



[Share this](#) [Print this](#) [Write to us](#)

A glorious month, this August. An even more glorious day, the 15th. Not one, or two, but three occasions worthy of the most jubilant celebrations.

The birthday of our much-loved Lord of the flute, Prince, Warrior, Friend - Krishna.

The day of freedom for a country most splendid - Bharat.

The birth anniversary of one of India's most treasured sons and our beloved Guru - Sri Aurobindo.

Each occasion is momentous. Each potent with its inner significance. And to think that all fall on a single day - a coincidence, a miracle, something that just had to be?

It matters little.

Let us simply enjoy this 15th of August to its utmost and celebrate it for what it is - a glorious day, a day of new birth.

Until the next time...

Eternally Yours

[Share this](#) [Print this](#) [Write to us](#)

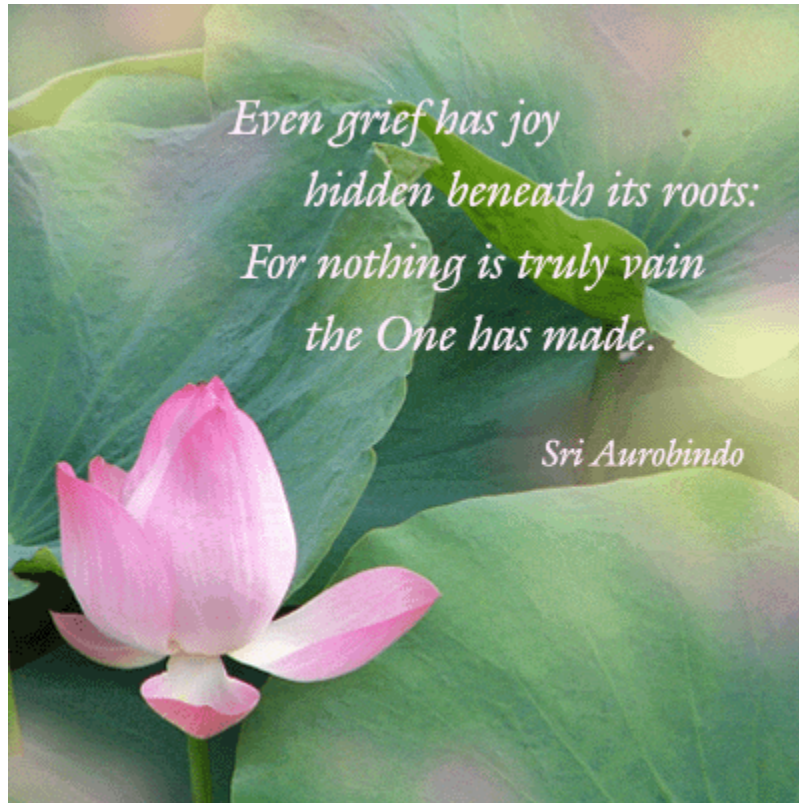


*... Grant that we may never forget
to own towards Thee a deep,
an intense gratitude.*

The Mother

Living Words

[Share this](#) [Print this](#) [Write to us](#)



*Even grief has joy
hidden beneath its roots:
For nothing is truly vain
the One has made.*

Sri Aurobindo



Flowers and their Messages

[Share this](#) [Print this](#) [Write to us](#)

In our theme of "Qualities Required for Living", last month we had taken quality of Generosity. For this month we are taking a flower to which the Mother has given the spiritual significance of Humility.



Spiritual Name	Humility "Adorable in its simplicity""Giving and self-giving without bargain."
Botanical Name	Agrostis nebulosa
Common Name	Drop seed

General Description

A light airy grass whose star-shaped panicles produce cloud effects. The panicles bear minute flowers that open pale greenish-white and change to maroon as they mature. This grass is propagated by seeds.


The Mother on Humility

It is very simple, when people are told "be humble", they think immediately of "being humble before other men" and that humility is wrong. True humility is humility before

the Divine, that is, a precise, exact, living sense that one is nothing, one can do nothing, understand nothing without the Divine, that even if one is exceptionally intelligent and capable, this is nothing in comparison with the divine Consciousness, and this sense one must always keep, because then one always has the true attitude of receptivity-a humble receptivity that does not put personal pretensions in opposition to the Divine.

*

To be humble means for the mind, the vital and the body never to forget that without the Divine they know nothing, are nothing and can do nothing; without the Divine they are nothing but ignorance, chaos and impotence. The Divine alone is Truth, Life, Power, Love, Felicity.



Question of the Month

[Share this](#) [Print this](#) [Write to us](#)

The importance of finding the Strength Within

We often receive questions from aspirants, who are not satisfied with their present lives, who are trying to find a meaning in their lives, a deeper reason for why things happen as they do, and who are searching for a light to guide them in their actions.

Each month we take a question of this nature and present an answer based on the writings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, with the belief that this could be of help to a larger number of persons.

We welcome further comments on making our endeavour beneficial to all.

Life is often a struggle, outside and within. We are confronted with forces and circumstances which try to depress and discourage us. We do not know how to face them and handle them.

The question arises :

Question : Where can we find the strength which can help us to become master of circumstances, to surmount difficulties and failures, to become an instrument of the Divine?

We give here two very beautiful and reassuring letters of Sri Aurobindo, where he says that the Strength we seek lies within us, and it is possible for each one of us to find it. And its action can change even weakness into power and turn incapacity into capacity.

You should not be so dependent on outward things; it is this attitude that makes you give so excessive an importance to circumstances. I do not say that circumstances cannot help or hinder-but they are circumstances, not the fundamental thing which is in ourselves, and their help or their hindrance ought not to be of primary importance.

In yoga, as in every great or serious human effort, there is always bound to be an abundance of adverse interventions and unfavourable circumstances which have to be overcome. To give them too great an importance increases their importance and their power to multiply themselves, gives them, as it were, confidence in themselves and the habit of coming. To face them with equanimity-if one cannot manage a cheerful persistence against them of confident and resolute will-diminishes, on the contrary, their importance and effect and in the end, though not at once, gets rid of their persistence and recurrence.

It is therefore a principle in yoga to recognise the determining power of what is within us-

for that is the deeper truth-to set that right and establish the inward strength as against the power of outward circumstances. The strength is there-even in the weakest; one has to find it, to unveil it and to keep it in front throughout the journey and the battle.

*

It is of no use waiting for the strength before one tries; the strength will come with repeated trials. Neither must you fear failure or be discouraged by failure-for these things do not always succeed at once....

There is something a little too personal in your attitude-I mean the insistence on personal strength or weakness as the determining factor. After all, for the greatest as for the smallest of us our strength is not our own but given to us for the game that has to be played, the work that we have to do. The strength may be formed in us, but its present formation is not final,-neither formation of power nor formation of weakness. At any moment the formation may change-at any moment one sees, especially under the pressure of yoga, weakness changing into power, the incapable becoming capable, suddenly or slowly the instrumental consciousness rising to a new stature or developing its latent powers.

Above us, within us, around us is the All-Strength and it is that that we have to rely on for our work, our development, our transforming change. If we proceed with the faith in the work, in our instrumentality for the work, in the Power that missions us, then in the very act of trial, of facing and surmounting difficulties and failures, the strength will come and we shall find our capacity to contain as much as we need of the All-Strength of which we grow more and more perfect vessels.

Sri Aurobindo



Sri Aurobindo's Role in the Indian Freedom Movement

[Share this](#) [Print this](#) [Write to us](#)

M.S. Srinivasan

What is exactly the role of Sri Aurobindo in the Indian Freedom Movement?

Many in India knew Sri Aurobindo as a great patriot and a freedom fighter but very few know the real magnitude and the crucial importance of his role in the freedom movement. Sri Aurobindo's action and direct participation in the freedom movement lasted for a very brief period from 1906 to 1910. But these few years changed the entire outlook of the country and the goal of complete independence "Swaraj" was planted firmly for the first time in the national consciousness. We give here below the views of some eminent and discerning historians who have made a fairly accurate assessment of Sri Aurobindo's role in the freedom movement. Prof. Haridas Mukherjee and Uma Kukherjee write in their book "India's fight for Freedom".

"Sri Aurobindo was in the strictest sense of the term a true patriot, path finder and pioneer of India's Freedom Movement, of all the statesman India has produced, he had the clearest vision of Indian swaraj in its fullness as well as the practical means to attain it by strenuous and consistent struggle. In the political arena he exhibited two distinct but inwardly allied personalities - as a passive Resister and as a revolutionary – and in both capacities he cast a powerful influence on the whole course of India's Freedom Movement which had its culmination in the transfer of Power in 1947"¹

And the noted historian Dr. R.C. Majumdar in his well-known study of Indian freedom movement writes:

"While Tilak popularized politics and gave it a force and vitality it had hitherto lacked, Aurobindo spiritualised it and became the high-priest of nationalism as a religious creed Tilak had raised his voice against the policy of mendicancy followed by the congress but it was reserved for Aurobindo to hit upon a positive approach to the problem The (Freedom) Movement was specially or more directly inspired by the teachings of Bankim Chandra, Vivekananda and Aurobindo who placed the country on the altar of

God and asked for suffering and self-immolation as the best offering for His worship These teachings inspired the lives of many a martyrs who climbed the scaffold with a smile on their lips or suffered torments worse than death without the least flinching.

.... Aurobindo's articles in the Bande Mataram put the Extremist party on a high pedestal all over India. He expounded the high philosophy and national spirit which animated the party and also laid down its programme of action. But far more valuable to the Extremist Party than even his discourse was his striking personality. Fired with religious fervour he preached Nationalism as a religion and he, the prophet of this new religion, infused by his precept and example the courage and strength into every one that came into touch with him. His emergence in Indian politics was as sudden as it was unexpected. Of him it may be truly said that he awoke one morning and found himself famous or that he came, he saw, and he conquered. He rose like a meteor and vanished like it - from the political atmosphere; but unlike the meteor, the dazzling light he shed on Indian politics did not vanish with him. The torch which he lighted continued to illumine Indian politics till it passed into the hands of worthy successors who led it to its distant goal".²

Sri Aurobindo as a freedom fighter combined in himself the roles of the prophet, visionary, statesman and the practical politician with a perfect and masterly ease. His crystal clear long-term vision of the future of the Nation did not blind him to the immediate necessities of the present situation. His idealistic political philosophy did not prevent him from adapting a practically feasible strategy to achieve the aim of Swaraj. As a prophet and visionary he had the clearest vision not only of the ideal of complete freedom "Purna Swaraj" but also the future destiny of the Nation. While most of the other leaders of his times had their eyes fixed on the political freedom of the country, Sri Aurobindo's vision extended far beyond this immediate aim to the spiritual destiny of India as the Guru of the World, her God-ordained mission for the "intellectual, moral and spiritual perfection of Mankind".³ But Sri Aurobindo's keen political insight perceived that political freedom is the first indispensable condition for fulfilling this higher destiny of the Nation. As he points out in one of his articles in Bande Matharam.

"A politically subservient people have very little scope for exercising their moral and spiritual energies subjection makes a people wholly tamasic, a sort of physical, intellectual and moral palsy seizes them and keeps them to a low level of being; they are like an insect groveling in the dust and before they can be lifted up to the higher plane of sattwa, they must pass through Rajas"⁴

When Sri Aurobindo entered the Indian political scene, most of the Indian leaders were following what is later came to be known as the "moderate" stance of petition and prayer, begging for small and petty concessions from the British Government. Sri Aurobindo was the first to proclaim boldly the ideal of "Purna Swaraj", complete Independence and hammered the idea with fire-breathing words into the consciousness of the people until it got fixed there as the immediate aim of the national endeavour.

As one of the pioneering inspirers of the freedom movement, Sri Aurobindo made use of two strategic motivators which eventually awakened the Nation from its tamasic torpor to

rajastic dynamism but inspired by sattwic idealism. First is the mounting resentment and hatred of the people, especially among educated youth, against the oppressive measures of the colonial government. Sri Aurobindo through his fiery writings in Bande Matharam transformed this negative impulse into revolutionary nationalistic fervour, full of positive rajasic energy. But Rajasic energy without an inspiring sattwic ideal can at any moment turn destructive. Sri Aurobindo's Yogic insight very clearly perceived that the innate and natural temperament and genius of the Indian Psyche is in Religion and the religious ideals and values have the highest motivational force for Indian people. So he gave a spiritual orientation to the freedom movement with the religious ideas of Nation as the divine Mother, call for self-sacrifice to Mother India and the political freedom of India as a pre-condition for fulfilling the spiritual destiny of India. Thus, Sri Aurobindo by his alchemic touch elevated patriotic nationalism into a religion and worship of God in the Nation. He planted the right seed-ideas and poured a stream of fresh inspiration into the national consciousness which later erupted into a volcano and eventually swept-off the colonial power. The other illustrious leaders who followed him and were inspired by him, organized and channelised this flood of popular awakening to freedom towards its destined fulfillment.

In short, Sri Aurobindo, through the medium of his writing in Bande Matharam, created and released a mighty wave of moral and spiritual force which awakened the Nation and eventually led it towards Freedom.

