

The Resurgent India

A Monthly National Review

March 2017



“Let us all work for the Greatness of India.”
- The Mother

Year 7

Issue 12

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SUCCESSFUL FUTURE

(Full of Promise and Joyful Surprises)

Botanical name: Gaillardia Pulchella

Common name: Indian blanket, Blanket flower, Fire-wheels

Year 7

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A Declaration

We do not fight against any creed, any religion.

We do not fight against any form of government.

We do not fight against any social class.

We do not fight against any nation or civilisation.

We are fighting division, unconsciousness, ignorance, inertia and falsehood.

We are endeavouring to establish upon earth union, knowledge, consciousness, Truth, and we fight whatever opposes the advent of this new creation of Light, Peace, Truth and Love.

— The Mother

(Collected works of the Mother 13, p. 124-25)

A PERSPECTIVE ON THE 2017 ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

The 2017 assembly elections in five states have been, by far, amongst the most interesting and decisive elections in the country, with the BJP and its allies forming the government in four out of the five states and winning by a massive margin in the Hindi heartland of Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. Not only did BJP single-handedly win far more than the majority seats in UP, it is also forming a government in the state after 14 years, skillfully negating and realigning the caste and religious equations painstakingly crafted by the 'secular parties' over the last three decades. These elections have paved the way for the ruling party, the BJP, to expand its footprint across the country.

SMART VICTORY AND NEW ALLIANCES

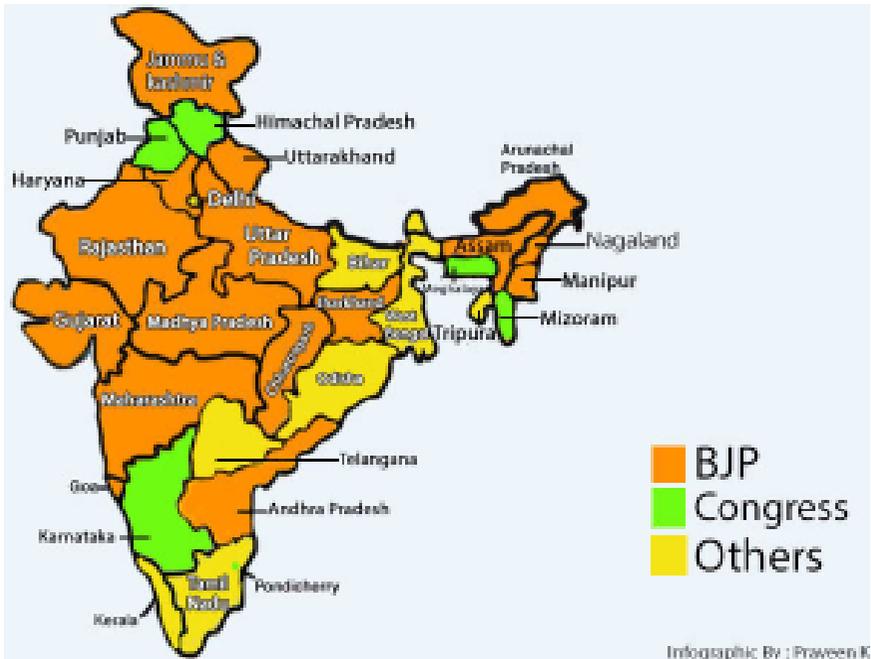
Not only in the recent assembly elections, but in the other sub-state elections – like the BMC elections in Maharashtra and the municipal elections in Odisha – the BJP has won resoundingly, with the Delhi and Bihar elections of 2015 being the only notable exceptions to the party's winning spree. In the current elections, whether we go seat-wise or according to vote-share, the movement has been in BJP's favour.

In UP, the BJP single-handedly won 312 of 403 seats, with its allies securing another 13 seats. Seen in terms of vote-share too, the party has managed to repeat the miracle it performed in UP in 2014 general elections, with a marginal vote-share decline of 2.2% from 43.6% then to 41.4% now. Its seats have gone up from merely 47 in 2012 to 325 now.

In Uttarakhand too, the BJP won unprecedentedly in a bipolar contest with the Congress, winning 57 out of 70 seats, with the Congress winning just 11. This was a 13 percentage point lead over the Congress. The outcome was remarkable in that the BJP increased its Uttarakhand vote-share from 33% in 2012 to 46.5% in 2017, and that too, in a state, where there have always been very close contests

between the two parties, with none being able to lead so remarkably in the last few elections.

In Goa and Manipur, though, the BJP won only 13 and 21 seats respectively out of the assembly of 40 and 60 legislators in these states and the Congress emerged as the single largest party, forces were allied in BJP's favour because the smaller parties in both the states allied with the BJP and the latter formed a coalition government in these states. Many in the opposition camp are calling this the 'murder of democracy', saying that Congress being the largest party should have formed the government in these states. This charge, however, is baseless and foolish.



Source: <http://www.oneindia.com/india/infographic-states-ruled-by-bjp-in-india-after-the-big-up-win-2372882.html>

To begin with, both the states witnessed a hung assembly, with no single party winning a creditable majority. In such cases, a combination of parties with majority of seats alone can form a stable government. Moreover, in both Goa and Manipur, BJP had a larger

vote-share than the Congress, even though Congress was ahead in terms of seats. This clearly shows that the overall mandate of the people favoured the BJP. In fact, in Manipur, the BJP's good tally of 21 seats was complemented by the fact that it was the single largest party in terms of vote-share at 36.3%, reflecting the popular choices of the people. In Goa also, the BJP had 32.5% vote-share to Congress's 28.4%. Under such conditions, it would have been undemocratic, in true terms, if Congress had formed the government in either Goa or Manipur. Punjab was the only state where BJP got the lowest tally of seats, and the SAD-BJP alliance was trumped by even the Aam Aadmi Party. In the aftermath of these elections, BJP-led governments rule a majority of the states in the country – something that would have been unthinkable a few years ago.

With this mandate, the BJP has its task cut out not only governing the country, but also of bringing about the needed social change. But what kind of a change that would be, will be clear only if we interpret this mandate correctly.

WHAT WORKED?

Much has emerged in the form of extensive analysis after these path-breaking elections. At the outset, almost all the analysts acknowledge that they cannot grasp how this miracle happened, with the UP election results still being a big mystery.

The win has been varyingly attributed to BJP's success in crafting a Hindu social consolidation rising above caste lines winning the support of all but Yadavs and non-Jatav Dalits; to the BJP's successful communal polarization campaign dividing the Hindus and Muslims; to the demonetization; to the Muslim women's support for the BJP's progressive stand on the issue of Uniform Civil Code and taking a stand against the triple talaq; to the anti-incumbency against SP and its poor record in law and order; its failure to rise to occasion in the Muzaffarnagar riots; and, finally, to the failure of "secular" parties to craft a 'grand alliance' akin to the one in 2015 Bihar by-polls which defeated the BJP.

This last notion about crafting a grand alliance is not without flaw. It needs to be stressed that even the combined vote-share of these parties, under the given conditions, would not have been more than 36%, for, in the first place, the differences amongst these parties are too irreconcilable to attract voters across party lines. These hard facts have not prevented political pundits from giving themselves the simplistic solace that a Bihar-like coalition would have worked in UP.

Besides these factual analyses, there are also voices calling for introspection and questioning the politics of the last 67 years. Congress as the bastion of Indian secularism – with all other parties merely being opportunistic, fake side-kicks – has received a drubbing. Lamenting the defeat of ‘secularism’, especially after the appointment of Yogi Adityanath as the UP Chief Minister, these voices have explained how Congress practiced completely false secularism after the death of Nehru, conceding that it practiced minority appeasement without doing any real work, making it a loser for all sides. Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi together propelled the rise of BJP in politics. The beginning of the 1980s was the time when Congress sought massive support from the Hindus and remodeled itself as nationalistic for purely short-term electoral gains even though, in terms of economic policies, it remained left-wing, and continued to sell out to minority appeasement politics.

Throughout the 1980s, the politics of the country was charged up, and in the 1990s, the BJP’s rise was cemented with the Ayodhya Ram Mandir Movement. The era of piecemeal and powerless coalition politics that was crafted thereafter, ostensibly in the name of secularism, repeatedly tried to check the political expansion of the BJP, hoping to maintain the false illusion of secularism. When we look back, it now seems clear that all along, behind the political picture, BJP was rising positively through the excellent groundwork done by the RSS and in reaction – but much more effectively – to the dishonest and immoral conduct of the leaders of the Congress and the other, so-called, secular parties. After the UP elections it seems that even their so-called ‘social engineering’ among castes and religions invented to maintain, forever, their grip on power has miserably failed.

