

# The Sunlit Path



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My dear friends,

I am happy to bring to you the 15<sup>th</sup> April, 2020 issue of The Sunlit Path. This issue contains several extraordinary passages from the writings of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother which illumine us in our inner quest and also provide a synthesising approach for inner and outer life. 'The Vedic Theory' brings home a message that the fundamental Vedic methods of expression of knowledge are experiential and revelatory rather than intellectual and 'analytical.' The 'Supramental Manifestation' is a beautiful essay which describes *the Principle* which offers the sure connecting link between inner realisation and outer world which fulfils both.' 'Our Ideal' describes the synthesising approach between materialistic and non-materialistic, or, one may say, the so called 'mundane' and the 'divine' world-views. And finally, we have a beautiful essay by Noloni Kanta Gupta, a disciple of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother about a Vedic story which emphasises the value and process of sacrifice in the emerging influence of psychic being.

I do hope you will find the contents inspiring.

Sincere regards,

Dr Bhalendu Vaishnav

## The Vedic Theory Sri Aurobindo

**THE VEDA, then, is the creation of an age anterior to our intellectual philosophies.** In that original epoch thought proceeded by other methods than those of our logical reasoning and speech accepted modes of expression which in our modern habits would be inadmissible. The wisest then depended on inner experience and the suggestions of the intuitive mind for all knowledge that ranged beyond mankind's ordinary perceptions and daily activities. Their aim was illumination, not logical conviction, their ideal the inspired seer, not the accurate reasoner. Indian tradition has faithfully preserved this account of the origin of the Vedas. The Rishi was not the individual composer of the hymn, but the seer (*drasta*) of an eternal truth and an impersonal knowledge. The language of Veda itself is *Sruti*, a rhythm not composed by the intellect but heard, a divine Word that came vibrating out of the Infinite to the inner audience of the man who had previously made himself fit for the impersonal knowledge. The words themselves, *drsti* and *'sruti*, sight and hearing, are Vedic expressions; these and cognate words signify, in the esoteric terminology of the hymns, revelatory knowledge and the contents of inspiration.

In the Vedic idea of the revelation there is no suggestion of the miraculous or the supernatural. The Rishi who employed these faculties, had acquired them by a progressive self-culture. Knowledge itself was a travelling and a reaching, or a finding and a winning; the revelation came only at the end, the light was the prize of a final victory. There is continually in the Veda this image of the journey, the soul's march on the path of Truth. On that path, as it advances, it also ascends; new vistas of power and light open to its aspiration; it wins by a heroic effort its enlarged spiritual possessions. (1)

## The Supramental Realisation The Mother

In order to know what the Supramental Realisation will be like, the first step, the first condition is to know what the supramental consciousness is. All those who have been, in one way or another, in contact with it have had some glimpse of the realisation to be. But those who have not, can yet aspire for that realisation, just as they can aspire to get the supramental knowledge. True knowledge means awareness by identity: once you get in touch with the supramental world, you can say something about its descent, but not before. What you can say before is that there will be a new creation upon earth; this you say through faith, since the exact character of it escapes you. And if you are called upon to define realisation, you may declare that, individually speaking, it means the transformation of your ordinary human consciousness into the divine and supramental.

The consciousness is like a ladder: at each great epoch there has been one great being capable of adding one more step to the ladder and reaching a place where the ordinary consciousness had never been. It is possible to attain a high level and get completely out of the material consciousness; but then one does not retain the ladder, whereas the great achievement of the great epochs of the universe has been the capacity to add one more step to the ladder without losing contact with the material, the capacity to reach the Highest and at the same time connect the top with the bottom instead of letting a kind of emptiness cut off all connection between the different planes. To go up and down and join the top to the bottom is the whole secret of realisation, and that is the work of the Avatar. Each time he adds one more step to the ladder there is a new creation upon earth.... The step which is being added

now Sri Aurobindo has called the Supramental; as a result of it, the consciousness will be able to enter the supramental world and yet retain its personal form, its individualisation and then come down to establish here a new creation. Certainly this is not the last, for there are farther ranges of being; but now we are at work to bring down the supramental, to effect a reorganisation of the world, to bring the world back to the true divine order. It is essentially a creation of order, a putting of everything in its true place; and the chief spirit or force, the Shakti active at present is Mahasaraswati, the Goddess of perfect organisation.