(M.S. Srinivasan is a research associate in Sri Aurobindo Society.)

References:

1. Quoted by Rishabchand in "Sri Aurobindo, his life Unique"
2. Ibid
3. SBCL Vol. 1 p.539
4. Sri Aurobindo on "Nationalism" compilation, Sri Aurobindo Ashram Pub:



Krishna

*At last I find a meaning of soul's birth
Into this universe terrible and sweet,
I who have felt the hungry heart of earth
Aspiring beyond heaven to Krishna's feet.*

*I have seen the beauty of immortal eyes,
And heard the passion of the Lover's flute,
And known a deathless ecstasy's surprise
And sorrow in my heart for ever mute.*

*Nearer and nearer now the music draws,
Life shudders with a strange felicity;
All nature is a wide enamoured pause
Hoping her lord to touch, to clasp, to be.*

*For this one moment lived the ages past;
The world now throbs fulfilled in me at last.*

Sri Aurobindo



[Share this](#) [Print this](#) [Write to us](#)

K.D. Sethna

The word "Nationalism" is very much in the air of an awakened and resurgent Asia. But, apart from opposition to colonial rule by the West as well as to the spread of Moscow-dictated Communism, what light exactly may be considered as thrown by India on this important word? We need to ask ourselves what Indian Nationalism is. For, on the answer will depend our own future and the role we shall play in world-history.

Indian Nationalism is not a simple phenomenon: it has many meanings and directions. All who have fired the Indian heart and fought for the independence of our country have contributed some special colour to this Nationalism. But if we wish to drive to its truest significance we must pick out the figure owing to whom the national awakening first took place in its most marked and conscious form.

Nationalism, to be the truest, must be not only a movement against a foreign rule but also an expression of a nation's authentic temperament. At times the authentic temperament is seen best when everything touched by foreign influences is cut away and the typical power of the nation's consciousness is found in its stark nakedness. It is in the nineteenth century that India began slowly to arise out of the decline into which she had fallen—the decline whose one result was her defeat at the hands of foreign invaders and another the strong stamp put on her by the culture of those who held her in subjection. But the stir of the native consciousness was neither complete nor sufficiently dynamic. There were many imitative elements, apings of the West, and a general tendency to believe that a westernised India alone could be India resurgent and India competent to cope with the shackles imposed by imperialist England. Denuded altogether of westernisation the only Indian feature seemed the superstition-ridden illiteracy of the common peasant or at the best the stagnant though not uncultured religious conventionalism of the common pundit. Surely here was not any creative source: everything else seemed a cross between Indian and England, with the latter herself providing by her home tradition of democratic humanism the directive energy for the former's fight against her colonial policy.

The Country's Very Soul in Pure Power

Then a strange thing occurred. Out of a temple in which the Goddess Kali was worshipped by stagnant though not uncultured religious conventionalism there came a man who had all the outer look of representing superstition-ridden illiteracy. And yet he was as little the common peasant as he was the common pundit. He came with a religious

message but it was something the pundit was utterly incapable of. He came with an absolute lack of education but it was something quite unlike the ignorance of the peasant. Here was one altogether innocent of western formulas, one who seemed akin at the same time to the two specimens thought possible of sheer Indianness and who still was entirely different from them and carried a tremendous conquering creativity. Before him bowed down the finest flower of educated Bengal. In him the westernised Indians saw authentic India stand up, clear of every colour of the West, clear even of every tinge of what typical India appeared to be in that age—a representative was he of some hidden essence of the national being, the country's very soul in pure power. At one stroke the emergent Nationalism was made to recognise its central meaning and direction. The attractive veil of westernisation fell from the eyes, the feebleness of the country's decadence went out of the limbs and India knew what she was and grasped the essential energy of her own self.

Ramakrishna, the illiterate man from the temple of conventional Kali-worship, was a veritable colossus of mystical experience: in him direct and immediate realisation of the Divine Being reached an intensity and variety which made him a marvelous summing-up of the whole spiritual history of India, with a face carrying the first gleam of a new age of the human soul. He could neither read nor write English: not even a word of English could he understand. Bengali itself he could only speak: he had no schooling at all. All that he had was God: he could unite himself with the Supreme Omniscience, his heart's home was the Infinite, he lived constantly in the Eternal.

The Divine Being and the Divine Force that he called the Mother were a presence with him at all times—from deep within him, from near and far around him, from some absolute transcendence high above. His feelings were not of the ordinary emotional kind but radiant with the true spontaneous psyche which is an everlasting spark of the Supreme, a child of the World-Mother. His thoughts were not of the brain-mind but luminous with an intuitive perception which was in contact with the inward as well as the outward. Apparently ignorant but wise beyond measure, frail and helpless to an initial view yet a powerhouse that could move the world, poor and ascetic yet holding the thrill of the Beauty that is immortal, he sat day after day at Dakshineswar with the most educated men of Calcutta about him together with simple village folk. And from his strange spiritual personality the true Indian Nationalism was born. For the first time came the awareness of what it was that had to be resurrected and put against the shallow vitalism from the West that was keeping India in chains or, at its most benevolent, bringing her up to be an artificially galvanised part of its own glittering scheme.

Of course, the Indian genius is not confined to spirituality pure and simple, not even to a many-sided spirituality to the exclusion of all other modes of being. The very fact that Ramakrishna's chosen instrument for world-work was Vivekananda, a complex passionate analytic mind, a highly cultured master of system and organisation, a richly endowed physical nature, shows that India moves instinctively to grip earth no less than heaven. At least the intention of Ramakrishna was to reshape through Vivekananda the whole of the country's life in the light of God-realisation. But by embodying in his own figure a stark spirituality, as it were, he performed the catharsis that was most needed in the country's consciousness if accretions and superfluities, illusions and delusions, waste

matter and foreign matter were to be swept off and prevented from obscuring and obstructing the growth of Indian Nationalism. The central condition sine qua non stood out the most vividly and acted the most powerfully by getting thus isolated.

The Four Types of Nationalism in India

If it was the shock of sheer spirituality in the figure of Ramakrishna that gave birth to Indian Nationalism by kindling in the nation a consciousness of its own typical genius, we should do well to guard against satisfaction with any lesser type of nationalist aspiration. The type truly in consonance with the cathartic shock from Ramakrishna is summed up in the famous cry of Bankim's song, *Bande Mataram*- "I bow to you, O Mother". The movement is basically religious, it is towards the Divine-the country is viewed as a Goddess who is not only its collective soul but also a face and form of the World-Mother, the creatrix of the universe. When the innate turn of the nation is mystical, even the patriotic fervour can be directed only to the Divine Spirit, and unless the country is felt as that Spirit's emanation this fervour will never fulfil the national life: such is the philosophy behind *Bande Mataram*. There is a second type of Nationalism which is not directly spiritual but charged with indigenous history. Since India's history cannot be separated from the spiritual quest, here also is a sense of the World-Mother just as in the first type indigenous history is ever alive, but the stress now falls less upon the Divine Presence than upon the particular face and form She assumes in the country's collective soul as felt in the traditional ideals and institutions, the characteristic customs and festivals, -in short, the whole historic consciousness. This Nationalism has the roots of its politics in the popular dharma. A third type is an ethical Nationalism in which certain moral doctrines are set up for the patriot's guidance, chiefly the doctrines of non-violence and ingenuousness. Patriotism which, for the second type, stands in need of no defence and aims first and foremost at the country's freedom and the expression of the country's historic nature and does not bind itself to rigid dogmas of method, patriotism which says "Swaraj is my birthright" and will not fight shy of violent revolution and effective secret strategy, is not acceptable. A particular brand of moral self-discipline deriving mainly from the Buddhist strand of our culture subsumes patriotism here, just as the mystic's élan takes it up in the *Bande Mataram* type; but there is a difference in that the latter has a wideness and a plasticity which has a keen tact of the moment wedded to loyalty to ideals, and, besides, it looks for its inspiration towards a Light beyond the trenchant mind's temperamental ideals. Ethicism is surely not spurned by it, but there is little adherence to one or another fixed and exclusive dogma: a large nobility is sought after and the idealism is not averse to a variety in the means of action.

A fourth type that has developed both by sympathy with the third and by appreciation of the latter's effectiveness at certain junctures of the nationalist movement is one bringing a blend of the rationalistic mind which has had so much to say in the modern West. It cuts the ethical completely off from the mystical. The third type is never without a religious bent, though the bent is towards serving God by serving men in a way the mind suggests rather than towards calling down a more than mental Power to guide one in work for that Power amongst men. The fourth type is non-religious, wholly secular. The country is no face and form of the Supreme Divine: it is not even a collective soul that can be

addressed as Mother, except metaphorically. It is only an aggregate of individuals, a mass of human creatures, a large group of people with common traditions and a common territory. This Nationalism need not lack patriotic fervour or an upshot of noble deed. But, however noble the secular nationalist may be, he is bound to be uncomfortably haunted by a division in his own Indianness: on one side the historic pull of a country deeply religious, if not always God-lit, and on the other the doctrinaire drag of a rationalistic "realism". Also, the secular nationalist is bound to come upon a limit to his effectivity, for he will put himself at variance with the whole trend of India's development and he will have to make an attempt at jettisoning the most important part of the experience and thought embalmed in the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Gita, experience and thought which fundamentally make India Indian. The only advantage he brings is enfranchisement from superstitious orthodoxy, from narrow insularity of outlook-an openness to world-forces, a tendency to international vision. But this advantage is just as much compassed by a truly spiritual Nationalism: an inner largeness breaks through sectarianism as well as communalism, an intuitive capacity is there for seizing on the essentially progressive elements everywhere and assimilating the best of the Occident into the Orient. When it is the World-Mother that is worshipped, there can be no imprisonment in small formulas: the mind is wide open to the world. At the same time, no loss is suffered of the delightful differentia that constitutes nationhood, for the World-Mother is seen focused as the single unifying soul of the motherland. It thus combines the quality of the second type of Nationalism with that of the fourth, while transcending both, and in that transcendence it resembles the third type but even beyond the latter it goes to the supra-ethical source of all ethics. Thus it combines the advantages of all the four types in a value higher than theirs.

This higher value not only answers most truly to the Indian genius and thereby promises to advance it the best but also makes a power that can carry India to a future greater than any possible to other countries on the strength of their own Nationalism: it promises to place India in the van of the world as a leader in the evolution of consciousness from the human to the divine.

(This article, although written a long time ago, is pertinent even in present times and has been written with tremendous insight and perception that is sorely lacking today. We hope that its inclusion in the August issue will be a reminder to those of us who have little or no remembrance of a very trying time for our nation.)

(K.D.Sethna (Amal Kiran) is a well-known poet and the editor of monthly Mother India. He has written large number of books and articles on a wide range of topics.)

My Indian Heritage

[Share this](#) [Print this](#) [Write to us](#)

Dr. N.C. Surya

Since Independence there has been a great deal of exhortation, effort and expenditure directed towards Indianising something or the other: Indianising dress, language, industry, psychiatry and so on.

The content of an observation on variable material depends very much on the stand-point of the observer. I am a worker in the field of human interactions. The problems of harmony, disharmony, individual and collective, confront me in actual attempts at the rectification of the machinery involved in their solution: the machinery, parts and functions, forces and energies, fields of action and lines of direction and effect, purpose and economy, such is the concern of my work. Accident of personal circumstances had driven me to the portals of a medical college. Over thirty years of contact showed to me the limitations of the grossly mechanistic models of thought and practice to which medical science or at least its practitioners seemed tethered. The next twenty years revealed to me the tragedy of medical practice, not only in holding on to this model but, in cherishing it with suicidal delight long, long after the merely mechanistic model was being blown literally beyond the sky by other sciences. The socio-economic factors in this game of self-inflicted blindness require separate consideration.

I was forced to look into the question of what is an India, firstly by my clients who directly or indirectly related themselves and their sufferings to some Indian Scriptural sayings, and by the currently popular, culture-oriented fashion of psychiatric concern smuggling in words-India, Yoga etc.-and presenting the whole of Indian Scriptures as some sort of psychotherapeutic appendix of Freud, Jung, Pavlov, ECT, and so on, as the hall-mark of Indianisation. The patient uses or implies concepts like Karma, Maya, Dharma, God, Guru etc. and the psychiatrist works scientifically on the place of Yoga in Electro-Convulsive Therapy, on the psychotherapeutic effects of Krishna or on the neurotic, Yogic postures in Catatonia as different from Catatonic postures in Yoga,-the definition of Yoga being as elastic as the grant given by the Indianising Foundation. (The reader may take a look at the poem, 'Hunting of the Snark', by Lewis Carrol, and then meet an Indian, desperately trying to Indianise himself! It may be tempting to define an Indian as one who is desperately trying to Indianise himself! Or better still, one who is frantically telling, exhorting, whipping and bribing every other Indian to Indianise himself!)

In this interesting maze of possibilities in the use of the word Indian, I was forced to search for tools necessary for my interactional use, not necessarily for absolute truths.

