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A recent release by the Hindi film industry tackles an interesting subject where the lead protagonists, play a role within a role, and emulate towards the end of the film, character traits of the personalities that they are acting out. These personalities are only a few of the exceptional men and women who committed themselves to the freedom struggle, sacrificing all they had and all they were, laying down their lives at the feet of Mother India. During the course of the film, one sees the change in attitude and the process by which each actor imbibes the strength of spirit and valour of heart, applying it to their own lives albeit in different circumstances. Perhaps we may not all agree to its plot line or the direction which the film takes, but what is relevant is the larger point of freeing the nation from tyranny and corruption by rebelling against the political forces which have us cornered.

The film is admirable because it gives us glimpses of such great and dynamic revolutionaries while simultaneously bringing home the point that such figures are not to be relegated to the past. Like all things which are true in nature and pure in intent, the spirit of a hero can never be extinguished like a fickle flame blowing in the wind. Instead, it would be more appropriate to think of it as a flame which passes on from one to another, lighting the mind with wisdom, infusing the heart with enthusiasm, charging the body with vigour, strengthening the soul with conviction.

Our world is full of such flames changing hands and hearts, crossing boundaries, across the great wide seas and continents. The chain reaction can only come to an end if there is a sudden gap where a lit torch finds itself without any takers, abandoned midway in its journey. And that would be perhaps the most tragic day in the history of man and his ever aspiring ascension to greatness.

Let us then be ready and willing to overcome all obstacles, constantly marching ahead, carrying forth with a steady hand and a strong will, that eternal flame, ensuring that never

should a gap arise, never should there be an end to greatness of spirit and form, never should our heads hang down for want of a hero.

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# *Eternally Yours*

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# Living Words

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## Flowers and their Messages

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For the month of February we had chosen the flower “Right Attitude”. For this month we have “Correct Perception” as our theme for this year is Qualities required for Living.



<b>Spiritual Name</b>	Correct Perception “A perception that does not deform the Truth.”
<b>Botanical Name</b>	Cananga odorata
<b>Common Name</b>	Ilang-ilang

### **General Description**

Correct Perception is a large tree which grows up to 50-75 ft tall and belongs to warm, moist, humid regions of Indo-Malaysia. The leaves are medium green, alternate, simple and ovate in shape. The flowers are very fragrant, large and pendulous with six long narrow twisting petals, borne in clusters along the branches. The fruits are short, ovoid, black, with 6-12 seeds.

The tree can be propagated through seeds or cuttings. It requires full sun to partial shade.

The flowers are used for perfumes, cosmetics, lotions and other fragrant products. Medicinally it has a calming effect.

### **The Mother on Perception and Right Action**

...our faculties of perception are quite linear and very onesided; so when we want to understand, we are immediately assailed by countless things which are almost inconsistent with each other and intermix in such an intricate way that one can no longer make out the lines and follow things—one suddenly enters a whirlwind.

... For instance, most men think one thought after another, even as they have to say one word after another—they can't say more than one word at the same time, you know, or else they stammer. Well, most people think like that, they think one thought after another, and so their whole consciousness has a linear movement. But one begins to perceive things only when one can see spherically, globally, think spherically, that is, have innumerable thoughts and perceptions simultaneously.

Naturally, up to now, if one wanted to describe things, one had to describe them one after another, for one can't say ten words at once, one says one word after another; and that is why all one says is practically quite incapable of expressing the truth, quite incapable. For we have to say one thing after another—the minute we say them one after another, they are no longer true. They must all be said at the same time, just as they can all be seen at the same time, and each one in its place. So, when one begins to see like this—to see, to discern, to feel, to think, to will like this—one draws near the Truth.

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I say “objective perception”. To see objectively is to see and judge without adding anything from oneself, free from all personal reaction. One must learn to see a thing without mixing up in it any personal feelings.


And I add that this “perfected machine” can do nothing without the clarity of a living consciousness. When the consciousness is *one*, you can know by identity; that is, by uniting your consciousness with the object or the person you want to know or judge impartially, you enter into an inner contact with this object or person, and then it is possible for you to know with absolute certainty....

Also what deforms and falsifies is the anxiety for the consequences. To have an absolutely true judgment, you must know how to execute and act without desire—only one in a thousand can do that. Almost all are anxious about the result or have the ambition to obtain a result. You must not be anxious about the results; simply do a thing because you have seen that it is that which must be done: tell yourself, “I am doing this because this is the thing to be done, and whatever may happen afterwards is not my concern.”

That evidently is an ideal and until it is reached the action will always be mixed. Therefore unless you are moved by a clear vision of the Truth, you must take as your rule to do always what you have to do, for it is that and nothing else that has to be done.

—The Mother

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## Question of the Month

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### **Should one discuss one's difficulty with others?**

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.

In life, and even more in the path of yoga, we are naturally confronted with outer and inner difficulties. We feel the need of a support, a person with whom we can discuss and share our problems, take advice and help. But we also ask ourselves is this right, are we being sincere, should we not seek our support in the Divine alone?

It is in this context that we have taken as our question:

*Question : Should one share one's difficulty with another in Yoga?*

We give below an answer where an attempt has been made to look at the issue in the light of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

In yoga, especially in those forms of yoga where surrender is a key movement, we are called upon to seek our support and everything else in the Divine alone. So the question naturally arises, – should one share one's difficulties with another while on the path of yoga? One could also take up as a related issue, – should one use any outer means at all, whether men or medicines, once one has set his feet towards the Divine? Well, the simplest answer could be that it depends upon the persons (the one who is sharing and the one with whom it is being shared) as well as the nature of the difficulty.

For there are different types of humanity that turns to yoga, each with its own unique constitution. And also there are different stages in our journey from the utter night of ignorance and darkness to the first glimmer of dawn and subsequently the blazing high noon of truth. There is also a whole range of humanity from those who rush to seek outward help at the slightest pretext to those who can face even disaster and death with a smile upon their lips and hope within their hearts. It is evident that the highest attitude in all this range is the one that stems from the deepest and fullest surrender. It is contained in the well-known mantra: "Let Thy will be done". But it is equally true that few can take and keep this attitude in any fullness, especially when they are going through

moments of deep crisis. And while the attitude of total surrender is perfect if true and genuine, yet it may stand in the way if our hearts are full of anxiety and fear while our lips are mechanically praying. There is nothing wrong if at such a moment we seek a temporary support outside and with another person. It may even be useful and necessary since by restoring back our faith it may actually facilitate the working of Grace in our life. Take for example someone who is ill. And the illness is of a fairly severe or even a moderate degree. Now, this person may not take medicine or go to a physician because of a rigid mental rule that he is supposed to get cured of the illness through inner means. In principle and theory it is true. But yoga is not theory and philosophy but practical psychology. Thus, he may not be able to make the right inner movements to effectuate cure by inner means. Or else, a part of his nature, say the mind and the higher vital may have faith and respond but the lower vital may resist or else the body may be unreceptive and the subconscious refuse to admit the Light. It is this inherent complexity of human nature that makes any generalisation or fixing of any rigid formula of practise as an inflexible rule for all, an impossibility.

If this is true of physical difficulties and ailments it is even more true of the psychological ones. This is so because while with physical difficulties the mind is able to see them objectively and itself being untouched able to summon the right movement from other parts of the being (if it knows how to do it of course), but if the mind itself is the seat of the difficulty it is very difficult to objectively see the problem in its right measure (unless the psychic consciousness and the inner being is sufficiently developed) and unable therefore to make the right response. Often in fact it colludes with the forces of disorder and disruption and considering the large role it still plays in human evolution in its present stage, it is better and saner to take heed of someone who can observe impartially and advice wisely.

Yet the principle of surrender stands. So how are we to resolve this contradiction. Here again the key-word is the attitude and the inner spirit with which we share or seek outward help. Thus, even while we share with another and naturally feel a genuine good will and gratitude for the help and support received yet must we always know that the outer means or another person was as much an instrument of the Divine and part of His grand design in the secret Providence of things just as our 'own' will and faith are instruments for the Divine's working in us and for others. Some people are emotionally stronger and their faith solid as a rock. Some have a deep mental clarity as a gift of God or an intelligence that can receive intuitive inspirations. Yet others have a capacity for knowing and manipulating occult and hidden forces. Still others have made a detailed study of the physical body and its reactions and responses to various chemicals and other forces. Then there are those who are like large emotional reservoirs and can lend an ear without judgement or reservations to others and thereby help in unburdening them. Finally, there are the rare few who are open to higher domains of Truth and are channels of Light. Each of these faculties and capacities that a human being innately has and develops are nothing else but gifts of Grace. And they are meant to be placed at the Divine service. Of course much of humanity does not so understand it and takes it all as his own, – not only inner psychological qualities but also more outward possessions like wealth and position. Nevertheless, the subtle and deeper truth is that they have been given to us and we are simply trustees and not their proud possessors. So, even when we go to someone and share or seek support and help or use outer means and aids, we must know and do it in the full awareness that it is the Divine who alone is working and

helping through all these different channels and instruments. Equally, whether we use inner means or outer or both, we must leave the final result in the hands of the Divine who may choose to give a particular fruit of our and other's efforts or withhold it or give it in His own time and in His own way.

If we do things in this spirit then it does not contradict in any way the spirit of consecration and entire dependence upon the Divine. If anything, it widens our field of consecration and our notion of the Divine who is not only the inner divinity seated in our heart but also in everyone else as well; who not only transcends the universe but also enters into, conducts and guides its million processes; who is not only within as a secret Presence but who has also become this outer world that is nothing else but His mask and His veiled figures and His works and His instruments. What we have to however avoid is all clinging of a vital-sentimental nature, craving for emotional returns, passion and possessiveness in our relationship of sharing. These things can and do often naturally arise when people share their difficulties with another, – a phenomenon well known to modern psychology as 'transference'. This not only distracts and disturbs our sadhana and comes in the way of the full action of the Grace but it has also the potential of seriously diverting us from the path into by-lanes of an intermediate vital world or the valley of false glimmers. It is because of this risk that one is advised abundant care and caution since such things can creep in like a slow miasma even through a vigilant eye and one may notice them only when the involvement has gone too far and too deep. No doubt a central sincerity and childlike trust in Grace pulls us out but leaves a trail of suffering in the process.

Finally, it is understood that not all difficulties can be shared by everyone. This is true even in ordinary life. In those who take up yoga, the problem gets somewhat more complicated. New forces come into play, new possibilities and new problems come up, difficulties assume a different character and dimension. This is especially so in Integral yoga where little by little the entire nature is taken up for the action and working of a transformative Light. This throws up many things including deep-seated, and neatly hidden resistances. These have to be worked out and worked through and the quick-fix solutions do not often work. There is much trial and error, fall and rise, crisis and change, all as part of the purification process so that the whole nature may turn to the Divine and undergo the needed transformation. Not all are in sympathy with this ideal or have any direct experience of the process. Few have lasting access to the means of help such as the psychic emergence or a deeper and higher opening to Light and Grace that a growth in sincerity and aspiration can bring to us. Therefore to seek advice from just anyone simply because one is emotionally attached to someone or has an intellectual reverence for him may not always be the right thing to do. Especially, one should be careful not to mix spiritual influences of different kinds or blindly resort to a new method that has a wide public appeal and is in fashion. Some of these methods and influences, even though branded 'spiritual' and 'yogic' may be contrary to the line of sadhana one has undertaken. Such things often produce more confusion than clarity, often delay and postpone rather than hasten the transformative process. If one has a strong need to share the difficulties it is any day better to share them with someone who has been steadily

walking on the same path, who has grown wiser by experience, is full of genuine good will for all and above all is widely open to Light and Grace.