CHANGING THE IMMEDIATE POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

Out of all the five state elections, it is the UP which is the most significant – not only because it is the largest and most important state, politically, but has also been the determining ground for shaping pan-India history since Independence. Home to a sizeable Muslim population and a mixture of castes and jatis, the state has shaped present political vote-banks as well as the dominant thinking on secularism and caste.

In this state, home to the rise of Mandal politics, where only caste-based regional parties have ruled and Muslim appeasement had become a standard political narrative, the 2017 elections reversed the thinking of the last three decades. This is the first time that there has been the rise of a united Hindu vote, cutting across caste lines – something that the RSS and BJP have been trying for the last three decades. But the difference this time was that what none of the past BJP leaderships under politicians like Advani or Vajpayee had been able to do has been done this time by Modi and Amit Shah by completely isolating the Muslim and Yadav vote bank of the SP from the main stream of the people.

Moreover, Modi has also effectively started the project of the “OBC-isation” of political Hinduism, instead of the earlier attempts by previous leaders to “Hinduise” Dalits and OBCs, which met with partial success during the Ayodhya movement. This signals a long-needed democratization of caste system in Hinduism. After this result, while some blind critics still refuse to see the writing on the wall, Muslims are fast realizing that they have been used as a convenient vote-bank by the so-called secular parties. It should not be too difficult for them to see that the so-called secular parties could not have done anything significant for them without taking the risk of a reaction from the Hindu majority. In the interest of their survival they would have been foolish to do so and did not – especially because they were hardly interested in anything more than their (Muslim’s) votes – until the coming of the UPA-II under the leadership of Sonia. With its record of an extreme appeasement

of the minorities, the UPA II completely alienated the Hindu majority and made the success of Narendra Modi in 2014 inevitable. A question that is widely being asked within the community now is – if mullahs can carry on a communal campaign and receive protection from certain ‘secular’ parties, then why shouldn’t a united Hindu backlash be inevitable and why the BJP isn’t justified in doing the same?

Not just the re-writing of the narrative of secularism – which has effectively turned in BJP’s favour even in border Meitei Muslim dominated areas like Manipur – but also the other key decisions by this government, like demonetization, surgical strikes and pro-poor schemes like LPG connections through Ujjawala and MUDRA have been validated. In this sense, UP has become the testing ground for the effectivity of Modi’s developmental work so far. This is as it may be, but the real issue is not to look at the surface of things which alone most people are conscious in their nature but to look at a deeper collective Will and Consciousness of which inevitably fulfils itself leading the collectivity in the direction rarely divined or understood by men even when the collectivity is very close to some kind of decisive change.

RECOGNIZING THE LARGER MOVEMENT

This collective Will and Consciousness needs to be recognized as something that in India has always been acting even during the advent of the British rule and the prior Muslim invasions. All political unity and consolidation – even the ones that helped fight back the foreign invasions – have been temporary, and the unity was broken once the temporary purpose was served. This is reflected, today, in our political system also, where, akin to the foreign invaders, the so-called secular parties have been able to wreak havoc with a basic sense of political unity, by exaggerating the caste and class identity-based differences. As if these differences and identities were an indispensable part of the original unity of the Indian spirit!

What has been missing during the long political history of India

– and not without very good reasons^a – is the basic spirit of nationalism of which only now the Collective Will seems to have chosen to make Indians acutely aware. This will tend to transcend all differences and will enable Indians to rise above petty, selfish motives for the larger good of the nation. If we open our eyes and look at the world, such a thing is already very active in some of the most prominent countries like the US, Japan, China and Russia. Such a consciousness transforms the everyday civic and political life by minimizing acts of petty corruption, and changing the nature of politics too. In such countries, it would, indeed, be very difficult to defend the minority-cult or poisonous politics of the kind we have in India.

In India, right now, it is this sense of nationalism that is urgently needed to change our civic life and change the nature of politics. But, while, for other countries, this has merely become a directionless end leading to no further evolvment, for India, this is just the starting point. For other countries, the purpose they come to serve for the larger progress of humanity and for the fulfillment of great ideals is limited. For, in the final analysis, countries cannot be judged on the basis of selfish motives like how much political, economic and military success they have achieved. These are very temporary ends – a self-serving collective unit or nation always perishes once these ends are achieved, for it has nothing to give besides these petty fulfillments. **“Of all the proud nations of the West there is an end determined. When their limited special work for mankind is done they must decay and disappear.”**¹

However, India will supply the world with her perennial light and mighty revolutions, for she is open to the Infinite and the Eternal. India’s destiny is to lead the world. **“It is *she* who must send forth from herself the future religion of the entire world, the Eternal religion which is to harmonise all religion, science and philosophies and make mankind one soul.”**²

But can India do this, under the present circumstances where

^a Please see the attached Appendix containing Sri Aurobindo’s words which provides a much deeper view of the whole issue.

the only language that the world understands is that of brute power? **India needs to become the repository of power – but not this brute power. She must manifest the *Shakti* whose transformative action can strongly assert itself. Otherwise, all changes in political, social and economic and military systems will be temporary and common like those taking place in other countries.** Such common changes can never be the basis of the way that can lead India to organise Human Unity.

Therefore, even though her strong cultural influence is already spreading everywhere, the actual action will be missing if India herself does not become a consolidated nationalistic force – which is just the starting point of her journey. Therefore, the kind of political discourse that we saw in these elections – and which appears to us as miraculous – should become the normal course of politics and the starting point of changes to come. The current elections, therefore, should in no way be seen to be limited to securing a long-term foundation for the BJP but should be seen in the larger context of the direction in which the country is moving.

APPENDIX

“The whole basis of the Indian mind is its spiritual and inward turn, its propensity to seek the things of the spirit and the inner being first and foremost and to look at all else as secondary, dependent, to be handled and determined in the light of the higher knowledge and as an expression, a preliminary, field or aid or at least a pendent to the deeper spiritual aim, – a tendency therefore to create whatever it had to create first on the inner plane and afterwards in its other aspects. This mentality and this consequent tendency to create from within outwards being given, it was inevitable that the unity India first created for herself should be the spiritual and cultural oneness. It could not be, to begin with, a political unification effected by an external rule centralised, imposed or constructed, as was done in Rome or ancient Persia, by a conquering kingdom or the genius of a military and organising people. It cannot, I think, justly be said that this was a mistake or a

proof of the unpractical turn of the Indian mind and that the single political body should have been created first and afterwards the spiritual unity could have securely grown up in the vast body of an Indian national empire. The problem that presented itself at the beginning was that of a huge area containing more than a hundred kingdoms, clans, peoples, tribes, races, in this respect another Greece, but a Greece on an enormous scale, almost as large as modern Europe. As in Greece a cultural Hellenic unity was necessary to create a fundamental feeling of oneness, here too and much more imperatively a conscious spiritual and cultural unity of all these peoples was the first, the indispensable condition without which no enduring unity could be possible. The instinct of the Indian mind and of its great Rishis and founders of its culture was sound in this matter. And even if we suppose that an outward imperial unity like that of the Roman world could have been founded among the peoples of early India by military and political means, we must not forget that the Roman unity did not endure, that even the unity of ancient Italy founded by the Roman conquest and organisation did not endure, and it is not likely that a similar attempt in the vast reaches of India without the previous spiritual and cultural basis would have been of an enduring character. It cannot be said either, even if the emphasis on spiritual and cultural unity be pronounced to have been too engrossing or excessive and the insistence on political and external unity too feeble, that the effect of this precedence has been merely disastrous and without any advantage. It is due to this original peculiarity, to this indelible spiritual stamp, to this underlying oneness amidst all diversities that if India is not yet a single organised political nation, she still survives and is still India.

