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New Race

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“India on the March” Special



**Spiritual Map of India*

Institute of Human Study
Hyderabad

Editorial

The world is going through calamities -- Natural, Biological, Military, Psychological, Economic and Moral. Life has become most unreliable. No one knows from where the attack would come. The invisible enemy these days hides in the house and attacks the most fearful one first, breaking the strength of others as well. Everyone is hurt, everyone has borne the loss. Perhaps not a single person on earth is spared who has not encountered the enemy. Whether one became victorious or lost the battle, each one has passed through hell. Each day we wake up only to realise that we are alive and sleep with the thought - one more day gone. In these uncertain circumstances what can one do? There are answers galore given by all kinds of people and preachers. Some are helped by those answers, some are not - some develop faith, some see their faith dwindle. All the old foundations of money, religion, culture, polity etc. seem inadequate before this Titan facing the world today. We are half paralysed and yet made to crawl - because to survive we have to move.

The condition that India faces today is worst. A country which was sending help to all even during the worst times, today needs help from all. She is getting help indeed. But in this phase of human evolution when Science and Technology are unable to help us survive, when biotechnology has become our enemy, can we still believe in the dreams of Shivaji Maharaj, Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo? They declared their vision saying India will be the guru of the world. Until March 2021, when India was supporting herself and the world through vaccines and other medical equipments, when by her act of generosity she was emerging as a leader before the world, she was again hit as if in the midriff. India was emerging slowly, showing the way to the world. But the battle has made us weak. There is terror all around. How do we proceed, how do we march ahead so that we can fulfill the dreams of our spiritual leaders?

The answer is to be found in Sri Aurobindo's own words. These words may come as a solace to some of us who are patiently waiting to see the dawn of a new light. In *Savitri* he declares:

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. (*Savitri*: Book I Canto IV)

This issue of *New Race* brings forth the Spirit of India, her culture and the trend in which human society is moving. We hope that the articles published here may enlighten our readers and make them greater admirers of Indian culture.

Shruti Bidwaikar

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tehanvotgya upanisad

Chapter I and the first section

Translated by Sri Aurobindo

ओमित्येतदक्षरमुद्गीथमुपासीत। ओमिति ह्युद्गायति तस्योपव्याख्यानम् ॥ १.१.१ ॥

1. Worship ye OM, the eternal syllable. OM is Udgitha, the chant of Samaveda; for with OM they begin the chant of Sama. And this is the exposition of OM.

एां भूतानां पृथिवी रसः पृथिव्या अपो रसः। अपामोघयो रस ओधीनां पुरो रसः
पुरास्य वाग्रसो वाच ऋग्रस ऋचः साम रसः। साम्ना उद्गीथो रसः ॥१.१.२ ॥

2. Earth is the substantial essence of all these creatures and the waters are the essence of earth; herbs of the field are the essence of the waters; man is the essence of the herbs. Speech is the essence of man, Rigveda the essence of Speech, Sama the essence of Rik. Of Sama OM is the essence.

सएा रसानारसतमः परमः परार्धयोऽटमो यदुद्गीथः ॥ १.१.३ ॥

3. This is the eighth essence of the essences and the really essential, the highest and it belongeth to the upper hemisphere of things.

कतमा कतमर्ककतमत्कतमत्साम कतमः कतम उद्गीथ इति विमृटं भवति ॥ १.१.४ ॥

4. Which among things & which again is Rik; which among things and which again is Sama; which among things and which again is OM of the Udgitha—this is now pondered.

वागेवर्कप्राणः सामोमित्येतदक्षरमुद्गीथः। तद्वा एतन्मिथुनं यद्वाक्च प्राणश्चर्कच सामच ॥ १.१.५ ॥

5. Speech is Rik, Breath is Sama; the Imperishable is OM of Udgitha. These are the divine lovers, Speech & Breath, Rik & Sama.

तदेतन्मिथुनमोमित्येतस्मिन्नक्षरे ससृज्यते।

यदा वै मिथुनौ समागच्छत आपयतो वै तावन्योन्यस्य कामम् ॥ १.१.६ ॥

6. As a pair of lovers are these and they cling together in OM the eternal syllable; now when the beloved and her lover meet, verily they gratify each the desire of the other.

आपयिता ह वै कामानां भवति य एतदेवं विद्वानक्षरमुद्गीथमुपास्ते ॥ १.१.७ ॥

7. He becometh a gratifier of the desires of men who with this knowledge worshippeth OM the eternal syllable.

तद्वा एतदनुज्ञाक्षरं यद्धि किंचानुजानात्योमित्येव । तदाहौ एव समृद्धिर्यदनुज्ञा समर्धयिता ह वै।

कामानां भवति य एतदेवं विद्वानक्षरमुद्गीथमुपास्ते ॥ १.१.८ ॥

8. Now this OM is the syllable of Assent; for to whatsoever one assenteth, one sayeth OM; and assent is blessing of increase. Verily he becometh a blesser and increaser of the desires of men who with this knowledge worshippeth OM the eternal syllable.

तेनेयं त्रयीविद्या वर्तते ओमित्याश्रावयत्योमिति।

सत्योमित्युद्गायत्येतस्यैवाक्षरस्यापचित्यै महिम्ना रसेन ॥१.१.९ ॥

9. By OM the triple knowledge proceedeth; with OM the priest reciteth the Rik, with OM

he pronounceth the Yajur, with OM he chanteth the Sama. And all this is for the heaping up of the Imperishable and by the greatness of It and the delightfulness.

तेनोभौ कुरुतो यश्चौतदेवं वेद यश्च न वेद । नाना तु विद्या चाविद्या च यदेव विद्यया करोति ।
श्रद्धयोपनिदा तदेव वीर्यवत्तरं भवतीति । खल्वेतस्यैवाक्षरस्योपव्याख्यानं भवति ॥ १.१.१० ॥

10. He doeth works by OM who hath the knowledge, and he also who hath it not; but these are diverse, the Knowledge and the Ignorance. Whatso work one doeth with knowledge, with faith and with the secret of Veda, it becometh to him more virile and mighty. This is the exposition of the eternal letters.

OM is the syllable (the Imperishable One); one should follow after it as the upward Song (movement); for with OM one sings (goes) upwards; of which this is the analytical explanation.

The Chhandogya, we see from its first and introductory sentence, is to be a work on the right & perfect way of devoting oneself to the Brahman; the spirit, the methods, the formulae are to be given to us. Its subject is the Brahman, but the Brahman as symbolised in the OM, the sacred syllable of the Veda; not, therefore, the pure state of the Universal Existence only, but that Existence in all its parts, the waking world & the dream self and the sleeping, the manifest, half-manifest and hidden, Bhurloka, Bhuvar & Swar,—the right means to win all of them, enjoy all of them, transcend all of them, is the subject of the Chhandogya. OM is the symbol and the thing symbolised.

(Sri Aurobindo, CWSA 18: 258)

India's Central Conception

A true happiness in this world is the right terrestrial aim of man, and true happiness lies in the finding and maintenance of a natural harmony of spirit, mind and body. A culture is to be valued to the extent to which it has discovered the right key of this harmony and organised its expressive motives and movements. And a civilisation must be judged by the manner in which all its principles, ideas, forms, ways of living work to bring that harmony out, manage its rhythmic play and secure its continuance or the development of its motives. A civilisation in pursuit of this aim may be predominantly material like modern European culture, predominantly mental and intellectual like the old Graeco-Roman or predominantly spiritual like the still persistent culture of India. India's central conception is that of the Eternal, the Spirit here incased in matter, involved and immanent in it and evolving on the material plane by rebirth of the individual up the scale of being till in mental man it enters the world of ideas and realm of conscious morality, dharma. This achievement, this victory over unconscious matter develops its lines, enlarges its scope, elevates its levels until the increasing manifestation of the sattwic or spiritual portion of the vehicle of mind enables the individual mental being in man to identify himself with the pure spiritual consciousness beyond Mind. India's social system is built upon this conception; her philosophy formulates it; her religion is an aspiration to the spiritual consciousness and its fruits; her art and literature have the same upward look; her whole dharma or law of being is founded upon it. Progress she admits, but this spiritual progress, not the externally self-unfolding process of an always more and more prosperous and efficient material civilisation. It is her founding of life upon this exalted conception and her urge towards the spiritual and the eternal that constitute the distinct value of her civilisation. And it is her fidelity, with whatever human shortcomings, to this highest ideal that has made her people a nation apart in the human world. (CWSA 20: 56-57)

Deeper issues for India

There are deeper issues for India herself, since by following certain tempting directions she may conceivably become a nation like many others evolving an opulent industry and commerce, a powerful organisation of social and political life, an immense military strength, practising power-politics with a high degree of success, guarding and extending zealously her gains and her interests, dominating even a large part of the world, but in this apparently magnificent progression forfeiting its Swadharma, losing its soul. Then ancient India and her spirit might disappear altogether and we would have only one more nation like the others and that would be a real gain neither to the world nor to us. There is a question whether she may prosper more harmlessly in the outward life yet lose altogether her richly massed and firmly held spiritual experience and knowledge. It would be a tragic irony of fate if India were to throw away her spiritual heritage at the very moment when in the rest of the world there is more and more a turning towards her for spiritual help and a saving Light. This must not and will surely not happen; but it cannot be said that the danger is not there. There are

indeed other numerous and difficult problems that face this country or will very soon face it. No doubt we will win through, but we must not disguise from ourselves the fact that after these long years of subjection and its cramping and impairing effects a great inner as well as outer liberation and change, a vast inner and outer progress is needed if we are to fulfil India's true destiny. (CWSA 36: 503-04)

Either India will be rationalised and industrialised out of all recognition and she will be no longer India or else she will be the leader in a new world-phase, aid by her example and cultural infiltration the new tendencies of the West and spiritualise the human race. That is the one radical and poignant question at issue. Will the spiritual motive which India represents prevail on Europe and create there new forms congenial to the West, or will European rationalism and commercialism put an end for ever to the Indian type of culture? (CWSA 20: 65-66)

Message for Humanity

In spite of all drawbacks and in spite of downfall the spirit of Indian culture, its central ideas, its best ideals have still their message for humanity and not for India alone. And we in India hold that they are capable of developing out of themselves by contact with new need and idea as good and better solutions of the problems before us than those which are offered to us secondhand from Western sources.(CWSA 20: 80)

But if the spiritual ideal points the final way to a triumphant harmony of manifested life, then it is all-important for India not to lose hold of the truth, not to give up the highest she knows and barter it away for a perhaps more readily practicable but still lower ideal alien to her true and constant nature. (Ibid: 74)

*India must rise
to the height of her
mission and proclaim
the Truth to the world*



Meaning of Nationalism

The very concept of nationalism is perhaps of a recent growth, that is, something that rose its head with the Commercial Revolution in the 17th Century. In the medieval period, the State was considered a personal property of a king and the citizens had hardly anything to do with it. With the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, the concept of one nation, one people, began to take shape in the minds of the people. And by mid-nineteenth century Central Europe awoke to this ideal of one nationality and it spread rapidly to Asia.

What formed the nation, was a geographical unity which served as a physical base. Next, on the emotional level, the binding factor was a common history of suffering and struggle and wars and sacrifice. But the base was the fourfold system of Priesthood, Military, Mercantile and the Proletariat or the Brahmin, Khastriya, Vaishyas and Shudra. The second level was a movement towards the centralisation of administration which had to go through the stages of violent battles between the sacerdotal and the military. In India the Brahmin did not allow the merger of the two powers or the dominance of the king. Hence, there was the necessity of an outer force in the form of the Colonial rule which broke the Brahmin resistance and gave India a Central government. But as soon as the King became the State, *L'état c'est moi*, I am the state the whole state came crumbling down as seen the French Revolution. Then the third moment began –that of development of the totality, and unity became the dominant attitude. There was then the French slogan of Liberty, Equality, Fraternity. This was the stage of the Industrial development when the collectivity became more important than the individual. The mind of man became more alert and the nation was born.

The fourth step is towards the internationalism, a world union a step that has been envisioned by Sri Aurobindo. If the nations do not go beyond itself and stick to their own egoism, then Nature may have to find her own means to force it upon mankind.

Nationalism in India

Nationalism in India developed as a movement to liberate the country from the common yoke of the British rule. The British government, after occupying the country stage by stage, first attacked the economic structure of the country and it sucked away the country's wealth. As a second well-planned step they introduced their soulless education which impacted the educated masses and made them subservient to the foreigners.

The British oppression of the common Indian masses and their religious conversions soon faced a revolt from nationalist leaders like G.K. Gokhale, Pheroze Shah Mehta, Surendranath Banerjee etc. They provided a wide base for the resurgence of the National spirit. Among them, Sri Aurobindo stood head and shoulders above the rest for he sided himself with the extremist group and in a brief time converted the elitist movement for India's freedom into a mass movement.

Spiritual Nationalism

Before the arrival of Sri Aurobindo on the national scene in 1905, India had witnessed some revolts and brave resistance to the British rule. Great names among scores of heroes are the famous Rani of Jhansi, Laxmibai, and the unsung hero Abbakka Chowta of Ullal settlement in the province of Mangalore. There were other movements like the Sepoy Mutiny etc.

They had the valour of the Kshatriya, the strength of the warrior, the zeal of a patriot. But what they lacked was the ideal, the vision. Brahmin without the Kshatriya is lame; the Kshatriya without the Brahmin is blind, it is said. And it is exactly this ideal, the deeper purpose of the freedom of India; the vision of India beyond the freedom that Sri Aurobindo had provided to the already boiling situation in the country's movement.

