

The Resurgent India

A Monthly National Review

August 2014



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

- The Mother

Year 5

Issue 5

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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 5

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CONTENTS

A Perspective on Narendra Modi's 15th August Address to the Nation	6
The Only Way Out For Us	14
An Approach to the Present National Problems in Terms of the Modern Intellectual View of Things	17
National ideals: Imperatives before us	17
Assessing the Modi government	19
The Importance of Studying India's Great Past	22
History of India – The Vedic Age (2)	24
II. The Aryan Invasion Theory	24
The Greatness of India and Its Culture (I)	29
I. INDIA	29
What is India	29

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 NARENDRA MODI'S 15TH AUGUST ADDRESS TO THE NATION

Prime Minister Narendra Modi delivered a spontaneous and moving speech on the Independence Day which has been much appreciated not only by the media but also by people at large and to some it must have come as music to the ears. It was something very different from what people had gotten used to receiving on this auspicious day which is also the birth day of Sri Aurobindo.

In the June 2014 issue of this Monthly National Review, appraising the first three weeks of the new government, it was observed that, "The unambiguous message that has been radiating from all that the new government has been saying and doing, so far, may be summed up in the following fourfold formula: Sincere Dedication to the Nation, Hard Work, Harmony and Goodwill for All." All the things in the above formula found ample expression in the Prime Minister's address and all are very important but, the first one – a sincere dedication to the nation – is the most important of them all and seems to be, very rightly, at the core of Narendra Modi's approach to all the multifarious problems facing the nation. It is becoming increasingly clear that the Modi Government marks the beginning of inevitable forthcoming resurgence of India during which, after a millennium of cruel subjugation to alien rule, "...Indians will witness a growing spirit of nationalism fed by the increasingly glowing achievements of their country and their countrymen around the world in all fields of endeavour. For the first time, after a very difficult millennium, Indians will have something to take pride in and this true pride and, based on it, the growing spirit of nationalism will tend to dissolve all the problems of our collective life which have become so very acute due to a blind and mechanical following of the western spirit and forms in this field. We all know that the problem had become so critical in the political field that it was threatening the integrity and even the very existence of the country. Love of power, money and progeny had become the common denominator of all the participants in the political arena. Now, with

coming of the new Modi government, the flowering of the spirit of true – true, because consecrated to the divine as India has always been – nationalism will increasingly transmute all these lower loves into an all-consuming love for the Motherland.”¹

However, in spite of all this, it does not seem to us that Sri Narendra Modi has sufficiently imbibed or understood the implications of the deeper Indian spiritual view of human life for the methods to be used for advance and the direction in which to advance, because his ideas about the development of the country – even as they point towards the right direction and are full of insights into our problems in various fields – and his expression of them seems entirely coloured – betraying no deeper or contrary note or suggestion – by the modern materialistic and utilitarian spirit and its approach to things.

When we talk of development and service of the poor (socialism) and our minds are turned towards the solution of these in the terms and by the processes offered by the West – which has miserably failed to truly solve these during the past one hundred years when it seriously addressed these – it clearly shows that we have not been able to arrive at a deeper approach and enter into the secret of their solution at the roots to which India alone has had the key.^a **“If India follows in the footsteps of Europe, accepts her political ideals, social system, economic principles, she will be overcome with the same maladies.** Such a consummation is neither for the good of India nor for the good of Europe. If India becomes an intellectual province of Europe, she will never attain to her natural greatness or fulfil the possibilities within her. *Paradharmo bhayavahah*, to accept the dharma of another is perilous; it deprives the man or the nation of its secret of life and vitality and substitutes an unnatural and stunted growth for the free, large and organic development of Nature. Whenever a nation has given up the purpose

^a “The individual cannot be perfect until he has surrendered all he now calls himself to the divine Being. So also, until mankind gives all it has to God, never shall there be a perfected society.”²

of its existence, it has been at the cost of its growth. India must remain India if she is to fulfil her destiny. Nor will Europe profit by grafting her civilisation on India, for **if India, who is the distinct physician of Europe's maladies, herself falls into the clutch of the disease, the disease will remain uncured and incurable and European civilisation will perish...**³

Thus, when we think in terms of the forthcoming industrialisation as a means of our betterment and development, it is good to remember the following words of Sri Aurobindo, "India can never so far forget the teaching which is her life and the secret of her immortality as to become a replica of the organized selfishness, cruelty and greed which is dignified in the West by the name of Industry. She will create her own conditions, find out the secret of order which Socialism in vain struggles to find and teach the peoples of the earth once more how to harmonize the world and the spirit."⁴

To all the above, our pragmatic sense can only say, "All this is very well for the future direction but what about our present predicament where we have a huge army of Macaulay's children^a, wide-eyed over Western culture and the physical comforts and the raw life-satisfactions that it offers and in the allurements of which most of them grow intolerant of anything that would seem to come between them and their enjoyment of these blessed things. They eagerly look for the high-paying jobs in the industrial and service sectors to attain to the one and the only thing that seems to them really worth attaining."