After all the spiritual and cultural is the only enduring unity and it is by a persistent mind and spirit much more than by an enduring physical body and outward organisation that the soul of a people survives. This is a truth the positive Western mind may be unwilling to understand or concede, and yet its proofs are written across the whole story of the ages. The ancient nations,

contemporaries of India, and many younger born than she are dead and only their monuments left behind them. Greece and Egypt exist only on the map and in name, for it is not the soul of Hellas or the deeper nation-soul that built Memphis which we now find at Athens or at Cairo. Rome imposed a political and a purely outward cultural unity on the Mediterranean peoples, but their living spiritual and cultural oneness she could not create, and therefore the east broke away from the west, Africa kept no impress of the Roman interlude, and even the western nations still called Latin could offer no living resistance to barbarian invaders and had to be reborn by the infusion of a foreign vitality to become modern Italy, Spain and France. But India still lives and keeps the continuity of her inner mind and soul and spirit with the India of the ages. Invasion and foreign rule, the Greek, the Parthian and the Hun, the robust vigour of Islam, the levelling steam-roller heaviness of the British occupation and the British system, the enormous pressure of the Occident have not been able to drive or crush the ancient soul out of the body her Vedic Rishis made for her. At every step, under every calamity and attack and domination, she has been able to resist and survive either with an active or a passive resistance. And this she was able to do in her great days by her spiritual solidarity and power of assimilation and reaction, expelling all that would not be absorbed, absorbing all that could not be expelled, and even after the beginning of the decline she was still able to survive by the same force, abated but not slayable, retreating and maintaining for a time her ancient political system in the south, throwing up under the pressure of Islam Rajput and Sikh and Mahratta to defend her ancient self and its idea, persisting passively where she could not resist actively, condemning to decay each empire that could not answer her riddle or make terms with her, awaiting always the day of her revival. And even now it is a similar phenomenon that we see in process before our eyes. And what shall we say then of the surpassing vitality of the civilisation that could accomplish this miracle and of the wisdom of those who built its foundation not on things external but on the spirit and the inner mind and made a

spiritual and cultural oneness the root and stock of her existence and not solely its fragile flower, the eternal basis and not the perishable superstructure?"³

References:

- 1. Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo, Vol.7, p.1086, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry**
- 2. Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo, Vol.6, p.84, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry**
- 3. Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo, Vol.20, pp.429-31, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry**

ASSESSING THE RISE OF THE MODI GOVERNMENT

The narrative fostered by the latest assembly elections – set to change the course of politics in this country – has marked the third big break in the way we perceive the Modi regime. The first was in 2014 when Modi won the general elections with a thumping majority and the second was when he displayed the extent to which he would go for ‘reform’, through drastic measures like surgical strikes and demonetization. And the third is winning the critical Uttar Pradesh elections.

These victories have surprised many observers, because, more than anything else, the term of this government has been rife with controversies and protests. There is a trend, wherein each year has been devoted to large themes of protest and discussion, with issues like nationalism, Indian culture, Hinduism, education, secularism and intolerance generating burning conversations among people. These are issues from which the common man has been largely alienated for the most part of the last few decades. They were concerned, and voted for the government, based on practical considerations like caste/jati solidarity – taken for granted – and of delivery of welfare.

However, the aspect of the development and welfarist programmes – the art of which the Modi government has mastered even more perfectly than the Congress of Indira Gandhi’s times and later – is secondary when we judge the change that the government has brought about. Indeed, if development were that critical a plank, then Akhilesh Yadav of SP should have won the recent elections, for every party promises numerous schemes and development initiatives, and Akhilesh had the actual track record – though seriously diluted by poor law and order – in UP and the goodwill of the people and the popularity to prove it. Yet, none of this, not even people’s goodwill or the endless welfare schemes, could compel them to vote for him. Thus, while judging the

government's track record, the real root of analysis should be psychological and study at the spirit of the change, which alone can explain outer realities like social change.

In India, at present, what is being witnessed is the completion of the true spirit of nation-building and national consolidation so that the country can take her rightful place in the world. What the Modi government has given, more than anything, is the involvement of people in actually shaping the national character. There have been repeated assassinations of our national character for far too long, as it had been left in the hands of corrupt, self-serving politicians, with our public being lethargic and unthinking. Now, by getting the people in touch with right issues and enabling them to collectively rise up – a process which our intellectuals would call 'reactionary' and term as a 'controversy' – and no longer remain a lumbering mass, party to the pettiness of our decades-old political culture.

A COMPLEMENTARY GLOBAL TREND

This process taking place in India complements the movement world-over. In all countries, things are changing. Unexpected leaders are gaining popularity and the "liberal" institutions and ideals that had been constructed over the last two centuries are losing currency with the people. People are supporting leaders like Trump in the USA and Marine Le Pen in France, and are endorsing Trump's policies on protectionism, torture, war and clampdown on illegal Muslim immigrants.

The reason for this backlash is not that the ideals of the modern age that we have cherished are wrong in their spirit, but that our liberal institutions have been built – especially since the last few decades – and deteriorated into a mere façade of harmony, beneath whose surfaces there has been perpetuated endless division and suffering. In India also, there was a strong backlash against the ideas of liberalism and secularism as practiced selectively by India's political and intellectual Left-minded elites. People, when they voted

for Modi, were demanding not a scaling back of these ideals, but a putting of them in a right perspective.

And that is why, despite numerous policy stumblings and mixed report cards, the popularity of the leader remains as strong as ever. The Modi government has now been in office for more than two and a half years – crossing the mid-term mark. This, usually, is the time when anti-incumbency begins to set in among the people. For, either governments become stale due to lack of any substantive work or they become corrupt – a fate which has befallen nearly all previous governments in India. Yet this government continues as strong as ever.

And, coupled with the election of Donald Trump in the United States and with Putin already in place in Russia, there are new and high expectations that finally such leaders in important countries like India, US and Russia will usher in many changes, most prominently the end of global Islamic terrorism. It is now widely recognized that the previous ‘liberal’ regimes like the Obama-led US had amply funded the terrorist groups in various conflicts across the Middle-east and Afghanistan.

Everything pertaining to the so called liberal world is now being questioned. Thanks to the transitions in India and the world, we are now living in an age, which many commentators have begun to describe as ‘post-truth’ – an age where the so-called ‘truth’ and ‘facts’ of the matter, as perceived by our senses and our ingrained collective understanding of so many decades, no longer matters solely. That is how popular leaders like Putin, Erdogan, Modi and Trump work. They are not circumscribed by apparent realities as touted by liberal, educated opinion. This may help them to surmount major barriers and dominant perceptions about right and wrong. To the superficial eye, these occasions and the rise of these personalities – though temporary – may seem more like a chance or an accident, or simply the temporary recoil of popular opinion from established institutions. But it is more than that – it is precisely what wise men call accidents, and cannot accept, that shape the course of history, instead of

established rational events which we use to justify our own view of history.

As Sri Aurobindo wrote in the context of the French Revolution and the despotic men who broke away from established patterns to bring it about, “So it is that God prepares the man and the moment, using good and evil with a divine impartiality for His mighty ends. Without the man the moment is a lost opportunity; without the moment the man is a force inoperative. The meeting of the two changes the destinies of nations and the poise of the world is altered by what seems to the superficial an accident.”¹

INDIA’S ROLE IN THE TIMES TO COME

India is favourably poised to take advantage of changing international conditions. With the current leadership, which is dynamic and not reluctant to proclaim the glory of India’s civilization to the world, she can lead the movement towards the world unity on a truly psychological basis. For now, even the global conditions, despite the prevalent strife (latest UN reports claim that the world is facing its worst humanitarian crisis right now), are favourably aligned towards a complete change of ideas, psychology and consciousness. India should play a leading role in facilitating this unity and “if she can develop that larger statesmanship which is not limited by the present facts and immediate possibilities but looks into the future and brings it nearer, her presence may make all the difference between a slow and timid and a bold and swift development.”²

It is precisely for this process that Modi has come in. There is mainly a double purpose involved – to elevate India to a dominant position in the world affairs and, within the country, to bring a sense of national unity among the people. Therefore, at the passing of the mid-term mark by the Modi government, we must judge what the government is doing based on these essential criteria.

While foreign policy and international dominance was already this government’s effortless forte, the real work is now being done

in the future direction of the development of a united national consciousness. In spirit, this unity has always existed – through all castes and sub-castes and other divisions – and no amount of political maneuvering over the last six decades has been able to destroy it, though on the surface, caste equations always led to a politically fragmented system.