In a meeting in Bombay in 1908 Sri Aurobindo declared:

Nationalism is not a mere political programme; Nationalism is a religion that has come from God; Nationalism is a creed in which you shall have to live. Let no man dare to call himself a Nationalist if he does so merely with a sort of intellectual pride, thinking that he is more patriotic, thinking that he is something higher than those who do not call themselves by that name. If you are going to be a Nationalist, if you are going to assent to this religion of Nationalism, you must do it in the religious spirit.(CWSA 06-07: 818-819)

In all his speeches and writings in the *Bande Mataram*, he raised the country to the status of a goddess:

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.(CWSA 28: 482)

In another instance, he wrote:

For what is a nation? What is our mother-country? It is not a piece of earth, nor a figure of speech, nor a fiction of the mind. It is a mighty Shakti, composed of the Shaktis of all the millions of units that make up the nation, just as Bhawani Mahisha-Mardini sprang into being from the Shaktis of all the millions of gods assembled in one mass of force and welded into unity. The Shakti we call India, Bhawani Bharati, is the living unity of the Shaktis of three hundred millions of people.(CWSA 06-07: 83)

In similar words, the Mother also spoke about 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. (CWM 13: 380)

Sri Aurobindo further wrote,

The work of national emancipation is a great and holy yajna of which boycott, Swadeshi, national education and every other activity, great and small, are only major or minor parts. Liberty is the fruit we seek from the sacrifice and the Motherland the goddess to whom we offer it; into the seven leaping tongues of the fire of the yajna we must offer all that we are and all that we have, feeding the fire even with our blood and the lives and happiness of our nearest and dearest; for the Motherland is a goddess who loves not a maimed and imperfect sacrifice, and freedom was never won from the gods by a grudging giver. (CWSA 06-07: 302)

Sri Aurobindo gave his clarion call to his compatriots and raised nationalism to the status of a religion. And, as if to confirm this call, there came upon the Indian consciousness, (1838-1894) Bankim Chandra's mantra, given in his novel *Ananda Math*, "Bande Mataram"! It was as if the nation was reborn in the reverberations of the Mantra. "The mantra Bande Mataram gave a new spirit, a new life, a new power to the nation. The nation of millions, then in slumber, was awakened; it rose to break the iron chains of the foreign rule". (Shyam Sundar, *India Great and Free*. P 10)

In his wider spiritual vision, he considered every nation as a power of the evolving spirit. In this manner "India is the Bharata Shakti, the living energy of a great spiritual conception, and fidelity to it is the very principle of her existence. For by its virtue alone she has been one of the immortal nations; this alone has been the secret of her amazing persistence and perpetual force of survival and revival". (CWSA 20: 57)

It is interesting to note that all great movements of life in India began "with a new spiritual thought and usually a new religious activity." (CWSA 20: 24) It is peculiar to India's culture that its people went through social or political reconstruction spearheaded by a religious motive or form. The spiritual basis was the foundation of its major revolutions or upheavals. We have examples of Arya Samaj, the Brahmo Samaj, the Ramakrishna Maths etc. which inspired not only a spiritual reawakening but a nationalist spirit.

Along with the mantra of "Bande Mataram", Sri Aurobindo's demand for Poorna Swaraj quickened the masses to awaken to the soul of India's demand for liberation: he believed that until and unless people became free in their minds, the nation would not be free. The timid and weak populace that had suffered for centuries in the hands of the British rulers were given back first a self-confidence in their country's greatness of the past and her golden destiny once her shackles were torn off. For such a total freedom, people have to pay the price with pain and suffering, sacrifice and deprivation, if needed.

Stages of Nationalism

Indian nationalism thus passed from spiritual nationalism under the banner of "Bande Mataram", to the second stage of Kshatriya Nationalism with the empowering mantra of "Swaraj is my birthright" or "Poorna Swaraj". In this period, the only right action was to adapt any and every means to liberate the country from the Asura that was throttling Bharat Mata! Violent revolutions or any other strategy was justifiable for the purpose. There were

stalwarts like, Bipin Chandra Pal, Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, and scores of young people who espoused this path.

At the third phase, Indian Nationalism entered the Ethical mode with its slogan of “Satyagraha” or Non-violence. The doctrines that were set up as guidelines to the patriots was not the philosophy of the Bhagavad Gita, but those of Madhava seva and moral self-discipline.

After these three phases of Nationalism, India gained her Independence and the country got liberated from its centuries of slavery. Long before her independence, in 1935 Sri Aurobindo had commented : “The question is what India is going do with her independence? ...Bolshevism? Goonda raj?” Unfortunately, after her freedom, the country forgot the sacrifices of the martyrs and gradually, under the banner of secularism, rationalism and realism, ideals borrowed from the West, its nationalism went into the background.

There was an onrush of Western materialism; the geographical and territorial country, the country of rich rivers and minerals came to the fore. Bharat Mata, Mother India, was asked to be content with political freedom obtained by her warriors.

Given the brain-power, man-power and natural resources of India, any other materialistic nation would have developed much more of material prosperity than what has been achieved in our country. The neglect of spiritual values, the erosion of dharma, ethics and morality has brought unbridled selfishness, deformation and corruption in all walks of life to such an extent that even the material progress has not taken place in the desired dimensions and whatever material progress has been achieved has failed to bring commensurate happiness and enjoyment. (Shyam Sundar p. 11)

But, on the independence day, Sri Aurobindo had written an open message:

August 15th, 1947 is the birthday of free India. It marks for her the end of an old era, the beginning of a new age.

...India is free but she has not achieved unity, only a fissured and broken freedom. At one time it almost seemed as if she might relapse into the chaos of separate States which preceded the British conquest. ...But the old communal division into Hindu and Muslim seems to have hardened into the figure of a permanent political division of the country. It is to be hoped that the Congress and the nation will not accept the settled fact as for ever settled or as anything more than a temporary expedient. For if it lasts, India may be seriously weakened, even crippled : civil strife may remain always possible, possible even a new invasion and foreign conquest. The partition of the country must go, - it is to be hoped by a slackening of tension, by a progressive understanding of the need of peace and concord, by the constant necessity of common and concerted action, even of an instrument of union for that purpose. In this way unity may come about under whatever form - the exact form may have a pragmatic but not a fundamental importance. But by whatever means, the division must and will go. For without it the destiny of India might be seriously impaired and even frustrated. But that must not be. (CWSA 36: 478)

This is Sri Aurobindo's prophesy which Time will fulfil in spite of human fallacies and short sightedness. The country has to recover its spiritual nationalism if it has to fulfil its spiritual destiny.

We have worshipped the country, the National Mother, as God. That was well, that carried us far. But it was only a stage, a means to bring the Europeanised mind back to spirituality. It was the worship of a *rūpa*, an *ista* by which to rise to the worship of God in His fullness. We used the Mantra *Bande Mataram* with all our heart and soul, and so long as we used and lived it, relied upon its strength to overbear all difficulties, we prospered. But suddenly the faith and the courage failed us, the cry of the Mantra began to sink and as it rang feebly, the strength began to fade out of the country. It was God, who made it fade out and falter, for it had done its work.

A greater Mantra than *Bande Mataram* has to come. Bankim was not the ultimate seer of Indian awakening. He gave only the term of the initial and public worship, not the formula and the ritual of the inner secret *upāsāna*.

For the greatest Mantras are those which are uttered within, and which the seer whispers or gives in dream or vision to his disciples. When the ultimate Mantra is practised even by two or three, then the closed Hand of God will begin to open; when the *upasana* is numerous followed the closed Hand will open absolutely. (SABCL 1: 431)

The worship of the *Bharata Mata*, the *Shakti* has to be reborn in the hearts of the Indians, to get a new inspiration, a new form and lead the world toward a new evolutionary march – from nationalism to internationalism, from equality and liberty to brotherhood in the Spirit. Worship of lesser godheads of money and power will not bring India closer to her destiny; it is *Bharat Mata* who will shower prosperity and power and perfection in India's material life; harmony and wisdom in her spiritual life.



The future of India is very clear. India is the Guru of the world. The future structure of the world depends on India. India is the living soul. India is incarnating the spiritual knowledge in the world. The Government of India ought to recognise the significance of India in this sphere and plan their action accordingly.

February 1954,
(*The Mother*, CWM 13: 353)

Strength in the Mind

artificially intelligent matter shall reveal the face of spirit

Narendra Joshi

From the high spiritual visions of Vedic literature to the dense forests of mythologies 'where even history dares not to peep,' some questions are persistently tormenting human minds. One such question is: What is the exact nature of Matter and what is its relation to Spirit? How to deal with their staggering opposition?

Aristotle believed that all Matter is made of four basic elements: Earth, Air, Fire, and Water. He believed Matter to be continuous and capable of being divided into smaller and smaller units without any limit. Democritus held that Matter is grainy and composed of atoms. (In Greek 'atom' means indivisible) While in India, Kanad talked about 'Anu,' the basic building block, Samkhya philosophy described about five great beings, *mahabhutas* and five *tanmatras*. There was also a rank materialist like Charvak in India who denied existence of anything beyond body or matter. – The body becomes a lump of ash on burning. Where is the question of rebirth? – he asked.

However, what is there between any two atoms, or two objects? Is it void, Aakasha, space, Ether or it is Nihil, Shunya? And then what is its nature? How all this was formed in the first place? – there was no unanimous answer for such doubts.

In modern times, it was John Dalton who showed in 1803 that atoms are basic building blocks and they form by their different combinations, different substances in universe. The difference is due to arrangement and number of atoms. Rutherford in 1911 and Chadwick in 1932 showed that atom is divisible. There was a model well accepted about internal structure of an atom with nucleus in centre and electrons in orbits. But later it was found that electrons are particles as well as waves, there are subatomic realities which are not deterministic. This was indeed a breakthrough and it brought science on the threshold of metaphysics.

Need to integrate Matter and Spirit:

Throughout history there are cycles 1) Cycle of materialism, wherein Spirit is denied as imagination of mind and 2) Cycle of spiritualism, wherein there is denial of Matter as illusion of senses, The pendulum swings from 'Pravritti' (circling outward towards the manifestation) to Nivritti (circling inward towards the Self) and then to Pravritti continuously. However, according to Sri Aurobindo, both these views are erroneous. They result in either bankruptcy of Life or bankruptcy in the things of Spirit. Sri Aurobindo asserts that to affirm divine life on the earth we must recognize that eternal spirit is not only the inner content, innermost truth of everything but it is equally the outer forms, garbs or mansions of this inner content. The seeming difference is purposeful and only a necessity in the process of manifestation. (CWSA 21-22)

Both Matter as well as Spirit is true. 'Annam Brahmetyajana' asserted Upanishads. This realization needs transcendence as well as transformation. Whenever a lower principle is transcended to a higher, the lower is not negated, but transformed, sublimated, it is illumined in the light received from higher steps. Unless this is done, we miss the purpose of the existence. If Divine has manifested itself in Universe, it is only to fulfil Himself. In this

sense, to fulfil God in life is man's manhood. (CWSA 21-22) During the transformation, that which is essential and inherent in lower will remain and will be put in order, that which is accidental will disappear.

To escape from Matter means also to escape from Spirit. And since spirit is the supreme principle there can be no escape from it. Matter is thus Spirit in spite of its staggering stupidity and iron necessity. Spiritualizing Matter is the task of evolution, not escape from it. (Maitra, 1993) A point is increasingly reached when only an arbitrary distinction separates forms of spirit from the forms of substance.

Today what is the situation in technology? The boundaries between material and non-material are vanishing. The encumbrance to material field was the heaviness and voluminous nature of matter. But that is largely getting rid of with continuous inventions of lighter and smaller and yet stronger forms of matter, whether it is in electronics, polymers, metals or composites. Its second hindrance was dependence on machinery, wires, pipelines, etc. making the system again heavy, cumbersome, and immovable. This is largely becoming obsolete with inventions of wireless, cordless transmission devices, hands free devices and voice control machines.

Relevance to AI

As a matter of fact, in AI (Artificial Intelligence) there is a group of scientists who say that to have intelligence, it is essential to have a body fit enough to carry it. They are then advocating 'Robotics' as a right application of AI and the limbs, sensor motors and building blocks of robots are continuously improved to express better intelligence. Recent attempts to replicate human kinematics of limbs as closely as natural and linking it to emotional status of human beings is a step ahead in this direction. For example, if a robot is angry, arms are moved with more speed and power, in case of love, they are moved gently and so on. In recent times, the materials used in AI are becoming more and more subtle, complex and miniaturized. Smart materials are responding to external stimuli and are thus seemingly much above the inert matter.

Nano materials and bio materials are coming to a point when it is difficult to separate manual creation from that of the Nature. Properties of proteins in nanomaterials depend on their shape and they are able to change shape almost infinitely, thus making them wonderful building blocks of the new age materials. Penrose argues that in microtubules and cytoskeletons, there is a particular pattern and number of elements that are able to store information and thereby appear intelligent. It is not the brain or neurons which make intelligence; rather it is these structures which are found not only in brain but also in single cell species, in trees and flowers. These species are also remarkably intelligent in their own ways, and this intelligence supports this theory of microtubules and cytoskeletons. Microtubules in the nerves and in many species have revealed that intelligence is not just in brain but exists everywhere, and that there is a relation between pattern and numerology which is necessary to create consciousness. (Penrose, 1989)

Sri Aurobindo's insights

According to Sri Aurobindo, the earth existence cannot be a creation of our individual minds, as our individual minds are themselves a creation of the earth existence and have come much later than the world. He emphasized that there is a universal mind and also that the creator of the world must precede and exceed its creation. By the instrumentality

of universal senses universal mind has created a relation of form with form and constitutes the rhythm of the material universe. One Conscious Being is phenomenally divided within itself by the action of a Universal Mind according to Sri Aurobindo. This division is repeated by individual mind. However, this division is only at the lower level and the unity of Spirit, the unity of Energy or the real unity of Matter is not hampered by this action according to him.

