CONTENTS

Guest Editorial

*Decisive Hour*

Swami Om Poorna Swatantra

2

Divine Living I

Sri Aurobindo

3

A New Society

Shyam Sunder

4

March of Civilisation : India

Sanat K. Banerjee

4

Premonition — Random Reflections from a Diary

Maria Netto

6

Life is a Condensed Page on a Screen

Leanne Anand

7

When Young India Awakes - 15

Beloo Mehra

8

The Right Time to perform Right Action

Sushrut Badhe

10

Myths and Fairy Tales From a psychological perspective

Lopa Mukherjee

12

Arjunacharya Story

The Internet

15
Guest Editorial

Decisive Hour

All authentic sources of Knowledge, whether the Vedas of the Hindus or the Gaia of the ancient Greek mystics or the modern spiritual scientists represented by James Lovelock, come to one conclusion that Earth, representing the material form of Nature, is a conscious living being, not an inert thing.

Man who represents the head of planetary life on earth, according to logical necessity must follow the law of Nature and the truth of Earth Being in his being, living and acting, whereas in actual fact he is doing just the contrary.

In his being man has become a dry island, — amidst the ocean of abundance surging around — cut off from all sides, completely isolated and insulated against all possible communication. In this loneliness he is suffocating and craving for a gasp of fresh air for his survival, — not knowing that foolishly he has made himself a closed door entity which is against the law of Nature. Man is in fact the unfinished product of Nature, which he has ignorantly taken to be the final end and settled there, protecting and defending his incompleteness and imperfection against Nature’s plan and process. This is the fundamental cause of human crisis. But the gentleman does not stop there (whether he is actually ‘gentle’), he has established his rule all over the earth acting as the Frankenstein Monster, distorting and destroying all forms of life. By his very nature he is negative and is therefore against himself and all that belongs to him or comes in contact with him: he is anti-life and pro-death.

Lastly we come to the human relationship with Nature. Practically we know that She is his Mother, She nourishes and sustains him throughout. But his approach to her is not that of a son, he is an exploiter, he is exploiting the mother, Nature for his selfish ends, and that too negatively, which has brought all round crises on him — environmental, ecological, depletion of natural resources, pollution etc., — and threatening his very survival on earth. To ensure his survival and progress in future he must bring about a total, revolutionary change in the model of his development and approach to Nature from exploitative to symbiotic. In a symbiotic relationship mother and son serve each other and mutually nourish and bring all round fulfillment, establishing creativity in the life and world. This change in his attitude and approach shall bring about a revolutionary change in the world in all departments of life: political, social, economic, educational, spiritual etc. — competition and wars will be replaced by peace and harmony, rivalry will give place to co-operation and love, all negativity to positivity and creativity: man made hell to heaven.

The current global crisis is a significant pointer towards that fundamental change that would give birth to a healthy and happy New World. In this new world man would follow the law of Nature and obey the truth of Earth Being. Here everything would be natural happy and harmonious, spontaneous, organic and effortless.

In fact, there is nothing new to be added, only the distortion caused by ignorant intervention by ego-centered human being is to be removed. Then the whole thing would be as it originally and naturally was: healthy, harmonious and happy. This healthy state would open the door for the manifestation of other higher things which are beyond our comprehension today.

Swami Om Poorna Swatantra
**Divine Living I**

All spiritual life is in its principle a growth into divine living. It is difficult to fix the frontier where the mental ceases and the divine life begins, for the two project into each other and there is a long space of their intermingled existence. A great part of this interspace,—when the spiritual urge does not turn away from earth or world altogether,—can be seen as the process of a higher life in the making. As the mind and life become illumined with the light of the spirit, they put on or reflect something of the divinity, the secret greater Reality, and this must increase until the interspace has been crossed and the whole existence is unified in the full light and power of the spiritual principle. But, for the full and perfect fulfilment of the evolutionary urge, this illumination and change must take up and re-create the whole being, mind, life and body: it must be not only an inner experience of the Divinity, but a remoulding of both the inner and outer existence by its power; it must take form not only in the life of the individual but as a collective life of gnostic beings established as a highest power and form of the becoming of the Spirit in the earth-nature. For this to be possible the spiritual entity in us must have developed its own integralised perfection not only of the inner state of the being but of the outgoing power of the being and, with that perfection and as a necessity of its complete action, it must have evolved its own dynamis and instrumentation of the outer existence.

There can undoubtedly be a spiritual life within, a kingdom of heaven within us which is not dependent on any outer manifestation or instrumentation or formula of external being. The inner life has a supreme spiritual importance and the outer has a value only in so far as it is expressive of the inner status. However the man of spiritual realisation lives and acts and behaves, in all ways of his being and acting, it is said in the Gita, “he lives and moves in Me”; he dwells in the Divine, he has realised the spiritual existence. The spiritual man living in the sense of the spiritual self, in the realisation of the Divine within him and everywhere, would be living inwardly a divine life and its reflection would fall on his outer acts of existence, even if they did not pass—or did not seem to pass—beyond the ordinary instrumentation of human thought and action in this world of earth-nature. This is the first truth and the essence of the matter; but still, from the point of view of a spiritual evolution, this would be only an individual liberation and perfection in an unchanged environmental existence: for a greater dynamic change in earth-nature itself, a spiritual change of the whole principle and instrumentation of life and action, the appearance of a new order of beings and a new earth-life must be envisaged in our idea of the total consummation, the divine issue. Here the gnostic change assumes a primary importance; all that precedes can be considered as an upbuilding and a preparation for this transmuting reversal of the whole nature. For it is a gnostic way of dynamic living that must be the fulfilled divine life on earth, a way of living that develops higher instruments of world-knowledge and world-action for the dynamisation of consciousness in the physical existence and takes up and transforms the values of a world of material Nature.

