

The Resurgent India

A Monthly National Review

May 2024



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

– The Mother

Year 15

Issue 2

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email: sadlecjnn@gmail.com, info@resurgentindia.org, URL :
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Editor : Ms. Garima Sharma, B-45, Batra Colony, Village Bharatpur, P.O. Kaushal Ganj, Bilaspur Distt. Rampur (U.P)

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SUCCESSFUL FUTURE

(Full of Promise and Joyful Surprises)

Botanical name: Gaillardia Pulchella

Common name: Indian blanket, Blanket flower, Fire-wheels

Year 15

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A Declaration

We do not fight against any creed, any religion.

We do not fight against any form of government.

We do not fight against any social class.

We do not fight against any nation or civilisation.

We are fighting division, unconsciousness, ignorance, inertia and falsehood.

We are endeavouring to establish upon earth union, knowledge, consciousness, Truth, and we fight whatever opposes the advent of this new creation of Light, Peace, Truth and Love.

– The Mother

(Collected works of the Mother, Vol. 13, pp. 124-25)

THE GREATNESS OF INDIA AND ITS CULTURE (40)

(Continued from the November 2023 Issue)

8. SOME SELECTED WORDS OF SRI AUROBINDO AND THE MOTHER ON INDIA AND ITS CULTURE

III. Politics, Society and Other National Issues

“A spiritual ideal has always been the characteristic idea and aspiration of India. But the progress of Time and the need of humanity demand a new orientation and another form of that ideal. The old forms and methods are no longer sufficient for the purpose of the Time-Spirit. India can no longer fulfil herself on lines that are too narrow for the great steps she has to take in the future. Nor is ours the spirituality of a life that is aged and world-weary and burdened with the sense of the illusion and miserable inutility of all God’s mighty creation. Our ideal is not the spirituality that withdraws from life but the conquest of life by the power of the spirit.”²⁰

“The old Indian system grew out of life, it had room for everything and every interest. There were monarchy, aristocracy, democracy. Every interest was represented in the government, while the Western system grew out of the mind. In Europe they are led by reason and want to make everything cut and dry without any chance of freedom or variation. If it is democracy, then democracy

only and no room for anything else. They cannot be plastic.

India is now trying to imitate the West. Parliamentary government is not suited to India. But we always take up what the West has thrown off.”²¹

“Spirituality is India’s only politics, the fulfilment of the Sanatan Dharma its only Swaraj. I have no doubt we shall have to go through our Parliamentary period in order to get rid of the notion of Western democracy by seeing in practice how helpless it is to make nations blessed.”²²

“The courage to defend our culture against ignorant occidental criticism and to maintain it against the gigantic modern pressure comes first, but with it there must be the courage to admit not from any European standpoint but from our own outlook the errors of our culture. Apart from all phenomena of decline or deterioration, we should recognise without any sophistical denial those things in our creeds of life and social institutions which are in themselves mistaken and some of them indefensible, things weakening to our national life, degrading to our civilisation, dishonouring to our culture. A flagrant example can be found in the treatment of our outcastes. There are those who would excuse it as an unavoidable error in the circumstances of the past; there are others who contend that it was the best possible solution then available. There are still others who would justify it and, with whatever modifications, prolong it as necessary to our social synthesis. The contention is highly disputable. The excuse was there, but it is no justification for continuance. **A solution which condemns by segregation one sixth of the nation to permanent**

ignominy, continued filth, uncleanness of the inner and outer life and a brutal animal existence instead of lifting them out of it is no solution but rather an acceptance of weakness and a constant wound to the social body and to its collective spiritual, intellectual, moral and material welfare. A social synthesis which can only live by making a permanent rule of the degradation of our fellowmen and countrymen stands condemned and foredoomed to decay and disturbance.”²³

“...our civilisation has always been preponderatingly spiritual and moral, and caste division in India had a spiritual object and a spiritual and moral basis.... A man’s caste depended on his *dharma*, his spiritual, moral and practical duties, and his *dharma* depended on his *swabhava*, his temperament and inborn nature. A Brahmin was a Brahmin not by mere birth, but because he discharged the duty of preserving the spiritual and intellectual elevation of the race, and he had to cultivate the spiritual temperament and acquire the spiritual training which could alone qualify him for the task. The Kshatriya was a Kshatriya not merely because he was the son of warriors and princes, but because he discharged the duty of protecting the country and preserving the high courage and manhood of the nation, and he had to cultivate the princely temperament and acquire the strong and lofty Samurai training which alone fitted him for his duties. So it was with the Vaishya whose function was to amass wealth for the race and the Sudra who discharged the humbler duties of service without which the other castes could not perform their share of labour for the common good. This was what we meant when we said that caste was a socialistic institution. No doubt there was a gradation of

