our watchword, then, will be acceptance, and not exclusion. Not only toleration, for so-called tolerations is often blasphemy, and I do not believe in it. I believe in acceptance. Why should I tolerate? Toleration means that I think that you are wrong and I am just allowing you to live? I accept all religions that were in the past, and worship them all; I worship God with every one of them, in whatever form they worship Him. I shall go to the mosque of the Mohammedan; I shall enter the Christian's church and kneel before the crucifix; I shall enter the Buddhist temple, where I shall take refuge in Buddha and in his Law. I shall go into the forest and sit down in meditation with the Hindu, who is trying to see the Light which enlightens the heart of every one.

Not only shall I do these, but I shall keep my heart open for all that may come in the future. Is God's book finished? Or is it still a continuous revelation going on? It is a marvellous book – these spiritual revelations of the world. The Bible, the Vedas, the Koran, and all other sacred books are but so many pages, and an infinite number of pages remain yet to be unfolded. I would leave it open for all of them. We stand in the present, but open ourselves to the infinite future. We take in all that has been in the past, enjoy the light of the

present, and open every window of the heart for all that will come in the future. Salutation to all the prophets of the past, to all the great ones of the present, and to all that are to come in the future. (325-326)

Religion is that which does not depend upon books or teachers or prophets or saviours, and that which does not make us dependent in this or in any other lives upon others. In this sense Advaitism of the Upanishads is the only religion. But saviours, books, prophets, ceremonials etc. have their place... (327)

About his own work and health

This body will never be fit again. I shall have to leave it and bring another body to complete the work. There are many things that remain undone. (345)

I shall never see forty... I delivered my message and I must go... The shadow of a big tree will not let the smaller trees grow up. I must go to make room. (345)

If there were another Vivekananda, he would have understood what Vivekananda has done! And yet, how many Vivekanandas shall be born in time! (345)

I have worked my best. If there is any seed of truth in it, it will come to life... I am satisfied in my conscience that I did not remain an idle Swami.... (346)

From the very nature of things, it is difficult to understand anything of the world. And now after lifelong labour it seems that I have known a little and when I think of giving that knowledge to others, the call has come from Above: Come away, just come away – don't bother yourself about teaching others. It is not the will of the Granny that the play should be over. (347)

Oh, the grief! If I could get two or three like me, I could have left the world convulsed. (347)

Now I desire a little peace – it seems there is no more strength left to bear the burden of work and responsibility – rest and peace for the few days that I shall yet live! Victory to the Guru! Victory to the Guru!... No more lectures or anything of that sort. Peace! (347)

I am more calm and quiet now than I ever was... My boat is nearing the calm harbour from which it is never more to be driven out. Glory, glory unto Mother! I have no wish, no ambition now. Blessed be Mother! I am a servant of Ramakrishna. I am merely a machine. I know nothing else. Nor do I want to know. Glory, glory unto Sri Guru! (348)

Work always brings evil with it. I have paid for the accumulated evil with bad health. I am glad. My mind is all the better for it. There is a mellowness and a calmness in life now, which was never there before. I am learning now how to be detached as well as attached, and mentally becoming my own master... (348)

It may be that I shall find it good to get outside of my body – to cast it off like a disused garment. But I shall not cease to work! I shall inspire men everywhere, until the world shall know that it is one with God. (352)

(Excerpts taken from Swami Vivekananda on Himself. Kolkata: Advaita Ashram Press, 2015)

SRI AUROBINDO: BRIDGE BETWEEN THE PAST AND THE FUTURE

(*Mysticism and Yoga*)

M. P. Pandit

The future, says Sri Aurobindo, does not arise from a vacuum. It always has its solid foundation in the best of the past. In working out his own multi-dimensional scheme of thought and practice, he takes care to organise it on the basis of the rich wisdom of the past of the Indian inspiration. In his studies into the ancient tradition, dating back to at least five thousand years, his discriminating eye spots out the fundamentals of the Indian civilisation in the varied fields of its expression, leaving aside the mainly local and temporal factors. He takes up what is of eternal value and relevance in the cultures of the past and examines how far and in what way they are applicable in the present stage of human evolution and also in what sense they should form the essential ingredients of life in the future to come. This he has done with deep scholarship and intuitive perception in religion, philosophy, mysticism, social sciences, polity, poetry and literature — to mention only the main lines of his inquiry. In this paper we propose to take a bird's eye view of his researches into the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Gita and the Tantras in their essential application at different stages of development of the life of the Indian peoples. It will be our endeavour to study the precise manner in which he has assimilated the perennial values of these basic streams of the old Indian spirit into his own integral philosophy of perfection of life. He analyses the historical developments that have led to the present juncture in our history! He examines the call of the Time-spirit in the world today and links the pointers of these traditions to the future in the making.

It is noteworthy that in his last work, *Savitri*, Sri Aurobindo speaks in the context of the whole world — in fact many worlds — and underlines in an unmistakable manner the fact that the possible lines of the progression of humanity are, as it were, anticipated in the lofty vision and thought of the ancient mystics of India.

(2)

It is common knowledge how the Veda, the most ancient Indian scripture, is looked upon today as a remnant of a primitive past and nothing more. Whether, following the Western scholars of the last century, the Vedic hymns are treated as parts of understandable Nature-worship or, following the orthodox ritualists, they are viewed as part of a sacrificial culture aiming at rewards and enjoyments in heaven, they have no relevance for the modern man. It is a superstition to look upon them as God-given, not man-made. Following his entry into the Vedas, under interesting circumstances, Sri Aurobindo saw how both these approaches are superficial and misleading. He realised, on reading this vast body of hymns, that there is great truth in Yaska's observation that the hymns have more than one meaning. They bear many interpretations viz. historical, ritualistic, naturalistic, spiritual and others. Sri Aurobindo found that these possible senses existed side by side, though the adhyatmik, the spiritual is central. This last holds good

throughout while the others apply in some cases only. Analysing the main features of the Vedic experience, from the spiritual stand-point, he discovered a whole system of thought and an inner practice concealed behind an exterior form of common-place prayers. To summarise his perceptions: the Rishis are not the authors of the hymns, of the Vedas; they are rather purified channels of an overhead non-human inspiration and revelation.

The hymns speak of a companionship between men and gods, Earth and Heaven. There is no unbridgeable gulf between the world of the humans and the worlds of the Gods. The universe consists of seven worlds or homes, *sapta-dhamani*, all inter-related. It is possible for man to establish a relation with the Gods by pursuing certain lines of inner worship. Thus invoked, the Gods descend into the invoker and thus participate in the cosmic existence. Each God embodies a Power, special to him. Thus Agni is the Will in the heart for ascent to Godhead; Indra is the Divine Mind shedding radiance upon the being freed from the limitations of the human mind; Varuna is the god of Vastness; Mitra the-god-of Love and so on. There is a graded discipline by which the Vedic mystics ascend the ladder of their consciousness, step by step, realising the truths of the Gods successively. This inner conversion is symbolised by the external ritual in which the Rishi offers all that he cherishes to the Gods, and the Gods in return bestow upon him valued gifts like the Cow (light), Horse (Power), Gold (Truth-consciousness) etc. The mantras used for this purpose have both the external and the internal sense. The sacrifice is imaged as a journey of the human to the divine.

Sri Aurobindo had certain striking experiences in his yoga, even before he took up the Vedas for study, which were collaborated in some of the hymns of “the Rigveda. He entered into the spirit of this world of the Rishis and testified to himself the high truths embedded in the hymns. No wonder he went on to assimilate the fundamentals of the Vedic experience in his own system of integral philosophy and practice. Sri Aurobindo presents these verities in modern terms, as of eternal Relevance to the questing human spirit. He explains how the birth of a God in man represents the manifestation of the particular psychological power for which the Godhead stands. There is a continual interchange among the various planes of existence. The Reality is one, but the forms in which it manifests are many. The mantra which is the channel of communication between the human and the divine is the Inspired World dynamic enough to link the human with the superhuman. The culmination of the long and strenuous journey of life is in the revelation of the highest Sun of truth in the meridian of the sky, the sharing of Soma, the delight of existence with the cosmic Powers, the high gods of the pantheon. Sri Aurobindo revives the Vedic vision of unity of the cosmos, the high purpose of human life which is to realise and embody the glory of Heaven while on earth. The way is to offer up one’s limiting material and vital possessions and free oneself to expand one’s consciousness more and more. This Vedic concept of continuous progression from the human to a divine state adumbrates the concept of spiritual evolution which is an important plank of Sri Aurobindo’s philosophy. As Sri Aurobindo presents it, the Knowledge of the Veda invests the present with a purpose, its vision points to a positive direction in the future.

(3)

Contrary to the view of many modern scholars that the Upanishads are a radical departure from the approach of the Vedas, a revolt against the gross ritualism and hedonism of the earlier period, Sri Aurobindo holds that the Upanishads are a continuation of the Vedic line of experience. They are an enlarging affirmation of the central truths of the Veda, in terms suited to the mentality of a later age. The Rishis of the Upanishads start out from the basics of their fore-fathers but seek to realise those truths from a different level of experience. They go on to re-affirm the realisations from the stand-point, of an intuitive mentality. And they always refer back to the Veda for confirmation of their own findings. They clinch their presentation with phrases viz. this was said by the Rishi, this is declared by the Rik etc.

Sri Aurobindo takes exception to the observations of the oriental scholars to the effect that these texts are disjointed utterances of a by-gone age. He points out that they are more in the nature of recordings of communications from the Teacher to the disciples with significant pauses to enable the student to grasp and assimilate the instruction. Very often the resumption of the discussion is marked by a repetition of an important word or phrase occurring earlier.

Thus Sri Aurobindo regards the Upanishads — especially the earlier ones — as important records of the spiritual realisations clothed in pregnant words of mystical overtones. They are gateways to the higher Knowledge of the Self, the Reality and the Creative Power at work in the universe. The shadow of illusionism is not yet; the Nirvana of the Buddha is far off. The Isha Upanishad boldly declares that this world is for the habitation of the Lord. Man has to renounce his claim on it and then participate in its enjoyment. He has a mission to fulfill in the full span of years that are given to him. He has to live and learn from his experience of the world, complete his cycle of growth in this world of multiplicity before he earns his right to enter into the domain of Oneness, the larger realms of Light and Knowledge. A premature attempt to overleap the apparent gulf between the lower truth and the higher can only lead to a spiritual blindness. Immortality justifies itself only when it is planted in the field of mortality.

Sri Aurobindo gives full value to the doctrine of the five Koshas, the sheaths, mentioned in the Taittiriya. He underlines the elaborate description in the text of the affirmation of Brahman the Reality on each of the planes of the universe viz. the material, the vital, the mental, the spiritual, the causal (blissful).

He devotes considerable attention to the discussion in the Katha relating to the state of being after life on earth. He notes that it is the continuity of consciousness that connects the different states of existence. By appropriate discipline, it should be possible for one to maintain the thread of continuity across the various states of transition. He repeatedly refers to the statement in the Katha Upanishad underlining the indispensability of interiorisation for one who seeks to know the Self. He gives importance to the declaration that the Self is won not by effort alone; he whom the Self chooses, to him it bares itself. The gates are opened by the Grace.

In his commentary (fragment) on the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, he explains that this universe has come to be because “he desired to be many”. Here desire’ means his Will to manifest, not desire in the mundane sense implying a lack. The universe is a willed becoming of the being of Brahman.

Sri Aurobindo integrates these and similar positive realisations of the Rishis of the Upanishads in his affirmative philosophy and Yoga so as to give a positive content to his comprehensive vision of the future in the making.

(4)

Sri Aurobindo expressly says that he goes to the Gita for what it has to give to “the noons of the future”. Unlike most other commentators he does not approach the text for support to his own philosophic system or to read his own ideas — social or political — into it. He is not distracted by legend or dogma. He brings sound common sense to bear on his study. He is definite that the Gita forms an integral part of the epic Mahabharata and all the seven hundred verses are of one inspiration. Possibly, they were not uttered as they are on the battlefield. But it is certain that the instruction was given on the spot and someone open to Sri Krishna’s inspiration, later put it into the form it presently has. The Gita, records Sri Aurobindo, has given the greatest doctrine of works to man. It recognises that action is a law of Nature and one cannot escape it. True, each act produces its own karma that binds. But that is so only if it is a desire-motivated action. If however, desire is eliminated and the action performed without self-interest, offering it to the Divine, it produces no legacy of karma, the doer has no claim on the fruits of work. He leaves it to the divine will. This approach of disinterested action holds good to the liberated man as well. Actions do not become irrelevant or dispensable to him. He continues to work for the good of the people, *lokasangraha*. It becomes part of his instrumental role for the divine will at work in the universe. This is especially important in view of the depreciation of works after liberation in certain lines of the Vedanta. Sri Aurobindo draws pointed attention to the fact that the action which the Gita enjoins upon the seeker is not duty or what passes for social or religious duty. This action has its origin in a God-impulsion, is carried on as an instrument without personal preference and produces results as ordained by the higher will. Such action is truly liberating.

Side by side, with its emphasis on action, the Gita gives a high place for knowledge (Jnana). By dedicated action, sadhana of meditation, concentration and absorption of the mind in the Self one gradually grows out of binding ignorance into illuminative knowledge — knowledge of the nature of the Self which leads to an overpowering Peace and Detachment.

That is not all. The Gita attaches equal importance to devotion (Bhakti) in the heart. In fact, it envisages the role of Bhakti as the main factor in uniting Karma and Jnana. It synthesises these three elements so as to forge the Trimarga (the triple path).

In the course of his analysis, Sri Aurobindo makes a clear distinction between the Knowledge content of the Sankhya and the experiential aspect of the Yoga. He studies in detail the play of the three gunas in every field of life and underlines the imperative to exceed the rule of the gunas at some stage in the Quest. His in-depth studies of the

phenomenon of the Avatara highlights the occult truth behind the appearance of the Divine in material form.

He celebrates the doctrine of surrender propounded in the Gita in a masterly manner and emphasises its relevance to man in all walks of life, even today and hereafter. The limited human has to surrender and lie open to the vaster Infinite. Inter alia, Sri Aurobindo shows how the personal and the impersonal, the mutable and the immutable features of the Spirit are reconciled in the Transcendent, the Purushottama above both. Sri Aurobindo carries this spirit of harmonisation and synthesis in his approach to questions thrown up in the present leading to the future.

(5)

Sri Aurobindo speaks of three great movements of synthesis in the periodical revival of the Indian Spirit: the magnificent attempt of collection of the Vedic heritage in the vast body of hymns of the Rishis; the enlarging re-statement of the Vedic wisdom in the Upanishads, perhaps a thousand years later; the striking re-conciliations of Karma, Jnana and Bhakti in the Gita along with Transcendence of apparent philosophical contraries in spiritual experience. He also refers to yet another movement of synthesis in the great tradition of the Tantras. The Tantras boldly hold that the universe is an outstreaming of a divine Reality. It is a manifestation of Shiva through his Shakti. Shiva and Shakti are the same truth in two poises. The creation is a play of delight inherent in the Supreme. The individual is to participate in this lila of the creative Power. There is no real division between the human individual and God, neither between him and the universe. Actually the individual is the universe in miniature. The various planes of existence have their corresponding centres in the individual system. They are the chakras, centres of consciousness-energy located in the subtle body waiting to be activated. At the base of this system of chakras, there is a pranic dynamism, expressively called the Kundalini which the tantric awakens and draws upwards along the route of the chakras. When this Kundalini reaches the overhead center, Sahasrara, there is the union of Shiva and Shakti resulting in a downpour of bliss. An intensive practice of this Yoga raises the human consciousness towards a divine level and the sadhaka draws the cosmic enjoyment from life.