This is as far as we can discuss it mentally and experientially. In the last analysis, it is impossible to lay down any inflexible external rule that can be applied universally and in all circumstances. Each case is different, each person is unique, each one stands on a different level and has his or her own unparalleled past and an equally different destiny and future. So also the means and processes will vary as one moves through the upward spiral of yoga. Nevertheless, whatever be the outer means or aids, whoever be the person through whom we may feel supported or helped, we must never forget that it is Grace that is carrying us through all this since Grace alone and no human agency alone can carry us through the difficult and even at times dangerous journey of yoga. To take with natural ease and childlike trust and simplicity whatever comes our way to facilitate our journey is itself a form of plasticity to Grace. To feel a constant gratitude towards the Grace in our hearts in all events and circumstances is the sure and sunlit path to surmount every obstacle and difficulty.

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*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.*

### **He who has discarded all Impurity**

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#### **The Mother**

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#### **Conjugate Verses**

***But he who has discarded all impurity, who is firmly attached to the precepts of morality, who knows how to moderate his appetite and who is loyal, he, truly, is worthy to wear the yellow robe.***

I would not like you to take this text as a moral catechism. It certainly has a much deeper and truer meaning, because in all truly spiritual teachings, morality as it is mentally conceived is out of place.

So too the word "impurity". Pure, as it is understood morally, has not at all the meaning it is given in a truly spiritual teaching; and particularly from the Buddhist standpoint, purity is absence of ignorance, as I have already told you last time, and ignorance means ignoring the inner law, the truth of the being. And loyalty means not to take the illusion for the reality, the changing and fluctuating appearances for the inner and real permanence of the being.

We can say then that self-control and self-mastery, measure, absence of desire, the search for the inner truth of the being and the law of its self-manifestation are very necessary preoccupations for those who want to practise the spiritual life.

To be true to oneself, to one's goal, not to let oneself be moved by disorderly impulses, not to take the changing appearances for the Reality, these are the virtues that one must have in order to progress on the way of spirituality.

*15 November 1957*

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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 first three verses of the Isha Upanishad translated by Sri Aurobindo along with a commentary.*

## ईशोपनिषद् īśopaniṣad

स पर्यगाच्छुक्रमकायमव्रणमस्त्राविरं शुद्धमपापविद्धम्  
कविर्मनीषी परिभूः स्वयम्भूर्याथातथ्यतोऽर्थान् व्यदधाच्छाश्वतीभ्यः समाभ्यः ॥

sa paryagācchukram akāyam avraṇam  
asnāviraṁ śuddham apāpa-viddham  
kavirmanīṣī paribhūḥ svayambhūryāthātathyato'rthān  
vyadadhācchāśvatībhyaḥ samābhyaḥ.

**It is He that has gone abroad – that which is bright, bodi-less, without scar of imperfection, without sinews, pure, unpierced by evil. The Seer, the Thinker the**

**One who becomes everywhere, the Self-existent has ordered objects perfectly according to their nature from years sempiternal.**

## **Commentary**

### **The Lord**

#### **"He"**

In its third movement the Upanishad takes up the justification of works already stated in general terms in its second verse and finds it more precisely upon the conception of Brahman or the Self as the Lord, ish, ishvara, para purusha, sah (He)-who is the cause of personality and governs by His law of works the rhythm of the Movement and the process of the worlds that He conceives and realises throughout eternal Time in His own self-existence.

It is an error to conceive that the Upanishads teach the true existence only of an impersonal and actionless Brahman, an impersonal God without power or qualities. They declare rather an Unknowable that manifests itself to us in a double aspect of Personality and Impersonality. When they wish to speak of this Unknowable in the most comprehensive and general way, they use the neuter and call it tat, That; but this neuter does not exclude the aspect of universal and transcendent Personality acting and governing the world (cf. Kena Upanishad III). Still, when they intend to make prominent the latter idea they more often prefer to use the masculine sah, He, or else they employ the term Deva, God or the Divine, or Purusha, the conscious Soul, of whom Prakriti or Maya is the executive Puissance, the Shakti.

The Isha Upanishad, having declared the Brahman as the sole reality manifesting itself in many aspects and forms, having presented this Brahman subjectively as the Self, the one Being of whom all existences are Becomings, and as that which we have to realise in ourselves and in all things and beyond all things, now proceeds to assert the same Brahman more objectively as the Lord, the Purusha who both contains and inhabits the universe.

It is He that went abroad. This Brahman, this Self is identical with the Lord, the Ish, with whose name the Upanishad opens, the Inhabitant of all forms: and, as we shall find, identical with the universal Purusha of the 16th verse,-"The Purusha there and there, He am I." It is He who has become all things and beings,-a conscious Being, the sole Existent and Self-existent, who is Master and Enjoyer of all He becomes. And the Upanishad proceeds to formulate the nature and manner, the general law of that becoming of God which we call the world. For on this conception depends the Vedic idea of the two poles of death and immortality, the reason for the existence of Avidya, the Ignorance, and the justification of works in the world.

### **Transitional Thought**

## **The Divine Personality**

The Vedantic idea of God, "He", Deva or Ishwara, must not be confused with the ordinary notions attached to the conception of a Personal God. Personality is generally conceived as identical with individuality and the vulgar idea of a Personal God is a magnified individual like man in His nature but yet different, greater, more vast and all-overpowering.

Vedanta admits the human manifestation of Brahman in man and to man, but does not admit that this is the real nature of the Ishwara.

God is Sachchidananda. He manifests Himself as infinite existence of which the essentiality is consciousness, of which again the essentiality is bliss, is self-delight. Delight cognising variety of itself, seeking its own variety, as it were, becomes the universe. But these are abstract terms; abstract ideas in themselves cannot produce concrete realities. They are impersonal states; impersonal states cannot in themselves produce personal activities.

This becomes still clearer if we consider the manifestation of Sachchidananda. In that manifestation Delight translates itself into Love; Consciousness translates itself into double terms, conceptive Knowledge, executive Force; Existence translates itself into Being, that is to say, into Person and Substance. But Love is incomplete without a Lover and an object of Love, Knowledge without a Knower and an object of Knowledge, Force without a Worker and a Work, Substance without a Person cognising and constituting it.

This is because the original terms also are not really impersonal abstractions. In delight of Brahman there is an Enjoyer of delight, in consciousness of Brahman a Conscient, in existence of Brahman an Existent; but the object of Brahman's delight and consciousness and the term and stuff of Its existence are Itself. In the divine Being Knowledge, the Knower and the Known and, therefore, necessarily also Delight, the Enjoyer and the Enjoyed are one.

This Self-Awareness and Self-Delight of Brahman has two modes of its Force of consciousness, its Prakriti or Maya,-intensive in self-absorption, diffusive in self-extension. The intensive mode is proper to the pure and silent Brahman; the diffusive to the active Brahman. It is the diffusion of the Self-existent in the term and stuff of His own existence that we call the world, the becoming or the perpetual movement (bhuvanam, jagat). It is Brahman that becomes; what He becomes is also the Brahman. The object of Love is the self of the Lover; the work is the self-figuration of the Worker; Universe is body and action of the Lord.

When, therefore, we consider the abstract and impersonal aspect of the infinite existence, we say, "That"; when we consider the Existent self-aware and self-blissful, we say, "He". Neither conception is entirely complete. Brahman itself is the Unknowable beyond all conceptions of Personality and Impersonality. We may call it "That" to show that we exile from our affirmation all term and definition. We may equally call it "He", provided

we speak with the same intention of rigorous exclusion. Tat and sah are always the same, One that escapes definition.

In the universe there is a constant relation of Oneness and Multiplicity. This expresses itself as the universal Personality and the many Persons, and both between the One and the Many and among the Many themselves there is the possibility of an infinite variety of relations. These relations are determined by the play of the divine existence, the Lord, entering into His manifested habitations. They exist at first as conscious relations between individual souls; they are then taken up by them and used as a means of entering into conscious relation with the One. It is this entering into various relations with the One which is the object and function of Religion. All religions are justified by this essential necessity; all express one Truth in various ways and move by various paths to one goal.

The Divine Personality reveals Himself in various forms and names to the individual soul. These forms and names are in a sense created in the human consciousness; in another they are eternal symbols revealed by the Divine who thus concretises Himself in mind-form to the multiple consciousness and aids it in its return to its own Unity.

### **He That Went Abroad**

It is He that has extended Himself in the relative consciousness whose totality of finite and changeable circumstances dependent on an equal, immutable and eternal Infinity is what we call the Universe. Sa paryagat.

In this extension we have, therefore, two aspects, one of pure infinite relationless immutability, another of a totality of objects in Time and Space working out their relations through causality. Both are different and mutually complementary expressions of the same unknowable "He".

To express the infinite Immutability the Upanishad uses a series of neuter adjectives, "Bright, bodiless, without scar, without sinews, pure, unpierced by evil." To express the same Absolute as cause, continent and governing Inhabitant of the totality of objects and of each object in the totality (jagatyam jagat) it uses four masculine epithets, "The Seer, the Thinker, the One who becomes everywhere, the Self-existent" or "the Self-Becoming".

The Immutable is the still and secret foundation of the play and the movement, extended equally, impartially in all things, samam brahma, lending its support to all without choice or active participation. Secure and free in His eternal immutability the Lord projects Himself into the play and the movement, becoming there in His self-existence all that the Seer in Him visualises and the Thinker in Him conceives. Kavir manishi paribhu svayambhu.

### **The Pure Immutable**

The pure immutability of the Lord is "bright". It is a luminosity of pure concentrated Self-awareness, not broken by refractions, not breaking out into colour and form. It is the pure self-knowledge of the Purusha, the conscious Soul, with his Power, his executive Force contained and inactive.

It is "bodiless",-without form, indivisible and without appearance of division. It is one equal Purusha in all things, not divided by the divisions of Space and Time,-a pure self-conscious Absolute.

It is without scar, that is, without defect, break or imperfection. It is untouched and unaffected by the mutabilities. It supports their clash of relations, their play of more and less, of increase and diminution, of irruption and interpenetration. For Itself is without action, acalah sanatanah,"motionless, sempiternal."

It is without sinews. The reason for Its being without scar is that It does not put out Power, does not dispense Force in multiple channels, does not lose it here, increase it there, replenish its loss or seek by love or by violence its complementary or its food. It is without nerves of force; It does not pour itself out in the energies of the Pranic dynamism, of Life, of Matarishwan.

It is pure, unpierced by evil. What we call sin or evil, is merely excess and defect, wrong placement, inharmonious action and reaction. By its equality, by its inaction even while it supports all action, the conscious Soul retains its eternal freedom and eternal purity. For it is unmodified; It watches as the Sakshi, the witness, the modifications effected by Prakriti, but does not partake of them, does not get clogged with them, receives not their impression. Na lipyate.

### **The Soul Inalienably Free**

What is the relation of the active Brahman and of the human soul to this pure Inactive? They too are That. Action does not change the nature of the Self, but only the nature of the diverse forms. The Self is always pure, blissful, perfect, whether inactive or participating in action.

The Self is all things and exceeds them. It exceeds always that in which the mind is engrossed, that which it takes in a particular time and space as a figure of itself. The boundless whole is always perfect. The totality of things is a complete harmony without wound or flaw. The viewpoint of the part taken for a whole, in other words the Ignorance, is the broken reflection which creates the consciousness of limitation, incompleteness and discord. We shall see that this Ignorance has a use in the play of the Brahman; but in itself it appears at first to be only a parent of evil.

Ignorance is a veil that separates the mind, body and life from their source and reality, Sachchidananda. Thus obscured the mind feels itself pierced by the evil that Ignorance creates. But the Active Brahman is always Sachchidananda using for its self-becoming the forms of mind, body and life. All their experiences are therefore seen by It in the

terms of Sachchidananda. It is not pierced by the evil. For It also is the One and sees everywhere Oneness. It is not mastered by the Ignorance that It uses as a minor term of its conception. The human soul is one with the Lord; it also is in its completeness Sachchidananda using Ignorance as the minor term of its being. But it has projected its conceptions into this minor term and established there in limited mind its centre of vision, its viewpoint. It assumes to itself the incompleteness and the resultant sense of want, discord, desire, suffering. The Real Man behind is not affected by all this confusion; but the apparent or exterior Man is affected. To recover its freedom it must recover its completeness; it must identify itself with the divine Inhabitant within, its true and complete self. It can then, like the Lord, conduct the action of Prakriti without undergoing the false impression of identification with the results of its action.

