

# The Resurgent India

A Monthly National Review

December 2017



***“Let us all work for the Greatness of India.”***

*- The Mother*

Year 8

Issue 9

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# THE RESURGENT INDIA

A Monthly National Review

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## SUCCESSFUL FUTURE

(Full of Promise and Joyful Surprises)

*Botanical name: Gaillardia Pulchella*

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

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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)

## FOOD – THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM IN ANY DISCUSSION OF COLLECTIVE PROGRESS

It has been two years since the last burning national debate on food safety broke out, after the Nestle Maggi noodles scandal. Yet, we now seem back to square one and Maggi is back on the shelves. Much has happened since then and our food has become progressively worse. Reports, word-of-mouth stories and social media messages and videos that circulate everyday describe how rotten is the food we eat. Yet, we remain unmoved and continue consuming the same food, knowing fully well that we are harming our health with every morsel.

The reason we are unmoved is simple – we are consumed with greed and despite knowing the reality, we are so steeped in inconstance and denial that nothing can move us. It is the case of a typical utilitarian society, where producers and sellers do everything possible to make the maximum profit out of our greed. They raise prices and destroy quality, and we, knowingly, become party to this self-destructive economy.

**Food, lust and money have become the three pillars of this utilitarian system. These, as The Mother had said, are the sites which are the most pervaded by falsehood. They seem to be the root of all our problems and will be the most difficult to change, since all reason and consciousness, even of well-meaning people, fail here, as they are thoroughly pervaded by forces of darkness.**

### NOTHING LEFT TO EAT

Today we are battling a crisis of food scarcity. Except that it's not visible to us, since we are producing artificial, fake surplus food. We have come a long way since the time of Green Revolution, where pesticides and chemicals were used in the crops to ensure higher yield. Similarly, till a few years ago the only food contamination we used to hear about was adulteration by adding stones or water or using bad oils in a few items.

But now, things have become much worse. Today, everything, starting right from our morning tea and coffee, has the ingredients to lead to fatal diseases. Coffee may have coffee-flavoured mud, while tea has coal tar dye which may lead to lung or skin cancer. Even simple milk has become very harmful and not just because it is 'synthetic', but because antibiotic gentamicin, pesticide boric acid and preservative formalin are pumped into cows, leading to hard-to-treat infections, lead poisoning and massive kidney damage.

Eggs are prone to causing deaths due to green diarrhea, because hens are kept in starved and torturous conditions for the sellers to make profit. Much like eggs, bread is another common consumption item, be it bread or our handmade chapattis. Shockingly, the flour used is bleached and contains 25 different harmful chemicals, including harmful fumigants used in pest-control, mud, dust, insects and fungus (Datta 2015). And we eat this flour every day. Similarly, wheat, oats, maize and barley are contaminated by mycotoxin, which can cause diseases like jaundice and gastronomical bleeding.

*Even bottled water has bromate in it, while fruit juices have non-permitted synthetic colour and **DNA-altering carcinogens**.*

According to reports, the maximum number of violations occur in raw or minimally processed foods, such as fruits, vegetables, spices, dairy products and grains. While fruits are injected with harmful chemicals to make them look fresh and colourful, spices have been given lead synthetic colouring to make them look bright yellow or red.

*Spices, including sugar and salt, are the most basic of items that go into the everyday food we cook and consume. Yet, they have resulted in serious cases of food poisoning. Indian spices, in particular, are coated with lead, and had resulted in deaths of several Indian children in Boston in 2010 (Park 2010). In 2013, the US Food and Drug Administration released a report, which indicated that nearly 9% of imported spices from India were contaminated with Salmonella. In fact, **almost 12 percent of spices brought to the US***

**were contaminated with insects, rodent hair and their excretions (ANI 2013). Also, as studies indicate, Indian spices have suffered from high pesticide residues, aflatoxin contamination and the use of prohibited food colorants.**

What more – the field of organic farming has also become infested with commercial interests. ‘Organic’ turmeric has been found to contain immensely harmful contaminants and chemicals. It seems that no matter what exalted or ideal way out is given to the human instrument, the pervasive utilitarian mentality will always enter and spoil all of that – in all areas and innovations.

The most recent cause of popular outrage was about how grains like fake plastic rice are flooding the markets. They have been imported from China and they look milky white and smooth. But suspicion was raised after people in Kerala – whose markets were flooded by this rice – started contracting stomach infections after eating this rice.

## **CONTAMINATION IN EVERYDAY FOOD THROUGH NEW TECHNOLOGY**

*The brief scenario highlighted above shows that right from morning to night, **nothing that we consume is without danger. And when we take the case of individual basic staple items like fruits and vegetables, spices and dairy products, there is ample compelling evidence that shows how food contamination is occurring through deliberate means.***

In fact, if as early as 1989, reports had warned us of the automobile exhaust fumes (containing lead and manganese) settling on our food and water, then the situation now must be much worse, since the number of automobiles has gone up manifold. Similarly, the discharge of untreated industrial effluents into rivers and fields ultimately enters our food chain. Japan’s Minamata disaster – for which the Convention on prohibiting the use of mercury was signed recently – ensured that food chain contamination due to industrial discharge of mercury crippled generations, much like any chemical

weapons disaster would do. But even today, the industrial discharge of so many chemicals continues to rise indiscriminately.

These are just classic examples from history. Today, there is a whole range of technologies to be used in food that can hasten our demise. To give a recent example from India – the government has been looking at setting up ‘irradiation facilities’ to boost the shelf life of our fruits and vegetables, so as to prevent the surplus from being thrown away due to storage problem in high production years.

Fruits and vegetables are amongst the most contaminated items on our table. Fruits like the mango – known as the king of fruits and everyone’s favourite – is, as is well-known in India, artificially ripened using calcium carbide. According to an investigation, more than 80% of the mangoes reaching Delhi’s biggest Azadpur mandi are artificially ripened. The chemical is also used to ripen other fruits like watermelon and bananas.

Using calcium carbide – a banned chemical which contains fatal arsenic and phosphorous – affects the neurological system, causing headaches, dizziness, mood disturbances, mental confusion and seizures (Vikram 2015). Calcium carbide can also turn human cells into cancerous cells.

Unfortunately, the instinct for greed and profit-motive is so strong that sellers ripen mangoes artificially to save time and make them look attractive to consumers. The greedy and self-destructive mindset of the consumers encourages the sellers to resort to such means.

The upshot is that there is no such thing as a ‘safe’ store from where one can buy fruits and vegetables. Even the places that are rumoured to be relatively safe – like Mother Dairy – use chemicals like ethylene to ripen their fruits, by their own admission, since ethylene is supposedly a less harmful ripening agent.

