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What is it about a New Year? How is it that a sudden switch of a number, a date, a turn of the page in a calendar, can bring such enthusiasm and rejuvenate the mind, body and spirit? Almost invariably one is filled with a fresh sense of hope for the future, ideals and ideas, extra dollops of energy that come in unadvertised. It may be all psychological as the cynics would claim, but so long as the psychology bends towards the bright light of positivism, it matters little as to the cause.

We always remind our readers about the R word at this time of the year. Resolutions. They may or may not be carried through to the end of the year, but in the same manner as all heartfelt wishes once uttered must indeed manifest, so must all sincere resolutions for they are the ardent prayers within our hearts - to make the formulation and send this prayer out is already one step towards concretizing it. So don't give ear to those who shun resolutions, calling them a waste of time. A prayer can never be a waste of time.

At Next Future too we will make our individual and personal resolutions. But for the good of humanity and in order to usher in a new world, we quote from one of our articles this month: "I must make this resolution today: I have to give up my ego."

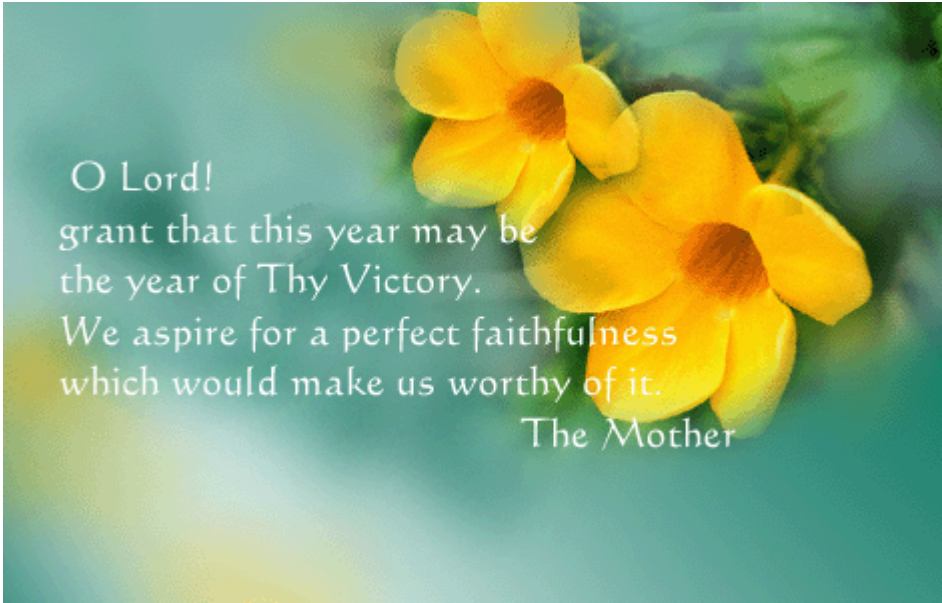
Simple and straightforward. No frills. No fancy point by point agenda. No clauses with pauses. This is all we need to do and the New Dawn will burst through. This is the universal R, the prayer of humanity - in it lies world peace, religious harmony, racial synthesis; in it lies Buddha's Compassion, the healing Touch of Jesus, Mohammed's Strength and Krishna's Companionship; in it lies divinity that is to become ours.

So what is there to stop us?

Until the next time...

Eternally Yours

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O Lord!
grant that this year may be
the year of Thy Victory.
We aspire for a perfect faithfulness
which would make us worthy of it.
The Mother

Living Words

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Flowers and their Messages

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From this year we will be taking one theme every two months. January and February follow the theme of the Divine's blessings on this world and we will start with "Divine Love".



Spiritual Name	Divine Love "A flower that is said to blossom even in the desert."
Botanical Name	Punica granatum
Common Name	Pomegranate

General Description

The pomegranate is a shrub with multiple stems that commonly grows 6-15 ft tall. The slender branches start out upright then droop gracefully. Unpruned shrubs have a weeping or fountain-shaped habit. The deciduous leaves are shiny and about 3 inches long. Pomegranates have beautiful orange-red trumpet-shaped flowers with ruffled petals. The flowers are often double, and are produced over a long period in summer. The pomegranate fruit is globose, and shiny red or yellowish-green when mature. Fruit is filled with crunchy seeds each of which is encased in a juicy, somewhat acidic pulp that is itself enclosed in a membranous skin. The seeds, juice and pulp are eaten. Grenadine is concentrated pomegranate syrup used to flavour drinks.

Pomegranates do best in climates with long hot, dry summers and cool winters. They are very tolerant to sandy, clayey, acidic and even alkaline soils. They grow in full sun and

require regular watering. They can be propagated by cuttings or by layering. Although easy to grow from seeds, pomegranate seedlings cannot be expected to resemble their parents.

They are grown for mainly their fruits but it also adds beauty to home landscape and can be grown as a specimen or as hedges. The fruits, leaves and bark have medicinal properties.

The Mother on Divine Love

The Divine has an equal love for all human beings, but the obscurity of consciousness of most men prevents them from perceiving this divine love.


*

For one who has known love for the Divine, all other forms of love are obscure and too mixed with pettiness and egoism and darkness; they are like a perpetual haggling or a struggle for supremacy and domination, and even among the best they are full of misunderstanding and irritability, of friction and incomprehension.

Moreover, it is a well-known fact that one grows into the likeness of what one loves. Therefore if you want to be like the Divine, love Him alone. Only one who has known the ecstasy of the exchange of love with the Divine can know how insipid and dull and feeble any other exchange is in comparison.

*

The only remedy for all human suffering: divine love.



Question of the Month

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Inner Imperfections and Spirituality and Yoga

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.

Most of us, at some time in our lives, feel the call of the Spirit, the wish to enter into the spiritual path. Generally this remains a wish, and very little is done to take it up seriously. Our other concerns are too many and too pressing.

However, for a few, this inner call becomes very strong and they set out on this difficult journey. But very soon one realizes that the path is not easy. At every step one is confronted with all the imperfections, limitations, perversions of one's own nature. One gets frustrated and depressed. One is convinced that the imperfections are too strong. One will never achieve the goal, one is just not meant for yoga and the spiritual path.

The question arose in the mind of a spiritual seeker who was overpowered by this situation:

Question : I find innumerable imperfections in my nature. There is no progress, nothing seems to be happening, After each rise there is a fall. Sometimes I feel I become even worse than before. With these imperfections is it not a clear indication that I am not meant for yoga, that I am incapable of following the spiritual path? Should I not give up this futile effort?

Here is Sri Aurobindo's reassuring reply full of compassion and spiritual insight. With this answer no sincere seeker should have any doubts about his ultimate destiny.

Imperfections cannot be a bar

The existence of imperfections, even many and serious imperfections, cannot be a permanent bar to progress in the yoga. (I do not speak of a recovery of the former opening, for according to my experience, what comes after a period of obstruction or struggle is usually a new and wider opening, some larger consciousness and an advance on what had been gained before and seems-but only seems-to be lost for the moment.)

The only bar that can be permanent-but need not be, for this too can change-is insincerity...

If imperfection were a bar, then no man could succeed in yoga; for all are imperfect, and I am not sure, from what I have seen, that it is not those who have the greatest power for yoga who have too, very often, or have had the greatest imperfections. You know, I suppose, the comment of Socrates on his own character; that could be said by many great yogins of their own initial human nature.

The one thing that counts

In yoga the one thing that counts in the end is sincerity and with it the patience to persist in the path-many even without this patience go through, for in spite of revolt, impatience, depression, despondency, fatigue, temporary loss of faith, a force greater than one's outer self, the force of the Spirit, the drive of the soul's need, pushes them through the cloud and the mist to the goal before them.

Imperfections can be stumbling-blocks and give one a bad fall for the moment, but not a permanent bar. Obscurations due to some resistance in the nature can be more serious causes of delay, but they too do not last for ever. The length of your period of dullness is also no sufficient reason for losing belief in your capacity or your spiritual destiny. I believe that alternations of bright and dark periods are almost a universal experience of yogis, and the exceptions are very rare.

The reason for Dark Periods

If one inquires into the reasons of this phenomenon,-very unpleasant to our impatient human nature,-it will be found, I think, that they are in the main two:

The first is that the human consciousness either cannot bear a constant descent of the Light or Power or Ananda, or cannot at once receive and absorb it; it needs periods of assimilation; but this assimilation goes on behind the veil of the surface consciousness; the experience or the realisation that has descended retires behind the veil and leaves this outer or surface consciousness to lie fallow and become ready for a new descent. In the more developed stages of the yoga these dark or dull periods become shorter, less trying as well as uplifted by the sense of the greater consciousness which, though not acting for immediate progress, yet remains and sustains the outer nature.

The second cause is some resistance, something in the human nature that has not felt the former descent, is not ready, is perhaps unwilling to change,-often it is some strong habitual formation of the mind or the vital or some temporary inertia of the physical consciousness and not exactly a part of the nature,-and this, whether showing or concealing itself, thrusts up the obstacle. If one can detect the cause in oneself, acknowledge it, see its workings and call down the Power for its removal, then the periods of obscurity can be greatly shortened and their acuity becomes less.

The Assurance

But in any case the Divine Power is working always behind and one day, perhaps when one least expects it, the obstacle breaks, the clouds vanish and there is again the light and the sunshine. The best thing in these cases is, if one can manage it, not to fret, not to despond, but to insist quietly and keep oneself open, spread to the Light and waiting in faith for it to come; that I have found shortens these ordeals. Afterwards, when the obstacle disappears, one finds that a great progress has been made and that the consciousness is far more capable of receiving and retaining than before. There is a return for all the trials and ordeals of the spiritual life.

Sri Aurobindo



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.

Perseverance

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The Mother

Conjugate Verses

*Those who are intelligent, meditative, persevering, who ceaselessly struggle with themselves, attain to Nirvana, which is the supreme felicity.
Whosoever can sustain his zeal, remain pure in his actions, act wisely, restrain his passions, live according to the Law (or to morality), he shall see his renown increase.*

This promise of a good name does not seem to me quite worthy of the Buddhist teaching. It probably meant something else. And to live according to morality, one must know which morality is intended, for if it is the usually recognised social morality, that also does not seem to me a very alluring promise. Those who have decided to abandon all worldly weaknesses certainly do not care about satisfying social morality... nor about acquiring a good name!

To sustain one's zeal is an excellent thing, to remain pure in one's actions is also indispensable, to act wisely is also perfect, one cannot do it too often; to restrain one's passions, that goes without saying, is the beginning... but that conclusion!!

However I see "Dhamma" has been translated here as "Law", and "Yasa" as "renown", whereas Dhamma should mean rather the inner truth and Yasa the spiritual glory. So we can interpret the text in this way: "Whosoever can sustain his zeal, remain pure in his actions, act wisely, restrain his passions, live according to the inner truth, he shall see his spiritual glory ever growing."

Thus understood, this text is quite excellent. One cannot do better than to conform to it.

31 January 1958 and 7 February 1958



Today's Imperative

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M. P. Pandit

What are we to do today? The question arises because every day, almost everyone of us thinks, on reading the papers, on hearing the news bulletins on the radio, what a pass the world has come to what a situation for our country! And we lament about the extraordinary state of corruption, irresponsibility and other unmentionable malaises that have crept into our public and individual life. We write articles, we deliver speeches regretting the fall in the standards of our life and so on. But how many of us ask ourselves: "What have I done to prevent this state of affairs? What could I have done to contribute to the betterment of the atmosphere?" Each one of us has a responsibility to maintain the health of the collectivity in which we live. There are problems, and there are bound to be problems in a developing life. Life is not static, it is a dynamic process of evolution, and problems are presented by Nature in order that we apply ourselves, work and take a step forward. In a memorable passage, Sri Aurobindo observes that pain is the hammer of Gods to break a dead resistance in the mortal's heart. But for pain, but for suffering, we would not move, we would be content to live like automatons. That is why the more we are ready to progress, the more the problems presented to us. It is easy to isolate problems as political or economic, and try to find solutions, but in the larger context of life these piecemeal solutions will not work. We have been seeing how, in our country, so many solutions are proposed with all goodwill, but none have succeeded because they are all out of focus. For every problem there is an immediate solution and there is a long range solution. The shortcut wants to tide over the crisis, the long range one to prevent the repetition of such crisis. It puts the finger on the root cause of the troubles. We have to understand from that point of view why problems have arisen in every walk of life including religion and spirituality which are supposed to be areas of harmony and peace. In every country there is tension, in every society there is disequilibrium, in every home there is disharmony. That shows that it is a universal problem and ours is only a local segment of the cosmic problem.