What forges the country together is not these temporary alliances or divisions on the surface, but the spirit of belonging to one nation, and conceiving the nation as our living Mother. For, “When there is one country, one Mother, unity is bound to be realised one day; the union of many races will forge a single strong and invincible nation. Religious beliefs may differ, religious communities may be in perpetual conflict, there may be no harmony or hope of harmony, but even so there is no cause for alarm. One day, harmony must surely prevail by virtue of the powerful magnetism of the Mother incarnate in the country; by hook or by crook, through negotiation, force or appeasement, communal divisions will be submerged in a feeling of fraternity and love of the Mother.... the country is the foundation of nationalism and this relation is unailing. Where a country exists, nationalism is bound to arise among its people. In one country two nations cannot persist for ever, they must eventually unite.”³

Nationalism cannot be identified with any one narrow epithet. The Mother has to be seen in her totality; only then can the ideal of nationalism be realized and our problems solved. When this happens, as Sri Aurobindo wrote, “The differences of language will no longer be an impediment; we will keep our own mother tongues and yet accept Hindi as the common language, thus eliminating that barrier. We shall be able to evolve a real solution to the Hindu-Muslim conflict. For want of a vision of the country as the Mother, the urge to do away with this obstacle has not been strongly felt; that is why the means has not been found and the conflict has continued to worsen. But her true and indivisible image is needed. If in our yearning for the vision of the Mother we seek her as the Mother of the Hindus,

the basis of Hindu nationalism, then we will fall into the old error and be deprived of the full flowering of nationalism.”⁴

This is significant, for here, we see that nationalism cannot be identified with Hindu nationalism alone. The trend that we are seeing in the current expansion of BJP, and especially the Hindu consolidation in the aftermath of the UP election, is simply political in its nature – a transitory, yet necessary phenomenon. In fact, if the Ayodhya backlash and movement was the first phase of cross-caste Hindu consolidation, the present can be called its second phase. Just like Ayodhya could not turn us into a Hindu polity, even the present will not.

But we must see the necessity and importance of the current phase of Hindu consolidation which has just begun, as it is critical not only for fostering cross-caste unity, but also laying some kind of foundation for the realization of the spirit of Sanatana Dharma. Sanatana Dharma is the true nationalism. Its meaning has been obscured to us through our ages of slavery to material and psychological forces, while only the spirit closed deep inside could prevent the country from disintegrating.

The time has now come for the realization of this spirit, which requires a consolidation, first and foremost, of our political structure, since that is where the material power lies. What was missing was a political translation of this spirit. And this, the Modi government, is now fast securing. While it has now only just started consolidating all its hard-work in building up a precarious political coalition, based on the principles of true Hinduism, cutting across caste lines, continuous effort is needed to make such a political unity permanent. Achieving this political unity, domestically, and asserting a space for India’s leadership, globally, is Modi’s immediate role.

INDIA’S GLOBAL RISE

India’s foreign policy and the country’s concurrent global rise is a testimony to the firm break taken by Modi government in

international affairs. It is also indicative of the massive changes that Nature is bringing about at such a fast pace.

India's position in the world affairs has been amply strengthened in recent times, even though the country's bid to enter major institutions like UN Security Council and to Nuclear Suppliers Group has not been realized. But the fact is that the very existence of these institutions is an irony in how the world is changing today. In a world where militarization and conflict have increased, and where power equations have changed so drastically, away from the 'liberal peace' of the 1990s, these "controlling" institutions have become toothless. It is the kind of mere symbolic assertion of power which would have been understandable even one or two years back, but no longer holds ground. Countries like US have led the charge in withdrawing from international institutions and multilateral cooperation treaties like the TPP, while countries like Russia and China are on the prowl for forging stronger regional alliances, for serving both their economic and military interests.

In this changed world, it hardly matters whether India has compelled China to make some symbolic condemnations against Pakistan. What would matter is if India is also able to expand its geo-strategy. Already, India is fast being counted among the Great Powers of the world. It was under the leadership of Modi that India deftly steered its way into the group of influential countries, and undertook a programme of serious economic and defense modernization reforms, weathering its way through shocks like the Demonetization and the Surgical Strikes on Pakistan. These external overtures have helped in the consolidation of India's position in world affairs. But so far, the progress in foreign policy has been on the diplomatic and economic fronts only. Formations like BRICS have little reality outside the sphere of economic diplomacy and their importance cannot be overstressed. Therefore, geo-strategy, for India, is still something that needs strengthening.

In the times to come, India's closeness to the US and the

latter's policy of tilt towards Asia Pacific (meaning South China Sea) is set to take a hit. Trump is interested only in bilateral relationships and is planning on phasing down the US's role in global interventions. Moreover, Trump's America is fast fading into irrelevance. This means that the Asia Pacific field has become a free field for China, which is already strengthening its hold through the One Belt, One Road (OBOR) initiative, which India has denounced since it is running through the PoK, and because China has separately signed onto the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) with Pakistan. SAARC has been made irrelevant by India itself due to its enmity with Pakistan, implying that China's OBOR initiative – and, both Russia and Afghanistan have jumped onto the OBOR bandwagon – will trump Modi's larger vision of a South Asian unity, leaving India isolated.

Modi needs to urgently re-think his foreign policy vision to assert a place for India in this changed world equation. It is also high time that India re-visits its history and improves its relations with China, which were vitiated during the Nehru regime over the contention over territory. It should not be surprised to find a willing ally in China. These actions could be accomplished once the government establishes a foothold over its internal sensitive border areas, especially in the North-east and addressing issues like illegal immigration. India marked a break with the past by signing agreements that would have been unimaginable before. These include the Land Boundary Agreement with Bangladesh in 2015, wherein India justified the move – including arguments about India's loss of territory – by saying that the agreement actually rationalized the borders; otherwise, there existed pockets of illegally occupied territory, which would have further promoted illegal Bangladeshi immigration.

Another step included signing a peace agreement with Nagaland's insurgent group, NSCN (IM), which no other government was able to achieve, and the momentum generated around the Citizenship Bill, 2016. In fact, the ruling BJP has been undertaking

intensive work in the North-east. Ample result of this can now be seen in how rapidly the party has expanded its footprint beyond Assam, into states like Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Nagaland, where, till two years back, BJP influence would have been unthinkable.

A WIDENING SCOPE IN DOMESTIC RESTRUCTURING

These victories have cemented the gaps that were missing from the BJP's victory in 2014 viz. its control over institutions and actual, influential decision-making. While the party was vastly successful in changing the social and political narrative on the ground, the institutions and rules were still being framed by the old, archaic elite.

The Opposition would always stall all sessions of Parliament, without fail, since 2014, over big issues like secularism, nationalism, intolerance, Dalits, education etc. Their control over Rajya Sabha also enabled them to stall important legislations. And yet, the irony was that, at the end, despite all major obstacles, these institutions proved to be fruitless; for, real change will be brought about, not by the transformation of the machinery, but the spirit. And with the pressure of the spirit increasing, we can see the institutions fading into irrelevance. With the current elections, now even the institutions will no longer be a hurdle in achieving the minimum material goals.

Now that these elections have set a secure stage for BJP in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, the Modi government is expected to get down to doubling the momentum of the work that it wants to complete. This will be achieved as it can now determine the nature of institutions like the Rajya Sabha and the Presidency. Already, the very next day after the declaration of the election results, the Minister of Home Affairs, Rajnath Singh, was quick to get the long-pending amendments to the Enemy Property Bill passed. Earlier, it was obstructed in Rajya Sabha, ostensibly, because the Opposition raised the cry that it would jeopardize Muslim properties. Similarly, the critical amended Citizenship Bill, which would have curbed the flow

of illegal Muslim migrants, was stalled by the Opposition on grounds of secularism.

These bills will now see the light of the day. In the social sphere also, there is a lot that the government can build on. In social policy, contrary to popular belief, the Modi government has left a good legacy. It has actually fared better on the social policy front than the UPA. For instance, thanks to persistent drought, the government sanctioned an amount of more than 55,000 crore for MNREGA – the highest ever so far, since the programme was launched. Many of the BJP-ruled states have also implemented MNREGA and PDS (Public Distribution System) reforms more effectively than UPA-ruled states. In fact, in this, the BJP-ruled, Raman Singh-led Chhattisgarh government has done so well that now it is being called a ‘poster boy for PDS reforms’ in the country.⁵

These examples show that we have come far ahead of the days of the ‘Kerala’ model of governance – known for its welfare and PDS system – which was popularized by leftwing intellectuals like Amartya Sen and others. But the changes have not been talked about either in the media or among the academics. These are the things less talked about, and less noted in public forums by the government also, but something on which this government should build on, to expand its popular base and legacy among the people.