However, the game is no longer about just chemicals. In India, and especially in Delhi, new technologies are being experimented with, to keep fruits and vegetables fresh. One such recent technology

has been the creation of a solar-powered vending cart for poor vegetable sellers. The cart can regulate the temperatures and environment around itself in summer and winter to keep the vegetables and fruits fresh for up to five days, dispensing with the need of poor sellers to sprinkle water on their gunny bags covering the produce. The solar cart can reduce the temperatures by up to 5-8 degree Celsius (Vikram 2015).

Since this is a very new technology, we cannot be sure of its effects. Nevertheless, technology is always a double-edged sword, and especially if it involves manipulating the environment. Most often, such innovations ignore the basic logic of human nature for which more will always be less. In our current mentality, we will always find more ways to subvert morals and make a profit for ourselves, no matter what the stage of technological advancement.

The solar powered cart is just a small-scale example of what the government is seriously considering. In view of the quick decay of perishable horticultural produce, the government is considering setting up irradiation facilities across the country in order to increase the shelf life of the produce, in case of plenty of production.

Irradiation disrupts the natural biological processes that lead to decay, by exposing the produce to brief nuclear radiation or gamma rays to kill the microorganisms. Bhabha Atomic Research Centre had recently agreed to transfer technology to increase the shelf life of litchi in Muzaffarpur, Bihar. This enabled them to preserve the litchi for 48 to 60 days at low temperature. The government is making such facilities available in other parts of the country where farmers could preserve perishable produce and sell it as per demand and adequate price in the market.

This is an example of a commonly available, affordable technology in India. But exposure to radiation can have harmful effects on health – yet no one opposed this move. In Bihar, where irradiation of litchi was done, recall how cases of poisoning due to litchi consumption spread like wildfire. No scientific link has been made

between those litchi deaths and irradiation and none will be made, but, amongst a combination of factors, this may be an important contribution.

The irradiation technology was triumphantly discussed in Bihar in 2013, in the case of litchi and mangoes, potatoes and onions – and how these can then be used to meet export demands. The involved scientists also said that use of nuclear energy in agriculture in general, can lead to new variety of seeds.

**While the rationale for using nuclear technology in food is ostensibly to make crops ‘climate-resistant’ and ensure food security and farmers security – even at the cost of health disasters – the commercial motive is never missing. *In Indonesia farmers are producing surplus new varieties of rice using nuclear radiation, funded by IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency).***

**Often such technologies are passed on in the name of saving on water and minimizing the use of fertilizers and killing diseases, but the side-effects of this unnatural process that raises yields immensely are something about which scientists are keeping mum and people are not demanding answers to.**

**Besides irradiation, 3D printing, artificial intelligence, synthetic biology and lab-grown food are other exploding technologies that are fast gaining pace in the field of food production. *While 3D printing promises us that the future space explorers will soon be able to print and eat pizza on Mars, AI and synthetic biology promise to contribute to the trend of lab-grown food by experimenting with the cell structures of organisms. When one goes into the details of these technologies GM food appears like a thing of the past – so fast are we hurtling towards destruction.***

**In fact, the food that is being grown in laboratories now-a-days through cellular agriculture is being called ‘sustainable’ and ‘clean’, especially in the context of meat production. To offset the environmental harm of meat consumption, businesses and**

**universities (like Stanford and UC Berkeley) are working on lab-grown meat, produced by manipulating organisms' cells. "The future belongs to scientists who can hack yeast cells to produce egg whites, torque plant proteins into muscle-like fibres and grow slaughter-free "duck" or "chicken" in factories", according to the San Francisco Chronicle (Srinivasan 2017).**

By as early as 2022, the market for lab-grown food is expected to earn about 220 million USD. Lab-grown meat or cultured meat was funded in 2014 and created waves for its success. Cultured or lab-grown milk is also being worked upon – no matter that the products will be only cell-based and will deploy the technique of synthetic biology. Synthetic biology goes one step further than even DNA sequencing or gene-editing – it can actually create new organisms or life. Much like Artificial Intelligence, its development poses great dangers in the hands of commercial interests – besides the fact that manipulation of Nature by an egoistic human instrument can only lead to inevitable disasters.

*Artificial Intelligence technologies are already being deployed by American companies to 'reinvent food', that is, to understand the molecular structure of animal-based foods such as milk and eggs, then predict how they can make products using plant-based alternatives (Card 2017). **The term 'plant-based alternatives' is often passed off as being sustainable and healthy – but how can it be healthy if it involves cell structure engineering and a subversion of natural processes? On a similar scale, experiments are happening which attempt to grow food under conditions where it can be free from insecticides and pesticides – but it is like replacing the old harmful chemicals whose overdose led to the problem with further entirely new and unprecedented ills.***

With such advances and ambition, it is not surprising that besides the military and medical fields, the potential of synthetic biology is being explored in the field of food also. In cultured meat, bovine cells are made to grow in a plastic dish, to ultimately produce a meat-like substance that resembles a food item like a burger, having

been made of the exactly same cells. It is being touted as plant-based meat and is being called sustainable and healthy. It is nothing of the kind.

All kinds of lab-grown food pervasively uses FBS or Fetal Bovine Serum – this is essentially cow fetus’s blood, procured by slaughtering the pregnant cow, getting the fetus out and killing it to get its blood. FBS is essential for lab-grown food, because this food is dependent on cells and cells have a natural tendency to die if they are in the wrong place – as seen in human body. When these cells are put in a plastic dish to produce lab-grown food, they will do their best to die. FBS keeps the cells alive, because it contains growth factors that can convince the cells that they are in the right place – especially so in the case of the blood of the young fetuses than the older cows and FBS is the best and most commonly used alternative to make any type of cells grow (Thieme 2017).

**This means that the so-called cultured meat that is being called healthy and sustainable and vegan is still unhealthy and very much made from slaughtering cows. How it can be sustainable is anyone’s guess. While proponents of this technology claim that lab-grown food will consume less resources – less land and water and lesser greenhouse gas emissions – one needs to ask at what cost will this happen. Systems and technologies that promise a surplus, idealistic future, under the present degenerate human condition, need to be viewed with suspicion. We have been promised these things before – communism promised a future based on human equality and material surplus, while capitalism also promised us material surplus and a fulfillment of our freedoms and desires. But the consequences we are facing now – in political, religious, social, economic and environmental terms – belie these false idealistic theories.**

While most of the above technologies are fast gaining pace and acceptance world-over and are likely to come to India soon enough, our policy-makers here have already started seriously working on the applications of biotechnology (GM food),

nanotechnology and others to boost agricultural production and 'improve' soil conditions.

While the debate about the GM food is well-known, other applications, such as through nanotechnology, are still not out in the open. Nanotechnology – the technology of micro particles – will be used to create Nano fertilizers, which will supposedly increase the nutrient use efficiency of the soil by three times and provide 'stress tolerant' abilities, and are also regarded as being economically cheaper than the usual fertilizers.

