

The Resurgent India

A Monthly National Review

July 2014



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

Year 5

Issue 4

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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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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)

THE PRESENT STATE OF OUR JUDICIARY

The Judicial system is the backbone of the socio-economic and political structure of a society. An efficient judicial system is the foundation of an efficiently functioning judiciary which automatically tends to ensure efficiency in the functioning of all the other organs of government, important institutions and socio-economic groups and organisations in the country. More efficient the system, smaller will be the size of its judiciary because less elaborate and time consuming will be the process by which it will be able to deliver justice. This swiftness in delivering justice will in turn tend to reduce the number of cases that are brought before the courts because justice delayed is justice denied and serves as an open invitation to certain kinds of delinquency. In our case, some of the laws themselves have been psychologically unsound and so defectively framed, with loopholes and ambiguities, that prolonged litigation has become the norm rather than an exception.

A prolonged misrule of over six decades to which the country has been subjected to even after Independence has progressively brought the functioning of all the organs of government to such low (and perverse) levels that, at present, our politics and administrative machinery seems to be taking on, increasingly, the appearance of a real nemesis for the country. Under its shadow, we have forgotten that when everyone is trying to get somewhere by stepping on everyone else, no one really gets anywhere. In such a scenario, a tremendous and all comprehending effort on the part of the new nationalist government – something we may be having for the first time in Delhi after almost a millennium of rule alien to India and its culture – supported by the Divine Grace, will be necessary to pull the country out of its present acute and overwhelming tamasic state. The success of all the honest efforts of the new government that it seems resolved on making depends critically on what is done in this all important field.

The present state of our judiciary, like the functioning of the government machinery in general, is what it is because the principal actors in this field – the judges, lawyers and judicial staff – have

become, in all the three instrumental parts of their nature (the mind, the life and the physical) utterly tamasic. In their normal poise, these three parts tend, respectively, to be predominately sattwic, rajasic and tamasic. But at present only the last dominates the mind, the heart and the physical functioning of all the actors in the field as must be well known to anyone who has had the misfortune of coming into even an indirect contact with any of them. The judges, in general, with their hearts and minds firmly set and concentrated on the satisfaction of their physical self and its animal appetites are not able to give either their full time or their full attention to their onerous and difficult work and tend to be procrastinatory, particularly when not dishonest in the popular and narrow sense of honesty. With the lawyers, the situation is ten times worse. It has become very very difficult to find a lawyer – especially in lower courts – who will not, if opportunity presents itself, betray his client for the sake of money or favours from the opposite party. Moreover, the lawyers also tend to be much more interested in having or at least making a show of having a ‘setting’ with judges or their agents than in honestly practicing law. Also, the lawyers, invariably, tend to be hugely procrastinatory unless they have an axe to grind or are under pressure for some reason or the other to have a speedy resolution of the litigation.

Although entirely moved by the same psychological forces, the story of the staff of the courts is something of its own kind. This organ of our judiciary is so entirely tamasic that it operates, almost entirely like a coin-operated machine. Every time one needs to get even the most trifling work done, i.e., every time one needs this machine to roll ever so little, fresh cash is needed, for these machines also tend to have such a short memory that even the most generous dealings or payments of the most recent past would not carry any weight with them. Each time fresh cash is needed.

According to Transparency International global survey (2007), as many as 77% of Indians believe the country’s judiciary is corrupt, and 36% paid bribes to the judiciary last year. According to the Global Corruption Report (GCR) 2007, an estimated Rs. 2,630 crore was the amount Indians coughed up as bribes to the judiciary, higher than

the bribe paid out in any other sector. The lower rung of the judiciary is most prone to corruption, where, according to the Centre for Media Studies (CMS) study, a majority of the bribe money went to lawyers (61%) followed by court officials (29%) and middlemen (5%).

According to the above GCR report, as of February 2006, 33,635 cases were pending in the Supreme Court, with 26 judges; 3.34 lakh cases in the high courts, with 670 judges; 2.5 crore cases in 13,204 subordinate courts. According to the National Crime Research Bureau, the rates of convictions in crimes such as murder, kidnapping, robbery which were 53%, 48% and 47% respectively in 1953 have come down to the level of 35.6%, 20.8% and 28.6% in 2012. The GCR also points out that the ratio of judges (to people) is abysmally low in India, at 12-13 per 1 million people compared to 107 in United States, 75 in Canada and 51 in the United Kingdom.