At an early stage of this search, I found that there was little resemblance between the strictly practical, personal, experimental and experiential approaches of Krishna, Buddha, Ramakrishna, Ramana Maharishi, Sri Aurobindo, and the bizarre medley of the professional pedlars of Indian Philosophy who profess to be propagating the teachings of the above persons. Once a Sufi happened to meet the Devil. The Devil was in a pose of utter relaxation, luxuriously lying down in a state of perfect rest and comfort. The Sufi wondered, and said, 'Friend Devil, how is it that you are idling your time. You are usually a very busy fellow. Have you no work?' The Devil replied: "Alas, it is too true. Since your dear disciples have taken on themselves the task of expounding and propagating your teachings to the four corners of the world, I find myself without a job, seeing that they have taken away all the burden of my work. It is very hard on me!" Well, the thing that struck me forcibly was that none of the above teachers were preoccupied with the business of Indianising anything or anybody. They meticulously used their bodies and their faculties to grow into a wider and greater harmony with the universe around and within. They never set out to create, maintain or perpetuate any tradition called, specifically, Indian. They occasionally commented on their experience and practice, and the results thereof, and opened the door to those who agreed to personally apprentice themselves and grow. For them the scriptural heritage was a platform to help to launch themselves into interactional growth, rather than an umbrella to shelter under or a costly mausoleum or a glossy philosophy to be entombed in. To engage the body in its totality in implementing the beliefs one holds and to modify body and belief to ever-newer and richer modes of expression, and never to be obsessed with fossilising a tradition were the hall-marks of the few but formidable Indians I looked to for guidance.

I venture to present a sample of the concepts that helped me. It is worthwhile noting that the words or concepts referred to are not nouns so much as verbs, ways of being and doing that act as catalysts operating on the body or person that opens himself to them.

A Guru or teacher covers the whole complex involved in the process of learning. There must be someone willing to learn, who is willing because he feels the need, acutely and seriously enough, to learn; the teacher who is both willing and equipped to teach the particular subject of learning; the content of the learning; and also, the material used as learning aids, of which time is a factor. When these factors constellate, the situation and process develop into what is known as the Guru-Sishya relationship. If the Sishya wanting to learn electricity hangs the picture of the professor of electro-magnetics in his room, and then goes on to sell crockery for seven days of the week and does not do one single experiment as per syllabus, and makes someone else sign the attendance register, and by threatening the Guru gets an engineering degree, or if he wants to learn about electricity and then apprentices himself to a barber-well, it is learning of a kind, but not the kind referred to here. If you want to learn swimming, and you have no time or need or inclination to dip your foot even accidentally in water, and you have no time to do that, because you are selling the pictures of the Guru, and you are expounding his teachings on swimming, and you are engaged in telling everyone how your swimming teacher is better than all the swimming teachers of the world, then you should know your true vocation.

Kshetra-Kshetrajna, the Body and I, this Body-I complex is the basis of knowledge. All else flows from this dialectic nucleus. It does not require ages of tapasya to verify this simple fact-but there it is. Can anyone know more of himself or the world around except by what his body and its faculties bring to his awareness? This is the foundation of all epistemology. Reciting the sloka with reverence and expounding it to others without experiencing and expressing its implications is the foundation of chaos. Sariram khalu dharma sadhanam. Verily, this body is the instrument of harmony. The instrumental nature of the body has been emphasized by those great pioneers, the Vedic and Upanishadic Rishis and by the great line of the Sufi teachers. This instrument is to be used, studied and developed. That the body is a burdensome appendage mysteriously thrust on us and quickly to be got rid of by the seeker of Mukti, or that it is a gratuitous luxury to be condemned but enjoyed-these views are distortions that crept in at some stage, gaining respectability as religious dogma or as a mystical totem for the anthropologist's delight. The I-Body complex as a ceaselessly interacting dialectic unit in evolution-that is the explicit observation of Krishna in the Gita, the essence of the Upanishads. Thus, its insistence on the necessity for a long life, for the 'I' to realise, to make real, its implications in the body as fully as possible in one life, and for the recurring appearance of the 'I', again and again till the evolutionary destiny of the I-Body complex stands revealed. The 'I' first becomes manifest in the human frame.

Skill in action is Yoga says Krishna. He also says that it is in the performance of your tasks that you will realise. Realise what? The essential knowledge, the knowledge of the interaction between yourself and your bodily instrument. Even in a simple machine like a car you can only learn its full possibilities by actually driving the car. You can only learn while doing. In all action there are two results-there is that which happens to the thing you are acting upon, and there is that which is happening to yourself and your body the actor in the process. Imagine a man driving his car to Madras to keep an appointment. Imagine him also as taking his eyes away from the dashboard, so to say from a constant awareness of what is happening to his own car. The car costs 50,000 rupees. So the driver has to pay some attention to the question of what is happening to his car irrespective of the appointment he has to keep in Madras. But the body has come to him gratis, free of charge. So he can do what he likes with it. He merrily crashes into other equally drunk vehicles, called persons, on the road, and writes a text-book on the psychology and philosophy of human conflict, wars, family quarrels and so on.

Your body is the latest, most complex vehicle gifted to you at birth. It is your best, most precious birth-day gift. It has parts, powers, gears, brakes, carburetors and so on. It provides the support for the owner, called I. Adhyatmajnana means the knowledge of the body, the support of the Atma. Yet, by a sleight of hand all are driven to run after so-called search for and knowledge of the Atma which by definition requires no knowledge, and by this most mendacious interpretation, contrary to what Krishna explicitly states and implies, generations of Indian youth have identified the Indian Heritage as an impractical farce utterly unrelated to their daily life.

This bears repetition. This body is your first, your primary vehicle. Its driving needs to be learnt as much as the driving of any complex vehicle. You must know how to use your

speech, your thoughts, your feelings, your sensations for navigating in the world around. The Buddha has made the most detailed study of the body in its totality and in infinitesimal detail.

The function called Upadrashta, the witness, is your dash-board. This function, can be developed, by abhyasa or practice. Looking at your own dash-board is the key-note of the Indian Heritage and of its exemplars. Looking at other's dash-board is the basis of science.

The Indian Heritage drives me to bring the best out of myself.

Satyam, the concept of truth: That truth, Satyam, which also implies Ritam, Harmony, is a ceaseless process from truth to truth, and not a fossilised formulation is seen from the statement Ritena Ritamapahitham: this truth covered by that truth. Truth can never be for you other than what you and your body realize in their interaction to ever greater accuracy and harmony with the universe around. Is it a fault of the India Heritage if truth has become a moral value to be preached and advertised and rewarded in the office or market, rather than the very foundation of a healthy functioning.

The recognition of compassion as the basic law of life. Now, this word compassion must be taken literally-Anukampa-to vibrate with, to resonate. The word is quite different from pity, and love translated as prema, which word does not occur in the Gita, or the Upanishads as far as I know, and carries with it a flavour of the cinema-romance with it. Compassion is the universal law-the law of exchange of energies, the law of yajna or sacrifice, the law of resonance underlying all interaction without which this known universe is unthinkable. The awareness of this property is what makes it human. It is the energy behind all action. All the sense organs are mechanisms for mediating the law of compassion; the brain is a huge complex receiver, analyzer, integrator and effector of this law of resonance. Whether the immense energies which the law of compassion makes available lead one to harmonious or chaotic action is the headache and starting point of inquiry. The more constricted one's personality, the more restricted the senses, the less compassionate one is likely to be; and the smaller the amount of energy available, and the more miserable and destructive one becomes.

The concept of Desa, Kala, Patra, of place, time and person offers a most useful frame of reference for determining the correctness or appropriateness of one's actions. If a person who has lost his job or his wife were to drop in on you for comfort and you were to recite to him the second chapter of the Gita and tell him that all is an illusion and that job and wife are merely transient reactions of the external body, you would be well advised not to blame it on the Indian Heritage if your friend flings a brick at your head.

The concept of prajna-steady aim as guide to action is a most potent factor for effective human action. A man without prajna is a rudderless boat, helplessly tossed on the ocean by every passing breeze, says Krishna. An aimless life is a worthless life says the Mother of Sri Aurobindo Ashram. Prajna is a central concept of the Buddha-introduce purpose into a purposeless world, and quite a few of the Buddhist treatment techniques are based

on this, and I have found it most helpful. If you cannot help wandering restlessly about the room in a state of anxiety, your picking up things in the room and arranging the room or sweeping the floor will cut your anxiety by half.

The concept of Adhara and Adhikara, of constitution and fitness: This is an aspect of personal and social functioning, neglect of which leads to much social and personal disorder. If one is a born genius in music it does not automatically give one the Adhikara to teach the piano if the fingers are twisted with arthritis. One of my acquaintances has a first class in mathematics, but is breaking down frequently at the post-graduate Institute where he just has not the Adhara to cope with the demands of the social milieu of the Institute and where he is without much support for his emotional dependence. His mathematical Adhikara would have borne better fruit as a teacher in a mofussil school.

The four major Varnas, translated crudely as hereditary castes draw attention to the four major modes of human expression of effective personality. Despite the exposition by Yudhishthira in his reply to the Python, Nahusha, stating that Varna can only be determined or assigned to a person after he is about fourteen years of age and also after taking into account his response to the educative processes, can one attribute this aberration to a fundamental defect of the Indian Heritage? It might be advantageous to the doctors if they took note of this concept of constitutional propensities in relation to health and disease.

Jalpa, Vitanda, Vada-the three modes of discourse draw attention to the fact that there are those whose sole object in discussion is to prove themselves right at any cost, those whose sole object is to prove the other fellow wrong at any cost, and those who see discussion as a mutual enlightenment on a common subject. This awareness had helped me greatly in modifying my modes of inter-personal interaction.

Some patient study of the personality of Krishna in the Mahabharata might give us an insight into the type of personality that exemplifies the dynamism of our heritage. The Indian Heritage deals directly with the processes of the human being, his health and his evolutionary destiny. No wonder Krishna said He is the Mantra and the Medicine. The Buddha referred to himself as, first of all, a Physician.

The best way, the most effective way, to turn young people away from all this treasure is systematically to thrust this heritage in the form of moral pills by the very people who have distinguished themselves by demonstrating that the Indian Heritage or its exemplars have absolutely no meaning for them in their daily life. If Hiranyakashyapa had wanted his son, Prahlada, not to think of Narayana, he could well have taken a lesson from our elders and daily asked his son to remember Narayana, worship Narayana, and obey Narayana. He would have soon found Prahlada at the local nightclub for Rakshasas, squaffing alcohol and telling his buddies what an old bore of a father he has, and how loudly he talks of Narayana, even as he was putting a shady deal through, and getting up a lawsuit against his brother. But poor Hiranyakashyapa took his Indian Heritage too seriously and acted truly as he saw fit.

For me, an Indian is one who recognizes that his whole knowledge of anything rests on the awareness of the world around and within provided by his body and its faculties, in their interaction with the 'I' inside and the world outside, and who systematically and effectively uses himself maximally towards the evolution of a more harmonious form and function. In fact, he will be impelled to do. Whether he will be a passive victim of this pressure or a willing participant in this game remains to be seen.

More catastrophic than the fission of the atom has been the fission that occurred between the I and its Body, this inseparable dialectic unity. The 'I', then goes to the temple or heaven, and the 'Body' goes to the doctor or the devil. Somewhere there is the saving link that can only be worked out under the compulsion of ontogenetic or phylogenetic evolution experienced by an individual.

The late Schumacher says that a so-called civilized man operates on the outside world with his limited perceptions and unlimited technology, and this he calls science. To deal with one's own body and self as a scientific instrument has not yet become fashionable, and that is exactly what all Indian Heritage is about.

Whether Krishna or Buddha or I said something or other is not so important as what you say, and how you give substance to what you say, and if you have found it necessary for navigating your vehicle.

To be an Indian is to be able to say 'I', and to take full responsibility for saying it, and to learn to make your complex body express what you say. Anyway, that is the foundation. That is the human being we talk about. My Indian Heritage makes me take one long look at the 'I'-less text-books of physiology and health which masquerade as the science of human health! Must you wonder at this state of mushrooming ill-health and insanity!

Indian Heritage is not a top-heavy pyramid encasing a venerable mummy, but is a dynamic launching ensemble for the conscious evolution of man to beyond man.

Indian Heritage is not just a museum of broken pots and arrow-heads of our ancestors, but is the log-book of those great voyagers of discovery and adventure on the ocean of life, who continue to live through us. The question is, are you a traveler, or are you a collector of glossy atlases?

This then, is My Indian Heritage which places Me squarely in the center of a bit of evolving Earth called My Body, and which ceaselessly impels us both to ever fresh adventures of the embodied Spirit to evermore glorious combinations of Form and Function.

(Dr. N.C. Surya was the Director of the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences, Bangalore. He later shifted to Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry.)

(Sourced from 'The Heritage', November 1985)



The Mother's commentaries on the Dhammapada were given between August 1957 and September 1958 to the members of Her Friday class at the Ashram Playground. After reading a chapter of the text, the Mother spoke about the points which interested Her and then asked the class to meditate on them. She did not systematically discuss all the Dhammapada verses, but she did cover most of the central ideas in the text.