Furthermore, a combination of nanotechnology and Artificial Intelligence – as proclaimed by Microsoft in the context of Indian farming – can provide farmers advanced information on soil and crop conditions and what needs to be done, via advanced sensing abilities.

Once again, the commercial motive is not hidden here also. As early as 2002, the ambitious nanotechnology 'roadmap' for agriculture by the United States Department of Agriculture, had envisioned the ambition of applying nanotechnology for harvesting feed-stocks for industrial processes, by working on the principle of 'flexible matter' in which properties of nanoparticles can be adjusted to create cheaper, smarter replacements across the food chain (Manjunatha, Biradar and Aladakatti 2016).

Besides further enabling genetic engineering by delivery of genes at specific cellular sites in plants and animals, nanotechnology is also expected to enable practices of controlled environment agriculture (growing plants in a controlled environment, to make production 'efficient') and using means like Nano-sensors for Precision farming (to predict the exact environmental and soil conditions, so that use of inputs can be minimized and production yields become high).

Besides these, Nano fertilizers and Nano pesticides for slow and efficient release, nanoparticles for soil conservation and Nano-based genes which can withstand sudden temperature swings due to climate change (such as the 'Primo MAXX' plant regulator designed

to withstand extreme weather conditions, being marketed by a large global corporation), have already been recommended in the Indian context (TERI 2009). Remember how ‘golden rice’ variety evoked a debate in India some time back? Well, nanotechnology has also been used to genetically alter golden rice. Hyped as combating Vitamin A deficiency and capable of being grown round the year, it yet poses immense health risks to people, besides surely contaminating non-GM rice, if released into the environment, as has, reportedly, happened in US and China during field trials (Greenpeace India 2013).

This may sound impressive – since it represents an advancement in technology designed to make life easier – but what about the results? Large, mechanized farms in the US are already using these technologies to make their production more efficient. Yet, the quality of food there – thanks to the flooding of unregulated GM food in the markets – is going down. The overall quality of life and well-being – both physical and psychological – is also worsening, more than ever before. So, most of these innovations are largely limited to mechanical applications designed to yield efficiency and profits, but with the quality of food worsening.

Our current, blind faith in the power of technology – even as we continue on an unabated trajectory of greedy possession – is the false idealism and construct that has trapped us and that will come crashing down on us in the near future. We think that now that we have destroyed the environment, resulting in a condition of loss of food, air and water, we can actually rectify these conditions by the proposed technological innovations. To every environmental and food security problem, we issue the solution of technology and we label these technologies as ‘green’ and ‘sustainable’ – which they are clearly not.

But nobody talks about why these problems came about in the first place – due to our psychological disease of pulling everything towards our ourselves for our own satisfaction – and how can the root-causes be tackled without a change in our own psychology.

## A FOOLISH CIVILIZATION

*In the face of these realities, our obsession with food, coming even at the cost of our well-being, has violated even basic common sense. **Even though we are a thoroughly utilitarian society, our current food propensities defy all basic economic logic.***

*Considering that nearly half of our household spending is on food, by eating fake food nowadays, that entire spending is going down the drain. And if we add extra costs like ill-health accruing from bad food and the fact that people with means are often found spending on eating at hotels or coffee shops etc., we go much beyond the 50% expenditure on basic household food of an average family. All these added costs would nearly amount to 70-80% (since today's younger generation is addicted to fancy and welcoming road-side cafes dotting every city). Presumably, this expense will increase dramatically, as we fall more ill by eating poison. Unfortunately, **even though we know this reality in our hearts, nobody is ready to acknowledge these hidden costs, which are not computed by economists when they try to measure well-being.***

And this is just one part of the economic folly. It is common knowledge that if we stop relying on chemicals and fake means of producing food, we would be in a state of acute global food crisis. That means when we consider the actual food available, there is nothing. Effectively, we are eating non-food! And that is why governments, all over the world, including in India, are under pressure to accept deadly technologies like Genetically Modified (GM) crops, with America, of course, taking the lead. In the absence of GM and these other artificial – even DNA-altering technologies – to make food, we would all be running to cut each other's throats due to shortage of food and water.

With the deep malaise of utilitarianism spreading like wildfire, there will be no way to ensure quality, well-grown food, with commercialism and urban expansion ensuring that no or little land is left for agriculture – whatever little harm-free agriculture one may

want to practice.

This is as dreary a picture as one can currently imagine. And this doesn't even capture the whole reality. With every passing day, as our mentality vitiates and we seek quicker and easier ways to make profit, food will be the biggest casualty and, along with environmental disasters, the cause of our collective impending demise.

## **ULTIMATE CAUSE – A POSSESSED MASS WITH A DISTORTED CONSCIOUSNESS**

*The fact that we continue to operate foolishly despite the stark reality before us seems inexplicable, especially with regard to a generation that regards itself as a proud offspring of a rational, utilitarian society – **the greed with regard to food, ironically violating even basic reason, is almost that of a possessed person. This, indeed, is true. Like most other things, when it comes to food too, our consciousness is distorted and we become puppets in the hands of mischievous forces.***

Enter a hotel or a café and you will see a crowd of people milling about, hogging their food. Sometimes there would hardly be any place to stand. In this mob, if one is even slightly perceptive, one can actually experience the gross manner in which mischievous forces operate. All kinds of wrong and inconscient vibes come from this food mob and is enough to make any sensitive person recoil. Food is thus a field where consciousness is most conspicuous by its absence.

*Another ascertained reality, which anyone can experiment with easily if they observe closely, is that the more we eat wrong food, the more our brain and true vitality diminishes. **It was not for nothing that the ancient Aryan culture and the sages of this country spoke about the necessity of moderation in food. Even a common person can experience this – once we start consciously controlling what and how much we eat, nearly 60-70% psychological problems can be sorted. It will actually remove our clouded perceptions. And when we eat wrongly, bad psychological effects***

*are immediately visible.*

This is something that we need to start observing daily within ourselves.