Unlike the Vedic and the Veda-based religions which have certain exclusive aspects, the Tantras are universal in their applications. Anyone can practice the Tantric discipline. Further, the Tantras recognise the *adhikara bheda*, grades of competence, and prescribe the appropriate modes of discipline to types of individuals. Again unlike the later systems that developed away from the central inspiration of the Veda, the Tantras envisaged the divine perfectibility of man. Sri Aurobindo gives special importance to this perspective of the Tantras in his vision of the future.

His Integral Yoga embodies the main principles of the Tantras: the Shakti as the Divine Mother; ascent of the human energies and the descent of the divine consciousness; activation of centres of consciousness so as to render the individual as the nodus of the human and the divine.

Sri Aurobindo draws attention to the collective dimension of approach to God provided by the Tantras. The institution of collective worship and prayer in religions of Puranic origin is largely a Tantric contribution. Sri Aurobindo accepts this frame for a large scale human advancement towards the Divine.

It may be noted that he goes beyond some of the practices in Tantra. Instead of awakening the Kundalini at the base and effecting a willed opening of the chakras step by step, he prefers opening to the Maha-kundalini in the universe and letting it work on the centres as they get ready. Thus, Sri Aurobindo synthesises in himself both the Vedic vision and the Tantric action. He moves towards the future on the twin wheels of the Veda and the Tantra.

(6)

Sri Aurobindo's Purna-Yoga, his means for the divinisation of man which includes the concept of perfect man in a perfect world, promises to be the yoga of the future. For its approach is holistic and it seeks to accelerate Nature's process of evolution that has been going on for aeons. It takes into account all that has been accomplished by Mother Nature so far and chalks out its rightful direction to the future. Naturally this yoga combines in itself the cream of past traditions of yoga from the earliest known beginnings of the present cycle of humanity.

He studies the yoga of the Vedic mystics in detail and draws upon its essential elements in laying down his path. The Vedic yoga starts with the awakening of Agni, the divine Will in the heart which launches man on the journey to his Godhead in the world of Light. Man offers up the best in himself to the Gods and this flame-tongue carries the offerings to their destination. The journey is long and Agni leads the human aspirant to his goal. Accepting the nutrition offered by the soul of man, the Gods are pleased to descend into man. This ascent of the human and the descent of the Gods is a two-way process - a salient feature of Sri Aurobindo's yoga.

Immortality is indeed the goal of the Vedic mystics, but before he can reach it, he has to complete his perfection on each of his planes of existence presided over by their respective Gods. In other words, he has to follow the course of Nature's evolution, complete his labour on each level of his being before he is permitted to enter the next higher domain of consciousness. Sri Aurobindo's yoga too insists on the sadhaka fully developing the potential of each part of his being. Nothing is to be left out; all that has been achieved has to be integrated. The Vedic scheme of cosmos with its seven worlds, lokas, is assimilated in Sri Aurobindo's seven planes of existence viz. Matter, Life, Mind, Supermind, Ananda, Chit and Sat.

The Vedic Soma is the delight of existence in Sri Aurobindo's philosophy. Man offers to the Gods the purified draught of Soma. And filled with intoxication, the Gods pour into the human jar their own flood of Bliss. In Sri Aurobindo's yoga the sadhaka offers up the cream of his life-experience and in response he is inundated with the celestial Ananda. The Vedic Rishi speaks of the opening of the divine doors. In the Integral Yoga the higher centres of spiritual consciousness open by themselves in answer to the intense call of the seeker.

The Upanishads detail a number of Vidyas, lines of Yogic discipline each with its own starting point and goal. There is the *Bhooma Vidya* in which one learns to expand one's consciousness in larger and larger circles till one becomes identified with the Universal. There is the *Prana Vidya* in which one concentrates on the life-force, prana and realises its divine character, pervading the Cosmos. There is the *Dahara Vidya* in which one concentrates upon the image of the inner sky in the heart and realises its identity with the spread of the ether outside. There is the discipline of concentrating on *Pranava*; there is another of detaching oneself from the physical body and dwelling in the consciousness presiding over it; there is one which seeks to arrive at the one substance behind the multiple forms that people the universe; there is another that fixes upon the immutable Self, Atman, as the indwelling Reality of all. Sri Aurobindo draws upon all these practices of Yoga mentioned in the Upanishads in structuring his Integral Yoga. His Yoga leaves the individual free to choose the line which is natural to him.

So too with the Gita. Not only does he follow the principle of Trimarga but he also lays stress upon surrender to the Divine and living in the consciousness of the Divine even in the midst of activities in the world. He holds high the ideal of the Purushottama, the Transcendent who combines in himself the truths of the Personal and the Impersonal, the Static Self and the Dynamic Self. He holds that it is possible — and indeed advisable — to realise all these aspects of the divine Reality without being exclusive.

We have already indicated of how his Yoga incorporates the essential yoga-practices of the Tantra. Sri Aurobindo takes into account the traditional Yoga of Patanjali, Rajayoga, Hathayoga. His Yoga assimilates into its discipline the principles of self-purification, posture, concentration, meditation, absorption. Sri Aurobindo points out the limitations of the traditional samadhi in as much as it creates a gulf between the tranced state and the waking state. He advocates Sahaja Samadhi in which one participates in external life without undergoing diminution of the quality of consciousness that settles in the state at absorption. The link between the inner and the outer is maintained.

To the rich legacy of the past lines of Yoga, Sri Aurobindo adds the objective of the Transformation of consciousness, perfectibility of the human body and an eventual conquest of the forces of disintegration, decay and death. He points out that the future evolution of consciousness is going to be on these lines.

(7)

It is noteworthy that in his epic *Savitri*, his last testament to humanity — present and future — Sri Aurobindo encapsulates the entire course of the history of the universe in Mantric poetry. He traces the birth and growth of life on earth till the arrival of the mind in the evolution of Nature. He portrays the formation and the development of different levels of mind viz. physical mind, sense mind, reasoning mind, thinking mind, idea mind, spiritual mind, in vivid pictures. He gives a faithful account — in poetic figures — of the different philosophies systematised by the human mind. The Sankhyan juxtaposition of Purusha and Prakriti, the dynamic poises of Shiva and Shakti, the doctrine of the One to the exclusion

of the many, the deployment of unity in multiplicity — these and other philosophies have been presented in fascinating detail and the limitations of each partial stand-point shown. Advaita, Vishishtadwaita, Dwaita, Parinama Vada are presented in the context of the dynamic evolution of a Spirit on earth. It is shown how the solution of the problem of life lies in a total view which reconciles all the warring elements of dialectics.

There are splendid descriptions of Yogic realisations that have marked the endless quest of man for the Reality. Overpowering experiences of the Atman throwing into shadow Names and Forms of the world, the realisation of the Nirvana, the aftermath of the universal Consciousness and similar realisations are given their full value. The fact of their being the constituents of an eventual total realisation bringing about unity of God, man and nature is brought to the fore.

Sri Aurobindo throws his net wide and captures the essentials of the world's occult traditions and draws a geography of the occult worlds, establishing a body of knowledge of the occult which has just begun to appear on the horizons of the modern mind. He traces the continual interchange that goes on between our physical world and the unseen worlds and throws hints which can help solve many of the problems that confront modern science, medical and other. He gives clues to many of the present day situations of unrest, evil and cultural suicide.

We find in this epic an account of the careers of each major value in the history of civilisations, Knowledge, Power, Beauty, Peace are all shown to be insufficient by themselves. The poet points to Love as the one truth in which all these values find their harmonisation. It is on the basis of Love that oneness is to be realised. Love promises to be the distinguishing mark of the emerging future. *Savitri* spans the entire course of history and pre-history and traces a continuity of consciousness right from the material atom to the Gnostic Being who stands on the threshold of the next decisive step in human evolution. There is no gap in Sri Aurobindo's total perspective. He joins the past to the present and links it to the developing future.

* * *

To understand Scripture, it is not enough to be a scholar, one must be a soul. To know what the *drashta* saw one must oneself have *drishti*, sight, and be a student if not a master of the knowledge. *Atha para yaya tad aksharam adhigamyate*. Grammar, etymology, prosody, astronomy, metaphysics, logic, all that is good; but afterwards there is still needed the higher knowledge by which the Immutable is known.

(Sri Aurobindo: CWSA 13: 37)

SIGNIFICANCE OF SRI AUROBINDO'S RELICS

Ananda Reddy

On this occasion of the 60th anniversary of the enshrinement of Sri Aurobindo's relics at Delhi Ashram I tried to find out the deeper significance of relics, especially the relics of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. In India, right from the times of mythology to history we have had the tradition of installing relics in different parts of the country – relics of great saints, avatars, vibhutis etc. To cite a random example, one of the most well-known stories is that of Daksha Yajna. Daksha had performed a yajna to which all the Gods were invited except Shiva. Sati, Shiva's consort, being the daughter of Daksha attends the yajna. However, when she is insulted by Daksha, her own father, she immolates herself in the sacrificial fire.

Enraged by the insult meted out to his spouse Sati, Shiva destroyed Daksha's sacrifice, picked up the corpse of Sati and danced his dance of destruction through the universe. Seeing the possibility of the ultimate destruction of the entire creation, Vishnu, with the power of the Sudarshan Chakra, the divine disk, cut through the corpse of Sati. The pieces of her body fell at different parts in the Indian subcontinent and these places became the Shakti Peethas - places of pilgrimage and worship for millions of Hindus. This is how we have an association with the parts of the body as relics -- whichever part, that is immaterial - but this kind of veneration or giving importance to the physical part of an avatar or a vibhuti has been there since thousands of years in our history.

A few months back I was in Sri Lanka and I was amazed to see the shrine of the relics of the Buddha. Then I asked myself about the philosophical importance of the relics – is it only an emotional expression or is there any philosophical basis to it! Unless we understand the deeper roots of the symbolism of relics our respect towards the shrine that we see in front of us, may not receive the due reverence or adoration. It is said that tradition for the sake of tradition may not hold lasting value unless we know the truth behind it. We go to temples and light incense and perform pujas as a ritual, but when we understand the truth behind each of these rituals, then they gain an enriched meaning without which they remain a shallow shell or a convention in the long run. This is what I want to avoid, that is, performing pujas at the relics shrines anywhere in the country as a hollow ritual. It is for this purpose that I thought of sharing with you all today what I discovered from my reading of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

The significance of relics is not so easy to understand, it goes back to the very act of creation or manifestation, or in the context of the present talk, I would say, the embodiment of the Supreme. Embodiment means the Supreme taking up a form or a body.

“It is He that has gone abroad—That which is bright, bodiless, without scar of imperfection, without sinews, pure, unpierced by evil”. (CWSA 17: 7)

This is from the Isha Upanishad.

स पर्यगाच्छुक्रमकायमव्रणमस्नाविरं शुद्धमपावद्धिम् ।

This is the first act, “It is He that has gone abroad”. This is the first embodiment when the

Supreme himself, by the power of his *yogamaya*, multiplied and manifested himself. In the Gita Lord Krishna tells Arjuna – “Leaning — pressing down upon my own Nature (Prakriti) I create (loose forth into various being) all this multitude of existences, all helplessly subject to the control of Nature”. (CWSA 19: 154)

प्रकृतिं स्वामवष्टभ्य विसृजामि पुनः पुनः ।
भूत्ग्राममिमं कृत्स्नमवशं प्रकृतेर्वशात् ॥

This is very clearly stated in our scriptures that the Sachchidananda or Purushottama – “looses forth” into this act of manifestation. Again Sri Krishna tells Arjuna – “By Me, all this universe has been extended in the ineffable mystery of My being; all existences are situated in Me, not I in them”. (Anilbaran Roy, *The Message of the Gita*, p.137)

मया ततमिदं सर्वं जगदव्यक्तमूर्तिना ।
मत्स्थानि सर्वभूतानि न चाहं तेष्ववस्थितः ॥

This is indeed one of the most direct descriptions of the Absolute embodying himself. Another remarkable and detailed description of this self-embodiment is given in the *Purusha Sukta* of the Vedic Rishi Narayana. “It is a hymn which deals with an eternal process by which the Infinite becomes finite. The hymn deals with the transformation of the Supreme and the process of world-formation.” (V. Madhusudan Reddy, *The Vedic Epiphany*, Vol-1:178) I will just quote a few hymns here to give you a taste of the *Purusha Sukta*. (Verses 11-14)

When they divided up the Perfect being,
Into how many parts did they make Him?
What became of His mouth? What his arms?
What of his two legs? What his two feet?

His face became the priest; His arms
Became the warrior-king; His legs
The tradesman, and from His feet
Were born the lowly serf.

The moon was born from His mind;
The sun came into existence from his eye;
Indra and Agni came from His mouth,
And from His breath was born the wind.

From his navel issued the middle region,
From His head unfurled the heaven,
From His feet emerged the earth, and from the ear
The four directions. So the worlds were organised.

That was the first embodiment of the Supreme when all the worlds were created. Sri Aurobindo writes about it in *The Life Divine* from a different angle:

In other words, if Brahman has entered into form and represented Its being in material substance, it can only be to enjoy self-manifestation in the figures of relative and

phenomenal consciousness. Brahman is in this world to represent Itself in the values of Life. Life exists in Brahman in order to discover Brahman in itself. Therefore man's importance in the world is that he gives to it that development of consciousness in which its transfiguration by a perfect self-discovery becomes possible. To fulfil God in life is man's manhood. (CWSA 21: 41)

This is just the beginning; we have to go to the deeper levels, meaning more understandable levels of manifestation. And the level on which we will now focus upon is that of the Avatar for it is directly connected to our present theme of the Relics. Sri Aurobindo explains that -

There are two aspects of the divine birth; one is the descent, the birth of God in humanity, the Godhead manifesting itself in human form and nature, the eternal Avatar; the other is an ascent – the birth of man into the Godhead, man rising into the divine nature and consciousness. (CWSA 19:148)

Thus in this descent of the Divine, there are two levels – first we have seen the Transcendent becoming the Universal (as seen in the *Purusha Sukta*, Vedas and the Upanishads). In the second process that takes place there is the descent of the eternal Avatar. What is this eternal Avatar? The birth of God in humanity, “the Godhead manifesting itself in human form and nature”. It is the descent of the Transcendent as the individual being, the Atman, the soul.