It is this idea on which the Upanishad bases the assertion, "Action cleaveth not to a man."

To this end it must recover the silent Brahman within. The Lord possesses always His double term and conducts the action of the universe, extended in it, but not attached to or limited by His works. The human soul, entangled in mind, is obscured in vision by the rushing stream of Prakriti's works and fancies itself to be a part of that stream and swept in its currents and in its eddies. It has to go back in its self-existence to the silent Purusha even while participating in its self-becoming in the movement of Prakriti. It becomes, then, not only like the silent Purusha, the witness and upholder, but also the Lord and the free enjoyer of Prakriti and her works. An absolute calm and passivity, purity and equality within, a sovereign and inexhaustible activity without is the nature of Brahman as we see it manifested in the universe.

There is therefore no farther objection to works. On the contrary, works are justified by the participation or self-identification of the soul with the Lord in His double aspect of passivity and activity. Tranquillity for the Soul, activity for the energy, is the balance of the divine rhythm in man.

### **The Law of Things**

The totality of objects (arthan) is the becoming of the Lord in the extension of His own being. Its principle is double.

There is consciousness; there is Being. Consciousness dwells in energy (tapas) upon its self-being to produce Idea of itself (vijñana) and form and action inevitably corresponding to the Idea. This is the original Indian conception of creation, self-production or projection into form (srishti, prasava). Being uses its self-awareness to evolve infinite forms of itself governed by the expansion of the innate Idea in the form. This is the original Indian conception of evolution, prominent in certain philosophies such as the Sankhya (parinama, vikara, vivarta). It is the same phenomenon diversely stated.

In the idea of some thinkers the world is a purely subjective evolution (vivarta), not real as objective facts; in the idea of others it is an objective fact, a real modification (parinama), but one which makes no difference to the essence of Being.

Both notions claim to derive from the Upanishads as their authority, and their opposition comes in fact by the separation of what in the ancient Vedanta was viewed as one,-as we see in this passage.

Brahman is His own subject and His own object, whether in His pure self-existence or in His varied self-becoming. He is the object of His own self-awareness; He is the Knower of His own self-being. The two aspects are inseparable, even though they seem to disappear into each other and emerge again from each other. All appearance of pure subjectivity holds itself as an object implicit in its very subjectivity; all appearance of pure objectivity holds itself as subject implicit in its very objectivity.

All objective existence is the Self-existent, the Self-becoming, svayambhu, becoming by the force of the Idea within it.

The Idea is, self-contained, the Fact that it becomes. For svayambhu sees or comprehends Himself in the essence of the Fact as kavi, thinks Himself out in the evolution of its possibilities as manishi, becomes form of Himself in the movement in Space and Time as paribhu. These three are one operation appearing as successive in the relative, temporal and spatial Consciousness.

It follows that every object holds in itself the law of its own being eternally, shashvtebhyah samabhyah, from years sempiternal, in perpetual Time. All relations in the totality of objects are thus determined by their Inhabitant, the Self-existent, the Self-becoming, and stand contained in the nature of things by the omnipresence of the One, the Lord, by His self-vision which is their inherent subjective Truth, by His self-becoming which, against a background of boundless possibilities, is the Law of their inevitable evolution in the objective Fact.

Therefore all things are arranged by Him perfectly, yathatathyatah, as they should be in their nature. There is an imperative harmony in the All, which governs the apparent discords of individualisation. That discord would be real and operate in eternal chaos, if there were only a mass of individual forms and forces, if each form and force did not contain in itself and were not in its reality the self-existent All, the Lord.

### **The Process of Things**

The Lord appears to us in the relative notion of the process of things first as Kavi, the Wise, the Seer. The Kavi sees the Truth in itself, the truth in its becoming, in its essence, possibilities, actuality. He contains all that in the Idea, the Vijnana, called the Truth and Law, satyam ritam. He contains it comprehensively, not piecemeal; the Truth and Law of things is the brihat, the Large. Viewed by itself, the realm of Vijnana would seem a realm of predetermination, of concentration, of compelling seed-state. But it is a determination

not in previous Time, but in perpetual Time; a Fate compelled by the Soul, not compelling it, compelling rather the action and result, present in the expansion of the movement as well as in the concentration of the Idea. Therefore the truth of the Soul is freedom and mastery, not subjection and bondage. Purusha commands Prakriti, Prakriti does not compel Purusha. Na karma lipyate nare.

The Manishi takes his stand in the possibilities. He has behind him the freedom of the Infinite and brings it in as a background for the determination of the finite. Therefore every action in the world seems to emerge from a balancing and clashing of various possibilities. None of these, however, are effective in the determination except by their secret consonance with the Law of that which has to become. The Kavi is in the Manishi and upholds him in his working. But viewed by itself the realm of the Manishi would seem to be a state of plasticity, of free-will, of the interaction of forces, but of a free-will in thought which is met by a fate in things.

For the action of the Manishi is meant to eventuate in the becoming of the Paribhu. The Paribhu, called also Virat, extends Himself in the realm of eventualities. He fulfils what is contained in the Truth, what works out in the possibilities reflected by the mind, what appears to us as the fact objectively realised. The realm of Virat would seem, if taken separately, to be that of a Law and Predetermination which compels all things that evolve in that realm,-the iron chain of Karma, the rule of mechanical necessity, the despotism of an inexplicable Law.

But the becoming of Virat is always the becoming of the self-existent Lord,- paribhuh svayambhuh. Therefore to realise the truth of that becoming we have to go back and re-embrace all that stands behind;-we have to return to the full truth of the free and infinite Sachchidananda.

This is the truth of things as seen from above and from the Unity. It is the divine standpoint; but we have to take account of the human standpoint which starts from below, proceeds from the Ignorance, and perceives these principles successively, not comprehensively, as separate states of consciousness. Humanity is that which returns in experience to Sachchidananda, and it must begin from below, in Avidya, with the mind embodied in matter, the Thinker imprisoned and emerging from the objective Fact. This imprisoned Thinker is Man, the "Manu".

He has to start from death and division and arrive at unity and immortality. He has to realise the universal in the individual and the Absolute in the relative. He is Brahman growing self-conscious in the objective multiplicity. He is the ego in the cosmos vindicating himself as the All and the Transcendent.

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## Awakening of Woman

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**Nolini Kanta Gupta**

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There is a movement in our country today for the awakening and advancement of womankind. But if we want it to succeed, we should first of all determine its right aim and objective. Women are the depressed class and are deeply asleep—but why? And what actually does this mean? What are the defects and deficiencies that we find in our women? As soon as we turn our eyes on them many things no doubt emerge. Our women are miserable in many respects; they lack strength, capacity, education, knowledge, etc. But what is the fundamental deficiency? I think underlying all the deficiencies of the women of our country there is one. We do not get the desired result essentially because we do not take that shortcoming into account or focus on it.

Where lies the distinction between two human beings? What again is the distinction between humans and other inferior creatures? What is that quality for which we place humans above all other creatures, and even among humans we give a higher place to certain types of individuals? What is that dharma which helps a being to progress and ascend to higher and higher fields along the course of evolution? That is self-consciousness, knowledge of one's own selfhood. The very feeling of 'I' has made humans distinct from the animals. The day ego-sense was aroused in the mind of the animal, saw the beginning of its transformation. Among humans also great is he in whom this self-consciousness has become intense, deep and vast. As the great from the East say, *ātmanāmeva jānatha*, the great from the West also aver "know thyself". To the extent one becomes conscious of oneself, gets established within and masters life and work with one's selfhood and characteristics, to that extent one is human.

For this very reason, in our country, the human beings who are contrasted with the superior have been termed "inferior". This self-consciousness is not so strong and manifest in an inferior being; it is unable to stand upright as the master and controller of its own dharma. It moves identified with Nature, becomes a puppet in her hand, like a helpless member of Nature. That is why that inferior play of Nature is reflected in the movement of the mass or collectivity; individual characteristics find expression as we ascend higher and higher above Nature.

In our country another name for woman is Prakriti. However appropriate this name may be in a deeper sense, practically the term itself betrays the fundamental deficiency in our women. That deficiency is of self-consciousness, of selfhood and of personality. Are not the women of India, of Bengal in particular, well-known all over the world for their tenderness and grace, submission and obedience? Our women do not know how to claim, easily identify themselves with the state

they are in, never hesitate to erase their own dharma in order to make another's dharma their own. Does this not mean that our women's nature is fluid, it takes the form of the vessel in which it is poured, and that the women have no capacity, no urge to give themselves a distinctive form of their own? For the very same reason, don't we see that our men, though all of them are not realised souls, yet have a wide diversity among them, each one is different from the others in one way or another; while women are all more or less made of the same mould as it were—having hardly the same diversity?

Our women have no knowledge of their selves, no sense of their personality—this does not mean that they don't know how to fight for the sanction and preservation of their rights. For European women this outer awareness of rights may be a sign of their sense of personality, but that is not the true thing. True personality is an inner feeling—I am a special being, I have my own dharma and karma, my own mind and heart, my life has to be shaped in a distinct and well-organised way of its own, according to the truth, the inspiration of my soul—most often it is this feeling that is the basis of personality. Our women were not given the scope to awaken this curiosity or inquisitiveness about their own selves in their minds. Such a question was excluded as much as possible from whatever education and initiation were given to them or the way their life was directed or controlled. There is no separate dharma of woman—“the husband's good deeds are the good deeds of a chaste woman”; not only so, she must remain dependent on her father in her early years of life, on her husband in the middle and on her son at the end. How can one have the feeling of self when one is completely dependent on others? Besides, the feeling of self is aroused by interchange with a freer life outside. Whenever and in proportion I come in contact or confrontation with something beside me, the more my selfhood becomes manifest, endowed with special features. The diversity in man is due to this sort of interchange, of acceptance and rejection, due to a sort of duel between one another in various ways, under various conditions. But the field of our women is narrow, their condition also is always the same, devoid of any diversity or speciality whatsoever—no greater or higher urge can enter there save the routine wants and complaints, needs and demands of day-to-day life.

When human consciousness tries to raise itself from the vital to the mental level, only then does the feeling of personality awaken, the sense of selfhood. The play of Prakriti, the inferior life, is the expression of the life-force; the special dharma of the mind has not found there its true expression; it remains a part and parcel of life and moves along as one of the life-streams. Then again the field of life is the confluence of various streams of force which are universal and cosmic; there, no special feature appears in an individual but the group, class or collectivity. The force-stream of life is therefore fluid and mobile—it does not give form to anything special. The individual formulations like the inferior creatures which are embodiments of sheer life-force, seem to be only the frame to contain and express it for its play; there is no fulfillment of their own for those formations, at the end of the play of the life-force they simply break and fall off on their own. It is the Purusha of the mind that gives a special form to life; the fluid formless force-streams of life get condensed into a separate centre—that is to say, stand out with a personal fulfillment or personality—subjected to the pressure of the special aim of this mental Purusha.

Woman is full of life, she is a symbol of the life-force; woman's distinctiveness is in this dharma of life. However true this may be, we have reduced woman to being too much of an instrument of the inferior life! The distinctive qualities of Indian women we keep boasting about are the purer, more refined and more beautiful aspects of this vibrant Prakriti. But what is missing here is the human mental being that has not been formed. There is a sort of ego-sense even at the level of the life-force, but this ego-sense does not constitute self-consciousness or even personality. That ego-sense is in fact a lack of self-consciousness and personality because it springs from the

life-force. It is merely a contrivance of Prakriti for achieving her end. True personality wants to transform life and Prakriti with the descent and revelation of a dharma in mind. It cannot exist as their slave or merely as their instrument.