Long ago, about 70 years ago, in a study of the development of the human society, Sri Aurobindo wrote a series of articles on the psychology of social development which he later entitled "The Human Cycle". The main thesis of his study is this: In the early primitive societies, all over the world the first man, the physical man, the primitive man is face to face with Nature. He is not organised, he feels the impact of the powers of Nature, his pre-intellectual mind senses some mystery about every thing; behind the trees, behind the running brooks, over the hills, he senses a presence; behind the activities of rain, wind, the sun and the moon, he regards supraphysical powers and instinctively bows down to them. He calls them gods, deities, angels, and the intuitive mind of that society -

because the rational intellect has not yet developed - creates means of communication with these supra-terrestrial powers. There is a companionship between men and gods. Whether in early Greece, Egypt, India, everywhere, the whole system is organised around an interchange, around the system of sacrifice, self-giving. Gods are invoked to descend into man, there is a partnership in the commonwealth of the earth. Everything is symbolic; the plateau, the hill represents existence with the several levels of consciousness. The flame, agni, represents the soaring aspiration in man, the sky and the ocean represent infinity. Indra is the god of mind who showers the luminosity of mind. Varuna comes next expanding the consciousness of man. When man becomes wide enough, there is Mitra the God of Love, because the ancients knew that when man is ego bound, limited, to love is dangerous. So they speak of Mitra coming only after Varuna has established his empire. This is called the symbolic age of mankind. Everything is governed by some deep perception; the leaders of society are not kings but seers, the rishis who see the truth, who hear the truth, satyasruta.

Gradually the inspiring truths of life recede and the outer moulds fix themselves: conventions become the order of the day. To illustrate, earlier only he was a brahmin who had acquired the right by virtue of study; by virtue of purity, to carry and communicate the knowledge of God, knowledge of the principle of life. Later in the succeeding age everybody who was born of a brahmin became a brahmin. Thus in the conventional age people started doing things in particular ways because their ancestors did so in the olden days. The truth had receded far behind and so tradition, superstition, dogma, rituals, multiplied creating a completely artificial mode of living. Naturally Nature, evolving Nature, would not allow man to stay there long, so there is revolt on the part of the individual. He begins to ask, "Why should I follow these conventions, why should I not do what I feel to be right? I must have that freedom." So the conventional age is followed by the individualist age when the individual raises the standard of revolt; man insists on living his own life. The most remarkable example of this movement is, of course, the French Revolution. Thus arose the entrepreneur, the capitalist with his laissez faire and there is a great efflorescence, the intellect. The rational mind comes into its own. Philosophies spring up, doctrines multiply. Even then, after a few centuries of this age of freedom we find the individual has messed up things. New problems cropped up following the industrial revolution in England. Thinkers started applying their mind to find out the cause of these disharmonies.

Individuals were given freedom but they did not use their freedom rightly, they started treading upon the toes of their neighbours. So there commenced serious studies to find out the real truth of life, collective life. Karl Marx may be said to be the first serious modern thinker who probed into this question and he came out with his thesis of economic determinism of history. He said everything is determined by economic causes, those who can control the economic resources control the society. What he said was perhaps true in the society in which he functioned, in the industrial society of England with all its abuses. He said there is no God, no such thing as soul, religion is an opiate of the people used to keep them down. All these dicta struck a favourable cord in the downtrodden people. But even then the polish wore off; it was realised that everything is not economics, everything is not bread and butter, there is something more in man. Even

if he is clothed well, fed well, he will not be happy; there must be something else. So slowly the solely materialist approach was given the go-by, serious thinkers and those like Bergson, the famous French philosopher, spoke of vital energy, elan vital, life-force, prana as the secret of life. Wherever there is abundance of life-energy there arise civilisations and when that dries up the civilisations come down. It had a few purchasers, but it could not satisfy a humanity which was slowly developing an intellectual mind. So there followed mental analysis, Bertrand Russell and the like who said that mind is the truth, the truth is in the idea, ideals, and they went on to erect their own systems and institutions which too did not work. The most disillusioned thinker who first accepted this mental truth of life was Arnold Toynbee who examined as many as 21 civilisations and spoke of challenge and response. Ultimately, he said the truth is not in the mind, it is in religion. Now even with religions as they have developed as a move for unity, to bring people together, to take man back to God, the moment it got organised, institutionalised it became a force for division. People have, by and large, lost faith in organised religion.

What next? Sri Aurobindo, Teilhard de Chardin and other evolutionary thinkers have perceived that we are now entering into a stage higher than the mental, what we may call the spiritual stage. But before we enter into the spiritual, we see that we are bogged down in what is called the subjective age. We see the roots of life behind the surfaces; at the first approach everything appears chaotic, disorganised, because it goes beyond the mental organisation to which we are accustomed. If you see modern art, modern literature in countries like Russia, Eastern Europe, you will find a consistent effort to probe beneath the surfaces of life. They may call it the unconscious or the subconscious or the subliminal, but they are feelings out below the surface. They are all on the way to the central truth of life - the soul, the spirit. But before this spiritual age can come there are other factors which are pressing upon man today for fulfilment. The individual age has done its work and gone. Today the call is for the universal man to be born; all over the world, in every segment of life, there is a movement gathering in this direction.

Now I would like to narrate a significant happening that took place at the turn of the last century. Somewhere in the nineties a Canadian doctor, Dr. Bucke, was trying to discover new ways of treating his mental patients. Dr. Bucke was fond of literature. He was a colleague of Whitman, Emerson and others, and he used to spend evenings discussing mystic poetry. One evening after discussing the poetry of Wordsworth, Dr. Bucke set off for his country home in his cab. In the midst of a forest he saw a great conflagration, a fire. You know in America there are large forest fires. He thought the forest must be on fire, so he stopped the vehicle only to become conscious that the conflagration was not outside but inside his own self. In a flash he realised all life is one and the centre of life is love. A few seconds of that experience completely changed his life and he went on to write a book called the Cosmic Consciousness which came out in 1902. Five hundred copies were printed, but it took many years to sell them. Today, I believe the book is in the 30th edition. In his remarkable introduction to this book he makes what he calls three prophesies. Mind you, it was written before 1900. He says: In the coming century aerial navigation will bring the world so close together as it has never been in history; nothing can happen in one corner which will not be immediately known in others. Second, it will be a sin to be rich. Third, all the existing religions will disappear; there will be one

universal religion in which there will be no intercessor between man and God. These were his three prophesies. At the moment we are concerned with the first prospect, unification of the world. We are entering into a stage where the individual man has to make room for the universal man. A universal man, visvamanava, as Tagore called him, is not one who just speaks the language of universality; he is one who feels without effort a spontaneous oneness with everybody else, whose heart beats in union with the hearts of others; whose mind echoes the thoughts of others. He can plant his thoughts in other people's minds. The universal man is struggling to be born. In economics, in politics, in social sciences, in religion, everywhere you see there is a cohesive force at work. The United Nations, with all the bad name that we give to it, has done remarkable service in this direction. The path of wisdom is to make the best use of it and improve it. In literature, in art, everywhere, there is a growing sense of oneness. The higher mind of humanity has today accepted the inevitability of one world, one humanity. But it is taking time to get translated into practice. Man is not readily accepting the evolutionary challenge of nature to break out of his ego-bound walls of division. Everywhere he asks how it affects him. I may talk philosophy, I may talk religion, but when things affect me personally, my attitude is neither philosophical nor religious. Whether at the individual level or group level or the national level, this obduracy is holding up the progress of everyone. And Nature is trying to shock us into sanity by creating and throwing problems after problems, forcing us to think and act. Everyone has some perception, the truth is pressing upon us so much that everywhere - wherever I have traveled - I have seen that individually people have the right perception that the change has to begin with oneself. Everybody has to change from within. But there it stops. Do we practice? It is easy enough to be on good behaviour on the public platform but the touchstone of sincerity, of our readiness to throw off our egoism, self-assertiveness, is in our dealing with our daily neighbours. It is there that the problem lies. Today's imperative is this: each one has to break out of his ego-walls, open his mind to the winds of thought and change, enlarge his heart, so that the waves of sympathy and love may go out of his being. They speak of open society; I speak of an open individual who is open to the movements and currents of progress. By experience, however, I have found, and people like me have also found, that individually there is a limit beyond which one cannot progress in this dimension. If one wants to reach God, yes, a solitary sannyasin, a recluse, can shoot up, but today a time has come when vertical spirituality, has to be combined with a horizontal spirituality. Sri Aurobindo says somewhere: your love for God is not complete unless you can love God in all. This compulsion to recognise that God is there in the neighbour, God is there in the sinner as in the virtuous, is universal. Our mind knows it somewhere on its top floor, but in our day to day life we fail. In politics, in social affairs, education, religion, economics, do we think of the neighbour? In the international affairs, up to a certain stage nationalism was a healthy force, but today, after two World Wars, nationalism has become a disease. National jingoisms, national chauvinisms are standing in the way of progress. So whether it is at the individual level or at the collective level, personal level or public level, our sincerity is at stake. Do we really mean to solve this problem? If we do, we have to sort it ourselves. I must make this resolution today: I have to give up my ego. Ego was the helper, ego is the bar. Up to a certain stage in evolution ego was a point of centralisation. Today it is holding us back. To put it more graphically, in the language of an American author, it is a one-man revolution that is the need of the day. No political

revolution can give us peace but if each individual is supported by another who carries on the same project, there will be a chain of changing individuals who will form a force for change. There is a subtle link that joins all life, so if I change myself in my corner in the east coast of India, one of you change herein the heart of India, somebody else does likewise in California, there are some points of change which have their consequence. They add harmony as against the precarious balance for suicide. We as individuals have a part to play; we have to change the pattern of our own ego-based life, elevate our consciousness and build conditions in which the individual man gives place to the universal man.

(Speech given by Shri M.P. Pandit at India International Centre, Delhi, 1989)

(M.P. Pandit came to the Ashram at a very young age. He is the author of a large number of books and articles on Integral Yoga and the Indian spiritual tradition. He was the Chairman of World Union International.)

Gems of Sanskrit Literature

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"The ancient and classical creations of the Sanskrit tongue both in quality and in body and abundance of excellence, in their potent originality and force and beauty, in their substance and art and structure, in grandeur and justice and charm of speech and in the height and width of the reach of their spirit stand very evidently in the front rank among the world's great literatures."

Sri Aurobindo

What a splendid observation! Truly, when one views Sanskrit literature from all these viewpoints one feels obligated to call it the best amongst all. The mass of Sanskrit literature covers the entire field of human experience. It is by no means restricted to grammar or philosophy or religious writings. 'Every human emotion and aspiration, every beat of the human heart, every flight of the human mind, the joys and sorrows of humanity are to be found in Sanskrit literature, and this makes it continuously meaningful' even today. Not only is the classical Sanskrit era oceanic in its productivity but it also symbolizes the zenith of Indian literature. Prose, poetry, drama and other writings blossomed forth so as to give a kaleidoscopic panorama rarely found in the history of literature.

Sanskrit is "at once majestic and sweet and flexible, strong and clearly-formed and full and vibrant and subtle, and its quality and character would be of itself a sufficient evidence of the character and quality of the race whose mind it expressed and culture of which it was the reflecting medium." Thus states Sri Aurobindo. One can find in the works of Kalidasa, Bharavi, Magha, Sivasvami, Banabhatta, Bhavabhuti, the majesty of Sanskrit language and in the works of Sriharsa, Dandi and Jayadeva, its sweetness. The flexibility of this language can clearly be observed in the Citrakavya or figurative literature. Strength and structural perfection are seen in almost all the literary works of Sanskrit. One can feel the subtle vibration of the sounds in the stotras written by the seer poets. The philosophical texts and other Shastras reveal its utmost subtlety.