SRI AUROBINDO
(CWSA, Vol. 21-22, pp. 1054-1056)
A New Society

The psychic, because of its importance, must be understood rightly. What is this psychic element, a word used in so many different senses? Some take it as something pertaining to the spirit or soul, confusing it with connotations varying from ghost-formations of some early mythologies to the inmost and highest Spirit. Some take it as mind which, unequivocally, it is not. In fact, for a proper understanding it becomes necessary at the outset to distinguish body, life and mind from the psychic.

The physical man is preoccupied with his body, his body’s demands and comforts, the fixed habits of his body. The vital man is preoccupied with his vital’s demands, the élan of his life-force; dissatisfied with fixity and habits he seeks new life fields, he seeks expansion. The mental man is preoccupied with his mental conceptions, mental ideas, mental ideals, mental guidance. He seeks to regulate and uplift his body and life by his mind, and succeeds partially, but because the success is partial his search continues. He goes deeper within.

The body, life and mind as they appear on the surface are not the entire body, life and mind. There is an inner body, an inner life, an inner mind; there is a body-self, a life-self, a mind-self, annamaya purussa, pranamaya purussa, manomaya purussa.

Deeper within are realms of the inner body, the inner life and the inner mind. Deeper within still is the psychic element. From the inner depths the body-being, life-being and mind-being can send intimations of an order much higher than these are many a time taken to be the diviner element in man that is called the soul, the psychic. But in reality these do not constitute the soul.

The soul is a spark of the Divine; in man it shapes itself into the psychic being that dwells in his inmost depths from where it seeks to come forward to the surface and evolve the person towards union with the Divine. Itself coming from the Divine, its aim is the Divine manifestation. It does not discard or reject the body, life or mind; nay, the body, life and mind are its instruments for a divine life. The soul gathers the essence of the mental, vital and bodily experiences and assimilates them for further evolution of the person in the terrestrial life. It is the support of the individual evolution from life to life, the evolution towards the Supreme.

The psychic being is described in the Upanishads symbolically as no larger than the size of one’s thumb; in the Upanishads it is the purussa, the purussa in the heart; in Sanskrit it is also called Caitya Purussa. Seated behind the heart, behind the emotional and higher vital centre, it is the fire without smoke, the true guide and leader of the other planes and parts of a human being; it is the eternal flame which, though covered at present, has to blaze forth to re-cast and re-mould the mind, life and body.

Shyam Sunder
(Reprinted from an earlier issue)

March of Civilisation : India

Spirit and Aim (2)

Vital Creativity

Contrary to what many of India’s critics seem to imagine, the Indian tradition has been a long and almost unbroken record of the joy and creativeness of life.

“For three thousand years at least,—it is indeed much longer,—she has been creating abundantly and incessantly, lavishly, with an inexhaustible many sidedness, republics and kingdoms and empires, philosophies and cosmogonies and sciences and creeds and arts and poems and all kinds of monuments, palaces and temples and public works, communities and societies and religious orders, laws and codes and rituals, physical sciences, psychic sciences, systems of Yoga, systems of politics and administration, arts spiritual, arts worldly, trades, industries, fine crafts,—the list is endless and in each item there is almost a plethora of activity.”

All this magnificent creation could not have been the work of a national mind sicklied over by a palsied life-force. A dreamy, pessimistic other-worldly people with no interest in and hold on life never existed in India, even in her worst days of decline. A lifeless India is a myth.

Material Base

But the life-force needs a material base on which to work,

---

1The renaissance of India, Chapter 1
a sound body in the individual and a strong framework of the body politic, an efficient social and economic organisation.

A considerable importance has always been attached in India to the health and hygiene of the physical frame. From early times she developed systems of physical culture quite apart from the Hatha Yoga; this system of Yoga is itself a monument to her ingenuity. The entire science of Indian medicine, Ayurveda, had for its basic aim the maintenance of the human body in good condition throughout life, and offers sound advice on the regime one should follow to achieve this aim.

It has been customary to dwell on the weakness of India’s political structure which exposed her to repeated foreign invasions. The facts point to quite another conclusion. From the earliest period of her recorded history, India developed an amazingly stable unit, the village community, which has kept its integrity to our own day inspite of all political turmoil. It constitutes to this day the basic unit of the Indian Polity. In ancient times, ‘the village sufficient to itself, took no interest in the great wars and revolutions which affected only the ruling clans of the kingdom including it in its territorial jurisdiction.’ The law-givers strictly enjoined that the life of the village should not in any way be disturbed by the warriors, and it seems that taken by and large this rule was strictly observed. Even the foreign invaders, including the Muslims, hardly interfered with the autonomy of the village community, so long as it continued to pay the land revenue and other taxes levied on it. It is only in recent times, under a totally alien dispensation, that the village was reduced to a nullity in the political life of the nation and lost most of its age-long autonomy.

It may be argued that its very self sufficiency proved a serious bar to national unity. There is truth in this view. But there were other factors to be considered. The continental size of the country, the immense difficulties of transport and communications before the advent of modern technology, and above all, the absence of inspiring ideals of national solidarity and loyalty to country as apart from the regional king may be counted among the factors. It may also be remembered that a modern European nation like France or England has taken no less than two thousand years to arrive at a firm political unity; their size and population were no bigger than a Province of India.

India’s economic organisation rested on no less solid foundations. Pasture and agriculture remained from the first the main source of national wealth, and so well were they managed that a modern Commission of experts led by Lord Linlithgow, found hardly any improvements to suggest from the technical point of view, considering the soil and other topographical features of the country. Gradually in course of time, India developed a flourishing mining industry; she produced valuable articles of trade like pepper and pearls; her muslins and silks won world renown. Her gold and silver ornaments filled the coffers of the rich and poor alike. To these were added the huge amount of specie that poured into the land from overseas. It was the lure of Indian gold that prompted the Muslim invasions, beginning with the Arabs in the 8th century and ending with the 18th century, raids of Ahmad Shah Durrani and Nadir Shah of Persia. The Europeans followed close to their footsteps.