The work of achieving a continuity which permits one to go up and down and bring into the material what is above, is done inside the consciousness. He who is meant to do it, the Avatar, even if he were shut up in a prison and saw nobody and never moved out, still would he do the work, because it is a work in the consciousness, a work of connection between the Supermind and the material being. He does not need to be recognised, he need have no outward power in order to be able to establish this conscious connection. Once, however, the connection is made, it must have its effect in the outward world in the form of a new creation, beginning with a model town and ending with a perfect world.

(2)

## Our Ideal Sri Aurobindo

The message of the East to the West is a true message, “Only by finding himself can man be saved,” and “what shall it profit a man though he gain the whole world, if he lose his own soul?” The West has heard the message and is seeking out the law and truth of the soul and the evidences of an inner reality greater than the material. The danger is that with her passion for mechanism and her exaggerated intellectuality she may fog herself in an external and false psychism, such as we see arising in England and America, the homes of the mechanical genius, or in intellectual, unspiritual and therefore erroneous theories of the Absolute, such as have run their course in critical and metaphysical Germany.

The idea by which the illumination of Asia has been governed is the firm knowledge that truth of the Spirit is the sole real truth, the belief that the psychological life of man is an instrument for attaining to the truth of the Spirit and that its laws must be known and practised with that aim paramount, and the attempt to form the external life of man and the institutions of society into a suitable mould for the great endeavour. This idea, too, is absolutely just and we accept it entirely. But in its application, and in India most, it has deviated into a divorce between the Spirit and its instruments and a disparagement and narrowing of the mental and external life of the race. For it is only on the widest and richest efflorescence of this instrumental life that the fullest and most absolute attainment of the spiritual can be securely based. This knowledge the ancients of the East possessed and practised; it has been



dimmed in knowledge and lost in practice by their descendants.

The message the West brings to the East is a true message. Man also is God and it is through his developing manhood that he approaches the godhead; Life also is the Divine, its progressive expansion is the self-expression of the Brahman, and to deny Life is to diminish the Godhead within us. This is the truth that returns to the East from the West translated into the language of the higher truth the East already possesses; and it is an ancient knowledge. The East also is awaking to the message. The danger is that Asia may accept it in the European form, forget for a time her own law and nature and either copy blindly the West or make a disastrous amalgam of that which she has in its most inferior forms and the crudenesses which are invading her.

The problem of thought therefore is to find out the right idea and the right way of harmony; to restate the ancient and eternal spiritual truth of the Self so that it shall re-embrace, permeate, dominate, transfigure the mental and physical life; to develop the most profound and vital methods of psychological self-discipline and self-development so that the mental and psychical life of man may express the spiritual life through the utmost possible expansion of its own richness, power and complexity; and to seek for the means and motives by which his external life, his society and his institutions may remould themselves progressively in the truth of the spirit and develop towards the utmost possible harmony of individual freedom and social unity.



This is our ideal and our search. Throughout the world there are plenty of movements inspired by the same drift, but there is room for an effort of thought which shall frankly acknowledge the problem in its integral complexity and not be restrained in the flexibility of its search by attachment to any cult, creed or extant system of philosophy.

The effort involves a quest for the Truth that underlies existence and the fundamental Law of its self-expression in the universe—the work of metaphysical philosophy and religious thought; the sounding and harmonising of the psychological methods of discipline by which man purifies and perfects himself —the work of psychology, not as it is understood in Europe, but the deeper practical psychology called in India Yoga; and the application of our ideas to the problems of man's social and collective life.