In next twelve issues we will reflect upon twelve glinting stars of the Galaxy of Sanskrit Literature.

Bhasa

Kalidasa mentions him as his predecessor and also refers to and imitates him occasionally in his works. Bana praises him as a fine dramatist. Rajashekhara and Vakpati have admired him highly in their respective works. Yet he was a mere name till the beginning

of the nineteenth century when all his dramas were discovered from a library in Trivandrum by T. Ganapati Sastri.

He is none other than Bhasa who has maximum number of dramas to his credit. Svapnavasadatta, Pratijna-yaugandharayana, Pancharatra, Pratimanataka, Abhishekanataka, Balacharita, Dutavakya, Karnabhara, Dutaghatotkacha, Charudatta, Madhyamavyayoga, Avimaraka and Urubhanga are the thirteen dramas written by Bhasa. Although nothing is known about the date and place of birth of Bhasa, he is quite alive in the minds of the people through these dramas. One finds in these dramas a skilful workmanship with a good style, chaste language, brisk movements, good sense of humour and characters full of action and strong emotions. Sri Aurobindo finds Bhasa's dramas 'finely vigorous'.

Ramayana and Mahabharata are the two main sources from which Bhasa had chosen the stories for his dramas. Gunadhya's Brihatakatha and Somadeva's Kathasaritsagara also supplied material for designing his Svapnavasadatta, Pratijna-yaugandharayana and Charudatta. Bhasa has been very original in handling the themes of his dramas by deviating considerably from the original and introducing new events, situations and characters. Many of his dramas have one or two acts with few characters.

Here we give few examples to give an idea of Bhasa's outlook:

Yaugandharayana is a character in Bhasa's Svapnavasavadatta (the drama of Vasavadatta who meets her husband in a dream) playing the role of the Minister of King Udayana. Vasavadatta is the queen. Yaugandharayana had heard from the soothsayers that if king Udayana marries Padmavati, the sister of the King of Magadha, then it would bring him and his kingdom a good fortune. But he found that the King Udayana would never think of a second wife because of his strong attachment to Vasavadatta. At any cost Yaugandharayana wanted to bring back the good fortune of the kingdom. He made a plan with Queen Vasavadatta, set the city aflame and spread the rumour that both Vasavadatta and he have got burnt in the fire. Then in the guise of ascetics both of them went to Magadha. There Yaugandharayana meets Padmavati in an ashram and requests her to take care of Vasavadatta who he has introduced as his sister. At this point the Chamberlain says to Padmavati not to agree to this proposal and makes a very interesting remark:

*Sukhamartha bhaved daatum sukham praanaah sukham tapah
Sukhamanyad bhavet sarvam dukham nyasasya rakshanam.*

"It is easy to give wealth, fruits of one's penance, even life and all else, but most difficult is to undertake a pledge."

Below are few more interesting verses from the same drama.

*Kaalakramena jagatah parivartamana
Cakraarapanktiriva gacchati bhaagyapanktih.*

"Worldly fortunes circle round with the wheel of time moving up and down like the wheels of a chariot."

For the literary history of India it is Bhasa's Charudatta which is important. Here Charudatta, the hero, once a very rich man, has lost all his wealth in charity. When his friend finds him repenting over the loss he consoles him with soothing words. Now Charudatta tells him that he is not regretting the loss itself but he feels that the sorrows of a man of riches who has become wretched is terrible. In the language of Bhasa:

*Na khalvaham nashtaam shriyam anushocaami , gunarasajnyasya tu pururshasya
vyasanam daaranataram maam pratibhaati, kutah*

"Now he continues saying that "like seeing a lamp while in darkness happiness is glorious after long sufferings. But penury after happy days is like death while living."

*Sukham hi dukkhaanyanubhuuya shobhate
Yathaandhakaaraadiva diipadarshanam.
Sukhaatuu yo yaati dasaam daridrataam
Sthitah shariirena mrritah sa jivati..*

In his Pancharatra, Bhasa brings out the importance of one's deed in the following words:

*Akaaranam ruupamakaaranam kulam
Mahatsu niiceshu ca karma shobhate.*

"No self-appearance or one's clan and family is of any import, it is the deed that makes you shine whether you are a low-born or high-born."

In the Karnabhara, when Karna is all ready to give his suit of armor and earrings to Indra in the guise of a Brahmin, then king Shalya interferes and advises Karna not to do this. In this context Karna says:

*Shikshaa kshayam gacchati kaalaparyaayaat
Subaddhamuulaa nipatanti paadapaah.
Jalam jalasthaanagatam ca shushyati
Hutam ca dattam ca tathaiva tishthati.*

"Knowledge acquired leaves us with the lapse of time; even deep-rooted trees fall down; water well stored in lakes often dries up; but the fruit of all that has been given with sincerity and with a sense of offering lasts for ever."

These are only a few examples to give a little taste of Bhasa's language and outlook and needless to say, one can take up the dramas of Bhasa and explore many more hidden treasures of high literary beauty.

(Compiled and presented by Dr. Sampadananda Mishra, Sanskrit Research Coordinator, Sri Aurobindo Society, Pondicherry)



The Forest

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Kathleen Morgan

To live in the forest
amongst the trees,
surrounded by trunks,
branches, roots, leaves.
To tread through detritus
brush against fern,
to be open, observe,
absorb and learn.

Within such life,
so alone,
can make you realize
you're never on your own.
The force that surrounds,
the growth, the power,
the beauty in nature
the art in a flower.
To sit in the stillness
be one with the land,
is one true way
to understand.

We are part of
an innumerable whole,
beyond physical form
lies an eternal soul.



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Ich bete wieder, du Erlauchter

I am praying again, Awesome One.

You hear me again, as words
from the depths of me
rush toward you in the wind.

I've been scattered in pieces,
torn by conflict,
mocked by laughter,
washed down in drink.

In alleyways I sweep myself up
out of garbage and broken glass.
With my half-mouth I stammer you,
who are eternal in your symmetry.
I lift to you my half-hands
in wordless beseeching, that I may find again
the eyes with which I once beheld you.

I am a house gutted by fire
where only the guilty sometimes sleep
before the punishment that devours them
hounds them out into the open.

I am a city by the sea
sinking into a toxic tide.
I am strange to myself, as though someone unknown
had poisoned my mother as she carried me.

It's here in all the pieces of my shame
that now I find myself again.
I yearn to belong to something, to be contained
in an all-embracing mind that sees me
as a single thing.
I yearn to be held
in the great hands of your heart-

oh let them take me now.
Into them I place these fragments, my life,
and you, God-spend them however you want.

Rilke

(From Rilke's Book of Hours; translated from the original German into English by Anita Barrows and Joanna Macy)

Future of Matter (I)

The Evolutionary Dimension: Towards Conscious Matter

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Our human organism is not a disembodied spirit in some ethereal heaven, but an embodied Soul in a material world. Most of the spiritual traditions of the past viewed this material reality of our body and the material world as an illusion and a snare which has to be cast off or abandoned for realizing the freedom of the Soul. But a more integral spiritual vision views this material reality as an expression of the Spirit. If this higher vision is accepted, what then is the spiritual significance, purpose and destiny of Matter; matter in our own body and the terrestrial matter as a whole? In this series of articles we examine this question in the light an integral spiritual vision. It will be an exploration of the future possibilities which lie ahead for the evolution of Matter in the light of Sri Aurobindo's vision and the Mother's experiences in her own body.

This will be a sequel to our earlier series "Future of the Human Potential" in which we explored some of the unmanifest potentialities of human consciousness which may unfold in the future. In this series we will examine some of the higher potentialities hidden in Matter which may be revealed during the future evolution of our planet, giving birth to an entirely new science of Matter.

M.S. Srinivasan

In our earlier series on the future of the human potential, we have discussed in some detail the central theme of terrestrial evolution: Growth of Consciousness. In Sri Aurobindo's vision, the manifest creation is the result of a dual process. First is the process of Involution by which the supreme and eternal consciousness of the spirit involves itself into, and becomes the apparent unconsciousness of matter. Second is the process of Evolution by which the involved consciousness of the spirit emerges, first as Life, and later as Mind, and will proceed further beyond Mind in the future towards its original nature as the pure and perfect consciousness of spirit. Sri Aurobindo identifies two principles which drive or shape the process of this evolution: Emergence and Integration.

A new principle emerges from the old and then there is an integration of the consciousness, energy and substance of the new with the old, creating the next higher principle in evolution. Consciousness emerges from the "dump" Matter as the principle of Life and this new vitally responsive life-energy is integrated with the substance and energy of "dump" matter in the stone, creating the living matter of the plant. Again, consciousness emerges from the living and "unconscious" matter of the plant as the sense-conscious and instinctive mind of the animal, and later as the self-conscious and thinking mind of man. Here also, there is again an integration of the energy and substance of the Life with the energy and substance of the Mind creating the living, sensing or thinking matter or substance of the animal or human brain. If we extend this evolutionary logic further into the future, when the consciousness emerges in its original form as of the

Spirit from the Mind, there has to be a still further integration creating a living and conscious Matter, conscious with the consciousness of the Spirit, or in other words a spiritually conscious Matter. This transformation of matter has to happen first in the matter within a human being, that is a human body.

If the growth of consciousness is the *raison d'etre* of evolution, Spirit is the source and destiny of evolution and the whole creation is returning towards the Source, then a spirituality conscious individual in a spiritually conscious world emerges as the most logical destiny of terrestrial evolution. The evolutionary impetus of the future, after making the inner being of man fully conscious of itself and its spiritual source, has to proceed further until the whole of bodily and terrestrial matter is fully spiritualised with the consciousness of the Spirit. This means, in the future, the process of integration which we have discussed earlier will not be confined to the brain as in the past. It will extend itself to the whole of human body and to every cell of the body, creating not just a spirituality conscious brain but also a spirituality conscious Body. Ultimately this "conspiring" impulse of evolution has to proceed further on beyond the human body to the whole of terrestrial creation, culminating in Sri Aurobindo's prophetic vision:

"Even the dump earth becomes a sentient force" ¹

But is such a thing possible? Matter and Spirit seem to lie at two opposite poles of existence? Can they unite and become one? To answer this question, we have to look deep into the spiritual source of Matter in the light of Sri Aurobindo's vision.

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

1. Sri Aurobindo, *Savitri*, p. 709



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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.

Learned through the Ages

I've learned that I like my teacher because she cries when we sing "Silent Night".

Age 6

I've learned that our dog doesn't want to eat my broccoli either.

Age 7

I've learned that when I wave to people in the country, they stop what they are doing and wave back.

Age 9

I've learned that just when I get my room the way I like it, Mom makes me clean it up again.

Age 12

I've learned that if you want to cheer yourself up, you should try cheering someone else up.

Age 14

I've learned that although it's hard to admit it, I'm secretly glad my parents are strict with me.

Age 15

I've learned that silent company is often more healing than words of advice.

Age 24

I've learned that brushing my child's hair is one of life's great pleasures.

Age 26

I've learned that wherever I go, the world's worst drivers have followed me there.

Age 29

I've learned that if someone says something unkind about me, I must live so that no one will believe it.

Age 39

I've learned that there are people who love you dearly but just don't know how to show it.

Age 42

I've learned that you can make someone's day by simply sending them a little note.

Age 44

I've learned that the greater a person's sense of guilt, the greater his or her need to cast blame on others.

Age 46

I've learned that children and grandparents are natural allies.

Age 47

I've learned that no matter what happens, or how bad it seems today, life does go on, and it will be better tomorrow.

Age 48

I've learned that singing "Amazing Grace" can lift my spirit for hours.

Age 49

I've learned that motel mattresses are better on the side away from the phone.

Age 50

I've learned that keeping a vegetable garden is worth a medicine cabinet full of pills.

Age 52

I've learned that regardless of your relationship with your parents, you miss them terribly after they die.

Age 53

I've learned that making a living is not the same thing as making a life.

Age 58

I've learned that if you want to do something positive for your children, work to improve your marriage.

Age 61

I've learned that life sometimes gives you a second chance.