*This has become even more clear in the present scenario, where things have reached a breaking point and the quality of what we consume has reached its lowest. **The unfortunate thing is that we have stepped from greedy utilitarianism to sheer foolishness, so much so that we have started applying utilitarian thinking to our own lives – the thinking that it is acceptable if we die at an early age after consuming wrong food. After all, in an average lifespan of 80 years, even if you die at 70 or 75, it's not a problem. The main point is that one gets to enjoy life to the fullest and eat whatever garbage one wants to eat. For an average person whose only aim is to earn money, enjoy and procreate and then die, this seems a fair enough cost-benefit balance – enjoy fully and die at a normal, little early, old-age.***

**This evokes little sympathy for such ultimate victims.**

*It explains the puzzle about why the literally poisonous Maggi noodles (over the years, there are reports about children dying after eating Maggi) went and came back in the Indian markets and why there is never any public outrage – not even in media – over massive food scandals that are unearthed. In fact, look at human behavior – we can recall that when Maggi was being banned, instead of a public outrage (outrage and gusto was only limited to the enthusiastic Food Safety and Standards Regulator of India which finally got to show some muscle and the reluctant state governments), there was a frantic mad-rush among the people to buy and stock up on as many packets of Maggi noodles as they could get, before it was banned. Sad youth wrote emotional messages on social media about their childhood attachment to Maggi. The result was that the price of a 20 rupees Maggi shot up to 100 rupees in the days leading up to the ban on Maggi! Thus, **instead of a national outrage, a whole new black market was created for a poisonous but popular product.***

**The Modi government was also widely targeted for trying to ‘destroy a brand’ by certain industry people.**

*Same thing happened when there was a scandal, some years back, about there being worms in the Cadbury chocolate. It didn't have any effect whatsoever. Cadbury remains as popular as ever. At least, in other countries there is outrage over compromised food quality, even though the basic nature of people remains entrapped by attachment to food. But in India, the situation seems much, much worse. So, when this is what happens in the wake of food scandals in India, there can be little sympathy for obese and bed-ridden victims of bad food. It reflects poorly on the national character of our country and makes a mockery of the lofty ideals of our forefathers. This irrational greed – with its pull-down effect towards tamas – will eventually constrain our capacities to think and progress collectively. It is a big vulnerability that the country should realize is of the scope of a national emergency.*

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## LOVE JIHAD: A SERIOUS WEAKNESS OF NATIONAL CHARACTER

The much-awaited Supreme Court hearing for the Hadiya case has finally concluded. The outcome was vague, and important questions remained unanswered. Instead, Hadiya aka Akhila Asokan – the Kerala girl who had converted to Islam and subsequently married a Muslim man, and who has been in her father’s custody for over a year, since the Kerala High Court annulled her marriage – was sent back to Tamil Nadu to finish her homeopathy degree course, with the college Dean being appointed as her guardian.

Everything else remains unanswered. Particularly, the report submitted by National Investigation Agency (NIA) on love jihad, as well as the order of the Kerala HC annulling Hadiya’s marriage, are matters that have been postponed by the Court for a hearing more than a month later. However, proceedings in the Court did throw up some incriminating facts that could make Hadiya’s case a compelling one of love jihad. Her husband’s tape-recorded conversations asking about the price of sending ISIS recruits could be one. It was decried as being manufactured. But then, what about Hadiya’s closeness to Sainaba – the leader of the women’s wing of the radical Muslim organization accused of love jihad viz. the Popular Front of India (PFI).

Sainaba was also incriminated clearly in the sting operation carried out by India Today, where she admitted to luring girls into conversions. Hadiya was put in touch with Sainaba and had been staying with her, before her father won custody of her. And these are just few instances that have come out in the public domain. The evidence presented in the NIA report should be culminating proof of the already well-known fact of love jihad.

Yet, Hadiya’s supporters – a certain class of self-proclaimed secular and feminist intelligentsia – have deliberately turned the argument on its head. Hadiya’s husband’s lawyers – Kapil Sibal and

Indira Jaising – have been talking only about Hadiya’s freedom of choice. But, in this case, it is obvious that the woman is in a state of mental delusion, so the question of ‘consent’ does not arise. That is why ***the facts to be presented by the NIA in January become very important. They should be able to settle this case, once and for all. Otherwise, there is no end to vague arguments about love and consent and what not.***

***Obviously, love jihad will give the illusion of love and willingness on the part of the woman, since the woman is first lured – and never coerced – into the trap and then married and converted.*** It has been in evidence for decades and was flagged during the last CPI(M) government too, when authorities provided evidence for numerous cases of love jihad as early as 2009. But, in recent times, there is a new dimension added to it – the national security threat it poses. For, most of the love jihad couples have left for Syria and Afghanistan to join the ISIS. Recall how a Christian family made news last year for having converted and then left to join ISIS, or, how Kerala made headlines for contributing the maximum number of ISIS fighters from India.

These proofs – which are worrying the Hindus and the Christians alike in Kerala, forcing them to forge a common cause – should be enough. But ***the national debate on love jihad has always had the distinction of being conducted along wholly impractical lines,*** divorced from the assertions of the people who have been most adversely and closely affected and completely uncaring of the impact that such a phenomenon may have on bringing down our national character to a new low.

While love jihad cases since last year were connected with ISIS recruitment, ISIS is no longer a threat to India. But while the ISIS – a purely political creation resulting from competitive politics between nations – is nearly dead, what will happen to the Muslim organizations in Kerala?

Organizations like the Popular Front of India (PFI) and its political

party wing, the Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI), besides its youth and women wings, form an elaborate network of radical Muslim organizations that have an all-India presence. ISIS and al-Qaeda were never that big a threat to India. Even now al-Qaeda's works in Kashmir have only led to a disruption in the existing terrorist movement there and has worked to the advantage of India, with al-Qaeda being resented by Pakistani terror groups in Kashmir for causing a diversion. Organizations like ISIS are mainly confined to Gulf politics and the manipulations by Western nations trying to destroy the economic and military interests of each other. So, ***let us not read too much into ISIS in the Kerala case, since ISIS is now a bygone.***

It is the PFI and its offshoots that are working overtime to create dents in the Hindu and the larger Indian society. That PFI has links with terror groups in Pakistan and Gulf is established by lot of evidence now, and that is something that this government is already working on.

Ever since a prominent media channel conducted a sting operation on the PFI and got the PFI's women wing leader, Sainaba (who has been on the NIA radar since before the sting was carried out), to confirm that young girls are indeed trapped and converted through marriage, the latest evidence before us is fool-proof. And this is not the only evidence. Kerala police – including the famous remarks on radicalization on Muslims and love jihad by retired police chief, TP Senkumar – has also confirmed that love jihad is a reality, perpetrated by 'Dawa Squad' members who work actively to convert youth to Islam, especially the youth belonging to the Ezhava community. Of course, they denied it later – as expected – but ***this just shows that the long-festering love jihad issue is a reality that is only being suppressed for political purposes – particularly, to keep the dominant Muslim vote-bank in Kerala in good humour.***

This politics of selfishness has made Kerala amongst the most backward states in the country, in terms of the overall mindset and approach towards national issues and even social issues like gender. By falling easy prey to the trap of Islamism, it is going further

backward. One can argue that this kind of a nuisance has been confined mainly to Kerala only. ***But why should even one state or region be allowed to become a drag on the national progress?***

***An issue like love jihad – which reeks of weakness and cowardice of petty plotting by a group of irrelevant fanatics – can never pose a threat to the country’s indomitable spirit.*** But that is no reason to be complacent about it and let things be – as has been the approach of successive governments for the last so many years. It is good that the Modi government has gone after it ruthlessly. ***Being complacent about a serious blemish, being casual about the issue exposes a psychological flaw in our being as a nation.***

***The main threat from organizations like PFI – spreading ‘love jihad’ – is that they are a force for bringing about national division, and, of creating ghettos of psychological dirt and isolation that cannot be allowed to persist in a nation that is destined for and aspiring to resurgence.*** All such plots of weakness must be crushed with an iron hand. It is time for Kerala to wake up to the national need of the hour and reform its politics and society.