This reminds us immediately of the Bhagavad Gita:

The Soul is the divine spark that dwells at the centre of each being; it is identical with its Divine Origin; it is the divine in man. (CWM 16:247)

Whensoever there is the fading of the Dharma and the uprising of the unrighteousness, then I loose myself forth into birth. (CWSA 19: 146)

However, Sri Aurobindo explains that “if there were not this rising of man into the Godhead to be helped by the descent of God in humanity, Avatarhood for the sake of the Dharma would be an otiose phenomenon.” (CWSA 19: 148)

This is a new interpretation given by Sri Aurobindo: that the Avatar does not come only for the sake of installing righteousness or a new dharma. He writes -

...since mere Right, mere justice or standards of virtue can always be upheld by the divine omnipotence through its ordinary means, by great men or great movements, by the life and work of sages and kings and religious teachers, without any actual incarnation. (CWSA 19: 148)

That is to say the avatar need not come only to establish a new dharma; he can send vibhuti or sages or great teachers etc. The deeper reason of his descent is not that; there is something more to it and that something more is the main key in our understanding of the significance of the relics. And let's now dig deeper into the truth of the descent of the Avatar.

To a question asked by a disciple, “What is the incarnation? From what plane does it take place?” Sri Aurobindo replied, “Incarnation is the descent, the Avatar” “An Incarnation is the divine consciousness and being manifesting through a physical body; it is possible from any plane.” (CWSA 28:471) That's the key phrase: “it is possible from any plane.” We all know

that the incarnation is the descent, embodiment of the divine consciousness and being. But Sri Aurobindo adds a new concept "it is possible from any plane"! What does that mean? Here is a note by Amal Kiran who explains that either the "Supreme Godhead takes hold of the desired plane and brings the characteristic to the earth in a sovereign shape or better still, that He has a station of Himself on every plane and incarnates from there according to the need of the evolutionary history. Thus he incarnates as Rama from His station on the plane of Mind, and as Krishna from the Overmind plane." (Amal Kiran, *Our Light & Delight*: 57-58)

Now we understand that from the several planes beyond Mind – Higher mind, Illumined mind, Intuitive mind, Overmind and then the Supermind, the Divine, according to the need of the evolution descends from a particular plane. This is a very important clue that Sri Aurobindo has given us. It is not that the supreme Sachchidananda comes from the highest heights because if we always maintain that idea then many questions remain inexplicable. For example: what is the difference between Sri Rama and Sri Krishna? Sri Krishna did so many miraculous acts whereas we don't get to see any such miracles in Sri Rama's life! Similarly, there are so many things about Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu etc. which remain inexplicable. We now understand that the Divine manifests from different planes according to the need of evolutionary consciousness. For example the idea of the Dashavatar is a marvellous example symbolic of the ascending levels of consciousness. Normally, we human beings always compare the present avatar with the past avatar. The Mother herself has given this message "In the eternity of becoming, each Avatar is only the announcer, the forerunner of a more perfect realisation. And yet men have always the tendency to deify the Avatar of the past in opposition to the Avatar of the future. Now again Sri Aurobindo has come announcing to the world the realisation of tomorrow; and again his message meets with the same opposition as of all those who preceded him. But tomorrow will prove the truth of what he revealed and his work will be done". (CWM 13: 22) This comparative sense between avatars should not be there because each avatar is coming from a particular plane, whichever it may be – physical, vital, mental or overmental. Each one of them has come to take the evolution forward accomplishing his mission on the earth. "Sri Aurobindo calls the Overmind", the world of the Great Gods" (*Our Light & Delight*: 56) openly exemplifying greater than mental consciousness, the world of the great Gods; after the mental comes the overmental. So, obviously, the one who comes from that Overmental level or, better to say, the Supreme descending from the level of the Overmind is Sri Krishna. When he comes as a mortal, he is Parashurama – who is the same Supreme but has descended from a different consciousness. So, there is no question of any higher or lower status of the avatar.

Take the simple example of Sri Krishna who in his time did not speak about Supermind. Is it that Sri Krishan did not know about Supermind? As he comes from the level of Overmind to give humanity the Overmental consciousness, he did not need to reveal the Supermind. Similarly, Swami Vivekananda, a vibhuti of Shiva, does not speak of Supermind when he was in his physical body but he guided Sri Aurobindo about the steps to go towards Supermind while in the Alipore Jail. So, we have to understand that when the avatars incarnate for

a particular mission on the earth, they reveal to humanity only that level of truth that is required by humanity for the next several centuries or for the next step of evolution.

Do you think Sri Aurobindo did not know what is beyond Supermind? He could have surely written more about what lies beyond Supermind –about Sadghanaloka, Chidghanaloka, Anandaghanaloka. But can we follow him? By the time humanity reaches Supermind, Sri Aurobindo will perhaps wait for us at the other end of the next higher world, may be in a new form! So what I want to impress upon you is that each avatar brings to humanity only that much of divine consciousness which we can absorb, which we can contain because an overdose of that would be harmful for the human consciousness.

To continue with Amal Kiran:

“Finally, Kalki who will come to set right the balance by bringing the Transcendent’s power to base on the Transcendent’s peace a new earth-order. A terrestrial heaven. In this tale of evolutionary humanity we would identify Kalki with Sri Aurobindo the master of integral yoga, the yoga not only of liberation but also of the perfect divine dynamism.” (*Our Light & Delight*: 56)

Amal Kiran concludes by saying that the next step beyond Overmind which we call Supermind is traditionally also called the Kalki. I may like to add a note of precaution here because we in India are very eager to call our own gurus as Bhagavan, some even go to the extent of calling their guru as ‘Kalki avatar’ because they want to give the highest accolade to their own guru! But Amal Kiran, I am sure, has not called Sri Aurobindo “Kalki Avatar” out of an emotional fervour. There seems to be a rationale behind it. What is the reason behind it? We will come to a bit later.

To pursue this argument forwarded by Amal Kiran, I would like to quote Sri Aurobindo’s reply to someone who had asked him, “We believe that both you and the Mother are avatars, but is it only in this life that both of you have shown your divinity? It is said that you and she were on earth constantly since creation. What were you doing in your previous lives?” The answer, “Carrying on the evolution.” (SABCL 26: 445) This is the other aspect that we should understand about them. Both Sri Aurobindo and the Mother had many previous births upon this earth but in those births they were vibhuti but this is the first time they came upon the earth as avatars. And because they came as vibhuti, the question is, “since you and the Mother were on earth constantly from the beginning, what was the need for the Avatars coming down here one after another” The response was point blank: “We were not on earth as avatars.” (CWSA 32: 91) The inevitable conclusion seems to be that Sri Aurobindo and the Mother were avatars only in their present life. They had come previously as vibhuti and worked for the manifestation of the higher stage of evolution.

This is in support of what Amal Kiran said about Sri Aurobindo and the Mother being avatars and yet I wanted to find why he called them as “Kalki avatars.” What is the real nature of the Kalki avatar? We have already seen that Sri Aurobindo and the Mother were vibhuti in their previous births. Somebody said Sri Ramakrishna should have known about Sri Aurobindo or the Mother; or that Sri Ramana Maharshi should have known about them. Did they know

them? Talking about Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Aurobindo wrote to a disciple, in 1935, "It was not necessary that he should have a vision of her coming down as he was not thinking of the future nor consciously preparing for it. I don't think he had the idea of any incarnation of the Mother". (CWSA 32: 35) It seems Sri Ramana had heard about the Mother and Sri Aurobindo from his disciples. When I was in Tiruvanmalai recently one of the disciples told me that Sri Ramana, in fact, knew about Sri Aurobindo's writings for he used to read the *Arya*. It does not matter so much because Sri Aurobindo writes that it is not necessary that every vibhuti or a spiritual master should recognize them in other parts of the world.

About the avatar, the Mother once said "When anyone writes about me, all the hair on my head stands up. Don't think I am merely being modest. I know where I come from and who I am. But it is the Truth that is important. Stress on the person seems so much to narrow it". (Amal Kiran, *Our Light & Delight*: 54) I think this is a sentence that all Aurobindonians need to remember and be conscious of. Many years back, I had raised a similar question to Champaklalji, "Are not the disciples turning Sri Aurobindo and the Mother into a religion?" He replied that initially the disciples may turn Sri Aurobindo and the Mother into a religion, but it will not last long because there is the saving grace of the Supermind – Supermind which Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have incarnated will not allow such a tendency, though natural to humans to turn them into religious figures. Then I found this sentence of the Mother – "Stress on the person seems so much that they narrow it – the truth." It explains everything. The deeper understanding is that they represent the supramental consciousness and we should not/ need not/ought not to see them as mere Persons because the moment we really "stress on the persons", we bring in the religious rituals and a baggage of ceremonies. Sri Aurobindo had written in a letter,

It is true that the Mother is one in many forms, but the distinction between the outer and the inner Mother must not be made too trenchant; for she is not only one, but the physical Mother contains all the others in herself and in her is established the communication between the inner and the outer existence. But to know the outer Mother truly one must know what is within her and not look at the outer appearances only. That is only possible if one meets her with the inner being and grows into her consciousness —those who seek an outer relation only cannot do that. (CWSA 32:483)

And the Mother too once remarked:

In thinking of me, you must think not only of the outer person. But of what she represents, what stands behind her. For you must never forget that the outer person is only the form and symbol of an eternal Reality, and through the physical appearance, it is to this higher Reality that you must turn. The physical being cannot become truly expressive of the eternal Reality until it is completely transformed by the supramental manifestation. And until then, it is through it that you must find the Truth. (CWM 16:227-28)

They always insisted that we must understand the truth behind their forms. In order to save Sri Aurobindo and the Mother being turned into a religious sect, let us understand their Truth

beyond their physical forms. That understanding will not come mentally, as obviously we can never understand them because mind by itself can never have the higher realizations. Unless and until we have the experience of the inner Mother and not go merely by the outer Mother and Sri Aurobindo, we run the risk of turning them into religious figures. That is why in a letter he had written: "I do not want to be murdered by my own disciples in cold print." (A.B.Purani, *Life of Sri Aurobindo: V*)

However, it is as much important to know "the truth" of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo as Avatars in human forms, as embodiments of Supramental consciousness. Sri Aurobindo emphasised:

Her embodiment is a chance for the entire physical to change and be transformed? It is a chance for the earth-consciousness to receive the supramental into it and to undergo first the transformation necessary for that to be possible. Afterwards there will be a farther transformation by the supramental, but the whole earth consciousness will not be supramentalised —there will be first a new race representing the supermind, as man represents the mind. (CWSA 32:32)

In fact, recently we at SACAR published a book by Chitra Sen. While walking with Priti Das Gupta in the playground, the Mother declared: "I have come this time in all my aspects. This has never happened before in the history of the earth, I have never come in this totality." (*The Mother & Women's Education in Sri Aurobindo Ashram: 200*)

Then Priti Das Gupta asked the Mother "Are you Mother Durga?"

The Mother smiled a little once again and nodded in agreement. I saw Mother Durga before me! What an indescribable form! Sri Aurobindo's Durga-stotra flashed in my mind:

"Mother Durga! Rider on the lion, trident in hand, thy body of beauty armour-clad..."

Then I asked:

"Are you Mother Mahalakshmi?"

The Mother nodded once again in the same way.

My uncontrollable curiosity compelled me once again and I could not help asking:

"Are you Mother Mahasaraswati?"

The Mother answered each of my questions with the same compassionate love and for a few seconds revealed to me her Mahasaraswati aspect. Her patience was infinite. I couldn't control my curiosity and the questions kept coming.

"Mother, are you Rajrajeshwari?"

Once again the Mother nodded in agreement.

"Tranquil is she and wonderful, great and calm forever."

I felt the Mother very distant as she stood before me solemn and immobile.

I kept naming all the gods and goddesses and it was always the same question: "Are you Mother Anandamayi? Are you Mother Chandi? Are you Mother this, Are you Mother that?"

The Mother just kept nodding in assent. My bag of questions was inexhaustible! Finally, at the end, I asked Her:

"Are you Mother Mahakali?"

That vast amazing form of the Mother comes up before my eyes even today. How unattainable she looked as I stared at her helplessly. Where was that ever familiar Mother of ours? That form of Hers was so unfamiliar that terrible fear gripped me. But the Mother came back to normal within a flash. With a soft smile she took my hands into Hers. However, I could not come out of that state even with the divine touch of her hands. I just stood there silently. (Chitra Sen, *The Mother & Women's Education in Sri Aurobindo Ashram*: 200-201)

She had shown her four divine aspects to a few disciples also and I would humbly submit including my father, Prof. V. Madhusudan Reddy.

Sri Aurobindo writes about these four aspects of the Mother in his book, *The Mother*. In fact, in one of his letters he clarifies: "These four Powers are the Mother's cosmic godheads, permanent in the world-play; they stand among the greater cosmic Godheads to whom allusion is made when it is said the Mother as the Mahashakti of this triple world stands there (in the Overmind plane) above the Gods". (CWSA 35: 105-06) Similar idea is found in *The Supreme* – a compilation of the Mother's recorded talks by Mona Sarkar. It is like a complementary to Sri Aurobindo's book *The Mother*. If we want to understand the book *The Mother* we should also read this book in which the Mother herself speaks about her different aspects – Transcendental, Universal and the Individual. About her Transcendental aspect she declared:

You have no idea of who is there before you. Well, even the gods whom you revere so much, perform tapasya in order to have a glimpse of me. It is for me and through me that the whole Universe exists and it vibrates in my consciousness. It is through me that all living beings and inanimate things and all that you see in the Manifestation, acts and progresses. There is nothing that is not within me. I am the Cause. It is in me that all things disappear. Everything, everything is expressed in me and aspires to take refuge in me.... I am above the whole Manifestation. (*The Supreme*: 15)

On reading this passage I always remember Sri Krishna's Vishwaroop Darshan. On the individual level, as incarnation of the Supramental Consciousness and force, each part of the Mother's body has its own transformative power for man and matter. Regarding her feet she told: "Wheresoever I have placed my feet, there is an activity of the force of transformation which makes the earth-consciousness vibrate. How in this obscure and solid inconscience – this mass of ignorance, of impenetrable *tamas*, where never a light was seen – now one sees at last a clearing, a ray of light brightening up this tiny mass." (*The Supreme*: 64) What we come to know is that because she touched her feet on the earth, the atoms of matter got transformed. What a powerful description: – "In the very depths of the nucleus of these

atoms I have kindled a flame which awakens with a quiver like a palpitation ... It reveals a world where nothing was. In these blind realms of matter where it lay inert and mute, in a deep slumber without life, there comes a vibration emanating from the Supreme Will and matter trembles, shudders and awakens in an ecstasy." (*The Supreme*: 64) It is because the Mother walked on this earth physically, because she touched the earth concretely with her feet that there was a "flame" that kindled in the very atoms of the Matter.