Philosophy and religious thought based on spiritual experience must be the beginning and the foundation of any such attempt; for they alone go behind appearances and processes to the truth of things. The attempt to get rid of their supremacy must always be vain. Man will always think and generalise and try to penetrate behind the apparent fact, for that is the imperative law of his awakened consciousness; man will always turn his generalisations into a religion, even though it be only a religion of positivism or of material Law. Philosophy is the intellectual search for the fundamental truth of things, religion is the attempt to make the truth dynamic in the soul of man. They are essential to each other; a religion that is not the expression of philosophic truth, degenerates into superstition and obscurantism, and a philosophy which does not dynamise itself

with the religious spirit is a barren light, for it cannot get itself practised. But again neither of these get their supreme value unless raised into the spirit and cast into life.

**What then shall be our ideal?** Unity for the human race by an inner oneness and not only by an external association of interests; the resurgence of man out of the merely animal and economic life or the merely intellectual and aesthetic into the glories of the spiritual existence; the pouring of the power of the spirit into the physical mould and mental instrument so that man may develop his manhood into that true supermanhood which shall exceed our present state as much as this exceeds the animal state from which science tells us that we have issued. **These three are one; for man's unity and man's self-transcendence can come only by living in the Spirit.**

(3)



## A Vedic Story

### Nolini Kanta Gupta

The gods are in a great fix. Where is Agni? How is it that the comrade has disappeared all on a sudden? The Sacrifice - the great work has to be undertaken. And he is to be the leader, for he alone can take up the burden. There is no time to be lost, everything is ready for the ceremony to start and just at the moment the one needed most is nowhere. So the gods organise a search party to find out the whereabouts of the runaway god.

The search party consists of Varuna, Mitra and Yama. We shall presently understand the sense of the selection. They look about here and therein ten directions, it is mentioned - and at last spot the defaulting god hiding within a huge thick strong cloak or caul. They hail him and ask him to come out and take up his charge. Agni refuses: he says he is not competent to undertake the burden; indeed that is why he ran away and they must not force him. The gods explain, entreat, encourage Agni. They say and assure him that no harm will come to him, rather he will flourish and prosper and become immortal. He is mighty and he will become almighty as he takes up his work and proceeds with it. Agni accepts in the end and marches out with the gods.

What does this parable mean? First of all then we must know what Sacrifice – a Vedic sacrifice – is. Sacrifice symbolises the cosmic labour, the march of the universe towards its goal, the conquest of Light over Darkness, the ascent of manhood to godhead, the flaming rise and progress of consciousness to its supreme expression and embodiment. It is the release out of Inconscience and Unconsciousness to consciousness and finally into the superconsciousness.

Sacrifice consists essentially in lighting the fire and pouring fuel-offerings

- into it so that it may burn always and brighter and brighter. It calls the gods, also, it is said, ascends to them, brings them down here to live among men, in men. It lifts men from the ordinary life and consciousness, takes them to the abode of the gods. In other words its function is to bring down and infuse into the human vessel the godly consciousness and delight and power. Its purpose is to divinise human life. Through the sacrifice man offers his present possessions, his body and life and mind to the Deity and deities and by this surrender and submission constant and unfailing ( *namas* ) he awakens the Divine in him - the Agni that is to lead him to the divine consummation.

Fire then is the energy of consciousness secreted in the heart of things. It is that which moves the creation upward, produces the unfolding evolution that is history, both individual and collective. It is kindled, it increases in volume and strength and purity and effectiveness, as and when lower element is offered and submitted to a higher reality and this higher reality impinges upon the lower one (which is what the rubbing of the *arani* or the pressing of the *soma* symbolises); the limitation is broken, the small enters into and becomes the vast, the crooked is straightened and lengthened out, what was hidden becomes manifest. This is described as the progression of the sacrifice ( *adhvara* – advance on the path). That is also the victorious battle waged against the dark force Ignorance. The goal, the purpose is the descent and manifestation of the gods here upon earth in human vehicles.

But this fire is not normally available, It is lost, imbedded in the thick petrified folds of unconsciousness and inconscience. Man's soul is not an apparent reality. It has to be found out, called forth, brought to the front. Even so, in the normal consciousness, the soul, the divine fire is a flickering, twinkling, hesitating spark; it is not sure of itself, not certain of its destiny. Yet when the time is ripe and the call comes, the gods, the luminous forces from above descend with all their insistence and meet the hidden godhead: Agni is reminded of his work and destiny which

nothing can frustrate or cancel. He has to consent and undertake his sacrificial labour.