It would be a mistake to suppose that all this wealth remained concentrated in a few hands. Neither the glowing accounts left by foreign visitors, particularly the Muslims and Europeans who visited the South and the Vijayanagar Empire from the 14th Century, nor the records of Indian literature and painting down to the 18th century leave here any room for this supposition. Indian art and literature, almost without exception, depict joyous scenes, and joy does not live on penury. ‘India’ says a very competent observer, ‘had a splendid capacity for bhoga and tyaga in their highest terms, the utter enjoyment of the householder, the utter renunciation of life, at one and the same time, in the same mind and body, to be master of both capacities and blind by neither,—this was the secret of India.’

The genius of India is no less apparent in her splendid social organisation. The main props of this organisation were the joint family and the system of hereditary caste, and they have stood the test of time remarkably well, during the entire period from the dim Vedic beginnings to the very threshold of the present day. The joint family gave a sense of unity and a cohesion to the kinship of blood and maternity which has held the social fabric firm against and disruption from within. The much maligned system of caste has been a conservative force of equal importance in preserving it from collapse through attacks from without.

These two institutions enabled India to absorb the immense hordes of barbarians who threatened her existence during the millennium that followed Alexander’s invasion. They were strong enough to withstand the powerful and dangerous assaults from an alien culture and religion from the West. Far from succumbing to the alien system, Indian society compelled the latter to adopt some of its important features, relating to marriage and the social

---

2“The Village and the Nation” Bandemataram 8.3.08.
hierarchy for instance. Originally intended to provide a framework within which each individual could develop freely along the lines of his svadharma and svabhava, and grow towards the spirit without having to leave the life of a householder, the system of caste still performs a function in maintaining the integrity of the Indian social structure.

**Conclusion**

Dharma, the law of ideal living, and the aspiration towards the Infinite in all its many sidedness, have been, we may conclude, the two master ideas that governed the Indian spirit.

Freedom and Unity have been its watchwords: freedom of the group and freedom of the individual within the group to grow on their own lines to their highest possibilities, unity of the whole basing itself on an endless variation among the parts that constitute the whole.

Thus equipped and fully conscious of her aim, India has proceeded on her march through the ages in a leisurely pace, fully assured of her goal as if all eternity lay before her.

_Sanat K. Banerjee_

(Reprinted from an earlier issue)

**Premonition — Random Reflections from a Diary**

No man is an island entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent; a part of the main; … any man’s death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind. And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.

John Donne — No Man is an Island

The random reflections printed here have come from a pen which seemed inclined to convey thoughts only of the ‘after life’. All jottings in my diary from the month of December 2019 revolve around this theme; well before ‘lockdown’ and ‘covid’ became part of our daily vocabulary. Every man perceives death in his own way, for nobody has ever met death before the stipulated hour. Having been born, we are only sure of one happening in our life, and that is death. Hence this becomes by default the only surety that binds us. The call to the afterlife makes us equals, the balance is right. When even one soul leaves this earth, the scales tilt. Yes, each man’s death diminishes us. How many times have we been diminished, over these last months? We dare not send to know for whom the bell tolls. We, strangers, are now united forever in death.

The truth of our existence is proved by the immortality of the soul. It does not die; and hence the fact that we lived and died is not insignificant. It is a truth that is perpetuated by the life of our soul. It can take many forms and many births, might even mingle with the elements, but it perpetuates. From the portals of our own soul, if we are alive to it, we can envision an afterlife that stretches into eternity.

The people who have gone to eternal sleep before us are models on which each one of us is fashioned. Our lives are an echo from the past. We try to capture those same lives lived, but we are likely to fail or may never retrieve them completely, for they pass us by in fleeting seconds. When we remember our own loved ones who are now in the other world, it may appear to us like a mural on a canvas that has been accidently doused with water, yet the imprint remains.

The invisible hand of God hands us a deal we either accept or reject. We surrender or revolt. If we believe that God deals the cards then we let life take its course, allow things to happen as they will. If we are masters of our own destiny, we kick and fight and make decisive plans and work around things, so they work out as we will. There is nobody to tell us what our decisions bring. Making a choice could be a lonely road to travel; a choice which was meant to enhance our life could become our enemy. The world in which we are left to languish after that, is incomprehensible, a blur; there are fragments of a life that cannot be arranged in any orderly way, a dark tunnel to swim through, the only light showing the way are words that we have oft said: this too shall pass.

Have you ever experienced this sensation? Where you step out of yourself once in a while? When I do, I call those times ‘death moments’. Those instances when we are not with ourselves; seeing things as if they aren’t happening, when really they are. It’s as if you’re watching a movie, but you are in the thick of that moment, or you’ve taken a pen from a bystander’s pocket to write about what’s going on around you, but in reality it’s an empty street. We step out of our physical being and see the other side, which can never be seen or experienced if you are only yourself all the time. It’s just that that rare time when you aren’t you and the place is not here and the time is not now. Happenings unfold, unknown occurrences are revealed, people aren’t moving, just flitting in and out of the lens and then fading away… Is this Nirvana? After birth? Or just being reborn in our mother’s womb?