We will be reproducing each of the sessions in order of sequence in this series.

One who does evil grieves

[Share this](#) [Print this](#) [Write to us](#)

The Mother

Conjugate Verses

In the two worlds, in this world and in the other, one who does evil grieves. He laments and suffers as he recalls his evil deeds.

It is quite evident that when you act in an ugly and mean way, naturally you are unhappy; but to be unhappy because you are conscious of the ugliness of your actions seems to me to be already a very advanced stage, for one needs to be very conscious in order to be aware of the evil that one does, and to be conscious of the evil that one does is already a first step towards not doing it any more.

Generally, people are altogether blind to the ugliness of their own actions. They do wrong through ignorance, through unconsciousness, through smallness, through that sort of doubling back on oneself which comes from unconsciousness and ignorance, that obscure instinct of self-preservation which makes one ready to sacrifice the whole world for the sake of one's own well-being. And the smaller one is, the more natural appears the sacrifice offered to one's smallness.

One must be very much higher on the scale to see that what one does is ugly. One must already have at the core of oneself a kind of foreknowledge of what beauty, nobility, generosity are, to be able to suffer from the fact that one doesn't carry them within oneself.

I think the Dhammapada speaks here of those who already know what is beautiful and noble and who do evil willfully, deliberately. For them life becomes terribly painful indeed. To do persistently what one knows should not be done, is at the cost of all peace,

all possible tranquillity, all the well-being that one can have. He who lies is constantly uneasy in the fear that his lie may be discovered; he who has acted wrongly is in a constant anxiety at the idea that perhaps he will be punished; he who tries to deceive has no peace lest it should be found out that he deceives.

In reality, even for a purely egoistic reason, to do good, to be just, straight, honest is the best means to be quiet and peaceful, to reduce one's anxiety to a minimum. And if, besides, one could be disinterested, free from personal motives and egoism, then it would be possible to become truly happy.

You carry with you, around you, in you, the atmosphere created by your actions, and if what you do is beautiful, good and harmonious, your atmosphere is beautiful, good and harmonious; on the other hand, if you live in a sordid selfishness, unscrupulous self-interest, ruthless bad will, that is what you will breathe every moment of your life and that means misery, constant uneasiness; it means ugliness that despairs of its own ugliness.

And you must not believe that by leaving the body you will free yourself of this atmosphere; on the contrary, the body is a kind of a veil of unconsciousness which diminishes the intensity of the suffering. If you are without the protection of the body in the most material vital life, the suffering becomes much more acute and you no longer have the opportunity to change what is to be changed, to correct what is to be corrected, to open yourself to a higher, happier and more luminous life and consciousness.

You must make haste to do your work here, for it is here that you can truly do it.

Expect nothing from death. Life is your salvation.

It is in life that you must transform yourself. It is upon earth that you progress and it is upon earth that you realise. It is in the body that you win the Victory.

27 December 1957



[Share this](#) [Print this](#) [Write to us](#)

Sri Aurobindo observed that the "Upanishads are at once profound religious scriptures, - for they are a record of the deepest spiritual experiences, - documents of revelatory and intuitive philosophy of an inexhaustible light, power and largeness and, whether written in verse or in cadenced prose, spiritual poems of an absolute, an unfailing inspiration inevitable in phrase, wonderful in rhythm and expression." He further writes about the structure of the Upanishads: "There is a perfect totality, a comprehensive connection of harmonious parts in the structure of each Upanishad; but it is done in the way of a mind that sees masses of truth at a time and stops to bring only the needed word out of a filled silence. The rhythm in verse or cadenced prose corresponds to the sculpture of the thought and the phrase. The metrical forms of the Upanishads are made up of the four half-lines each clearly cut, the lines mostly complete in themselves and integral in sense, the half-lines presenting two thoughts or distinct parts of a thought that are wedded to and complete each other, and the sound movement follows a corresponding principle, each step brief and marked off by the distinctness of its pause, full of echoing cadences that remain long vibrating in the inner hearing: each is as if a wave of the infinite that carries in it the whole voice and rumour of the ocean. It is a kind of poetry, - word of vision, rhythm of the spirit, - that has not been written before or after."

The commentary given below is taken from Sri Aurobindo's writings.

ईशोपनिषद् īśopaniṣad

Conclusion and Summary

The Isha Upanishad is one of the more ancient of the Vedantic writings in style, substance and versification, subsequent certainly to the Chhandogya, Brihadaranyaka and perhaps to the Taittiriya and Aitareya, but certainly the most antique of the extant metrical Upanishads. Upanishadic thought falls naturally into two great periods; in one, the earlier, it still kept close to its Vedic roots, reflected the old psychological system of the Vedic Rishis and preserved what may be called their spiritual pragmatism; in the other and later, in which the form and thought became more modern and independent of early symbols and origins, some of the principal elements of Vedic thought and psychology begin to be omitted or to lose their previous connotation and the foundations of the later ascetic and anti-pragmatic Vedanta begin to appear. The Isha belongs to the earlier or Vedic group. It is already face to face with the problem of reconciling human life and activity with the Monistic standpoint and its large solution of the difficulty is one of the most interesting passages of Vedantic literature. It is the sole Upanishad which offered almost insuperable difficulties to the extreme illusionism and anti-pragmatism of

Shankaracharya and it was even, for this reason, excised from the list of authoritative Upanishads by one of his greatest followers.

The Principle of The Upanishad

The principle it follows throughout is the uncompromising reconciliation of uncompromising extremes. Later thought took one series of terms,-the World, Enjoyment, Action, the Many, Birth, the Ignorance,- and gave them a more and more secondary position, exalting the opposite series, God, Renunciation, Quietism, the One, Cessation of Birth, the Knowledge until this trend of thought culminated in Illusionism and the idea of existence in the world as a snare and a meaningless burden imposed inexplicably on the soul by itself, which must be cast aside as soon as possible. It ended in a violent cutting of the knot of the great enigma. This Upanishad tries instead to get hold of the extreme ends of the knots, disengage and place them alongside of each other in a release that will be at the same time a right placing and relation. It will not qualify or subordinate unduly any of the extremes, although it recognises a dependence of one on the other. Renunciation is to go to the extreme, but also enjoyment is to be equally integral; Action has to be complete and ungrudging, but also freedom of the soul from its works must be absolute; Unity utter and absolute is the goal but this absoluteness has to be brought to its highest term by including in it the whole infinite multiplicity of things.

So great is this scruple in the Upanishad that having so expressed itself in the formula "By the Ignorance having crossed over death by the knowledge one enjoys Immortality" that Life in the world might be interpreted as only a preliminary to an existence beyond, it at once rights the balance by reversing the order in the parallel formula "By dissolution having crossed over death by birth one enjoys Immortality", and thus makes life itself the field of the immortal existence which is the goal and aspiration of all life. In this conclusion it agrees with the early Vedic thought which believed all the worlds and existence and non-existence and death and life and immortality to be here in the embodied human being, there evolvent, there realisable and to be possessed and enjoyed, not dependent either for acquisition or enjoyment on the renunciation of life and bodily existence. This thought has never entirely passed out of Indian philosophy, but has become secondary and a side admission not strong enough to qualify seriously the increasing assertion of the extinction of mundane existence as the condition of our freedom and our sole wise and worthy aim.

The Opposites

The pairs of opposites successively taken up by the Upanishad and resolved are, in the order of their succession:

1. The Conscious Lord and phenomenal Nature.
2. Renunciation and Enjoyment.
3. Action in Nature and Freedom in the Soul.
4. The One stable Brahman and the multiple Movement.
5. Being and Becoming.
6. The Active Lord and the indifferent Akshara Brahman.

7. Vidya and Avidya.
8. Birth and Non-Birth.
9. Works and Knowledge.

These discords are thus successively resolved:

God and Nature

1. Phenomenal Nature is a movement of the conscious Lord. The object of the movement is to create forms of His consciousness in motion in which He as the one soul in many bodies can take up his habitation and enjoy the multiplicity and the movement with all their relations.

Enjoyment and Renunciation

2. Real integral enjoyment of all this movement and multiplicity in its truth and in its infinity depends upon an absolute renunciation; but the renunciation intended is an absolute renunciation of the principle of desire founded on the principle of egoism and not a renunciation of world-existence.

This solution depends on the idea that desire is only an egoistic and vital deformation of the divine Ananda or delight of being from which the world is born; by extirpation of ego and desire Ananda again becomes the conscious principle of existence.

This substitution is the essence of the change from life in death to life in immortality. The enjoyment of the infinite delight of existence free from ego, founded on oneness of all in the Lord, is what is meant by the enjoyment of Immortality.

Action and Freedom

3. Actions are not inconsistent with the soul's freedom. Man is not bound by works, but only seems to be bound. He has to recover the consciousness of his inalienable freedom by recovering the consciousness of unity in the Lord, unity in himself, unity with all existence.

This done, life and works can and should be accepted in their fullness; for the manifestation of the Lord in life and works is the law of our being and the object of our world-existence.

The Quiescence and the Movement

4. What then of the Quiescence of the Supreme Being and how is persistence in the Movement compatible with that Quiescence which is generally recognised as an essential condition of the supreme Bliss?

The Quiescence and the Movement are equally one Brahman and the distinction drawn between them is only a phenomenon of our consciousness. So it is with the idea of space

and time, the far and the near, the subjective and the objective, internal and external, myself and others, one and many. Brahman, the real existence, is all these things to our consciousness, but in itself ineffably superior to all such practical distinctions. The Movement is a phenomenon of the Quiescence, the Quiescence itself may be conceived as a Movement too rapid for the gods, that is to say, for our various functions of consciousness to follow in its real nature. But it is no formal, material, spatial, temporal movement, only a movement in consciousness. Knowledge sees it all as one, Ignorance divides and creates oppositions where there is no opposition but simply relations of one consciousness in itself. The ego in the body says, "I am within, all else is outside; and in what is outside, this is near to me in Time and Space, that is far." All this is true in present relation; but in essence it is all one indivisible movement of Brahman which is not material movement but a way of seeing things in the one consciousness.

Being and Becoming

5. Everything depends on what we see, how we look at existence in our soul's view of things. Being and Becoming, One and Many are both true and are both the same thing: Being is one, Becomings are many; but this simply means that all Becomings are one Being who places Himself variously in the phenomenal movement of His consciousness. We have to see the One Being, but we have not to cease to see the many Becomings, for they exist and are included in Brahman's view of Himself. Only, we must see with knowledge and not with ignorance. We have to realise our true self as the one unchangeable, indivisible Brahman. We have to see all becomings as developments of the movement in our true self and this self as one inhabiting all bodies and not our body only. We have to be consciously, in our relations with this world, what we really are,-this one self becoming everything that we observe. All the movement, all energies, all forms, all happenings we must see as those of our one and real self in many existences, as the play of the Will and Knowledge and Delight of the Lord in His world-existence.

We shall then be delivered from egoism and desire and the sense of separate existence and therefore from all grief and delusion and shrinking; for all grief is born of the shrinking of the ego from the contacts of existence, its sense of fear, weakness, want, dislike, etc.; and this is born from the delusion of separate existence, the sense of being my separate ego exposed to all these contacts of so much that is not myself. Get rid of this, see oneness everywhere, be the One manifesting Himself in all creatures; ego will disappear; desire born of the sense of not being this, not having that, will disappear; the free inalienable delight of the One in His own existence will take the place of desire and its satisfactions and dissatisfactions.

Immortality will be yours, death born of division will be overcome.

The Active and Inactive Brahman

6. The Inactive and the Active Brahman are simply two aspects of the one Self, the one Brahman, who is the Lord. It is He who has gone abroad in the movement. He maintains Himself free from all modifications in His inactive existence.

The inaction is the basis of the action and exists in the action; it is His freedom from all He does and becomes and in all He does and becomes. These are the positive and negative poles of one indivisible consciousness. We embrace both in one quiescence and one movement, inseparable from each other, dependent on each other. The quiescence exists relatively to the movement, the movement to the quiescence. He is beyond both. This is a different point of view from that of the identity of the Movement and Quiescence which are one in reality; it expresses rather their relation in our consciousness once they are admitted as a practical necessity of that consciousness. It is obvious that we also by becoming one with the Lord would share in this biune conscious existence.

In the ordinary view the Jiva cannot exist both at the same time; his dissolution is into the Quiescence and not into unity with the Lord in the action and inaction.

Vidya and Avidya

7. The knowledge of the One and the knowledge of the Many are a result of the movement of the one consciousness, which sees all things as One in their truth-Idea but differentiates them in their mentality and formal becoming. If the mind (manishi) absorbs itself in God as the formal becoming (paribhu) and separates itself from God in the true Idea (kavi), then it loses Vidya, the knowledge of the One, and has only the knowledge of the Many which becomes no longer knowledge at all but ignorance, Avidya. This is the cause of the separate ego-sense.