What does it all imply? It is not just bringing down the Supermind – yes, that in itself is an immense avatic mission, but now, we come to know that the ultimate secret of their physical manifestation is to connect directly the Supermind to the atoms so that each atom is awakened "to an ecstasy"! Further she says:

"It is a mystic influence, a spiritual Will which has gone out from me and has penetrated even into the subconscious, into the inert inconscience, to act and to awaken the divinity which is hidden in this dark, obscure and black Inconscience. It is because it was there, hidden, - this divine spark, - that the world was saved; without that it would be the end of everything, of this universe. Then with the liberation of this force and light, the atoms regained courage to face this obscurity of the ignorance, the falsehood of the world imprisoned in the darkest inconscience. And with this emergence, we see everywhere sparks of this light which wants to establish itself. There where I have placed my feet on the earth it has been blessed and has become receptive to my force. With gratitude, the earth retains the effect of the transmutation that took place by the fact that I walked on her, that is why she expresses herself in an inexpressible joy". (*The Supreme*: 64)

Today whatever you hear about the atomic destruction or a third World-War is all but verbal-wars and media hype and political one-up-manship. It is sufficient to know that the Mother and Sri Aurobindo have walked upon this earth and therefore she will not be destroyed! "The earth, the rocks, the dust, the water and the air, all that constitutes this universe implores for a new rebirth to blossom in the joy of participating in the New Consciousness". (*The Supreme*: 66) That is the importance of their walking upon the earth; she has spread this contagious spirit, the supramental spirit into matter and that, I suppose, is the reason why she started sending relics to different parts of the world – "One can say that these are the precursors or the emanations of the New Wave". (*The Supreme*: 66)

The significance of the relics is not to spread religious fervour or a religious movement. It might have been there with the Buddha's relics - to spread his religion. Of course, the Buddha's relics too equally radiate his presence, his consciousness and the disciples can feel it. There are also the *shaktipeethas* we spoke of earlier. But these relics at Delhi Ashram and other places are not enshrined here as a remembrance of the Mother or Sri Aurobindo or merely to feel their presence. You can remember them sitting in front of their photograph, but we need to go to the Samadhi. Out of their great compassion for you and me, those who cannot travel to Pondicherry the Mother has sent the Lord to us here at Delhi as if to say

Look, I have sent His own body, his own presence, his own transformative presence among you". That, I suppose, is the Supreme Grace of the Mother that she has shared

with us his relics as if telling her children, "If you want to transform your life, here I am sending His Presence and Power.

Whenever I think of relics, I think Champaklalji, who for years had collected every bit of the hair that had fallen off from Sri Aurobindo's head or found on his pillow or bedsheet or any other spot. Each time Sri Aurobindo cut his nails, Champaklalji was very particular to see that every bit of it was collected and preserved. He perhaps had the vision that in future these will be the sacred relics. He did the same with the Mother's hair and nails.

In 1957 the relics were sent here to Delhi, the very first relics outside the Ashram in Pondicherry. As reported in a journal brought out from the Delhi Ashram, it was a magnificent scene to see the Mother bringing the casket at 11 o' clock of 4th December and telling them:

Here are four caskets – a rosewood one, a sandalwood one, a silver and a gold – the gold within the silver, the silver within the sandalwood and the sandalwood within the rosewood one and that is tied in one handkerchief and then another one. I shall now take them all out and put them back again. This must remain intact, this has Potency, this has Power. These boxes that were made at Harpagaon, a department of the Ashram, are symbolic: When I saw the Mother doing this 53 years back, I can still see the care, the love, the veneration with which the Mother handled the boxes – it was as if she was touching Sri Aurobindo's own body – that was incredible. She spent eternity placing one box into another. It was as if the first time I saw the Mother "handling" the body of Sri Aurobindo.

I too am blessed for I saw the Mother doing all this while giving the relics for Gaddipelli in Andhra Pradesh. I still remember, it was 4th April, 1964 that the relics were installed there. The gold represents supramental consciousness, the silver the spiritual consciousness, the sandalwood the mental consciousness and the rosewood the physical consciousness. Now we understand why the Mother got those boxes made at Harpagaon.

I am only trying to find the essential meaning of relics; it is its transformative force which transforms even Matter on the level of the earth, human beings on the level of consciousness and perhaps even the Gods! That is their power. You and me may not understand this power today, we are too close to these Incarnations. But millions are turning to Sri Krishna's consciousness, one who was there thousands of years back. Tomorrow millions would take shelter in Sri Aurobindo and the Mother who in their very physical bodies incarnated the supramental transformative consciousness and force.

Therefore, friends, let's not make it a ritual out of the relics worship. We are now here to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the installation of the relics at the Delhi Ashram but, "anniversary" is not an appropriate word. We have to celebrate it every day otherwise we will turn it into a religion. The choice is ours. It is true spirituality when we consider this day as the "eternal birth". And also, 5th December is the day when we express our gratitude to Sri Aurobindo for all that he has done for us and continues to do. As writes the Mother: "Sri Aurobindo has not left us. Sri Aurobindo is here, as living and as present as ever and it

is left to us to realise his work with all the sincerity, eagerness and concentration necessary". (CWM 13:7) In fact, when we were children during our annual vacations from 1st November to 15th December, we used to have fun and games these days. But from 5th to 9th December there were no sports activities or entertainment. The Mother had said, these 4-5 days, we have to go deeper within ourselves, ask the meaning of death, find the meaning of life, the purpose of our existence. These are the days to go within and not outwardly celebrate the day with events and entertainment. The more we feel the presence of Sri Aurobindo, his consciousness on these days, the more we feel intimate and enveloped by him:

Sri Aurobindo is constantly in the subtle physical, very active there ... If you become conscious in the subtle physical you will surely meet him... (CWM 13:13)

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EVOLUTION NEXT

(Continued from the previous issue...)

Alok Pandey

Part 3

What we need to reckon with is that the human consciousness moves within a narrow spectrum of consciousness. In fact, this is true of every species. It is as if a magic circle were woven around the limits and capacities of a species so that it does not express all the powers and potentialities of Nature. At the same time, each species is given a particular type of strength out of Nature's seemingly inexhaustible store. This particular power ensures the species' survival against the other species and creates a healthy balance. With the advent of man, however, Nature seems to have herself introduced a strange tendency, -- to try breaking the limits! Unlike other species who are content to live within the limits imposed by Nature and seldom break the fence drawn out for them, man carries within him an incorrigible explorer who is not happy with limits and barriers. He wants freedom, vastness, limitless expanse, total mastery, undiluted bliss, absolute Truth, perfect knowledge, ultimate Power. But in doing so he not only looks up and above towards higher levels of consciousness, greater sources of Energy and Power but also plumbs into the abysses to draw upon himself the forces that lie chained in the dark subconscious terrains of our past animal evolution. He can take his flight of evolution towards the godlike heights or else plunge down and grow in power by the downward turn towards the titanic type of humanity, full of brute strength and brilliant cunning, cruel and ruthless. This too is superhuman if we like, but not the true evolutionary impulsion since such a turn will ultimately end up destroying the very species that evolves this way due to the inevitable backlash of Nature but do much harm and damage to the totality of creation in the process. Nevertheless, whether this way or that, evolution has to reckon with the past gyres and grooves through which the evolutionary forces have carved their way. This is the great evolutionary challenge, to uncover and integrate or to annul and dissolve the past that stands in the way of the evolutionary emergence.

Towards this end, Nature uses two processes. First it opens up the magical circle and lets in a host of forces from the past and the future to enter the ring in which the species is closed. This leads to an increase in abnormal phenomenon, even strange creatures with different patterns of behaviours. There is also a period of confusion that follows since unexpected forces have come in and disturbed the balance. It is a moment of transition but from our scale a moment that may stretch through a few centuries. The magic circle of Nature is actually nothing but a bundle of habits, habitual ways of reactions and responses from the brain and nerves, feelings and impulse, will and emotion, in fact from the entire gamut of our physical and psychological apparatus. These habits are strengthened further due to collective suggestions, mental formation and then quite simply by life experiences which are nothing but a faithful rendering of these habits! Eventually we begin to regard these as laws of nature and fundamental truths. But Nature herself shows the way at times that there is nothing absolute about these truths. She gives us a glimpse of alternate processes

and other possibilities through the appearance of the abnormal and the anomalous. Of course the habitual physical mind of man reacts to these abnormalities and anomalies either by disbelief or else a defect. On the other hand the mind of the credulous tends to build a superstition around it. But there is another way than either being credulous or being suspicious of what appears to us as 'unnatural' and abnormal. It is to try and understand it. But more often than not we simply tend to explain it away on the basis of our known paradigms. We rarely challenge our premises and our theories. Our scientific framework becomes a cult in its own right where transgression becomes a heresy. But there are always a few individuals who challenge these premises, and undertake the adventure into the New and the Unknown without any presumptions, -- scientific or otherwise. They break into fresh grounds of thought and experience and begin to live by another way of being. They discover a new Law, a higher rule of Nature than what they had known so far. These geniuses, often misunderstood and mocked during their lifetime become harbingers and pioneers of a new change. After a while the rest follow as anomalies abound and Nature accepts the change slowly through a growing number of such 'seemingly madmen'. The old paradigms get overturned and new laws get discovered. Or shall we say uncovered!

Here too we see the double road appearing before humanity. When the safe boundaries that confine humanity are broken, we have an increasing number of madness, or for that matter, even an increase in physical illnesses and social pathologies. But not all madness and pathologies are indicative of the future type. When the boundaries crash around our human-ness strange and unprecedented forces rush into the arena to occupy the field. Most of these are simply forces from our bygone past, the subconscious energies that belong to our past evolution and had been tied down and hidden carefully in the folds of darkness that lurks in our entrails. At the same time, however, there is also a window of opportunity for the forces of a higher and more luminous order to also enter the arena of the world and use our humanity as a base to project themselves upon the earth. This too breaks the established order since these forces follow another law than the human. The result of this luminous influx is sometimes noted as the phenomenon of the eccentric genius. Though misunderstood 'freaks' in their own time they yet pave the way for the future. The coming dawns see them multiply until their type becomes the common lot.

In fact, these geniuses and prodigies may well be forerunners like a promise held up by Nature as a possibility of the future. The first step is the difficult task, the great challenge and nature sometimes achieves it by forcibly overleaping her boundaries. In the process imbalances occur. Something is left behind, something is broken in the process. It is a price for the great leap. But later, with passage of time, the idea-force they unleashed, the new emotion that they released in the earth atmosphere, the new motive and impulse that inspired their actions, the new sociology they brought into the play becomes the norm. The strong initial resistances to the new approach gives way to a more general acceptance and a more varied application of the truth they brought down into the earthly play. Like Prometheus, they pay the price for the great discovery, but the average humanity benefits from this sacrifice. The history of earth is full of this progressive march of mankind wherein

an individual leads, a few follow, but later, the movement builds up and masses participate in it turning it into the norm rather than an anomaly.

But here too a word of caution is needed. All that comes in the garb of a new truth is not necessarily the future and all that reappears out of the ashes of the old is again, not necessarily the past. During such evolutionary moments that stretch through a few centuries, the past and the future mingle freely, that which must go and that which must replace often sit and eat at the same table, that which is rising in the morning sky and that which is setting as the dreams of the night look upon each other and are often visible together. These are dangerous moments, troubled times, times of evolutionary transition. What one needs most, what one lacks most to steer during these unique hours that come to earth is a Wisdom that can see behind appearances, a calm heart that is patient and willing to wait and watch and learn, a strong and persistent will that is ready to endure as evolution negotiates through the narrow gorge and the dangerous passage. Or perhaps all that is needed is faith, a faith that carries us on wings of courage and hope, facing every challenge until we are delivered into the 'promised land' of the future.

The challenges are many, the difficulties legion. Imagine the constricting feeling of a caterpillar pupa moulding into a butterfly or the suffocation felt by the mudfish transforming into a turtle. It is a phase when nothing works. The old notions and ways and processes fail and at best give us only a partial relief. The new methods are yet not in sight and even when they are, work sometimes and at other times do not work. The old means are no longer sufficient, the new means have barely been glimpsed but not yet fully developed.

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Part 4

If we admit the possibility of conscious evolution in human beings as opposed to an unconscious evolution in animals then it may be worthwhile contemplating what these processes may be. Of course we need to avoid a common mistake when we use the word unconscious. Thus when it is said that evolution is an unconscious process in the animal, it simply means that the animal is generally not conscious that an evolutionary process is active in him. He is not a conscious collaborator in the process. It is led by a series of seeming accidents and even catastrophes; it is guided by the twists and turns of a seeming random chance. Seeming, because very often we use the word chance an accidents as a mask, to hide our ignorance of the deeper and subtler forces, that may be at play. There is something at work which we do not know. There are energies and forces and powers concealed behind the surface play of a seeming mechanical Nature that push the evolutionary process from behind, switch on and switch off the vast and complex machinery of Nature, set into motion different loops of Time, arrange events and circumstances on the stage of cosmic Space, so that the cosmos moves as a whole towards a far off destined Event of which our present experience of life and things are a mere shadow. The Power that presides over these multitudinous energies, beings and forces at various levels is the mysterious element in creation, called Grace. It usually works from behind pushing things through a web of

cause and effect which we weave in our freedom but which is modified at each moment so that the results, whatever they be, whether to our liking or not to our liking, whether pleasant or painful, lead eventually towards the emergence of the divinity concealed within the heart of creation. But sometimes this mysterious fiat of Grace that leans over Creation and works from behind the veil of forces steps in the forefront and intervenes in a way that is almost dramatic and miraculous. Events and circumstances take a sudden unexpected turn, situations change fast and we find ourselves as if carried on some strong wings of Love with faith as our compass and surrender as the sole effort. It is only when this intervention is over and we have landed at another shore, that we realise the full import of that moment of Grace. Or perhaps only after we have settled in the new condition for a while that we understand and begin to see that how that moment of crisis was actually a boon to spur us towards where we stand today. It was in fact an evolutionary wicket gate, a narrow and sometimes stifling portal to squeeze us forcibly out of an impasse in which we were caught as a bird in a cage. And like the bird too, we had begun to feel the cage as our comfort zone and not a jail which limits us. We had begun to love our limitations. We were hypnotised by circumstances as it were and believed that we are weak and powerless to change anything. We thought then that our ego-self is all and to live and die for the ego and its extensions and expansions is our sole purpose and Nature's goal. Late we realise when the seal of Ignorance is broken that this was but a jaundiced view of life seen through bandaged eyes and what we felt was our freedom to choose and act was in fact our greatest slavery and servitude.

But generally the Grace works only from behind the scenes. Even when it works in the forefront it does so by pushing the forces and instruments in a way that to someone not trained to notice may well feel it was the situations that suddenly changed but hardly feel the Grace that intervened. Grace is not like magic. It has its own logic even when its action seems magical. It does not cancel the web of forces through which creation moves since that would be creating a huge disturbance in the links that bind us all together in a single thread. It simply realigns the forces, readjusts the balance of energies, much like the restart button of the computer so that blockages to evolution are cleared suddenly and the road for a smooth progress opened up again. Sometimes Its action is felt as if the train of lift we were traveling in has been changed over and instead of the slow coal or steam engine we have been put into a bullet train and on some Fast-track rails. It is indeed Jump Time and an evolution fast forward. It can be disorienting and dizzying, even sometimes disturbing and dangerous if we cannot hold on with faith. But for those who have been blessed with the eye to acknowledge or simply have the required openness and humility to admit, the journey and all its dangerous and unexpectedness becomes a delightful tonic for the soul, a journey that takes us to a wall-less zero-gravity space. But it is a Space, that, unlike physical space, is teeming with the powerful vibration of Love, a silence that is filled with a Luminous Delight.