Our women are full of this life-force in all its positive and negative aspects. And that is why they are enthused by a particular ideal or made to follow a particular path. But the question is whether in this way we get any permanent result and how far can they be led like this? Water takes on the form of the vessel in which it is poured—this no doubt is a quality of water; but that form never becomes permanent—it is but a momentary imitation, just an echo. If from stone you can carve out a thing of beauty then that is real greatness—which we call art. The sense of personality is like this stone; it has the capacity to resist, it has a strength of its own, and if that is utilised effectively then what results is powerful and exquisite.

Our women have life-force—what they need is the force of knowledge. When their souls will be awakened in this force of knowledge, will become strong and capable and brim with the greatness of self-identity then it might not be easy to direct them or mould them at will; but only then will they be the vehicle of a more solid creation. So then, in our country woman's "progress" would mean her rising and establishing herself on her mental being—"the awakening of woman" is to recognize and know her nature and reality with this increasing self-consciousness, and to wake up to her personality.

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*(Nolini Kanta Gupta was a revolutionary, linguist, scholar, critic, poet, philosopher and a man of deep spiritual realisation. Author of nearly 60 books he was a Trustee of Sri Aurobindo Ashram.)*



## A World Astir...

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### The New Face of Terrorism

**Georg Stollenwerk**

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The phenomenon of “terrorism” has taken many masks and claddings in the history of mankind. Mercenaries of old, self-proclaimed “warriors of god and truth” throughout all ages, certain kinds of “anarchists” and totalitarian governments alike have used and abused high ideals like duty, righteousness, justice, nationalism, freedom, security, order and law as a cover-up for spreading violence, terror, fear and fanaticism as an expression of a rawness and brutality, unworthy of a mankind that strives for a higher purpose in evolution and the Divine Life on earth.

In recent years the forces of terror or rather those working behind the screen to impose the concept of terror on man seemed to have withdrawn into the background. Small groups in Germany, France and Italy, quite active in the 60s and 70s have been more or less dissolved, ETA in Spain and IRA in Northern Ireland have more or less withdrawn from their “path of force” and entered the political stage to achieve their goals through a policy of negotiation and understanding. Although the situation has always been volatile, we were witnessing a relatively encouraging process of political, ethnic and religious reconciliation in many parts of the world. In a parallel and – in a way – interconnected move, totalitarian regimes and their means of organised “state terror” and torture have been on retreat throughout the world and are gradually disappearing from the map of mankind. A new era in mankind seemed to have dawned, in spite of all remaining “hot spots” the door to an international community based on the ideals of peace and understanding seemed to be wide open.

Recent events, however, have cast some doubt on this rosy picture of a “progressing mankind”. The globalization of terror through Al-Qaida, the degrading atrocities in Iraq, a new method of “suicide bombings” and tactics of “blind hits” imposing the impression that everybody can be a victim at every time in every part of the world have given a new mask to the face of terrorism - or may simply have removed the ones still remaining to reveal its true face. The shocking frankness of recent political statements against Israel by the Iranian government and the victory of Hamas in the Palestinian election, its apparent refusal to renounce at violence, have left the world somehow stunned.

Are we currently witnessing a setback in the development of man into a higher species? An advance of aggressive and hostile forces? An increase in inhuman, rather sub-human concepts and emotions? Does terror once more claim its territory in an even more widespread and perfidious way than ever before in the history of man? Has it become so powerful that it can dare to expose itself in its original form, without any need to cover itself with justifying arguments, simply be “terror” in its naked shape?

At first sight it seems indeed to pursue its aim quite successfully, which is neither political nor religious in a particular sense, but global, psychological and more profound. “Terrorism” has become “issue no.1” in international news and media. Everybody talks about it, has concepts, ideas, solutions, feelings connected with it, independent from political, cultural, religious, social or national backgrounds. It has entered the minds and hearts of practically everybody and thus managed to establish a certain nebulous fear everywhere in the world. And by establishing and constantly nourishing that fear, that paralysing helplessness, it provokes a similar mental, emotional and physical reaction: violence, rejection, defense, distrust, suspicion, segregation, even hatred towards anybody who is different, behaves different, even looks different. This new form of terrorism aims not only at physical destruction. It aims at changing a general atmosphere of confident progress into a psychological setback, stagnation, if possible into regression, a recourse to old habits of defensive confrontation instead of a courageous step towards compassionate and understanding collaboration, towards a multiplicity in human unity. It aims at turning back the wheel of evolution. Behind the outer scenario of “war against terror”, on a psychological level, this disintegrating spirit seems to advance considerably. Are the progressive forces withdrawing, even helpless against such kind of brutality and human ignorance? Where is the intervention of the Divine?

Answering questions about when the supramental descent would take place Sri Aurobindo stated around 1935: “I find that the more the Light and Power are coming down the greater is the resistance. You yourself can see that there is the tremendous resistance.” (*A.B. Purani: Evening Talks, p. 317*)

This simple statement may dissolve our doubts, answer our questions and may well lead us to the conclusion that the upsurge of these archaic and darkened energies from the depths is not a sign of their potentially growing strength, but an effect of the Divine Truth-Consciousness exerting its pressure on these planes, shedding light on this dark spot, tearing apart every kind of cladding surrounding it with a nice and even fancy romantic or adventurous look (as assumed with the Assassin in ancient Iran or piracy in Elizabethan Europe), exposing its true nature to the naked eye of everybody who was tricked and veiled by all the justifying mental and emotional arguments surrounding the mystery of terror, showing to all the world the simple thing that this kind of perverted violence is not divine, not a “force of kali”, but sub-human and with no right to remain or to last in the ascending path of man to Divinity.

In this light the increase of terrorism is not necessarily a sign of a victory of terror, but rather of the final exposure and defeat of the forces behind it. But how can we participate in this process? What can be our attitude? Can we do anything after all? Referring to difficulties in the sadhana Sri Aurobindo and The Mother have constantly given the advice not to concentrate on the negative forces and on the obstacles to be surmounted, but on Her Light and Love that dissolves them. Thus, it may be helpful not to concentrate on the phenomenon of terrorism, on the amount of the resistance and on the fear it creates nor to rely on old structures and habits to defend us and the world against it, but to constantly remind us of the cause of it: the work of the Divine Truth-Consciousness, its irresistible and invincible power of transformation now active in the earth

atmosphere, active in the physical manifestation. It may be helpful not to get involved in or be excited about the news of another video tape of Osama bin Laden, but to aspire for Her Love and Light constantly poured into creation by Her Divine Grace.

In this light, the resistance, this new “outbreak of terror” may take its temporarily considerable yet limited place in evolutionary transformation: a shade that has always been there, at present appearing ugly, as for the first time utterly exposed to the true Light. In fact, it could even be considered as a visible “proof of progress”, the Truth-Consciousness entering more and more, deeper and deeper into levels left untouched up to now – an unfolding and dismantling that is bound to continue until the Divine Realisation is fulfilled and “Nature shall live to manifest secret God, The Spirit shall take up the human play, This earthly life become the life divine.” (*Savitri, Book XI*)

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*(Georg Stollenwerk is from Germany. His work has taken him to all parts of Germany and to many countries outside and also given him the opportunity to watch at close quarters the evolving political, economic and social situation. Being a spiritual seeker he attempts here to look at these from a deeper insight.)*

## *A land of Children Dancing in the Rain*

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**Azim**

**H.**

**Premji**

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One often hears of the high prevalence of child labour in our country. Of the many reports I have read, perhaps the most disturbing was a report on the condition of children employed by zari factories in Delhi, Mumbai and other parts of India. It grieves me to imagine children exposed to such inhumanity in an evolved society like ours.

Robbing children of their childhood is a criminal act, and our society must weed this malaise out from the root. But where does the root lie? Before you attempt an answer, let me give you an anecdote from the other end of the social spectrum.

A colleague in Wipro has a child studying in standard nine of a reputed school in Bangalore. This child wakes up 5 a.m. and studies for an hour before going to school. She returns from school at 4 p.m. and rushes for her IIT entrance exam coaching class. At 6 p.m., she has tuition for 2 hours. Post dinner, she spends an hour or more on homework. I asked her when she gets time to play. She replied that she does not play. She gets half an hour of free time each day, which she spends watching her favourite serial on television. She also added that board exams and entrance exams are very important, and that you only get one chance.

Let me ask you: is the condition of this child different from that of the child in the zari factory?

When I look at children, I wonder whether they have time to play with friends, to meet interesting people, to explore the world, and to follow their curiosity. When the first monsoon showers begin, I would think that the streets would be full of children rushing headlong into the rain, dancing and playing. However, I think today, the rains fall on empty streets.

This, my friends, is the new Indian reality in our villages, in our slums, and in our metropolitan high-rises. Whatever the reasons – poverty, societal aspiration, apathetic individuals and organisations, or just the burden of circumstances – the reality is that our children are straitjacketed, thus stifling their natural growth.

The final indicator of a country's independence is the way its children live. Are children free from the malaise of poverty and hunger? Are they free from the burden of parental aspiration? Are they free from norms of social conditioning? Are we ensuring the curiosity of our children continues to burn and is not stamped out? Are they free to explore the world, to realize their unique potential, and thereby, help discover the true potential of the society itself?

Gandhiji said that the greatest lessons in life are learnt from children, not from learned men. A child will fearlessly try before giving up. As adults, fearing failure, we give up even before we

try. A child is inherently curious about the world, about relationships, about wanting to understand how things work. As adults, our blinkered and conditioned self prevents us from truly exploring without prejudice. For a child, what she does is meaningful in its own right. As an adult, we usually link every action to an external reward of money or recognition.

I did not learn how to be a father from manuals. Whatever little I learnt about being a parent, I learnt by observing my children and letting them teach me. Similarly, I think our teachers could grow enormously by learning from their students how to be a good teacher. We will then refrain from pushing our knowledge down their young minds, and begin the democratic process of being joint learners as we discover and understand our world. I believe a powerful force for empowerment is to have motivated teachers who are learners first, teachers second. Only then will we stop trying to mould children into our "adult" likeness. Only then will we let them blossom, developing on the already mature qualities of their childhood.

If India has to develop economically, socially, intellectually, and culturally, we must empower those most vulnerable to social diktat: our children. Let us resolve to give our children the freedom of childhood; let us change our schools from being textbook prisons to laboratories of exploration; let us change homes from being tuition centres to playgrounds of art and sport.

India will be radiant when our children are free to dance in the rain.

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*(Azim Premji, Chairman and Managing Director, Wipro Limited)*



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*It is not easy to define what is to be considered as true news. Each of us may differ in our opinion of such a definition. However, we at Next Future have an idea, although it is as yet in its infancy. True News is news that carries some weight – the weight of truth, of beauty, of hope, of the greatness of the human spirit, of the aspirations that we hold within, of the dreams we fulfill, of the differences that we make. Our media is spilling to the brim with news but more often than not, it is pointing to the things going wrong, the negatives, the senseless goings-on. One can't certainly shy away from reality but at the same time, one can and must continue to hope and cherish the idea of a better world. Some may even go further and act on this idea and make it a concrete reality. True News will explore such instances which make the heart swell with pride and the mind feel the peace that goes together with goodwill and harmony. More importantly, True News will be that which leads one from today unto tomorrow – nothing that is transient but all that is evolutionary, leading from step to higher step. The smallest episodes that make up our lives at times form such a step and thus begins our climb to a wonderful future.*

## **Uncommon Battle**

**Uday Mahurkar**

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For half a millennium now, the people of Muli, a nondescript town in Gujarat's Surendranagar district, have revered the partridge and would take it askance were someone to kill one. But would you expect anything less from a community that sacrificed hundreds of lives to save the bird from being killed centuries ago? Once a year, they convene on the outskirts of the town to commemorate the horrifying event of 1474 that led to the town's tryst with the fowl.

The chain of events had started off in a mundane manner when a partridge, despite being injured, escaped a group of hunters. The Chabad tribal hunters found it in the custody of Jombai, mother of Lakhdhirji, the chief of the Sodha Parmar Rajputs, who were camping at Muli. She had found the bird in her tent, behind the image of Mandavrajji, a symbol of the Sun God and the Parmar's presiding deity. She refused to hand it over, arguing that the bird had sought sanctuary and she could not go against the Kshatriya custom of providing protection to living beings that sought it. She and her younger son Munjoji offered to compensate the hunters with cows and goats. But the Chabads wouldn't listen.