Age 62

I've learned that you shouldn't go through life with a catcher's mitt on both hands. You need to be able to throw something back.

Age 64

I've learned that if you pursue happiness, it will elude you. But if you focus on your family, the needs of others, your work, meeting new people, and doing the very best you can, happiness will find you.

Age 65

I've learned that whenever I decide something with kindness, I usually make the right decision.

Age 66

I've learned that everyone can use a prayer.

Age 72

I've learned that it pays to believe in miracles. And to tell the truth, I've seen several.

Age 75

I've learned that even when I have pains, I don't have to be one.

Age 82

I've learned that every day you should reach out and touch someone. People love that human touch - holding hands, a warm hug, or just a friendly pat on the back.

Age 85

I've learned that I still have a lot to learn.
Age 92

I've learned that you should share this with someone you care about.
Sometimes they just need a little something to make them smile.
Ageless.



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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."

We present below the verses one to twelve of the part three of Kena Upanishad translated by Sri Aurobindo along with a commentary.

केनोपनिषत्

kenopanishat

सा ब्रह्मेति होवाच ब्रह्मणो वा एतद्विजये मही यध्वमिति

ततो हैव विदाञ्चकार ब्रह्मेति ॥ १ ॥

sā brahmeti hovāca brahmaṇo vā etadvijaye mahīyadhvamiti
tato haiva vidāñcakāra brahmeti

1. She said to him, "It is the Eternal. Of the Eternal is this victory in which ye shall grow to greatness." Then alone he came to know that this was the Brahman.

तस्माद्वा एते देवा अतितरामिवान्यान्देवान्यदग्निर्वायुरिन्द्रस्ते

ह्येनन्नेदिष्टं पस्पर्शुस्ते ह्येनत्प्रथमो विदाञ्चकार ब्रह्मेति ॥ २ ॥

tasmādvā ete devā atitarānivānyāndevānyadagnirvāyurindraste
hyenannediṣṭhaṁ pasparśuste hyenatprathamō vidāñcakāra brahmeti

2. Therefore are these gods as it were beyond all the other gods, even Agni and Vayu and Indra, because they came nearest to the touch of That...

तस्माद्वा इन्द्रोऽतितरामिवान्यान्देवान्स

ह्येनन्नेदिष्टं पस्पर्श स ह्येनत्प्रथमो विदाञ्चकार ब्रह्मेति ॥ ३ ॥

tasmādvā indro'atitarānivānyāndevānsa
hyenannediṣṭhaṁ pasparśa sa hyenatprathamō vidāñcakāra brahmeti

3. Therefore is Indra as it were beyond all the other gods because he came nearest to the touch of That, because he first knew that it was the Brahman.

तस्यैष आदेशो यदेतद्विद्युतो व्यद्युतदा३

इतीन् न्यमीमिषदा३ इत्यधिदैवतम् ॥ ४ ॥

tasyaiṣa ādeśo yadetadvidyuto vyadyutatadā3
itin nyamimīṣadā3 ityadhidaivatam

4. Now this is the indication of That,—as is this flash of the lightning upon us or as is this falling of the eyelid, so in that which is of the gods.

अथाध्यात्मं यद्देतद्गच्छतीव च मनोऽनेन

चेतदुपस्मरत्यभीक्षणं सङ्कल्पः ॥ ५ ॥

athādhyātman yaddetadgacchatīva ca mano'neṇa
caitadupasmaratyabhikṣṇaṁ saṅkalpaḥ

5. Then in that which is of the Self,—as the motion of this mind seems to attain to That and by it afterwards the will in the thought continually remembers It.

तद्ध तद्वनं नाम तद्वनमित्युपासितव्यं स य एतदेवं वेदाभि

हिनः सर्वाणि भूतानि संवाञ्छन्ति ॥ ६ ॥

taddha tadvanam nāma tadvanamityupāsitavyam sa ya etadevaṁ vedābhi
hainam sarvaṇi bhūtāni saṁvāñchanti

6. The name of That is “That Delight”; as That Delight one should follow after It. He who so knows That, towards him verily all existences yearn.

उपनिषदं भो ब्रूहीत्युक्ता त उपनिषद्ब्राह्मी वाव त

उपनिषदमब्रूमेति ॥ ७ ॥

upaniṣadam bho brūhītyuktā ta upaniṣadbrāhmīm vāva ta
upaniṣadamabrūmeti

7. Thou hast said “Speak to me Upanishad”; spoken to thee is Upanishad. Of the Eternal verily is the Upanishad that we have spoken.

तसै तपो दमः कर्मेति प्रतिष्ठा वेदाः सर्वाङ्गानि

सत्यमायतनम् ॥ ८ ॥

tasai tapo damaḥ karmeti pratiṣṭhā vedāḥ sarvāṅgāni
satyamāyatanam

8. Of this knowledge austerity and self-conquest and works are the foundation, the Vedas are all its limbs, truth is its dwelling place.

यो वा एतामेवं वेदापहत्य पाप्मानमनन्ते स्वर्गे

लोके ज्येये प्रतितिष्ठति प्रतितिष्ठति ॥ ९ ॥

yo vā etāmevaṁ vedāpahatya pāpmānamanante svarge
loke jyeye pratitiṣṭhati pratitiṣṭhati

9. He who knows this knowledge, smites evil away from him and in that vaster world and infinite heaven finds his foundation, yea, he finds his foundation.

Commentary

The Transfiguration of the Self and the Gods

The means of the knowledge of Brahman are, we have seen, to get back behind the forms of the universe to that which is essential in the cosmos,- and that which is essential is

twofold, the gods in Nature and the self in the individual,- and then to get behind these to the Beyond which they represent. The practical relation of the gods to Brahman in this process of divine knowledge has been already determined. The cosmic functionings through which the gods act, mind, life, speech, senses, body, must become aware of something beyond them which governs them, by which they are and move, by whose force they evolve, enlarge themselves and arrive at power and joy and capacity; to that they must turn from their ordinary operations; leaving these, leaving the false idea of independent action and self-ordering which is an egoism of mind and life and sense they must become consciously passive to the power, light and joy of something which is beyond themselves.

What happens then is that this divine Unnameable reflects Himself openly in the gods. His light takes possession of the thinking mind, His power and joy of the life, His light and rapture of the emotional mind and the senses. Something of the supreme image of Brahman falls upon the world-nature and changes it into divine nature.

All this is not done by a sudden miracle. It comes by flashes, revelations, sudden touches and glimpses; there is as if a leap of the lightning of revelation flaming out from those heavens for a moment and then returning into its secret source; as if the lifting of the eyelid of an inner vision and its falling again because the eye cannot look long and steadily on the utter light. The repetition of these touches and visitings from the Beyond fixes the gods in their upward gaze and expectation, constant repetition fixes them in a constant passivity; not moving out any longer to grasp at the forms of the universe mind, life and senses will more and more be fixed in the memory, in the understanding, in the joy of the touch and vision of that transcendent glory which they have now resolved to make their sole object; to that only they will learn to respond and not to the touches of outward things. The silence which has fallen on them and which is now their foundation and status will become their knowledge of the eternal silence which is Brahman; the response of their functioning to a supernal light, power, joy will become their knowledge of the eternal activity which is Brahman. Other status, other response and activity they will not know. The mind will know nothing but the Brahman, think of nothing but the Brahman, the Life will move to, embrace, enjoy nothing but the Brahman, the eye will see, the ear hear, the other senses sense nothing but the Brahman.

But is then a complete oblivion of the external the goal? Must the mind and senses recede inward and fall into an unending trance and the life be for ever stilled? This is possible, if the soul so wills, but it is not inevitable and indispensable.

The Mind is cosmic, one in all the universe; so too are the Life, and the Sense, so too is Matter of the body; and when they exist in and for the Brahman only, they will not only know this but will sense, feel and live in that universal unity. Therefore to whatever thing they turn which to the individual sense and mind and life seems now external to them, there also it is not the mere form of things which they will know, think of, sense, embrace and enjoy, but always and only the Brahman.

Moreover, the external will cease to exist for them, because nothing will be external but

all things internal to us, even the whole world and all that is in it. For the limit of ego, the wall of individuality will break; the individual Mind will cease to know itself as individual, it will be conscious only of universal Mind one everywhere in which individuals are only knots of the one mentality; so the individual life will lose its sense of separateness and live only in and as the one life in which all individuals are simply whirls of the indivisible flood of Pranic activity; the very body and senses will be no longer conscious of a separated existence, but the real body which the man will feel himself to be physically will be the whole Earth and the whole universe and the whole indivisible form of things wheresoever existent, and the senses also will be converted to this principle of sensation so that even in what we call the external, the eye will see Brahman only in every sight, the ear will hear Brahman only in every sound, the inner and outer body will feel Brahman only in every touch and the touch itself as if internal in the greater body. The soul whose gods are thus converted to this supreme law and religion, will realise in the cosmos itself and in all its multiplicity the truth of the One besides whom there is no other or second. Moreover, becoming one with the formless and infinite, it will exceed the universe itself and see all the worlds not as external, not even as commensurate with itself, but as if within it.

And in fact, in the higher realisation it will not be Mind, Life, Sense of which even the mind, life and sense themselves will be originally aware, but rather that which constitutes them. By this process of constant visiting and divine touch and influence the Mind of the mind, that is to say, the superconscient Knowledge will take possession of the mental understanding and begin to turn all its vision and thinking into luminous stuff and vibration of light of the Supermind. So too the sense will be changed by the visitings of the Sense behind the sense and the whole sense-view of the universe itself will be altered so that the vital, mental and supramental will become visible to the senses with the physical only as their last, outermost and smallest result. So too the Life will become a superlife, a conscious movement of the infinite Conscious-Force; it will be impersonal, unlimited by any particular acts and enjoyment, unbound to their results, untroubled by the dualities or the touch of sin and suffering, grandiose, boundless, immortal. The material world itself will become for these gods a figure of the infinite, luminous and blissful Superconscient.

This will be the transfiguration of the gods, but what of the self? For we have seen that there are two fundamental entities, the gods and the self, and the self in us is greater than the cosmic Powers, its Godward destination more vital to our perfection and self-fulfilment than any transfiguration of these lesser deities. Therefore not only must the gods find their one Godhead and resolve themselves into it; that is to say, not only must the cosmic principles working in us resolve themselves into the working of the One, the Principle of all principles, so that they shall become only a unified existence and single action of That in spite of all play of differentiation, but also and with a more fundamental necessity the self in us which supports the action of the gods must find and enter into the one Self of all individual existences, the indivisible Spirit to whom all souls are no more than dark or luminous centres of its consciousness.

This the self of man, since it is the essentiality of a mental being, will do through the mind. In the gods the transfiguration is effected by the Superconscious itself visiting their substance and opening their vision with its flashes until it has transformed them; but the mind is capable of another action which is only apparently movement of mind, but really the movement of the self towards its own reality. The mind seems to go to That, to attain to it; it is lifted out of itself into something beyond and, although it falls back, still by the mind the will of knowledge in the mental thought continually and at last continuously remembers that into which it has entered. On this the Self through the mind seizes and repeatedly dwells and so doing it is finally caught up into it and at last able to dwell securely in that transcendence.

It transcends the mind, it transcends its own mental individualisation of the being, that which it now knows as itself; it ascends and takes foundation in the Self of all and in the status of self-joyous infinity which is the supreme manifestation of the Self. This is the transcendent immortality, this is the spiritual existence which the Upanishads declare to be the goal of man and by which we pass out of the mortal state into the heaven of the Spirit.

What then happens to the gods and the cosmos and all that the Lord develops in His being? Does it not all disappear? Is not the transfiguration of the gods even a mere secondary state through which we pass towards that culmination and which drops away from us as soon as we reach it? And with the disappearance of the gods and the cosmos does not the Lord too, the Master-Consciousness, disappear so that nothing is left but the one pure indeterminate Existence self-blissful in an eternal inaction and non-creation? Such was the conclusion of the later Vedanta in its extreme monistic form and such was the sense which it tried to read into all the Upanishads; but it must be recognised that in the language whether of the Isha or the Kena Upanishad there is absolutely nothing, not even a shade or a nuance pointing to it. If we want to find it there, we have to put it in by force; for the actual language used favours instead the conclusion of other Vedantic systems, which considered the goal to be the eternal joy of the soul in a Brahmaloaka or world of the Brahman in which it is one with the infinite existence and yet in a sense still a soul able to enjoy differentiation in the oneness.