Actually, the number 12-13 per million ought to be more than enough if the system were healthy and efficient. But if we are going to continue in India with a system based on occidental values – the British Judicial System – then it is most likely that we shall witness a judiciary ever growing in size and complexity and where the justice and the interests of those in need of it are increasingly subordinated to the greed and narrow self-interest of the principal actors in the field. The new government, judging by its actions and declared intentions, seems to be well aware of the need for a decisive and far-reaching action in the field before the country can be really put on a new footing. Basically, a twofold approach may be necessary to address the problem at its roots. The first and the most important is to set forces in action aimed at evolving a judicial system which is faithful to and expressly based on the values and genius of the spiritual culture of this country which is unlike any other in the whole world. The second pertains to the attempts at improving the functioning of the present system as long as it is in place during the period of transition. In the next article entitled, 'Our Judicial System' a very broad perspective is provided on the whole issue based on the writings of Sri Aurobindo.

OUR JUDICIAL SYSTEM – A PERSPECTIVE

From our discussion on the serious flaws in our judicial system and the suggested reforms in the earlier article, it should be apparent that the fundamental thing in the whole is the national character. Unless people are willing and able to stand for the truth rather than their narrow self-interest, no edifice of laws and ingenious judicial structure can be of much help. Given the low level to which the national character has sunk, especially during the last fifty years, none of the proposed reforms in our judicial system – short of an evolution of it towards a system based on deeper values – can be expected to lead to any lasting improvement. Undoubtedly, they may change and even slightly improve things in the short-run, but it is only a matter of time before the actors in the judicial arena are able to learn new tricks or rather dig new holes – the digging getting easier and easier as the layer of national character supporting the whole edifice gets thinner and thinner – to circumvent or bypass the obstructions created by the new rules and procedures (implementing the reforms) which soon end up making the judicial system even more cumbersome without making any substantial improvement in its actual functioning. What really counts is the actual character or psychology of the individuals and not any outer structure of rules and regulations and professed – only professed, never sincerely believed – norms of morality or generally agreed upon propriety. And we all know what has become of our character and psychology and how its core – just behind the veil of our acts and deeds and professions – has gotten stuffed with selfishness, greed and lust leading to an unrepentant pursuit of personal interest and desire by the individuals and the groups. We must realise, once and for all, that in such a scenario no outer machinery, however ingenious and supported by “all-powerful” Science and its progeny – Technology – can in the end prevail against the craftiness of human nature which can be controlled and overcome only by an appeal to something deeper (soul or spirit) in it than the surface mentality, never otherwise. Sri Aurobindo wonderfully pointed it out when he wrote:

“This erring race of human beings dreams always of perfecting their environment by the machinery of government and society; but it is only by the perfection of the soul within that the outer environment can be perfected. What thou art within, that outside thee thou shalt enjoy; no machinery can rescue thee from the law of thy being.”¹

Since it is a basic tenet of the functioning of our being and nature, to try to work things out in contradiction to this with the help of ingenious outer machinery is foolishness – a foolishness which pervades all the attempts of the modern materialistic societies which are infatuated with the idea (and prospect) of an unlimited progress with the help of Science and have been trying – in spite of repeated failures which have failed to dissuade them – to perfect human nature with the help of the machinery of government and society. The story is repeated in every field – economics, politics, judicial system, health and education, etc. The story is the story of the labour of the Sisyphus. Take for example the field of government development spending undertaken with an avowed aim of improving the material condition of the people and to produce desirable effects on the functioning of individuals and groups. If we have an utterly corrupt and inefficient postal system then it will be an utter foolishness to waste time and energy in repeatedly and enthusiastically posting urgent letters through such a postal service. After few miscarries one would be expected to start exploring alternatives but no, not in the field of government development spending. Who is there who – unless he is a recluse or a world shunning ascetic – lives in India and hasn't made his unpleasant acquaintance with the rude government machinery and its inefficiency and corruption, which are largely a product of the government's ill conceived adventures aimed at bringing about desired changes in the well being and the functioning of individuals and groups in the economy. Late Shri Rajeev Gandhi, when he was the PM in middle and late eighties, admitted in a public meeting that only a very small fraction – say 17 or 18 paise out of a rupee – of government money reaches where it was intended and the rest gets absorbed by the middle layers. This bothered Shri Gandhi,

but what did not seem to have bothered him, and what still does not bother our leaders, is what this money has been doing to the character of hundreds of millions of our people who are exposed to this kind of theft of public money. This is a far greater loss with very serious consequences even for the very existence of the nation, for, as the students are taught in schools, when money is lost, nothing is lost; if health is lost, something is lost; but if character is lost, everything is lost. The present condition of our national character is at the root of the malfunctioning of all our systems and institutions and groups. This is a canker eating at the core of our national life.