Avidya is accepted by the Lord in the Mind (manishi) in order to develop individual relations to their utmost in all the possibilities of division and its consequences and then through these individual relations to come back individually to the knowledge of the One in all. That knowledge has remained all along unabrogated in the consciousness of the true seer or Kavi. This seer in ourselves stands back from the mental thinker; the latter, thus separated, has to conquer death and division by a developing experience as the individual Inhabitant and finally to recover by the reunited knowledge of the One and the Many the state of Immortality. This is our proper course and not either to devote ourselves exclusively to the life of Avidya or to reject it entirely for motionless absorption in the One.

Birth and Non-Birth

8. The reason for this double movement of the Thinker is that we are intended to realise immortality in the Birth. The self is uniform and undying and in itself always possesses immortality. It does not need to descend into Avidya and Birth to get that immortality of Non-Birth; for it possesses it always. It descends in order to realise and possess it as the individual Brahman in the play of world-existence. It accepts Birth and Death, assumes the ego and then dissolving the ego by the recovery of unity realises itself as the Lord, the One, and Birth as only a becoming of the Lord in mental and formal being; this becoming is now governed by the true sight of the Seer and, once this is done, becoming is no longer inconsistent with Being, birth becomes a means and not an obstacle to the enjoyment of immortality by the lord of this formal habitation.

This is our proper course and not to remain for ever in the chain of birth and death, nor to flee from birth into a pure non-becoming. The bondage does not consist in the physical act of becoming, but in the persistence of the ignorant sense of the separate ego. The Mind creates the chain and not the body.

Works and Knowledge

9. The opposition between works and knowledge exists as long as works and knowledge are only of the egoistic mental character. Mental knowledge is not true knowledge; true knowledge is that which is based on the true sight, the sight of the Seer, of Surya, of the Kavi. Mental thought is not knowledge, it is a golden lid placed over the face of the Truth, the Sight, the divine Ideation, the Truth-Consciousness. When that is removed, sight replaces mental thought, the all-embracing truth-ideation, mahas, veda, drishti, replaces the fragmentary mental activity. True Buddhi (vijnana) emerges from the dissipated action of the Buddhi which is all that is possible on the basis of the sense-mind, the Manas. Vijnana leads us to pure knowledge (jnana), pure consciousness (cit). There we realise our entire identity with the Lord in all at the very roots of our being.

But in Chit, Will and Seeing are one. Therefore in Vijnana or truth-ideation also which comes luminously out of Chit, Will and Sight are combined and no longer as in the mind separated from each other. Therefore when we have the sight and live in the Truth-Consciousness, our will becomes the spontaneous law of the truth in us and, knowing all its acts and their sense and objective, leads straight to the human goal, which was always the enjoyment of the Ananda, the Lord's delight in self-being, the state of Immortality. In our acts also we become one with all beings and our life grows into a representation of oneness, truth and divine joy and no longer proceeds on the crooked path of egoism full of division, error and stumbling. In a word, we attain to the object of our existence which is to manifest in itself whether on earth in a terrestrial body and against the resistance of Matter or in the worlds beyond or enter beyond all world the glory of the divine Life and the divine Being.



[Share this](#) [Print this](#) [Write to us](#)

One can live in a number of ways, and no one can be a judge of how life is to be lived. But there are times when we may find that life itself has become an art &–; the entire process of living is transformed from something mechanical and separate to ourselves to something which is deeply personal and conducted with the finesse of an artist. Our attitude which may have been complacent at one time, may at another become ever-changing and persevering, similar to the persistence of the painter’s stroke until he arrives at the perfection that he seeks. Along the way, much happens &–; much is learnt. In the end we have the masterpiece of the realization.

In the Art of Life, we will introduce such instances where a perception, an attitude, an insight, an experience, can bring out some beautiful aspects of human nature. Each tale may not be true in the strictest sense of the word or that which is apparent to the eye and understood by the mind, but underneath the surface, in subtle terms it explores and expresses itself, and lets out the fragrance of its inner truth for all to take in.

Heaven and Hell

A famous soldier came to the Master Hakuin and asked: "Master, tell me: is there really a heaven and a hell?"

"Who are you?" asked Hakuin.

"I am a soldier of the great Emperor's personal guard."

"Nonsense!" said Hakuin. "What kind of emperor would have you around him? To me you look like a beggar!" At this, the soldier started to rattle his big sword in anger.

"Oho!" said Hakuin.

"So you have a sword! I'll wager it's much too dull to cut my head off!"

At this the soldier could not hold himself back.

He drew his sword and threatened the Master, who said: "Now you know half the answer! You are opening the gates of hell!"

The soldier drew back, sheathed his sword, and bowed. "Now you know the other half," said the Master. "You have opened the gates of heaven."

Show me the Anger

A student came before the master Bankei and asked to be helped in getting rid of his violent temper.

"Show me this temper," said Bankei. "It sounds very fascinating".

"I haven't got it right now, so I can't show it to you," said the student.

"Well then," said Bankei, "bring it to me when you have it".

"But I can't bring it just when I happen to have it," protested the student". "I'd surely lose it again before I got it to you".

"In such a case," said Bankei, "it seems to me that this temper is not part of your true nature. If it is not part of you, it must come into you from outside. I suggest that whenever it gets into you, you beat yourself with a stick until the temper can't stand it, and runs away."

(Sourced from the Internet)



Integral Education

[Share this](#) [Print this](#) [Write to us](#)

Education is perhaps the most important domain related to human progress. Except, here we do not mean the kind of syllabus oriented teaching imparted solely in school or college, but rather a form of constant learning that takes place through the life of an individual. This kind of education is integral and complete, leaving no area ignored within the human being. Its objective is to forever widen itself, and by developing the right consciousness, be able to rise from truth to higher truth.

Each one has to actively work towards this, framing one's own agenda, aspiring for one's own goal. It isn't a discipline meant only for the chosen few but in fact if practiced consciously can transform the very nature of every being. At the end, it all boils down to something extremely basic but easily forgotten... in the words of The Mother, "Of one thing you can be sure - your future is in your hands. You will become the man you want to be and the higher your ideal and your aspiration, the higher will be your realization, but you must keep a firm resolution and never forget your true aim in life."

In our section called Integral Education, we will put forth concrete ideas of how such a thorough form of learning can be both inculcated in oneself as well as imparted to another.

Parts of the Physical

Sri Aurobindo

Everything has a physical part - even the mind has a physical part; there is a mental physical, a mind of the body and the material. So the emotional being has a physical part. It has no location separate from the rest of the emotional. One can only distinguish that when the consciousness becomes sufficiently subtle to do so.

*

It is because your consciousness in the course of the sadhana has come into contact with the lower physical nature and sees it as it is in itself when it is not kept down or controlled either by the mind, the psychic or the spiritual force. This nature is in itself full of low and obscure desires, it is the most animal part: of the human being. One has to come into contact with it so as to know what is there and transform it. Most sadhaks of the old type are satisfied with rising into the spiritual or psychic realms and leave this part to itself - but by that it remains unchanged, even if mostly quiescent, and no complete transformation is possible. You have only to remain quiet and undisturbed and let the higher Force work to change this obscure physical nature.

*

[Defects of the physical consciousness:] There are many - but mainly obscurity, inertia, tamas, a passive acceptance of the play of wrong forces, inability to change, attachment to habits, lack of plasticity, forgetfulness, loss of experiences or realisations gained, unwillingness to accept the Light or to follow it, incapacity (through tamas or through attachment or through passive reaction to accustomed forces) to do what it admits to be the Right and the Best.

*

This negation is the very nature of the physical resistance and the physical resistance is the whole base of the denial of the Divine in the world. All in the physical is persistent, obstinate, with a massive force of negation and inertia - if it were not so, sadhana would be extremely cursory. You have to face this character of the physical resistance and conquer it however often it may rise. It is the price of the transformation of the earth-consciousness.

*

It is the nature of the physical mind to be obstinate. Physical nature exists by constant repetition of the same thing - only a constant presentation of different forms of itself. This obstinate recurrence is therefore part of its nature when it is in activity; otherwise it remains in a dull inertia. When therefore we want to get rid of the old movements of physical nature, they resist by this kind of obstinate recurrence. One has to be very persistent in rejection to get rid of it.

There are two aspects of physical Nature as of all Nature the individual and the universal. All things come into one from the universal Nature - but the individual physical keeps some of them and rejects others, and to those it keeps it gives a personal form. So these things can be said to be both inside it and coming outside from within or created by it because it gives a special form and also outside and coming in from outside. But when one wants to get rid of them, one first throws out all that is within into the surrounding Nature - from there the universal Nature tries to bring them back or bring in new and similar things of its own to replace them. One has then constantly to reject this invasion. By constant rejection, the force of recurrence finally dwindles and the individual becomes free and able to bring the higher consciousness and its movements into the physical being.

*

The physical sadhana is to bring down the higher light and power and peace and Ananda into the body consciousness, to get rid of the inertia of the physical, the doubts, limitations, external tendency of the physical mind, the defective energies of the vital physical (nerves) and bring in instead the true consciousness there so that the physical

may be a perfect instrument for the Divine Will. The food and care for the body is only to get it into good condition, afterwards it would not be necessary to attend to such things.

*

The difference lies in the fact that those who are doing sadhana live on the physical plane in order to transform it - under the pressure of a Force created by the sadhana which urges towards that and must continue till it is achieved. Those who do not do sadhana live on the physical plane not to transform it but to continue it as it is there is no such Force or pressure or necessity or urge. Those who are not sadhaks but have their minds turned to the higher consciousness are preparing for sadhana and will one day do it - whatever that sadhana may be.

The prevalence of the physical difficulties when one comes down into the physical is the same phenomenon as the prevalence of the vital difficulties when one is on the vital plane. Transformation implies facing the difficulties and changing or overcoming what arises in each part of the being so that that part may respond to what is higher, but the full change of the whole can only come by the ascent to the Above and the descent from Above. The first step of that (usually though not always) is the realisation of the self above and the descent of the higher peace into all the being down to the most physical.



Integral Health

[Share this](#) [Print this](#) [Write to us](#)

The Science of the Supernature

Dr. Alok Pandey

There is technology and there is the Science, just as there are techniques and there is a Principle, or there are methods and processes and there is the general law.

Technology, techniques, methods and processes are only an extended application of Science and Principles and Laws. Therefore, there is a limit to technology and techniques and methods, unless and until we discover a new science, a new principle or a new law. A technique is nothing more than one form of application of a Principle. The limits of that technique are therefore already set. One may multiply the number of techniques or perfect the existing one, yet one cannot go beyond the limits of the principle on which it works. Too much reliance on a technique without an understanding of its principle is therefore a double-trap. Firstly it limits us, secondly and what is worse, we do not even realize its limitations. Therefore all kinds of claims, genuine and false, are born and with it arises a dogmatic assertion verging on superstition.

And what is Science, Principle and Law, but a discovery or statement of a single line of action that Nature takes.

For each discovered line of force, there are many that are still undiscovered. Science, Principle and Law too have their limits. For Nature has an infinite variety of action that our finite senses cannot grasp nor our limited minds seize. Therefore an excessive reliance on them is also a double-trap. For firstly it hypnotises us into believing that what we have seen, discovered and known is the only truth. Secondly, by conditioning and limiting us, it prevents us from going beyond the known - till an ever dissatisfied adventurer and explorer comes to peer into the unknown with fresh eyes and disturbs our vision or shifts it to another grey spot. Then what seemed so very true, practicable and real, suddenly begins to appear wrong, false and full of flaws; a defect of our vision, a limit to our understanding.

So the march of knowledge slowly goes on, lifting veil after veil, substituting one pair of spectacles for another. And so scientific prejudices are born and with them, intellectual biases, mental opinions, temporary inferences, judgments and dogmas of science, no different from the superstitions of the savage or narrow creed of intolerant religion. Or perhaps it is worse, since scientific cults apparently stand supported by the light of reason. And reason is like a lamp that, whilst illuminating one line in its immediate

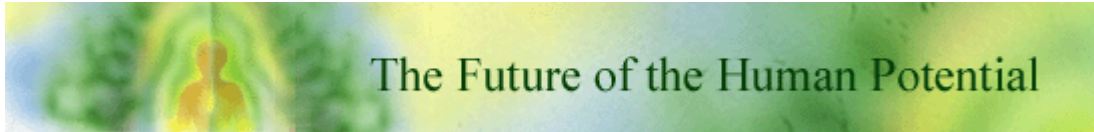
vicinity, increases the folds of darkness that hide the other lines. Attracted to one tendency or possibility in Nature, we refuse to even observe and examine, let alone admit, other equally strong or even stronger possibilities and principles. For science itself is a child of Nature and not its master. It observes what little of her treasures the great Mother reveals. Or perhaps we see in her what we believe and choose to see.