## HISTORY OF INDIA – THE VEDIC AGE (32)

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

#### D. SRI AUROBINDO'S VIEW OF HIS WORK ON THE VEDA AND SOME SELECTIONS FROM HIS FURTHER WORK AIMED AT MAKING HIS PRIMA FACIE CASE ENTIRELY FIRM

##### (v) *Bhaga Savitri, the Enjoyer*

“Surya Savitri is the Creator. According to the Truth of things, in the terms of the Ritam, the worlds are brought forth from the divine consciousness, from Aditi, goddess of infinite being, mother of the gods, the indivisible consciousness, the Light that cannot be impaired imaged by the mystic Cow that cannot be slain. In that creation, Varuna and Mitra, Aryaman and Bhaga are four effective Puissances. Varuna represents the principle of pure and wide being, Sat in Sachchidananda; Aryaman represents the light of the divine consciousness working as Force; Mitra representing light and knowledge, using the principle of Ananda for creation, is Love maintaining the law of harmony; Bhaga represents Ananda as the creative enjoyment; he takes the delight of the creation, takes the delight of all that is created. It is the Maya, the formative wisdom of Varuna, of Mitra that disposes multitudinously the light of Aditi brought by the Dawn to manifest the worlds.

In their psychological function these four gods represent the same principles working in the human mind, in the human temperament. They build up in man the different planes of his being and mould them ultimately into the terms and the forms of the divine Truth. Especially Mitra and Varuna are continually described as holding firm the law of their action, increasing the Truth, touching the Truth and by the Truth enjoying its vastness of divine will or its great and uncontracted sacrificial action. Varuna represents

largeness, right and purity; everything that deviates from the right, from the purity recoils from his being and strikes the offender as the punishment of sin. **So long as man does not attain to the largeness of Varuna's Truth, he is bound to the posts of the world-sacrifice by the triple bonds of mind, life and body as a victim and is not free as a possessor and enjoyer.** Therefore we have frequently the prayer to be delivered from the noose of Varuna, from the wrath of his offended purity. Mitra is on the other hand the most beloved of the gods; he binds all together by the fixities of his harmony, by the successive lustrous seats of Love fulfilling itself in the order of things, *mitrasya dh[mabhi]*. His name, Mitra, which means also friend, is constantly used with a play upon the double sense; it is as Mitra, **because Mitra dwells in all, that the other gods become the friends of man.** Aryaman appears in the Veda with but little distinctness of personality, for the references to him are brief. The functions of Bhaga are outlined more clearly and are the same in the cosmos and in man.”<sup>1</sup> “What the Rishi seeks is the enjoyment in all created things of the immortal and immortalising Ananda.

It is this Ananda which is that enjoyment of the divine Producer, of Surya Savitri, the supreme result of the Truth; for **Truth is followed as the path to the divine beatitude.** This Ananda is the highest, the best enjoyment. It disposes all aright; for once the Ananda, the divine delight in all things is attained, it sets right all the distortions, all the evil of the world. It carries man through to the goal. If by the truth and right of things we arrive at the Ananda, by the Ananda also we can arrive at the right and truth of things. It is to the divine Creator in the name and form of Bhaga that this human capacity for the divine and right enjoyment of all things belongs. When he is embraced by the human mind and heart and vital forces and physical being, when this divine form is received into himself by man, then the Ananda of the world manifests itself.

Nothing can limit, nothing can diminish, neither god nor demon, friend nor enemy, event nor sensation, whatever pleasure this divine Enjoyer takes in things, in whatever vessel or object of his enjoyment.

For nothing can diminish or hedge in or hurt his luminous self-empire, *svarājyam*, his perfect possession of himself in infinite being, infinite delight and the vastnesses of the order of the Truth.

Therefore it is he that brings the seven delights, *sapta ratnā*, to the giver of the sacrifice. He looses them forth on us; for they are all there in the world as in the divine being, in ourselves also, and have only to be loosed forth on our outer consciousness. The rich and varied amplitude of this sevenfold delight, perfect on all the planes of our being, is the *bhāga*, enjoyment or portion of Bhaga Savitri in the completed sacrifice, and it is that varied wealth which the Rishi seeks for himself and his fellows in the sacrifice by the acceptance of the divine Enjoyer.”<sup>2</sup>

“Bhaga is the godhead who brings this joy and supreme felicity into the human consciousness; he is the divine enjoyer in man. All being has this divine enjoyment of existence for its aim and end, whether it seeks for it with knowledge or with ignorance, with the divine strength or the weakness of our yet undeveloped powers. ... An increasing and victorious felicity of the soul rejoicing in the growth of its divine possessions which gives us strength to journey on and overcome till we reach the goal of our perfection in an infinite beatitude, this is the sign of the birth of Bhaga in man and this his divine function.”<sup>3</sup>

“Bhaga is Savitri the Creator, he who brings forth from the unmanifest Divine the truth of a divine universe, dispelling from us the evil dream of this lower consciousness in which we falter amidst a confused tangle of truth and falsehood, strength and weakness, joy and suffering. An infinite being delivered out of imprisoning limits, an infinite knowledge and strength receiving in thought and working out in will a divine Truth, an infinite beatitude possessing and enjoying all without division, fault or sin, this is the creation of Bhaga Savitri, this that greatest Delight.”<sup>4</sup>

### **(vi) Brihaspati, the Power of the Soul**

**“Brihaspati is he who has established firmly the limits and**

**definitions of the Earth, that is to say of the material consciousness.** The existence out of which all formations are made is an obscure, fluid and indeterminate movement, – *salilam*, Water. The first necessity is **to create a sufficiently stable formation out of this flux** and running so as to form a basis for the life of the conscient. This **Brihaspati does in the formation of the physical consciousness and its world, *sahas*, by force, by a sort of mighty constraint upon the resistance of the subconscious.** This great creation he effects by establishing the triple principle of mind, life and body, always present together and involved in each other or evolved out of each other in the world of the cosmic labour and fulfilment. The three together form the triple seat of Agni and there he works out the gradual work of accomplishment or perfection which is the object of the sacrifice. Brihaspati forms by sound, by his cry, *rave*, for the **Word is the cry of the soul as it awakens to ever-new perceptions and formations.** ‘He who established firmly by force the ends of the earth, Brihaspati in the triple seat of the fulfilment, by his cry.’<sup>a”5</sup>