Therefore, according to Sri Aurobindo, substance is only a form of the spirit. The appearance which this form of spirit assumes to our senses is due to the dividing action of cosmic mind. In Supermind, consciousness represents itself as mind, and the force of consciousness, or *Tapas*, represents itself as life. It is mind that gives the appearance of division. Therefore, according to this thought, the inconscience, the inertia, the atomic disaggregation of matter has their source in the dividing action of mind by which our physical universe came into being.

Matter, according to Sri Aurobindo, means the involution of the conscious Delight of being in self-oblivious Force and in self-dividing, infinitesimally disaggregated form of substance. In mind, the conscious unity of existence is represented obtusely, ignorantly and quite externally as the contact in consciousness between seemingly divided beings and separate objects through the senses and based on this sense-contact, mind found itself and prepared to return to a higher principle of union in which division is subordinate to unity. He further says, “Material substance is the form in which mind acting through senses contacts the conscious Being of which it is itself a movement of knowledge” (CWSA 21-22). However, since mind by its very nature can know only by division, it sees the existence as infinitesimal points which it associates together to arrive at a totality.

The atomic existences which are formed must by law of their being tend to aggregate. Each of these aggregates also, due to the instinct of the hidden life that forms them and the hidden mind and will that govern them, must tend to form larger conglomerates. Each such individual existence, according to Sri Aurobindo, is supported implicitly or explicitly by mind. Implicitly, mind supports through an apparently mechanical action force, in which the ‘will to be’ is dumb and imprisoned, but none the less powerful; explicitly, mind supports by its self-aware mental ego in which the ‘will to be’ is liberated, conscious and separately active. The sharp division, which our mental habit and practical experience has created between spirit and matter, has no fundamental reality. At the foundation of this apparent dichotomy is an inalienable Oneness which generates an infinite variety. Between spirit and matter there is an apparent division and struggle, in which apparently separated life-forms evolve into conscious beings which come into relation with each other and form larger and more intricate systems and groupings. This process is governed by a secret Consciousness and Will which together are forever One and master of all its complex action.

Sri Aurobindo is perhaps the strongest advocate of the importance of human body as the fit instrument for expressing and evolving intelligence and higher consciousness. He is in line with Upanishads in this respect as he supports the ‘Matter also is Brahman’ theory. The Divine is not just the inner content, but also the garb of this human existence. He supports the journey of search for truth from gross to subtle. His theory of ascending series of substances in evolution is significant in this context.

How Sri Aurobindo's thoughts can help AI:

On one hand, AI theorists and scientists will be happy to get a support from a spiritualist like Sri Aurobindo in their efforts to prove that matter has enormous possibilities and can even be modified to express life and mind through it. Their efforts in making matter more and more subtle, minute and responsive are consistent with Sri Aurobindo's view of matter.

Sri Aurobindo reasserted the Vedic saying that the importance of a fit body and healthy physical life is essential for ascending to higher levels of consciousness above the mind. In recent centuries there has been a prevalence of a life negating ascetic philosophy in India. Any effort by human beings to replicate God's works was seen as blasphemy. In this background, Sri Aurobindo's unambiguous verdict that 'matter also is brahman' and that the physical should be perfected and spiritualized has brought the ancient holistic and earthly foundation back to the philosophy. He has also praised the work done by materialism in its search for the material foundation of the truth. His works give a better perspective for materialists to see that matter and its modifications alone will never bring life and mind down into it. This has been a perpetual error, and the recent revelation that there is no essential matter other than energy has put this issue back on the centre stage.

While artificial creations can be deceptively natural, it is important to note that they need living beings to begin this process. This shows that matter alone cannot create life; it needs higher truth of life and mind to transform it to a more intelligent material. This again supports Sri Aurobindo's theory. Penrose's conclusion about microtubules storing intelligence and thereby saying that it is not brain alone but several creations in nature that are intelligent is in tune with Sri Aurobindo's writings. He says it is the work of the Supermind as a creator.

Mohrhoff's theory, informed by Sri Aurobindo's spiritual philosophy, attempts to bring a more holistic and relations basis to Quantum Mechanics, and thereby to technology, and avoid the interpretation of some researchers which is partly nihilist or illusionist. (Mohrhoff, 2005)

According to the PIQM, quantum mechanics affords us a glimpse "behind" the manifested world at formless particles and non-visualizable atoms, which, instead of being the world's constituent parts or structures, are instrumental in its manifestation.

Conclusion

In theory as well as in practice, Sri Aurobindo's integration of the materialist and spiritualist views will give broader scope as well as some limitations for AI's work in this direction. Matter is the foundation and has enormous possibilities. However, it is not all sufficient to do this. The fact that AI needs a living being to start biomaterials creation at artificial levels shows that the life principle has to be inserted from outside to start a process and cannot be expected to arise spontaneously from matter as it is.

A genetically enhanced and optimized body is certainly not to be equated with the supramental body. However, according to some thinkers, one day it could exhibit similar characteristics. The genetically enhanced body could be a stepping stone towards the supramental body. The physiological properties of a yogic supramental body possibly could be determined and passed on to other bodies by scientific means creating the blueprint for a new human race.

Some modern thinkers are optimistic that science could provide the means for a sexless and extracorporeal reproduction as envisioned by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

Matter or body may be researched to find that stage where it becomes a fit receptacle of the higher power, 'Adhara' in Sri Aurobindo's terms, a fit instrument to carry the divine mission. Beyond this any miraculous metamorphosis of matter itself should not be expected.

However, the progress in materials is very encouraging as they are becoming subtle, intricate and responsive. Protein folding and DNA decoding, genetics and cloning, nanomaterials and MEMs are a few examples in this direction. This research should continue as it will eventually bring us to that point where a higher power may be invoked.

Invoking spirit in matter (from *pranpratihtha* rituals for idols of gods to planchet for departed souls), kinesis (moving objects inert in air), action at a distance, transmission of information without medium are techniques in mysticism, shamanism, and Tantra. So far, they have been widely considered to be unscientific, however, Science itself is now pointing to such possibilities. In AI also after works of Capra, Penrose and the like, these ideas are not a taboo. Penrose points to the peculiar shape, pattern, and numbers in microtubules as helping in the storing of intelligence and perhaps in invoking mind in them. Relations between pattern, numerology and symmetry calling in a higher power like intelligence or consciousness reminds one of Tantra philosophy, which has been discussed in Sri Aurobindo's works. Concepts like Sri Jyotish, Kundali, chakras as well as nadis are established in Tantra and Yoga literature and are related to these ideas. Penrose admits these connections and theorizes this higher power to be Quantum indeterminacy. It may be beneficial to see this in light of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy of Tantra. Rather than a quantum factor, it may be attributed to the already existing higher powers which are waiting for an instrument to express themselves.

Such a change in the direction and also the objective of AI will make it more moderate, natural and safe in its attempts and in turn will help its progress.

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patriotism in ancient india –it's spiritual baadē

Sonali Chakrabarti

The people of India have been long made to believe that patriotism as such, is a product of Western intellectual and artistic tradition, only arriving on Indian shores after the 18th century. This was with the advent of English education and a class of educated Indians, educated in the Western mould by virtue of institutions established by the colonizers. From the very early stage of life our curriculum taught us that people having Western education realized the cost of freedom of our motherland and started to fight against colonial Government. Eventually it took the shape of freedom movement in India.

In India the concept of patriotism is different. We trace it back in ancient period where the basis of patriotism was spirituality. Sri Aurobindo clarified the Indian idea of patriotism; distinguishing it from western one. In the chapter 'The Discovery of the Nation-Soul' in *The Human Cycle* Sri Aurobindo commented that "The objective view of society has reigned throughout the historical period of humanity in the West; it has been sufficiently strong though not engrossing in the East. Rulers, people and thinkers alike have understood by their national existence a political status, the extent of their borders, their economic well-being and expansion, their laws, institutions and the working of the things". (CWSA 25: 36)

For this reason, political and economic motivation everywhere predominated on the surface and history has been a record of their operation and influence. Sri Aurobindo tried to attract the attention on psychology of mass which actually modify the perspective in East specially in India. Whether we accept it or not, ancient Indian account is a supportive document of Sri Aurobindo's thought of Nation or nationality.

From times immemorial the process of nation building has been taking place. The foundation is complete spiritual development of human being. In other words, it is the evolution of humanity. These are not just airy theories These are completely relevant to the practical life of the people. In our scriptures and literature. In Sanskrit literature we have the prayer for motherland time and again. In "Prithvi Sukta" of Atharva Veda there are about 63 slokas for adoration of Motherland. There is a prayer mentioning the geographical characteristics of the country. This land with seas in its three sides' fertile with the rivers and plenty of grains should be protected by God. Another part of the same text depicts the land as a land of various languages, and culture praying to protect this plurality. So, it is found that collective mind exercised the plurality as a great value system. In Vishnu Purana it is clearly uttered that those who are born in this country are extremely fortunate.

Sanskrit literature clearly chants for the motherland as, "Janani janmabhumiischa swargadapi gariasi". The poet of Atharva Veda clearly mentions the causes of economic development of the country. The soil of this land is rich, the number of rivers is many and natural beauty of the land made it rich and wealthy. For this fact the special thanks are given to God. Not only that, the practice of river worshiping was prevalent at that period. As an Indian they prayed to the rivers like Ganga, Yamuna, Saraswati, Sindhu, Satadru, Bitasta, Asikni and others. This type of prayer was collective for collective cause of national

development. This is not subjective or individualistic in nature. This is a spiritual expression of nationality. This prayer extends its sphere to Natural assets like mountain, forest, river as well as other creatures, living objects of our environments. Separate prayers for birds and reptiles are also there which indicates an integration with nature as a whole. Ancient Indians realized themselves as the part of larger natural environment or eco system. This universal expression is nothing but the reflection of universal consciousness. The patriotism and spiritualism are integrated in this thought.

This prayer for natural resources and energy has been changed with the passage of time, with the development of social organizations. Small groups in the society came into being to serve various purposes. Prayers for peaceful group life emerged in various scriptures. Successful society with desired value system needs proper understanding among group members and also communication. Winning war was less important than social communication and integration. People of India earnestly prayed for this.

In the Vedic period one of the important document of Indian society is Manusmriti. This is one kind of law book accounts for various disciplinary activities to operate society meaningfully with equity. It is very strict in observation of legal actions to be taken in situational demand. But in Manusmriti also motherland is a subject of emotion. The emotional description of India we find here addresses India as “Bramhabhartā” which is the “God’s own land.”

In Bhagawat Purana also we find high scale adoration for our country. Each and every resident of this country prays for its safety and security. People thank God for their birth in this country. Regular “Puja” or rituals for motherland was compulsory daily routine. Not only for materialistic gain but also the spiritual expression is very common for the worship of motherland.

Pilgrimage is an important characteristic of ancient Hindu civilization. This system unified India in a unique way. We cannot find so many places of pilgrimage in any other country. This is a main source of social, cultural and emotional integrity of India. These places of spiritual revelation include geographical significance and expression of creativity through architecture, music dance etc. It helps in all round development of humanity as well as spiritual expression of all the faculties of human being which is unique to India. As Swami Vivekananda also identified the backbone of India in her spirituality. Indian people dedicate all sorts of performance to God.

The beauty of rivers, valleys and mountains are not for our sensory satisfaction only. Through the beauty of the nature the beauty of the creator is reflected and we can feel His presence through it. The beauty leads us to the realm of spiritual engrossment. Crossing the mental, vital and psychic periphery the visit to pilgrimage raises our self-consciousness and self-restraint. This concept of pilgrimage is totally different from western concept of tourism. These places also determine the geographical boundary of India as a nation. Our ancient texts as puranas, *Itihasas*, epics pointed out all the places in the Indian subcontinent. Fifty one pithas of Sati, Twelve jyotirlinga, all the places are located in a specific geographical

region. So, it is very clear that cultural integrity gives rise to emotional attachment with motherland.

There are so many factors which are identified as the components of nation building like language, religion, administration, cultural identity, economy etc. but it is the landmass or geographical identity which serve as the basic structure of all these components. It is very important for a nation to have a stable geographical area. Therefore, the nomads could not build a permanent civilization in the history of the world. Indian subcontinent has been able to establish a robust civilization due to the geographical permanence.

It is very clear that patriotism in India is not the offshoot of colonialism. Indian people are accustomed with the feeling of patriotism. It is already inculcated among people of India through its strong bond of spiritual and cultural heritage. In modern India our new generation is to some extent disoriented with the attraction of consumer world. The cultural heritage of India should be properly represented to them. The essence of Indian culture as depicted by Sri Aurobindo and Swami Vivekananda should be made comprehensible before them. After seventy-five years of Indian independence it is high time to realize the message of spiritual culture of India. The patriotism is our cultural essence.

Our leaders are the symbol of sacrifice not only the epitome of lust or enjoyment. The heroes of our epics give us the message of sacrifice. The article can be concluded with the words of Sri Aurobindo from which it is very clear that tradition of Indian civilization appeared time and again through the same message to reconstruct the country in the line of its original flavour of spirituality. "The nation or society, like the individual, has a body, an organic life, a moral and aesthetic temperament, a developing mind and soul behind all these signs and powers for the sake of which they exist..... it is a group soul that once having attained to a separate distinctiveness must become more and more self conscious....." As told by Sri Aurobindo we should search the soul for the new generation.