_Maria Netto_
Life is a Condensed Page on a Screen

We navigate ourselves around
Dovetailed days,
Living on moments turned to hours,
Wearing our masks as we go about.
Time drags on,
Sunlight falls,
Rain pours down
And beings either die or survive.
We look at each other and move on.
Face to face, strangers.
On face book, best friends, like,
Thumbs up and smiley faces.
Then, thoughts of being alone in endless darkness.
But those few moments when our fingers are moving,
Life is condensed into beautiful little pages.
And we are alive,
Breathing, smiling;
Sometimes in the dark of the night,
A light flickers
And we grab that device again.
No time, no limits now.
And the darkness turns to like,
And thumbs up and smileys again.
Without any boundaries,
We navigate again,
Unknown places, faces and countries and characters.
We become alien to ourselves
Sleep is discarded.
No capitals to where we begin
No stops to where we end
With each click, we are followers, learners, discoverers,
Virtual of course!
When we feel beyond
This simple living of each day,
All time and all sensations halt.
Colours all merge onto one screen
White and shining,
Like a veil of pure colourless fabric; tulle, tissue-thin…
Seeing through it,
Some life that we long for,
Some person we hope to be.
Within a love enclosed square room,
Within moments of this shared bliss,
We are glad to be alive
While the world is shut out.

Leanne Anand
Yuvaan was fascinated to learn some historical details about the temple reconstruction in free India. It was only after the accession of Junagarh to India in October 1947 that a decision was made to reconstruct the Somnāth temple. Sardar Patel had made a public announcement about it during his visit to Prabhas Patan. But there was some resistance in the union cabinet back in Delhi. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the education minister at that time and a good friend of Jawahar Lal Nehru, opposed the idea. He argued that the temple ruins should be handed over to the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), to be preserved as a historical monument. Interestingly, Maulana Azad had never suggested anything similar for Islamic shrines and mosques which were being repaired by the ASI at that time.

Sardar Patel was very firm in his resolve to see the temple restored to its glory; he responded with a note:

- “The Hindu sentiment in regard to this temple is both strong and widespread. In the present conditions, it is unlikely that this sentiment will be satisfied by mere restoration of the temple or by prolonging its life. The restoration of idol would be a point of honour and sentiments with the Hindu public.”

The temple was not going to be preserved as a historical monument; it was going to be reborn as a living temple, restored to its old glory as the first among the twelve jyotirlinga’s of India. The temple complex was going to be developed as an important pilgrimage centre and a place of great cultural and spiritual significance.

Nehru presided over the cabinet meeting in which this decision was taken. But after Sardar Patel’s passing in December 1950, it seems Nehru became very hostile, not only to the temple project, but also to his cabinet colleagues, particularly Munshi and V. N. Gadgil, who were associated with the temple reconstruction project.

The President of India, Dr Rajendra Prasad was requested to inaugurate the ceremony of the prāṇa-pratishṭā (installation of deity). But while preparations for the big event were going on, Nehru called Munshi and said: “I don’t like your trying to restore Somnath. It is Hindu revivalism.” Munshi felt humiliated, the more so because Nehru made it seem as if things were being done without his knowledge.

On 24th April 1951, Munshi wrote a long letter to Nehru clarifying many things and giving a detailed account of the government’s decisions taken during the entire reconstruction process. As Yuvaan read parts of the letter included in one of the online articles, he not only admired the thoroughness of this important historical document, but also realised that many things related to the rebuilding of the Somnāth temple would have remained completely unknown, if Munshi had not written this letter.

- “As you will see, the Government of India not only took the initial decision to reconstruct the temple, but formulated and set the scheme going; alongside creating the agency for its further implementation. This will clearly indicate to you the extent of association the Government of India has with the scheme...

- “Yesterday you referred to ‘Hindu revivalism.’ I know your views on the subject; I have always done justice to them; I hope you will equally do justice to mine. Many have been the customs which I have defied in personal life from my boyhood. I have laboured in my humble way through literary and social work to shape or reintegrate some aspects of Hinduism, in the conviction that that alone will make India an advanced and vigorous nation under modern conditions...

- “One word more. It is my faith in our past which has given me the strength to work in the present and look forward to our future. I cannot value freedom if it deprives us of the Bhagavad Gita or uproots our millions from the faith with which they look upon our temples and thereby destroys the texture of our lives. I have been given the privilege of seeing my incessant dream of Somnath reconstruction come true. That makes me feel—makes me almost sure—that this shrine once restored to a place of importance in our life, will give our people a purer conception of religion and a more vivid consciousness of our strength, so vital in these days of freedom and its trials...”

What a marvellous letter! No wonder, it was called a ‘masterpiece’ by V. P. Menon, one of the key advisors in the Nehru’s cabinet. Yuvaan was so thrilled at reading this that,

he immediately re-read the excerpts to savour the force and sincerity of Munshi’s words. He was also happy to learn that despite Nehru’s strong disapproval and opposition, the President of India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, did inaugurate the prana–pratishtha ceremony. Without the courage and conviction of Munshi, the Somnath temple would have not been built, Yuvaan was now convinced.

Doing some more research, Yuvaan made another important discovery. He learned that a few months before writing his ‘masterpiece’ letter to Nehru, on July 30th, 1950, Munshi had written to Sri Aurobindo:

- “I would like to have your guidance as regards the future of Sanātana Dharma. Starting from your Uttarpara Speech, which has been a sort of beacon to me for years, I have been working for the reintegration of Hindu culture . . . But I am neither learned nor a profound thinker. I can contribute only my faith and the little energy which has been vouchsafed to me. I only pray that strength may be given to me to carry forward the message of the Seers of whom, in my opinion, you are the only surviving Apostle. What shall I do now?”

The following reply from Sri Aurobindo was sent to him on August 3, 1950, dictated to A.B. Purani:

- “My dear Kanubhai,

  ‘In reply to your letter of July 30th, 1950 Sri Aurobindo has asked me to write to you the following:

  ‘Your feeling that there should be reintegration of Indian Culture under modern conditions is quite right. It is the work that has to be done. And as far as Sri Aurobindo can see at present Indian Spiritual Culture has a great and bright future before it. It is the future power that might dominate the world.

So, your efforts in carrying out that work are quite in the right direction and in carrying out that work you would have his full support and blessings.’”