All this was only by way of a useful digression to bring the whole problem into a sharp focus. It should be very clear now that if we want a lasting and truly effective and real improvement in our judicial system or, for that matter, in any system then there is no substitute for a support from something deeper in human beings, be it character, moral values and lofty idealism on the mental plane or, better still, an opening to a consciousness greater than the ordinary human mental consciousness. In pointing out these basic things, it is not our intention to suggest that all attempts to improve the state of things in our judicial system are entirely worthless. Undoubtedly, all judiciously planned and skillfully executed attempts directed at the improvement in the functioning of our judiciary may be effective to some extent, even to a great extent, but only in the short-run unless supported by something deeper and higher which is usually there behind truly sincere human efforts in any field. Thus, the present government, if it makes sincere efforts in this direction, will be doing the right thing.

The most harmonious and desirable condition of a society is that in which there is no need of a judicial system at all. A more and more elaborate judicial system becomes necessary as disharmony grows in a society. Without an upliftment of character or consciousness no outer machinery can really deliver the goods in the long-run. Outer machinery can sometimes be a useful instrument of consciousness, but never its substitute. Higher the supporting (pervading) consciousness, lesser will be the need of an elaborate outer machinery which will move towards an increasing simplification and eventual disappearance as

the higher and higher levels of consciousness are approached. In the reassuring words of Sri Aurobindo, **“Governments, societies, kings, police, judges, institutions, churches, laws, customs, armies are temporary necessities imposed on us for a few groups of centuries because God has concealed His face from us. When it appears to us again in its truth and beauty, then in that light they will vanish.”**²

(I) TRADITIONAL HINDU YUGAS (AGES) AND THE GROWTH OF JUDICIAL SYSTEM

The four Yugas are Satya, Treta, Dwapar and Kali Yuga. The Satya or Krita Yuga is the Golden Age when men are full of might and wisdom. In this Yuga Vishnu incarnates as Yajña, as the divine Master in man to whom men offer up all their actions as a sacrifice, reserving nothing for an egoistic satisfaction. This is possible because people in this age, live in their inmost being in full harmony with Truth. This age of harmony and a condition of human freedom and natural and spontaneous coordination may have resulted in an entire absence of government. At any rate, given certain spiritual conditions which would constitute a government of God among men or, in the language of Christianity, a kingdom of Heaven on earth, the elaborate arrangements of modern administration, made necessary because of human depravity and the needs of our Iron Age (Kali Yuga), would be unnecessary. The question of a judicial system does not even arise in such an age.

The next age – the Silver Age – is called Treta, the age of Dharma where Vishnu descends as the Chakravarti Raja – the sustainer of society’s righteousness, its sword of justice and defence and preserver of dharma. He gathers a number of human communities under his unifying sway. This age is known for its righteousness and is popularly characterized as Rama Rajya. In this age, the Raja’s officials sleeplessly look after the good of the people and no elaborate judicial system is needed because there is hardly ever any occasion for disputes. The Raj Darbar itself may serve as the court because – as one can gather from the description of Sri Rama’s

Darabar in Valmiki Ramayana – the petitions before it are so rare that the king’s ministers and officials are always looking for, but are rarely able to come across a petitioner or an aggrieved person – even an aggrieved animal! In Dwapara – the Bronze Age, the age of doubt – there is a further decline in man’s character, powers and capacities. Intellectual regulation substitutes for the rule of Dharma. Ideas, thoughts and emotions assume much greater prominence, and doubt sets in man’s heart and mind and he has to seek the aid of written word or Shastra to properly direct his actions. Vishnu takes the form of King or Ruler who begins to take the help of written word – but only help, there is no mechanical subjection to it like in the present, rather he uses his understanding and intelligence freely along with the highest available recorded wisdom of the race – the Shastra, to guide his actions. In the Kaliyuga or the Iron Age, there is a further diminution in man’s capacities and powers who begins to be increasingly subject to his instincts, impulses and desires. Written word is not sufficient to maintain order in collective life and subjection to some kind of outward machinery or system – which still remained very simple in oriental societies – becomes necessary.