All hell broke loose and a battle began. The Sodha Parmar Rajputs had Brahmins, Rabaris (cowherds) and Harijans on their side. Around 200 of them, Munjoji included, died, but not before felling more than 400 rivals in order to save the bird.

Stone memorials in Muli, built for each person who died in the battle, testify to the folly and the moral integrity of that day. The caste identify of those who died fighting on the Parmar side is

depicted on each stone *palli*. The Parmars are shown with a sword in hand, the Rabaris as riding a camel, while palms stand for the women who were killed. From that day on, Muli's Parmars vowed never to kill a partridge and accorded it a divine standing. Even during times when partridge hunting was rampant and was a favourite pastime among the royals, killing it was banned in Muli.

Says Jitendrasinhji, scion of the ruling family of Muli, "I am proud that my ancestors were associated with one of the noblest acts in human history." Historians have written about the great war over a mere partridge, for the uniqueness of the battle moved them as much as the practice of treating alike all living beings that seek protection, be it man or bird.

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*(Sourced from India Today, June 13-2005)*



# Integral Health

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## The Tragedies of Time

**Dr. Alok Pandey**

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Disasters and catastrophes, whether man-made or natural, raise several questions for the human mind. For men living largely in their senses, it creates indignation and horror, the shock of sudden loss. It brings pain and suffering to those who have lost cherished ones or whose expectations in life were smashed by some cruel hand of fate. The idealistic philosopher is shaken in his theories that search for symmetry and rational order in the universe. The physical scientist turns his instruments to study the material forces that govern these events so as to ultimately arrive at a law for their occurrence. He can then devise more accurate equipment for power and control. The psychologist spends time studying the behaviour of individuals and groups in disasters whilst the social activist and philanthropist rush to provide whatever help they can. The religious turn towards God for help and succour in their hour of distress, whilst the atheist uses it as an argument against the very presence of God. Some evade the whole issue by drawing an irreconcilable distinction between God and the world. This world, they observe is, by its very nature imperfect, full of sorrow and suffering, doomed to remain so. Nature is a device or ploy to trap the soul and in-definitely extend the misery and illusion of the world.

Each viewpoint has its truth and is yet incomplete. Even a sum of these views remains so, due to the very nature of the consciousness that experiences the phenomenon. Man, as long as he is part of the machinery of Nature, sees a blind mechanical force with no clear goal. He is like someone strapped to the undercarriage of a car, feeling the twists and turns of the wheels of fate, with partial glimpses of the road and scenery, without knowing the destination. He is oblivious too of the soul that steers along this dangerous road that now seems to overrun an abyss, then turns towards high and beautiful summits. This is the misery of man, or rather the misery called man, aptly described in the Upanishads as an object of sacrifice, perennially tied to the stake of the earth by the triple bonds of body, life and mind. Our mental blindness is a curse, our partial seeing a still greater one. The wholly blind are at least open to every possibility in the mind's eye, but the one-eyed are shut in a limited arc of vision that allows nothing else into the mind than what they partially see.

We do not see the fate of those who have passed beyond the ken of our senses. If only we could somehow grasp that no one really dies, but merely changes appearance like a voyager leaving a familiar shore to travel to other distant lands and climes. The journey does not end with the closing of one life, but is as starting-point for even greater adventures. We also do not see that Nature is neither cruel nor just, that the governance of the world is not a system of reward and

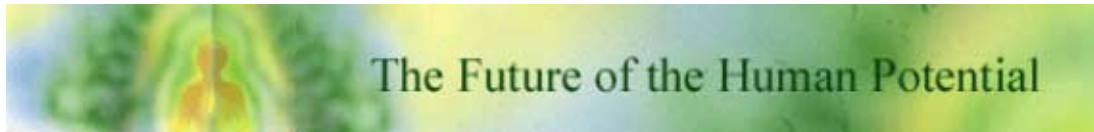
punishment. We draw a figure of God in our own little image, an exaggeration of the human qualities... But God is a totality greater than all we can perceive and no single idea, vision or concept can hold the whole Truth. We fail to see that while one giant wave was staging the game of death, another was bringing food from the sea to sustain and nourish human life. Yet another was sending its clouds as envoys to the sky, bringing rain for some parched corner of the earth. And yet another was simply sporting with the skies and winds in mighty jest. Many waves were carrying merchandise to distant lands as many were drowning in the vast expanse. The destroyer and creator are together in play and man chooses to be on one side or the other. Those who do not choose are left at the mercy of the play of forces, driven and tossed by Time's giant waves to this or that shore in an epic struggle and conflict. For when we do not choose, then something chooses for us. That something is neither driven by man's blind hopes nor deterred by his fears. For it sees what we do not see and knows what we do not know.

Tragedy is, after all, a sense of proportion according to the value our mind gives it. But it is also the unfilled gap between what we are in our present actuality and could be in our potentiality. And are we not all potentially divine and immortal? To our narrow consciousness, there is a sense of tragedy and loss. But to a consciousness as vast as the earth or as still as the sky, the sense of tragedy passes off into an ever-present oneness moving towards an even greater unity. To that consciousness nothing is lost and everything moves from one level of perfection to a greater perfection. In the being of God there is no tragedy. In God's vision, the world is not a senseless paradox as the illusionist would let us believe, nor is this façade of events and circumstances driven by a blind, mechanical and un-intelligent will. It is rather an ignorance moving towards a bliss of identity, a field tilled with death that still bears the fruits of immortality. Instead of cursing God and only trying to master Nature, we need to dive deep into both. We need to plunge down where we can discover the utter identity of both, one as the supporting truth, the other as the executive force, one as the wisdom and vision behind things, the other as the power and will that works out the truth that seeks to express itself here upon earth. The way is incalculable because it exceeds all mental limits and expands with the soul into limitless knowledge, boundless power and immortal life. Death and disasters are instruments to goad the spirit towards an immortal strength, to build compassion and rediscover a lost oneness through sympathy with the world's grief. These first steps serve as a prelude to our epic climb to summits where there are no 'others'. Our brief joys and sorrows are only the first imperfect attunements of life's harp strings to a much greater harmony and bliss. Our partial seeing and hasty judgments are only the faint beginnings of sight that will arrive at the full-orbed Light of noon.

Let us then redouble our efforts with each tragedy to arrive at the perfection hidden in Nature and intended in all her movements. Let each sorrow be a spur towards greater bliss, each struggle and fall a means to grow in strength and expand our wings into limitless skies. For such is the way to finding a true and lasting remedy, the remedy that comes by the touch of our alchemist soul.

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



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

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

*To an overly pragmatic mind most of these future verities may appear dreamy or utopian. But, what else is human progress than a progressive realisation of our utopias? And as Sri Aurobindo says in his epic Savitri, “Earth’s winged chimera’s are Truth’s steeds in Heaven<sub>1</sub>”. The Truth’s steeds may sometimes use our winged chimeras to descend into earth carrying their heavenly possibilities.*

### **Globalism: Towards a Global Consciousness**

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**M.S. Srinivasan**

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Much has been said and written about "Globalisation". However, we will not enter into the debate on the pros and cons of what is called as "Globalisation". This term or idea was coined by modern thinkers to denote a contemporary phenomenon created mainly by advances in technology, in the field of transportation, communication media, computers, internet and others, and its economic, social and political consequences.

We are, undoubtedly, moving towards a "global" future. So, the idea of "globalism", in different forms is likely to be a dominant theme in the thought and life of future humanity. As we have discussed in our previous article, in the past history of the race, collective consciousness of humanity had progressed from the family and the clan to the nation-unit; in the future it will be called upon to take the next step towards a supra-national aggregate and ultimately to a truly global humanity. But the question is what is the type and nature of globalism we are heading towards in the future? Will it be merely an outer economic or political unity held together by technology and the mutual interests of competing (or cooperating) ego or an inner unity felt concretely in the deepest core of our consciousness? In other words, will be it an outer unity created by a global organization or an inner unity felt in a global consciousness? To answer this question we have to understand the deeper evolutionary significance of the present urge and drive towards globalization.

Modern physicists studying the depth of matter and the ancient Indian sages studying the depth of the human psyche and spirit, both have discovered that Unity is the fundamental law of life.

Modern physics says all matter, including perhaps our material body, is nothing but configurations in the unified field of space-time-energy. Similarly, ancient Indian sages saw with their inner vision that all creation including the so called "inanimate" matter, is the expression of a unified field of consciousness-energy, chit-shakti, or in other words, a global and transcendent Unity or Oneness of consciousness-energy is the essence of the individual and the universe. Even physical and biological matter is the expression of the energy of consciousness, but here, the consciousness is involved and lost in movement of the energy. The terrestrial evolution is the gradual emergence of the involved consciousness to higher and higher levels of self-expression-from the stone, plant animal and man. But human mental consciousness, centred and conditioned around the ego is not the last summit of terrestrial evolution. Nature is moving towards the next step in evolution, which is to recover fully and consciously the original source of evolution, the global or unity-consciousness in the individual and the collective life of man and in the planet as a whole. So the evolutionary impetus of Nature in the future will be, predominantly, towards the realization of an inner unity of the human race in a global consciousness and not merely an outer unity through a global society, government, or organization.

This brings us to the question, if inner unity of global consciousness is the destiny of human and terrestrial evolution, what then is the significance of the present urge towards outer unity or globalization? It prepares the outer mind and life of humanity to receive and manifest the inner unity. When the Humanity as a whole awakens to the inner Unity, there will be the right environment, instruments and institutions to manifest and express the inner unity in the outer life.

We can see at present, the outer movement of globalization created by technology, transportation, communication, the internet, media, and the global business, had awakened the collective consciousness of humanity to the "connectedness" and interdependence of human life. The political, economic and cultural barriers between nations and people are no longer as hard and opaque as they were in the past and are becoming thin, porous and transparent. Multinationalism is now a well-established idea and practice in business, science and technology. The ideas and values of the Eastern culture are seeping into the West and openly or subtly influencing the Western mind. Similarly the values of the Western culture, flooding through the media and multinational business are influencing the work-ethics and life-styles of Eastern youth in both ways, positive and negative. The cultural identities are expanding beyond national boundaries to global dimension. For example, a large section of the Indian diaspora spread all over the world, forms a wealthy, highly educated, global cultural group very much attached to the Indian cultural and religious values.

All these developments and many others which are yet to come, will impress on the thought, sentiments and life of humanity a vivid sense of living in a "global village". But this perception, sentiment, or the vital sense of globalism does not constitute a global consciousness.

For, all the new developments which are now called as "globalism", and its inner and outer results, are still ego-centric, centred around and driven by the aims and interests of the individual and the collective ego. The ego's range and the sense of identity might have enlarged into global proportions. This enlargement may bring about a certain amount of psychological modification in the consciousness of humanity. For example, when the ego's range of identity expands beyond the family and the clan to the nation, it creates a new sentiment or feeling of patriotic nationalism. Similarly when the ego's range of identity enlarges further to embrace a supra-national or global aggregate, it may create a new sentiment or feeling of a global citizenship. In fact, many business executives, professionals, scientists and media-men who work in a multi-national or multi-

cultural environment, or travel frequently all over the world, and thinkers, poets and artists who think on a vast scale in terms of humanity or the world, have this sense of a world-citizen in their thought, or vital sentiment. But all these enlargements in the outer life, thought and sentiment, though helpful as a preparatory education, are not the global consciousness, precisely because they cannot liberate the human consciousness from the limitations and conditioning of the individual and collective ego. A global multinational organization may possess a strong and powerful collective ego, which can be very aggressive, exploitative and dominating. Similarly, someone who feels himself to be a "global citizen" in his thought and vital sentiment can be very selfish and ambitious in his behaviour, emotions or action.