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I say no longer that nationalism is a creed, a religion, a faith; I say that it is the Sanatana Dharma which for us is nationalism. This Hindu nation was born with the Sanatana Dharma, with it it moves and with it it grows. When the Sanatana Dharma declines, then the nation declines, and if the Sanatana Dharma were capable of perishing, with the Sanatana Dharma it would perish. The Sanatana Dharma, that is nationalism. This is the message that I have to speak to you.

(Sri Aurobindo, CWSA 8:12)

Harmony and Beauty in Life

the ideal law of development

Sanjay Shirwalkar

Sri Aurobindo is well-known as a maha yogi, as a man of letters, as a poet par excellence, as a philosopher but is less known as a social thinker. He had definite and intuitive insights on social thought, on the state of humanity, its present and its future. These were reflected in his writings. He wrote articles on many different topics in the 'Arya' magazine from 1914 to 1920. These were later compiled into different books like *The Life Divine*, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, etc and two books concerning sociology *The Human Cycle* and *The Ideal of Human Unity* also came out and they now they are included in Volume 25 of the Collected Works of Sri Aurobindo (CWSA). The present discussion is based on ideas expressed in *The Human Cycle*. I have extensively referred to *Social Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo* by Kishore Gandhi.

Although the title of present discussion is the ideal law of development, we shall start discussion by adding something first about the society, the nature, the relation between the individual and the society, problem of social development and then in the end we shall take up ideal law of development.

Sri Aurobindo formulated a whole system of social philosophy and it covered all aspects of social existence. He gave the problem of social development special treatment and discussed the problems in the book *The Human Cycle*. For him individual, society and its problems were part of the Reality and they are included in his general philosophy.

The Problem of Social Development

All social thinkers agree that the condition of the society is different at different periods of history. They have to find the answer to some simple questions. What is the manner or pattern of social change? What is its character or quality? What is the cause of the change? A number of theories have been put forward and grouped into four groups as per their characteristics for convenience.

The first group: the social change is haphazard, there is no pattern but there is ceaseless motion.

The second group: the social change is cyclic and it may be oscillatory or circular but there is neither growth nor deterioration.

The third group: the social change is rhythmic, cyclic and it may be oscillatory or circular but there is a downward slide, there is a fall from an original ideal or good state.

The fourth group: social change is rhythmic, cyclic, movement may be oscillatory or is circular and the change is in upward evolutionary direction.

There are no specific examples in first group but it does come up that there is no pattern to some changes that occur without positing any specific theory. The ancient religious beliefs mostly falls into the second and the third group, the fourth group was also discussed in ancient times and it has come more into vogue after Darwin's theory of evolution of living organisms. Sri Aurobindo's theory fits into the last group. He observes that the movement of social change

shows a rhythmic pattern and the movement may be circular or spiral with the curve moving in the upward direction. Besides he also accepts that like the development of individual being, the changes in society may sometimes slide in downward direction, there may be a fall. The falls help the individual or the society to correct their faults, integrate with new development and move at a higher level and in general move in an upward evolutionary direction. This is similar to the forward movement by a small group adventuring by a cross country route to a far off destination by car and in an unknown territory. Sometimes the car has to halt, backtrack and re-route its forward movement in face of difficulty and then move further. Sri Aurobindo held realistic views about social changes and he was neither too optimistic nor too pessimistic.

One can see this in his proposition of historical changes that was based on Lamprecht's theory of social changes - the symbolic age, the typical age, the conventional age, the individualist age and the subjective age. Society has evolved through these changes to the present subjective age. Let us discuss these in brief.

The Symbolic age

In this age the general population was close to nature and were ruled more by instinctive intuition and imagination than by conscious intuition and mental consciousness and hence everything was expressed in symbols and even great ideas got expressed in everyday plebian or agrarian activities. This mentality is much different from our mentality and hence we do not relate properly to it and misunderstand most of the writings of that period. Religion had a firm grip upon their lives and the Divine or gods were kept at the center of all their activities. Example: Rig Veda marriage hymns. The daughter of sun, Surya is at the center and the hymns describe her marriage to the gods. Another example is that of the four varnas. In that age, the Rishis classified the prevailing professions into four classes. The individuals could choose any profession as per their choice without any restrictions. They symbolically represented as emerging from the body of the Divine.

The Typical age

In this age there was continuation of symbolic age. The idea and ideals of dharma got established. New ideas regarding honor of each varna entered into the society. The individuals still could adopt any varna of their choice, it was still very flexible. Examples abound in the Vedic and Upanishadic literature. Valmiki, Satyakama Jabala, and many others.

The Conventional age

This age is an age of dark period in history of East as well as West. In this age the varna system got converted into *jati* system. There was no flexibility in adopting one's profession. The priest became more powerful, more than even king and controlled everything. There was crystallization and fixing of ideas and rigidity entered everywhere, conventions were fixed and no one could bypass the conventions in all activities of life. The priest class in connivance with royals and traders maltreated the subjects and in human malpractices were rampant. In the West there was revolt and it entered into Renaissance period where reason dominated and thus ended this black period and entered in Individualist age. In the East there was a longer continuation of this period and the advent of Europeans started influencing the mentality and thinking of the people.

The Individualistic age

This age was an age of reason, questioning and revolt, there was revolt against everything. The main driver was the opening up of the vitality and the mental consciousness that reasoned, questioned and challenged everything. This is also the age of Renaissance and Reformation. There was tremendous vitality, and creativity reached its peaks be it art like painting, sculpture, architecture or advances in all branches of physical sciences, advances in psychology, sociology etc. Some notable examples are Michelangelo, Raphael, Van Gogh, Milton, Shakespeare etc. There was urge to find new countries, great mariners were there like Columbus. Handful of Europeans started conquering great land masses in Africa, America, in India, Asia etc. But there was great sliding later - the advent of dictators like Hitler, Mussolini, the two world wars that were barbaric to the extreme and shook humanity to the core. Now humanity started self-questioning, questioning its own actions and seeking answers to its troubles leading to the next age of Subjective age.

The Subjective age

This age has dawned over India just a hundred years back. The horrors of the world wars, the self-introspection of humanity brought in new personalities who gave fundamental psychological and spiritual succor to humanity. India had to be free that was the first agenda so the freedom struggle and gaining of independence. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo and other towering spiritual personalities were the leaders of this age. There are great triumphs in sciences and technologies, there space has been conquered, but these achievements apart the developments have also left us hollow, alone in midst of plenty without any inner peace. We feel we have missed the wood for the trees and there is something wrong and lacking in our system. We search for answers in drugs, drinks, in vitalistic excesses but there is no solution till we know that there is something within us that is intrinsically true and beautiful, the essential inner soul, the psychic being, the evolving Self of our being.

The Individual and the Society

The word society, group or collective are synonymous words and mean a voluntary coming together of individuals for some purpose. This may involve giving up of certain liberties in exchange of achieving the objective of the society. The relation between the individual and collective or society is very complex, difficult and fundamental problem of Sociology. There are many factors affecting this relationship and various thinkers and sociologists have given their solutions. Theories can be clubbed into two groups - the Social Contract Theory that are individualist in nature and Organic Theory that are collectivistic in nature. I wish to add a third group to these theories that which is spiritual in nature - the synthetic or integral social vision of Sri Aurobindo which is all inclusive.

The Social Contract Theory asks a basic question: how did human beings exist in nature in their original natural state? Different philosophers have given different answers and this thinking has influenced powerfully the political arrangement of governments.

The Social Contract Theory of Thomas Hobbes gives us a monarchical solution to the problem. He says that individuals came together out of fear of danger to their life and made a contract among themselves where they gave up their freedom to some authority like a king

in return for protection of their life. That authority demanded full surrender to it in return for their protection. This has been prevalent since ancient times.

John Locke and Jean Rousseau gave a different solution. They took the stand that human beings lived in a happy and enjoyable state when they lived in isolation in nature. There were no controls by any group and it was a happy situation, but it would not last long as there was no guarantee to any private property and to ensure this, they entered into a voluntary contract to form a society. They decided to appoint someone by common consent, an authority to take care of them and protect their interests. They did not give up all of their freedom but only that portion that was necessary to preserve themselves. They had the freedom to change the authority if they found the arrangement to be unsatisfactory. This was a democratic set up where freedom was guaranteed and it had the power to influence the French and American revolutions.

The Organic Theory of Society was advocated by thinkers in the 18th century as a reaction to the Social Contract Theory. Here the society was considered to be like a living organism with parallel arrangement of structure and functions. The theory of biological evolution of species proposed by Charles Darwin was instrumental in firing up imagination and ideas of thinkers at that time to consider the society as a biological organism that underwent similar changes and was governed by similar stages of birth, growth, maturation and decay. The science of sociology was then based on biology. The proponents of this theory were Spencer, Bluntchli, Spengler, Lilienfeld, Schaffle, Novicov and others. In fact the theory even accepted the psychological approach and treated society like an organism that has group-body, group-life, group-mind and group-soul. These were supported by Plato writings, Hegel, Kidd etc. In this theory the individual has to give up his individuality and freedom and surrender to the collective and work as per the requirement of the group. The individual had no right to own anything privately, everything belonged to the state and the state would provide for his well-being, he was reduced to work as a tool, as an automaton, as a cell of the state collectivity. This improves the mechanical efficiency of the state. The individual had no right to question the authority of the collective vested in a party or a group to look after their welfare. Dictators like Mussolini and Hitler found succour in the collectivistic doctrine of Hegel and Communists in the doctrine of Karl Marx. They had catchy slogans and mass appeal to bind the masses to their ideal and were led by powerful leaders. Nolini Kanta Gupta has discussed the various “isms” at length and Sri Aurobindo also comments that the masses have their consciousness close to the physical in such cases and therefore are easily led and maintain uniformity in thought and action easily. It is only when desires and questionings start that the regimes find it difficult to control such individuals and these are then exterminated. Examples of oppression are known like the purging of Jews, massacre of communist dissidents, the Gulag etc.

Sri Aurobindo accepts certain portions of Social Contract theory and the Organic theory and has proposed his own synthetic or integral theory. Sri Aurobindo’s philosophical arrangement is not esoteric, it is not running away from civilization but remaining within the society and working out solutions for the grave problems of humanity and like an individual, a group, society or a collective is an integral part of universal existence, hence his theory is

inclusive in nature. He avers that, "Society is a larger composite individual, the collective Man" (CWSA 25: 73).

Society has a similar form - body, life and mind, moral, aesthetic temperament and soul like an individual person. In fact, Sri Aurobindo says that each nation has its own presiding god, like for India we have the Bharat mata. It is not a geographical area but an inner truth of existence of our nation. Just as an individual body is composed of cells, the society is composed of individual members. Like an individual, the society also undergoes similar cycle of birth, growth, decay and with a possibility of renewal under particular conditions.

We discussed similarities, now we will discuss differences. The constituents of the body cells are subconscious in nature while the constituents of society are individuals with their own conscious mind. In the initial stages of formation, a society appears crude and later it grows in refinement as life and mind develop further. Another difference is that the body has an objective existence whereas society has a subjective existence.

The character of organic unity is attributable to the outer self only and the essential self is the inner soul. The inner soul is a group soul that has to become separate, distinct, more and more self-conscious and only then it grows. The real determinant of the society is the consciousness of the society and in its depths it is the soul-consciousness, this controls and influences the outer existence. Society has no right to suppress the individual and at the same time individual has no right to disregard the society and must fulfil the legitimate claims demanded from it. The individual and the society have to first evolve into ego so as to assert their independence in the universal collective, only then can they distinguish from others. They have a role or a part to play in this drama of existence of Reality. Initially the individual and the society will identify with the ego which is the false soul and on further evolution recognize and grow in their true self that is their soul. The individual should not lose itself in the morass of the mass but stand out and express the truth of its being and help the collective to find its truth and that is the true objective of individual's existence. Therefore, in the right relationship there would be no conflict.

Sri Aurobindo argues that the initial postulate of the Social Contract theory that human beings lived in isolation is partly wrong and partly true. He considers that from the prehistoric records found in caves, etc, the individual never lived in isolation but always in groups and the main driver for that has been the instinct of survival. This arrangement has also resulted in fostering and development of group, its growth, increasing its efficiency, self-assertion and self-preservation besides safety of the group, however the individual had to be subservient to the group, in fact collectivistic tendencies can be traced back to this arrangement. He considers that the basic assumption in the hypothesis is faulty. He also does not agree with Rousseau that the individual originally lived solitary in a state of enjoyment and later formed society for a certain purpose. He argues, the idea of living in solitary status is a later development as he considers that the tendencies exhibited in the group were more nearer to physical uniformity and hence the idea of living in independence came much later as it was sign of growth of individuality when the vital and the mind emerged and grew and people started asserting and having their opinions. But he does not fully reject this idea also.

He considers that as there is an imprint of living freely in isolation in human psyche. It is possible that humans may have lived for a brief period in their cyclical history in a state

of utter freedom and he considers this to be an anarchistic approach. During this condition there were no social restrictions governing the individual and the individual lived according to his inner instincts, not as per his mind or fanciful desires. He lived in utter freedom and enjoyed the unfettered bliss of living in isolation without any controls. If the individuals came together they lived by instincts without trampling on the rights of other individuals. In this state they lived by their instincts, by their inner law of love and light, by right thinking, by right action and in spontaneous and free association with others. He accepts that there is poetic truth in it but it has a seed idea for the condition of the futuristic society that will live consciously by intuition rather than by mind or vital.