Now, given our present national subjection to the Western mental ideal of democracy and its accompanying huge soulless political machinery developed to execute it, no democratically elected

^aOn 10-12-1836 Lord Macaulay wrote to his father claiming that if the course of education in India continued on the lines designed by him, there will not be a single Hindu left in Bengal after 30 years, all would either become Christians or would remain Hindu only in name. They would not have any faith in the Veda or in their religion. Macaulay's system of education continued even after Independence and has been growing stronger and more pervasive ever since.

government can reasonably be expected to neglect the materialistic aspirations of this ever growing and increasingly vocal army of Macaulay's children. It seems obvious that, whether or not we like it, we are going to have to undergo the modern process of industrialisation, at least in the immediate future. If we believe that there is divine providence behind all that happens, then we can look upon the above as something unavoidable and perhaps even necessary to enable India to carry out its God-given work for humanity. For, given the psychology of modern man which takes the level of income as almost the sole or at least the most important determinant of the well-being and worth of persons and nations, an economically underdeveloped and militarily weak India, even if otherwise endowed, can hardly be expected to be equal to the task that is expected of her in the future. Sri Aurobindo had sensed this inevitability even a hundred years ago. In 1919, expressing his views on the issue of our taking over of good (leaving out the bad) things of the European culture, he wrote, "Obviously, if we 'take over' anything, the good and the bad in it will come in together pell-mell. **If we take over for instance that terrible, monstrous and compelling thing, that giant Asuric creation, European industrialism, – unfortunately we are being forced by circumstances to do it, – whether we take it in its form or its principle, we may under more favourable conditions develop by it our wealth and economic resources, but assuredly we shall get too its social discords and moral plagues and cruel problems, and I do not see how we shall avoid becoming the slaves of the economic aim in life and losing the spiritual principle of our culture.**"⁵

In his Independence Day address the Prime Minister talked about Sri Aurobindo's and Swami Vivekananda's vision of India as the World Guru and asked all his country men to work for it. But this is something which cannot possibly come true unless we are able to rise above the modern materialistic man's way of thinking and handling the serious problems facing humanity. Therefore, the issue of how to minimize the adverse effects of the modern model of economic and

political development and to rise above it as soon as possible should be the one important preoccupation of a truly national government and of all who are able to have a deeper view of the present condition of humanity which is facing the prospect, simultaneously, of unprecedented opportunities and perils in the future.

Now, the most important question before us is how to go about organising Indian society in the light of the above discussion? Before we can profitably proceed further, it should be pointed out that **the problem with the forthcoming industrialisation is not so much – only just a little – with the mechanised production using machines which can do the work of hundreds or thousands of manual workers and thus create wealth, but the psychology or the material utilitarian spirit^a that accompanies and grows with it.** In appearance the action of this utilitarian spirit is like that of a canker (in the fruit) which leaves the outsides of a fruit practically unscathed even while eating the core. But for those who can look behind the surface appearances, the action is much more like the rust which not only spreads or expands laterally but also digs into ever deeper and deeper layer of the metal and does not stop until it has turned it to dust. Starting from the spheres of politics, business, industry and finance, the utilitarian spirit in India has already made very deep inroads even in the area of essential services that practically must remain free from it if they are ever going to perform their sacred and indispensable tasks. Due to the progressive deterioration in the quality of service under the spell of utilitarianism, the real contribution of this sector (of our economy) to our national well-being has been falling even as its nominal share in the GNP increased

^a “People and things, circumstances and activities seem to be viewed and appreciated exclusively from this angle. Nothing has any value unless it is useful. Certainly something that is useful is better than something that is not. But first we must agree on what we describe as useful – useful to whom, to what, for what?”

For, more and more, the races who consider themselves civilised describe as useful whatever can attract, procure or produce money. Everything is judged and evaluated from a monetary angle. That is what I call utilitarianism. And this disease is highly contagious, for even children are not immune to it.”⁶

from 38.2% in 1960-61 to 54.7% in 2010-11 which only shows how, in one of the many ways in which the national or per capita product figures are deceptive when taken as indicators of people's well-being. Actually, **the progressive deterioration in the quality of all essential services is the most serious problem faced by the country today and one of its most perilous offshoots is the progressively deteriorating quality of air, water and food available to people at large which is playing havoc with their health and well-being.**

According to Sri Aurobindo the three godheads of the soul – Liberty, Equality and Fraternity – are going to be the basis for the organisation of the Human Unity which must come about if the human race is at all going to survive. **“Europe's failure in truly giving form to the triple godhead of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity – brought to the forefront of European consciousness by the French Revolution – is perhaps one of the most important causes that led to the last two World Wars** and fortunately the present state of defence technology is such that humanity can no longer afford a third one which may very well prove to be the last. **Fraternity is the only base on which both equality and liberty can be built and it is because of the absence of the true spirit of this godhead (which exists only in the soul) that all attempts steeped in the spirit of Western Culture and based on taking either equality (Communitistic or Socialistic forms of authoritarianisms) or liberty (capitalistic democratic forms) as their starting point or base have failed to establish the triple-godhead.**