In the modern Western materialistic cultures – which India is at present trying hard to emulate – system, organisation, machinery seems to have attained their perfection. Bondage to these has been carried to its highest expression and man’s inner spiritual freedom is getting increasingly slain in modern societies because of their passion for organising external liberty or/and equality. When the inner freedom is gone, the external liberty follows it, and a social tyranny more terrible, inquisitorial and relentless than any that caste ever organised in India, begins to take its place. The process that began in the early years of last century producing its fruits in the form of Communism, Nazism and Maoism still continues in this century which began with a worst form of international terrorism fueled by religious intolerance.

(II) THE BRITISH JUDICIAL SYSTEM

The period of European history from the fall of the Roman Empire

in the West to the beginning of Renaissance is known as Middle Ages or Dark Ages. These ages were marked by the predominance of Christian Theology (Pope & Catholic Church) with no room for Philosophy and Science because the mediaeval Theology did not care for these fields of knowledge. In fact, Science was guillotined wherever its presence attracted her attention. There was also needless and severe persecution of those considered guilty of open or implicit “questioning” or any behaviour deemed contrary to God by the Catholic Church. The records of this period are full of bloody stories of ruthless tortures and murders by the Catholic Inquisition which during three hundred years of its witchhunt burned at the stake an astounding five million women.³

Renaissance liberated Reason, and Science which is based on it, began to avenge herself against the Church – her old oppressor. Science began to assert itself as Reason began to increasingly replace religion in man’s living room. The Secularist centuries, especially the nineteenth and the twentieth weighed the balance down very much in the direction of Reason. The British Judicial System, which the British imposed on India in the nineteenth century and which it has kept intact even after her independence, was the result of the application of human reason to this field. **The new system owed much more to Roman law and jurisprudence than to credal religion whose undue interference in judiciary – given the bitter experience of the centuries of Catholic Inquisition – was rejected entirely. To rule out any repetition of the instances of outright injustice and crude persecutions based on blind prejudices which characterised the Middle Ages, broad rules and procedures and principles – like the one requiring that an accused be considered innocent unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt – were enacted to guide the courts and judges – who were now to be subject to provisions of the laws and acts passed by the Parliament – in their conduct. Another important development was a general acceptance of the principle of complete freedom of the judiciary from any interference by the executive branch of the government.**

(III) THE PRESENT WORKING OF THE SYSTEM

In the present day system, a trial court judge is bound by the established rules and procedures for finding the truth of the matter and the penalties for different kinds of offences are also well defined – though there is always some leverage for the court’s discretion – to ensure that the offender is protected against the whims of the deciding judge. But this is a double edged sword because it also means that even if the judge has been able to independently find out or is reasonably sure – through the use of his subjective faculties – about the truth of the matter, he cannot decide on this basis alone or even chiefly but must go by the “objective” finding that may emerge by submitting to the rules and the procedures established for the processing of the available evidence – which, in the present day courts seems to depend a great deal on the skill of the lawyers and eagerness and capacity of the contestants and need not have anything to do with the truth of the matter.

The present working of the judicial system is aptly summed up by the popular saying that **the Law is blind and has to be led by others to the truth**. In the present day Indian Courts where even the integrity of the crucial participants who are supposed to lead the Law to truth – the lawyers and the judges and the witnesses – has become highly questionable, the relative capacity and eagerness of the contestants has become the single most important deciding factor. Obviously, with this kind of dilution in the character of the participants or actors in the drama, the truth or right has little chance of prevailing in our Courts. But even without this serious dilution, the system has very serious problems of its own, inherent in its very constitution, which have been powerfully brought to light in the following remarks of Sri Aurobindo, made at the beginning of the last century, on the functioning of the British Courts. “Under a civilised disguise these Courts are really the mediaeval ordeal by battle; only in place of the swords and lances of military combatants we have the tongues and technicalities of lawyers and the mutually tilting imaginations of witnesses. The victory is to the skilfullest liar and