In fact in this enlightened state in subjective age, human beings will live in free association, without any state control, the only law will be the inner law based on conscious intuition. Like in the prehistoric past human beings lived instinctively like an animal and now would live intuitively in self-possessed unity reflecting the Divine and become God. This was the main dream of the Mother in the creation of Auroville where human beings from all walks of life without restrictions on country, age, creed, faith, religion, sex, social status, wealth etc. would live in utter freedom and realize their inner truth and live in perfect harmony with all other individuals by inner law of harmony, good will, love and right thinking ushering the divine life upon earth and uniting human beings in an inner utter human unity. Of course this is a utopia but is in the making in Auroville as an experiment initiated by the Mother.

Sri Aurobindo says that the relationship between the individual and society is complex and multi sided and cannot be reduced to a single formula. In the normal state the individual is a part of a society and is contained in it but individuals inner being is its true self, it is capable of independent existence without aid of society, it is capable of enlargement, universalization and containing within itself not only the whole of society but even the whole of humanity. The examples that easily come to mind are the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. This is the importance of Sri Aurobindo's theory that reveals to us the integral truth of the many sided relations between individual and society.

Now let us go the next discussion of the ideal law of development.

The Ideal Law of Development

Our present unsatisfactory state compels us to search for answers to some of the root questions regarding our existence and one dwells and ponders on them. Humans have a unique ability, they have the power of self-introspection, of looking within oneself and search for answers. The real effort lies in going inwards and as per one's capacity of development one can have answers to the questions that one has asked oneself. Now a days there are workshops that teach us how to go within and carry out inner search. What is this indication of? We have passed the conventional age and entered into a subjective age of mankind, this age has come after the age of reason, the dominance of mental being. The power of reason and mind in combination with imagination has lead humans to reach new heights of modern developments but left them in a vacuum in the midst of plenitude. This state of human beings became the precursor of the next stage the subjective age.

Our present state is like the cauldron of Medea as Sri Aurobindo describes in *The Synthesis of Yoga*, where things are being churned, shredded, new combinations worked out, the muck

of the age also rises up and hence we see a chaos everywhere and search for answers but find none satisfactory. One can even compare this state to the churning that took place when *samudramanthan* took place. What came out was both *amrita*, the nectar and the *halal* or the poison. Now, similarly out of this present churning, divine life on the earth will come out by defeating or transforming the forces that prevent its advent. Then there will be the awareness of the divine presence right into the physical, in the Inconscient. As in *Savitri*, at the end, Death shrank back in terror and was swallowed by the Light and a greater dawn comes upon earth.

What do we try to do most at present? It is to be as perfect as possible. Then, what is perfection? There are many definitions of perfection- it is attaining something of the highest, the highest is the Divine hence attaining the Divine is what we mean by perfection or spiritual perfection, the highest form of perfection. How to attain perfection? The Mother and Sri Aurobindo have given the solution in their legacy and we have understand and absorb it in our daily life.

The simplest answer is have faith, go within and find your 'real' self or the psychic being. At present you are living in the outer ego, this is your false soul, and when you go within, you will understand that you are dominated by this false soul. Surrendering to the Divine and offering yourself to the Divine is best way. It is like being carried like a baby cat, the Divine will carry you inwards and show you your true psychic being, your true growing soul belonging to the Divine. Once you reach there nothing need be known, give the charge of your life in the hands of psychic being and work as per directions from the psychic being. You have to have a sincere desire for the Divine and reject all that stands in the way comes in the way of its manifestation. It is difficult to tell any time period, but it is important to make a start.

The realisation of Self in the collective group-soul is as important as it is there in the individual soul. But for that the individual has first to realise its own soul, the Self. The object of the collective is to provide the individual with right conditions so that one becomes more and more conscious of oneself and grows towards the One. The right conditions for growth are freedom and harmony. In fact these principles of freedom and harmony should be the corner stone of any society. Sri Aurobindo and the Mother worked tirelessly to achieve this in the Ashram and they gave full freedom to the sadhaks to develop. Sadhaks made mistakes, revolted against them but they were calm and patient and dealt with them with utmost love and care and guided them on the true path. Another example is the experiment of Auroville where these ideas are being worked out in day to day life.

The principles of freedom and harmony will foster freedom to grow in the desired direction and harmonise multiplicity; freedom is necessary for the individual, collective and the race and also there should be harmony between the individuals, collectives and the race. This is of great importance in achieving the goal of perfection aimed by the individual and the collective. In fact throughout the history of the race, humanity has been making this effort to go in this direction for attaining perfection at the individual and collective. Human beings group according to their physical, vital, mental or spiritual affinities and form smaller aggregates like associations, communities, classes, etc, the larger aggregates may be economic, political or social groups or nations. However one is never limited by belonging to

a particular group or nation one partly belongs to the group or nation and still one exceeds that and belongs to Divine and the world.

Although human being is limited to his individuality however one can evolve and universalise oneself, this is like sharing in the complexity and variation of the Divine. This variation enriches the multiplicity and something constantly gets added into it and there is growth and divine expansion. However, no collective however large it may be, say a state or a nation or even smaller collectives have any right to claim and use the individual for their own sole growth, perfection and greatness. If it is there then it is an egoistic claim, an error and deformation of truth. Similarly, even groups or collectives express the Divine and therefore similar to what an individual seeks viz, freedom and harmony, collectives also have a similar right to be themselves. They also develop a group soul and demand the right of freedom of expression so as to fulfil destiny of individual, collective and humanity. This is done by providing full freedom to the individual and the collective for self-development and at the same time maintain harmony between individuals, harmony within the collective and between other collectives.

The collective should not have uniform culture, regimentation or become a closed unit or cell limited to themselves alone and not sharing their gains with other collectives and becoming indifferent or hostile to the growth of other collectives. No 'ism' shall govern and bind the individual. Collectives may progress greatly for a time but need to be careful that their growth is not arrested or they remain satisfied or complacent in their own achievements otherwise their gains will not add much to the perfection of humanity. It should be noted that free development from within is the surest way for the growth and perfection of the individual, the collective and ultimately of the humanity. This is the golden law of development of individual, collective and humanity and this will happen in the subjective age. This will also lead to the development and culmination into human unity that is so desired by the humanity.

In conclusion, one can say that the law of perfection of individual is a free development from within besides respecting the right of similar free development of others. Basically, the individual has to harmonise one's life with the collective and contribute to the development and perfection of the collective and humanity simultaneously. This law is equally valid even for collectives, they also have to work out the development of their soul and perfection in a similar fashion and contribute to the perfection of individual and humanity in general. They have to harmonise with other collectives allowing full freedom for inner growth and by their actions attain the supreme goal of converting all individuals and collectives into one divine family. One can envisage a life of living by the inner truth of a person from intuitive level in full freedom without any state controls by right action, right thinking and free association. This will be a state of golden anarchy, when human will exceed themselves and become God and reflect the Divine and live in unity.

This has so far never been attained and hence this is at present the ideal law of social development. Human beings in the current state are imperfect and it will take a long time to bring about some level of inner perfection and as said earlier there is *samudramanthan* and pearls and gems and nectar of the divine in form of divine life will come upon earth. In short, first there has to be spiritual and psychical development of the individual souls

and collective souls into the Self. This realisation is the most important and crucial step because from this standpoint, only then the progress will proceed safely towards the step of harmonisation with other individuals and with other collectives. In fact, stopping short at this point will arrest the movement, it has to spread into the whole of humanity and humanity should freely accept to lift itself up to this higher level and that will ensure the advent of the divine life as envisaged by Sri Aurobindo and the Divine Mother.

As Sant Dyaneshwar says in 'Pasaydan':

आतां विश्वात्मके देवे, येणे वाग्यज्ञे तो गावे, तो गोनि मज द्यावे, पसायदान हे ॥१॥
जे खळांचि व्यंकटी सांडो, तया सत्कर्मी रती वाढो, भूतां परस्पर जडो, मैत्र जीवांचे ॥२॥
दुरितांचे तिमिर जावो, विश्व स्वधर्म सूर्ये पाहो, जो जे वांछील तो ते लाहो, प्राणिजात ॥३॥
वर्तित सकळ मंडळी, ईश्वरनि ठांची मांदियाळी, अनवरत भूमंडळी, भेटतु भूता ॥४॥
चला कल्पतरूंचे आरव, चेतनाचिंतामणींचे गाव, बोलती जे अर्णव, पीयूषांचे ॥५॥
चन्द्रमंजे अलांछन, मार्तण्ड जे तापहीन, ते सर्वाही सदा सज्जन, सोयरे होतु ॥६॥
किंबहुना सर्व सुखी, पूर्ण होवोनि तिहीं लोकी, भजिजो आदिपुरुषीं, अखण्डित ॥७॥
आणि ग्रंथोपजिवीये, विशे गी लोकी इये, दृष्टादृष्ट विजये, होआवेजी ॥८॥
येथ म्हणे श्री विश्वेश्वरावो, हा होईल दानपसावो, येणे वरे ज्ञानदेवो, सुखिया झाला ॥९॥

Now, 'O' God, The entire Cosmos Divine |

Be pleased with this pious word offering of mine ||

Grant me in good will benign | Your Benevolent Grace Divine ||1||

May the evil minded, their wickedness shed |

May their intellect turn to pious and good deeds instead ||

May all living beings find themselves bonded |

By friendly ties of soul companionship ||2|| May the darkness of ignorant disappear |

May the universe see the Sun of self consciousness ||

May whatsoever aspirations of those be fulfilled | Of all living beings ||3||

May shower all over the pious bliss Divine | May the world be full of Saintly beings benign ||

May incessantly in the Universe | Meet the living beings ||4||

Moving groves of wish granting trees | Colonies of conscious wish fulfilling jewels ||

These saints are, speaking oceans | Full of pious Nectarly Divine ||5||

A Moon without a smear | A Sun without a hot sear ||

Always to one and all, these hallowed saints | Become kith and kin dear ||6||

Let all beings be completely satisfied and happy | Fully contented in all the three world ||

Engrossed and merged in devotion | Eternally, of ultimate Divine ||7||

the mythological and iconographic representation of sati

Aditi Kanchanbaras

Introduction

The term Sati invokes an image of a woman on a funeral pyre, however not of a woman wailing or screaming in pain but resiliently accepting her fate. The pain and agony of these women who committed Sati was often veiled with the overbearing societal explanation of terming it as a marital duty. This practice as per those who are aware of the term and those who argue in its favour, try to give it a scriptural sanction by blindly referring to the Vedas and other ancient texts which they believe had prescribed this practice. Moreover, *itihasa* like Mahabharata and even Ramayana, along with the Puranas are quoted to glorify this inhuman practice. In this paper, emphasis will be given to exploring these claims made by quoting the ancient texts which according to a popular belief not only represent widow immolation as an icon of marital duty but also glorified it and gave it a divine stature. This will be done to support the argument that there lay a difference between the descriptive nature of Sati practice in the texts and the glorification associated to it by the society, which made it prescriptive in nature.

History of the Practice

It is important to know the context in which this practice developed to gain a deeper understanding of why it developed and why was it consequently popularized? John Stratton Hawley says that “For many Hindus, Sati is not a woman’s deed but the woman herself”, this is an important quote in terms of understanding the societal position of women and how it played a pivotal role in encouraging Sati practice. However, it is more than important to establish a boundary between the practice and the term which now are popularly used interchangeably, however, their remained a difference between the two originally.

Sati was often used to refer to a “good woman or a true wife” according to mythology as well the tale of Sati mainly referred to Lord Shiva’s first wife and Daksha’s (Brahma’s son) daughter. The tale described how Sati immolated herself upon hearing the insults hurled by her father about Shiva, her self-immolation and its glorification did not stop at this it further carried on to the tale which described how Shiva performed his Rudra Tandava while carrying Sati’s body in his arm, to save from further destruction.

Vishnu using his chakra had cut down Sati’s body into 52 parts which according to the myth when fell on earth formed the basis for the Shakti peethas.

This mythological tale serves as an important basis for linking the glorification of the practice not only did it become the benchmark for ideal married women to whom the servitude towards their husbands was utmost important, but it also glorified such “devoted” wives and gave them a divine stature in form of the shakti peeths, making them an almost goddess like icon.

While the mythological tale originates from the *Shaivapurana*, it is important to look at the practice in isolation from its religious connotation. That is by not looking at Sati as a goddess but rather as a “woman who is immolated on her husband’s pyre” John Hawley states

that the use of term Sati to refer to the practice is more of an anglicized idea, as otherwise Sati was the name used for the women who would as a gesture of virtue and dedication to their husbands immolate themselves. Etymologically, the term is derived from *asti* which means “she is pure or true” The practice according to the ancient texts, is referred to as *anugamana/anumarana* and *sahagamana/anvarohana*, connoting the action of “choosing” to immolate herself following the death and funeral of her husband and the other being “choosing” to immolate herself on the pyre of her husband respectively. In this context, the question of choice becomes utmost important. This is because as described above, the practice had started as a choice. Which the women could make to avoid widowhood, however women who had children, or had missed their menstruation cycle were not allowed to commit Sati, other than these factors it is only in the later period that is from the Guptas inscriptions that the mention of Sati is found (c. 300 CE) in areas around Nepal, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan in later period. Moreover, this is the same time around which the puranas (*Shaivapurana* to be exact) were being composed that is from 4CE to 8 CE. This is an important point as while the practice gains the status of custom the period in which this takes place is similar with the composition of religious texts which again glorified the act of self-immolation as a symbol of devoted wife or *pativrata*.