The basic reason behind this kind of difficult equation is simple. Men are created equal in the spirit but not in their outer nature and are endowed with varying assortment of abilities, capacities and qualities. **People who are endowed with a strong vital nature, and consequently a powerful will, have always been able to stamp their will on all those around them. Such people will always come to occupy positions of importance and authority in any walk of life – especially in the political and economic fields because of the special attraction these have for the human vital ego –**

regardless of the nature of the outer form of a government or society. The past experience of humanity amply bears it out and the European experience of the last century only confirms it beyond any shadow of doubt. The crux of the matter is that the wolves will always dominate the sheep no matter where and in what kind of physical arrangement or structure they are put together. We all know how nature has put them together in humanity with a perfect similarity in the outer appearance and with no other distinguishable features. They differ only in capacities and force, the things which become visible only in action and manifestation and then who – except perhaps some other wolves who would have their own axe to grind – can stop them, certainly not the sheep. **The only approach that can possibly tame the human wolf is the approach through the heart – not from its surface parts but from its depths where the soul has its station and where all feel oneness. Once the deep and inherent feelings of Love and Brotherhood are awakened in human hearts, the discords automatically begin to dissolve and humanity can smoothly advance towards the triple-godhead because it is only Love that can prevent the misuse of Liberty and it is only Brotherhood which can make Equality tolerable.**

As pointed out above, **European society has failed to organise fraternity – the base of the apex and hence has never been able to found a successful and enduring social and political structure. Socialism and Communism gave supreme importance to equality but failed to achieve either equality or the other arm of the triad – liberty. Capitalistic Europe gave the supreme importance to liberty but it also failed to achieve either liberty or equality.** In the words of Sri Aurobindo, “....Two ideas of that formula Europe has pursued with some eagerness, Liberty and Equality; but she has totally rejected the third and most necessary, Brotherhood. In its place she has erected the idol of her heart, Machinery, and called it Association; for Association without Brotherhood is merely Machinery.”⁷

“Freedom, equality, brotherhood are three godheads of the soul; they cannot be really achieved through the external machinery of society or by man so long as he lives only in the individual and the communal ego. When the ego claims liberty, it arrives at competitive individualism. When it asserts equality, it arrives first at strife, then at an attempt to ignore the variations of Nature, and, as the sole way of doing that successfully, it constructs an artificial and machine-made society. A society that pursues liberty as its ideal is unable to achieve equality; a society that aims at equality will be obliged to sacrifice liberty. For the ego to speak of fraternity is for it to speak of something contrary to its nature. All that it knows is association for the pursuit of common egoistic ends and the utmost that it can arrive at is a closer organisation for the equal distribution of labour, production, consumption and enjoyment.

Yet is brotherhood the real key to the triple gospel of the idea of humanity. The union of liberty and equality can only be achieved by the power of human brotherhood and it cannot be founded on anything else. But brotherhood exists only in the soul and by the soul; it can exist by nothing else. For this brotherhood is not a matter either of physical kinship or of vital association or of intellectual agreement. When the soul claims freedom, it is the freedom of its self-development, the self-development of the divine in man in all his being. When it claims equality, what it is claiming is that freedom equally for all and the recognition of the same soul, the same godhead in all human beings. When it strives for brotherhood, it is founding that equal freedom of self-development on a common aim, a common life, a unity of mind and feeling founded upon the recognition of this inner spiritual unity. These three things are in fact the nature of the soul; for freedom, equality, unity are the eternal attributes of the Spirit.”⁸

It should be clear from all the above that a triangle cannot stand on its apex formed by the two sides representing Liberty and Equality, we cannot possibly found a collectivity on the formula of the French Revolution unless we first concentrate on the base of the triangle – Brotherhood – which exists only in the soul and the Spirit and can

exist nowhere else without it. This leads us to the true solution – the imperative necessity of seeking for the spiritual Reality – The Truth of our Being.

THE ONLY WAY OUT FOR US

Once for all, we must realise in our mind, heart and soul that **the modern ideal of progress and material prosperity, even when pursued efficiently, cannot lead us to a state basically different from the state of modern developed societies which has nothing to recommend for itself.** Consider the loneliness and psychological and emotional deprivation of individuals resulting from an extreme concentration on one's physical being – even to the extent of the exclusion of one's nucleus family – and imagine the relentless suffering that comes one's way from the feeling of not being loved or wanted by anyone and from the psychological disorders resulting from this – so common in “developed” societies – and it would be obvious that India is still much better than the advanced societies it is foolishly aspiring to imitate. This will be a state, lower – in terms of individual happiness and fulfillment – than where we are even at present, because we have not yet gone whole hog in the material pit and we still inherently trust the power of the eternal Indian spirit to prevent that from ever happening in the future. We may not sink to the bottom but as long as we are shut up in our present narrow surface consciousness with its enormous concentration on material pleasures and comforts, the effective pursuit and attainment of any ideal state (worthy of its name) is not really possible for us. **The key to the whole problem lies, as India has always known, in a transition to a higher level of consciousness. For, at present level of consciousness, no matter how ingeniously and efficiently we organize our society, we cannot basically do too much better than the other materially advanced societies. In fact, this evolutionary world has been so planned as to have a built-in incentive for rising into ever higher and higher planes of consciousness, because the problem and difficulties at any level of consciousness – and they are different at different levels – are**

really solvable only at a higher level of consciousness.