What then is this global consciousness? It is a consciousness in which there is no ego, individual or collective, small or big, which means, there is no sense of "I" or "mine" distinct and separate from others and the rest of creation. And when there is no ego, it leads to a concrete inner realization of universal oneness, or unity-consciousness in which we feel others and all creation as part of our own universal Self and within our self. The world is no longer felt outside us but within our own universal self. We believe that this renunciation and transcendence of the ego will be the major theme of the future evolution of humanity. Transcendence of the Ego is one of the basic principles of the discipline in all spiritual teachings. But in the future, this principle of ego-transcendence will become a prominent theme not only in the moral and spiritual development of the individual, but also in the collective, secular life, in economics, society, politics.

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

## The Wonder that is Sanskrit

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

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

### **Some Doubts and Questions**

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#### **Is Sanskrit a Hindu Language?**

It would be good at this stage to look at some of the objections that have been raised against Sanskrit becoming the national language of India. One argument, which is often used nowadays, is that Sanskrit is predominantly a Hindu language – and with India being a multi-religious country, how is it possible for the Muslims and the Christians to accept Sanskrit?

This argument has no basis, as a language cannot be Hindu. Just because the Ganga or the Himalayas are worshipped by Hindus, it does not make them ‘Hindu’. Even though the Taj Mahal was built by Shah Jahan it does not become a ‘Muslim’ monument, and similarly Urdu is not a Muslim language simply because many Muslims use it.

All these are the heritage and the pride of the whole of India. We must also realise that all literature in Sanskrit can by no means be considered purely religious or sectarian in character. There is in Sanskrit a considerable amount of technical, scientific and secular literature. Works on polity like the *Arthashastra* of Kautilya or on architecture like the *Manasara*, the *Samarangana-sutradhara* and the *Aparajitapriccha*, as also many other treatises relating to the *Kalas*, can certainly not be characterised as religious. We must not forget, in this context, the pure literature embodied in the various types of Sanskrit drama and poetry.

It must be further pointed out that the large mass of literature in Sanskrit was not produced by any particular community. Several instances can be quoted of non-brahmin and non-Hindu authors who have made significant contributions to Sanskrit literature. It is definitely misleading to assume that Sanskrit represents only the religious literature of the Hindus.

This aspect of Sanskrit not being exclusively religious, was appreciated even by some of the Muslim rulers of India, who patronised Sanskrit literature, and, in some cases (as in Bengal and Gujarat), had their epigraphic records inscribed in Sanskrit. It was the scientific and secular aspect of Sanskrit literature that made the Arabs welcome Indian scholars to Baghdad to discourse on sciences like medicine and astronomy, and to translate books in these subjects into Arabic. The *Ayurveda* system of medicine, until recently, was the truly national Indian system, which was practised everywhere, and access to this was through Sanskrit books, which even Muslim practitioners of the *Ayurveda* in Bengal studied.

Or we can take the case of Kashmir. A large majority of people there are converts to Islam. But the language of Kashmir was the language of *Loka Prakash* for centuries, including the Moghul period. This book was written in Sanskrit and had been current in the society from the 5th century B.C. up to the 16th century A.D. for more than 2000 years. Of course during the time when the rule of Islam was established in Kashmir, a few words of Arabic and Persian entered in *Loka Prakash* but its language remained the same, namely Sanskrit.

Even in modern times there have been Muslim scholars and lovers of Sanskrit. It is significant that when the bill on the National Language of India was being discussed in the Constituent Assembly, soon after independence, it was a Muslim, Shri Najiruddin Ahmed, who proposed that the national language of India should be Sanskrit. He asked rhetorically, "If you have to adopt a language, why should you not have the world's greatest language?" He also quoted Dr. Shaidullah, Professor of Dhaka University and a great Sanskrit scholar, as saying, "Sanskrit is the language of every man, to whatever race he may belong."

Is Sanskrit a Dead and Difficult Language?

Whenever there is a demand for Sanskrit as the national language it is met with the opposition: 'How can a dead language be the national language of a country?'

In the words of Professor Lakshmikanta Maitra, "I know it will be said that it is a dead language. But dead to whom? Dead to you, because you have become dead to all sense of grandeur. You have become dead to all that is great and rich in your own culture and civilisation. You have been chasing the shadow and never tried to grasp the substance which is contained in your great literature. If Sanskrit is dead, may I say that Sanskrit is ruling us from her grave. Nobody can get away from Sanskrit in India."

"To call Sanskrit dead is only to utter a cheap slogan. Even *Sangam* Tamil is dead, even Tulasi's Hindi is dead; Sanskrit is not so dead as even these. It can be denied only by one who makes bold to deny the roots of a tree, the ether that pervades us on every side, or our inner being, merely because these are not visible to the eyes. When the great philologists and scholars of computational linguistics wholeheartedly accept Sanskrit as the best and most scientific language of the world, on what basis can one say that Sanskrit is a dead language? One should always remember that a natural language never

dies. It is the artificially created language that dies. Sanskrit being a natural language, there is no question of its death. It is alive in the heart and mind of the people of India.” As Professor Sampurnananda has said, ‘Sanskrit is not merely alive, it is also a medicine to make the dead alive.’

To be an official language it is not necessary that the language should be the language of the masses. Today we have English as an official language of India and we have fought for it. It is the language of only the intelligentsia, and has been accepted in the Constitution as the official language of the Union. In that way Sanskrit has always been the language of the intelligentsia in India. Sir William Jones carried out extensive researches in 1786 and came to the conclusion that for a long time Sanskrit was the language of administration for courts and used for other official purposes. The University Education Commission presided over by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, later the President of India, came to the conclusion that “Sanskrit was all the time the lingua-franca of the world of learning in India, and this position it has held all the time in India.”

There are thousands of Sanskrit institutions in India and abroad engaged in research in Sanskrit and in its propagation. Almost all universities in India have departments of Sanskrit. There are special Sanskrit universities, colleges and schools where Sanskrit is taught through Sanskrit only. Most of the high schools in India offer Sanskrit as an optional subject. Every year hundreds of research theses are prepared by Sanskrit scholars. Sanskrit magazines and journals are being published by many institutions, and number over a thousand at present. Thousands of people use this language as their mother tongue. The news in Sanskrit is broadcast by All India Radio and by Delhi Doordarshan and has many listeners.

There are some villages like Matur in Shimoga district in Karnataka where several people from all walks of life communicate in Sanskrit only. A number of original writings in Sanskrit are created every year. The Sanskrit scholars of this country are tirelessly engaged in bringing out original works in Sanskrit in every field. Every year many prestigious awards are given to the outstanding scholars in the field of research, translations and original writings in Sanskrit. How then can one say that Sanskrit is dead?

Hebrew appeared to be a dead language for a long time in Israel. It was mainly the language of study and prayer. The people of Israel realized its value and made efforts to revive it. And due to their deep love and interest, it successfully became their national language in a short time. Now Hebrew is a language of the day-to-day life of the people of Israel. This should be our spirit as regards Sanskrit. Sri Aurobindo warns that “...it will not be a good day for India when the ancient tongue ceases entirely to be written or spoken.”

As for the difficulty of learning, this is not something peculiar to Sanskrit. “To decry it as difficult is to practice a *vibhiIaka* [scare-crow] before the young and unthinking. There is no language whose learning is easy. People in Tamil Nadu know how difficult it is to learn Hindi. To them Sanskrit is much easier. If they can learn the broken syllables of

Hindi, why can they not, with less labour, learn the fuller, and more perfect Sanskrit itself! There is an illuminating passage in Tagore's *Reminiscences*, where the poet records the reactions to his teaching Bengali to Scot girls, and says with reference to the erratic nature of English pronunciation, that the difficulties of one language are the same as those of another and that habit blinds one to those of his own. In a recent address Professor S.K. Belvelkar pointed out that considering the success that a totally foreign language like English, with all its tricks of pronunciation, had in India, it should be very easy for Sanskrit to succeed."

Furthermore, Sanskrit itself provides us many clues and possibilities of simplification, which can make it very easily a language of daily use and mass communication. It is not necessary to enter into the details of this work here, but there is already a vast amount of literature available on this subject. It is therefore both strange and sad to see the lack of understanding about the importance and value of Sanskrit in India itself, and the lack of interest in its study and learning. When Prof. Sheldon Pollock of the University of Chicago was asked why one should study Sanskrit, he replied, "It is indicative of the appalling quality of the public discourse on Sanskrit in India today that you even ask this question." And Prof. Richard Gombrich who holds the Boden chair at Oxford says, "The reasons for studying Sanskrit today are the same as they ever were: that the vast array of Sanskrit texts preserves for us a valuable part of the cultural heritage of mankind, including much beautiful literature and many interesting, even fascinating, ideas."

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(Compiled from the book "The Wonder that is Sanskrit" authored by Sampad and Vijay)



# 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 discipline meant only for the chosen few but in fact if practiced consciously can transform the very nature of every being. At the end, it all boils down to something extremely basic but easily forgotten... in the words of The Mother, "Of one thing you can be sure – your future is in your hands. You will become the man you want to be and the higher your ideal and your aspiration, the higher will be your realization, but you must keep a firm resolution and never forget your true aim in life."*

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

## **The Importance of Food**

### **Sri Aurobindo**

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It is a mistake to neglect the body and let it waste away; the body is the means of the sadhana and should be maintained in good order. There should be no attachment to it, but no contempt or neglect either of the material part of our nature.

\*

It is the attachment to food, the greed and eagerness for it, making it an unduly important thing in the life, that is contrary to the spirit of yoga. To be aware that something is pleasant to the palate is not wrong; only one must have no desire nor hankering for it, no exultation in getting it, no displeasure or regret at not getting it. One must be calm and equal, not getting upset or dissatisfied when the food is not tasty or not in abundance – eating the fixed amount that is necessary, not less or more. There should be neither eagerness nor repugnance.

\*

I think the importance of sattvic food from the spiritual point of view has been exaggerated. Food is rather a question of hygiene, and many of the sanctions and prohibitions laid down in ancient

religions had more a hygienic than a spiritual motive. The Gita's definitions seem to point in the same direction; – tamasic food, it seems to say, is what is stale or rotten with the virtue gone out of it, rajasic food is that which is too acrid, pungent, etc., heats the blood and spoils the health, sattwic food is what is pleasing, healthy, – etc. It may well be that different kinds of food nourish the action of the different *gunas* and so indirectly are helpful or harmful apart from their physical action. But that is as far as one can go confidently. What particular eatables are or are not sattwic is another question and more difficult to determine. Spiritually, I should say that the effect of food depends more on the occult atmosphere and influences that come with it than on anything in the food itself. Vegetarianism is another question altogether; it stands, as you say, on a will not to do harm to the more conscious forms of life for the satisfaction of the belly. As for the question of practising to take all kinds of food with equal *rasa*, it is not necessary to practise nor does it really come by practice. One has to acquire equality within in the consciousness and as this equality grows, one can extend it or apply it to the various fields of the activity of the consciousness.

\*

It is no part of this yoga to suppress taste, *rasa*, altogether. What is to be got rid of is vital desire and attachment, the greed of food, being overjoyed at getting the food you like, sorry and discontented when you do not have it, giving an undue importance to it. Equality is here the test as in so many other matters.

\*

Not to eat as the method of getting rid of the greed of food is the ascetic way. Ours is equanimity and non-attachment.

\*

There is no harm in fasting from time to time for a day or two or in reducing the food taken to a small but sufficient modicum; but entire abstinence for a long period is not advisable.

\*

You must not let that movement [reduction of food] go too far. It is one of the dangers of the *sadhana*, because of the ascetic turn of the yoga in the past that as experiences come the suggestion comes that food or sleep etc. are not necessary and also there may come an inclination in the body not to eat or not to sleep. But if that is accepted the results are often disastrous. It is no more to be accepted than the inertia itself.