Agni feared and tried to escape from the burden of his responsibility; He wrapped himself in a thick and vast cloak and hid in the depths of far waters. That is the parable way of describing the difficulty, the apparent impossibility of the undertaking Agni has to shoulder. Curiously however he has taken shelter just in the spot which seemed safest to him, from where begins his work, whose nature and substance he has to transform, that is to say, the nether regions of inconscience which is to be raised and transfigured into the solar region of the supraconsciousness.

One interesting point in the story is the choice of the gods who formed the search party. They were Mitra, Varuna and Yama. Varuna is the god of the vast consciousness (Brihat), the wide universal, the Infinite. His eye naturally penetrates everywhere and nothing can escape his notice. Mitra is harmony and rhythm of the infinity. Every individual elements he embraces and he holds them all together in loving union – his is the friendly tie of comradeship with all. Finally Yama is the master of the lower regions, the underworld of physical and material consciousness, where precisely Agni has taken refuge. Agni is within the jurisdiction of the trinity and it devolves upon them to tackle the truant god.

There is another point which required clarification. As a reason for this nervousness and flight he alleges that greater people who preceded him had attempted the work, but evidently failed in the attempt; so how can he, a younger novice, dare to go the same way? Putting the imagery back to its psychological bearing, one may explain that the predecessors refer to the deities of the physical, vital and mental consciousness who ruled the earth before the emergence of the psychic or soul consciousness. It is precisely because of the failure or insufficiency of these anterior- in the evolutionary movement – and inferior gods that Agni's service is being requisitioned. Mythologically also a parallelism is found in the Greek

legends where it is said that the Olympian gods – Zeus and his company - were a younger generation that replaced, after of course a bloody warfare, their ancestors, the more ancient race of Kronos, the Titans. Titans were the Asuras and Rakshasas who reigned upon earth before the advent of the mental - sattwic – human being, Manu, as referred here.

Now, here I give you the original text in translation:

### **THE COLLOQUY OF AGNI AND THE GOD ( Rigveda – X.51.)**

#### The gods

1. Huge and firm was that covering with which you shrouded yourself and entered into the waters.

O Agni ! You are conscious from your very birth.

The One God saw you in all your multiple universal body.

#### Agni

2. Who saw me? Which of the gods saw my multiple body all around: O Mitra! O Varuna! Tell me, where do they dwell - all the blazing fuel that move to the gods?

#### The gods

3. O Agni! God self-conscious, we seek you, you who have entered variably into the waters and into the growths of the earth. You shine richly. Yama has seen you as you flame out of your ten seats.

#### Agni

4. O Varuna! I fled because I was afraid of the work of the priest. The gods must not yoke me to that work. That was which I imbedded my body variably so that I as Agni may not know of that pathway.

#### The Gods

5. Come, O Agni! Man, the mental being, desires to do the sacrifice, he has made everything ready, and you dwell in obscurity!

Make easy-going the path that leads to the gods, with a happy mind carry the offering.

### Agni

6. There were elders before Agni who covered the same path, even as charioteers to their way.

That is why, O Varuna! Out of fear I have come away so far, even as animal shrinks and shivers at a shooting arrow.

### The gods

7. We shall make your life undecaying, O Agni! So that no harm comes to you when engaged in the work.

So, carry to the gods their share of the offering; a happy birth you have a happy mind you must carry.

### Agni

8. Then bring to me my share of the mighty offerings, those that are given before, those that are given after and those that are simply given.

O gods! Long life to the being shining in the waters, to Agni himself lying in the growths of the earth.

### The gods

9. The offerings that precede, the offerings that follow, offerings pure and simple - all forceful, may you enjoy. May this sacrifice be yours entirely. The four quarters bow down to you, O Agni!







## Acknowledgements

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1. Sri Aurobindo, Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo, CWSA; 15, 10
2. The Mother, Collected Works of The Mother, CWM, 3 178-79
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