We must turn to the Divine Magician for the attainment of a higher level of consciousness. "There is no fundamental significance in things if you miss the Divine Reality; for you remain embedded in a huge surface crust of manageable and utilizable appearance. It is the magic of the Magician you are trying to analyse, but only when you enter into the consciousness of the Magician himself can you begin to experience the true origination, significance and circles of the Lila. I say 'begin' because the Divine Reality is not so simple that at the first touch you can know all of it or put it into a single formula; it is the Infinite and opens before you an infinite knowledge to which all Science put together is a bagatelle."⁹

It is to the Divine Magician that India must turn to for a true resolution of all her problems. And, as Vedanta tells us, He is not far, He is our very own self – the highest truth of our being and nature in which we are inseparably one with all existence. **To aspire for the Divine is to aspire for the greatest possible perfection and fulfillment. "Whatever is man's faith or sure Idea in him, that he becomes,"** says Lord Krishna in the Gita. **Now, this is the sheer truth of the workings of this universe which is at the very foundation of all Yoga systems. Thus, if a person whole-heartedly aspires for the Divine with an unshakable faith, he is sure to realise his essential identity with Him and eventually have his whole nature transformed into the Divine Nature.**

The Indian society can, therefore do nothing better than to make the seeking, finding, and manifestation of the Divine on the part of its members as the first and the only aim of all its activities and endeavours. In the process it will tend to grow in knowledge, power and beauty and there will be an automatic dissolution of the problems that normally beset a society, including material deprivation and poverty. To make an effective start in this direction, "There must be a group forming a strong body of cohesive will with the spiritual knowledge to save India and the world. It is India that can bring Truth in the world. By

manifestation of the Divine Will and Power alone, India can preach her message to the world and not by imitating the materialism of the West. By following the Divine Will India shall shine at the top of the spiritual mountain and show the way of Truth and organise world unity.”¹⁰

All this is not to suggest that we should – even if we could, which is impossible – go back to the past forms of ancient Indian culture. That will be an unnatural imposition on the present time spirit. Rather, we should do as Sri Aurobindo suggested, “You need not come back to the old forms, but you can retain the spirit **which might create its own new forms....**”¹¹

We call upon all our brothers and sisters, the world over, to make a start in this direction in their own way.

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AN APPROACH TO THE PRESENT NATIONAL PROBLEMS IN TERMS OF THE MODERN INTELLECTUAL VIEW OF THINGS

The present government has been in the office for less than three months, yet the expectations of the citizens are mounting. The political environment that is taking shape today is vastly different from the one which was prevalent at the time of the former governments. The people, then, had been largely uncritical and resigned to political and social fatalism. Today, however, more is less, and this marks the beginning of a new change in Indian politics. No matter how much the government promises or achieves, it will always be kept on tenterhooks by an ever more conscientious public. This is a part of a wider change that is shaping afresh the political system and is not limited to any particular government.

In the present context, now that we are past the stage of promises and vision by the new government, implementation and delivery have become the watch-words through which the government will be assessed by the country. However, implementation is only one of the elements of the much deeper changes that are now expected of the government.

In order to understand what these changes should be, it is important to understand why we need changes in the first place. It is not in order to prove or please the people that implementation and delivery by the government should be emphasized urgently. True democratic accountability lies not in accommodation of demands of various sections of society, but in transparency to the national ideals and principles.

Thus, the government should be judged in its future course of action, not on the basis of whether it is seen to be pleasing the people, but on how much it is traversing the path of fulfillment of national ideals.

NATIONAL IDEALS: IMPERATIVES BEFORE US

The idea of what should constitute our national ideals does not

come across as very contentious. No one would deny the necessity of ideals such as democracy, equality, justice and freedom, which can be manifested through various processes such as economic growth, a transparent political system and a progressive social life. However, these words and ideals can be misleading, precisely because they can be appropriated by anyone to justify any course of action or policy. Every democratic government declares commitment to these goals and strives towards policies that can fulfill them. Some regimes, such as the Nehruvian state, are even sometimes genuinely idealistic in this respect. Yet our history since Independence stands witness to the abject failure of such an approach.

Therefore, how the fulfillment of these ideals is to proceed should be clarified at the outset. Here it is important to emphasize that these are such national ideals which cannot be founded on the mere fulfillment of material conditions alone. Can the ideal of equality be achieved by simply engaging in customary social service or NGO-type practices or by the governmental allocation of minimum material benefits such as subsidies? Expressed in this way, it seems absurd to think that there can ever be even a remote connection between the two. And yet, our whole political economy is based on such assumptions and we are reduced to a vicious self-fulfilling circle.