\*

It is the habit in the subconscious material that feels an artificial need created by the past and does not care whether it is harmful or disturbing to the nerves or not. That is the nature of all intoxicants (wine, tobacco, cocaine etc.), people go on even after the deleterious effects have shown themselves and even after all real pleasure in it has ceased because of this artificial need (it is not real). The will has to get hold of this subconscious persistence and dissolve it.

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## **Take My Hand**

I can tell you  
what is real to me,  
I can tell you  
what it is that I see.  
It may be hard for  
you to understand,  
just believe in me  
as you take my hand.

There's a power in the  
bond that we share,  
there are so many  
reasons why we care.  
It may seem strange,  
even quite unreal,  
just have faith  
in what you feel.

Listen to the sounds  
the silence holds,  
be aware as knowledge  
starts to unfold,  
just sit back, let  
it come to you,  
don't worry about  
what you have to do.

For each of us has  
a time and place,  
we need to find  
our own space.  
If you look too hard  
you'll never see,  
what will come to you  
if you let things be.

– Kathleen Morgan

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# TALES TOLD BY MYSTICS

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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.*



## From whom to Beg ?

**Manoj Das**

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Women of the village had to walk no less than a mile in summer to fetch drinkable water from the river because their shallow ponds dried up or the meager water left in them grew too unclean to be consumed.

Everybody suffered, but it seems nobody except Bholaji, a servant living in a road-side hut, gave any serious thought to finding any solution to the problem.

He had tried his best, he had run from pillar to post, but in vain. He had been back in his hut, deciding to change his strategy.

He had been there only for an hour, talking to a young disciple of his, when someone peeped in and asked, “Can you give us a little water to drink? We are dying of thirst.”

Bholaji came out and saw a group of five travelers waiting under a tree with their camels. It was a merchant’s party.

“I’ll give you water to drink. But do you mind waiting a little?” asked Bholaji.

“We are too thirsty and too tired to do anything except waiting for water,” replied the leader of the group. Bholaji went away.

In a little over half an hour Bholaji and his disciple were back on the spot, bringing two large jars filled with water. The merchant did not fail to observe that they were panting.

The travelers quenched their thirst and perched their tents on the meadow in front of Bholaji’s hut. Evening set in and they began cooking their food and requested Bholaji and his disciple to join them in their dinner.

While the cooking was going on, the merchant found out to his embarrassment that Bholaji and his disciple had literally run to and fro the river to fetch water.

“Why don’t you dig a well?” asked the merchant.

“Ours is a rocky area. We have to dig deep for water to surface. We need a good amount of money—at least fifty gold coins—to execute the project. But the villagers live from hand to mouth. Where can we find such huge sum of money?” Bholaji asked and then proceeded to give an account of his futile efforts in the direction of solving the problem.

He had been to meet the landlord. But he was aghast to find the old man bed-ridden with a prolonged ailment. The landlord knew Bholaji to be a saintly person. The moment his eyes fell on Bholaji, he said in a tone of supplication, “Holy man, it is so kind of you to have paid a visit to me. I am suffering with this cursed disease for the last one year and physicians from far and near have practically squeezed the last coin out of my purse. I beg of you a favour. Will you promise to grant it?”

Bholaji felt sad and amused at the same time. He had come to beg the landlord’s favour. What favour was the landlord seeking of him?

“Be pleased to tell me, Sir, what I can do for you!” Bholaji muttered.

“Please pray to God so that His Grace takes me out of my predicament,” said the landlord in a feeble voice.

Bholaji agreed to do so and, after speaking to the landlord some words of consolation, took leave of him.

Bholaji was left with no alternative than to walk all the way up to the capital to seek an appointment with the king. A courtier who respected him told him, “The best time for obtaining the king’s favour is to make an appeal to him when he would come out of the shrine after offering his prayers to his deity. Generally he does not refuse anything to anybody at that auspicious moment.”

The shrine at which the king prayed was inside the palace and nobody else was allowed to step into the sanctum sanctorum while the king was there. The resourceful courtier, however, arranged for Bholaji to stand outside the shrine, close to the entrance.

But while standing there, he heard the king praying in a murmur, “O Lord, you know very well how the neighbouring king has been a continuous threat to my position. Unless I conquer and annex his kingdom for good, I cannot be at peace. Grant me victory, grant me strength and also grant me the wealth necessary to pass through the ordeal of a war!”

Bholaji quietly turned and crossed the gate of the shrine. The courtier who was waiting for him outside was surprised. “What happened? Why did you not wait for the king to come out?”

“I am not going to ask him for help.”

“Why?”

“How can I beg from a beggar? He is himself begging for several things from God. Why should I not also ask God for what I want?” replied Bholaji. He returned to his village.

The merchant whom Bholaji narrated his chain of experiences heard him with rapt attention. He bowed to him and placed an amount of a hundred coins before him.

“Believe me, Sir, I had taken a vow of donating this much money for some noble cause if I succeeded in making a certain deal during this business trip of mine. I did succeed. I have no doubt in my mind that offering this to you would be the best fulfillment of my vow,” said the merchant.

Both Bholaji and the merchant wiped their tears of gratitude.

*(The version of the story, which is relatively more popular, ends with the savant’s discovery that the king too is a beggar, and his quiet retreat. While the story is a comment on the reality that everybody is a beggar in this world of endless desires, all fulfillments can come only from one source—though they may come through human agencies.)*

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*(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 literacy 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**

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## Instalment-31

We have now looked at Sri Aurobindo's concept of evolution in some essential details. Savitri relates this notion to the evolution of man so far and to his future evolution as well; she is also able to explain why there is no need to be discouraged by the appearance of the world as it exists today. If anything, we have every reason to be optimistic about the eventual manifestation of the divine in all its glory in this world of ours. The world appears like an eternal paradox which contains within itself an eternal truth, says Sri Aurobindo in *The Life Divine* (p. 4)

Thus the eternal paradox and eternal truth of a divine life in an animal body, an immortal aspiration or reality inhabiting a mortal tenement, a single and universal consciousness representing itself in limited minds and divided egos, a transcendent, indefinable, timeless and spaceless Being who alone renders time and space and cosmos possible, and in all these the higher truth realisable by the lower term, justify themselves to the deliberate reason as well as to the persistent instinct or intuition of mankind.

There is one more aspect to the truth that Savitri represents in her philosophical encounter with the God of Death, and it is that here in the course of evolution, liberation or perfection is intended not only for the soul, but also, for the instruments that embody the soul in matter – to the human body, vital and mental. This world is not something essentially non-divine; it is the becoming of the divine, and it too has its place in the eventual divinisation of the manifested world.

But standing on Eternity's luminous brink  
I have discovered that the world was He;  
I have met Spirit with spirit, Self with self,  
But I have loved too the body of my God.  
I have pursued him in his earthly form. (p. 649)

This theme keeps occurring throughout the poem, and we shall explore it in some detail here.

In the Indian philosophical tradition, philosophy is called 'darshan', which means something 'seen' or directly experienced and not something established only through reasoning and logic.

Indian philosophy is based primarily on spiritual perceptions obtained in higher states of consciousness although sensory observation and rational argumentation also play an important part in it. For example, there are states of consciousness in which one realises the unreality of this world. Then careful logic and perceptive psychological analyses are brought in to build intricate metaphysical systems around this experience. Therefore in Indian philosophy the nature of the spiritual experience, and not logic is the final arbiter of all philosophical debates.

Since Savitri is a mouthpiece of Sri Aurobindo, we need to glance briefly at Sri Aurobindo's spiritual biography to arrive at an estimate of his great spiritual authority. He has himself stated that his philosophy is an attempt to set down in philosophical terms his spiritual experiences. There are four distinct spiritual experiences in Sri Aurobindo's life which have shaped the intellectual exposition of his philosophy. Sri Aurobindo himself speaks of the four following great realisations as the foundations of his yoga and spiritual philosophy. (Ref. Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library, Vol. 26, p. 64)

i) the realisation of the silent, spaceless, timeless Brahman attended in the beginning by a feeling and perception of the total unreality of the world: this tremendous experience came to him in Baroda at the end of a 3-day meditation session with Lele, his yogic mentor. This was akin to the experience of nirvana. It brought to him a series of powerful experiences and a radical change of consciousness that made him see the world as a cinematographic play of vacant forms in the impersonal universality of the absolute Brahman

ii) the realisation of the cosmic consciousness and of the Divine as all beings: this is the experience he had in the Alipore jail and he has described his vision of Sri Krishna as the all-pervading Lord of creation in his Uttarapara speech. This is the experience of the living Lord to whom he surrenders his whole being.

iii) the realisation of the supreme Reality with the static and dynamic Brahman as its two aspects. This realisation was in a way a synthesis of the preceding two. It was a vision of the supreme Reality as a multiform unity, simultaneously static and dynamic, characterised by silence and expression, emptiness and creativity, infinite and yet composed of manifold forms. This vision occurred when Sri Aurobindo was in Chandernagore in 1910.

iv) the realisation of the higher planes of consciousness leading to the supermind. This experience of Sri Aurobindo's sadhana came to him on November 24, 1926.

After settling down in Pondicherry, Sri Aurobindo was trying to transform the lower levels of the being by the descent of the higher planes. From the time of his confinement in Alipore jail, he had been aware of these levels of consciousness above the ordinary mind, to which he gave these names later: Higher Mind, Illumined Mind, Intuitive Mind, Overmind. These are the principle gradations of consciousness which lead to the Supermind, the real source of Consciousness-Force. These are not mere modes of knowing but realms of being, fields of existence.

The third and the fourth realisations mentioned above constitute the bases of much that is new in Sri Aurobindo's philosophy. In Chandernagore he realised that the dark half of the reality we see around us is not meant to be rejected but to be illumined and transformed. He also found out that as one up in one's consciousness, one acquires also the capacity to go down into the nether levels. Normally the dark levels of our consciousness as well as the bright upper ranges are out of our sight.

In his own yogic sadhana, Sri Aurobindo descended from the rational consciousness through the vital consciousness first into the consciousness of the body which organises the tissues and cells of our body. Below this level he found that there is a physical consciousness (the subconscious) which contains the experiences of our evolutionary past – our fears, deceptions and a tendency to cling on to repetitive activities. As he descended further, he came to a vast region, in which life itself is embedded. This is a realm of inexorable universal law and Sri Aurobindo experienced it as a blind rejection of life's upward evolutionary thrust. In the heart of this Inconscient Sri Aurobindo found himself precipitated into the Supreme Light. This was the beginning of his realisation that this Inconscient too was a manifestation of the Divine. He realised that Night, Evil, Death were not the ultimate truth; they were only a mask on the face of the Divine. There is only the one Divine Consciousness in the very heart of Matter. In *Savitri*, Aswapati (who in many ways represents the persona of Sri Aurobindo) enters the world of Darkness, Night and Evil in his exploration of the various worlds. This is described in Cantos Seven and Eight of Book II of *Savitri*. When he enters these nether levels, he sees the face of evil and darkness in many forms. But he doesn't give up.

He saw in Night the Eternal's shadowy veil,  
Knew death for a cellar of the house of life,  
In destruction felt creation's hasty pace,  
Knew loss as the price of a celestial gain  
And hell as a short cut to heaven's gates.  
Then in Illusion's occult factory  
And in the Inconscient's magic printing-house  
Torn were the formats of the primal Night  
And shattered the stereotypes of Ignorance. (p. 231)

He realised that the Night was only a veil drawn on the face of the Eternal, and death as a stage of transition and hell as a shortcut to heaven's gates. This is a very crucial experience because here we have the basis of Sri Aurobindo's affirmation of the Divine in the world and the setting of his goal as the transformation of the mental, the vital and the material into fully worthy instrumentalities of the Divine. We don't have turn our face away from the earth to be holy, or fight the flesh with its spiritual opposites. Sri Aurobindo proposed to utilise the very qualities of the earth and the flesh. God is already there; he does not have to be brought in but only to be liberated. This needed the descent of a consciousness he called the Supramental consciousness..