“This self-expressive Soul, Brihaspati, is the Purusha, the Father of all things; it is the universal Divinity; it is the Bull of the herds, **the Master and fertilizer of all these luminous energies evolved or involved, active in the day or obscurely working in the night of things,** which constitute the becoming or world-existence, *bhuvanam*. To the Purusha under the name of Brihaspati the Rishi would have us dispose in the order of a sacrifice all the materials of our being by sacrificial action in which they are given up to the All-Soul as acceptable oblations offered with adoration and surrender. **By the sacrifice we shall become through the grace of this godhead full of heroic energy for the battle of life, rich in the offspring of the soul, masters of the felicities which are attained by divine enlightenment and right action.**”<sup>6</sup>

### ***(vii) The Ribhus, Artisans of Immortality***

“The Ribhus, it has been suggested, are rays of the Sun. And it

<sup>a</sup> *Yas tastambha sahas vi jmo ant n, bhaspatis triadhastho rave*.

is true that like Varuna, Mitra, Bhaga and Aryaman they are powers of the solar Light, the Truth. But **their special character in the Veda is that they are artisans of Immortality.** They are represented as human beings who have attained to the condition of godhead by power of knowledge and perfection in their works. Their function is to aid Indra in raising man towards the same state of divine light and bliss which they themselves have earned as their own divine privilege. The hymns addressed to them in the Veda are few and to the first glance exceedingly enigmatical; for they are full of certain figures and symbols always repeated. But once the principal clues of the Veda are known, they become on the contrary exceedingly clear and simple and present a coherent and interesting idea which sheds a clear light on the Vedic gospel of immortality.

The Ribhus are **powers of the Light who have descended into Matter and are there born as human faculties aspiring to become divine and immortal.** In this character they are called children of Sudhanwan, a patronymic which is merely a parable of their birth from the full capacities of Matter touched by the luminous energy. But in their real nature they are descended from this luminous Energy and are sometimes so addressed, 'Offspring of Indra, grandsons of luminous Force.' For **Indra, the divine mind in man, is born out of luminous Force as is Agni out of pure Force,** and from Indra the divine Mind spring the human aspirations after Immortality.

The names of the three Ribhus are, in the order of their birth, **Ribhu or Ribhukshan, the skilful Knower or the Shaper in knowledge, Vibhwa or Vibhu, the Pervading, the self-diffusing, and Vaja, the Plenitude.** Their names indicate their special nature and function, but they are really a trinity, and therefore, although usually termed the Ribhus, they are also called the Vibhus and the Vajas. Ribhu, the eldest is the first in man who begins to shape by his thoughts and works the forms of immortality; Vibhwa gives pervasiveness to this working; Vaja, the youngest, supplies the plenitude of the divine light and substance by which the complete work can be done."<sup>7</sup>

"They are the sublimated human energies of formation and

upward progress who assist the gods in the divinising of man. And of all their accomplishments that which is central is **the formation of the two brilliant horses of Indra**, the horses yoked by speech to their movements, yoked by the Word and fashioned by the mind. For **the free movement of the luminous mind, the divine mind in man, is the condition of all other immortalising works.**

The **second work of the Ribhus is to fashion the chariot of the Ashwins, lords of the human journey**, – the happy movement of the Ananda in man which pervades with its action all his worlds or planes of being, bringing health, youth, strength, wholeness to the physical man, capacity of enjoyment and action to the vital, glad energy of the light to the mental being, – in a word, the force of the pure delight of being in all his members.

The **third work of the Ribhus is to fashion the cow who gives the sweet milk.** It is said elsewhere that this cow has been delivered out of its covering skin, – the veil of Nature's outward movement and action, – by the Ribhus. The fostering cow herself is she of the universal forms and universal impetus of movement, *vr̥vajuva* *vr̥var̥p̥m*, in other words she is the first Radiance, Aditi, the infinite Consciousness of the infinite conscious Being which is the mother of the worlds. That consciousness is brought out by the Ribhus from the veiling movement of Nature and a figure of her is fashioned here in us by them. She is, by the action of the powers of the duality, separated from her offspring, the soul in the lower world; the Ribhus restore it to constant companionship with its infinite mother.

Another great work of the Ribhus is in the strength of their previous deeds, of the light of Indra, the movement of the Ashwins, the full yield of the fostering Cow **to restore youth to the aged Parents of the world, Heaven and Earth.** Heaven is the mental consciousness, Earth the physical. These in their union are represented as lying long old and prostrate like fallen sacrificial posts, worn-out and suffering. The Ribhus, it is said, ascend to the house of the Sun where he lives in the unconcealed splendour of his Truth and there slumbering for twelve days afterwards traverse the heaven

and the earth, filling them with abundant rain of the streams of Truth, nourishing them, restoring them to youth and vigour.<sup>a</sup> They pervade heaven with their workings, they bring divine increase to the mentality;<sup>b</sup> they give to it and the physical being a fresh and young and immortal movement.<sup>c</sup> For from the home of the Truth they bring with them **the perfection of** that which is the condition of their work, the movement in the straight path of the Truth and **the Truth itself with its absolute effectivity in all the thoughts and words of the mentality.** Carrying this power with them in their pervading entry into the lower world, they pour into it the immortal essence.

It is the wine of that immortal essence with its ecstasies which they win by their works and bring with them to man in his sacrifice. And **with them come and sit Indra and the Maruts, the divine Mind and its Thought-forces,** and the four great Kings, sons of Aditi, children of the Infinite, Varuna, Mitra, Aryaman, Bhaga, the purity and vastness of the Truth-consciousness, its law of love and light and harmony, its power and aspiration, its pure and happy enjoyment of things.

And there at the sacrifice the gods drink in the fourfold bowl, *camasa* □ *caturvayam*, the pourings of the nectar. For Twashtri, the Framer of things, has given man originally only a single bowl, the physical consciousness, the physical body in which to offer the delight of existence to the gods. The Ribhus, powers of luminous knowledge, take it as renewed and perfected by Twashtri's later workings and **build up in him from the material of the four planes three other bodies, vital, mental and the causal or ideal body.**

Because they have made this fourfold cup of bliss and enabled him thereby to live on the plane of the Truth-consciousness they are able to establish in the perfected human being the thrice seven ecstasies of the supreme existence poured into the mind, vitality and body. Each of these they can give perfectly by the full expression

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<sup>a</sup> IV.33.2, 3, 7; 36.1, 3; I.161.7.

<sup>b</sup> IV.33.1, 2, <sup>c</sup> V.36.3.

of its separate absolute ecstasy even in the combination of the whole.