There are countless other hits and misses of the past two-and-a-half years that can be added to this discussion. But the real point to be made here is how, through all of this and through the fundamental changes in the present system, the Modi government is serving the larger fulfillment of India’s future role.

As already reiterated above, the major part of this role is to emanate from the field of politics, and not developmental/welfare schemes. If we look at the critical areas which need change today and over which Modi government’s attempts to initiate reform since the past two-and-a-half years has been stalled the most, education, culture and constitutionalism stand out.

Both culture and education are closely linked. Pick up any contemporary history book – written, as usual, by one of those ‘prominent’ Leftist historians – and one will see how vitiated is the social and political history we have been reading so far, starting right from ancient Indian history and the myth of Aryan invasion. If one bothers to pick alternate historical records – with far better proofs – one will see that the mainstream history is politicized. It is a product of the socialist drive of the politicians in our country – Nehru and Indira Gandhi – who sought a hold over young minds and sought to paint Congress as a progressive, modern force in our history books. Any account of culture and civilization is completely missing or is entirely vitiated. Thus, while the political Left may have died years ago in our country, it continues to exercise a space for itself through its hold over young minds.

When Modi came to power, he – or rather, BJP’s social arm, the RSS – took special interest in changing this history and reforming the education system, focusing on changing the scope of administrative powers, appointments to national research councils, especially of history and culture and arts, and, changing the syllabus or the content of study. The process has met with great agitation. In fact, the whole of 2015 could be said to be devoted to agitations by the Left-wing forces struggling to survive.

Over the last two years, universities have witnessed the most disturbance. And in our country today, universities – especially central, well-known universities in Delhi, namely, Delhi University and Jawaharlal Nehru University – embody all the tendencies of the erstwhile Left-wing culture that has lost traction everywhere, but continues to exercise some grip over young minds in these universities. Ever since the Modi government came to power, JNU has been on a constant eruption, either due to highly publicized issues like protests against the government or for subtle, yet important, administrative changes that are affecting it.

While over big issues like the Kanhaiya Kumar incident or the Najeeb Jung incident, the ‘secular’ opposition left no stone unturned

to nail the government, but the fast administrative changes being issued by the government have now effectively ensured that places like JNU finally emerge out of their comfort zone. Internally, the campus is violently divided, and the old guard is of the view that this government will not rest till JNU is finished or till it becomes 'normal' like other universities. For the first time now, even the old Left-wing professors can be seen telling their students to be efficient and practical instead of wasting their time in ideology, if they actually want to survive in the new system.

Similarly, in the area of culture, law and constitutionalism too – areas again dominated by ideas of the old Leftist elite – the fault lines were exposed very early into this government's tenure. Recall the violent 'award-wapsi' protests as well as other associated protests by artists and litterateurs and writers over issues like free speech and intolerance. The Opposition thrived by relishing this and political pundits had written Modi's political obituary several times. But now, they seem like nothing but an illusory whirlwind.

Similarly, it was for the first time in any government's tenure that the constitutionalism of Nehru and Ambedkar and Patel and the ideas of Gandhi and Savarkar were actively debated. Never was the common man so sensitized as during the current government's tenure. The actual battle was fought at the level of ideas, and in this, the decades-old dominance of the Left stands torn and on the verge of extinction. It is, in fact, one of this government's biggest achievements that institutions and figures that were, for so long, considered formidably reputed and beyond the pale of common man, now stand exposed and torn of their aura, brought within the reach of the common man.

What all this really signifies is the awakening of the long-dormant soul of the country and the creation of the ideal material conditions through which the principles of Sanatana Dharma can get the best chance to express themselves. There is still a long way to go, and Modi's rise is simply an instrument for the laying down of the foundation of the future. What is happening now is a

process of thorough cleansing of the national psyche, full of toils and bloodshed. However, the swiftness of the pace at which changes are occurring is remarkable, showing that Nature is fast paving the way for larger transformations, in which India is to take the lead.

FUTURE OF THE CURRENT REGIME

The successes of the current regime are only now beginning to be noticed. So, perhaps, it is too early to predict its future. But if we look at the past, through all the contraries and through the entire trajectory of Congress rule which now stands completely dismantled, it is evident that there was, yet, the collective force of the nation that was shaping even the past events, however much we may denounce them now. The seeds of the decline of Congress were sown very long ago, inside the Congress party itself. As one family consolidated its hold over power inside the party, the Congress began to view the nation as a reflection of itself, rather than itself as a reflection or embodiment of national ideals. It ultimately got entrapped in its own illusions, without even realizing that they had become illusions and the nation had moved ahead.

This is what inevitably happens with any collective organization or institution, as it begins slumbering in its phase of consolidated success, being at the top of things, and sinking slowly without realizing it, till one day the reality stands stark, and the wise men are left trying to analyze what happened. And what the wise men call a phase of infancy and weakness and struggle is the beginning of a new force preparing to overtake the old giant. This was what BJP and RSS have been thus far. The time is not far when the current party's consolidated success with a popular leader at the helm will soon entrap it, and a new instrument takes its place. For, the inevitable future of this country is not towards the petty aims of economic and political and geo-strategic expansion that we imagine or even nationalism as we narrowly envisage it now. It is towards a society driven by the spiritual consciousness of Unity that India shall move,

for so only it can fulfil its mission in the world which, in the words of Sri Aurobindo, is to organise Human Unity by pointing back humanity to this true source of human liberty, human equality, human brotherhood.

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HISTORY OF INDIA – THE VEDIC AGE (27)

XIII. THE PSYCHOLOGICAL AND THE HISTORICAL BASES FOR THE INTERPRETATION OF THE VEDA

C. SRI AUROBINDO'S DETAILED PSYCHOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION OF THE VEDA

(vi) The Idea of the United Human and Divine Existence and the Preliminary Conditions for the Great Achievement of the Immortality

Verses 9 to 12 of the third Sukta of Vamadeva (IV.3.9-12) give the preliminary conditions for the achievement of the Immortality. Since, “...no verse in the Veda can be properly understood except by reference to its context, to its place in the thought of the Sukta, to all that precedes and all that follows,”¹ Sri Aurobindo begins with opening verses of this Sukta^a which “call to men to create Agni who sacrifices in the truth, to create him in his form of golden light (*hiraṅyaparāṃ*, the gold being always the symbol of the solar light of the Truth, *īśā jyotiḥ*) before the Ignorance can form itself, *purā tanayitnor acitāt*. The god is asked to awaken to the work of man and the truth in him as being himself ‘the Truth-conscious who places aright the thought’, *īśasya bodhi īśā tacit svādhi*,”^b – for all falsehood is merely a wrong placing of the Truth. He is to refer all fault and sin and defect in man to the various godheads or divine powers of the Divine Being so that it may be removed and the man declared finally blameless before the Infinite Mother – *aditaye anṅgasa*, or for the infinite existence, as it is elsewhere expressed.

Then in the ninth and tenth verses we have, expressed in various formulas, the idea of the united human and divine existence, Diti and Aditi, the latter founding, controlling and flooding with itself the former. ‘The Truth controlled by the Truth I desire (i.e. the human by the divine), together the unripe things of the Cow and her ripe and

^a IV.3.1, ^b IV.3.4

honeyed yield (again the imperfect human and the perfect and blissful divine fruits of the universal consciousness and existence); she (the cow) being black (the dark and divided existence, Diti) is nourished by the shining water of the foundation, the water of the companion streams (*ḡmaryeḡa payasḡ*). By the Truth Agni the Bull, the Male, sprinkled with the water of its levels, ranges unquivering, establishing wideness (wide space or manifestation); the dappled Bull milks the pure shining teat.^a The symbolic opposition between the shining white purity of the One who is the source, seat, foundation and the variegated colouring of the Life manifested in the triple world is frequent in the Veda; this image of the dappled Bull and the pure-bright udder or source of the waters only repeats therefore, like the other images, the idea of the multiple manifestations of the human life purified, tranquillised in its activities, fed by the waters of the Truth and the Infinity.