Science does not acknowledge Grace even though a number of scientists individually do. That in itself may not matter as far as Grace is concerned. Since the Power that works towards evolutionary ends pushes all things from within and behind. It does not discriminate or differentiate between the believer and the non-believer. And yet there is a difference when

we look at it from the human standpoint. It is this that when we acknowledge Grace and its working in our life, it opens our being and makes us receptive to the working. This makes the work go much faster because there is support at the other end where the actual evolutionary process is going on through real time. But when we do not so acknowledge, when instead of accepting that there is a Power that assists us from Beyond our usual reach, then this attitude works as a sort of refusal that closes our doors to the Grace. We turn away from It as it were. In greatly hinders and hampers the process. That is why it has been said, for our advantage, that attitudes such as trust, gratitude, aspiration etc help us. The Divine Grace does not need them (an oft mistaken view). It is we who need these attitudes to open an inner psychological door or cut out a window in the mud-walls of our body for the action of Grace. In fact this is a key process for conscious evolution, a process wherein science and spirituality meet and blend so well.

The Mother's Way of Action

The Mother gave me some apparently simple and trivial work whether as a test or with a deeper intention, I cannot say. But this we knew that she had almost always an occult or hidden purpose behind her movements. Sometimes she would disclose it. At any rate we were supposed to take it as a matter of discipline. I am afraid, my nature was not so obedient and thus I failed to cooperate with her at times. She asked me, for example, to give instructions in anatomy and physiology to a young girl who had come from outside. I could not understand why a girl who intended probably to stay here, and would never take up a medical career should learn these subjects. However, I started. The girl was quite intelligent but my interest was not equal to her intelligence. Besides, the subjects were quite new to her and could not be properly learnt unless followed by practical demonstrations. I found it therefore a tedious job. After a couple of months, I told her that a new doctor had come to the Ashram whom she would find more competent and I left her. I came to know afterwards that she had gone away and got married. I wondered then if the Mother wanted to use our contact as a means of keeping her here. Many years later, she returned to the Ashram.

Another example was of a young boy whose parents had settled in the Ashram. The Mother told me that the boy had an inner opening. It would do him good if I read with him Sri Aurobindo's poems. We began. The boy was really nice and had some regard for me. Here too, I could not continue for long and broke off.

Once during the Pranam in the 'thirties, I had to face a very embarrassing situation. I was going through a period of acute inner struggle As always, I used to write frankly about it to Sri Aurobindo. Extremely patient and affectionate, he let me fight it out, but I could not do so and groaned. Finally I became impatient and wrote a desperate letter saying that the tussle must end now. Next day was Pranam. The Mother came down as usual. I noticed behind her seat a garland of flowers called "Courage". The hall was full of disciples. When it was half-empty, my turn came for pranam. As soon as I had knelt down before the Mother with folded hands, she fixed her concentrated gaze on my eyes and kept me immobile like a statue. The people around were witnessing the scene with awe and wonder. I felt all their strange vibrations. After about five minutes, she relaxed her grip and with a soft smile gave me the garland "Courage". It did its work.

(An Excerpt from Nirodbaran's, Memorable Contacts with the Mother: 68-69)

SEARCH FOR THE UNITY OF MATTER AND ENERGY

THE WAY AHEAD FROM THE VEDANTA TO THE QUANTUM SCIENCE

(A compilation taken from social media, responses are based on research)

Narendra Joshi

The rationale : The unity of Matter and Energy is a perpetual and intriguing part of human thought. This paper is an overview of the exploration to see unity of Matter and Energy as traced in the ancient Indian scriptures like the Upanishads and the Vedas: its reiteration by many like Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo and the same expressed by leading scientists like Heisenberg, Bohr, Tesla, Einstein and others.

Though the quest is perpetual, the trigger for this paper was a certain incident and reactions. It all started when a highly placed person claimed that cosmologist Stephen Hawking, who passed away in March 2018, once said that the Vedas have a theory that is superior to Albert Einstein's groundbreaking equation, $E=mc^2$. Neither the Vedic Rishis nor Einstein or Hawking needed such certificate to prove their inerasable mark and profound contribution in the evolutionary march. However, this utterance led to a bitter debate on cyber world and media.

It also provoked many netizens to attack such seemingly far fetched and unsupported remarks. While it was perhaps right to point out flaws in such sweeping statements, in the process these critics went too far and questioned the very truth and uniqueness of Indian philosophy, its revelations and negated the consistent pursuit of it in our culture. One of the key aspect of this attack was proving the unscientific nature of the Indian thought.

Whether Stephen Hawking really said the above statement or not can be always debated and it may remain a mystery since the great scientist is no more. But it is true that mass and energy being one is already proclaimed in ancient Indian philosophy of the Vedas and the Upanishads and same was stressed by Swami Vivekananda in his talk to Tesla and in public forums.

We can see it again in the works of Sri Aurobindo and many other sages and philosophers. Einstein was in fact refuted by Hawking when the later said that Universe does have indeterminism as God does play dice. So there is somewhere a profound truth in this whole issue. Problem is when people on either side try to connect these links more out of ego than out of dispassionate enquiry and put it clumsily without proper linkages.

The beginning of this work was while refuting an unsympathetic and unprovoked attack by one such netizen who challenged that there is no reference of such unity in ancient Indian scriptures, nor has ancients as well as modern science proved it experimentally. He said that any attempt of saying that Vedantic texts had any scientific notion like this is pure fiction if not suffronization.

We will explore the truth through a series of questions and answers that ensued.

Q 1: Modern Science has proved things experimentally. The ancients never thought of it or they only faintly thought about it. Even Einstein's equation was proved in laboratory by J.J. Thomson.

J. J. Thomson was not just an experimental physicist, but also a philosopher. He conducted cathode ray experiments to prove his theory that an atom has electrons. Whatever theories scientists proposed, they were experimentally verified later and then were confirmed. So to say that experiments in physical laboratories always preceded scientific discoveries is misleading. In modern science, many things are proven by thought experiments and not by actual experiments. The famous Schrodinger's cat is one such experiment. Now about your proof of the equation by experiment: Thomson a natural philosopher in 1881, John Henry in 1884, Henry Poincare in 1900 wrote about the matter energy unity and it was 1904 when Fritz Hasenöhrle created a thought experiment involving heat energy in a moving cavity. All this paved way to Einstein's papers which started getting published from 1905 onwards. No fission experiment was done then: it was human thought and mathematics. Still Einstein himself was not convinced with his conclusion in initial papers and wrote many papers in next 40 years to patch the gaps. Nucleus and Protons were proposed in 1911 and 1913 by Rutherford and others. The experimental apparatus with which Otto Hahn and Fritz Strassmann discovered nuclear fission was in 1938. This again proves that thought preceded and was able to conclude that which experiments only verified later.

Scientists even found some particles by intuition and the actual presence of those was proved experimentally much later.

Q 2: *But we don't see any proof of experiments in the Vedas.*

It seems audacious to say that there is NO such proof of unity in the Vedas. Really who claims that he knows all the verses of the Vedas and also knows exact meaning of each of them. The very secret of Vedas is profound and demands more study if not humility. The key words have many meanings. Even simple words like "Ashwa" and "Go". The words mean different at different planes of mind but those details cannot be given here and should be read. Also opposite of experimental is not hypothetical. At mental level as well it is true and can be experimented. So mentally, rationally, it is proven, not all is assumed and everything is a hypothesis. In fact Tarka or Logic was one of the means of knowledge, there were other means like Pramana, Anumana, Pratyaksha, etc. but Knowledge by being, by identity is the highest way considered by the ancient Indian epistemology, and is reiterated by visionaries like Sri Aurobindo. The Unity of existence is the central theme of the Veda and the Vedanta, the unity of individual with environment, with society and with entire becoming is proclaimed and sought.

So unity of matter and energy is essential and just a small subset of this theme.

Q 3: *Was this idea of duality of matter and energy always dominant in human societies?*

No. It became dominant as a result of some developments in recent centuries especially after scientific revolution. The medieval outlook of the world was mainly that of an organic, spiritual, and living universe. However, since the seventeenth century up to beginning of the twentieth century, the paradigm for the nature of existence has changed dramatically. That was the time when physics was seen as a true, exact science and the root of all other sciences. Thus, classical physics led to a mechanistic view of reality, and was largely shaped by three

outstanding persons: Sir Isaac Newton with his mathematical theory, Rene Descartes with his rational philosophy, and Francis Bacon with his methodology of scientific experimentation. Thereafter, Matter was thought to be the basis of all existence and the material world was declared to be an assemblage of different objects in a huge machine. Thus, it was believed that any complex phenomenon can be understood by reducing it to its elementary building blocks and by understanding the mechanisms among such blocks.

Q 4: When did this materialistic view got its first shock?

In their victorious investigations, scientists soon came across the phenomena of magnetism which was not explainable by mechanistic terms. This was taken up by Michael Faraday (1791-1867) and James Clerk Maxwell (1831-1879) who further discovered that there is not only an entity like force but also something called as force-field. This means that there is something which is independent of material bodies and yet real and powerful. This led to the discovery that even light is an electromagnetic field behaving like waves in space. Yet, the dominance of Newtonian mechanics was so strong that Maxwell himself tried to explain these waves as resulting from the elastic behaviour of 'Ether' Heinrich Hertz (1857-1894) and Hendrik Lorentz (1853-1928) developed this idea further and found that matter itself is elastic. John B. Stallo (1823-1900) raised the doubt as to how the atom can be solid as well as elastic! Lord Kelvin (1824-1907) described the atom as a spinning vortex ring in the ether. However, the problem is this: If one starts with basic building blocks adding them up to make any object, then the smallest particle would have no properties and not even magnitude.

Q 5: Give some details of this shift in thinking about Matter.

This happened when the normal limits of observations were crossed. That is while experimenting at smallest possible levels like atomic experiments and at the largest levels like astronomy. Every time the scientists asked a question in their atomic experiments, Nature answered them with a paradox. The more they tried to clarify, the sharper became the paradoxes. The view of reality that emerged depended on what questions were asked, and thus there was no certainty. Opposites appeared as equally true and logic wasn't working at those smallest levels of matter. Neils Bohr (1885-1962) explained that these were not pairs of opposites but pairs of complementary things. Their coexistence and equal viability meant that they were complementary to each other, and thereby completed the whole of which they were mere parts (Jitatmananda, 2002, p64).

Scientists found themselves in doubt for the first time due to these shattering findings which were shifting the entire foundation of science. Werner Heisenberg (1901-1976) rightly asked, 'Can nature possibly be as absurd as it seemed to us in these atomic experiments?'

Q 6: So what is meant by Energy and Matter unity?

Energy is matter and matter is energy. The fact that particles are not isolated entities but are wave like probability patterns and they have their existence due to relations of these patterns make them to behave in a peculiar way. This means that more the particles are confined, the faster they move. This also means that there is certain restlessness in matter, though at the macroscopic level

it appears inert. In a sense, it is alive at microscopic dimensions. Modern physics sees Matter as a continuously vibrating and dancing motion whose rhythmic patterns are predetermined. This comes to a decisive point in the nuclei of atoms where confinement is in the smallest area, with the protons and electrons moving at a velocity almost equal to that of light. At such high speeds, Einstein's relativity theory must be taken into account to make it understandable. Relativity theory changed the notions of space and time radically. Space and time form an interrelated entity called space-time, where time is the fourth dimension in addition to three-dimensional space. Although scientists have now understood intellectually the concept of space-time as an entity, they do not have actual experience of the same and so find it difficult to really grasp the situation at such levels. In certain experiments on particles there is a time axis, but no sign as positive time and negative time. Thus 'before' and 'after' don't have any meaning. This breaks the chain of causation so much celebrated by scientists in their exploration.

Q 7: What then is the meaning of the famous equation $E = mc^2$ for a layman?

The most decisive effect of relativity theory was on 'mass,' which was realized to be nothing more than a form of energy. Even an object at rest has energy stored in it. The relation between mass and energy is given by the famous equation by Einstein: $E = mc^2$ where E is energy, m is mass and c is the speed of light. Thus matter is no more indestructible, it can be transformed into energy. In high energy physics, matter is continuously created, destroyed, and transformed. Mass today is measured through energy. It is thus clear that there is no *stuff* in the basic elements of matter, only bundles of energy. This energy implies continuous motion, process, and interaction with other particles in the same space-time continuum. The space aspect makes them to appear as a being with mass, the time aspect makes them to appear as a process with energy. The view of universe is thus an indivisible dynamic whole whose parts are essentially related and can be seen as patterns of a cosmic process. At the subatomic level there are interactions and interrelations within parts of the whole which are more fundamental than the parts themselves. There are motions but no moving objects, or as Capra described, there are no dancers and yet there is dance.

Q 8: Do mental or conscious aspects have any role in this unity?

Of course yes. According to Wigner, the next important breakthrough will be to treat physical and mental phenomenon as not divergent or unconnected to each other. Wolman B.B. in his handbook of parapsychology wrote that a number of systems in the Eastern mystical traditions and philosophies have a precise correspondence with formulations of quantum theory. This is an obvious invitation to exhibit the two, Matter and Consciousness, as aspects of an 'integrated understanding of the world.' Inventor Nikola Tesla agreed with such integrated exploration and prophesized that the day science starts studying nonphysical phenomena it will make more progress in one decade than what was made in many centuries.

Q 9: Is this unity seen at individual level only?

It is important to see how from Individual to Cosmic Mind and Cosmic Consciousness, this unity is seen.

In the ongoing evolution of matter, life emerges out of non-life, and mind and consciousness emerge out of the higher domains of life. This evolutionary concept does not

divide mind and matter as Descartes once did. It reduced reality either to non-living matter as in materialism or assimilates it to a non-material mind as in idealism. It does not keep them perpetually separated and divorced as it is in dualism. Interaction of our mind and consciousness with the Ether / Aakash / Quantum vacuum links us with other minds around us and also to the planet. This oneness and relation of our mind with society and Nature has been known to mystics, saints and seers for ages and now this recognition is coming to science. The exchange between our consciousness and the rest of the world is constant and flowing in both directions.

This takes the whole new paradigm to another height where not only are matter, life and consciousness one in essence in each entity, but they are also one in totality. With concepts like cosmic life, cosmic mind, and even cosmic consciousness getting acceptance in rational and intellectual forums, there is more room for debate and experiments in supraphysical domains.

(To be continued...)

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BEAUTY AND DELIGHT



Art is a thing of beauty and beauty and Ananda are closely connected—they go together. If the Ananda is there, then the beauty comes out more easily—if not, it has to struggle out painfully and slowly. That is quite natural.

Sri Aurobindo

BEAUTY IN WOMEN*

Sri Aurobindo

In regard to beauty in women, is there something inherent in the body that we call beautiful, a well-formed shape, physiognomy, harmony of movements, etc. It seems to most men it is colour + skin + physiognomy. But there are some women who do not have these in the body and yet are attractive. Is it something in their vital that gives them this beauty?

It is something vital in some cases, something psychic in others that gives a beauty which appears in the body but is not beauty of shape, colour or texture.

Often the vital and mental character of persons who have physical beauty is not good, sometimes it is even repulsive. Many would refuse to recognise it as beautiful.

If it is vital in its origin, it need not come from beauty of mind or character; it is something in the life-force which may go with a good character but also with a bad one.

Indians hardly appreciate the beauty of the Chinese or Japanese; like Europeans, they cannot appreciate beauty in Negroes. Many Asiatics could not appreciate the beauty of European models or actresses, who are so lacking in modesty according to their conceptions.