the most plausible workman in falsehoods and insincerities. It is largely an elaborate pitch and toss, an exhilarating gamble, a very Monte Carlo of surprising chances. But there is skill in it, too; it satisfies the intellect as well as the sensations. One should rather call it a game of human Bridge which admirably combines luck and skill, or consider it as an intellectual gladiatorial show. In big cases the stake is worthy of the play and the excitement, a man's property or his life. But woe to the beaten! In a criminal case, the tortures of the jail or the terrifying drop from the gallows are in prospect, and it is rather the hardihood of guilt than the trembling consciousness of innocence that shall best help him. Woe to him if he is innocent! As he stands there, – for to add to the pleasurable of his condition, the physical ache of hours of standing is considerably added to the cruel strain on his emotions, – he looks eagerly not to the truth or falsehood of the evidence for or against him, but to the skill with which this or that counsel handles the web of skilfully mixed truth and lies and the impression he is making on the judge or the jury. A true witness breaking down under a confusing cross-examination or a false witness mended by a judicious reexamination may be of much better service to him than the Truth, which, our Scriptures tell us, shall prevail and not falsehood, – eventually perhaps and in the things of the truth, but not in the things of falsehood, not in a court of Justice, not in the witness box. There the last thing the innocent man against whom circumstances have turned, dare tell is the truth; it would either damn him completely by fatally helping the prosecution or it is so simple and innocent as to convince the infallible human reason of its pitiful falsity. The truth! Has not the Law expressly built up a hedge of technicalities to keep out the truth?"⁴

That this must be the fate of any system based predominantly on Reason is made vivid by the following lines of Savitri:

*"An inconclusive play is Reason's toil.
Each strong idea can use her as its tool;
Accepting every brief she pleads her case.
Open to every thought, she cannot know.*

*The eternal Advocate seated as judge
Armours in logic's invulnerable mail
A thousand combatants for Truth's veiled throne
And sets on a high horse-back of argument
To tilt for ever with a wordy lance
In a mock tournament where none can win."*⁵

In the old Indian system, the judicial authorities – village Panchayats, Judges, Rulers and Royal courts – were responsible for finding the truth of the matter for which they were free to use their skills and ingenuity with which they were normally highly endowed and to do whatever else was necessary to get to the bottom of the truth of the matter. A prospective offender knew that, given the efficiency and unquestionable integrity of authorities, the chances of his offence going undetected were virtually nil and the result was that there were very few cases – a good indicator of the health and efficiency of the system – that ever reached the courts; unlike today, where, if one is prepared to put a sufficient amount of energy (time and money) into the case, one can be reasonably sure of winning or, at least, indefinitely postponing the final adverse verdict. Since our courts are overburdened with cases, the appointment of more judges, the amendment of the CPC and the establishment of “fast-track” courts are some of the measures that have been undertaken to improve the condition. All such measures or suggestions coming out of a sincere desire to improve the functioning of our system should be welcome even when apparently misplaced and, therefore, likely to come to nothing in the long-run. For, such is the nature of this world that, often, it is the splendid failures that sum to victory – a victory that can never be won until we begin to realize that the root of all our problems is not the politicians, the government officials, the lawyers, the judges, the common men or, to put it in one word, the Others but rather, Ourselves. If we wish to have a perfect society, we must begin with our own perfection because, as Sri Aurobindo so beautifully points out, “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.”⁶

References:

1. *Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo 12, Page 468*
2. *Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo 12, Page 465*
3. *Dan Brown, The Da Vinci Code, Doubleday 2003, Page 132*
4. *Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo 12, Pages 47-48*
5. *Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo 33, Page 252*
6. *Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo 22, Pages 1058-059*

THE FIRST TWO MONTHS OF THE WORKING OF THE MODI GOVERNMENT

The intense scrutiny to which the new government was subjected even as it completed just one month in office vindicates the movement towards collective awakening which is strengthening its hold over the country. Towards the end of June, the whole media could be seen producing innovative 'report cards' on the performance of the new government since it assumed office on 26th May. The post-Budget period has also seen fresh reviews on the government's performance so far. Based on ideological or political motivations, most of these assessments highlighted the string of policy announcements and measures that the government has endorsed and the gaps it has left unfulfilled. That is why it is no wonder that most of the 'expert' commentators are disappointed with the policy 'continuity' with the previous government that this government apparently displays.