The Ribhus have power to support and contain all these floods of the delight of being in the human consciousness; and they are able to divide it in the perfection of their works among the manifested gods, to each god his sacrificial share. For such perfect division is the whole condition of the effective sacrifice, the perfect work.”<sup>8</sup>

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# THE GREATNESS OF INDIA AND ITS CULTURE (32)

## 5. THE GREATNESS OF INDIAN LITERATURE

### VIII. THE REGIONAL LITERATURES

“It is the later developments of Vedantic philosophy, the Puranic ideas and images and the poetic and aesthetic spirituality of the religions of devotion that inspired from their birth the regional literatures. The literature of the Sanskrit tongue does not come to any abrupt end. Poetry of the classical type continues to be written especially in the South down to a comparatively late period and Sanskrit remains still the language of philosophy and of all kinds of scholarship: all prose work, all the work of the critical mind is written in the ancient tongue. But the genius rapidly fades out from it, it becomes stiff, heavy and artificial and only a scholastic talent remains to keep it in continuance. In every province the local tongues arise here earlier, there a little later to the dignity of literature and become the vehicle of poetic creation and the instrument of popular culture. Sanskrit, although not devoid of popular elements, is essentially and in the best sense an aristocratic speech developing and holding to the necessity of a noble aspiration and the great manner a high spiritual, intellectual, ethical and aesthetic culture, then possible in this manner only to the higher classes, and handing it down by various channels of impression and transfusion and especially by religion, art and social and ethical rule to the mass of the people. Pali in the hands of the Buddhists becomes a direct means of this transmission. The poetry of the regional tongues on the contrary creates, in every sense of the word, a popular literature. The Sanskrit writers were men of the three highest castes, mostly Brahmins and Kshatriyas, and later they were learned men writing for a highly cultured elite; the Buddhist writers too were for the most part philosophers, monks, kings, preachers writing sometimes for themselves, sometimes in a more popular form for the mass of the people; but the poetry of the regional tongues sprang straight from the heart of the people and its writers came from all classes from

the Brahmin to the lowest Shudra and the outcaste. It is only in Urdu and to a less degree in the Southern tongues, as in Tamil whose great period is contemporaneous with the classical Sanskrit, its later production continuing during the survival of independent or semi-independent courts and kingdoms in the South, that there is a strong influence of the learned or classical temperament and habit; but even here there is a very considerable popular element as in the songs of the Shaiva saints and Vaishnava Alwars. The field here is too large to be easily known in its totality or to permit of a rapid survey, but something must be said of the character and value of this later literature that we may see how vital and persistently creative Indian culture remained even in a period which compared with its greater times might be regarded as a period of restriction and decadence.

As the Sanskrit literature begins with the Vedas and Upanishads, these later literatures begin with the inspired poetry of saints and devotees: for in India it is always a spiritual movement that is the source or at least imparts the impulse of formation to new ideas and possibilities and initiates the changes of the national life. It is this kind that predominated almost throughout the creative activity of most of these tongues before modern times, because it was always poetry of this type that was nearest to the heart and mind of the people; and even where the work is of a more secular spirit, the religious turn enters into it and provides the framework, a part of the tone or the apparent motive. In abundance, in poetic excellence, in the union of spontaneous beauty of motive and lyrical skill this poetry has no parallel in its own field in any other literature. A sincerity of devotional feeling is not enough to produce work of this high turn of beauty, as is shown by the sterility of Christian Europe in this kind; it needs a rich and profound spiritual culture. Another part of the literature is devoted to the bringing of something of the essence of the old culture into the popular tongues through new poetic versions of the story of the Mahabharata and the Ramayana or in romantic narrative founded on the ancient legends; and here

again we have work of the very greatest genius as well as much of a lesser but still high order. A third type presents vividly the religious beliefs and feelings of the people, the life of court and city and village and hamlet, of landholder and trader and artisan and peasant. The bulk of the work done in the regional tongues falls under one or other of these heads, but there are variations such as the religio-ethical and political poems of Ramdas in Maharashtra or the gnomic poetry, the greatest in plan, conception and force of execution ever written in this kind, of the Tamil saint, Tiruvalluvar. There is too in one or two of these languages a later erotic poetry not without considerable lyrical beauty of an entirely mundane inspiration. The same culture reigns amid many variations of form in all this work of the regional peoples, but each creates on the lines of its own peculiar character and temperament and this gives a different stamp, the source of a rich variety in the unity, to each of these beautiful and vigorous literatures.

Thus under the stress of temperamental variation the poetry of the Vaishnavas puts on very different artistic forms in different provinces. There is first the use of the psychical symbol created by the Puranas, and this assumes its most complete and artistic shape in Bengal and becomes there a long continued tradition. The desire of the soul for God is there thrown into symbolic figure in the lyrical love cycle of Radha and Krishna, the Nature soul in man seeking for the Divine Soul through love, seized and mastered by his beauty, attracted by his magical flute, abandoning human cares and duties for this one overpowering passion and in the cadence of its phases passing through first desire to the bliss of union, the pangs of separation, the eternal longing and reunion, the  $\sqrt{\square}$  of the love of the human spirit for God. There is a settled frame and sequence, a subtly simple lyrical rhythm, a traditional diction of appealing directness and often of intense beauty. This accomplished lyrical form springs at once to perfect birth from the genius of the first two poets who used the Bengali tongue, Vidyapati, a consummate artist of word and line, and the inspired singer Chandidas in whose name

stand some of the sweetest and most poignant and exquisite love-lyrics in any tongue. The symbol here is sustained in its most external figure of human passion and so consistently that it is now supposed by many to mean nothing else, but this is quite negated by the use of the same figures by the devout poets of the religion of Chaitanya. All the spiritual experience that lay behind the symbol was embodied in that inspired prophet and incarnation of the ecstasy of divine love and its spiritual philosophy put into clear form in his teaching. His followers continued the poetic tradition of the earlier singers and though they fall below them in genius, yet left behind a great mass of this kind of poetry always beautiful in form and often deep and moving in substance. Another type is created in the perfect lyrics of the Rajput queen Mirabai, in which the images of the Krishna symbol are more directly turned into a song of the love and pursuit of the divine Lover by the soul of the singer. In the Bengal poetry the expression preferred is the symbolic figure impersonal to the poet: here a personal note gives the peculiar intensity to the emotion. This is given a still more direct turn by a southern poetess in the image of herself as the bride of Krishna. The peculiar power of this kind of Vaishnava religion and poetry is in the turning of all the human emotions Godward, the passion of love being preferred as the intensest and most absorbing of them all, and though the idea recurs wherever there has been a strong development of devotional religion, it has nowhere been used with so much power and sincerity as in the work of the Indian poets.