Modesty is not part of physical beauty, that is a mental-vital element. As for physical beauty, different races have different conceptions. Indians and Europeans like curves, Chinese detest them in a woman.

An intellectual would find beauty only in an intellectual woman; an emotional person would call a woman beautiful only if she has refined tender feelings; for a Gandhian a woman would be beautiful only if she spins eight hours a day or works for Harijans.

That has nothing to do with beauty in the ordinary sense as it is beauty of intellect or beauty of character or beauty of spinning and Harijanising.

Perhaps at a certain stage of psychic development one could look at human beauty as one looks at beauty in cats or dogs —recognising the beauty without any attraction.

One can recognise and feel without any desire of possession or sexual feeling etc. That is how the artists look at beauty—they delight in it for its own sake.

Supposing people developed the faculty of seeing the layers below the skin, would not their whole conception of beauty crumble down?

Yes, probably, unless the mind reconstructed a new idea of it.

Does not the conception of beauty differ according to race, temperament and level of consciousness?

Yes.

* Title given by the editors of CWSA 27.

Are not attractiveness and beauty different?

Yes.

Is there nothing constant called “beauty”?

There are two kinds of beauty. There is that universal beauty which is seen by the inner eye, heard by the inner ear etc.— but the individual consciousness responds to some forms, not to others, according to its own mental, vital and physical reactions. There is also the aesthetic beauty which depends on a particular standard of harmony, but different race or individual consciousnesses form different standards of aesthetic harmony.

18 October 1935 (CWSA 27: 706-707)

Since I have Seen Your Face

Since I have seen your face at the window, sweet
Love, you have thrown a spell on my heart, on my feet.
My heart to your face, my feet to your window still
Bear me by force as if by an alien will.

O witch of beauty, O Circe with innocent eyes,
You have suddenly caught me fast in a net of sighs.
When I look at the sunlight, I see your laughing face;
When I purchase a flower, it is you in your radiant grace.

I have tried to save my soul alive from your snare,
I will strive no more; let it flutter and perish there.
I too will seize your body alive, O my dove,
And teach you all the torture and sweetness of love.

When you looked from the window out on the trampling city,
Did you think to take my heart and pay me with pity?
But you looked on one who has ever mocked at sin
And gambled with life to lose her all or win.

I will pluck you forth like a fluttering bird from her nest.
You shall lie on Love's strong knees, in his white warm breast,
Afraid, with delighted lids that will not close.
You shall grow white one moment, the next a rose.

Sri Aurobindo (CWSA 2: 192)

LAXMIBEN PATEL'S WORK WITH THE MOTHER

Deepshikha Reddy

Laxmiben was an old Ashramite, who came in the early years with her parents and family. She had a delicate hand for painting and handicrafts. She was chosen by the Mother to make slippers for Her by hand. Mother used many-many slippers of different colours, patterns and materials to match Her dresses. I had interviewed her in the summer of 1998.

Deepshikha: Laxmi-di, how did you start working with the Mother? Or I should say for the Mother. Please tell me everything in detail as much as you can remember. I will be so grateful to you didi, as it will indeed be a very precious information for all of us and for posterity.

Laxmiben: Ok Deepshikha, till now I have never spoken to anyone about this. It has remained like a golden secret in my heart. But as you have a deep wish to learn about those days, I will tell you how the Mother used to deal with each one of us individually. Just, do not ask me too many questions.

Deepshikha: I'll not disturb you or ask you any question in-between like I do with others. I can see you are entering a very precious memory-lane of your earlier years with the Mother.

Laxmiben starts:

The Mother will tell me just that I want this thing. But she wouldn't explain anything as to how to do it using what material. For example she brought me a powder box and said: 'I want you to cover it.' The moment She said it, I got a picture-vision like image in my mind. It was as instantaneous as she spoke. I saw the form and knew what objects I should take to make a mermaid figure on the box. The powder box was brought from Her bathroom. The mermaid lady will be suitable with the bathroom articles, I thought.

So, first I got the picture of a mermaid in my mind. I could make it out of any material available to me. At that time we never went to the market so that we could know as to what things were available there. We were never supposed to go out for shopping. Then I got a small doll to which I gave the shape of a mermaid till the waist with a satin cloth and fitted it on the box and then decorated it with small shining sequences stitched on it. I used a little wire to give it a shape especially for the tail. Then the whole box was ready.

Ma always used to say: "Never imitate my child, bring it out from within." And things really started opening up and blossoming by themselves. It is not that I knew about all these or I learned about these things. Somehow things got discovered on their own.

Once Ma brought to me her pearl necklace. Pearl signifies occultism. She held my hand and said: "I have something very very old and it is broken and you have to remake it. Can you make it?" I never used to say: "Yes, I can make it." By remaking what she meant was that I should dethread it and redo it. In my life I had not even seen pearls till then.

She took me by one hand, the other holding the necklace, interior in the room and then

opened the drawer, brought out the tiny little box and then said: "See, this is the thing, you have to make it again exactly like this." I said: "Mother, I will try." Then She said: "You have to come here and do it" meaning that I could not bring it home to make it.

Till then I had never yet gone to Her room upstairs. That was the first day. She was waiting for me at the entrance. She took me by my hand and made me sit down at a place saying: "Here is enough light. So you sit here." Do you remember where Dyuman-bhai had kept the Mother's asana (seat) upstairs in Her room? It was exactly there I was made to sit to work. I sat and then She herself went in to bring the table and I always used to keep all things along with the apron and napkin with me only. Then She said: "Very good, you must keep one apron." I will give you a small velvet tray so that the pearl beads don't roll away." They were very very tiny pearls.

I was in my twenties. It was November 1950. She used to be very kind to me. I had a box with me. She gave me the velvet tray. Then She bent down as I was sitting below and kept something on that and went away. A special thread was brought by my father with special needle also. Now, I do not even remember how I made it or repaired that necklace. I crossed the two threads and fixed four pearls on all sides and then I crisscrossed the thread and did the necklace. After doing a part of it there was some *Meenakari* work to be inserted. Then again the other pearls were continued on. It was a thick necklace with ornate design. In-between a four-square there was a coloured pearl - it was a pink in the middle of four pearls around it. It was given to Her by Her great friend in Japan, Mrs. Kobayashi She didn't tell me her name though. She told me that "Therefore, I love this necklace so much. On this Darshan I want to wear it with the Crown." "Haven't you seen Her beautiful crown in the museum (Sri Smriti) that She used to wear on Darshan days?" I have also made Her crown. It is there along with the maroon colour swed chappals. Ma was very particular about the colours. She used to wear matching things and say "I want to wear this with this dress." I had bought swed (a particular material) from Madras and Bombay. I got it brought to me here.

I used to go to the Mother daily at 2 p.m. in the afternoon for doing Her necklace. She used to say: "Take a little rest and come." She used to be so careful about every small detail concerning us, you cannot imagine. I used to keep all my things with Her and then return home. Then next day when I would go She herself would bring all the things for me - no one else would come. She would come with the table, tray and everything.

There were other people like Mili-di and all others there. But She would not tell anyone to bring those things.

Deepshikha: Do you remember the other who used to be present in Her room?

Laxmiben: Yes, Mili-di, Vasudha-ben, Kiran Kumari-di, Mona were also working for the Mother. Champaklal-ji used to do his own work and dada also. Mother used to move here and there.

Then suppose after half an hour or so, if it became a little cloudy, she would take me by my hand again and take me to the window near the balcony to make me sit there. She would

see that I am very comfortable as if I was doing a very special work, I used to wonder. She used to give me so much love and tender care that I used to get totally overwhelmed. First I made only half of the necklace in two days. It was a difficult work. The Mother was pleased because I used to keep everything ready. She used to always say that everything should be perfect. It was the particular attitude that mattered most. She used to say: "You work slowly but perfectly." If the attitude is right then all the things come around automatically. I am personally a very good organiser. I kept everything in great detail - all ready when needed.

Suddenly She would come just like that with a typical naughty smile on Her face and with Her hand hidden at the back and surprise me with some biscuits or chocolates. She herself was so busy doing so many works but She constantly had an eye on my work and noticed if the light was enough or if I would feel hungry or tired. Sometime She would say: "Laxmi, my child, come and sit here." Her loving care was incredible.

Every day I would work only for two hours. It took me ten days to finish the necklace. She would not allow me to work more than two hours as She used to say that it is hard on the eyes. She told me: "This necklace I shall put on my crown on the Darshan day - 24th November." On the 23rd when I went upstairs, She told me twice "Tomorrow I shall wear the necklace." She didn't wear it on the neck. I had hopes to see Her wearing it on the 24th as I had remade it. She would not wear bangles or necklaces. She used to wear finger-rings and also anklet. I will tell you the story about the anklet later.

You know in December first week Sri Aurobindo passed away. About a week before that I had a dream that I was sitting just like this in my garden-room in the open and something dropped from the sky on my lap and I saw that it was the same necklace. I picked it up as it was the Mother's mala from the crown. At that time I didn't understand the significance of that incident. Then I forgot all about it though inside my heart and mind there was a sensation about it but I could not be sure or clear. In November, Sri Aurobindo was not well and the Mother had almost retired to look after Him. She was very busy. She stopped wearing all these things after Sri Aurobindo passed away in December beginning.

Then one day after many months my father said to the Mother: "Mother, you have a stock of gold ornaments and all, I will offer you money. Why don't you give some of your own jewellery to my children and also to other Ashramites?" Actually the Mother started giving Her Sari, blouse, pieces of jewellery etc. to the Ashramites. When I went to the Mother She said: "I am going to give you something special." I had forgotten all about it and She gave me the same pearl-necklace I had redone for Her. Only then I realised that when it fell from the sky on my lap in my dream, may be that was the time when She had decided this gift for me in future.

(A part of the interview, to be continued...)

THE FIRST FLIGHT...

Deepshikha Reddy



TOWARDS A THEORY OF POETIC CREATION

Vinod Balakrishnan

Has any Indian thinker, philosopher, poet, academician, writer, in the last century, thought it necessary to engage with the subjects of poetry, art and the creative process with the verve and philosophical doggedness as Sri Aurobindo? Of course, it was the century of struggle and turbulence as well as the birth pangs of a nation coming into being. It would take a truly decolonized mind capable of serenity in troubled times to reflect intensely and articulate the almost ineffable. Sri Aurobindo's life in Pondicherry uniquely situated him for the "ascent of consciousness" which provided him insights into the abstract realms of poetry and art.

There is no pretension to provide a science about the creative process; he is no scientist. However, he trusts the *pramana* (authority) of his own experience to do so. Beneath the phrases that are inventively re-phrased and the clauses that are re-stated, there is the earnestness to tear the vexing cobwebs of abstruse explanation. He persistently identifies mental states and categories, painstakingly names them with a philosopher's rigour and characterizes processes that are not visible or tangible and which must be apprehended more intuitively.

Sri Aurobindo possesses a humanity that is seldom seen in a scientist or an engineer or even in a physician. While each one of them serves humanity as doers or authors of their actions, thereby, stamping an egotistic authority by fetching solutions for humankind's problems, he effaces himself by choosing to be a "channel or a receptacle" of creative energies. He merely shares his experiences like a Prometheus who is in possession of that fire which was once with the Gods and now, unlike Prometheus, would conduct its descent that "is waiting complete and ready behind."

The poet as one who "waits" is distinct from the poet who 'writes'. Philip Sydney who defends the poet against the Platonic banishment from the commonwealth envisions him as "poein" the maker and "vates", the seer. The former connotes an artificer who has polished the skill of turning out measured words. The latter possesses the innate ability to see poetic possibility and lisp in numbers like Pope. Edgar Poe made a case for the poet-as-builder for whom the poem was written, as it were, to a mathematical formula; precise and tidy. Keats, before Poe, saw the poet-as-shaman who possessed the natural talent from whom words came trippingly as leaves came to trees. The idea of the poet as maker and seer is founded on the principle of an individual ability that can will a poem into existence. Though, the poet for both Poe and Keats is an instrumental cause, they are agents of making than instruments. In the decolonized mind of Sri Aurobindo, the poet is a finely-tuned instrument who chooses to be "the mouthpiece of the gods."

The two words "writing" and "waiting" suggest two diametrically opposed philosophies about poetry. Even the mighty Milton who invokes the "Heav'nly Muse" to illumine what is dark in him and to raise and support what is low, does so with the stated purpose of

“justify[ing] the ways of God to men” but not before wishing: “I may assert Eternal Providence.” The philosophical underpinning is that of unmitigated individualism enshrined in the assertion of the “I” even as it purports to assert Eternal Providence. Sri Aurobindo’s modest declaration is in sharp contrast and foregrounds a different philosophical disposition as well as the position of the poet vis à vis the creative process. In the letter of 26th January, 1932, he too, like Milton, begins his statement with the First Person, “I” but shorn of the ambition of attempting anything adventurous. On the contrary, it is about the waiting of the poet: “I had only one way, to allow a certain kind of incubation and then wait for the white heat in which the entire transcription could rapidly take place.”

There is also a difference between Milton and Sri Aurobindo in their attitude to the germination of the poem which further contrasts the philosophy of writing with the philosophy of waiting. That distinction is based on the idea of “brooding” in Milton and “incubation” in Sri Aurobindo. While both the words originated about the same time (‘brooding’ around the late 16th century and ‘incubation’ around the early 17th century), Milton sees the Muse as the symbolic dove that brought the universe into existence and, hence, he would importune that spirit to inspire him. Sri Aurobindo demonstrates in his idea of “incubate” a humbler spirit, unburdened by the weight of reason or conditions, that is capable of an infinite waiting for the spirit, disembodied and capable of inspiring. While Milton prays for inspiration, he is impatient to allow “brooding”. Sri Aurobindo does not pray for any inspiration but accepts the situation that “when you miss a verse or a poem, it is better to wait in an entire quietude about it (with only a silent expectation) until the true inspiration comes.”

Perhaps, the writers of poetry subscribe to a picture of man which is debunked by Sri Aurobindo. The distinction must lie in the idea of the poet as a creating entity implicit in Milton and the poet as part of a creative ecology in Sri Aurobindo. While Milton pleads for inspiration from the Muse, the will to make that which is “unattempted yet in prose or rhyme” is wholly personal, individual, Miltonic. The creative frame in Sri Aurobindo is not undifferentiated; it is a field of energy that is charged by a heightened vital force of the poet that has become capable of conducting the original source of inspiration. The ability to transmit beautifully is only the third and functional element in the production of poetry.

One might, in haste, judge Sri Aurobindo as being inexact in defining or naming the highest form of poetry at different times as “the thing”, “really fine and great”, “the one true word”, “the authentic rhythm”, “the real divine substance”, “the true speech and rhythm”, “[Inspiration’s] true form and speech”, “Overmind poetry”, “truly poetic poetry”, “the most genuine and perfect poetry”, and so on. However, one might also see in the repeated attempts to capture “the thing”, the earnestness and integrity of his spirit that understands the many levels of consciousness that swirl in the field of creative energy and the many levels of language that ceaselessly try to catch them in order to communicate from the experiencer to those who see meaning and purpose in the experience. That Sri Aurobindo had to think of so many descriptions for poetry as “pure transcript,” points to the levels of consciousness he himself attained that he feels responsible for an honest accounting in spite

of subtle experiential states that defy language's tendency to define and name, thereby, catch and locate on the page.