But just as the garment is not the human being, nor the body the person, so also the surface findings of our sciences and their technological applications, the principles discovered and techniques that evolve out of them, are but screen phenomena. We are still studying and analysing the outer robe while the wearer himself remains unnoticed. His soul entirely escapes our field of vision in spite of dissecting the body to the last finite atom. For we have explored as much as we can with our minds. We have overstretched the limits of our senses. We have overstrained the limits of reasoning and analysis. Now we are moving in circles of quantity and numbers.

What we need instead is a new quality. A new pair of eyes, a new set of senses that are not deceived by appearances, a new mind that at once knows the Truth by identifying with the object, rather than the laborious and grossly inadequate way of indirect study, analysis and inference. In short, we need a new man or new being, call it whatever, to evolve out of this old one - a being not mesmerised by the senses nor stupefied by its own brilliance of logic. We need a being of Truth and Light, a being of Oneness, Harmony and Love, a being whose will does not need an outer instrumentation to fulfil itself and whose knowledge does not depend upon factual data.

This is the new line of possibility opening before man, the new door to fuller emancipation. It is a new science, not dependent upon technology and teaching nor statistical analysis, but reaching out and directly seizing upon its objects. It also has its own methods and processes that it spontaneously adjusts to suit its purpose. In other words, this new Power is independent of outer technology, technique and instruments. It may however use or dispense with them as it wills. It is a power that is superior to Nature. Sciences, Laws and Processes flow out of That as wave upon wave rises in the ocean, one after another; each different, though each looking the same. So too, this is a power, one with a knowledge that can use the existing forces of Nature or change and create new ones. It is a Knowledge-Power beyond even the grasp of our highest mind. It is the Knowledge-Power of the One. To ascend to That, to open to That, to receive That, and allow That to work out its purpose: that is the Supreme Science that awaits its hour. It is beyond techniques and laws, beyond method and processes, the science of the future, the science beyond Nature - the Science of the Supernature.

(Dr. Alok Pandey has been working in the field of psychiatry with a spiritual approach for more than 15 years. He has developed a working concept of integral health and integral psychology which he is using in his life and practice. He is one of the founders of SAIHR).



Futurology is now emerging as a new and fledgling field of knowledge. Modern futurology tries to plot the future trends in the external life of man - in economics, society, politics, business, technology. We will be presenting here an alternative scenario with an emphasis on the future of the Human Potential, especially the potentialities of the inner being of man, his psychological and spiritual potentialities. For, we believe that it is in this inner realm lies the future of human evolution.

In this series of articles we will try to do what is called in modern futurology as "scenario building", sketching a line of future possibilities in the light of Sri Aurobindo and Mother's vision of the future, with an emphasis on the brighter and more luminous possibilities. Many of the themes or terms discussed here have become familiar jargons and cliches of the ever-growing New Age literature. But the deeper spiritual significance of these themes of the future are not yet well-understood. In this series, we will try to clarify the deeper and broader significance of some of these New Age cliches like holism or globalism or global consciousness.

To a too earthly and pragmatic mind most of these future verities may appear dreamy or utopian. But, what else is human progress than a progressive realisation of our utopias? And as Sri Aurobindo says in his epic Savitri, "Earth's winged chimera's are Truth's steeds in Heaven!". The Truth's steeds may sometimes use our winged chimeras to descend into earth carrying their heavenly possibilities.

Return to the Source: Age of the Spirit

[Share this](#) [Print this](#) [Write to us](#)

M.S. Srinivasan

According to Indian thought, there are two major and distinct phases in human evolution: first is the movement away from the spiritual source and centre of our being and second is the return towards the source and centre. First is the externalized, "secular" or the "worldly" movement or effort for power, mastery and enjoyment of the outer world. Second is the inner psychological and spiritual movement towards the source of our being, return to the Origin, rediscovery of our true Self the true meaning of Religion. The history of the past was predominantly a movement away from the source and the history of the future will be predominantly a movement towards the source. As we have discussed earlier, this return movement will begin or initiated in the subjective age. And if the race pursues this subjective urge to its roots, without stopping in between, it should logically culminate in the Spirit, which is the deepest source of our subjective being.

This doesn't mean there was no effort towards the source in the past. In fact, most of the ancient civilization had this religious ideal as the goal of individual and collective life. But the deeper spiritual significance of the ideal and the path to realize it was never fully

understood and implemented in a collective scale, except perhaps, to a certain extent, partially, with a very limited success in ancient India. Only a few exceptional spiritual individuals or thinkers had the deep and clear insight into the ideal and tried to realize or give form to it in their consciousness and life or in thought, feeling and action. But in the collective life, the large majority of the masses received the ideal in a diluted and externalized form through organized religion. Even among the few who understood or realized the deeper spiritual significance of the ideal, most of them viewed the path towards the ideal as the renunciation of or escape from the world and a flight to a transcendent Beyond. So the return to the source was accompanied or followed by abandonment of the world and this spiritual effort itself was confined to a small elite group of seekers.

In the future, we will be witnessing a much more widespread return-to-the source movement, with a more integral spiritual ideal. The future spiritual ideal may not be merely a lonely return of the individual to the Source, flight of the "alone into the Alone"; it will be the return not only of the individual but also the collective life to the Source. More importantly, return or descent of the Source or more precisely the light and power of the Source into every activity of the individual and collective life of humanity, will lead to a spiritual transformation of the whole of human life.

This will herald the spiritual age of the future. The age of the Spirit will be characterized by a widespread quest for the ultimate source of our being, the deepest highest and the total truth of life. This quest will not be confined to religion and spirituality but will be manifest in every activity of human life. This will eliminate the distinction we make at present between the "spiritual" and "secular" or "worldly" life. This distinction comes from the traditional conception of religion which equates spirituality with belief in God, prayer, meditation, asceticism, ashram, monkhood. But a spiritual quest may or may not have all these marks. An intuition into a supreme Reality beyond Mind as the sources of our being and life and a seeking for it; quest for the deepest and highest truth, law and principles of life; sincerity and persistence in the quest until the highest is fully realised in the inner consciousness as well as in the outer life --these are the signs of a true spiritual quest. In the age of the Spirit this spiritual quest will be manifest in every activity of the human life - in education, science, philosophy, art, literature, economics, politics, business, commerce, government.

The other important characteristic of the spiritual age is Freedom, inner and outer freedom, inner freedom from ego and desire and outer freedom from externally imposed rules and regulations and authorities. Each individual and collectivity will have the freedom to grow in harmony with the unique truth and law of its inner and outer nature, Dharma, as it is called in Indian thought, realize its highest potentialities and contribute to the progress of the whole. This freedom will not infringe on the freedom of others. For there is a great harmony and rhythm in universal Nature. When we live in harmony with the truth of our own nature, which is a part of universal Nature, we are consciously or unconsciously in tune with the harmony of universal Nature, and therefore in harmony with the nature of all others and that of the environment.

Not only every individual and the collectivity, but also every human activity like philosophy and science or economics and politics, will have the freedom to grow in harmony with its own dharma and realize its highest ideals. There will be a free, lively and vigorous interaction between various activities and sciences, but none of the activities, including spirituality, will try to impose its ideals on other activities. In the spiritual age there will be a general acceptance of the spiritual ideals in all sections of the human society. But this acceptance would have come about not by the imposition of the ideal of a spiritual authority, but a free growth from within each part of the human society. Leaders with spiritual consciousness will emerge from every section of the society and in every activity of human life and give a spiritual direction to that part of human life by their thought, action or living example or just by their sheer silent presence. Thus, in this way, the entire human life will move consciously and with a free and joyous élan towards its spiritual destiny. We will discuss these transitional stages from the present condition of humanity to the spiritual age in our subsequent articles. Here we will briefly touch upon some of the possibilities and dangers that lie ahead in this transitional period from the subjective to the spiritual age.

There is an interesting parable in the Upanishad which may provide some prophetic clues to the stages or transition from the present to the future spiritual age. In this parable, a disciple comes to the Master seeking for the knowledge of the supreme Reality, Brahman. The Master first instructs the disciple to meditate on Matter as the Brahman; Matter as the Origin and End of all things. The disciple comes back with the realization "From Matter alone are these creatures born and being born they live by Matter and into Matter they depart and enter again". Interestingly this is the realization of modern scientific materialism. The advent of new physics and its brief flirting with eastern philosophy might have softened much the hard-core materialism of modern science. But the basic philosophical standpoint of established orthodox science is very much materialistic; it still believes that some form of physical energy, electromagnetic, nuclear, gravitational or biological as the source of man and the universe and the psychological realities like mind or soul as an "epiphenomenon" emerging from the physical reality and ending in it. This is more or less the first realization of the seeker in the Upanishadic parable. But the seeker in the Upanishad was not satisfied with his first realization. He probably knew intuitively Matter was not the highest reality and "Matter is Brahman" was not the highest realization. He again asks the Master "Teach me the Eternal". The Master again instructs his pupil to meditate and realize successively "Life-force is Brahman", "Mind is Brahman" and finally the eternal Delight of the Spirit as Brahman. This Upanishadic parable throws some luminous hints on the future progress of humanity towards its spiritual destiny.

In the subjective age, as the higher ranges of consciousness which we have discussed earlier begins to manifest more and more, humanity as a whole will be rapidly awakened to a deeper and inner reality beyond Matter. There will be a vivid and concrete subliminal or spiritual intuition of an inner universal Force, a universal vital Energy or a universal Mind or a universal Spirit as the source and origin of things. This will abolish all forms of naïve and crude materialism from the human consciousness. However, if the evolving human race opens more widely to the subliminal rather than the spiritual ranges of

consciousness, it may lead to a vital or mental subjectivism which mistakes the vital energy or the mind as the supreme Reality. We must note here that there are regions in the subliminal which can very effectively imitate the higher spiritual states of consciousness. Someone who doesn't have the experience of the higher spiritual realm, may mistake some luminous regions of the subliminal vital or mind as the highest spiritual reality and rest content there.

In our modern age, some of the western philosophies like that of Bergson, Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, or Emerson are the result of a subjective vital or mental intuition of a universal vital energy or mind, and formulated differently according to the nature, temperament and conditioning of the mind of the thinker. But in a predominantly materialistic mentality of the modern West, they remained only as intuitions of a few great thinkers and abstract intellectual ideals in the upper storeys of the mind, without sufficient force to catch hold of the entire mind and life of the race. But in the subjective age, when the human consciousness awakens to the subliminal, these ideas will lose their abstractness; they will acquire a concrete experiential reality and sufficient living force to possess and govern the whole consciousness and life of the race, in the same way the idea of scientific materialism took hold of the race for nearly a century. We have already discussed briefly the dangers and possibilities which lie ahead when the human race passes through this stage of subliminal subjectivism of the vital or mental kind. On the positive side, it will release and manifest the higher faculties of the subliminal mind and vital in humanity, leading to a richer life, greater mastery of the mind and vital over the material life, and a deeper knowledge and awakening to the inner dimensions of life. The danger is that since the subliminal is not free from ego, it may lead to a larger edition of the present fiasco, the ego misusing the greater power of the subliminal for a more grandiose and sublimated satisfaction of the lower motives of the vital and mental for power and enjoyment. And if this happens again there is no guarantee our present human civilization will reach its evolutionary destiny or even survive. It may end up like the legendary civilization of Atlantis.

On the other hand, if our present civilization is destined to realise its spiritual destiny, it will be as sincere and persistent as the seeker in the Upanishadic parable we have recounted earlier, not satisfied with any intermediate realizations in the vital or mental plane, seeking persistently for the deeper and higher reality and pushing on until the highest is realized. To this sincere and persistent quest, Nature will respond by sending spiritual leaders and teachers like the Master in the parable, who will guide the race safely and wisely to its highest destiny.

And finally comes the most important and central characteristic of the Age of the Spirit -- freedom from Ego or the transcendence of Ego and as a result, Consciousness of Oneness, and the realization of the Unity of all existence. We have already discussed this theme in some detail in an earlier section on "Global Consciousness". We will discuss the process of transition from the ego-centric to the egoless and the Global consciousness in our consequent articles.

However we would like to indicate here that elimination of the Ego is a crucial factor in realizing the highest human potential. For in our spiritual perspective Ego is the source of all limitation and bondage. It is Ego which limits and constricts the infinite essence and potentialities of man; it limits the infinite being, consciousness force and delight of the essence of our self and reduces us to a state of ignorant, struggling, suffering, and striving, creature, confined within the narrow bounds of a small ego. With the elimination of Ego, Humanity recovers its infinite essence and the human life becomes a free, conscious, delightful and progressive unrolling of the Infinite in the finite.

Transformation of the Body

We have come almost to the end of our quest into the future of humanity. With the return of humanity to the Source, elimination of Ego, unfolding of the higher ranges of consciousness in the consciousness and life of man, we as a race reached the highest potential of transformation.

The spirit or the soul of man is delivered from ego and ignorance and redeemed to its original purity and perfection. The life of man and all its activities are now governed not by the ignorant mind but by the intuitive truth-conscious wisdom of the Spirit. But what happens to Matter and our human body made of Matter in the age of the Spirit? As we have explained repeatedly, the spirituality of the future will not be satisfied with the past spiritual formula of returning to the Source and abandonment of the Creation. In the future Age of the Spirit, return to the Spirit will be accompanied or followed by a return of the Spirit on the World of Mind, Life and Matter, transforming them into its perfect instruments.