Munshi’s efforts toward reconstruction of the Somnāth temple were indeed blessed by Sri Aurobindo! This is what Yuvaan felt in his heart as he read this letter of August 3, 1950.

He was still musing on the amazing convergence of the truths he was uncovering from his readings and the histories he was learning of the places he was visiting, when the car turned in to the massive complex of Somnāth Temple Trust. From a distance he caught a glimpse of the magnificent shikhara of the temple, and he felt an intense joy and a deep feeling of love:— love for his country, love for his culture, love for Lord Somnāth love for Sri Aurobindo. His eyes teared up with emotion, and as the car slowly approached the guest house in the same complex, he recalled what he had read a couple of hours back in Essays on the Gita — the mahāvākya of Bhagavad Gita.

- “With the Lord in thy heart take refuge with all thy being; by His grace thou shalt attain to the supreme

---

3CWSA, 36: 512-513

4CWSA, 36: 513
peace and the eternal status. So have I expounded to thee a knowledge more secret than that which is hidden. Further hear the most secret, the supreme word that I shall speak to thee. Become my-minded, devoted to Me, to Me do sacrifice and adoration; infallibly, thou shalt come to Me, for dear to me art thou. Abandoning all laws of conduct seek refuge in Me alone. I will release thee from all sin; do not grieve.”

Beloo Mehra

The Right Time to perform Right Action

We saw how essential ‘listening to the inner voice’ was in extricating oneself from the trap of the ‘Arjuna Paradox’. Listening to the inner voice is never easy as the inner voice invites us to take a leap of faith and act against all the outer voices that try to convince us otherwise.

While the stories and lives of various heroes who achieved greatness listening to their inner voices illustrate the great outcomes of letting the inner compass direct one’s life, one must understand that the journey is not a bed of roses. No one knows where one is going to land after taking the leap of faith and more often than not, one ends up bruised in unknown territory. But like a soldier true to his cause, one must dust oneself and get up to journey onwards in the swim against the current.

But this brings us closer to the next question, after hearing the inner voice once, How does one go on? Do we bide our time till we hear the inner voice again or do we simply wait for the right time? Also if we have to wait for the right time, how can we avoid slipping into inertia?

Questions very similar to these were agitating an already restless mind of Arjuna at Kurukshetra. He had requested Krishna to show him the way, but he was in no mood to accept every single thing Krishna had said just like that. I wonder at times, if Krishna would have even told me one Adhyaya of the Gita if I had stood in place of Arjuna because personally I would listen to anything Krishna said at face value without question just because he said so. He would have said ‘Fight’ and I would have said ‘Okay’ and that would have just ended everything. There would have been no elaborate secrets of existence passed on, no higher truths of life and spirituality simplified and most definitely no Darshanas — neither the peaceful Chaturbhuja roopam (The Four armed form) or the horrifying Vishwaroopam (The Universal form). Now how absolutely boring would that have been! And probably that is why Arjuna was Krishna’s dearest one. You see, though Arjuna had doubts aplenty, his love for Krishna was pure and faultless. His every question bore the original fragrance of his underlying sincerity and aspiration to know and these are the two conditions necessary for the manifestation of the divine truth.

He considered Krishna to be both his beloved friend as well as his teacher and this beautiful relationship empowered him to audaciously ask even the most candid questions like “How can I believe that you were born before the sun?” or “You are the God! So can you not grant me the strength to see your true form?” and the likes. One interesting aspect of this dialogue between man and god, student and teacher, one beloved friend with another is that it demonstrates the beautiful freedom that is inherent in the Sanatana Dharma, the Eternal Way. The freedom to question and choose an independent path as per one’s own calling is unique in every respect.

Unlike other religions of the book, which offer explicit instructions that cannot be disagreed with or even questioned and demand only implicit obedience through conformation of their tenets, in the Sanatana Dharma, each is allowed to freely tread on his own path in life depending upon one’s nature.

Moving on to the Gita, post Arjuna’s act of surrender, Krishna told Arjuna to accept the uncomfortable truth that every individual born will ultimately have to face death, old age and disease. He told him not to be restless, but to be silent and peaceful and try to connect with his inner spirit that is imperishable. He explained that though the human body weathers with time and ultimately wears out, the spirit cannot be touched by wind, wetted by water or even burnt by fire. But all this philosophy was a little too much for Arjuna to digest in the current situation that he had found himself in. Arjuna always wanted to be a great warrior and strived to hone his skills so he could contribute in a way that would perhaps even turn the tide of any battle but this was something he had never signed up for or even imagined in his worst dreams. It was like a nightmare, a scenario straight out of a horror movie. His duty was now to attack Dronacharya, the very teacher who had held his hand and taught him to wield the bow and arrow. And his arrows were also expected to pierce the heart of Grand sire Bhisma, a godly figure whom he revered the most! All this was too much and Arjuna just wanted to get out of the situation and here was Krishna with his sermon telling him that Arjuna should not get disturbed by what was happening.
on the outside and that he should focus on the inside and be peaceful and calm. The fact that there was a pure spirit which could not be touched or affected by outer situations simply did not resonate with him. He was now going to participate in a battle. Where was immortality in this realm of mortality? Arjuna was quite clear in his logic. If the spirit was to be reached in this raw physical and material existence, it was not possible in the battlefield. Krishna had told him that the truth of the spirit or the “Aadi aatma” was higher than all the sciences in the world. Arjuna was a master of Astrashastra—the advanced science of weaponry and he felt if he had to understand the highest knowledge of human existence—the Adhyatma, he would have to renounce the science and skills that he had acquired with dedicated and consistent efforts for there was no way he could possibly understand the truth of the Atman in his actions which would involve killing. But now, pushed to a corner in life, he had already lost the inner battle and decided to renounce everything just to get out of action. But here was Krishna asking him to engage in action to realise the spirit.