One of the premises on which Sri Aurobindo's theory about the language of poetry is conceived is that speech is not the ultimate form of human expression. The corollary to this idea is that it is not necessary to write as if the poet is capable of mastering an all-encompassing language. In fact, that language which is celebrated as the finest attribute of civilized man and that language which determines the quality of representation is, in itself, a mere tool to advance civilizational goals. To Sri Aurobindo, there is a language beyond speech and writing which speech and writing will always struggle fruitlessly to capture. It is a language that is simultaneous with the poet's evolution from the "vital" through the "mental" to the "supramental"; it is as dynamic as the flow of creative energy either in its ascent or in its descent.

Broadly, poetry happens at four levels in the decreasing order of human effort or the increasing efficiency of the channel to wait and conduct the energy flow. The "Brain-mind" manufactures poetry. The higher "Psychic-mind" is charged by the heart's capacity for goodwill and there is a more spontaneous flow of speech that finds its form through inspiration; the interference from the lower mind is less. Above the "Psychic-mind" is the "Illumined-mind" where the ability to receive from a higher plane is greater though the poet would still be conscious about the channel operating in a state of pure inspiration. The highest state is the "Overmind" where inspiration does not operate. It is the state where the quality of readiness is ideal for a descent of the Supramental in the form and speech of its own choosing.

One can see an uncanny resemblance to hypothesize a correspondence between the planes from which poetry originates and the energy centres called *chakras*. The "lower vital" corresponds to the *muladhara chakra*; the "higher vital" above is the *swadishtana chakra*; "the dynamic or creative intelligence" corresponds to the *manipura chakra*; "the plane of dynamic vision" corresponds to the heart-centre or *anahata chakra*; "the psychic" is the *vishuddhi chakra*; "the illumined mind" which is associated with intuition is the *ajna chakra* and the "Overmind" corresponds to the *sahasrara*.

While the correspondence with the *chakras* is a hypothesis that must be established through deep reflection and *sadhana*, one can propose with greater persuasion, the framework of the three *gunas* over which the "vital", the "mental" and the "supramental" kinds of poetry can be superimposed. To put it in simpler terms, one can see the vital informed by the "outer consciousness" or what could be called the *bahiranga sadhana*. The next higher form of poetry is more powerfully driven by the vital mind's initiation and the "inner consciousness" should be characterized as *antaranga sadhana*. The highest form of poetry that happens through the poet-as-channel issues from a level of readiness or waiting that can be called "the innermost consciousness" or *antaratma sadhana*.

The outer consciousness is not capable of inspired poetry. It is too lethargic to drive the inspiration through the vital. The waiting poet is hassled by the noises from the outer consciousness and weakly lets it preside over the creative process. The writing is commanded

by the “external mind”; the result is, a crafted “mental manufacture.” In terms of *guna*, it will be recognized as *tamo guna*. The next level, higher than the vital is the plane of mental poetry where the vital mind and the emotion are active. On this plane there is a serious attempt at translating the inspiration. However, the output though powerful is still inferior and this kind of poetry can be characterized as possessing a *rajo guna*. The Overmind is above the mental plane where the source of inspiration is a “light force” which is “the very substance of knowledge.” It is the realm of perfect inspiration as “substance, rhythm, form and words” become one, “ready formed”, and the quality of waiting enables the manifestation of the “pure transcript”. On this plane the poet must be seen to realize a *sattva guna*.

The three *gunas* can be restated as the three stages of waiting by the poet. The first and the lowest stage of waiting would be one of “aspiration”. When the poet has the aspiration but lacks the necessary energy to receive and maintain the call of the creative powers, then one is in a *tamo guna*. However, in Sri Aurobindo’s evolutionary scheme one can imagine the aspiring poet evolving higher towards a more open stage where the consciousness is kept uplifted and maintained at a dynamic state of readiness. This higher state would correspond to *rajo guna*. The highest stage the poet reaches through evolutionary aspiration and evolutionary openness is the state of recognition. At this stage, the poet attains the ideal condition to receive “the one right thing” which is apprehended as the “flow from above”; the *sattva guna* enables the poet to attain the highest stage of evolutionary readiness and waiting.

The poet who waits is one who is better prepared to receive the inspiration as poetry already written and waiting for the appropriate medium. It also implies a state of being related to oneself and the cosmos outside oneself. The poet conducts the state of relatedness in its own form and rhythm and substance. It is not even the form into which, by effort, the enthusiasm stuffs the poem in a pre-meditated way. On the contrary, it is an “*anandamaya aavesh*” – an ecstasy that results on account of the unmediated creative power becoming the creative expression. It also implies that the poet realizes and accepts the condition of being related to every thing in the cosmos; that by allowing oneself to be the vital channel for the flow of poetry from the supramental plane, one celebrates the *samanvaya* or the balance of this relation.

Sri Aurobindo’s *The Future Poetry* is a sustained critique of the practice of poetry and an argument for the impregnated word that can turn human effort into a realized mantra. A number of scholars have recognized the place of *The Future Poetry* in the canon of criticism and some, grudgingly, accord it its place beside *Biographia Literaria* of Coleridge and Longinus’s *On the Sublime*. It is time, more attention is given to Volume 27 of the *Complete Works* in which Sri Aurobindo, through letters to members of his ashram reflected on poetry, painting, other arts, beauty, aesthetics and the relation of these to the practice of yoga. Between 1931 and 1937, the sage of Pondicherry opened his heart and soul as well as his copious pen to enlighten the novice and the initiated alike about relations that most people know exist, but few believe that they really do. Volume 27 (*Letters on Art and Poetry*) is a testament to that Upanishadic conversation between the Master and his disciples; it waits in library shelves for a penetrating, respectful and honest appraisal.

LIFE



*The soul lives: it is not abolished,
it is not lost in a featureless Indefinite.*

Sri Aurobindo

THE FINNISH EDUCATION MODEL: IN THE LIGHT OF THE MOTHER'S ESSAYS ON EDUCATION

Sridarshan Koundinya

The Author visited Finland for 5 days to study their education systems as part of a delegation from the Indus Trust in Bangalore. Visits to Government departments, play schools gave a good insight into the Finland Model. This essay describes salient features of the Finland Education Model in the light of the Mother's essays on education.

Introduction

Finland's Education model has been a success in terms of happiness (Finland is ranked 5th happiest nation in the world), innovation, education (1st in PISA ranking twice) and safety (ranked 2nd in the world). Finland has been named as an Education superpower (The country spends 6.5 % of GDP on education) and a global Innovation hub (Sahlberg, 2011). Finland's schools owe their newfound fame primarily to one study: the PISA survey, conducted every three years by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The survey compares 15-year-olds in different countries in reading, math, and science. Finland has ranked at or near the top in all three competencies on every survey since 2000, neck and neck with super-achievers such as South Korea and Singapore. Compared with the stereotype of the East Asian model -- long hours of exhaustive cramming and rote memorization -- Finland's success is especially intriguing because Finnish schools assign less homework and engage children in more creative play. All this has led to a continuous stream of foreign delegations making the pilgrimage to Finland to visit schools and talk with the nation's education experts, and constant coverage in the worldwide media marveling at the Finnish miracle (Partanen, 2011). The Author was a member of one such delegation from Bangalore. The Author taught Holistic Education based largely on the Mother's Essays on Education to Trainee Teachers enrolled in a Post Graduate Teacher Training Program and interprets his 5-day experience in Finland in light of the Mother's Essays on Education. This essay is organized around various thematic areas inspired by the Mother's Essays.

The Primary Aim of Education

There is a difference in the primary aim of Education between the Finland Model and the Mother's articulation in her essays on Education:

- Equity is the primary aim of education in Finland. "Everyone has the right to basic education free of charge. The public authorities shall guarantee for everyone equal opportunity to receive other educational services in accordance with their ability and special needs, as well as the opportunity to develop themselves without being prevented by economic hardship and this is as per the Constitution of Finland" (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2018).
- The primary aim of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram and School is to find, become and manifest

the Divine by preparing the human consciousness for future realizations and for the supramental manifestation through the new race (*The Mother on Education*, 2016).

Unique Methods: Lack of Curriculum Standardization and the Role of the Teacher

There are some similarities in the unique methods employed. Since each student is considered as unique in both systems, there is less standardization of curriculum. There is no regular testing/ assessment process. Hence teachers become very important in both systems

All schools of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram and the Sri Aurobindo Society as per statements on their websites, aim at “expanding the mental, creative and physical capacities of each child spontaneously and the education is child-centered where teachers and children play, work and learn together. Instead of formal classroom education and examinations, the children learn through the Project Method”. The Mother has said that it is a divine grace for someone to be a teacher and good teachers must be calm, quiet and abolish all egoism. Teachers should also have the maturity to allow full freedom to each child to develop organically without any pressure.

Finland also has no standardized tests until 9th grade. The only exception is what's called the National Matriculation Exam, which everyone takes at the end of a voluntary upper-secondary school. Instead, the public-school system's teachers are trained to assess children in classrooms using independent tests they create themselves. All children receive a report card at the end of each semester, but these reports are based on individualized grading by each teacher. Periodically, the Ministry of Education tracks national progress by testing a few sample groups across a range of different schools. Every student's learning is assessed continuously. I-pads and mobile phones are allowed in classrooms. Differentiated / individualized teaching, Experiential and collaborative learning are important aspects of the pedagogy. If the Finland model of education is so successful it's because of respect and autonomy given to teachers. Teachers are considered most important resource in bringing positive change in society. About 30 years back the government abolished school inspections and placed its trust in teachers. Teachers have to undergo an integrated 5 years Master's program and after they qualify, they have full autonomy in choosing teaching material and in designing curricula according to local needs at the Municipal level. Apart from testing knowledge and communication skills, they are tested for their attitude to see if they love children and can be patient with them. They are also encouraged to innovate to make learning process more child friendly. As a result, most learning happens in the classroom. There is no culture of private tuitions and minimum home work is given as children usually spend less than half an hour doing it. Number of students in a class is restricted to 25. Teaching is one of the most aspired for professions in the country. Teachers of K-12 schools are paid up to 5000 Euros a month and they retire with a pension at 65, which is a good salary in Finland since top salaries of Lawyers, Doctors and Engineers is about 7000 Euros but without pension. Hence the Teaching profession attracts the best talent in the country and the culture and system trusts Teachers.

Early Intervention

The Mother had said that “The Education of a human being should begin at birth and if possible even before birth and continue throughout his life” (CWM12: 9). While continuous life-long learning has become a cliché in the postmodern global knowledge economy, systematic educational intervention prior to birth of the child is rare if not absent.

One of the causes of the success of the Finland education model is the State's intervention in early years of the child and even prior to birth. The health and development of the unborn child in the womb is monitored closely even before child-birth and medical interventions are planned in advance where necessary. Doctor and nurse visits are regular (9 visits in the 1st year) to ensure good health of every child. If any special need is detected, immediate remedial action is taken. Every family is given financial support of US \$160 after child birth for 3 years and one parent is given leave with 60 percent pay for 3 years. They have an effective early year education program which includes 2 hours of play every day. In case any special need is detected during the early years immediate intervention is administered by professionals trained in special needs education. Good quality free lunch is also given to every child in play-schools. Senior citizens in the neighborhood who don't have any other source of income other than pension can also have lunch in the school for a Euro. Every child whether rich or poor gets the same good quality of education and also health care free of cost. This also ensures that gifted children among the poor are included in the program. Social security given to every mother and child in the early years is one big factor that helps learning in children even in later years as the starting point advantage is huge for Finnish children (Rasanen, 2017).

Holistic Education

There are similarities in both systems with regards to Holistic education as explained below.

The Mother had envisaged a systematic discipline to train the physical, vital and mental parts so that “the mind will be the vehicle of infallible knowledge, the vital will manifest an invincible power and strength and the body will be the expression of a perfect beauty and harmony” (CWM 12: 11).

The aim of Physical Education is to develop Good health, beauty, harmony and physical strength through balance in diet, activity and sleep. The aim of Vital and Emotional Education is the refinement of the senses through a study and appreciation of Literature, Dance, Music, the Fine Arts and Humanities and character development by learning to be a discerning witness of desires. The aim of Mental Education is to develop the capacity of the Mind for wideness by considering everything from different points of view, for Concentration and uniting with higher ideals and for rejection of undesirable thoughts and for mental silence (CWM 12: 12-29).

The equivalent of this holistic approach in the Finland Model was adapted from Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, a Swiss pedagogue and educational reformer, who articulated the aim

of education as achieving a unity of “the Head, Heart and Hands” (Gazibara 2013). The Finland Model is based on the philosophy of phenomenology and most learning happens through inter-disciplinary and collaborative phenomenon-based projects where different approaches and points of view are discussed to develop the Mind. Sports and physical education is given importance and so is Arts, Dance and Literature to develop the physical and emotional capabilities. Learning does not happen only in classrooms and where there are classes, students go out to play for 15 minutes after every class which lasts for 45 minutes. There are sessions on Mindfulness Meditation primarily influenced by western applications of Buddhist techniques like vipassana to the medical science of stress reduction (Jon Kabat-Zinn, 2012) and involves transcending the ego by concentration on the breath and on the sensations of various parts of the body (as in vipassana). These techniques are a good beginning but do not include the transformative discipline adopted in the Ashram and introduced briefly in the next section.

Psychic, Spiritual and Supramental Education

Just as in the primary aims of Education there is a considerable difference in the two systems of education in terms of psychic, spiritual and supramental education.

Psychic development is central to holistic education in the Mother and Sri Aurobindo's system. The Mother states that it is important to know the truth of our existence and then to unify and organize all the elements of our being into a homogeneous whole around this psychic center and follow a discipline of aspiration and rejection to make the psychic a vehicle of true and pure love (CWM 12: 9, 11). The Mother explains the terms Psychic, Spiritual and Supramental Education in the following quotations:

Psychic education enables one to have a higher realization upon earth of immortal life, endless time, limitless space, ever-progressive change and an unbroken continuity in the universe of forms. The spiritual consciousness, on the other hand, means to live the infinite and the eternal, to be projected beyond all creation, beyond time and space. To become conscious of your psychic being and to live a psychic life you must abolish all egoism; but to live a spiritual life you must no longer have an ego. Supramental education will result in a transformation of the nature itself, a transfiguration of the being in its entirety, a new ascent of the species above and beyond man towards superman, leading in the end to the appearance of a divine race upon earth. (CWM 12: 30-38)

The author specifically asked Finnish Teachers, Education Professionals and Government technocrats about the role of spirituality in Education. They were all aware of concepts like ‘Spiritual quotient (SQ) or spiritual intelligence’ (Zohar and Marshal, 2000) and Mindfulness (Jon Kabat-Zinn, 2012) but none of their frameworks came even close to the transformative education envisaged and implemented by the Mother and Sri Aurobindo, which has been summarized very briefly above.

Conclusion

The Finnish Model was primarily inspired by the Russian revolution with a focus on promoting equality in the society by providing equal opportunities to everyone. This model also incorporates most elements of physical, vital and mental education influenced by Swiss educationists' concern for achieving a unity of "the Head, Heart and Hands". The Finnish Education Model demonstrates practically how even a little of the Mother's ideas, if sincerely applied and implemented universally can transform a whole Nation and make it an Education and Innovation superpower. India can also learn a lot from Finnish efforts in early Intervention described in this paper.