Finally the Rishi proceeds to the coupling, which we so repeatedly find, of the luminous Cows and the Waters. 'By the Truth the Angirasas broke open and hurled asunder the hill and came to union with the Cows; human souls, they took up their dwelling in the blissful Dawn, Swar became manifest when Agni was born. By Truth the divine immortal waters, unoppressed, with their honeyed floods, O Agni, like a horse breasting forward in its gallopings ran in an eternal flowing.'^b These four verses in fact are meant to give the preliminary conditions for the great achievement of the Immortality. They are the symbols of the grand Mythos, the mythos of the Mystics in which they hid their supreme spiritual experience from the profane and, alas! effectively enough from their posterity. That they were secret symbols, images meant to reveal the truth which they protected but only to the initiated, to the knower, to the seer, Vamadeva himself tells us in the most plain and emphatic language in the last verse of this very hymn; 'All these are secret words that I have uttered to thee who knowest, O Agni, O Disposer, words of leading, words of seer-knowledge that express their meaning to the seer, – I have spoken them illumined in my words and my thinkings'; *eḡ viḡḡ viduḡe*

^a IV.3.9-10, ^b IV.3.11-12

tubhyaṁ vedho, nṛhṁni agne niṣyṁ vacṁṁsi; nivacanṁ kavaye kṁvyṁni, aṁṁsiṁṁ matibhir vipra ukthaṁ.^a **Secret words that have kept indeed their secret ignored by the priest, the ritualist, the grammarian, the pandit, the historian, the mythologist, to whom they have been words of darkness or seals of confusion and not what they were to the supreme ancient forefathers and their illumined posterity, niṣyṁ vacṁṁsi nṛhṁni nivacanṁ kṁvyṁni!** ”²

(vii) Sarama and Her Work

“That Sarama is some power of the Light and probably of the Dawn is very clear; for **once we know that the struggle between Indra and the original Aryan seers on the one hand and the sons of the Cave on the other is no strange deformation of primitive Indian history but a symbolic struggle between the powers of Light and Darkness**, Sarama who leads in the search for the radiant herds and discovers both the path and the secret hold in the mountain must be a forerunner of the dawn of Truth in the human mind. And if we ask ourselves what power among the truth-finding faculties it is that thus discovers out of the darkness of the unknown in our being the truth that is hidden in it, we at once think of the intuition. For Sarama is not Saraswati, she is not the inspiration, even though the names are similar. Saraswati gives the full flood of the knowledge; she is or awakens the great stream, *maho arṁṁ*, and illumines with plenitude all the thoughts, *dhiyo viṁṁ vi rṁjati*. Saraswati possesses and is the flood of the Truth; Sarama is the traveller and seeker on its path who does not herself possess but rather finds that which is lost. Neither is she the plenary word of the revelation, the Teacher of man like the goddess Ila; for even when what she seeks is found, she does not take possession but only gives the message to the seers and their divine helpers who have still to fight for the possession of the light that has been discovered.”³

According to Sri Aurobindo Sarama has been mentioned by name only in few hymns of the Veda but from these and some other

^a IV.3.16

descriptions in the Veda the following two essential characteristics of Sarama emerge clearly; "...the knowledge comes to her beforehand, before vision, springs up instinctively at the least indication and with that knowledge she guides the rest of the faculties and divine powers that seek. And she leads to that seat, *sadanam*, the home of the Destroyers, which is at the other pole of existence to the seat of the Truth, *sadanam* *ṽtasya*, in the cave or secret place of darkness, *guhṽyṽm*, just as the home of the gods is in the cave or secrecy of light. In other words, she is a power descended from the superconscient Truth which leads us to the light that is hidden in ourselves, in the subconscious. All these characteristics apply exactly to the intuition."⁴

"...the action of Sarama is precisely that of the Intuition which goes straight to the Truth by the straight path of the Truth and not through the crooked paths of doubt and error and which delivers the Truth out of the veil of darkness and false appearances; it is through the illuminations discovered by her that the Seer-mind can attain to the complete revelation of the Truth."⁵

"The hill of our already formed triple existence which rises into heaven at its summit is rent asunder by Indra and the hidden illuminations go abroad; Swar, the higher heaven of the superconscient, is manifested by the upward streaming of the brilliant herds. The sun of Truth diffuses all the strength and glory of its light, the inner Dawn comes from the luminous wideness instinct with knowledge, – *jṽnatṽgṽt*, the same phrase that is used of her who leads to the house of the Dasyu in I.104.5; and of Sarama in III.31.6, – the rivers of the Truth, representing the outflow of its being and its movement (*ṽtasya preṽ*), descend in their rushing streams and make a channel here for their waters; heaven, the mental being, is perfected and made firm like a well-shaped pillar to support the vast Truth of the higher or immortal life that is now made manifest and the largeness of that Truth is lodged here in all the physical being. The delivery of the pregnant contents of the hill, *parvatasya garbhaṽ*,

the illuminations constituting the seven-headed thought, *Ṛtasya dhātūḥ*, which come forth in answer to the inspired word, leads to the supreme birth of the seven great rivers who constitute the substance of the Truth put into active movement, *Ṛtasya preṭṭhāḥ*.”⁶

“We find another allusion to Sarama in a hymn by Parashara Shaktya, I.72. This is one of the Suktas which most clearly reveal the sense of the Vedic imagery, like most indeed of the hymns of Parashara, a very luminous poet who loves always to throw back something more than a corner of the mystic’s veil. It is brief and I shall translate it in full. ‘He has created, within, the seer-knowings of the eternal Disposer of things, holding in his hand many powers (powers of the divine Purushas, *naryā puruṣāḥ*); Agni creating together all immortalities becomes the master of the (divine) riches. All the immortals, they who are not limited (by ignorance), desiring, found him in us as if the Calf (of the cow Aditi) existing everywhere; labouring, travelling to the Seat, holding the Thought they attained in the supreme seat to the shining (glory) of Agni. O Agni, when through the three years (three symbolic seasons or periods corresponding perhaps to the passage through the three mental heavens) they, pure, had served thee, the pure one, with the *ghṛtā*, they held the sacrificial names and set moving (to the supreme heaven) forms well born. They had knowledge of the vast heaven and earth and bore them forward, they the sons of Rudra, the lords of the sacrifice; the mortal awoke to vision and found Agni standing in the seat supreme. Knowing perfectly (or in harmony) they kneeled down to him; they with their wives (the female energies of the gods) bowed down to him who is worthy of obeisance; purifying themselves (or, perhaps, exceeding the limits of heaven and earth) they created their own (their proper or divine) forms, guarded in the gaze, each friend, of the Friend. In thee the gods of the sacrifice found the thrice seven secret seats hidden within; they, being of one heart, protect by them the immortality. Guard thou the herds that stand and that which moves. O Agni, having knowledge of all manifestations (or births) in the worlds (or, knowing all the knowledge of the peoples)

establish thy forces, continuous, for life. Knowing, within, the paths of the journeying of the gods thou becamest their sleepless messenger and the bearer of the offerings. The seven mighty ones of heaven (the rivers) placing aright the thought, knowing the Truth, discerned the doors of the felicity; Sarama found the fastness, the wideness of the cows whereby now the human creature enjoys (the supreme riches). They who entered upon all things that bear right issue, made the path to Immortality; by the great ones and by the greatness earth stood wide; the mother Aditi with her sons came for the upholding. The Immortals planted in him the shining glory, when they made the two eyes of heaven (identical probably with the two vision-powers of the Sun, the two horses of Indra); rivers, as it were, flow down released; the shining ones (the cows) who were here below knew, O Agni.'