A perplexed Arjuna asked this question to Krishna,

_O Krishna, Haven’t you just said what is superior,
That spiritual knowledge over material action is better!
Then why is it that you coerce me into action?
This ghastly ‘karma’ on me, why do you sanction? 3.1_

This question of Arjuna takes me back to the time when my teacher, Damleji told me the story of his Guru, Sri Nana Maharaj Taranekar, a prominent saint of the Datta Sampradaya revered as the 16th incarnation of Lord Dattatreya across Maharashtra, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh. One can also find more details of the same in his biography “Shree Martand Mahima” written by Dr. Vijay Paage.

During his younger days, Nana Maharaj had embarked on a spiritual yatra and reached Gokul, the historic town in Mathura district, UP where Sri Krishna had spent his childhood. Aspiring for a _darshana_ of Krishna, he had begun the journey. However, despite his sincerest of prayers, he had not received a darshan of Krishna. Exhausted and weary, even after three days without food, he was disappointed and began questioning everything including his own spiritual journey or _sadhana_. On one side was the Yamuna river and on the other a treacherous and dense forest. All seemed lost and in that most desolate moment, disgusted and dejected, he decided to surrender his physical body at the feet of the Lord. Suddenly he felt a brightness radiating behind him and as he turned, he saw a young Krishna, with a peacock feather on his head, a beautiful flute on his left hand and a water vessel in his right. Nana Maharaj smelt a beautiful fragrance and he was about to run to touch his feet when he heard him utter the following words in his Brija dialect, “_Thade rahiyo Panditji!_” “_Stand your ground, Panditji_”

Krishna laughed and gave a tight hug to Nana Maharaj and gave three drops of “_teertha_” which tasted like nectar and Nana Maharaj’s fatigue and tiredness disappeared. Bal Gopal continued his laughter and Nana Maharaj was full of joy, he asked Krishna this question,

_Ek baath ekanth mein sunalo jagadadhar
Taare mhare karma toh prabhu ka kya upkaar?_

One thing, in private, listen O sustainer of the universe
If it is my actions, that will take me across,
Then what is the role of your favour/grace?

Krishna only laughed heartily again and tears streamed from the eyes of Nana Maharaja as he realised that he would never see this form again. But Bal Gopal disappeared without answering the question. This sounds so typical of Krishna, doesn’t it?

Many times in life we are faced with questions that don’t get answered easily: Why does God, the all powerful father of all living people not intervene and stop wrong things from happening? If God is all powerful, why does he let good people die untimely deaths? What is the point of a non-intervening God, if mankind has to fight it out alone? Looking at the suffering of his impoverished family and the scores of people dying in the Bengal famine, a young Narendra Datta had questioned God’s existence and even his inner voice saying “Agar tum ho, toh yeh Kyu Hai?” meaning “If you are, then why is this?”. The answers that he got transformed his life completely and he became the Swami Vivekananda whose words even to this day give scores of directionless youth meaning and purpose in life. What are the answers to these questions? I guess, there is really no readymade answer to this question and that each of us will have to seek and find through our own individual life experiences.

Arjuna, was of the old fashioned school of thought which had a binary logic when dealing with the spiritual and the material. It postulated a dichotomy — “What was spiritual could not be material and vice versa. Even today, many consider the spiritual and the material to be opposites and non-reconcilable and draw a sharp line of demarcation between the two. However, Sri Aurobindo’s integral Yoga completely erased this line between the two that was drawn and reinforced by the Mayawadi schools of thought. “All Life is Yoga” is perfectly encapsulated by integral yoga and we have seen from the stories how the many great and
silent sadhaks or seekers of Sri Aurobindo’s way, who are no more with us today, used their works rather than visiting temples or engaging in rituals to further their sadhana or spiritual journey.

In the Gita too, Krishna explained to Arjuna that even an Avataar has to perform duties and wade through the travails that affect the mortal nature. He told him that warriors, eagerly wait for an opportunity to utilise their acquired skills and nothing is most important to them than to uphold their duty to defend what is right. Many times they are more than willing to make the greatest sacrifice—the sacrifice of their own lives too. Krishna tried to reason and explain that no single moment can pass in life where action is not performed. The karmic chain of action covers every activity of existence. Even our activities which are not classified as works such as Eating, Sleeping, Thinking and the likes, fall into the karmic web and affect the cause-effect equilibrium.

Sensing Arjuna’s apparent fear of death, Krishna went on to emphasise that when such a moment to place one’s life at stake for a noble cause presents itself, the warrior joyfully consents. He tells Arjuna that, there is not greater victory in life than listening to the call of duty. Even if Arjuna did not fully accept the soul and its journey beyond life, victory is certain in such a situation. His words “Tasmaad Uttishta Kaunteya” — “Arjuna, Rise Up and Fight” from the II Adhyaya echo very strongly.

In this mighty battle to uphold the right
Either the Heaven’s doors shall open on defeat
Or your victory the whole earth shall joyously greet
Success is certain Arjuna, Rise up and fight! 2.37

In hindsight, as an answer to our questions on whether one must wait to listen to the inner voice or work, we can see that nothing is more important than performing one’s duties. Each of us has a purpose, a sacred duty and responsibility towards ourselves and our universe. If we recognise this and hold on to our duties, we will never go astray.

Indeed! There is absolutely no room for inertia and biding one’s time for the right moment is not an option for the time and moment to perform the right action is only now!

“Do thy work with a calm, strong and equal spirit; fight and fall nobly or conquer mightily. For this is the work that God and thy nature has given to thee to accomplish.” — Sri Aurobindo (CWSA, Vol. 19 pg. 67)

Sushrut Badhe

Myths and Fairy Tales From a psychological perspective

A vast number of folk tales, legends and myths have been passed down the generations as oral stories. They have a dual purpose: to entertain and instruct. Stories with similar plots are found in most cultures, because many of them play with universal patterns, called archetypes; and common human problems. These stories have a simple narrative that children will enjoy, and a deeper layer that the psychologically mature can grasp. Also, the idioms we use in our language are psychologically loaded, just as myths use metaphors to convey their secret meaning.