If our ideals are high, then the means we use to achieve them should also be high. That is why the root of our dealing with the present problems afflicting our nation lies in a collective national consciousness of these issues. The material problems that we face today can only be resolved within such a framework. And this is precisely what the governments in the past have failed even to perceive. Certainly, it is not the main role of the government to cultivate such a consciousness. However, the government still has a critical task in this respect. Governmental machinery is the center-point of any political culture, and it is only in the realm of politics that people come together as a nation. Therefore, the government needs to provide the enabling cultural and institutional conditions which can foster such a consciousness collectively.

ASSESSING THE MODI GOVERNMENT

In this respect, the current Modi government is, albeit tentatively, treading in the right direction. The Prime Minister's Independence Day address has infused a fresh aspirational attitude among the people. A few weeks earlier, the general disillusionment which is never too far from the surface, had begun to take hold of the people. No substantial material benefits were visible and important legislations, such as the Insurance Bill, appeared stuck in the Rajya Sabha for good. It was not clear how the government would proceed in implementing the grand vision that it had laid down for the country.

However, the Prime Minister's Independence Day address has considerably allayed the doubts in this regard. The various analyses of the PM's speech have reserved judgments about the implementation of the laudable ideas expressed in the address. Yet, the address laid the broad lines along which the implementation could proceed. Some of the major issues that the PM raised included:

First, he announced the disbanding of the Planning Commission. This was a landmark announcement as it acknowledges the need to break away from relics of the past and not assign sanctity to defunct institutions. It marks a clear ideological as well as policy break from the elements that have persisted since the Nehruvian era.

Second, emphasizing the all-inclusive nature of the new government, the PM also stressed that all forms of divisive communal violence be ceased for 10 years and the results in terms of social returns to our country will be substantial.

Third, he laid the greatest emphasis on the issue of women's empowerment. Boldly taking up the mounting issue of the mounting rape cases in the country, his most significant appeal to the people was to change their mindset towards gender and question their sons instead of daughters.

Fourth, the PM also laid great stress on the issue of public sanitation. He set a target of constructing separate toilets for girls in public schools, in order to put a stop to the deteriorating rate of

girls' enrolment in schools.

Fifth, he reiterated the 'make in India' message to encourage domestic manufacturing. His message was to sell in the countries of the world, but manufacture here. This signaled a policy break from the previous regimes, which never focused on the structural issues afflicting the Indian economy, of which manufacturing has been an important, long-neglected component.

Sixth, his 'zero defect, zero effect' policy found resonance with the environmental issues and good quality manufacturing. This will go some way in allaying doubts about the new government's commitment to the environment.

Seventh, he called for bureaucratic changes, especially in Delhi, where the unbridled power of the bureaucrats led to a functioning of 'parallel governments', with everyone having his own 'fiefdom'.

Eighth, reiterating his foreign policy, he focused on a united role for South Asia in ending poverty in the subcontinent. Breaking away from the norm of his predecessors, he did not attack Pakistan. He even took the example of Nepali youth who had moved away from Maoism and violence; this was an influential diplomatic policy gesture.

Finally, he announced the scheme of Jan Dhan Yojana to encourage financial inclusion in India. Under this scheme, select households will use RuPay cards, instead of VISA or MasterCard, and will also get a substantial insurance cover.

The key issues flagged in the vision laid out by the PM certainly cannot be said to contain any minute details regarding policy implementation. Neither are they extraordinary issues that we are unaware of. What is, then, the significance of the PM's address? Here, it should be remembered that the issues of both implementation and grandness of vision become secondary to the foremost need of the hour, that is, laying down the foundation through which such a vision can be effectualised; for, without a sound foundation, any implementation will be short-lived. It is here that PM Modi is at his

best possible advantage.

The issues that he raised, irrespective of how idealistic or commonplace they were, are likely to have a much more effective impact on the people than if they had been raised by any other leader. For instance, the PM broke away from the general Independence Day convention when he spoke of domestic issues like sanitation and upbringing of boys and girls at home. This nationalization of domestic issues is likely to have a much greater impact now. Similarly, when the PM recommends a 10-year moratorium on communal violence, it gains more significance. Any other leader saying this would have simply been dismissed as belonging to the so-called secular or Leftist group. This last point is particularly significant, as it also shows the increasing irrelevance of ideology in Indian society, as even the common man is able to recognize what is the façade of ideology.

At the present stage, it is the impact that the current leadership generates that matters the most. If the impact fails, then no effective implementation or a grand vision can work, since this is a democracy that we are talking about. And if the impact succeeds then nothing can stop the policy implementation, since it is only through such an impact that the enabling conditions for people's participation can be generated. Once such enabling conditions are in place, the government will be forced to deliver, there would be no other alternative. And the new government is currently moving in this direction.