So runs this hymn of Parashara, translated with the utmost possible literalness even at the cost of some uncouthness in the English. It is clear at the very first glance that it is throughout a hymn of knowledge, of the Truth, of a divine Flame which is hardly distinguishable from the supreme Deity, of immortality, of the ascent of the gods, the divine powers, by the sacrifice to their godhead, to their supreme names, to their proper forms, to the shining glory of the supreme state with its thrice seven seats of the Godhead. Such an ascent can have no other meaning than the ascent of the divine powers *in man* out of their ordinary cosmic appearances to the shining Truth beyond, as indeed Parashara himself tells us that by this action of the gods mortal man awakens to the knowledge and finds Agni standing in the supreme seat and goal; *vidan marto nemadhit* cikivn, agni pade parame tashiv sam. What is Sarama doing in such a hymn if she is not a power of the Truth, if her cows are not the rays of a divine dawn of illumination? What have the cows of old warring tribes and the sanguinary squabbles of our Aryan and Dravidian ancestors over their mutual plunderings and cattle-liftings to do with this luminous apocalypse of the immortality and the godhead? Or what are these rivers that think and know the Truth

and discover the hidden doors? Or must we still say that these were the rivers of the Punjab dammed up by drought or by the Dravidians and Sarama a mythological figure for an Aryan embassy or else only the physical Dawn?"⁷

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2. ***Ibid*, pp.209-10**
3. ***Ibid*, p.211**
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THE GREATNESS OF INDIA AND ITS CULTURE (27)

5. THE GREATNESS OF INDIAN LITERATURE

III. THE UPANISHADS

“The Upanishads stand out from the dim background of Vedic antiquity like stupendous rock cathedrals of thought hewn out of the ancient hills by a race of giant builders the secret of whose inspiration and strength has passed away with them into the Supreme. They are at once Scripture, philosophy and seer-poetry; for even those of them that dispense with the metrical form, are prose poems of a rhythmically mystic thought. But whether as Scripture, philosophical theosophy or literature, there is nothing like them in ancient, mediaeval or modern, in Occidental or Oriental, in Egyptian, Chaldean, Semitic or Mongolian creation; they are unique in style, structure and motive, entirely *sui generis*. After them there were philosophic poems, aphorisms, verse and prose treatises in great number, Sutras, Karikas, Gitas, their intellectual children; but these are a human progeny very different in type from their immortal ancestors. Pseudo-Upanishads there have been in plenty, a hundred or more of them; some have arrived at a passable aping of the more external features of the type, but always betray themselves by the pseudo-style, the artificial falsetto, the rasping creak of the machine; others are pastiches; others are fakes. The great Upanishads stand out always serene, grand, inimitable with their puissant and living breath, with that phrase which goes rolling out a thousand echoes, with that faultless spontaneous sureness of the inevitable expression, with that packed yet easy compression of wide and rich wisdom into a few revelatory syllables by which they justify their claim to be the divine word. Neither this inspiration nor this technique has been renewed or repeated in later human achievement.”¹

The Upanishads “...are the treasure-house of the deepest eternal Knowledge without beginning or end which is the root and foundation of the eternal dharma. We find the same knowledge in the Suktas of the four Vedas but covered over with metaphors which give an

exoteric meaning to the hymns like that of the descriptive image of the ideal man. The Upanishads unveil for us the supreme Knowledge, the naked limbs of the real man. The poets of the Rigveda, the Rishis, expressed spiritual knowledge in divinely inspired words and rhythms; the Rishis of the Upanishads had direct vision of the true form of that Knowledge and expressed it in a few profound words. Not only Monism, but all the philosophical thoughts and doctrines that have come into being in Europe and Asia – Rationalism, Realism, Nihilism, the Darwinian theory of evolution, the Positivism of Comte, the philosophy of Hegel, Kant, Spinoza and Schopenhauer, Utilitarianism, Hedonism, all were seen and expressed by the Rishis endowed with the *direct vision*. But what has been elsewhere partially glimpsed, proclaimed as the integral truth – in spite of its being only a fragment of the Truth – and given a distorted description with a mixture of truth and falsehood, has been recorded in its fullness and right perspective, in a pure and unmistakable manner.

Therefore we should endeavour to find the true deep meaning of the Upanishads without being bound by the exposition of Shankara or anyone else.

The word ‘Upanishad’ means to enter into a secret place. **The Rishis did not obtain the knowledge mentioned in the Upanishads by force of argument, extensive learning or from the flow of inspiration, but earned by Yoga the right of entry into the secrecy of the mind where hangs the key to the integral Knowledge,** penetrated into the hidden chamber, took down the key and became sovereigns of vast realms of that infallible Knowledge. Unless the key can be secured, it is not possible to have access to the true significance of the Upanishads. Any attempt to discover the meaning of the Upanishads by argument alone is equivalent to investigating a dense forest with a lighted candle from high treetops. Direct vision is the sun-light which illumines the entire forest making it visible to the seeker. Direct vision can be attained only by Yoga.”²

A. An Overview of the Upanishads

“THE UPANISHADS are the supreme work of the Indian mind,

and that it should be so, that the highest self-expression of its genius, its sublimest poetry, its greatest creation of the thought and word should be not a literary or poetical masterpiece of the ordinary kind, but a large flood of spiritual revelation of this direct and profound character, is a significant fact, evidence of a unique mentality and unusual turn of spirit. 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 cadenced prose, spiritual poems of an absolute, an unfailing inspiration inevitable in phrase, wonderful in rhythm and expression. It is the expression of a mind in which philosophy and religion and poetry are made one, because this religion does not end with a cult nor is limited to a religio-ethical aspiration, but rises to an infinite discovery of God, of Self, of our highest and whole reality of spirit and being and speaks out of an ecstasy of luminous knowledge and an ecstasy of moved and fulfilled experience, this philosophy is not an abstract intellectual speculation about Truth or a structure of the logical intelligence, but Truth seen, felt, lived, held by the inmost mind and soul in the joy of utterance of an assured discovery and possession, and this poetry is the work of the aesthetic mind lifted up beyond its ordinary field to express the wonder and beauty of the rarest spiritual self-vision and the profoundest illumined truth of self and God and universe. Here the intuitive mind and intimate psychological experience of the Vedic seers passes into a supreme culmination in which the Spirit, as is said in a phrase of the Katha Upanishad, discloses its own very body, reveals the very word of its self-expression and discovers to the mind the vibration of rhythms which repeating themselves within in the spiritual hearing seem to build up the soul and set it satisfied and complete on the heights of self-knowledge.

This character of the Upanishads needs to be insisted upon with a strong emphasis, because it is ignored by foreign translators who seek to bring out the intellectual sense without feeling the life of thought vision and the ecstasy of spiritual experience which made

the ancient verses appear then and still make them to those who can enter into the element in which these utterances move, a revelation not to the intellect alone, but to the soul and the whole being, make of them in the old expressive word not intellectual thought and phrase, but Sruti, spiritual audience, an inspired Scripture. The philosophical substance of the Upanishads demands at this day no farther stress of appreciation of its value; for even if the amplest acknowledgement by the greatest minds were wanting, the whole history of philosophy would be there to offer its evidence. The Upanishads have been the acknowledged source of numerous profound philosophies and religions that flowed from it in India like her great rivers from their Himalayan cradle fertilising the mind and life of the people and kept its soul alive through the long procession of the centuries, constantly returned to for light, never failing to give fresh illumination, a fountain of inexhaustible life-giving waters. Buddhism with all its developments was only a restatement, although from a new standpoint and with fresh terms of intellectual definition and reasoning, of one side of its experience and it carried it thus changed in form but hardly in substance over all Asia and westward towards Europe. **The ideas of the Upanishads can be rediscovered in much of the thought of Pythagoras and Plato and form the profoundest part of Neo-platonism and Gnosticism with all their considerable consequences to the philosophical thinking of the West, and Sufism only repeats them in another religious language. The larger part of German metaphysics is little more in substance than an intellectual development of great realities more spiritually seen in this ancient teaching,** and modern thought is rapidly absorbing them with a closer, more living and intense receptiveness which promises a revolution both in philosophical and in religious thinking; here they are filtering in through many indirect influences, there slowly pouring through direct and open channels. There is hardly a main philosophical idea which cannot find an authority or a seed or indication in these antique writings – the speculations, according to a certain view, of thinkers who had no better past or background to their thought than a crude, barbaric, naturalistic and animistic ignorance. And **even the larger**

generalisations of Science are constantly found to apply to the truth of physical Nature formulas already discovered by the Indian sages in their original, their largest meaning in the deeper truth of the spirit.