In the next verse we have the culmination of the teaching of the Upanishad, the result of the great transcendence which it has been setting forth and afterwards the description of the immortality to which the souls of knowledge attain when they pass beyond the mortal status. It declares that Brahman is in its nature "That Delight," Tadvanam. "Vana" is the Vedic word for delight or delightful, and "Tadvanam" means therefore the transcendent Delight, the all-blissful Ananda of which the Taittiriya Upanishad speaks as the highest Brahman from which all existences are born, by which all existences live and increase and into which all existences arrive in their passing out of death and birth. It is as this transcendent Delight that the Brahman must be worshipped and sought. It is this beatitude therefore which is meant by the immortality of the Upanishads.

And what will be the result of knowing and possessing Brahman as the supreme Ananda? It is that towards the knower and possessor of the Brahman is directed the desire of all creatures. In other words, he becomes a centre of the divine Delight shedding it on all the

world and attracting all to it as to a fountain of joy and love and self-fulfilment in the universe.

This is the culmination of the teaching of the Upanishad; there was a demand for the secret teaching that enters into the ultimate truth, for the "Upanishad", and in response this doctrine has been given. It has been uttered, the Upanishad of the Brahman, the hidden ultimate truth of the supreme Existence; its beginning was the search for the Lord, Master of mind, life, speech and senses in whom is the absolute of mind, the absolute of life, the absolute of speech and senses and its close is the finding of Him as the transcendent Beatitude and the elevation of the soul that finds and possesses it into a living centre of that Delight towards which all creatures in the universe shall turn as to a fountain of its ecstasies.

* * *

The Upanishad closes with two verses which seem to review and characterise the whole work in the manner of the ancient writings when they have drawn to their close. This Upanishad or gospel of the inmost Truth of things has for its foundation, it is said, the practice of self-mastery, action and the subdual of the sense-life to the power of the Spirit. In other words, life and works are to be used as a means of arriving out of the state of subjection proper to the soul in the ignorance into a state of mastery which brings it nearer to the absolute self-mastery and all-mastery of the supreme Soul seated in the knowledge. The Vedas, that is to say, the utterances of the inspired seers and the truths they hold, are described as all the limbs of the Upanishad; in other words, all the convergent lines and aspects, all the necessary elements of this great practice, this profound psychological self-training and spiritual aspiration are set forth in these great Scriptures, channels of supreme knowledge and indicators of a supreme discipline. Truth is its home; and this Truth is not merely intellectual verity,-for that is not the sense of the word in the Vedic writings,-but man's ultimate human state of true being, true consciousness, right knowledge, right works, right joy of existence, all indeed that is contrary to the falsehood of egoism and ignorance. It is by these means, by using works and self-discipline for mastery of oneself and for the generation of spiritual energy, by fathoming in all its parts the knowledge and repeating the high example of the great Vedic seers and by living in the Truth that one becomes capable of the great ascent which the Upanishad opens to us.

The goal of the ascent is the world of the true and vast existence of which the Veda speaks as the Truth that is the final goal and home of man. It is described here as the greater infinite heavenly world, (Swargaloka, Swarloka of the Veda), which is not the lesser Swarga of the Puranas or the lesser Brahmaloaka of the Mundaka Upanishad, its world of the sun's rays to which the soul arrives by works of virtue and piety, but falls from them by the exhaustion of their merit; it is the higher Swarga or Brahman-world of the Katha which is beyond the dual symbols of birth and death, the higher Brahman-worlds of the Mundaka which the soul enters by knowledge and renunciation. It is therefore a state not belonging to the Ignorance, but to Knowledge. It is, in fact, the infinite existence and beatitude of the soul in the being of the all-blissful existence; it is

too the higher status, the light of the Mind beyond the mind, the joy and eternal mastery of the Life beyond the life, the riches of the Sense beyond the senses. And the soul finds in it not only its own largeness but finds too and possesses the infinity of the One and it has firm foundation in that immortal state because there a supreme Silence and eternal Peace are the secure foundation of eternal Knowledge and absolute Joy.

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A Last Word

We have now completed our review of this Upanishad; we have considered minutely the bearings of its successive utterances and striven to make as precise as we can to the intelligence the sense of the puissant phrases in which it gives us its leading clues to that which can never be entirely expressed by human speech. We have some idea of what it means by that Brahman, by the Mind of mind, the Life of life, the Sense of sense, the Speech of speech, by the opposition of ourselves and the gods, by the Unknowable who is yet not utterly unknowable to us, by the transcendence of the mortal state and the conquest of immortality.

Fundamentally its teaching reposes on the assertion of three states of existence, the human and mortal, the Brahman-consciousness which is the absolute of our relativities, and the utter Absolute which is unknowable. The first is in a sense a false status of misrepresentation because it is a continual term of apparent opposites and balancings where the truth of things is a secret unity; we have here a bright or positive figure and a dark or negative figure and both are figures, neither the Truth; still in that we now live and through that we have to move to the Beyond. The second is the Lord of all this dual action who is beyond it; He is the truth of Brahman and not in any way a falsehood or misrepresentation, but the truth of it as attained by us in our eternal supramental being; in Him are the absolutes of all that here we experience in partial figures. The Unknowable is beyond our grasp because though it is the same Reality, yet it exceeds even our highest term of eternal being and is beyond Existence and Non-existence; it is therefore to the Brahman, the Lord who has a relation to what we are that we must direct our search if we would attain beyond what temporarily seems to what eternally is.

The attainment of the Brahman is our escape from the mortal status into Immortality, by which we understand not the survival of death, but the finding of our true self of eternal being and bliss beyond the dual symbols of birth and death. By immortality we mean the absolute life of the soul as opposed to the transient and mutable life in the body which it assumes by birth and death and rebirth and superior also to its life as the mere mental being who dwells in the world subjected helplessly to this law of death and birth or seems at least by his ignorance to be subjected to this and to other laws of the lower Nature. To know and possess its true nature, free, absolute, master of itself and its embodiments is the soul's means of transcendence, and to know and possess this is to know and possess the Brahman. It is also to rise out of mortal world into immortal world, out of world of bondage into world of largeness, out of finite world into infinite world. It is to ascend out of earthly joy and sorrow into a transcendent Beatitude.

This must be done by the abandonment of our attachment to the figure of things in the mortal world. We must put from us its death and dualities if we would compass the unity and immortality. Therefore it follows that we must cease to make the goods of this world or even its right, light and beauty our object of pursuit; we must go beyond these to a supreme Good, a transcendent Truth, Light and Beauty in which the opposite figures of what we call evil disappear. But still, being in this world, it is only through something in this world itself that we can transcend it; it is through its figures that we must find the absolute. Therefore, we scrutinise them and perceive that there are first these forms of mind, life, speech and sense, all of them figures and imperfect suggestions, and then behind them the cosmic principles through which the One acts. It is to these cosmic principles that we must proceed and turn them from their ordinary aim and movement in the world to find their own supreme aim and absolute movement in their own one Godhead, the Lord, the Brahman; they must be drawn to leave the workings of ordinary mind and find the superconscient Mind, to leave the workings of ordinary speech and sense and find the supramental Sense and original Word, to leave the apparent workings of mundane Life and find the transcendent Life.

Besides the gods, there is our self, the spirit within who supports all this action of the gods. Our spirit too must turn from its absorption in its figure of itself as it sees it involved in the movement of individual life, mind, body and subject to it and must direct its gaze upward to its own supreme Self who is beyond all this movement and master of it all. Therefore the mind must indeed become passive to the divine Mind, the sense to the divine Sense, the life to the divine Life and by receptivity to constant touches and visitings of the highest be transfigured into a reflection of these transcendences; but also the individual self must through the mind's aspiration upwards, through upliftings of itself beyond, through constant memory of the supreme Reality in which during these divine moments it has lived, ascend finally into that Bliss and Power and Light.

But this will not necessarily mean the immersion into an all-oblivious Being eternally absorbed in His own inactive self-existence. For the mind, sense, life going beyond their individual formations find that they are only one centre of the sole Mind, Life, Form of things and therefore they find Brahman in that also and not only in an individual transcendence; they bring down the vision of the superconscient into that also and not only into their own individual workings. The mind of the individual escapes from its limits and becomes the one universal mind, his life the one universal life, his bodily sense the sense of the whole universe and even more as his own indivisible Brahman-body. He perceives the universe in himself and he perceives also his self in all existences and knows it to be the one, the omnipresent, the single-multiple all-inhabiting Lord and Reality. Without this realisation he has not fulfilled the conditions of immortality. Therefore it is said that what the sages seek is to distinguish and see the Brahman in all existences; by that discovery, realisation and possession of Him everywhere and in all they attain to their immortal existence.

Still although the victory of the gods, that is to say, the progressive perfection of the mind, life, body in the positive terms of good, right, joy, knowledge, power is recognised as a victory of the Brahman and the necessity of using life and human works in the world

as a means of preparation and self-mastery is admitted, yet a final passing away into the infinite heavenly world or status of the Brahman-consciousness is held out as the goal.

And this would seem to imply a rejection of the life of the cosmos. Well then may we ask, we the modern humanity more and more conscious of the inner warning of that which created us, be it Nature or God, that there is a work for the race, a divine purpose in its creation which exceeds the salvation of the individual soul, because the universal is as real or even more real than the individual, we who feel more and more, in the language of the Koran, that the Lord did not create heaven and earth in a jest, that Brahman did not begin dreaming this world-dream in a moment of aberration and delirium,- well may we ask whether this gospel of individual salvation is all the message even of this purer, earlier, more catholic Vedanta.

If so, then Vedanta at its best is a gospel for the saint, the ascetic, the monk, the solitary, but it has not a message which the widening consciousness of the world can joyfully accept as the word for which it was waiting. For there is evidently something vital that has escaped it, a profound word of the riddle of existence from which it has turned its eyes or which it was unable or thought it not worth while to solve.

Now certainly there is an emphasis in the Upanishads increasing steadily as time goes on into an over-emphasis, on the salvation of the individual, on his rejection of the lower cosmic life. This note increases in them as they become later in date, it swells afterwards into the rejection of all cosmic life whatever and that becomes finally in later Hinduism almost the one dominant and all-challenging cry. It does not exist in the earlier Vedic revelation where individual salvation is regarded as a means towards a great cosmic victory, the eventual conquest of heaven and earth by the superconscious Truth and Bliss and those who have achieved the victory in the past are the conscious helpers of their yet battling posterity. If this earlier note is missing in the Upanishads, then,- for great as are these Scriptures, luminous, profound, sublime in their unsurpassed truth, beauty and power, yet it is only the ignorant soul that will make itself the slave of a book,- then in using them as an aid to knowledge we must insistently call back that earlier missing note, we must seek elsewhere a solution for the word of the riddle that has been ignored. The Upanishad alone of extant scriptures gives us without veil or stinting, with plenitude and a noble catholicity the truth of the Brahman; its aid to humanity is therefore indispensable. Only, where anything essential is missing, we must go beyond the Upanishads to seek it,-as for instance when we add to its emphasis on divine knowledge the indispensable ardent emphasis of the later teachings upon divine love and the high emphasis of the Veda upon divine works.

The Vedic gospel of a supreme victory in heaven and on earth for the divine in man, the Christian gospel of a kingdom of God and divine city upon earth, the Puranic idea of progressing Avatars ending in the kingdom of the perfect and the restoration of the Golden Age, not only contain behind their forms a profound truth, but they are necessary to the religious sense in mankind. Without it the teaching of the vanity of human life and of a passionate fleeing and renunciation can only be powerful in passing epochs or else on the few strong souls in each age that are really capable of these things. The rest of

humanity will either reject the creed which makes that its foundation or ignore it in practice while professing it in precept or else must sink under the weight of its own impotence and the sense of the illusion of life or of the curse of God upon the world as mediaeval Christendom sank into ignorance and obscurantism or later India into stagnant torpor and the pettiness of a life of aimless egoism. The promise for the individual is well, but the promise for the race is also needed. Our father Heaven must remain bright with the hope of deliverance, but also our mother Earth must not feel herself for ever accursed.