THE IMPORTANCE OF STUDYING INDIA'S GREAT PAST

In his reply to a letter dated 4.3.1895 of the Maharaja of Khetari, Swami Vivekananda wrote, "...The majority of mankind can only understand power when it is presented to them in a concrete form, fitted to their perceptions. To them, the rush and excitement of war, with its power and spell, is something very tangible, and any manifestation of life that does not come like a whirlwind, bearing down everything before it, is to them as death. And India, for centuries at the feet of foreign conquerors, without any idea or hope of resistance, without the least solidarity among its masses, without the least idea of patriotism, must needs appear to such, as a land of rotten bones, a lifeless putrescent mass.

It is said – the fittest alone survive. How is it, then, that this most unfitted of all races, according to commonly accepted ideas, could bear the most awful misfortunes that ever befall a race, and yet not show the least signs of decay? How is it that, while the multiplying powers of the so-called vigorous and active races are dwindling every day, the immoral (?) Hindu shows a power of increase beyond them all? Great laurels are due, no doubt, to those who can deluge the world with blood at a moment's notice; great indeed is the glory of those who, to keep up a population of a few millions in plenty, have to starve half the population of the earth, but is no credit due to those who can keep hundreds of millions in peace and plenty, without snatching the bread from the mouth of anyone else? Is there no power displayed in bringing up and guiding the destinies of countless millions of human beings, through hundreds of centuries, without the least violence to others?

The mythologists of all ancient races supply us with fables of heroes whose life was concentrated in a certain small portion of their bodies, and until that was touched they remained invulnerable. It seems as if each nation also has such a peculiar centre of life, and so long as that remains untouched, no amount of misery and misfortune can destroy it.

In religion lies the vitality of India, and so long as the Hindu race do not forget the great inheritance of their forefathers, there is no power on earth to destroy them.

Nowadays everybody blames those who constantly look back to their past. It is said that so much looking back to the past is the cause of all India's woes. To me, on the contrary, it seems that the opposite is true. So long as they forgot the past, the Hindu nation remained in a state of stupor; and as soon as they have begun to look into their past, there is on every side a fresh manifestation of life. It is out of this past that the future has to be moulded; this past will become the future.

The more, therefore, the Hindus study the past, the more glorious will be their future, and whoever tries to bring the past to the door of everyone, is a great benefactor to his nation. The degeneration of India came not because the laws and customs of the ancients were bad, but because they were not allowed to be carried to legitimate conclusions.”¹

The next article in this issue is the second installment in the series entitled “History of India – the Vedic Age” which was initiated by its first installment appearing in the April 2014 Issue of this magazine. This series is written with a view to making Indian people aware of the truth of their great past which has been willfully distorted during past few centuries by historians with occidental mentality hostile to India and its culture.

References:

1. *Collected Works of Swami Vivekananda, Mayawati Memorial Edition, Vol. 04, pages 323-24*

HISTORY OF INDIA – THE VEDIC AGE (2)

II. THE ARYAN INVASION THEORY

The Vedas 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.**”¹

One form – dangerous and harmful to the integrity and well-being of India – of this gross misunderstanding is the Aryan Invasion Theory (AIT) which has been imposed on the enslaved Indian mentality by motivated European scholarship. Behind this framing of the AIT the European scholarship had colonial, racial and Christian missionary motives. The AIT (with its accompanying trivialisation of the Veda) is still held sacred and revered by the Indian historical establishment and continues to be taught even today to Indian students in the officially prescribed history textbooks. Here, it is instructive and revealing to contrast the present continuing opacity of the Indian intellect with the penetrating and soul-stirring insight into the whole approach and motive of European scholarship powerfully expressed by Swami Vivekananda writing more than hundred years ago, “...what your European Pundits say about the Aryan’s swooping down from some foreign land, snatching away the lands of the aborigines and settling in India by exterminating them, is all pure nonsense, foolish talk! Strange, that our Indian scholars, too, say amen to them; and all these monstrous lies are being taught to our boys! This is very bad indeed.

I am an ignoramus myself; I do not pretend to any scholarship; but with the little that I understand, I strongly protested against these ideas at the Paris Congress. I have been talking with the Indian and European savants on the subject, and hope to raise many objections to this theory in detail, when time permits. And this I say to you – to our Pundits – also, ‘You are learned men, hunt up your old books and scriptures, please, and draw your own conclusions.’

Whenever the Europeans find an opportunity, they exterminate the aborigines and settle down in ease and comfort on their lands; and therefore they think the Aryans must have done the same! The Westerners would be considered wretched vagabonds if they lived in their native homes depending wholly on their own internal resources, and so they have to run wildly about the world seeking how they can feed upon the fat of the land of others by spoliation and slaughter; and therefore they conclude the Aryans must have done the same! But where is your proof? Guess-work? Then keep your fanciful guesses to yourselves!