So spiritual transformation of Matter, matter within our own body and also the terrestrial matter, will be the final consummation of the future age of the Spirit. This is an ideal which has not even been conceived in the past spiritual traditions. But it is an integral part of Sri Aurobindo's and Mother's spiritual vision of the future. This profoundly original insight of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother has important implications for the future of the human potential. For it throws light on the destiny and the hidden potentialities of our human body. So, considering the importance of the subject we will discuss it in some detail in our next series called Future of Matter.

(M.S. Srinivasan is a research associate in Sri Aurobindo Society.)

The Wonder that is Sanskrit

"...it will not be a good day for India when the ancient tongue ceases entirely to be written or spoken."

So prophesied Sri Aurobindo about Devabhasha, the language of the gods, otherwise known as Sanskrit. There is a growing awareness of late of the genius behind this ancient language. People from all walks of life are discovering how it relates to their life and more importantly, how it enhances the quality of life itself. Over the next twelve months we will put across some of these views from around the world which will help our readers appreciate and understand the worth of Sanskrit and the need for a conscious resurgence.

Sanskrit: The National Language of India

[Share this](#) [Print this](#) [Write to us](#)

Dr.

Sampadananda

Mishra

In India where people have come from different racial stocks, profess different religions, follow different customs and manners, believe in different faiths and speak different languages, the unanimous acceptance of anything seems impossible. This has led to economic, political and linguistic problems amongst others. The main cause of these problems is the lack of communication among us which can be done through a common language. This language can bring us together and establish a oneness and harmony.

There are more than 500 languages and dialects used in India. So it is very difficult to decide a common language for our country i.e. a 'National Language'. At present 'Hindi' has been accepted partially as our National Language inviting a general dissatisfaction and tempting regional chauvinism. This shows that we have not yet understood the real concept of a National Language. Its meaning is not clear to us.

After going through many writings on the concept of National Language and verifying different opinions on this subject the following characteristic features emerge.

Firstly, this language should ideally have made a great contribution to the National life and culture thus acquiring a tremendous unifying capacity.

Secondly, it must have a relation to the other languages of the country and be understood by the majority.

Thirdly, it must not belong to any community or be the language of any particular part of that country.

Fourthly, it must not be a foreign language. Finally, it must have the capacity to face the coming age. A language which can satisfy the above conditions is really fit to be the National Language of a multi-lingual country. So far as India is concerned, only Sanskrit fulfills all the above criteria.

Sanskrit is the language in which India's real soul is reflected. It is the language of its culture and people. It is the language of its religion, philosophy, literature and science. Its knowledge gives the key to the heart of the Indians.

The contribution of Sanskrit to the National life and culture is incomparable. Dr. Rajendra Prasad once said, "Our whole culture, literature and life would remain incomplete so long as our scholars, our thinkers, our leaders and our educationists remain ignorant of Sanskrit."¹ Sanskrit is not just any language. India itself is embedded and treasured in this language. It is the reservoir from which we draw inspiration and collect materials for a glorious future. According to Sri Aurobindo, Sanskrit is the 'key to the heart and intimate sense of our own culture' through which we can 'establish a vivid continuity between the still living power of our past and the uncreated power of our future'.²

Sanskrit possesses a tremendous unifying capacity. It has a vital role to play in our National integration. In it are latent our customs, traditions, spiritual and religious ideals. Its literature has created a sense of unity in the mind of our people. Sanskrit is perhaps the only language in the world wherein for the first time, the concept of the whole world as one has been expressed along with the idea of love for one's Motherland. Prof. V. V. Ivanove and V. N. Toporove say that, "Sanskrit has been the element which united the Indian subcontinent throughout the whole of India's history. Also thanks to the unifying role of Sanskrit in time, the cultural complex of ancient India, preserved in Sanskrit texts, has remained the treasure of India today. Moreover, Sanskrit is not merely the factor uniting India in time and space but the living symbol of Indian culture...The very notion of India is hardly conceivable without Sanskrit which has symbolized and cemented the unity of Indian culture and history throughout several millennia."³

In spite of apparent diversity, India is one and India has one culture reflected in Sanskrit binding us by one thread. Sardar K.M. Panikar, a well-known Indian indologist, says, "When we talk of our national genius being unity in diversity, of the fundamental oneness of Indian mind etc. what we really mean is the dominance of Sanskrit which overrides the regional differences and regional peculiarities and achieves a true national character in our thought and emotions and even gives form and shape to the languages."⁴ Sanskrit being our national inheritance can give us a spontaneous unity through its literature, science, philosophy and thoughts.

Secondly, Sanskrit has an intimate relationship with almost all the important languages of India which are indebted to it as a source of inspiration. All the main Indian languages possess a number of Sanskrit words. The tatsama (like that) words in all the languages are Sanskrit. All the tadbhava (derived from that) words can be understood easily by developing a little intimacy with Sanskrit. 40 to 50 percent Sanskrit words are commonly

used by all Indians. Tamil too possesses many Sanskrit words. The 'Dictionary of Tamil' published in seven volumes by Madras University has 40,000 Sanskrit words. Dr. Raghavan, an eminent Sanskrit scholar of Tamilnadu, says, "...it is possible to speak sentences made up wholly of Sanskrit words and be understood" in Tamil. 5 Many efforts have been made to find out the commonly used Sanskrit words in all Indian languages. One can consult the 'Tatsama Shabdakosha' published by Government of India which shows the close relationship of Sanskrit to other Indian languages.

Thirdly, Sanskrit is free from communalism. It does not belong to any particular part of this country but to the whole of India. Everyone can claim it as one's own. Every part of India has made distinguished contribution to its literature.

Sanskrit being the soul of this land, the language of the inhabitants of this land, it has never been foreign to anyone taking birth here. The suggestion to make English as the National Language is inappropriate even though it is a language through which different people of India communicate. English is a foreign language and cannot be our National Language as it cannot express adequately the Indian ethos.

Lastly, Sanskrit because of its richness in vocabulary, diverse usage and generative power, has the capacity to face the fast developing needs of modern science, technology, politics, economics etc. This language through its scientific grammar can expand to adjust to any requirement without losing its originality. Other Indian languages can also do so but they have to depend on Sanskrit for the root words and many other grammatical rules.

Whenever there is a demand for Sanskrit as the National Language it is met with the opposition: 'how can a dead language be the National Language of a country?' Is Sanskrit really dead? When the great philologists and scholars of computational linguistics wholeheartedly accept Sanskrit as the best and most scientific language of the world, on what basis can one say that Sanskrit is a dead language. One should always remember that a natural language never dies. It is the artificially created language that dies. Sanskrit is very much alive. It is alive in the heart and mind of the people of India. Once Prof. Sampurnananda said, "Sanskrit is not merely alive, it is also a medicine to make the dead alive." 6

There are thousands of Sanskrit institutions in India and abroad engaged in doing research in Sanskrit and in its propagation. Almost all the Universities of India except a few, have departments of Sanskrit. In most of the High Schools in India Sanskrit is accepted as a language subject. Sanskrit daily, monthly, quarterly, half-yearly and yearly magazines and journals are being published by many institutions, numbering more than a thousand. Thousands of people are using this language as their Mother tongue. Sanskrit News is broadcast twice a day by All India Radio and once in a week (which is a matter of regret) by Delhi Doordarshan. There are some villages like Mattur in Karnataka where people from all walks of life communicate in Sanskrit only. The Sanskrit scholars of this country are tirelessly engaged in bringing out original works in Sanskrit in every field. After being aware of such facts how can one say that Sanskrit is dead?

Hebrew was like a dead language for a long time in Israel. It was mainly the language of study and prayer. The people of Israel realized its value and raised their interest to revive this language. And due to their deep love and interest it successfully became their National Language. This should be our spirit as regards Sanskrit. Sri Aurobindo warns us by saying that "...it will not be a good day for India when the ancient tongue ceases entirely to be written or spoken." 7

Another important question in this connection is that Sanskrit is a difficult language to learn. All languages are difficult to learn. Can anybody learn English or Hindi or any other language without interest and effort? Prof. Raghavan puts it rightly when he says that "Sanskrit is just a language as any other and there is no special difficulty in Sanskrit alone as some seem to imagine. Mention is made of the many tenses and moods and difficulties of conjugation and declension, of gender and number in Sanskrit. But these are not difficulties comparable to the idiosyncrasies of pronunciation of English, where the phonetic character of the letters as they occur in words is not known at all to the reader. If English with all this could have expanded into a world language, what is the difficulty in cultivating Sanskrit? What is necessary is the desire and the application to learn Sanskrit." 8

Sanskrit in the beginning appears to be difficult because of its richness in vocabulary, richness in literature and a complex grammatical system etc. But these things need not be a barrier for making Sanskrit a part of our life. The difficulties standing in the way can be discarded by simplifying the system of learning Sanskrit. The Mother of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram also wanted a Sanskrit of this kind, "...a simple Sanskrit... as simple as possible... simple by going back to its origin...." 9

Thus we see that the arguments opposed to making Sanskrit a National language are not the real barrier. All that is needed is a genuine interest and strong desire in order to make this beautiful language a part of our life.

References

1. Address of Sanskrit Visva Parishat, Banaras, 16-11-1962.
2. SABCL, Vol.17, p.195.
3. 'Sanskrit', Moscow, 1968, p. 26-27.
4. 'Our Inheritance: Sanskrit', Bhavan's Journal, 15th July, 1994, p. 35.
5. 'Sanskrit: Essays on the value of the language and literature', Madras, 1972, p. 16.
6. 'Samsara', 2nd Nov. 1948.
7. SABCL, Vol.17, p. 299.
8. 'Sanskrit', Madras, 1972, p. 55.
9. The Mother, 11-11-1967.



SAVITRI

the Golden Bridge, the Wonderful Fire

[Share this](#) [Print this](#) [Write to us](#)

Mangesh Nadkarni

Instalment-36

The God of Death has now exhausted all the arguments he could muster to convince Savitri that her quest is not worth all the effort and zeal with which she has been pursuing it, nor is the goal she is seeking feasible or natural. At the beginning he haughtily dismissed her as a two-legged animal not worth his attention. This arrogance of the God of Death gradually vanished and he now has a genuine admiration for Savitri. What she is seeking is the release of Satyavan from the hold of death and his return to earth with her. The God of Death has tried to convince Savitri what she adores as love is no more than a biological hunger and like all vital urges it is but a fleeting passion. Secondly, it is the law of nature that once death has claimed someone, he cannot be retrieved. The hold of death is impregnable, no one and nothing can escape from its iron grip. Thirdly, death is the inevitable end of all life. Satyavan's soul may be immortal, but then a similar immortality is not obtainable to Satyavan in a human body. Spirit and Matter are at odds in this world, and therefore what she is seeking is unfeasible and impractical.

We have now seen how Savitri refutes each of the arguments the God of Death advances. Her refutation is directed at showing not so much that his arguments are erroneous in themselves as in showing that each one of them is based not on an integral truth but on a partial truth. Savitri explains to him the truth of a manifestation which is constantly evolving and which has yet to evolve further. The human mind which is now the apex of the evolutionary world is not by any means the final stage of evolution. It is only an intermediate stage for beyond the thinking lie the spiritual levels of the mental consciousness beginning with the Higher Mind. Above it is the Illumined Mind; then after that comes the Intuitive Mind and after that we have the Overmind. She also gives a brief description of the crown of terrestrial evolution, the Supramental consciousness:

Above the stretch and blaze of cosmic Sight,
Above the silence of the wordless Thought,
Formless creator of immortal forms,
Nameless, investitured with the name divine,
Transcending Time's hours, transcending Timelessness,

The Mighty Mother sits in lucent calm
And holds the eternal Child upon her knees
Attending the day when he shall speak to Fate.
There is the image of our future's hope;
There is the sun for which all darkness waits,
There is the imperishable harmony;
The world's contradictions climb to her and are one:
There is the Truth of which the world's truths are shreds,
The Light of which the world's ignorance is the shade
Till Truth draws back the shade that it has cast,
The Love our hearts call down to heal all strife,
The Bliss for which the world's derelict sorrows yearn:
Thence comes the glory sometimes seen on earth,
The visits of Godhead to the human soul,
The Beauty and the dream on Nature's face.
There the perfection born from eternity
Calls to it the perfection born in Time,
The truth of God surprising human life,
The image of God overtaking finite shapes. Page: 661

Here we have Savitri's first description of the supramental world that is waiting in the transcendental to come down on earth. This will be the key to the transformation of the world as it is today into a veritable manifestation of the glory and perfection of the Supreme consciousness which has created it.

The God of Death seems to be impressed by Savitri's description of the glories of the Supramental consciousness. His question now is: "Who can hope ever to bring down that supreme truth to men and persuade that truth to walk on this harsh world with feet that are sure to be wounded? If it is not brought down, it will remain for ever an aspiration in the heart of the earth. He then pointedly asks Savitri: "Do you have that strength, O Savitri, to bring down this truth to man and earth?"