However, in order to assess the government's performance, it is important to see how the detailed policy decisions that the government is taking contribute to national changes at a much broader level. The past two months have seen a number of initiatives by the new government in different sectors. While there can be no certainty regarding the actual realization of these initiatives, yet they mark a significant departure from the former UPA-II government.

For, it is the framework within which the government is functioning and the intentions it is expressing that make a difference, even though a detailed analysis of policy statements like the Union Budget 2014 reveals continuities with the 'UPA budget'. It is worth noting that this framework of the government becomes important because though institutions largely function independently of the detailed interventions of the top national leadership, the government plays an important directing role in laying out the foundations for future changes. This government may display some continuities with the UPA government but it differs radically in the foundations it is laying down.

The new government has sent out strong signals indicating the foundations on which it will be based and has also backed them up with action where feasible. The previous government sought to consolidate the position of individuals and the party by promoting populism, corruption and identity politics, even though it was forced to take some tough decisions last year to tackle the growing economic crisis, such as the formation of Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, monetary policy reforms, regulatory consolidation and others. But these reforms were promoted as the Congress struggled to uphold its populist reputation. It was facing diminishing returns of its flagship welfare schemes to targeted sections of society implicating it adversely in their eyes.

In contrast, the new government has followed a completely different course without scrapping any of the welfare schemes, as many expected it to do. It has also fulfilled some, less glamorous, but more substantial policy initiatives in the areas of defence, finance, administration, economy and foreign policy: In economy and finance, while the government has expectedly charted a policy favorable to a greater role of the global and domestic capital necessary for the country's short-term economic viability globally. It has also disproved the assumption about its blindly pro-capital agenda by proceeding cautiously on economic reforms in issues such as inflation and financial sector. It has not hesitated to implicate groups like Reliance in the power sector.

Similar vigour is visible in the field of administration too, where the new government has not hesitated to target the luxurious culture of bureaucrats through a series of austere directives. These were largely a part of the government's 'ten point agenda' and small steps, but are significant as correctives of the deep-rooted, collective ill-will its targets have spawned. There are numerous other instances of domestic initiatives that the government has undertaken so far, but they are not grand or immediately obvious due to the complexity of negotiating interests involved.

A more explicit manifestation of the new government's

framework can be assessed through its international policy, where the government is relatively less constrained by competing interests. The aggressive ramping up of defence deals, the straightforward outreach towards the South and South-East Asian nations and the renewing of the role of BRICS as, not just a political, but also a feasible economic alternative to the hegemony of the West, have made it clear that this government intends to follow a long-term foreign policy plan, unlike the short-termism that characterized the previous government. Most significant in this respect is the vision to promote India's political leadership in an increasingly resurgent Asia, with attempts towards developing a special relationship with countries like China and Japan outside of multilateral fora which are likely to further challenge the weakening American and European hegemony.

While India's changed position in international politics clearly reflects the new government's decisive future orientation, it should also provide guidance to draw inferences about the government's future course of action in domestic policy as well. In fact, it should be assessed less on the basis of 'reforms' or 'policy', which are only meant to lay a stabilizing groundwork for the future, and more on the basis of deeper and larger movement that is increasingly shaping the very nature of government in general.

For, more than the differences between the parties in power, substantial difference is made by the fact that the very institution of government is itself changing as it is being simultaneously constrained and encouraged by a changed and resurgent national environment.

CORRUPTION (2)

(II) THE AESTHETIC, ETHICAL AND RELIGIOUS CODES AND CORRUPTION

Violations of these codes are often termed corruption. Historically, the legal codes of the collectivities were derived almost entirely from these. A few years after the Great Depression of the 1930s, an increasingly important role of the state in managing an economy was advocated by J. M. Keynes and was progressively accepted by most democratic countries. It was only after this that the legal code began to be extended to such areas and issues that had hitherto been mostly free from any action of any kind of codes. Therefore, the newly made provisions of the legal code in these new areas were quite independent and without any strong supportive base in other codes.