In what Veda, in what Sukta, do you find that the Aryans came into India from a foreign country? Where do you get the idea that they slaughtered the wild aborigines? What do you gain by talking such nonsense?"²

Unfortunately, in India, the nonsense continues even after a hundred years and even in the present condition of humanity when "A genuinely global community of nations can and should only proceed on the basis of honest scholarship. **Unmasking self-serving dishonesty in some areas of western or eastern scholarship is a service towards expediting the irreversible evolutionary process towards a genuinely united humanity.**

To give one illuminating illustration, we might mention the nearly universal and quite uncritical acceptance by both Indian politicians and the generality of national and international academics, of the 19th Century myth of the 'Aryan invasion of Dravidian India' and of the arbitrary classification of the population into Aryan and Dravidian ethnic types. The damage inflicted on the political perceptions of the population poses a threat to the very integrity of India as a unique political and cultural entity. **Witness the two most dominant political parties of Tamil Nadu, the DMK and the ANNA DMK (the 'D' standing for 'Dravida'). They swallowed hook, line and sinker the shallow, ill-researched "findings" of 19th Century European indologists.**"^a

^a A passage from a message entitled "Neo-Colonial Captive Minds" by Devan Nair, the former President of Singapore, posted to the egroup of the Educational Council on Indic Traditions (ECIT), <http://www.infinityfoundation.com/ECITneocolonialframe.htm>

In the light of these attacks on the very unity and integrity of the country, Swami Vivekananda's call to our learned men to hunt up our old books and scriptures and draw their own conclusions assumes critical importance. It has not, however, been possible for Indian Pundits to do so because we have lost, nationally, the capacity to go behind the outer symbols and phrases to the real purport of the Vedic and Vedantic seers. Even those Indian Pundits – and they are still a minority – who have been able – as result of their own and other sympathetic occidental investigations and research in this field – to see the truth of all that constituted and was behind the AIT and free themselves from the hold of this pernicious doctrine are still not able at all to penetrate into the deeper meaning of the Veda and remain stuck into the grooves created by the European Vedic scholarship. This **spiritual opacity of the Indian Intelligence is a great national loss as it has practically shut us off from the perennial source of the great vitality and creativity of our spiritual culture.** According to Sri Aurobindo, "...the increasing intellectualisation of the Indian mind has been responsible for this great national loss. Our forefathers who discovered or received Vedic truth, did not arrive at it either by intellectual speculation or by logical reasoning. They attained it by actual & tangible experience in the spirit, – by spiritual & psychological observation, as we may say, & what they thus experienced, they understood by the instrumentality of the intuitive reason. But a time came when men felt an imperative need to give an account to themselves & to others of this supreme & immemorial Vedic truth in the terms of logic, in the language of intellectual ratiocination. For **the maintenance of the intuitive reason as the ordinary instrument of knowledge demands as its basis an iron moral & intellectual discipline, a colossal disinterestedness of thinking, – otherwise the imagination and the wishes pollute the purity of its action, replace, dethrone it and wear flamboyantly its name & mask;** Vedic knowledge begins to be lost & the practice of life & symbol based upon it are soon replaced by formalised action & unintelligent rite & ceremony. **Without tapasya there can be**

no Veda. This was the course that the stream of thought followed among us, according to the sense of our Indian tradition. The capacity for tapasya belongs to the Golden Age of man's fresh virility; it fades as humanity ages & the cycle takes its way towards the years that are of Iron, and with tapasya, the basis, divine knowledge, the superstructure, also collapses or dwindles. The place of truth is then taken by superstition, irrational error that takes its stand upon the place where truth lies buried builds its tawdry & fantastic palace of pleasure upon those concealed & consecrated foundations, & even uses the ruins of old truth as stones for its irregular building. But such an usurpation can never endure."³

And yet – although, hopefully it is in its last phase before passing into oblivion – it still endures and all the discussion on the meaning of the Veda and the derivation of fantastic historical and other conclusions with flimsy support in certain passages in the Rigveda – which have nothing much to do with the history of even the outer forms of society and have been shown by Sri Aurobindo to have a much deeper spiritual import – is still common to most ancient Indian history books and even the classical and most prestigious eleven volume series edited by R.C. Majumdar entitled “The History and Culture of the Indian People”, which is considered to be the first history of India written exclusively by her own people, is not free from this taint. It is well therefore to get the ghost of the AIT off our back before making a serious attempt at the discovery of the secret truth of the Veda – and based on that the nature of the Vedic age – as it has found expression in the extensive writings of Sri Aurobindo on the Veda.

Fortunately, it is no longer a smooth sailing for such disastrous approaches at present, for, an opposition to such injurious handling of our past is increasing among the learned Indologists working in various branches of knowledge. For example, Sri K.Ramsubramanian of the IIT, Mumbai speaking on “The origin and Development of Mathematics in India”, at the Physics Colloquium of the BARC, Mumbai, on June 7, 2013, after describing in detail the sound Indian

mathematical tradition starting from the period of Śulbasūtras (800 B.C.), had the following to say in his concluding remarks, "...I would like to conclude with the words of Claude Alvares,^a

All History is elaborate efforts in myth-making... If we must continue to live with myths, however, it is far better we choose to live with those of our own making rather than by those invented by others for their own purposes.

Making the students aware of the major achievements of their own civilization – particularly in their impressionable age – is likely to boost their self-confidence and self-esteem which are important ingredients in building nation.

That much at least we owe as an independent Society and Nation !!"