It was necessary at one time to insist even exclusively on the idea of individual salvation so that the sense of a Beyond might be driven into man's mentality, as it was necessary at one time to insist on a heaven of joys for the virtuous and pious so that man might be drawn by that shining bait towards the practice of religion and the suppression of his unbridled animality. But as the lures of earth have to be conquered, so also have the lures of heaven. The lure of a pleasant Paradise of the rewards of virtue has been rejected by man; the Upanishads belittled it ages ago in India and it is now no longer dominant in the mind of the people; the similar lure in popular Christianity and popular Islam has no meaning for the conscience of modern humanity.

The lure of a release from birth and death and withdrawal from the cosmic labour must also be rejected, as it was rejected by Mahayanist Buddhism which held compassion and helpfulness to be greater than Nirvana. As the virtues we practice must be done without demand of earthly or heavenly reward, so the salvation we seek must be purely internal and impersonal; it must be the release from egoism, the union with the Divine, the realisation of our universality as well as our transcendence, and no salvation should be valued which takes us away from the love of God in his manifestation and the help we can give to the world. If need be, it must be taught for a time, "Better this hell with our other suffering selves than a solitary salvation."

Fortunately, there is no need to go to such lengths and deny one side of the truth in order to establish another. The Upanishad itself suggests the door of escape from any over-emphasis in its own statement of the truth. For the man who knows and possesses the supreme Brahman as the transcendent Beatitude becomes a centre of that delight to which all his fellows shall come, a well from which they can draw the divine waters. Here is the clue that we need. The connection with the universe is preserved for the one reason which supremely justifies that connection; it must subsist not from the desire of personal earthly joy, as with those who are still bound, but for help to all creatures. Two then are the objects of the high-reaching soul, to attain the Supreme and to be for ever for the good of all the world,-even as Brahman Himself; whether here or elsewhere, does not essentially matter. Still where the struggle is thickest, there should be the hero of the spirit, that is surely the highest choice of the son of Immortality; the earth calls most, because it has most need of him, to the soul that has become one with the universe.

And the nature of the highest good that can be done is also indicated,-though other lower forms of help are not therefore excluded. To assist in the lesser victories of the gods which must prepare the supreme victory of the Brahman may well be and must be in

some way or other a part of our task; but the greatest helpfulness of all is this, to be a human centre of the Light, the Glory, the Bliss, the Strength, the Knowledge of the Divine Existence, one through whom it shall communicate itself lavishly to other men and attract by its magnet of delight their souls to that which is the Highest.



Integral Health

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When Old Meets the New

Dr. Alok Pandey

The body is an unconscious machine obeying mechanical laws and processes, said the scientist of old. The body is a conscious machine responding to our thoughts and feelings, says the modern scientist.

The body is unconscious, an obstacle and hindrance, said the yogi of old. The body can be a conscious instrument of the Spirit, says the Yoga of this age of Matter.

Both views, the modern scientific and spiritual, meet at the matrix of consciousness. One, looking from below, maintains that consciousness is an evolutionary result of activities in the physical brain. The other, observing from above, knows the physical body and brain to be the result of an involution of consciousness into matter and its re-emergence from it. Both views appear different when viewed by the mind. In reality however, the difference is only in appearance. Consciousness condensed becomes Matter. Matter subtilised is Consciousness. Both are one in essence, different in manifestation.

This is the grand reconciliation, awaiting its hour in the new Millennium. This is the vision of the New Age, -- Matter and Spirit marrying each other in the holy embrace of a spiritualized body. The seer vision of the Yogi awaits its golden hour:

"The Spirit's tops and Nature's base shall draw
Near to the secret of their separate truth
And know each other as one deity.
The Spirit shall look out through Matter's gaze
And Matter shall reveal the Spirit's face."¹

(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).

(1: Sri Aurobindo. Savitri Bk. XI. Pondicherry; Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1970, p.709.)



Integral Education

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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 disciple 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.

Man-making Education

Swami Vivekananda

Knowing is unveiling.

Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man.

Knowledge is inherent in man, no knowledge comes from outside; it is all inside. What we say a man 'knows', should, in strict psychological language, be what he 'discovers' or 'unveils'. What a man 'learns' is really what he 'discovers' by taking the cover off his own soul, which is a mine of infinite knowledge. We say Newton discovered gravitation. Was it sitting anywhere in a corner waiting for him? It was in his own mind; the time came and he found it out. All knowledge that the world has ever received comes from the mind; the infinite library of the universe is in your own mind. The external world is only the suggestion, the occasion, which sets you to study your own mind. The falling of an apple gave the suggestion to Newton, and he studied his own mind. He rearranged all the previous links of thought in his mind and discovered a new link among them, which we call the law of gravitation. It was not in the apple nor in anything in the centre of the earth.

All knowledge therefore, secular or spiritual, is in the human mind. In many cases it is not discovered, but remains covered, and when the covering is being slowly taken off, we say 'we are learning', and the advance of knowledge is made by this process of uncovering. The man from whom this veil is being lifted is the more knowing man; the man upon whom it lies thick is ignorant; the man from whom it has entirely gone is all knowing, omniscient. Like fire in a piece of flint, knowledge exists in the mind; suggestion is the friction which brings it out. All knowledge and all power are within. What we call powers, secrets of Nature, and force are all within. All knowledge comes from the human soul. Man manifests knowledge, discovers it within himself, which is pre-existing, through eternity.

No one was ever really taught by another. Each of us has to teach himself. The external teacher offers only the suggestion which rouses the internal teacher to work to understand things. Then things will be made clearer to us by our own power of perception and thought, and we shall realise them in our own souls. The whole of the big banyan tree which covers acres of ground was in the little seed which was perhaps no bigger than one-eighth of a mustard seed. All that mass of energy was there confined. The gigantic intellect, we know, lies coiled up in the protoplasmic cell. It may seem like a paradox, but it is true. Each one of us has come out of one protoplasmic cell and all the powers we possess were coiled up there. You cannot say they came from food, for if you heap up food mountains high, what power comes out of it? The energy was there potentially no doubt, but still there. So is infinite power in the soul of man whether he knows it or not. Its manifestation is only a question of being conscious of it.

The Light Divine within is obscured in most people. It is like a lamp in a cask of iron: no gleam of light can shine through. Gradually, by purity and unselfishness, we can make the obscuring medium less and less dense, until at last it becomes as transparent as glass. Sri Ramakrishna was like the iron cask transformed into a glass cask, through which can be seen the inner light as it is.

Self-education

You cannot teach a child any more than you can grow a plant. The plant develops its own nature. The child also teaches itself. But you can help it to go forward in its own way. What you can do is not of a positive nature but negative. You can take away the obstacles, and knowledge comes out of its own nature. Loosen the soil a little, so that it may come out easily. Put a hedge round it; see that it is not killed by anything. You can supply the growing seed with the materials for the making up of its body, bringing to it the earth, the water, the air that it wants. And there your work stops. It will take all that it wants by its own nature. So with the education of the child. A child educates itself. The teacher spoils everything by thinking that he is teaching. Within man is all knowledge, and it requires only an awakening, and that much is the work of the teacher. We have only to do so much for the boys that they may learn to apply their own intellect to the proper use of their hands, legs, ears and eyes.

Free Growth

That system which aims at educating our boys in the same manner as that of the man who battered his ass, being advised that it could thereby be turned into a horse, should be abolished. Owing to undue domination exercised by the parents, our boys do not get free scope for growth. In everyone there are infinite tendencies which require proper scope for satisfaction. Violent attempts at reform always end by retarding reform. If you do not allow one to become a lion, one will become a fox.

Positive Ideas

We should give positive ideas. Negative thoughts only weaken men. Do you not find that where parents are constantly taxing their sons to read and write, telling them that they will never learn anything and calling them fools and so forth, the latter do actually turn out to be so in many cases? If you speak kind words to them and encourage them, they are bound to improve in time. If you can give them positive ideas, people will grow up to be men and learn to stand on their own legs. In language and literature, in poetry and arts, in everything we must point out not the mistakes that people are making in their thoughts and actions, but the way in which they will be able to do these things better. The teaching must be modified according to the needs of the taught. Past lives have moulded our tendencies, and so give to the pupil according to his tendencies. Take everyone where he stands and push him forward. We have seen how Sri Ramkrishna would encourage even those whom we considered worthless and change the very course of their lives thereby! He never destroyed a single man's special inclinations. He gave words of hope and encouragement even to the most degraded of persons and lifted them up.

Liberty is the first condition of growth. It is wrong, a thousand times wrong, if any of you dares to say, 'I will work out the salvation of this woman or child.' Hands off! They will solve their own problems. Who are you to assume that you know everything? How dare you think that you have the right over God? For, don't you know that every soul is the Soul of God? Look upon everyone as God. You can only serve. Serve the children of the Lord if you have the privilege. If the Lord grants that you can help anyone of His children, blessed you are. Blessed you are that that privilege was given to you when others had it not. Do it only as worship.

Assimilation of Ideas

Education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain and runs riot there, undigested all your life. We must have life-building, man-making, character-making, assimilation of ideas. If you have assimilated five ideas and made them your life and character, you have more education than any man who has got by heart a whole library. If education were identical with information, the libraries would be the greatest sages in the world and encyclopaedias the Rishis.

Getting by heart the thoughts of others in a foreign language and stuffing your brain with them and taking some university degrees, you consider yourself educated. Is this education? What is the goal of your education? Either a clerkship, or being a lawyer, or at the most a Deputy Magistrate, which is another form of clerkship isn't that all? What

good will it do you or the country at large? Open your eyes and see what a piteous cry for food is rising in the land of Bharata, proverbial for its food. Will your education fulfil this want? The education that does not help the common mass of people to equip themselves for the struggle for life, which does not bring out strength of character, a spirit of philanthropy and the courage of a lion - is it worth the name?

We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded and by which one can stand on one's own feet. What we need is to study, independent of foreign control, different branches of the knowledge that is our own, and with it the English language and western science; we need technical education and all else that will develop industries, so that men instead of seeking for service may earn enough to provide for themselves and save against a rainy day.

Concentration: The Only Method of Education

There is only one method by which to attain knowledge, that which is called concentration. The very essence of education is concentration of mind. From the lowest man to the highest yogi, all have to use the same method to attain knowledge. The chemist who works in his laboratory concentrates all the powers of his mind, brings them into one focus, and throws them on the elements; the elements stand analysed, and thus his knowledge comes. The astronomer concentrates the powers of his mind and brings them into one focus; and he throws them on to objects through his telescope and stars and systems roll forward and give up their secrets to him. So it is in every case: with the professor in his chair, the student with his book, with every man who is working to know.

The more the power of concentration, the greater the knowledge that is acquired. Even the lowest shoemaker, if he gives more concentration, will make shoes better. The cook with concentration will cook a meal all the better. In making money, or in worshipping God, or in doing anything, the stronger the power of concentration, the better will that thing be done. This is the one call, the one knock, which opens the gates of Nature, and lets out floods of light.

Ninety per cent of thought-force is wasted by the ordinary human being and therefore he is constantly committing blunders. The trained man or mind never makes a mistake. The main difference between men and the animals is the difference in their power of concentration. An animal has very little power of concentration. Those who have trained animals find much difficulty in the fact that the animal is constantly forgetting what is told him. He cannot concentrate his mind upon anything for a long time. Herein is the difference between man and the animals. This difference in their power of concentration also constitutes the difference between man and man. Compare the lowest with the highest man. The difference is in the degree of concentration.

All success in any line of work is the result of this. High achievements in arts, music, etc., are the result of concentration. When the mind is concentrated and turned back on itself, all within us will be our servants, not our masters. The Greeks applied their concentration to the external world and the result was perfection in art, literature, etc. The Hindu

concentrated on the internal world, upon the unseen realms in the self and developed the science of yoga. The world is ready to give up its secrets if we only know how to knock, how to give the necessary blow. The strength and force of the blow comes through concentration.