This act as marked by A.S Altekar was not unique to the subcontinent, certain civilizations like the Celts, Slavs, Goths etc would bury women along with other utilities like bows and arrows with their respective male partners due to the belief in afterlife, however, he completely negates the fact that this practice of double burials was brought by Aryans to India, as there is no mention of it in Vedas or in Avesta for that matter, even the exact cause behind this practice is debated but the one used by Altekar is of supporting the patriarchal structures of the societies.

Historians like A.S Altekar have also supported this viewpoint that Sati as a mandatory practice was not a part of the Vedas and the original custom of the widow lying beside the dead husband on his funeral pyre was asked to get up and continue her life. Even Romila Thappar is of the view that the self-immolation of the widow was symbolic rather than literal. The important question that thus arises here is what gave the priests or the society the authority to compel women to perform this practice? The answer is embedded in the social position that women held.

Development of Sati as a Norm

The earlier section focused on negating the argument that the practice of Sati was an inescapable mandatory practice. The practice of Sati popularized mainly with the changing society, a society which demanded women to foster certain duties and responsibilities to make the lives of male in the society easier. Texts like Vedas, Manusmriti, Arthashastra and Puranas clearly describe the duties and role of women. In her text Pandita Ramabai provided certain excerpts from the Manusmriti which showcases the condescending attitude adopted towards women, one such excerpt states that:

“Her father protects her in childhood, her husband protects her in youth, and her sons protect her in old age, a woman is never fit for independence.”

These texts often served as a great example of the status women held in the society, which was highly patriarchal. As discussed earlier the main instances of Sati emerge from the Gupta period, while elsewhere double funerals were customary, but not in the case of the Indian subcontinent prior to Guptas. Altekar has argued that had this been the case even the heterodox sects like Buddhism and Jainism which stood vehemently against animal sacrifices would have not protested this barbaric act. The normalisation of Sati mainly began from the Gupta age, as it was during this time that the Brahmins gain an important status in the society than they had before. Land grants too were given to them in ample amount during this period. Moreover Shakuntala Narasimhan and John Hawley mention of the monetary gain that Sati brought this sect along with the family of the husband, there are very less cases of childless widows acquiring the property of their spouses, to remove this possibility altogether and to avoid remarriage/*niyoga* which Thapar establishes was a prevalent practice (*niyoga* was a popular custom where the widow would marry her brother in law to produce heirs). The Brahmin priests were highly paid. There were instances post the Gupta period and mainly during the coming in of Rajputs where women were intoxicated with *bhang* (opium) and their jewellery forcefully stripped of them and donated to Brahmins. It served as an extra income along with the payment that they received for performing the ritual which was very high. It also becomes important to make a note that this practice though was popularised by Brahmins, it was widely prevalent amongst the kshatriyas or the warrior class, it did however to some extent trickle down to Vaishyas, however, there lies lesser evidence of any Brahmin Sati or Shudras Sati, the latter was however kept afar from the religious sanctum by the hierarchical society anyway.

Thus to quench the patriarchal thirst for women regulation and carry on the monopoly of customs by Brahmins Sati became a norm in the later society, an important example of this brahmin domination and monopolization is that in the ancient societies it was the brahmins who were believed to be solely well versed in the Vedas, and the word of the Vedas was deemed important due to the affinity our society holds with tradition, Altekar along with other historians has argued how the term “*Yoni magre*” was changed to “*Yoni magne*” from the old ritual which asks the widow to come back to the womb of earth to asking her to enter the womb of fire.

Religious Representation and Subsequent Glorification

Another question that arises here is why was immolation the sole resort even when lesser painful methods of death were available? The answer to this question lies in the supreme position that fire holds in society. Fire, is an important element even according to Avesta. In the Vedas it has symbolized purity. Being pure and virtuous were two dominant traits of ideal women in the ancient patriarchal society. Hence the practice of *anugama*, required the women to immolate themselves. An important factor is also the status of widows in the society and how the widows were considered an impure burden and often an omen in the family. This was seen more so in the medieval period than the ancient one, where widows were asked to remarry even Kautilya in his Arthashastra had emphasized on this view. However, it is important to note that remarriage should not be viewed as an acceptance

of widows but rather as a means of lineage continuation, a role that patriarchy prescribes to women staunchly.

Even mythologically, women and fire had a prolonged relationship. From Sati to Sita and Draupadi to Madri, women especially those who gained the stature of goddesses like the ones mentioned before had a relationship with fire. It can be observed how in most circumstances these women were subjected to some aspect of dishonour, does than fire become an important prop to prove their chastity? It will not be wrong to assume so, while Sita gave *agnipareeksha* to prove her chastity, Draupadi who had a polyandrous marriage with Pandavas was born out of the fire, and Sati who immolated herself upon her husband's dishonour, it is only Madri who we find to have become Sati. But here too in case of Madri, Altekar explains how it was an act of guilt that made her commit this act and less of a customary requirement, and how anachronistically the emphasis was given by the priests on the latter than former. While stating the *itihasa* an important loophole is that Dashratha's wives in the Ramayana did not become Sati, nor did Mandodari who was Ravana's wife. The same applies for Uttara and the wives of Kauravas who did not become Sati, for had it been so an account of these more than hundred immolations would have surely been made. Hence, the relationship between fire and women did have a mythological connection but there is no explicit argument that validates widow burning in the ancient scriptures.

Conclusion

Through the arguments presented, it is to be noted that Sati both as a term and practice gained iconographic and mythological glorification post the Gupta period. Even so, the glorification was not based on any evidence which can be traced to the Vedas, Puranas, Manusmriti, Itihasa etc but based on monopolization of these texts for the Brahmanical benefit and to reinforce patriarchy. The motives of the male-dominated society and Brahmanical monopoly functioned in such a way that led to the popularization of such a barbaric practise. It was unquestionable due to the realm of knowledge limited to only certain strata of the society. Unfortunately, it was these strata that supported the practice completely. The popularization made Sati an icon of what an ideal wife should be and mythologically gave it a goddess status that deepened this iconography.

The icon of Sati did not die with the 1830s reform movements with some notable works by Raja Rammouhan Roy, these have seeped into the society and thus it becomes eminent to showcase this hoax popularization of Sati before cases like Roop Kanwar (1969) replicate and carry on in the name of "tradition". It is important to isolate Sati, as a practice or as a term which in reality denoted those helpless women who were either manipulated or coerced in the name of hero-worship and burnt alive for personal benefits than the popular imagery created of a brave, devoted and virtuous woman accepting to be burnt alive as an honorary deed. The Sati stones till date remain important markers of this horrifying act which was veiled as a duty or an act of honour. Thus, it can be concluded that the popular mythological and iconographic image of Sati is more of a construct by the society rather than an ancient tradition without any scriptural sanction.

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A peculiar figure for some time was the Rishi, the man of a higher spiritual experience and knowledge, born in any of the classes, but exercising an authority by his spiritual personality over all, revered and consulted by the king of whom he was sometimes the religious preceptor and in the then fluid state of social evolution able alone to exercise an important role in evolving new basic ideas and effecting direct and immediate changes of the socio-religious ideas and customs of the people. It was a marked feature of the Indian mind that it sought to attach a spiritual meaning and a religious sanction to all, even to the most external social and political circumstances of its life, imposing on all classes and functions an ideal, not except incidentally of rights and powers, but of duties, a rule of their action and an ideal way and temperament, character, spirit in the action, a dharma with a spiritual significance. It was the work of the Rishi to put this stamp enduringly on the national mind, to prolong and perpetuate it, to discover and interpret the ideal law and its practical meaning, to cast the life of the people into the well-shaped ideals and significant forms of a civilisation founded on the spiritual and religious sense.

(Sri Aurobindo, CWSA 20: 388-389)

Pursuit of Perfection in Matter

Indian Geniuses of Dharma and Dhaṭra

(For every pursuit of life and analogy in them:
a case of Symbolic Parity between Āyurveda and Kāmasāstra Theory)

Rahul Altekar

Abbreviations used: AYD - Āyurveda, KS - Kāmasāstra, VAYD - Vāgbhata's Aṣṭāṅga
Hṛdayam, VKS - Vātsyayana's Kāmasūtra

Introduction

Every culture and civilization of the world has its own history; especially related to various sciences prevailed in that civilization. The scope and applications of these sciences may range from pure sciences like physics, chemistry or mathematics and also spread in the integrated form of pure science applications like Cosmology and Philosophy, Geology and Geography, Astrology and Astronomy, Psychology and Sexology, Algebra and Geometry, Ergonomics and Ecology, Mechanical and Civil Engineering, as well as Biology and Medical Sciences¹.

India may be one of the few unique countries, where she has her own traditional science of Sexology and Social Behavior, which can be referred as *Kāmasāstra* (KS). Also, it is the general acceptance among the scholars that *Āyurveda* (AYD) is the oldest known medical science prevailed in the world. We could find many common features in Indian sciences and its evolution. In this regard we can note Sri Aurobindo² - "We have to see moreover that the whole is at present a great formless chaos of conflicting influences with a few luminous points of formation here and there where a new self-consciousness has come to the surface."

In this research paper, attempts are made to analyse the core concepts of KS theory and linking symbolically with AYD fundamental concepts. It is interesting to note the interdisciplinary confluence between these two ancient Indian Sciences and how KS principles are in line with AYD prescriptions.

Literature Review

KS is considered as one of the sacred sciences of the Hindu tradition. Brahmā³ considered being the first who composed a text of one-lac chapters dealing with the guidelines of lifestyles of the people. Later Nandi segregated thousand chapters from it and compiled the text called KS. Śvetaketū further edited it into smaller version of five hundred chapters. Later Bābhṛavaya compiled it into seven books containing fifty chapters.

The later tradition continued with Dattaka, Ārāyaṇa, Suvarnanābha, Ghotakamukha, Gonarda, Goṅikaputra, Kūcumāra, who composed their own treatises focusing on the one or more issues presented by Bābhṛavaya. Vātsyayana composed a treatise called Kāmasūtra, which is a general text based on all above. It contains total seven books arranged in sixty-four chapters with 1250 verses. We find very lucid and detailed description of all the issues pertaining to the matured and cultured lifestyles focusing on male-female relationships.

Discussions

The discussions are spanning across two specific topics - *sankhya* theory of AYD and its symbolic connection with KS Theory and the grammatical symbolization between two

sciences. *Sankhya* theory is considered as the baseline influential philosophy on AYD scheme of coverage.

Symbolization through Baseline Philosophy

Philosophical thinking strongly emphasizes clear formulation of ideas and problems, selection of relevant data, and objective methods for assessing ideas and proposals. It also emphasizes development of a sense of the new directions suggested by new hypotheses and questions one encounters while doing research. Philosophers regularly build on both the successes and failures of their predecessors. Such persons can readily learn any principles of any field.

In medical profession, philosophical thinking is essential to enhance professional ability to solve known and unknown problems, communication skills, persuasive powers, and writing skills especially for composing texts and codifying knowledge for the future generations.

India has its six major system of philosophy, namely *nyāya*, *vaiśeṣika*, *sāmkhya*, *yoga*, *mīmāṃsā*, *vedānta*. Each system typically deals with the topics like –

- Theory of causation
- Views on evolution
- Epistemology - Sources of knowledge
- Illustration, examples, and explanations on Rules of inductive and deductive logic
- Views on Supreme Power and God
- Theory of deeds, reincarnation, realization and Liberation

We find a close connection of *sāmkhya yoga*, *mīmāṃsā* philosophy with AYD theory. We also see ample application of all six types of means of knowledge acquisition in AYD texts. However, most of the modern AYD professionals believe⁴ that AYD has its own philosophy.

Jaiswal⁵ unconditionally concludes AYD has its foundations laid by the *Nyāya* and *Vaiśeṣika* school. It is also related to the manifestation framework, well known as *Sāmkhya*. The *Vaiśeṣika* School preached about inferences and perceptions that should be obtained about a patient's pathological condition for treatment. Whereas, *Nyāya* school propagated its teachings on the basis that one should have an extensive knowledge of the patient's condition, and the disease condition before proceeding for treatment. Interestingly, both these schools of philosophy merged in later years and brought glory to the AYD and helped in disseminating the knowledge about AYD. Thus, AYD, being a divine creation; or even otherwise; from its technical, empirical, logical, methodical, and systematic approach of dealing subject matter & narration, along with authoritative prescriptions, and supported by its unique style of text composition, we concluded that AYD has its own applied philosophy for medical sciences.

We see symbolic social influence of AYD baseline philosophy on KS. The symbolic influence⁶ affects the opinion or judgments of an individual to the extent that the opinions or judgments emitted by the source of influence are in this case considered as an indication of the source itself, that is, of the source's intentions. We can interpret the symbolic social influence as - psychological presence of AYD thought process especially on the socially connected matters, in the minds of KS authors forming their mental representation. Thus, AYD philosophy influenced the behavior and thoughts of KS authors, which is reflected in the KS text, especially on the dimensions of the structural, conceptual, and prescriptive narration.

KS, like AYD, claims its origination as divine, and from the same preceptor, Brahma. We have already discussed the structural, conceptual and prescriptive influence of AYD on KS texts and thought process. We clearly observe the empirical and logical deductions in KS theory. It shows high authority while describing various prescriptions and refer AYD wherever apt. KS uses Yoga philosophy particularly in the *Āsana* description and in general while describing the copulation process. We can conclude that symbolically KS has its own applied philosophy influenced by AYD.