We cannot expect any good to come out of the myths about our past invented by those who show a lack of sympathy for Indian spiritual culture because they have no capacity for understanding it.

(To be continued...)

References:

1. *Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo 17, pages 361-362*
2. *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Mayawati Memorial Edition, Vol.5, pages 534-35*
3. *Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo 17, pages 308-309*

^a In his introduction to *The Indian Science and Technology in the 18th Century* by Dharmapal, Other India Press, Goa, 2000.

THE GREATNESS OF INDIA AND ITS CULTURE (1)

I. INDIA

WHAT IS INDIA

“India is not the earth, rivers and mountains of this land, neither is it a collective name for the inhabitants of this country. India is a living being, as much living as, say, Shiva. India is a goddess as Shiva is a god. If she likes, she can manifest in human form.”¹

* * *

“Mother India is not a piece of earth; she is a Power, a Godhead, for all nations have such a Devi supporting their separate existence and keeping it in being. Such Beings are as real and more permanently real than the men they influence, but they belong to a higher plane, are part of the cosmic consciousness and being and act here on earth by shaping the human consciousness on which they exercise their influence.”²

* * *

“The Soul of India is one and indivisible. India is conscious of her mission in the world. She is waiting for the exterior means of manifestation.”³

* * *

“INVOCATION 15 August 1947

O our Mother, O Soul of India, Mother who hast never forsaken thy children even in the days of darkest depression, even when they turned away from thy voice, served other masters and denied thee, now when they have arisen and the light is on thy face in this dawn of thy liberation, in this great hour we salute thee. Guide us so that the horizon of freedom opening before us may be also a horizon of true greatness and of thy true life in the community of the nations. Guide us so that we may be always on the side of great ideals and show to men thy true visage, as a leader in the ways of the spirit and a friend and helper of all the peoples.”⁴

* * *

“In the whole creation the earth has a place of distinction, because unlike any other planet it is evolutionary with a psychic entity at its centre. In it, India, in particular, is a divinely chosen country.”⁵

* * *

“India is the guru of the nations, the physician of the human soul in its profounder maladies; she is destined once more to new-mould the life of the world and restore the peace of the human spirit.”⁶

* * *

“... There is only one country in the world that knows that there is only one Truth to which everything should be turned, and that is India. Other countries have forgotten this, but in India it is ingrained in the people, and one day it will come out. ... I know the conditions of the country. Even if one person could put himself faithfully at the disposal of the Truth, he could change the country and the world.”⁷

* * *

“India is the country where the psychic law *can and must* rule and the time has come for that *here*. Besides, it is the only possible salvation for this country whose consciousness has unfortunately been distorted by the influence and domination of a foreign nation, but which, in spite of everything, possesses a unique spiritual heritage.

Blessings.”⁸

* * *

“From the spiritual standpoint, India is the leading country in the world. Her mission is to give the example of spirituality. Sri Aurobindo came on earth to teach this to the world.

This fact is so obvious that a simple, ignorant farmer here is closer to the Divine in his heart than the intellectuals of Europe.

India shall take her true place in the world only when she will

become integrally the messenger of the Divine Life.”⁹

* * *

“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. But the function of India is to supply the world with a perennial source of light and renovation. Whenever the first play of energy is exhausted and earth grows old and weary, full of materialism, racked with problems she cannot solve, the function of India is to restore the youth of mankind and assure it of immortality. She sends forth a light from her bosom which floods the earth and the heavens, and mankind bathes in it like St. George in the well of life and recovers strength, hope and vitality for its long pilgrimage. Such a time is now at hand. The world needs India and needs her free. The work she has to do now is to organize life in the terms of Vedanta...”¹⁰

* * *

“India has in herself a faith of superhuman virtue to accomplish miracles, to deliver herself out of irrefragable bondage, to bring God down upon earth. She has a secret of will power which no other nation possesses. All she needs to rouse in her that faith, that will, is an ideal which will induce her to make the effort.”¹¹

(To be continued...)

References:

1. *Collected Works of the Mother 13, page 380*
2. *Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo 28, page 482*
3. *Collected Works of the Mother 13, page 359*
4. *Collected Works of the Mother 13, page 360*
5. *Collected Works of the Mother 13, page 376*
6. *Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo 07, page 906*
7. *India the Mother, the Mother, Institute for Evolutionary Research, page 184*
8. *Collected Works of the Mother 13, page 378*
9. *India the Mother, the Mother, Institute for Evolutionary Research, page 232, 234*
10. *Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo 07, page 1086*
11. *Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo 07, page 1017*

“India of the ages is not dead nor has she spoken her last creative word; she lives and has still something to do for herself and the human peoples. And that which must seek now to awake is not an anglicised oriental people, docile pupil of the West and doomed to repeat the cycle of the Occident’s success and failure, but still the ancient immemorable Shakti recovering her deepest self, lifting her head higher towards the supreme source of light and strength and turning to discover the complete meaning and a vaster form of her Dharma.”

- Sri Aurobindo

(Complete works of Sri Aurobindo 20, page 444)

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