As we go up the ladder of consciousness from mind, each ascending stage brings about an integrating transformation in the person. We also begin to realise our closeness to the other members of the human community. There is an increase in the sense of quiet, peace, light, and harmony with others, as we go up from one level to the next. But it is not easy to transform the lower levels of our being. Nature resists the attempts at transformation and clings to its fixed old habits of operating within its old grooves. This tendency of our lower levels of being, namely our physical, vital and mental consciousness, to persist in order to cling to their accustomed ways of being is so strong that this effort is generally regarded hopeless and most spiritual luminaries think it a waste of effort. They regard it as an attempt as vain as that which tries to straighten the tail of a dog, which for ever remains crooked no matter how hard your try. If after all the heroic efforts to change this world, it remains 'anityam' and 'asukham' in the language of the Gita, it is best to take the stand that the Brahman alone is the truth and this jagat, the terrestrial world is an illusion, maya. But Sri Aurobindo based on his spiritual experiences believes that the lower planes of our being can be transformed. He also believes that the key to this transformation lies in bringing down into the lower planes the power of the original creative consciousness, of what he

calls the Supermind. Even overmind, the highest range of consciousness already manifested on earth does not have this power of transformation. It can only come from a level of consciousness which Sri Aurobindo has called the Supermind.

Here lies the crux of the problem and the issue on which Sri Aurobindo has views which distinguish him all other thinkers belonging to the Indian spiritual tradition. Man always has had an intuition of perfect world beyond the world of imperfection we see around us. But this world of perfection has always been seen as belonging exclusively to the supracosmic or transcendental world – a chinmaya loka, or a Vaikunth or a Kailas. This has encouraged the spiritual aspirants in their ardour for the transcendental world and their intolerance with man's terrestrial existence. Therefore most spiritual thinkers regard the worldly existence as an unreality, a vanity. Man's mind often finds that the senses often trick it, the vital mind finds its appetite for novelty and excitement always exceeds the satisfaction this world can give it, and the thinking mind finds that there can be no certitudes here, and the soul exclaims in its frustration everything here is relative and valueless. Then the next step is to conclude that the Absolute and the Eternal is real, and this world is an immense delirium, an immense cosmic illusion. The Absolute Brahman is the only reality and this world is a maya, an illusion, a falsehood.

In *The Life Divine*, in which Sri Aurobindo deals with this issue at some length, he has pointed out that in India this philosophy of world negation has been given formulations of supreme power by two of her greatest thinkers, Buddha and Shankara, although he also makes it clear that this was not the attitude of the Vedic Rishis.. He also points out further that

All voices are joined in one great consensus that not in this world of dualities can there be our kingdom of heaven, but beyond, whether in the joys of the eternal Brindavan or the high beatitudes of Brahmaloaka, beyond all in the featureless unity of the indefinable existence. And through many centuries a great army of shining witnesses, saints, teachers, names sacred to Indian memory and dominant in Indian imagination, have borne always the same witness and swelled always the same lofty and distant appeal ... renunciation the sole path of knowledge, the acceptance of physical life the act of the ignorant, cessation of birth the right use of human birth, the call of the Spirit, the recoil from Matter. [1]

It is undoubtedly true that the spirituality which Sri Aurobindo aims at is very difficult. Perfecting the inner being of man is easier. To transform the outer being of man and with it the outer world is an extremely difficult undertaking, and nobody so far even has claimed that it is possible to achieve such an ideal, except Sri Aurobindo. He knew how difficult it is to change particularly the vital and the physical beings of man. But he was confident that this could be done. In a letter he wrote to the Mother in 1916 he referred to this problem:

It is this to which our nature is most recalcitrant. It persists in the division, in the dualities, in the sorrow and unsatisfied passion and labour, it finds it difficult to accustom itself to the divine largeness, joy and equipoise -- especially the vital and physical parts of our nature; it is they that pull down the mind which has accepted and even when it has long lived in the joy and peace and oneness. That, I suppose, is why the religions and philosophies have had so strong a leaning to the condemnation of Life and Matter and aimed at an escape instead of a victory. But the victory has to be won; the rebellious elements have to be redeemed and transformed, not rejected and excised.

It must be clearly understood here that Sri Aurobindo had no doubt about either the value or the validity of the experience of Nirvana. Without the experience of Nirvana, it is difficult to rise beyond the ignorance of the mind-constructed world and to realise our freedom from the determinations of Nature. Only in this way can the fundamental self recover its position as pure consciousness. And when the spiritual aspirant falls suddenly into a state of oneness with the timeless, immobile self in the experience of Nirvana, the world he has so far taken as the only reality and the reality revealed by the experience of Nirvana is striking that he is moved to believe that the world of multiplicity he saw was unreal and the silent self alone is real. Sri Aurobindo himself was no stranger to the state of Nirvana. He knew exactly what the experience was and has described it in his letters. (*Letters on Yoga*, pp. 48 – 51)

The question that is relevant here is whether the Nirvana experience is one of the experiences of approaching the Supreme Reality or it is the only experience or the culminating experience, the ultimate experience? Sri Aurobindo's answer to this is that beyond the Nirvana experience is a still higher and more inclusive spiritual realisation which grants a place of validity to both the Nirvanic experience and to the world-consciousness of which it is the negation.

The normal tendency to identify oneself with an individual body, life and mind leads to an illusion. This is the view given to us by our mind as long as it is unenlightened. The reality is that there is a Self, a pure existence of which all things here are becomings. At some point the spiritual seeker has to discover that the finite is one self-representation of the manifestation of the Infinite. A spiritual seeker begins in the negative way, saying, "I am not the body, not the life and not the mind". From there he must go on to the realisation, "I am That, the pure, the blissful". The truth is that our reality is that of a Self which is a pure existence of which all these things are becomings.. In other words, he should be able to say "This body is also potentially divine, so is this vital being and the mind". This is the truth which we have to realise, to make operative in our outer and inner life. And in arriving at this truth the Nirvana experience is certainly most valuable. But our seeking should not end with the transcendent Reality. We must repossess the outer world with this spiritual consciousness, because the world of multiplicity is the Absolute's dynamic nature and aspect.

What Sri Aurobindo finds unsatisfactory in traditional Indian spirituality is not its strong leaning towards the experience of Nirvana but its tendency to get stuck with it, stopping half-way. It is the pressing problem of evil that drives many spiritual aspirants to this extreme. How to reconcile the ever-pure, blissful, perfect Infinite with this world of impurity, falsehood, evil and suffering? The best solution seems to be to deny any reality to the world outside and to withdraw into the glories of the transcendent within ourselves. But this, says Sri Aurobindo, is an escape rather than a solution.

With this escape, we become petrified in our present imperfections, weaknesses and suffering, and deny to ourselves the opportunity of participating in the divine action. Evolution, we have seen, is the way the divine has chosen of progressively manifesting himself in this creation. God is liberating himself here from falsehood into truth, from ugliness into the good and the beautiful, from suffering into delight. And man has to be the leader of this great effort for in him Nature has an instrument in man who can understand her purpose and co-operate with her.

The Nirvanic solution to the problem of life is that it is destructive of values at all levels. We make that an excuse for not striving to elevate the whole race to the highest possible level of perfection, by changing the material life of the race into fresh forms, religious, intellectual, social or political. Sri Aurobindo does not accept the common idea that a man leading a spiritual life is

expected to be lost to the rest of the community and its pressing concerns. In his view God gave man life on earth precisely in order that the higher might be expressed in terms of the lower. To refuse this vocation is neither to serve God nor to fulfil one's own manhood. To reject the world altogether is to miss "the Divine Being's larger joy in cosmic existence ... the total sense creation and the entire will of God.

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*(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)*

[1] Sri Aurobindo: *The Life Divine* (SABCL Vol. 18) p. 23.



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### **Allowing the Lord to Do it**

#### **The Mother**

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You are faced with a so-called problem: what should you say, what should you do, how should you act? There is nothing to do, nothing, you only have to say to the Lord, “There, You see, it is like that”—that’s all. And then you stay very quiet. And then quite spontaneously, without thinking about it, without reflection, without calculation, nothing, nothing, without the slightest effort—you do what has to be done. That is to say, the Lord does it, it is no longer you. He does it, He arranges the circumstances, He arranges the people, He puts the words into your mouth or your pen—He does everything, everything, everything, everything; you have nothing more to do but to allow yourself to live blissfully.

I am more and more convinced that people do not really want it.

*But clearing the ground is difficult, the work of clearing the ground beforehand.*

But you don’t even need to do it! He does it for you.

*But they are constantly breaking in: the old consciousness, the old thoughts...*

Yes, they try to come in again, by habit. You only have to say, “Lord, You see, You see, You see, it is like that”—that’s all. “Lord, You see, You see this, You see that, You see this fool” —and it is all over immediately. And it changes automatically, my child, without the slightest effort. Simply to be sincere, that is to say, to *truly* want everything to be right. You are perfectly conscious that you can do nothing about it, that you have no capacity. I feel more and more that this amalgam of matter, like this, of cells, all that, is pitiful. It is pitiful! I do not know whether there are certain states in which people feel powerful,

wonderful, luminous, capable; but for me it is because they do not really know what they are like! When you really see how you are made—it is really nothing, nothing. But it is capable of everything, provided... provided that you allow the Lord to act. But there is always something that wants to do it by itself; that’s the trouble, otherwise...

No, you may be full of an excellent goodwill and then *you want* to do it. That's what complicates everything. Or else you don't have faith, you believe that the Lord will not be able to do it and that you must do it yourself, because He does not know! (*Mother laughs.*) This, this kind of stupidity is very common. "How can He see things? We live in a world of Falsehood, how can He see Falsehood and see..." But He sees the thing as it is! Exactly!

I am not speaking of people of no intelligence, I am speaking of people who are intelligent and who try—there is a kind of conviction, like that, somewhere, even in people who know that we live in a world of Ignorance and Falsehood and that there is a Lord who is All-Truth. They say, "Precisely because He is All-Truth, He does not understand. (*Mother laughs.*) He does not understand our falsehood, I must deal with it myself." That is very strong, very common.

Ah! we make complications for nothing.

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## Lion playing with woman



**"Art after all is not forbidden to deal with the unusual..."**

**Sri Aurobindo**

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*Lion playing with woman. Khajuraho, Chandella dynasty, eleventh century. Photograph by Elizabeth Beck.*



## Your Voice

*Enthusiasm is quite possibly the most important ingredient of any new venture. Without it, there is nothing exceptional, spontaneous or living about what one is trying to create. Your Voice is a section where we invite opinions and view points from our readers and where we showcase letters with suggestions, ideas, support and criticism. We entreat you to feel free and write to us about anything that may strike you regarding Next Future in its concrete form as well as from a larger perspective. There is a possibility that we may not have enough space to feature all letters coming in, but we will try our utmost to do so.*

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Words are insufficient to describe my joy of browsing this wonderful magazine. I would suggest to include more practical spiritual themes.

Sreelakshmi Pradeep

\*

I was really surprised and at the same time satisfied to find in the previous issue of 'Next Future', two articles of Peter Drucker: 'A Room with a View' by M.S.Srinivasan and 'My Life as a Knowledge Worker', written by the author. Peter Drucker was my 'business-guru' over thirty years and even when I retired at the age of 76, his teaching was an excellent background to continue working by on my own work at home. His management teaching, written in several books and presented in many seminaries, helped me considerably to follow a different quality of administrations-work, above all through three important attitudes: honesty, perfection and a new approach to deal with people.

It is furthermore interesting that during my Sadhana, beginning during the year 1973, the luminous hints of Peter Drucker's thoughts were considered by me as a complementary value of the spiritual life.

In his book 'In Search of Excellence', Peter Drucker emphasized also the need of discipline in any work done, but not only on a theoretical base, it must be lived in practice.

At any rate my congratulations for these two worthy articles which shows once more that 'Next Future' treats the life-movements always towards perfection, outwardly and inwardly.

Walter

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Really enjoyed February's edition — especially Peter Drucker's column and also Upanishad and Dhammapada articles.

Ajay

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