And yet these works are not philosophical speculations of the intellectual kind, a metaphysical analysis which labours to define notions, to select ideas and discriminate those that are true, to logicise truth or else to support the mind in its intellectual preferences by dialectical reasoning and is content to put forward an exclusive solution of existence in the light of this or that idea of the reason and see all things from that viewpoint, in that focus and determining perspective. The Upanishads could not have had so undying a vitality, exercised so un failing an influence, produced such results or seen now their affirmations independently justified in other spheres of inquiry and by quite opposite methods, if they had been of that character. It is because these seers saw Truth rather than merely thought it, clothed it indeed with a strong body of intuitive idea and disclosing image, but a body of ideal transparency through which we look into the illimitable, because they fathomed things in the light of self-existence and saw them with the eye of the Infinite, that their words remain always alive and immortal, of an inexhaustible significance, an inevitable authenticity, a satisfying finality that is at the same time an infinite commencement of truth, to which all our lines of investigation when they go through to their end arrive again and to which humanity constantly returns in its minds and its ages of greatest vision. The Upanishads are Vedanta, a book of knowledge in a higher degree even than the Vedas, but knowledge in the profounder Indian sense of the word, Jnana. Not a mere thinking and considering by the intelligence, the pursuit and grasping of a mental form of truth by the intellectual mind, but a seeing of it with the soul and a total living in it with the power of the inner being, a spiritual seizing by a kind of identification with the object of knowledge is Jnana. And because it is only by an integral knowing of the self that this kind of direct knowledge can be made complete, it was the self that the Vedantic sages sought to know, to live in and to be one with it by

identity. And through this endeavour they came easily to see that the self in us is one with the universal self of all things and that this self again is the same as God and Brahman, a transcendent Being or Existence, and they beheld, felt, lived in the inmost truth of all things in the universe and the inmost truth of man's inner and outer existence by the light of this one and unifying vision. The Upanishads are epic hymns of self-knowledge and world-knowledge and God-knowledge."³

B. Veda and Vedanta

"Veda & Vedanta are the inexhaustible fountains of Indian spirituality. With knowledge or without knowledge, every creed in India, sect, school of philosophy, outburst of religious life, great or petty, brilliant or obscure, draws its springs of life from these ancient and ever flowing waters. Conscious or unwitting each Indian religionist stirs to a vibration that reaches him from those far off ages. Darshana and Tantra and Purana, Shaivism & Vaishnavism, orthodoxy & heresy are merely so many imperfect understandings of Vedic truth & misunderstandings of each other; they are eager half-illuminated attempts to bring some ray of that great calm & perfect light into our lives & make of the stray beam an illumination on our path or a finger laid on the secret & distant goal of our seeking. Our greatest modern minds are mere tributaries of the old Rishis. Shankara, who seems to us a giant, had but a fragment of their knowledge. Buddha wandered away on a bypath in their universal kingdom. These compositions of an unknown antiquity are as the many breasts of the eternal Mother of Knowledge from which our succeeding ages have been fed & the imperishable life in us fostered. **The Vedas hold more of that knowledge than the Vedanta, hold it more amply, practically and in detail; but they come to us in a language we have ceased to understand, a vocabulary which often, by the change of meaning to ancient terms, misleads most where it seems most easy & familiar, a scheme of symbols of which the key has been taken from us. Indians do not understand the Vedas at all; Europeans have systematised a gross**

misunderstanding of them. The old knowledge in the Vedas is to us, therefore, as a river wandering in dark caverns inaccessible to the common tread. It is in the Upanishads that the stream first emerges into open country. It is there that it is most accessible to us. But even this stream flows through obscure forest & difficult mountain reaches and we only have it for our use at favourable points where the forest thins or the mountain opens. It is there that men have built their little artificial cities of metaphysical thought and spiritual practice, in each of which the inhabitants pretend to control the whole river. They call their dwelling places Vedanta or Sankhya, Adwaita or Dwaita, Shaivism or Vaishnavism, with a hundred names beside and boast that theirs is the way & theirs is the knowledge. But, in reality, each of us can only command a little of the truth of the Sanatana Dharma, because none of us understands more than a little of the Upanishads.”⁴

C. The Philosophy of the Upanishads

“...the universal nature of God. This universal nature of Brahman the Eternal is the beginning and end of the Vedanta and if it is not accepted, nothing the Vedanta says can have any value, as all its propositions either proceed from it or at least presuppose it; deprived of this central and highest truth, the Upanishads become what Mleccha scholars & philosophers think them to be, – a mass of incoherent though often sublime speculations; with this truth in your hand as a lamp to shed light on all the obscurest sayings of the Scriptures, you soon come to realise that the Upanishads are a grand harmonious and perfectly luminous whole, expressing in its various aspects the single and universal Truth; for under the myriad contradictions of phenomena (prapancha) there is one Truth and one only. All the Smritis, the Puranas, the Darshanas, the Dharmashastras, the writings of Shaktas, Shaivas, Vaishnavas, Sauras, as well as the whole of Buddhism and its Scriptures are merely so many explanations, comments and interpretations from different sides, of these various aspects of the one and only Truth. This Truth is the sole foundation on which all religions can rest as on a sure and

impregnable rock; – and more than a rock, for a rock may perish but this endures for ever. Therefore is the religion of the Aryas called the Sanatana Dharma, the Law Sempiternal. Nor are the Hindus in error when they declare the Sruti to be eternal and without beginning and the Rishis who composed the hymns to be only the witnesses who saw the truth and put it in human language; for this seeing was not mental sight, but spiritual. Therefore **the Vedas are justly called Sruti or revelation. Of these the Rig, Yajur, Sama & Atharvan are the fertilising rain which gave the plant of the Truth nourishment and made it grow, the Brahmanas are the forest in which the plant is found, the Aranyakas are the soil in which it grows, the Upanishads are the plant itself, roots, stalk, leaves, calix and petals, and the flower which manifests itself once and for ever is the great saying SO AHAM – I AM HE which is the culmination of the Upanishads.**”⁵

“...philosophy of the Upanishads raises its front among the distant stars.”⁶

“The answer to all philosophical problems hinges on the one question, What is myself? It is only by knowing man’s real self that we can know God; for whatever we may think or know, the value of the thought and the knowledge must hinge upon the knower, the means of knowledge and Vedanta’s final & single answer to all the questions of philosophy is contained in a single mighty & ever-memorable phrase, So ’ham. I am He or more explicitly or to the question of the inquirer अहं ब्रह्मास्मि, I am Brahman. Cutting through all tremors & hesitations, scorning all doubt or reserve it announces with a hardy & daring incisiveness the complete identity of man & God. **This is its gospel that the individual Self who seems so limited, thwarted, befouled, shamed & obscured with the bonds & shackles, the mud & stains of earthly life and the pure, perfect and illimitable Being who possesses & supports all existence, to Whom this vast and majestic Universe is but an inconsiderable corner of His mind and infinite Time cannot end and infinite Space cannot confine and the infinite net of cause and effect is powerless to trammel are equal, are of one nature, power, splendour, bliss,**

are One. It seems the very madness of megalomania, the very delirium of egoism. And yet if it be true?

And it is true. Reason can come to no other conclusion, Yoga ends in no less an experience, the voices of a hundred holy witnesses who have seen God face to face, bring to us no less wonderful a message.”⁷

References:

- 1. Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo, Vol.18, p.433, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry**
- 2. Bengali Writings, pp.58-59, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry**
- 3. Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo, Vol.20, pp.329-32, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry**
- 4. Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo, Vol.17, pp.361-62, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry**
- 5. Ibid, pp.101-02**
- 6. Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo, Vol.18, p.357, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry**
- 7. Ibid, p.337**

Form IV (see rule 8)

Statement about the ownership and other particulars about the newspaper "The Resurgent India" to be published in the first issue every year after the last day of February.

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I, Mrs. Suman Sharma, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

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(sd) Suman Sharma
Signature of Publisher

SRI AUROBINDO'S REASON FOR LEAVING POLITICS

“I may also say that I did not leave politics because I felt I could do nothing more there; such an idea was very far from me. I came away because I did not want anything to interfere with my Yoga and because I got a very distinct adesh in the matter. I have cut connection entirely with politics, but before I did so I knew from within that the work I had begun there was destined to be carried forward, on lines I had foreseen, by others, and that the ultimate triumph of the movement I had initiated was sure without my personal action or presence. There was not the least motive of despair or sense of futility behind my withdrawal. For the rest, I have never known any will of mine for any major event in the conduct of the world affairs to fail in the end, although it may take a long time for the world-forces to fulfil it.”

– **Sri Aurobindo**

(Complete works of Sri Aurobindo, Vol. 35, p.26)