Symbolization through Grammatical Aspects

Under structural influence discussions, we have seen how AYD has influenced KS text with reference to chapter sequencing, diction, style of expression, and composition structure. We will review further the grammatical simile between these two sciences.

The ancient Indian Scholars maintained the learning and the streamline flow of knowledge by rhythmic recitation for thousands of years even before the era of documentation.

The profounder of AYD had adopted⁷ three steps of learning i.e. Learning (*adhyayana*), Teaching (*adhyāpana*) and Discussions (*tadvidyasambhāṣā*). The most preliminary stage of study is grasping and mastering of the text thoroughly. The texts were written mostly in a very concise style known as “*Sutra*” and in combined form of both prose and verse. This prose is bound by some rules and the verses were mostly in simple form.

We see⁸ that VAYD has used *Anuṣṭupa Chhanda* in about 95.11% of its *sutra*. In fact, all the verses of *Nidānasthāna* and *Kalpasthāna* are in *Anuṣṭupa Chhanda*. Maximum number of *Chhanda* are used in *Āikitsāsthān* i.e. 32. *Āikitsāsthān* and *Sutrasthāna* are the chapters that used most varied types of *Chhanda*.

Unfortunately, we couldn't identify similar literature dealing with metrical analysis of KS texts. We experienced that it is a mammoth work with significant expertise. Hence an approach of high-level symbolic comparison of both sciences from their simplicity, conciseness, ability to balance poetic embellishment with required lucidity for technical subject matter (especially refraining from using words with multiple possible meaning), has been adopted.

We see both these sciences used very simple language and comprehensible terms. Memorization of *sutra* is the prime objective. Interestingly, we find AYD suddenly becomes more poetic textually when topic is KS oriented; and when KS text describes the therapeutic aspects, it becomes serious and secular leaving its primacy of romanticism, and thus resembling the scientific text of medical science. This natural urge of changing text rhythm exhibited by both sciences in their composition style, is symbolic of the interdependence between them. Few examples are cited below.

AYD text literally attains the altitude of Classical Sanskrit romance when composes *sutra* on *vājīkarana* or liquor consumption guidelines.

नामापियस्याद्दयोत्सवाय, यांपश्यतांतृप्तिरनाप्तपूर्वा ।

सर्वेन्द्रियाकर्णपाभूता, कान्तानुवृत्तिव्रतदीक्षिताया ॥ (VAYD 6.40.39)

कलाविलासगडयोवयोविभूगुचिःसलज्जारहसिप्रगल्भाद्य

प्रियंवदातुल्यमनःशयाया, सास्त्रीवृत्वायपरंनरस्यद्यद्य (VAYD 6.40.40)

We see here the romantic poetry full of sentiments, emotions and imagination opposed

the objectivity, which is maintained through verses otherwise. It is very difficult to believe that the above verses are drawn from a textbook of medical science.

देशसात्त्याच्चयोतिउपचरेत । (VKS – 2.5.20)

Now we will review the KS text. We find KS assumes the AYD tone to recommend authoritatively the therapeutic processes without any poetic embellishment.

मे ावस्तमु कसिध्दस्यपयसःसशर्करस्यपानंवृ त्वयोगः। (VKS – 7.1.37)

KS suggests deploying the romantic moves as “treatment” based on regional specificity.

मेषवस्तमु-कसिध्दस्य पयसः सशर्करस्य पानं वृषत्वयोगःद्य (VKS – 7.1.37)

KS suggest here aphrodisiac medicine preparation process and its usage.

न प्रयुञ्जित संदिग्धान्न शरीरात्ययावहान् ।

न जीवघातसंबद्धान्नशुचिद्रव्यसंयुतान् ॥ (VKS – 7.1.50)

KS prohibits here the usage of unhygienic, dangerous, lethal materials medica and pharmacology to safeguard health.

Conclusion

We could locate many such examples in AYD and KS literature. Interestingly, this transition in the tone happens significantly in the last section of the both sciences. As indicated earlier, this is obvious because in the last section, both these sciences are dealing with the topics which are primarily of other’s domain. Moreover, a clear mention of each other is observed in the last section of these sciences. KS mentions AYD and vice versa. This strengthens the claim of significant symbolic relationships between these sciences.

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Introduction

India is the land of knowledge and wisdom. This knowledge has invented, evolved, and has flowed since time immemorial. The uniqueness of this knowledge is that India has always had a free flow of thoughts and ideas sometimes these ideas and thoughts are opposite and contradictory. But all these philosophies, ideas and practices developed, evolved, and progressed side by side.

How has this knowledge evolved? Why and what? Are the main components of this wisdom? These questions have always ignited the mind of the seeker who has progressively contributed to that Philosophy. And that is the reason why even after 2500 to 5000 years this knowledge or wisdom is still relevant and inspires aspirants to study and practice at their own pace. Among all these philosophies “Yoga” is the most powerful, prominent, and popular technique in the present era. Unfortunately, its philosophy, Metaphysics lag due to over exposure on one aspect of it and i.e., physical aspects or ‘Asana’ in Yogic terminology. But Yogic wisdom has deeper layers which one must analyze on the path of Yoga. Roots of Yoga can be traced back to the Vedic Period. It is difficult to trace the exact date or era when wisdom or knowledge of Yoga descended.

Origin and Development of Yoga and its roots in Tantra

India gives utmost importance to Parampara (traditions akin to a certain lineage). We have Yoga Parampara and Yajna Parampara. Yoga has its lineage, methods and methodologies, epistemology, and metaphysical aspect.

These lineages emerged, evolved, and progressed as and observed the nature, asked questions about his own natural environment and its evolution. As the Sankhya Philosophy states, “The whole Nature is for the soul, not the soul for nature”. (The complete Works of Swami Vivekananda Vol.I).

Also, when a man acknowledges the importance of use of fire and his motor skills his quest for knowledge evolves over a period. Simultaneously, in Yajna paramapara two streams have emerged. Karma Kanda (Rituals) and Jnana Kanda (Knowledge / Upanishads).

Yoga has its roots in Vedas, but techniques are more prominent in Tantra. When one speaks about Yoga, the standard book that comes to mind is Patanjali Yoga Sutra which is one of the Vaidik Darshana. But Sage Patanjali has not given descriptions about various asanas or Pranayama. But he prescribes parameters when one performs asanas. Techniques and descriptions of Asanas has been given in Hatha Yoga.

Parameter which sage Patanjali prescribes is whether one is stable in the posture? Secondly whether there is relaxation of effort and merger of mind with the infinite. Third parameter is from the practice of asana there is no assailment from the conflicts.

If a person somewhere reaches these parameters, it is Yoga + Asana= Yogasana otherwise, it is just a physical posture whose effects are not felt or experienced at the mind level.

So, these knowledge streams help each other to grow, develop and expand in its space, pace, and time. Though in India we do not make any distinction or compartments between it is Vaidik or Tantrik as these systems are engulfed in each other mutually. Vaidika texts are called Nigama and Tantrika texts are called Agama.

Tantik texts are divided in five traditions, namely Shaiva Tradition, (Agama), Shakta Tradion (Related to female aspect) which in Hindu tradition known as Dasha Mahavidyas. Pancharatra Tradition (Shri Vishnu) Ganapatya Tradition and Surya Tradition (Sun). Though much reference or literature is not available on Pancharatra and Surya Tradition but Shaiva, Shakta and Ganapatya traditions are still followed in various parts of India.

Roots of Tantra can be found in Vaidika tradition too. The Tantra can be traced back to Shatapatha Brahmana, Keshin Sukta of Rigveda (10th Mandala). It gives a glimpse of Tantra practices or the practice of Asceticism. Asceticism is one of the important dimensions of Tantra.

Also, Upanishads talk about Vidya and Avidya, Para Vidya and Aparā Vidya. Theoretically, the meaning is clear. But how does one realize them? What is the starting point from where a seeker can commence his journey? How to practice them in life? are some of the pertinent questions one seeks answers for. It also depends on the person whether he is a Sadhaka (seeker who practices) or Shodhaka (researcher or Philosopher in modern terms). He approaches these practices as per his temperament. In short Yoga has its roots in Vedas, Upanishads, and predominantly in Tantra.

Tantra and its extension Hatha Yoga has evolved the system of Yoga or made remarkable contribution theoretically as well as practically. Both have various means to evolve life of an individual.

Tantra and Hatha Yoga beyond Physical Practices

Tantra and Hatha Yoga not only elaborate about practices and methods, but these practices speak about Evolution of Consciousness of human beings. Main purpose of Tantra is “Expansion of Consciousness” and Liberation of Energy. (Swami Satyananda Saraswati, Bihar School of Yoga, Munger)

As in *The Synthesis of Yoga* Sri Aurobindo stated that Yoga proceeds in its methods by three principles of practice. First Purification followed by concentration and Liberation. Tantra also describes different techniques which proceeds through these principles.

Tantra also emphasized on Bhava (attitudes) which are of three kinds: Pashu Bhava (animal), Veera Bhava (Heroic attitude) and divya Bhava (Divinity) which are again based on the temperaments of Gunas. Man’s evolution or a process to reach divinity depends on the evolution of Gunas. That process of ‘evolution of consciousness is the main purpose and aim of Tantra and Hatha Yoga. Unfortunately, Tantra has many distortions regarding its theory and practice. Tantra is not just a technique, but it is a lifestyle or an experience.

Tantra practice is a combination of Shaiva and Shakti Tradition.

Shaiva tradition has Nath (linked to Hatha Yoga), Dashanami and Udasina Sampradaya and Ramanandi Sampradaya in Shri Vishnu tradition. Ramanandi Sampradaya though it's a practice of asceticism worship mainly Shri Rama.

Each Sampradaya has its rules, code of conduct and scriptures. Shakta sampradaya flourished in Bengal and Assam. Kamakhya Peetha is a prominent center of the practice of Shaktism. Each sampradaya has a Guru and disciples which forms the 'Parampara'. Every guru with his realization and experience and need of the time make it relevant in existing society.

Due to many misnomers about the Tantra which unfortunately took negative or labeled as black magic was abandoned for some time. Later in the 18th century Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa (1836-1886) practiced both Tantra and Vedanta where he synthesized both the systems. Mere asceticism does not help to reach the state of realization. With the support of Bhakti emotions can be refined or cultured otherwise these becomes hurdle in the path of Yoga. This is how Tantra not only speaks about Consciousness, Physical Aspect but it handles human Psychology too.

Yoga Psychology is another field where these practices can be studied as Psycho-Physiological processes. 'Asceticism' which is the central point in Tantra and Hatha Yoga.

Again, it has two paths one is Mantra Marga (Vedic rituals or traditions) and Kaula Marga (Yoga and Meditation). From this Kaula Marga Hatha Yoga Tradition established around 10th / 11th century. This tradition traced its roots to Lord Shiva known as Adinatha as Absolute consciousness.

From this Hath Yoga Tradition Natha Sampradaya emerged prominently in Maharashtra.

Natha Sampradaya and its relation to Maharashtra is popular because of Sant Jnaneshwar. Sant Jnaneshwar initiated by his elder brother Nivruttinatha who was a disciple of Gahininatha. Later Sant Jananeshwar wrote a commentary on Bhagavat-Geeta and sowed the seed of Bhakti Movement in Maharashtra. Bhakti provide a strong base in Yoga Marga specially in today's time.

Life of both Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa and Sant Jnaneshwar demonstrated that today Tantra alone will not be practiced single handedly. One must carefully study the texts, meaning and words from the texts of the Tantra in that context. Otherwise, its results will be disastrous.

For example, Tantra speaks about three bhavas and Pancha Makaras. If one takes a literal meaning it will create disaster in one's life.

मद्यं मांसश्च मत्स्यश्च मुद्रा मैथुनमेव च ।

मकारपंचकं देवि देवताप्रीतिकारकम् ॥

madya māsaśca matsyaśca mudrā maithunameva ca
makārapacaka devi devatāpṛitikārakama

This is from Kularnava Tantra 10 th chapter on special rituals which one has to perform on special days.

Some tantra believes that it is merely symbolic and not need be taken literally. It is a method of sadhana and when the method is understood, literal meaning becomes irrelevant.

In this shloka madya that is wine means a secretion of hormone in the medulla oblongata in the Centre of the head the area of Brahmarandhra. With Khechari mudra this nectar must be retained in Lalana Chakra. This is the madya theory of Tantra.

Same with masa. Masa means khechari mudra. In Hatha Yoga Pradipika while describing about Khechari mudra.

One of the shloka on the description on Khechari mudra is:

गोमांसं भक्षयेन्नित्यं पिबेदमरवारुणीम् ।
कुलीनं तमहं मन्ये चेतरे कुलघातकाः ॥
gomāsa bhakṣayennitya pibedamaravāruṇīma
kulīna tamaha manye cetare kulaghātakāḥ

Tantra here if one takes literal meaning of gomasa as cow's meet then whole core of the khechari mudra will be misinterpreted. Go word is used for two objects one is for Cow and the other is for Tongue.

The meaning of the shloka is “by constant swallowing of the tongue he can drink amarvaruni. I consider him of high lineage. Others destroy the heritage”. One must carefully analyze and study these scriptures available in Sanskrit. In Sanskrit it is particularly important to understand the words in particular context.