The Mother tells stories from her life where she sees beings from a world we would imagine belonged to the fairy tales. But for her these realms exist, and far more concretely than the material world. The two worlds can communicate when we, of the material world, can open ourselves to the powers of the magical world. This is what Mother said:

“For me, this subtle world is far more real than the material world—much truer, much more tangible, concrete, real—but for others in this material world to believe in the subtle worlds, either they must have some beginning of experience, or else they must agree to have confidence and say, ‘All right, they say it’s like that, therefore it must be like that.’ Otherwise, to be convinced they want the truth to manifest in a world of falsehood in spite of the falsehood. Their attitude is like this: ‘We are willing to admit that it is possible, that it is real, but as long as it has not manifested here, we do not quite believe in it.’

Question: Are you referring to the supramental world?

“It applies to everything: every true thing in the world, including all the fairy tale miracles. Things that appear miraculous to the physical consciousness happen in an altogether different way, but to it they are indeed miraculous since they don’t depend on any physical processes. As I have said, to travel from one place to another there is no need for any means of transport, to feed ourselves it is not necessary to put external things into the body, to dress ourselves we
have no need to put on clothes, etc. The play of forces is the spontaneous expression of Truth and of the true Will, the true vision.” (Mother, Agenda, 1958, pp. 146-147)

Even if we are unable to be enchanted and bewitched by the fairy tales, we can follow their movements unfold in the world. Their stories are symbolic representations of forces at play in our lives. We can use the myths to warn us, to show us the way ahead, to be our guides and companions.

Myths can be interpreted in various ways. Let me offer my own here for some well-known tales. I will use the psychological terms shadow and anima/animus. The shadow suggests a part of our self we do not see consciously. Many folk tales play with the shadow, which shows up as the repressed, neglected part of a person—an “other” of the same gender. There is also often a knight in shining armours for women, the animus; and lady guide for men, the anima. The anima is the female half of a man’s being, and the animus the male half of a women. These provide the complementary function, which is needed to balance the being. It has been depicted as the Ardhanareshwar in Hindu iconography, and the yin-yang figures from Taoism that together make up the whole, the circle. The anima for a man and animus for a woman is a part of the being that not only completes the being but also leads it to the Self. It shows up as the opposite gender since it represents the missing part.

In the Greek myth of Psyche and Eros, Psyche is the human soul aspiring for the divine. Eros is the god of love, the divine animus in Psyche. In the story, Eros rescues her when her society has exiled her. In symbolic language, when the soul is denied, ignored, punished by the external world, it is the divine love, which is already within, that saves it.

Eros marries Psyche, but he has not revealed his true identity to her, and asks her not to be curious. This is her test. But her doubting self, her shadow, suspects his divinity. In the story it shows up as her jealous sisters. She casts the pale light of a candle—the dim human mind—and sees her sleeping lover. She cannot believe her eyes. He is beautiful and majestic, beyond words. Eros wakes up, feels betrayed and abandons her.
Then begins Psyche’s Hero’s Journey to reclaim him. Her tasks are not easy. But the challenges have a purpose: they are to strengthen her; to make her deserving of Eros’s love. She has to sort seeds of different kinds that are all mixed together. Ants come to her aid. It is her own psychic skill at detail-oriented work. Next, she has to collect wool from golden sheep. Some reeds by the river tell her to wait for the sheep to brush past them; and then collect the wool that gets stuck on the reeds. Psyche learns to be patient. She has also learnt to communicate with the animal and plant worlds, which is a psychic power. Her third task is to collect water from Styx, the river of death. An eagle appears from the blue; takes her goblet; fights against the dragons that guard the sacred water; and collects the water of immortality for her. The eagle is her intuition, another psychic power. He comes swiftly and she trusts him without hesitation. The last task is to get a beauty balm from Persephone, queen of Hell. Here the boatman who takes her across to Hell advises her to be steadfast in her purpose. He is the Wise Old Man archetype. Psyche resists the temptations to help the suffering souls on the way, who are in fact deceptions. Steadfastness is a psychic strength. Her ability to listen to her inner voice, the wisdom figure, is her saving grace.

At the end of these trials, Eros comes to receive Psyche in his arms of love. She is united with him and made a goddess. Such is the soul’s difficult journey and its ultimate triumph.

I would interpret the Cindrella fairy tale as a person’s individuation process. Cindrella, with a weak ego, is being controlled by the authoritative shadows within her, personified as the step-mother and step-sisters. The Great Mother archetype shows up in her life as a fairy to break the spell of the dark shadows. She is transformed into a princess. But she is still unsure of her new state. She loses her self-confidence and returns to her sordid but safe life, at the stroke of midnight. The Great Man within her though, has left her a clue—an unconscious trail, as represented by her shoe. She is too shy to reclaim it on her own. But her animus—the courageous masculine quality in her—the prince, finds her. Then she starts a new life as a queen, free and in control of herself, well into the individuation journey.

In Beauty and the Beast, the animus of the beautiful girl, called Beauty, is unevolved and crude. Therefore, he is the fierce-looking Beast. But he has a heart of gold. He keeps Beauty happy with external pleasures. Beauty is forced to confront her ugly but helpful animus; and gradually she begins to love him. It is when she chooses him over the others in her life, that he transforms into a prince, which he had always been. The curse of the animus is the ego’s misunderstanding of it. The animus can lead the ego to the Self, when it is given a fair chance.