The power of concentration is the only key to the treasure-house of knowledge. In the present state of our body we are much distracted, and the mind is frittering away its energies upon a hundred things. As soon as I try to call on my thoughts and concentrate my mind upon any one object of knowledge, thousands of undesired impulses rush into the brain, thousands of thoughts rush into the mind and disturb it. How to check it and bring the mind under control is the whole subject of study in Rajayoga. The practice of meditation leads to mental concentration.

To me the very essence of education is concentration of mind, not the collection of facts. If I had to do my education once again, I would not study facts at all. I would develop the power of concentration and detachment, and then with a perfect instrument, collect facts at will.

Brahmacharya

Power comes to him who observes unbroken Brahmacharya for a period of twelve years. Complete continence gives great intellectual and spiritual power. Controlled desire leads to the highest results. Transform the sexual energy into spiritual energy. The stronger this force, the more can be done with it. Only a powerful current of water can do hydraulic mining. It is owing to want of continence that everything is on the brink of ruin in our country. By observance of strict Brahmacharya all learning can be mastered in a very short time: one acquires an unfailing memory of what one hears or knows but once. The chaste brain has tremendous energy and gigantic will power. Without chastity there can be no spiritual strength. Continence gives wonderful control over mankind. The spiritual leaders of men have been very continent and this is what gave them power.

Every boy should be trained to practise absolute Brahmacharya and then and then alone faith and Shraddha will come. Chastity in thought, word and deed always and in all conditions is what is called Brahmacharya. Unchaste imagination is as bad as unchaste action. The Brahmacharin must be pure in thought, word and deed.

The Goal of Man-making

The end of all education, all training, should be man-making. The end and aim of all training is to make the man grow. The training by which the current and expression of will are brought under control and become fruitful, is called education. What our country now wants are muscles of iron and nerves of steel, gigantic wills which nothing can resist, which can penetrate into the mysteries and secrets of the universe and will accomplish their purpose in any fashion, even if it means going down to the bottom of the ocean, meeting death face to face.

It is man-making religion that we want.
It is man-making theories that we want.
It is man-making education all round that we want.

1. Swami Vivekanada lived during a period when the education of girls was still not very common in India and hence he uses the word 'boy' as versus perhaps 'child'. However, he himself put in considerable effort and always promoted the idea of the education of girls.



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The Indian tradition of literature, unique for its content as well as chronological development, ran in two lines : Mythological and Pragmatic.

Beginning with the Vedas at the dawn of civilisation the first line branched out into the Upanishads, gave way to the epics and the Mahapuranas, followed by Upapuranas and the rest.

The second line consisted of the Brihat Katha (the precursor of the Kathasaritsagara), the Jatakas and the Panchatantra, etc. They shed light on different aspects of life, on its worldly and other worldly complexities, sometimes didactic (as in the Jatakas) but more often simply expository of the various possibilities of life.

Between these two lines quietly ran a third, the treasure of tales told by the hermits, mendicants, ascetics and other mystics. Profound for psychological studies, sharp with mystic experiences, these tales of light, wit and delight remained a oral tradition for the most part.

We propose to serialise some of them, "retold by a master story teller of our time - one of the best-loved writers of India" - as the India's National Academy of Letters introduces the author, Manoj Das.

Indra to Blame!

Manoj Das

There was a Pundit who was quite wealthy. He had a large orchard.

One afternoon a cow entered his orchard and ate up a few brinjals. The Pundit pounded it with a lathi. The beating proved too much for the creature. It died.

The poor man who owned the cow raised a shrill cry. Passers-by who saw the Pundit's deed were stunned. The villagers were shocked. Apart from the fact that the cow was a valuable asset materially speaking, it was a sacred animal. For a Pundit to kill it was the height of bizarrerie.

The prominent ones of the village met the Pundit. They suggested that the Pundit pay compensation to the poor man and do some penance for his own sin. Penance, of course, was his personal business. But compensation he must pay.

"What have I done to give compensation and do penance?" asked the Pundit, feigning surprise.

"You killed a cow! What worse could you do?"

"How did you conclude that I killed a cow?" asked the Pundit.

"So many people saw you thrashing it to death!" said the villagers.

"Oh that!" laughed the Pundit. "How to explain the fact to you who know nothing of the complexity of realities? I did not kill it, it is God Indra who killed it."

"How does God Indra come into the picture?" asked the villagers, puzzled.

The Pundit recited a difficult couplet from a scripture. It meant that Indra was the spirit and the presiding deity of the human hands. The Pundit said in conclusion, "So, if anyone is responsible for what my hands did, it is God Indra. Do you understand? Go to Indra and ask him for the compensation!"

The people dispersed, unable to rebuff him.

Two days later a very dignified looking person was seen walking the village street. He stopped near the Pundit's house. "How wonderful!" he said aloud, looking at the Pundit's orchard.

"What is wonderful, Sir?" asked the Pundit.

"This orchard. I wonder who could have raised this!" mused the stranger.

"I have raised it, Sir, with my own hands!"

"Excellent. But who has dug these well-designed tunnels through the orchard?"

"Myself, Sir, myself!" exclaimed the flattered Pundit.

"Who raised those beautiful flower-plants?"

"I Sir, I, with this very pair of hands!" said the Pundit, lifting his arms high, unmindful of the crowd that had collected behind the stranger.

"Fine. Now, can I put a small question to you?"

"Why not, Sir!"

"If it is you who did all this with your own pair of hands, must the poor Indra be blamed when it comes to killing the cow?"

The Pundit's face fell. The stranger, who was none other than Indra, went away.

The villagers now understood the hollowness of the Pundit's logic. They compelled him to pay sufficient compensation to the owner of the cow.

This belongs to the genre of satires directed against hypocrites to whom scriptures came handy whenever it suited their mean interest. It is true that the different limbs of the human body are related in a subtle way to different energies represented by different gods, but to use such knowledge for serving any purpose at a lower plane is unpardonable.

(Manoj Das is an internationally known creative writer. He is the recipient of India's national recognition, the Sahitya Akademi Award and the nation's most prestigious literary award, the Saraswati Samman. As a social commentator, his columns in India's national dailies like The Times of India, The Hindustan Times, The Hindu and The Statesman, revealing the deeper truth and the untraced aspects behind current issues, have been highly appreciated.)



SAVITRI

the Golden Bridge, the Wonderful Fire

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Mangesh Nadkarni

Instalment-41

Savitri sees all the four aspects of the Supreme Divine in the most enchanting form standing in front of her. We have already seen how the Virat, Hiranyagarbha and Ishwara aspects of the Supreme are described by the poet. Now Savitri sees in this figure the Turiya aspect as well. Before we examine how this aspect is described, let us briefly examine how it is characterised in the Mandukya Upanishad. The Mandukya describes it as follows:

Na antah prajnam na bahih prajnam na ubhayatah prajnam na prjnaanaghanam na prajnam na aprajnam / adrishTam avyavahaaryam agrahyam alakshaNam acinntyam avyapadeshyam ekaatma pratyaya saaram prapancopashamam shantam shivam advaitaam caturtham manyante sah aatmaa sah vijneyah

"He who is neither inward-wise, nor outward-wise, nor both inward- and out-ward wise, nor wisdom self-gathered, nor possessed of wisdom, He Who is unseen and incommunicable, unseizable, featureless, unthinkable, and unnameable, Whose essentiality is awareness of the Self in its single existence, in whom all phenomena dissolve, Who is calm, Who is Good, Who is the One than whom there is no other, Him they deem the fourth; He is the Self, He is the object of Knowledge."

We see above how the Upanishad makes an attempt to describe in words what is basically ineffable. Let us see now how Sri Aurobindo handles this challenge:

Above was the brooding bliss of the Infinite,
Its omniscient and omnipotent repose,
Its immobile silence absolute and alone.
All powers were woven in countless concords here.
The bliss that made the world in his body lived,
Love and delight were the head of the sweet form.
In the alluring meshes of their snare
Recaptured, the proud blissful members held
All joys outrunners of the panting heart

And fugitive from life's outstripped desire.
Whatever vision has escaped the eye,
Whatever happiness comes in dream and trance,
The nectar spilled by love with trembling hands,
The joy the cup of Nature cannot hold,
Had crowded to the beauty of his face,
Were waiting in the honey of his laugh.
Things hidden by the silence of the hours,
The ideas that find no voice on living lips,
The soul's pregnant meeting with infinity
Had come to birth in him and taken fire:
The secret whisper of the flower and star
Revealed its meaning in his fathomless look.
His lips curved eloquent like a rose of dawn;
His smile that played with the wonder of the mind
And stayed in the heart when it had left his mouth
Glimmered with the radiance of the morning star
Gemming the wide discovery of heaven.
His gaze was the regard of eternity;
The spirit of its sweet and calm intent
Was a wise home of gladness and divulged
The light of the ages in the mirth of the hours,
A sun of wisdom in a miracled grove.
In the orchestral largeness of his mind
All contrary seekings their close kinship knew,
Rich-hearted, wonderful to each other met
In the mutual marvelling of their myriad notes
And dwelt like brothers of one family
Who had found their common and mysterious home.
As from the harp of some ecstatic god
There springs a harmony of lyric bliss
Striving to leave no heavenly joy unsung,
Such was the life in that embodied Light.
He seemed the wideness of a boundless sky,
He seemed the passion of a sorrowless earth,
He seemed the burning of a world-wide sun.
Two looked upon each other, Soul saw Soul. Pages 682 - 683

The Divine as the Prajna Purusha has already been described in the lines preceding the lines reproduced above. Above this Prajna Purusha is the Infinite in its conscious bliss, reposing in its omniscience and omnipotence, alone and absolute in its immobile silence. All powers are present here since they are woven into countless concords (harmonies).

Here in the body of this figure can be seen the bliss that has made the world, and of the sweet form of this figure, love and delight are the head. All the joys that flow from the

passionate human heart when its desires are fulfilled are recaptured and held captive by the blissful limbs of this being as in the captivating meshes of a net.

In the beauty of the face of this figure is collected all the beauty, including even the beauty that the human eye cannot capture fully; all the happiness including that which comes in dream and trance, and the sweet nectar spilt by love in excitement, all the joy that nature's vessel cannot contain - all these are contained in his honeyed laughter.

There are things that lay veiled by the silence of earthly time and there are also ideas that cannot be expressed in speech; all these burn bright in his being; in him takes place the potent meeting of the inner soul with infinity. In his fathomless look stands revealed the secret whisper of the flower and the star.

The curve of his lips is as eloquent as a rose of dawn. His smile plays with the wonder of the mind and stays in his heart when it leaves the mouth; it shines with the radiance of the morning star, shining like a gem of heavenly revelation.

His look is the stare of eternity. In its sweetness and calm is the felicity of a sage; it reveals the wisdom of the ages in the mirth of fleeting hours. In it shines a sun of wisdom as in an enchanted wood.

In the harmony of his mind all opposites find a close mutual relationship; these contraries appear wonderful to each other and marvel at each other's myriad differences; they dwell together like the members of one family, who have found their common and mysterious home.

This embodiment of Light standing before Savitri stood like a harmony of lyric bliss issuing from the lyric of an ecstatic God, trying to make sure that no heavenly joy is left unsung.

He seemed as wide as the boundless sky; he seemed to personify the passion of an earth freed from sorrow; he seemed like the burning of a world-wide sun.

The two looked upon each other, Savitri and this effulgent figure in front of her. The soul of Savitri saw the soul of what had appeared like the God of Death.

Then like an anthem rising from the transparent cave of the heart, a voice soared up whose enchanting sound seemed to have the power of changing the painful weeping of the suffering earth into sobs of ecstatic joy and her cry into a happy song of the spirit. This was the voice of the enchanting figure standing in front of Savitri.

" O Savitri, O human image of the immortal word, you have seen beyond the ornate walls of the senses and forced the thought-covered doors to swing open and seen through the arches of revelation and unlocked passages of spiritual sight. You have found the entry into the heavenly state of the soul and found the golden key to the treasures beyond. I am wonder-struck that you have been able to do all this.