He continues: "If you can do this I would like to know who you really are hiding in this human disguise. Your very look and voice and your words suggest you have some special power in you. Do you then have the power needed to bring down this glorious power, the Supramental consciousness down on earth? Where is your strength? Where is your strength to conquer Time and Death? Do you possess God's force which is needed to build heaven's truths here on earth?"

"If you do have this strength, O Savitri, reveal your power to me; only when I see your power and understand its nature and source, will I give you back Satyavan. Or if the Mighty Mother is with you, show me Her face, so that I too can worship Her. Let Her immortal eyes look into my eyes, the eyes of Death. Let an imperishable Force touch brute things here and transform earth's death into an immortal fire".

This is how the long colloquy between the God of Death and Savitri ends.

Savitri looks on the God of Death in silence. It is as though she is looking at Death and sees him as the symbol of the world's darkness which has finally yielded to heaven-light and God and doesn't need any more to hide itself behind the veil of the Inconscient. It is as though Savitri has made the God of Death realise his limitations.

Then a great transformation comes over Savitri. The aura of glory of the Divinity dwelling in her, the radiance of the Immortal that has always lit her face and shone through her body overflows from her being and turns the air around her into a sea of light. In a flaming moment of revelation the Incarnation that Savitri is pushes aside its human veil. The little human figure that Savitri was is now seen as holding in her the immensity of the Infinite; she is seen as the very source and home of the Eternal. Her soul is now seen as the centre of the world and the entire wide space as the outer robe of her soul. Her gaze now acquires the calm and incomparably high dignity of the highest heavens looking at the meekness of the earth; the gaze of the Omniscient shines across her forehead; her two eyes are like two stars watching over the whole universe.

Then we have a powerful description of the descent of the Mahakundalini in Savitri through the seven chakras which are located in the subtle body, sukshma deha. The Light and Power which Savitri has so far held in check within her now descends into her through the various chakras. The topmost chakra is the sahasrara or the thousand-petalled lotus which commands the higher thinking mind and the illumined mind and it is open upwards to the consciousness of the intuitive mind, intuition, overmind and beyond . This Power enters the secret chamber of the thousand-petalled Lotus chakra at the crown of her head, and from there comes down and occupies the centre of the ajna chakra, situated at the junction of the eye-brows from where the mind's Lord functions as if from his control-room. The ajna chakra commands thought, will and vision. The Lord of the Mind (symbolised in the Vedas as Indra, the King of Gods, as the foremost of the agencies responsible for the descent of the Supramental light) sits there in his natural seat of concentration and becomes the controlling will-power. He opens the third eye in man, the subtle eye that is able to see all that is unseen by our physical eyes. It opens when a spiritual a Light which brings with it a golden ecstasy fills the brain. When this happens, the wisdom of the Eternal compels the mortal's choice and the Eternal Will replaces the mortal will.

This Power now enters the vishuddha chakra, the mystic lotus of the throat and her speech throbs with inspired and immortal words. The throat centre or the vishuddha chakra commands expression and all externalisation of mind movements and mental forces. Her life now gets in tune with the World-soul and her thoughts move in harmony with the cosmic thought.

The descending power now moves smoothly into the lotus of the heart, the anahata chakra that commands the emotional being of man and has the psychic deep behind it. In this cave it hides its light from the lesser powers, which are in pursuit of it. It wakes up in this centre the irresistible Force that can change even Fate.

This Power now pours into lotus of the navel, the manipura chakra, which commands the larger life-forces and the passions and larger desire-movements. From there it goes further down into the centre of the lower-vital desires, the svadhisthana chakra, which commands the small vital movements the little greeds, lusts and desires, and the small sense-movements. Owing to the impact of the descending Power, a heavenly rapture begins to flow even from the grosser physical longings and desire itself turns into a pure celestial flame.

The Power now breaks into the cave at the base of the spine, the muladhara chakra, where the World-Energy sleeps. This is normally visualised as a multiple headed serpent power, Kundalini. As the descending Power strikes the serpent-force, it rises and thrusts its way upwards till it meets and joins the World-Self seated in the thousand-petalled lotus (the sahasrara chakra) at the crown of the head. Thus takes place the momentous event of the meeting of the Force from below with Self seated above - the union of Shakti and Shiva. The dumbness of Matter is joined to the vast silence and the infinite Power of the Spirit.

This is the tremendous change that comes over Savitri. She is now waiting for the Word (the inspired, mantric Word) to speak through her. Through her, Eternity looks into the eyes of the God of Death, and the Darkness of death in turn saw the living Reality of the Godhead facing it.

(This brings to mind a somewhat analogous situation known as the vishvarupa darshan - the Vision of the World-Spirit in the Gita (Chapter 11). There Arjun, who knows that the imperishable greatness of the divine conscious soul is the secret of all that happens in the universe, desires to see the very form and body of this Godhead. However, the human eye can see only the outward appearances of things but it cannot grasp the universal form of the Lord, so the Lord now gives him the eye which can see the divine's universal form. Arjun then is able to see the wondrous form of the Supreme divine - God magnificent, and beautiful and terrible. But in the greatness of this vision is too the terrific image of God the destroyer. Arjun can hardly bear to see this aspect of the Lord and cries to the dreadful Godhead to show his auspicious form.

Here the context is entirely different; Arjun was a devotee but the God of Death begins as an adversary contemptuous of Savitri. Gradually, as he carries on the colloquy with her, he begins to feel that she is probably the Mighty Mother herself, but he wants to be sure about this. And therefore asks her to reveal to him the power that is behind her.)

Then is heard a Voice that seems to be the very self of stillness; it sounds like the low, calm voice of infinity when it speaks to the silence which reigns in the sleep consciousness. (One of the three kinds of consciousness spoken of by the Upanishads, the two others being the waking Consciousness and the Dream consciousness.)

"I hail you, almighty and victorious Death, You are the ostentatious Darkness of the Infinite. You are the Void that creates room for all to exist. (Death creates room for the new to live by consuming the old.) You are the hunger that nibbles at the universe and chews it and thus consumes the remnants of what were once upon a time the suns, which

once burned and then died and became cold. You eat the entire world with your jaws of fire, and try to weaken the energy that made the stars.

"You are the Inconscience but you carry the seeds of all thought (all Real-Ideas) in your bosom. You are the Nescience in which all Knowledge is dormant and from which it emerges slowly wearing the mask of the bright ignorance of the mind.

"But you are only my shadow and my instrument. It is I who has given you the awful shape of dread and your sharp sword of terror and grief and pain so that you can force the soul of man to struggle for light to illumine his short span of life which he lives half-consciously.

"You drive and force man to achieve greatness in his otherwise drab, mechanical life. You act like the whip which makes him yearn for the eternal bliss and makes him agonizingly aware of the need of conscious immortality. O Death, live for some more time and continue to be my instrument. One day man too shall come to understand your fathomless heart of silence, your brooding peace of Night, and your solemn obedience to the eternal law that governs all, and the calm pity in your gaze.

"But right now, Oh timeless Mightiness, step aside and leave the path of Savitri, who is my incarnate Force. (Please note that here is a clear indication that the Being that is now addressing the God of Death is not the human Savitri but the Supreme Divine Mother who has now descended into her.) Free the radiant god, Satyavan, from your black mask you have put on him; release the soul of the world called Satyavan so that freed from your clasp of pain and ignorance, he may stand as the master of life and fate, as man's representative in the house of God, the eternal bridegroom of the eternal bride that is Savitri."

(This is an extra-ordinary passage which explains the role of death in life. Sri Aurobindo has always looked upon death not as a denial of life but as a process of life. Besides, at this moment when Savitri completely vanquishes the God of Death, she hails him as the "almighty and victorious Death" (ref. line 893, page 666) Furthermore, Savitri appeals to Death "Live, Death, awhile, be still my instrument" (ref. line 912, page 666). These are some of the questions about this passage, which we need to answer, and we shall do so in the next instalment.)

Savitri has now spoken (or, the Supreme Divine Mother herself has spoken through Savitri.) But still the God of Death is not fully convinced and tries to resist her. He now knows the truth about Savitri but he still refuses to accept it. He has now seen who she really is but refuses to acknowledge what he has seen. He stands there unshakeable, still claiming his right to be. His spirit, however, bows down but his will obeys the law of his own nature which is binding even on the Gods.

The two antagonists stand there face to face opposing each other. The being of the God of Death towered like a huge fortress of darkness; around this fortress Savitri's power of life grows until it sieges and engulfs it from all sides like an ocean. Death continues to defy

the spirit of Savitri. He bears this concrete mass of conscious power as it assaulted him from the front and from above. He withstood the divine desire to be. The God of Death represents the Nihil, the total negation of being. A pressure of force hard to bear weighs on his unbowed head and obstinate heart. But Light emanating from Savitri licks up all his thoughts and he feels it like a torture in his heart. It courses throughout his being like a splendid agony and runs through his nerves. His darkness mutters in protest as it perishes in the blaze. Savitri's mastering Power dominates every limb of his and the God of Death finds that his enormous will has no power left in it and he feels that this has left him altogether empty and bereft of any force.

The God of Death then calls in Night to aid him but that too shudders and retreats; he then calls to Hell but that too sullenly retreats. Finally he turns to the Inconscient for support since he himself was born out of it and owes his vast being to its sustaining power, but the Inconscient draws him back towards the boundless vacancy of itself as if it wants one vacancy to swallow up another vacancy. He then calls up his own strength to support him but it too refuses to respond.

His body is now eaten up by light, his very spirit is devoured by it. At last, the God of Death realises that his defeat is inevitable and this leaves crumbling the shape that he had worn all along. Thus he abandons his hope of making man's soul too his prey and of forcing mortality even on his immortal spirit.

The God of Death now flees from the dreaded touch of luminous Savitri and takes refuge in the Night that is in retreat. In the dream twilight of that symbol world the fearful universal shadow, Death, disappears, thus vanishing in the Void from which it had come. And as though the very reason for its existence is now no more with the disappearance of Death, the twilight from the souls of Savitri and Satyavan also fades and disappears.

Now at last Savitri and Satyavan find themselves alone, but neither of them stirs. Between the two of them arises a mute, invisible and luminous wall. In that long bank moment of pause, nothing is able to move. All waits upon the unknown and inscrutable Will of God.

This brings us to the end of Book X, Canto Four.

(Mangesh Nadkarni retired as professor of Linguistics a few years ago. He enjoys sharing with as many people as possible what he receives from his study of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother)



[Share this](#) [Print this](#) [Write to us](#)

To Be Thyself

Sri Aurobindo

It has been well said by one who saw but through a veil and mistook the veil for the face, that thy aim is to become thyself; and he said well again that the nature of man is to transcend himself. This is indeed his nature and that is indeed the divine aim of his self-transcending.

That which thou hast to transcend is the self that thou appearest to be, and that is man as thou knowest him, the apparent Purusha. And what is this man? He is a mental being enslaved to life and matter; and where he is not enslaved to life and matter, he is the slave of his mind. But this is a great and heavy servitude; for to be the slave of mind is to be the slave of the false, the limited and the apparent. The self that thou hast to become, is the self that thou art within behind the veil of mind and life and matter. It is to be the spiritual, the divine, the superman, the real Purusha. For that which is above the mental being, is the superman. It is to be the master of thy mind, thy life and thy body; it is to be a king over Nature of whom thou art now the tool, lifted above her who now has thee under her feet. It is to be free and not a slave, to be one and not divided, to be immortal and not obscured by death, to be full of light and not darkened, to be full of bliss and not the sport of grief and suffering, to be uplifted into power and not cast down into weakness. It is to live in the Infinite and possess the finite. It is to live in God and be one with him in his being. To become thyself is to be this and all that flows from it....

These things thou art, therefore thou canst become all this; but if thou wert not these things, then thou couldst never become them. What is within thee, that alone can be revealed in thy being. Thou appearest indeed to be other than this, but wherefore shouldst thou enslave thyself to appearances?

Rather arise, transcend thyself, become thyself. Thou art man and the whole nature of man is to become more than himself. He was the man-animal, he has become more than the animal man. He is the thinker, the craftsman, the seeker after beauty. He shall be more than the thinker, he shall be the seer of knowledge; he shall be more than the

craftsman, he shall be the creator and master of his creation; he shall be more than the seeker of beauty, for he shall enjoy all beauty and all delight.

Spotlight

[Share this](#) [Print this](#) [Write to us](#)

Two-armed Shiva



"To suggest the strength and virile unconquerable force of the divine Nature in man and in the outside world, its energy, its calm, its powerful inspiration, its august enthusiasm, its wildness, greatness, attractiveness, to breathe that into man's soul

and gradually mould the finite into the image of the Infinite is another spiritual utility of Art. This is its loftiest function, its fullest consummation, its most perfect privilege."

Two-armed Shiva, serene and youthful, the ever different god. Virupaksha temple, Pattadakal, Chalukya, seventh century. Photograph by Elizabeth Beck.