In the Little Red Riding Hood, the child ego is enticed by the evil archetype, as represented by the hungry wolf. The child gets several warnings from one of her inner guardians, her rational mind. In the story the child asks why her grandmother’s ears are so long, why her eyes so large, why her teeth so sharp. Every time the evil throws back plausible answers: to hear you better, to see you better. When the wolf is sure of its victory, it says, “I have sharp teeth
to eat you better.” The child has failed to act after being warned. She is deceived and is devoured by the wolf, which is a figurative devouring of the child ego. The opposite of evil, the good, which is the etymological root for ‘god’ comes to her rescue as the hunter. He literally “delivers” her from the wolf’s belly and the wolf is killed. The floundering ego has been saved to continue its journey on its own. She has learnt the lesson of being wary of the “wolf in sheep’s clothing”.

In *Snow White* again we find the evil Mother archetype. The beautiful princess escapes this mother. She finds the dwelling of seven dwarfs, each with a name that calls out a character trait of the girl. They are: Happy, Grumpy, Sleepy, Bashful, Doc, Sneezy and Dopey. She keeps them happily united in her house. The house represents her being, where she is the central ego. Then one day the witch-mother overpowers her and poisons her. She remains in a near-death state until her salvation. The saviour is her animus, the prince who delivers the spell-breaking kiss. She wakes up from her sleep and awakes to Selfhood.

A similar plot is found in the *Snow Queen*, with genders reversed. Here the victim is a boy whose heart has become cold, literally and figuratively. He is captivated by the Snow Queen, the cold Mother archetype, who makes him her captive. He is imprisoned in a beautiful castle made of ice. He is lonely. His heart is cold and dry. He is solving mental puzzles, and has lost touch with his feelings. His redeemer is his anima, his girlfriend from the village. She has to journey far and through many vicissitudes to find him. She meets allies on the road, who are benevolent archetypal powers and her own psychic abilities. With their help she reaches the Snow Queen’s castle and finds him. Her warm kiss and hot tears that drop on him melt the ice in his heart. He reconnects with his feelings, and falls in love again with his anima. United in spirit, they escape from bondage, and return to a warm world—warm because it reflects the warmth in their hearts.

The world of magic is not a child’s fancy. It exists all around us had we eyes to see. This is the source of fantasies such as the *Lord of Rings, Peter Pan* and *Harry Potter*. It is our belief system than creates artificial walls, and pulls up the drawbridge as soon as the genie escapes the magic lamp. If we allow Santa Claus into our life, we will be rewarded, always, in and out of season, rewarded with love and laughter. If we open our heart to magic, we shouldn’t be surprised by all the miracles that will follow. The occult forces are at play as fairies and dwarves. Let’s become their playground and watch them have fun. Let’s take a magic carpet ride and visit the land of impossible possibilities.

Lopa Mukherjee

---

**Arjunacharya Story**

Arjunacharya and his wife were very simple and humble devotees. They lived in a small hut and everyday after his morning duties, he used to go to village and beg for alms.

As a rule he used to visit only three houses and beg alms. He used to accept just enough alms for himself and his wife to live.

He was writing a commentary on *Bhagavad Gita* and everyday he spent hours reading and writing.

One day he was so engrossed in it that he forgot to go to the village for getting food. Since it was already late afternoon, the ladies in the village were resting and there was no spare food even in single house. So he came back empty handed.

Once more he sat to read the *Bhagavad Gita*. In the ninth chapter verse 22, Lord Krishna says:

> ananyaash cintayanto maam ye janaah paryupaasate
> teshaaṁ nityaabhiyuktaanaam yoga-kshemam vahaamy aham

> “But those who always worship Me with exclusive devotion, meditating on My transcendental form to them I carry what they lack, and I preserve what they have.”

Arjunacharya started thinking about the last words deeply and did not find them correct.

How could the Lord say, “vahamya aham” — I personally carry?

He scratched the line — “yoga kshema vahaamyaham” and then he told his wife that he was going to river for a bath.

Meanwhile two boys (Krishna and Balarama) appeared and carried loads of rice, vegetables, fruits and butter and handed it over to Arjunacharya’s wife.
She was surprised and wonder-struck by their beautiful faces and so she asked them who they were.

They introduced themselves as disciples of her husband and that they have brought these provisions as per their order.

She was very thankful and happy that now can cook something for her hungry husband.

When the boys started leaving she saw the scars on the back of their bodies, she was shocked.

She asked them: Who has done this to you oh beautiful boys?

They told her that her husband makes them work very hard and if they did not obey he used to beat them.

She was not able to believe what they said. But she felt very sad for them and applied sandal wood paste on their backs to relieve the pain and they left immediately.

When Arjunacharya returned home his wife was very angry at him. She even didn’t wanted to speak to him.

Arjunacharya asked her: Why do you not want to speak to me? Have I hurt you?

“No”, replied his wife, “you are bad person. You are hurting small children!”

How? asked Arjunacharya.

When he heard what his wife told him, he was able to realise that the two boys were Krishna and Balaram.

He ran inside where his Bhagavad Gita was lying and could see that the pen marks on his shloka had vanished.

He started weeping for doubting the Lord’s word and said, “Yogakshemam vaahamy aham! It is true.”

“You do come personally to save the devotees. Oh ! Please forgive me”.

His wife felt sad for not having recognised them, though she saw them face to face. But Arjunacharya was very happy thinking how his wife had direct darshan of Krishna and Balarama.

Arjunacharya consoled her and said, “Now I have understood that there is no difference between Lord Krishna and Bhagavad Gita. By scratching on the Bhagavad Gita I was scratching body of the Lord Krishna. And Lord is truth, He takes care of His devotees. He personally carries what they have and provides what they lack”.

Then they began to chant and glorify the Lord.

(This is real incident which took place in the life of a great devotee called Arjunacharya who lived in South India).

Courtesy: The Internet