However, the primary aim of the system of education envisaged by the Mother and Sri Aurobindo is spiritual and goes beyond the Finnish model of holistic education. especially in the areas of psychic, spiritual and supramental education. This is an area where the Sri Aurobindo International Centre for Education can contribute a lot to the world in the area of education.

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SELF-DETERMINATION AND THE PATH AHEAD

Kisholoy Gupta

Born free, as free as the wind blows
Stay free where no walls divide you
Born free to follow your heart...

Every time I hear this song from the Oscar winning movie 'Born Free', I feel I am born again. Songs that sing freedom of the soul are so refreshing. For freedom of the soul allows us to self-determine on our own terms.

Self-determination is a state of being, where a person determines inwardly, by herself or himself, the sort of person she or he is. As a result of this internalised thinking, the person also determines her or his thoughts and action in the external circumstances and environment. According to Sri Aurobindo when the person thinks inwardly the spiritual energy within grows and helps the individual determine her or his thoughts and action in the external world.

The urge for freedom to self-determine on our terms, is something that is always there within us. Just as the urge for self-determination is so ingrained in all of us, there is an innate desire in us to have a society where each individual contributes gainfully towards it.

Yet these two urges or forces of Nature within the human race seem to be at loggerheads. For when individuals seek the liberty to self-determine, it is at the cost of disharmony within the community. At the same time when the community expects each one to contribute, the individual feels that the liberty to act on her or his terms has been snatched away. Nature has her own mystical ways and Sri Aurobindo has his own lucid way of explaining them.

Sri Aurobindo has said that, "There remains the problem of relations, of the individual and the collective self-determination and of the interaction of the self-determination of one on the self-determination of another".¹ That is, the individual has as much egoistic urge for seeking self-determination as much as the society has egoistic reasons to impose itself on its people, for its own self-determination.

Both, the individual and the society, would like to have the liberty of self-determination. When both try to achieve that in the community, state or organization, disharmony brews. It is like a big destructive wave coming and destroying the calmness of the ocean. Sri Aurobindo says, "It is the last ideal of love at which strife tries ignorantly to arrive; ... the strife between two equally deep-rooted human tendencies, individualism and collectivism"²

Seeking self-determination by the individual and a spirit of communal harmony, is nothing new. It is even older than history. Anthropologically speaking, the people of a tribe stuck together for the collective protection of their tribe. Each one must have realised that their own unique capability must be subservient for the greater cause of the tribe. It made "surviving sense" to be together against external forces.

That there should be a political balance of power between the people and the government was seen as early as 302 BCE. in the writings of Greek philosopher, Polibius. It was based

on his philosophy that French Baron Montesquieu wrote the “The spirit of the Law” in 1748. Subsequently, the founding fathers of the United States of America were influenced by this philosophy of having a balance of power.

Earlier in 1215, ‘The Great Charter’ Magna Carta was signed in England. This was historic because it established everyone, including the king, to be subjected to the laws of the land. While granting certain powers to the king, it guaranteed certain rights or liberties to individuals in terms of justice and fair trial. Then there was the French revolution between 1787 and 1799. The motto of the revolution was Liberty, Equality, Fraternity. It was a landmark in terms of the balance between self-determinations of two forces of Nature, the ‘Individuality and Collectivity’.

Through the passage of time and two World Wars, the world formed League of Nations and United Nations Organizations. These have paved the way for the formation of many associations on the lines of federalism. The idea being two-fold; respecting individual nations’ individuality and at the same time, forming of a united front of a collection of nations.

Having seen history unfolding, the fight between individuality and collectivism has not ebbed. It has escalated to a level of calamitous despair. Every individual seems to be looking at the world through a lens of egoism. Each nation wants its pound of flesh. The concept of a global village is dying. Nations and organizations are meeting endlessly trying to make pacts and laws to usher in harmony in the human race. Such reactions however seem mechanical.

This yawning gap between the individual’s self-determination and the self-determination of the collectivity, cannot be settled by ‘any mechanical solution’. Mechanical laws and pacts will take to the path of separation of the individual and collectivity, not to the path of unity. Some think that to have a collaborative atmosphere, individuals should sacrifice their goals for the greater cause of the society. Altruism, they say is the answer. Self-sacrifice or a one-sided contribution cannot be the only acknowledged and accepted conduct of a contributing individual. It can only be a step in the fulfillment of an evolved society.

The secret truth is that ‘all’ are ‘one being’ with rest. This understanding requires the self-expansion of consciousness in the human race. The realization of the Oneself uniquely residing in the other has to dawn in the individual and the collectivity. My belief is that this self-expansion would come about through realizing what Sri Aurobindo wrote a hundred year ago:

The law of our self-determination has to wed itself to the self-determination of others and to find the way to enact a real union through this mutuality. But its basis can only be found within and not through any mechanical adjustment. It lies in the discovery within by the being in the course of its self-expansion and self-fulfilment that these things at every turn depend on the self-expansion and self-fulfilment of those around us, because we are secretly one being with them and one life. ³

The findings of a small informal survey:

To find, how 'self-determination of individuals' was being viewed vis-à-vis 'self-determinations of organizations', a dip stick test was conducted a few years ago in Bangalore. The response was gathered from a group of twenty managers belonging to different organizations.

The study was about the culture of self-determination, prevailing in organizations on two issues. The first one was how much was the freedom meted out to employees in organizations so that they had the liberty to self-determine their thoughts and action. The second one was how much did the organizations expect the individual employees to sacrifice for the sake of the organization. After all the organization also desired to self-determine its thoughts and action through its people.

The first question, in the survey was, as to what extent freedom of self-expression was prevalent in the organizations? 30% of them said that their organizations did not provide full freedom to its managers to express themselves freely. The rest of the 70% said that managers could freely express their opinion in their organizations. Thus, a majority organization seemed to encourage their managers to be open in their thoughts while expressing themselves.

The second question was, would business prosper to its optimum, if full liberty was allowed to managers to act according to their own free will? The response was extremely low. It implied that though organizations allowed managers to freely express their 'thoughts', they were not too comfortable to hand over full liberty to their managers, in terms of them determining their own 'actions'.

The third question was related to altruism. They were asked if sacrificing personal goals for the greater cause of the organization was a sure sign of a great company. 60 % agreed whereas 40% disagreed. This implied that there was a clear difference of opinion. A sizeable percentage felt self-sacrificing was an acknowledged sign of a great employee. A good 40% percentage disagreed too.

The last question was a spiritual one. It sought the reason, why harmony prevailed in the work culture. The question was why would people love and respect each other in any organization? Was it because people thought they were integrally connected to that One Divine source? The response was interesting.

15% were not sure of what to answer. 40% said that no such feeling or culture existed. However, 45% of the respondents agreed that an underlining belief prevailed, where people respected each other because they knew they were spiritually bonded by that One Divine source.

Though the results from this informal survey with twenty managers would not stand the test of validity, it did throw some indicative light. First, individual 'thoughts' were welcomed in organizations. However, it was not so when it came to allowing liberty of 'taking action'. The second indication was also very interesting. It was that the overriding expectation from individuals to self-sacrifice their individual goals for the greater cause of the organization, was not very encouraging.

The response to the last question was however encouraging and sent lights of hope. A good percentage of people were collaborative because they realize that they interconnected through a higher spiritual power. There was ample indication that people with noble values were existing in a good percentage.

Presenting the way ahead:

While countries with their leaders may conjure newer legal framework and churn out commercial processes, we as a community of common people can do our bit. Let us venture into deal; a deal which we may call the 'Human Relations Deal'. A deal where we, the people would be born free. This would be a deal where we would be free to self-determine and concurrently also have amity amongst us.

It would be a deal to rise beyond our selfish egos and realize our greater self. It would be to understand that we, the human race are an integral part of God's creation. At each progressive step we would call for a closer unity with the larger collectivity. A confluence of the law of self-determination and the common law of mutuality is bound to happen!

This human relations deal would be to ourselves, by ourselves for ourselves. It would be a clarion call to shift our paradigms in our hearts, minds and consciousness. This deal would make the whole human race stand together on the premise that we are sparks of the same universal divine flame.

As affirmed earlier the signs of realization are already there. It is for us to give it the push for people to live free in a globalized united family.

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COMING IN THE CLASP OF DIVINE GRACE

Dolan

The following poem came from a recollection of a memory from 1999, in Chennai, India. Even as I write this, the memory comes alive with the feelings, as though I am reliving them again; thus, the major use of present tense.

A brief background on how the poem's inspiration shaped: I had recently come to know Mother and Sri Aurobindo from my school teacher. I was supposed to be busy in studies; instead a beautiful daze came over me. It continued for days, though the intensity varied. My teacher gave me a small book to read and that was my first taste of the Divine Mother. The more I read it, the more it felt like- I was floating in beauty. I could not read for my upcoming entrance exams..... Something just caught hold of me and it felt like the most beautiful feeling on earth. The only thing I felt like doing those days was to remain immersed in the splendour of the words of the book. I got very attached to it, but had to return it soon. So, I started writing the book's quotes - and my pen flowed. Inspirations came rushing in for poetry and painting. Everything I touched, felt or became beautiful. I didn't have such lovely paintings or words before. I had forgotten the practical world. My heart felt so light, seized by glory. Every day, I got more and more absorbed in a magnificent love that was hard to touch and catch hold of; yet, was engulfing my whole being. Lightness came over me and the days passed in wonder and beauty. It felt like the whole world was filled with grace and magic.

As I went for my walks those days, it felt like the whole of nature was speaking to me. Mother loved flowers, so I went to pick some for Her. But I couldn't tear them off the tree; - a subtle sensitivity took over me Even that small tear pierced my being with a loud bang. Thus, I picked them from the ground- the most beautiful and fresh ones possible. For the time being- everything was filled with so much light- that even the dust laden flowers were shining with beauty.

That very memory brings back those subtle feelings now. It was Chennai, so the place was filled with Bougainvillea flowers of all kinds. And I liked to pick them. I liked to play with different colors and then forming a new art with them each day in my decorations, while offering. I then, felt a strong affinity with the flowers.

I miss them a lot now, hardly get to see them anymore – guess they only grow in tropical lands. But, those flowers saved, guided and protected me in my journey that followed. A part of me still melts at their remembrance! I soon learnt they were flowers of Divine Protection! I then engulfed their spirit and took their touch with me, wherever I went. As I write this, the feelings get so alive, as if the flowers never left me, - even though, now I am in a land where I never get to see them.

To: The Lines of Bougainvillea Bushes

I walk past your rows,
Caressing your leaves, in silent presence;
You exude a lovely marigold of color glows.
Your petals shining; myriad in their essence
Blossoming bright and vibrant in Nature's care
Filled with a lively suppleness and simplicity rare!
You talk to me through your heart's cove
And thread together our spirits' sounds.
I seem to overflow in that love...
As if my feet not on the grounds
But merging in you, disappearing, soaring aloft...
Melting into a coziness that is so beautiful and soft!
My being so light and feathery,
Fluttering with the sway of the wind's cue,
Like a colorful butterfly in glee.
As though flowing in and becoming one with you...
You radiate a softness that is hard to touch.
Yet you touch the softness in my heart so much.
I feel so safe and nourished in your perfumes.
I then take your flowers for my holy altars.
After your love, I could not pluck your blooms.
Thus, I bent down to pick your offers
Of love; the generous gift of your hearty blossoms,
On Mother Earth's bosoms!
I admire the gift of your flowers
As I take them to my shrine's arms.
My Divine welcomes the dust kissed petals' showers,
Filled with the delight of thy perfumes' charms
Accepting with Her infinite heart, wide open in luminosity
Thy offerings of art, filled with love and generosity.

15th December 2017



SKETCHES OF LIFE

Oeendrilla Guha

A lonely evening drove me out of the house. My mood lifted as I neared the beach. Excited voices drowned out the strained voice of emptiness. As I trudged alone, random words caught my attention: children arguing with their parents for sweets and balloons, siblings bickering with each other for the bigger share of a snack.

While weaving my way through the crowds, I stole quick glances at the sea. Like a snorting bull, it puffed out convoluted billows, a clear sign of ill-humour and an impending torrent. I climbed over the rocks and took my place on one of them.

A fragile canoe, a tiny dot in the grey expanse, steadying itself against the constant onslaught of the turbulent waters made slow progress. Unpremeditated, with a mighty demand, the waters upturned the canoe. At a loss for words and in abject thought I gazed at the void and reflected to myself that I too am being upturned by phenonemal forces time and again like the struggling canoe. In the melee of failed attempts I feared a final defeat.

Soon a soft moon rose, striking a faint contrast against the dark dome and sea. Yet it gave me hope; that if the moon could pierce the angry clouds and reflect its pale silver light in the waters I could likewise overcome odds and ineptitude and shine, no matter how pale my glow. An ill-defined beginning was nevertheless a pursuit. In close contact with such immensities, my weak self looked up to them for reassurance; in their presence I could no longer allow my vapid self to be at its lowest point. Shaking off doubts I stood up. In the dim moonlight I spotted a rescue craft making its way towards the canoe. I had forgotten about the canoe. The crowds cheered as it was tugged away, a survivor in the battle-field of life. I did not walk back home, I pranced.



“Living Within” Study Camp No. 47
YOGA AS A WAY OF LIVING

25th-26th August 2018

Jointly organised by

SACAR & NAMAH

SCHEDULE

25 th August (Saturday)	26 th August (Sunday)
09.00 Invocation by Mrs. Deepshikha Reddy	09.00 Invocation by Mrs. Deepshikha Reddy
09.15 Dr. Debabrata Sahani <i>Yoga and Life</i>	09.15 Dr. Yogesh Mohan <i>Living Within - At the Workplace</i>
10.45 Tea break	10.45 Tea break
11.15 Mr. James Anderson <i>Living the Yoga of Love</i>	11.15 Dr. Alok Pandey <i>Yoga and Evolution</i>
12.45 Lunch	12.45 Lunch
14.00 Mr. Pulkit Sharma <i>Transforming Relationships Through Yoga</i>	14.00 Dr. Falguni Jani <i>Taking Charge of Our Life</i>
15.30 Tea break	15.00 Dr. Sampadananda Mishra <i>Samatvam Yoga Uchyate: A Deeper Insight into the Idea of Oneness and Equality</i>
16.00 Dr. Ananda Reddy <i>Mamekam Sharanam Vraja (Take Refuge in Me Alone)</i>	16.00 Tea break
17.30 Close	16.30 Dr. Soumitra Basu <i>Towards Immortality</i>
	17.30 Close

REGISTRATION

Camp Fee:

For residents at SACAR's Guest House: Rs. 2,200 (Including lodging, boarding and study)

For non-residents: Rs. 1,500 (Including lunch, tea and study)

CAMP FEE IS NON-REFUNDABLE

Mode of Payment: DD/ Cheque/ Bank transfer in favour of SACAR TRUST

Venue:

SACAR, 39 Vanniar Street, Vaithikuppam, Puducherry - 605012

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*Shri Anubindo
is constantly
among us and
reveals himself
to those who are
ready to see and
hear him*

*blessings
/.*



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