There has opened in you the secret sight which man misses in his blindness and it has enabled you to see beyond Time and revealed to you the course which my chariot takes, and disclosed to you how death is my underground channel through life to reach my hidden vistas of bliss."

Then the enchanting presence in front of her tells Savitri who he is:

I am the hushed search of the jealous gods
Pursuing my wisdom's vast mysterious work
Seized in the thousand meeting ways of heaven.
I am the beauty of the unveiled ray
Drawing through the deep roads of the infinite night
The unconquerable pilgrim soul of earth
Beneath the flaring torches of the stars.
I am the inviolable Ecstasy;
They who have looked on me, shall grieve no more.
The eyes that live in night shall see my form. (Pages: 683 - 84)

"I am the object of the hushed search of the jealous gods who pursue my wisdom's vast mysterious word.

I am the beauty of the secret Divine Ray, which attracts the unconquerable pilgrim soul of the earth as it trudges along the tangled roads of the endless night, beneath the flaring torches of the stars. I am the Ecstasy that is secure from assault or trespass. Those who look on me shall never grieve again. Only they for whom the external world and its show are a night (who have no absorbing interest in the outer world and its drama) shall see my form."

(Now this enchanting Divine being begins to weave a subtle net which he wishes to cast on Savitri as one final test of her integrity and dedication to her mission in life. As usual, it is prefaced by a philosophical note which highlights how impossible it is to achieve what Savitri is keen on achieving - the transformation of earthly life into its perfect divine image.)

The Divine being continues, " On the shores of the sea of consciousness which flows through several straits, underneath an agitated sky (reflecting the stress the sea of consciousness is experiencing), two powers which originated from the same source walk up and down close to each other and yet are separated in the life of man; they are Soul and Nature. Nature leans down to embrace the earth, and the Soul longs to touch the skies.

Two powers from one original ecstasy born
Pace near but parted in the life of man;
One leans to earth, the other yearns to the skies:
Heaven in its rapture dreams of perfect earth,
Earth in its sorrow dreams of perfect heaven.
The two longing to join, yet walk apart,
Idly divided by their vain conceits,

They are kept from their oneness by enchanted fears;
Sundered mysteriously by miles of thought,
They gaze across the silent gulfs of sleep. Page 684

Heaven in the rapture of its perfection dreams of making earth perfect like itself, and earth in its sorrow dreams of a changing itself into a perfect heaven. These two powers yearn to unite but still walk apart from each other, vainly divided by their sense of vain self-importance. What keeps them apart from one another are their mysterious fears of each other. They are thus separated from each other inexplicably as though by a long distance of several miles. All they really do is to gaze at each other across the gulfs of the Ignorance.

Or side by side reclined upon my vasts
Like bride and bridegroom magically divorced
They wake to yearn, but never can they clasp
While thinly flickering hesitates uncrossed
Between the lovers on their nuptial couch
The shadowy eidolon of a sword. Page 684

"Or these two powers recline upon my vast spaces side by side like a bride and bridegroom, but mysteriously separated. When they wake up, they yearn for each other but they cannot clasp one another as long as the shadowy sword of state hangs above threateningly between the lovers on the marriage bed." (It is a notional sword not a real one but it is enough to keep the lovers separated until they realise the imaginary status of this sword.)

But when the phantom flame-edge fails undone,
Then never more can space or time divide
The lover from the loved; Space shall draw back
Her great translucent curtain, Time shall be
The quivering of the spirit's endless bliss. Page 684

"But once it is realised that it is only a phantom sword, not a real one, it gets dissolved along with its flame-edge. Then nothing, neither space nor time, can separate the lovers. Space will draw back her great transparent curtain, and Time shall quiver with endless bliss of the Spirit."

Attend that moment of celestial fate.
Meanwhile you two shall serve the dual law
Which only now the scouts of vision glimpse
Who pressing through the forest of their thoughts
Have found the narrow bridges of the gods.
Wait patient of the brittle bars of form
Making division your delightful means
Of happy oneness rapturously enhanced
By attraction in the throbbing air between. Page 684

"You will have to await that moment of celestial fate when the phantom sword which keeps the lovers separated dissolves once and for all. In the meanwhile you and Satyavan will have to learn to accept and follow the law of duality (of Soul and Nature separated). The true nature of their relationship is now grasped only by those whose acute vision takes them beyond the thick forests of thought to a vision of the narrow bridges of the gods which span the gulf."

"Wait in patience and bear with the fragile separation created by outer forms, hoping to see a happy oneness uniting them one day. Even you can see this division as a delightful means of enhancing their oneness. You can understand this if you contemplate the secret behind the ecstatic attraction they feel for one another."

(At this point, the Divine being offers to Savitri a glorious alternative to what he has just described. This alternative amounts to Savitri as disowning this world and leaving it to its ambiguous fate and to climbing on to the blissful home in which she can play as an eternal divine child.)

Yet if thou wouldst abandon the vexed world,
Careless of the dark moan of things below,
Tread down the isthmus, overleap the flood,
Cancel thy contract with the labouring Force;
Renounce the tie that joins thee to earth-kind,
Cast off thy sympathy with mortal hearts. Page 685

"But, O Savitri, there is yet another fate you can choose. But to make that choice, you should be willing to give up this troubled world; you should pay no heed to the sad groaning and complaining that is for ever going on this earth, you should turn your back on earth and this life. You should cancel your contract to be in the world and keep working for its redemption. You should cut off the bond that ties you to earth-kind and cast off your sympathy with human hearts and their aspirations.

Once you are thus liberated from your self-imposed bondage to earth, you can rise and claim the spirit's rights."

Arise, vindicate thy spirit's conquered right:
Relinquishing thy charge of transient breath,
Under the cold gaze of the indifferent stars
Leaving thy borrowed body on the sod,
Ascend, O soul, into thy blissful home. Page 685

"You should then relinquish your charge of the transient breath which has tied you down to your body. Abandon your body borrowed from Nature and leave it on this earth under the cold stare of the indifferent stars and be the soul you are and ascend to your blissful home in the transcendent world." (The assumption here is that our soul comes from the Supreme in the transcendental world and as long as we remain bound to our body, vital and mind complex, we are tied down to earth and its imperfections which manifest and torment human life in the forms of sorrow, old age, ignorance and finally death. So as

long as we are on earth in this complex of body, life and mind, we shall remain alien to the glories of the Spirit - its bliss, immortality and truthful existence. That is why a choice is placed before Savitri.)

Here in the playground of the eternal Child
Or in domains the wise Immortals tread
Roam with thy comrade splendour under skies
Spiritual lit by an unsetting sun,
As godheads live who care not for the world
And share not in the toil of Nature's powers:
Absorbed in their self-ecstasy they dwell.
Cast off the ambiguous myth of earth's desire,
O immortal, to felicity arise." Page 685

'Once you ascend to this home of the Spirit, you will be like the eternal child playing in the playground of bliss. You will then be walking with your comrade in splendour, Satyavan, in the domains of the wise immortals. There in the spiritual skies, the sun never sets. You and Satyavan will be able to live there as gods live. You will have no care, you will not be sharing in the toil and hardship of nature as in earthly life. You will live like gods ever-absorbed in your self-ecstasy. Cast off the dubious myth of a perfected earth. Arise to felicity, O mortal being."

(As we see here, this Divine being is very persuasive. He tries to convince Savitri as the God of death did in the earlier cantos that human life on this earth cannot be redeemed. There cannot be any perfection here, neither for the body, nor the vital, nor the mental being of man. Only the Spirit engaged here in the physical form of a human birth can rise to the status of perfection, if it relinquishes what Nature has supplied to it in the course of this evolution. This, you will realise, is tantamount to an attempt to sabotage the very purpose and mission of Savitri's birth. Savitri of course rejects the alternative placed before her.)

(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)



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The Call and the Consecration

Sri Aurobindo

All Yoga is in its nature a new birth; it is a birth out of the ordinary, the mentalised material life of man into a higher spiritual consciousness and a greater and diviner being. No Yoga can be successfully undertaken and followed unless there is a strong awakening to the necessity of that larger spiritual existence. The soul that is called to this deep and vast inward change, may arrive in different ways to the initial departure. It may come to it by its own natural development which has been leading it unconsciously towards the awakening; it may reach it through the influence of a religion or the attraction of a philosophy; it may approach it by a slow illumination or leap to it by a sudden touch or shock; it may be pushed or led to it by the pressure of outward circumstances or by an inward necessity, by a single word that breaks the seals of the mind or by long reflection, by the distant example of one who has trod the path or by contact and daily influence. According to the nature and the circumstances the call will come.

But in whatever way it comes, there must be a decision of the mind and the will and, as its result, a complete and effective self-consecration. The acceptance of a new spiritual idea-force and upward orientation in the being, an illumination, a turning or conversion seized on by the will and the heart's aspiration,-this is the momentous act which contains as in a seed all the results that the Yoga has to give. The mere idea or intellectual seeking of something higher beyond, however strongly grasped by the mind's interest, is ineffective unless it is seized on by the heart as the one thing desirable and by the will as the one thing to be done. For truth of the Spirit has not to be merely thought but to be lived, and to live it demands a unified single-mindedness of the being; so great a change as is contemplated by the Yoga is not to be effected by a divided will or by a small portion of the energy or by a hesitating mind. He who seeks the Divine must consecrate himself to God and to God only.

If the change comes suddenly and decisively by an overpowering influence, there is no further essential or lasting difficulty. The choice follows upon the thought, or is simultaneous with it, and the self-consecration follows upon the choice. The feet are

already set upon the path, even if they seem at first to wander uncertainly and even though the path itself may be only obscurely seen and the knowledge of the goal may be imperfect. The secret Teacher, the inner Guide is already at work, though he may not yet manifest himself or may not yet appear in the person of his human representative. Whatever difficulties and hesitations may ensue, they cannot eventually prevail against the power of the experience that has turned the current of the life. The call, once decisive, stands; the thing that has been born cannot eventually be stifled. Even if the force of circumstances prevents a regular pursuit or a full practical self-consecration from the first, still the mind has taken its bent and persists and returns with an ever-increasing effect upon its leading preoccupation. There is an ineluctable persistence of the inner being, and against it circumstances are in the end powerless, and no weakness in the nature can for long be an obstacle.

But this is not always the manner of the commencement. The sadhaka is often led gradually and there is a long space between the first turning of the mind and the full assent of the nature to the thing towards which it turns. There may at first be only a vivid intellectual interest, a forcible attraction towards the idea and some imperfect form of practice. Or perhaps there is an effort not favoured by the whole nature, a decision or a turn imposed by an intellectual influence or dictated by personal affection and admiration for someone who is himself consecrated and devoted to the Highest. In such cases, a long period of preparation may be necessary before there comes the irrevocable consecration; and in some instances it may not come. There may be some advance, there may be a strong effort, even much purification and many experiences other than those that are central or supreme; but the life will either be spent in preparation or, a certain stage having been reached, the mind pushed by an insufficient driving-force may rest content at the limit of the effort possible to it. Or there may even be a recoil to the lower life,-what is called in the ordinary parlance of Yoga a fall from the path. This lapse happens because there is a defect at the very centre. The intellect has been interested, the heart attracted, the will has strung itself to the effort, but the whole nature has not been taken captive by the Divine. It has only acquiesced in the interest, the attraction or the endeavour. There has been an experiment, perhaps even an eager experiment, but not a total self-giving to an imperative need of the soul or to an unforsakable ideal. Even such imperfect Yoga has not been wasted; for no upward effort is made in vain. Even if it fails in the present or arrives only at some preparatory stage or preliminary realisation, it has yet determined the soul's future.

But if we desire to make the most of the opportunity that this life gives us, if we wish to respond adequately to the call we have received and to attain to the goal we have glimpsed, not merely advance a little towards it, it is essential that there should be an entire self-giving. The secret of success in Yoga is to regard it not as one of the aims to be pursued in life, but as the one and only aim, not as an important part of life, but as the whole of life.

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Buddha



"The figure of the Buddha achieves the expression of the infinite in a finite image,.... to embody the illimitable calm of Nirvana in a human form and visage."

Sri Aurobindo

Buddha stone, 5th century A.D. from the Gupta period.