Other Vaishnava poetry does not use the Krishna symbol, but is rather addressed in language of a more direct devotion to Vishnu or centres sometimes around the Rama Avatar. The songs of Tukaram are the best known of this kind. The Vaishnava poetry of Bengal avoids except very rarely any element of intellectualising thought and relies purely on emotional description, a sensuous figure of passion and intensity of feeling: Maratha poetry on the contrary has from the beginning a strong intellectual strain. The first Marathi poet is at once a devotee, a Yogin and a thinker; the poetry of the saint Ramdas, associated with the birth and awakening of a nation, is

almost entirely a stream of religious ethical thinking raised to the lyrical pitch; and it is the penetrating truth and fervour of a thought arising from the heart of devotion that makes the charm and power of Tukaram's songs. A long strain of devotee poets keeps sounding the note that he struck and their work fills the greater space of Marathi poetry. The same type takes a lighter and more high-pitched turn in the poetry of Kabir. In Bengal again at the end of the Mahomedan period there is the same blending of fervent devotion with many depths and turns of religious thought in the songs of Ramprasad to the divine Mother, combined here with a vivid play of imagination turning all familiar things into apt and pregnant images and an intense spontaneity of feeling. In the South a profounder philosophic utterance is often fused into the devotional note, especially in the Shaiva poets, and, as in the early Sanskrit poetry, vivified by a great power of living phrase and image, and farther north the high Vedantic spirituality renews itself in the Hindi poetry of Surdas and inspires Nanak and the Sikh gurus. The spiritual culture prepared and perfected by two millenniums of the ancient civilisation has flooded the mind of all these peoples and given birth to great new literatures and its voice is heard continually through all their course.

The narrative poetry of this age is less striking and original except for a certain number of great or famous works. Most of these tongues have felt the cultural necessity of transferring into the popular speech the whole central story of the Mahabharata or certain of its episodes and, still more universally, the story of the Ramayana. In Bengal there is the Mahabharata of Kashiram, the gist of the old epic simply retold in a lucid classical style, and the Ramayana of Krittibas, more near to the vigour of the soil, neither of them attaining to the epic manner but still written with a simple poetic skill and a swift narrative force. Only two however of these later poets arrived at a vividly living recreation of the ancient story and succeeded in producing a supreme masterpiece, Kamban, the Tamil poet who makes of his subject a great original epic, and **Tulsidas whose famed Hindi Ramayana combines with a singular mastery lyric intensity, romantic richness and the sublimity of the epic imagination and**

**is at once a story of the divine Avatar and a long chant of religious devotion.** An English historian of the literature has even claimed for Tulsidas's poem superiority to the epic of Valmiki: that is an exaggeration and, whatever the merits, there cannot be a greater than the greatest, but that such claims can be made for Tulsidas and Kamban is evidence at least of the power of the poets and a proof that the creative genius of the Indian mind has not declined even in the narrowing of the range of its culture and knowledge. All this poetry indeed shows a gain in intensity that compensates to some extent for the loss of the ancient height and amplitude.

While this kind of narrative writing goes back to the epics, another seems to derive its first shaping and motive from the classical poems of Kalidasa, Bharavi and Magha. A certain number take for their subject, like that earlier poetry, episodes of the Mahabharata or other ancient or Puranic legends, but the classical and epic manner has disappeared, the inspiration resembles more that of the Puranas and there is the tone and the looser and easier development of the popular romance. This kind is commoner in western India and excellence in it is the title to fame of Premananda, the most considerable of the Gujerati poets. In Bengal we find another type of half-romantic half-realistic narrative which develops a poetic picture of the religious mind and life and scenes of contemporary times and has a strong resemblance in its motive to the more outward element in the aim of Rajput painting. The life of Chaitanya written in a simple and naive romance verse, appealing by its directness and sincerity but inadequate in poetic form, is a unique contemporary presentation of the birth and foundation of a religious movement. Two other poems that have become classics, celebrate the greatness of Durga or Chandi, the goddess who is the Energy of Shiva, – the "Chandi" of Mukundaram, a pure romance of great poetic beauty which presents in its frame of popular legend a very living picture of the life of the people, and the "Annadamangal" of Bharatchandra repeating in its first part the Puranic tales of the gods as they might be imagined by the Bengali villager in the type of his own human

life, telling in the second a romantic love story and in the third a historical incident of the time of Jehangir, all these disparate elements forming the development of the one central motive and presented without any imaginative elevation but with an unsurpassable vividness of description and power of vital and convincing phrase. All this poetry, the epic and the romance, the didactic poem, of which Ramdas and the famous Kural of Tiruvalluvar are the chief representatives, and the philosophic and devotional lyrics are not the creation or meant for the appreciation of a cultivated class, but with few exceptions the expression of a popular culture. The Ramayana of Tulsidas, the songs of Ramprasad and of the Bauls, the wandering Vaishnava devotees, the poetry of Ramdas and Tukaram, the sentences of Tiruvalluvar and the poetess Avvai and the inspired lyrics of the southern saints and Alvars were known to all classes and their thought or their emotion entered deeply into the life of the people.

I have dwelt at this length on the literature because it is, not indeed the complete, but still the most varied and ample record of the culture of a people. Three millenniums at least of a creation of this kind and greatness are surely the evidence of a real and very remarkable culture. The last period shows no doubt a gradual decline, but one may note the splendour even of the decline and especially the continued vitality of religious, literary and artistic creation. At the moment when it seemed to be drawing to a close it has revived at the first chance and begins again another cycle, at first precisely in the three things that lasted the longest, spiritual and religious activity, literature and painting, but already the renewal promises to extend itself to all the many activities of life and culture in which India was once a great and leading people.”<sup>1</sup>

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## **The Creation of a Perfected World**

“A perfected human world cannot be created by men or composed of men who are themselves imperfect. Even if all our actions are scrupulously regulated by education or law or social or political machinery, what will be achieved is a regulated pattern of minds, a fabricated pattern of lives, a cultivated pattern of conduct; but a conformity of this kind cannot change, cannot re-create the man within, it cannot carve or cut out a perfect soul or a perfect thinking man or a perfect or growing living being. For soul and mind and life are powers of being and can grow but cannot be cut out or made; an outer process or formation can assist or can express soul and mind and life but cannot create or develop it. One can indeed help the being to grow, not by an attempt at manufacture, but by throwing on it stimulating influences or by lending to it one’s forces of soul or mind or life; but even so the growth must still come from within it, determining from there what shall be made of these influences and forces, and not from outside. This is the first truth that our creative zeal and aspiration have to learn, otherwise all our human endeavour is foredoomed to turn in a futile circle and can end only in a success that is a specious failure.”

**– Sri Aurobindo**

(Complete works of Sri Aurobindo, 22, p.1058-59)