Basically, legal code incorporates provisions of state administered physical punishments (corporeal, financial, etc.) to supplement and augment the effectivity of the aesthetic, moral and religious approbations, since, for a sizeable portion of humanity these alone are not a sufficient deterrents and one cannot reasonably expect such ones to refrain from doing unacceptable things except through the fear of adverse and painful physical consequences. In this day and age, the utilitarian spirit which tends progressively to erode all the codes of conduct is ever growing and has become so all-pervasive that it is threatening the very existence of the human race. Therefore, in such a scenario, an efficient – swift and effective – administration of the saner parts of the legal code has become both an imperative necessity and, thanks to the working of the utilitarian spirit, an insurmountable difficulty unless, in response to a call from below, the not easily approachable layers of the deeper and higher parts of our being are opened by the Grace enabling the descent of the truths of the eternal and infinite spirit in our being and nature to uplift all our life and action here to a higher plateau and set us moving towards the Eternal and the Infinite.

All the aesthetic, ethical and religious codes have their origin and source in the truths of the Supreme Spirit which is infinite and eternal and unaffected by variations in the Age (Yuga), culture, nature and the form of organization of the collectivities. In the absence of any written legal code – which emerged only when the organization of collectivities in its evolution reached a secondary or tertiary level – these codes played a supremely important role in the preservation and the smooth functioning of the collectivities. Some parts of these codes – although often varying in their scope and importance – are common to the whole human race, while others differ according to the Age, culture, nationality and religion to which a collectivity belongs. These codes have their origin in the suprarational and tend to penetrate such deeper and higher levels of the subjective being of individuals that a purely formal legal code cannot at all even begin to approach. Thus, these codes encompass a very deep and vast region of human psyche and tend to be far more effective than any direct action of the physical powers. Actually, these alone are responsible for maintaining order and harmony in the collectivities. It is only these codes that enter and maintain order, harmony and efficiency in the area of services such as health, education, philanthropy, social service, etc., because in these areas – which are impervious and altogether beyond the purview of any legal code – a right feeling and right will among the participants is indispensable if they are at all going to be effective in their task or worthy of the name of service.

(III) THE SPIRITUAL CODE AND CORRUPTION

Essentially, the Spirit is an atmosphere created by the luminous and liberating action of the Divine Grace in the universe to save it from the darkness into which it has fallen by linking it to the unthinkable and ineffable mystery of the Absolute. The fundamental truths of the Spirit are the sole basis of the spiritual code and all the other lower codes that derive from it. These truths have found their highest and universal expression in the following triple formula of the Vedanta whose unequivocal assertions are: I am THAT, thou are THAT and all are THAT. Each unit or element – right down to the

level of the ultimate particles of matter – is altogether THAT and identical with it which holds back nothing of itself from anything or anyone and gives itself completely to each. It is, thus, as completely and equally present in an ant-hill as in a solar system. This is the mathematics or the logic of the Infinite – this is complete, that too is complete, take the complete out of the complete and the complete is the remainder. The above Vedantic truths are the ultimate and the only true source of all ethics, morality and spiritual injunctions. When man is concentrated on the externals, these may seem to be completely covered up or even non-existent but in reality they are not capable of being diluted or reduced in their secret action behind all the appearances, for, these are forever and are the sole unalterable basis of all that exists.

The spiritual instructions and injunctions are the external and, for that reason, necessarily diluted forms of a spiritual Guru's dealings with his disciples which having their ultimate basis in the fundamental and suprarational truths of the spirit are too nebulous, varied and often contradictory in appearance to be stipulated and satisfactorily expressed in the form of a written spiritual code. In the Indian conception of Dharmas, that is, the standards, rules and laws of right action and living formulated by the sages and seers, the specific form of these depends – as repeatedly pointed out in the traditional Indian formula – on Desh (Place), Kala (Time) and Patra (Person). The Dharmas may be looked upon by some as coming close – at least at their loftiest heights – to the nature of a spiritual code; but here it must be understood that the spiritual code at its core is constituted not so much by the Dharmas as by the laws of the nature as it rises towards the Divine and in the highest formulations of this code, it is not the following of Dharma (however lofty and wide) that is enjoined on a mature spiritual aspirant but the abandonment of all Dharmas – sarva dharman parityajya. More appropriately and strictly speaking, the Dharmas are a part of religion which is – in spite of a jungle of formulas, prohibitions, practices and rituals of which it is supposed to be constituted – in its essence a mould for enabling a growing human soul to climb to the peak of