Same with Pati (Master), Pash (binding Fore) and Pashu (animal). These are temperaments which are present in us. These temperament has its own Consciousness which has its own frequency. One must transcend his consciousness to reach to the stage of Pati the master which is considered to be the stage of a “Higher Consciousness”. It lifts the person from materialistic mode to Spiritual and then Psychic being as his Gunas gets transmuted.

As per Yoga anatomy and Physiology we are made of five pranas, Chakras, and five sheaths. This has been thoroughly discussed in Sidha Siddhanta paddhati by Sage Gorakhnath. It is one of the prominent texts on Hatha Yoga. It elaborates the relationship between microcosm and macrocosm.

We dwell with two consciousness one is outward through which we live ordinary life and the other is inward which man is not aware of. To achieve this internal immobility Hatha Yoga and Yoga of Knowledge plays a vital role. Physical immobility is linked to Hatha Yoga and Mental immobility to Yoga of Knowledge.

Conclusion

Yoga and Tantra provides a huge canvas where everything is connected. As Upanishads stated that this Supreme Consciousness cannot be realized by mere discourses nor by a

weak mind. To reach that Consciousness one needs certain tools or map from where one commences his journey. And it should always work in a harmonious way as one has to live his life in a holistic way.

It's a harmony between Tantra and Yoga and to get at least a glimpse of its knowledge which has width and depth in its own sense.

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We observe, first, that there still exists in India a remarkable Yogic system which is in its nature synthetical and starts from a great central principle of Nature, a great dynamic force of Nature; but it is a Yoga apart, not a synthesis of other schools. This system is the way of the Tantra... Nevertheless, in its origin, Tantra was a great and puissant system founded upon ideas which were at least partially true. Even its twofold division into the right-hand and left-hand paths, Dakshina Marga and Vama Marga, started from a certain profound perception. In the ancient symbolic sense of the words Dakshina and Vama, it was the distinction between the way of Knowledge and the way of Ananda,—Nature in man liberating itself by right discrimination in power and practice of its own energies, elements and potentialities and Nature in man liberating itself by joyous acceptance in power and practice of its own energies, elements and potentialities. But in both paths there was in the end an obscuration of principles, a deformation of symbols and a fall.

(Sri Aurobindo, CWSA 23:42)

Introduction to the Yoga Sutras of Sage Patanjali

There is less consensus about the date of birth of Patanjali. The period of the sage is generally pinned between the 2nd and the 4th-century B.C.E. The place of his birth is likely to have been somewhere in the north-western part of India. According to one of the legends, he is considered to be the incarnation of *Adishesha*, the giant thousand-headed serpent upon which Lord Vishnu reclines. For this reason, he is generally depicted as half human and half serpent. Three important works are associated with Patanjali- *Mahabhasya*, a treatise on Sanskrit grammar based on Panini's work; *Patanjalatantra*, a medical text; *Yoga Sutras*, a text on the theory and practice of Yoga.

The Yoga of Patanjali is classified under the Raja Yoga branch of Yoga. Swami Vivekananda regards the PYS as the "highest authority on Raja yoga." The word "Raja" denotes "king" or "prince." A king is characterized by fierce willpower and courage. An individual with such tremendous will, and a scientific bent of mind, finds it appealing to tread the path of Raja Yoga to reach the Truth. It incorporates various extrospective (*Bahiranga*) and introspective (*Antaranga*) practices that use the power of the mind as an instrument to ultimately transcend the mind.

Looking into the composition of the PYS, it is a collection of 196 aphorisms, divided into four chapters or *padas*- *Samadhi pada* (51 aphorisms), *Sadhana pada* (55 aphorisms), *Vibhuti pada* (56 aphorisms), and *Kaivalya Pada* (34 aphorisms). Perhaps the most famous aspect of the PYS is the *Ashtanga Yoga* or the eight limbs of Yoga. These eight limbs are not considered stages or levels but an upward spiral movement where, as one ascends every round, his/ her experience of each limb becomes more profound. When followed sincerely by any practitioner, these limbs assure the attainment of *Samadhi*, where one realizes the Truth.

The eight limbs of Yoga are as follows-

Limb 1: *Yama* consists of moral restrains that person is expected to display in an interpersonal context. There are five *Yamas*.

- a. *Ahimsa*- harmlessness
- b. *Satya*- truthfulness
- c. *Asteya*- justice and honesty
- d. *Brahmacharya*- chastity
- e. *Aparigraha*- refusal of ownership

Limb 2: *Niyama* consists of observances that a practitioner is expected to follow in an intrapersonal context. There are five *Niyamas*.

- a. *Shoucha*- cleanliness, and purity
- b. *Santosha*- contentment
- c. *Tapas*- austerity

Swadhyaya- meditation on Scriptures

- a. *Ishwara Pranidhana*- worship and devotion to God

Limb 3: *Asana* is to stay in apposition firmly with ease. The purpose of asanas is to improve the vitality of the body.

Limb 4: *Pranayama* is the process of control and regulation of *prana* or vital energy.

The first four limbs are called *Bahiranga yoga* which refers to mastery over the mind by indirect and external practices. The last three limbs form the *Antaranga yoga*, which involves practices that directly handle the mind.

Limb 5: *Pratyahara* forms the bridge between *Bahiranga* and *Antaranga yoga*. It deals with withdrawing the senses from sense objects and turning oneself inwards.

Limb 6: *Dharana* involves focussing the whole mind on a single point. The point may be a chant or a picture of a deity etc.

Limb 7: *Dhyana* refers to meditation. It is about defocussing and happens effortlessly. Limb 8: One achieves a sense of deep absorption or super-consciousness in the final state of *Samadhi*. In this state, the doer, the work, and the act of doing are merged.

The PYS from the lens of Sri Aurobindo

- Age of social consciousness

The age at which the PYS was written can be identified as typical age. Records indicate that Sage Patanjali was a contemporary of Pushyamitra, a brahmin who assassinated the last Maurya, thus founding the Shunga dynasty in 185 BC. The society during the period of the Shunga dynasty echoed a strong typical mentality. Historical sources say that Pushyamitra revived the Vedic religion from the Buddhist domination that prevailed during those times. He performed animal sacrifices and *yagnas* that king Ashoka of the Mauryan Empire had prohibited. General disapproval of heterodox sects prevailed under the Shungas. These features indicate a typical age where the ideas of social honor are imprinted upon people's minds (CWSA: 25, 11).

- Aspect of Aditi

Out of the four aspects of Aditi, the Yoga of PYS is powered by Mahakali or the strength aspect. The Mahakali aspect denotes force and a tameless spirit. According to Sri Aurobindo "Rajayoga is of three kinds- sachesta, salpachesta, and nichesta, or the one with effort, with little effort, and the one with no effort." (CWSA 1: 508) Out of these, Patanjali's Yoga falls into the first category, which demands the practitioner's relentless effort. The practice of the initial limbs of Patanjali's *Ashtanga Yoga*, *Yama*, and *Niyama*, or moral exercises and moral habits, respectively, require great vigilance and self-discipline. Sri Aurobindo himself speaks of how tedious and painstakingly difficult it is to establish them even imperfectly (CWSA: 01, 508- 509). Such a pursuit requires a "wrath that is immediate and dire against treachery, falsehood, and malignity" (CWSA: 32, 19) which is descriptive of Mahakali's Force of action. The next step of Asanas calls for a "Divine violence rushing to shatter every limit and obstacle" (CWSA: 32, 19), yet another feature of Mahakali. *Pranayama* finds its place in the fourth limb of *Ashtanga Yoga*. This arrangement enables the practitioner to gain an overwhelming intensity to successfully practice the following limbs of *Antaranga Yoga*, viz *Dharana*, *Dhyana*, and *Samadhi*.

Stage of human aspiration

Among the stages of human aspiration, namely, God, light, freedom, and immortality, the Yoga of Patanjali is in the stage of God. As Sri Aurobindo says, Divine union was the aim of Yoga in Patanjali's days. He elaborates that even those belonging to the ascetic schools of Yoga were seeking a union with the formless Brahman. (CWSA: 29, 437) Although the text itself can indicate the stage of light with its extensive knowledge about the functioning of the human mind and beyond, the ultimate aim behind acquiring knowledge seems to be for establishing a union or *yuj* with the Divine. Another compelling evidence that indicates human aspiration to be in the stage of God is the status of *Iswara Pranidhana* in the PYS. It is the last of the five *Niyamas*. Patanjali suggests *Iswara Pranidhana* or complete surrender to God as a shortcut to the end goal of his Yoga, the state of Samadhi.

Inner movement

The path of Raja Yoga is well known for its emphasis on mastery over the mind.

According to Sri Aurobindo, "The processes of the Raja Yoga are mental and emotional. Patanjali's science is not the pure Raja Yoga; it is mixed and allows an element of the Hatha in its initial processes." (CWSA 1: 507) Out of Patanjali Yoga's eight limbs, *Asana* deals with the physical aspects, and *Pranayam* deals with the vital elements. Other than these two, four limbs, i.e., *Pratyahara*, *Dharana*, *Dhyana*, and *Samadhi*, deal with the mind. Therefore, the qualitative or inner movement of the PYS is predominantly mental, but it also includes vital and physical processes. The motive behind incorporating the physical and vital aspects is that *Asanas* help attain stillness of the body, and *Pranayama* practice enables an increase of intensity. These two limbs will make mastery over the mind more feasible.

Moreover, those who undertake the journey of Raja Yoga do not expect to experience the state of *Samadhi*. According to Patanjali, they need *Abhyasa* (constant practice) and *Vairagya* (non-attachment) as support to progress in his Yoga. These two pillars that are foundational in stopping the movements of the *Chitta* (mind) are related to the mind. Thus, the inner qualitative paradigm can be conclusively said to be mental.

Outer movement

The outer movement of the PYS is centrifugal in nature, i.e., the trend is from the center to the circumference. Patanjali is said to have done the intensive work of studying Vedic texts, compiling diversified theories and practices, and amalgamating them into a unique, scientific system for Divine union. The knowledge from sutras has then been practiced and adopted by various people seeking to attain the Divine.

Stage of descent of consciousness

The work of PYS seems to be at the third stage of the descent of consciousness, characterized by a shift from Vedas and Upanishads to Darshanas. Yoga is one of the Shad Darshanas or six schools of Indian philosophy, the chief contributor of the yogic school being sage Patanjali. Yogic philosophy is very closely related to yet another school called Sankhya. The revelations and intuitive experiences encapsulated in the Vedas and Upanishads were written in a more compact, intellectual, and "crowded brief expression" (CWSA: 20, 343) called sutras. The sage is lauded for his exceptional logic and reasoning in the yoga sutras' composition and arrangement.

Impact:

The text PYS fell into obscurity for about 700 years, from 1200 C.E to 1800 C.E.

What happened between 200 BCE to 12000 CE? Is the text silent about it ?

It gained popularity through the efforts of Swami Vivekananda. He was instrumental in rendering the strength of Patanjali yoga to Western countries. From this perspective, the PYS can be seen as a laboratory experiment of nature. The PYS was compiled in the 2nd-century B.C.E, which probably denotes the sowing of the seed of Yoga in time's womb. It was not until the 19th century that it began to mature and bear fruits. Since then, the name of Patanjali has been on the lips of numerous yoga practitioners who not only practice this system but also memorize and recite the sutras, appreciating its terseness and brevity. Many researches in the field of health, social and behavioral sciences are now being done on the effect of PYS (Eg. Anjali, 1995; Satish, 2014).

Need of the study and its uniqueness

During the time of Sage Patanjali, Yoga had been diluted and diversified into numerous schools of thought. The yoga sutras came off as a timely creation. They presented a crisp, comprehensive picture of the essence of Yoga, which encompassed all the central practices that existed then. This contribution must have provided a sense of relief for those bewildered or perhaps, overwhelmed by the diversity. Interestingly, Yoga today has also undergone many diversifications, some useful, others even quite contrary to the very fundamentals of Yoga. Studying PYS in the light of Sri Aurobindo's ideas can be very helpful and relevant in the current times.

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[The man of Ideas] knows that his idea is bound to conquer, he knows that the man possessed with it is more formidable, even with his naked hands, than the prison and the gibbet, the armed men and the murderous cannon. He knows that in the fight with brute force the spirit, the idea is bound to conquer. The Roman Empire is no more, but the Christianity which it thought to crush, possesses half the globe, covering "regions Caesar never knew". The Jew, whom the whole world persecuted, survived by the strength of an idea and now sits in the high places of the world, playing with nations as a chessplayer with his pieces. He knows too that his own life and the lives of others are of no value, that they are mere dust in the balance compared with the life of his idea. The idea or sentiment is at first confined to a few men whom their neighbours and countrymen ridicule as lunatics or hare-brained enthusiasts. But it spreads and gathers adherents who catch the fire of the first missionaries and creates its own preachers and then its workers who try to carry out its teachings in circumstances of almost paralysing difficulty. The attempt to work brings them into conflict with the established power which the idea threatens and there is persecution. The idea creates its martyrs. And in martyrdom there is an incalculable spiritual magnetism which works miracles. A whole nation, a whole world catches the fire which burned in a few hearts; the soil which has drunk the blood of the martyr imbibes with it a sort of divine madness which it breathes into the heart of all its children, until there is but one overmastering idea, one imperishable resolution in the minds of all beside which all other hopes and interests fade into insignificance and until it is fulfilled, there can be no peace or rest for the land or its rulers. It is at this moment that the idea begins to create its heroes and fighters, whose numbers and courage defeat only multiplies and confirms until the idea militant has become the idea triumphant. Such is the history of the idea, so invariable in its broad lines that it is evidently the working of a natural law.

Sri Aurobindo