all human achievements from where it can proceed further freely by rising into the wide-infinite skies of the Spirit. Therefore, in the spirit of Sanatana Dharma, it is best to leave the spiritual code open ended even when one prefers to treat some of the noblest and loftiest formulations of the Dharma as parts of its treasure which contains the most precious possessions of the human race. It is a strict subjection to the yoke of the Dharma that kept the historical Indian monarchies from degenerating into the despotic tyrannies characteristic of the Persian and the Western and Central Asian polities. With the passage of time, the Dharmas get codified in the form of a large number of treatises composed by the seers for the purpose of providing a detailed guidance to individuals and social groups in their actions and dealing with others. These are called shastras and are the chief source of the traditional aesthetic, ethical (or moral) and religious codes in India. It should be obvious from the discussion above that the infringements of the spiritual code – which by their very nature are too subtle to be visible to anyone but the adepts in this field – would not at all come into the ambit of corruption as it is commonly understood, for, even, when they come to common notice, such infringements are apt to be looked upon as deviation, retrogression, or fall from the path for the spiritual aspirant rather than corruption.

The Absolute Reality is invariably present behind all the happenings and appearances in and beyond time and space and is the sole ultimate and immediate determinant of all that exists, comes into existence or goes out of it. All of what really matters to us is always safe in THAT. In the words of Sri Aurobindo:

*“An outstretched Hand is felt upon our lives.
It is near us in unnumbered bodies and births;
In its unslackening grasp it keeps for us safe
The one inevitable supreme result
No will can take away and no doom change,
The crown of conscious Immortality,
The godhead promised to our struggling souls*

*When first man's heart dared death and suffered life.
One who has shaped this world is ever its lord:
Our errors are his steps upon the way;
He works through the fierce vicissitudes of our lives,
He works through the hard breath of battle and toil,
He works through our sins and sorrows and our tears,
His knowledge overrules our nescience;
Whatever the appearance we must bear,
Whatever our strong ills and present fate,
When nothing we can see but drift and bale,
A mighty Guidance leads us still through all.
After we have served this great divided world
God's bliss and oneness are our inborn right.
A date is fixed in the calendar of the Unknown,
An anniversary of the Birth sublime:
Our soul shall justify its chequered walk,
All will come near that now is naught or far."*¹

Needless to say that the action of the supreme Spirit or even of the individuals permeated with its presence, regardless of the appearances to the contrary, cannot even remotely be affected or stained by the utilitarian spirit or any vicissitudes of the workings of the terrestrial evolutionary nature. Herein lies the foundation of our ultimate safety and assured fate which, in the words of Sri Aurobindo, has taken here the form of a mutual debt:

*"A mutual debt binds man to the Supreme:
His nature we must put on as he put ours;
We are sons of God and must be even as he:
His human portion, we must grow divine.
Our life is a paradox with God for key."*²

It is difficult to get a hearing for such notions in the present din of words that only plead for the reign of trifling truths of temporal worth. However, all those who have been able, in spite of the present

dark scenario where the prospect of an impending ecological and moral disaster looms large on the horizon, to keep their faith in the Divine Grace intact will find the following words of Sri Aurobindo very assuring:

*“When darkness deepens strangling the earth’s breast
And man’s corporeal mind is the only lamp,
As a thief’s in the night shall be the covert tread
Of one who steps unseen into his house.
A Voice ill-heard shall speak, the soul obey,
A Power into mind’s inner chamber steal,
A charm and sweetness open life’s closed doors
And beauty conquer the resisting world,
The Truth-Light capture Nature by surprise,
A stealth of God compel the heart to bliss
And earth grow unexpectedly divine.
In Matter shall be lit the spirit’s glow,
In body and body kindled the sacred birth;
Night shall awake to the anthem of the stars,
The days become a happy pilgrim march,
Our will a force of the Eternal’s power,
And thought the rays of a spiritual sun.
A few shall see what none yet understands;
God shall grow up while the wise men talk and sleep;
For man shall not know the coming till its hour
And belief shall be not till the work is done.”³*

References:

- 1. Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo 33, Page 59*
- 2. Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo 33, Page 67*
- 3. Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo 33, Page 55*

THE MISSION OF INDIA

“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.... The ideal is that of humanity in God, of God in humanity, the ancient ideal of the *sanatana dharma* but applied as it has never been applied before to the problem of politics and the work of national revival. To realise that ideal, to impart it to the world is the mission of India.”

- Sri Aurobindo

(Complete works of Sri Aurobindo 07, p. 1017)

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