social respect which placed the function of the Brahmin at the summit and the function of the Sudra at the base, but this inequality was accidental, external, *vyavaharika*. Essentially there was, between the devout Brahmin and the devout Sudra, no inequality in the single Virat Purusha of which each was a necessary part. Chokha Mela, the Maratha Pariah, became the guru of Brahmins proud of their caste purity; the Chandala taught Shankaracharya: for the Brahman was revealed in the body of the Pariah and in the Chandala there was the utter presence of Shiva the Almighty. Heredity entered into caste divisions, and in the light of the conclusions of modern knowledge who shall say erroneously? But it entered into it as a subordinate element. For Hindu civilisation being spiritual based its institutions on spiritual and moral foundations and subordinated the material elements and material considerations. Caste therefore was not only an institution which ought to be immune from the cheap second-hand denunciations so long in fashion, but a supreme necessity without which Hindu civilisation could not have developed its distinctive character or worked out its unique mission. But to recognise this is not to debar ourselves from pointing out its later perversions and desiring its transformation. It is the nature of human institutions to degenerate, to lose their vitality, and decay, and the first sign of decay is the loss of flexibility and oblivion of the essential spirit in which they were conceived. The spirit is permanent, the body changes; and a body which refuses to change must die. The spirit expresses itself in many ways while itself remaining essentially the same, but the body must change to suit its changing environments if it wishes to live. There is no doubt that the institution of

caste degenerated. It ceased to be determined by spiritual qualifications which, once essential, have now come to be subordinate and even immaterial and is determined by the purely material tests of occupation and birth. By this change it has set itself against the fundamental tendency of Hinduism which is to insist on the spiritual and subordinate the material and thus lost most of its meaning. **The spirit of caste arrogance, exclusiveness and superiority came to dominate it instead of the spirit of duty, and the change weakened the nation and helped to reduce us to our present condition.** It is these perversions which we wish to see set right. The institution must transform itself so as to fulfil its essential and permanent object under the changed conditions of modern times. If it refuses to change, it will become a mere social survival and crumble to pieces. If it transforms itself, it will yet play a great part in the fulfilment of civilisation.”²⁴

“Whether the spirit as well as the body of caste should remain, is the modern question. **Let Hindus remember that caste as it stands is merely *jat*, the trade guild sanctified but no longer working, it is not the eternal religion, it is not *chaturvarnya*.** I do not care whether widows marry or remain single; but it is of infinite importance to consider how women shall be legally and socially related to man, as his inferior, equal or superior; for even the relation of superiority is no more impossible in the future than it was in the far-distant past. And the most important question of all is whether society shall be competitive or cooperative, individualistic or communistic. That we should talk so little about these things and be stormy over insignificant details, shows painfully the impoverishment of the average Indian

intellect. If these greater things are decided, as they must be, the smaller will arrange themselves.”²⁵

IV. The Problem of Hindu-Muslim Unity

“..one thing we may be certain, that Hindu-Mahomedan unity cannot be effected by political adjustments or Congress flatteries. It must be sought deeper down, in the heart and the mind, for where the causes of disunion are, there the remedies must be sought. We shall do well in trying to solve the problem to remember that misunderstanding is the most fruitful cause of our differences, that love compels love and that strength conciliates the strong. We must strive to remove the causes of misunderstanding by a better mutual knowledge and sympathy; **we must extend the unfaltering love of the patriot to our Musulman brother, remembering always that in him too Narayana dwells and to him too our Mother has given a permanent place in her bosom; but we must cease to approach him falsely or flatter out of a selfish weakness and cowardice.** We believe this to be the only practical way of dealing with the difficulty. As a political question the Hindu-Mahomedan problem does not interest us at all, as a national problem it is of supreme importance. We shall make it a main part of our work to place Mahomed and Islam in a new light before our readers, to spread juster views of Mahomedan history and civilisation, to appreciate the Musulman’s place in our national development and the means of harmonising his communal life with our own, not ignoring the difficulties that stand in our way but making the most of the possibilities of brotherhood and mutual understanding. Intellectual sympathy can only draw together, the sympathy

of the heart can alone unite. But the one is a good preparation for the other.”²⁶

Talk of 23-07-1923

“Sri Aurobindo: You can live amicably with a religion whose principle is toleration. But how is it possible to live peacefully with a religion whose principle is ‘I will not tolerate you’? How are you going to have unity with these people? **Certainly, Hindu-Muslim unity cannot be arrived at on the basis that the Muslims will go on converting Hindus while the Hindus shall not convert any Mahomedan.**

Disciple: There was only recently the boycott of a drama in Andhra because some Hindu in the show was represented as marrying a Muslim lady!

Sri Aurobindo: You can’t build unity on such a basis. Perhaps, **the only way of making the Mahomedans harmless is to make them lose their fanatic faith in their religion.**”²⁷

Talk of 28-03-1923

“Sri Aurobindo: I am sorry they are making a fetish of this Hindu-Muslim unity. It is no use ignoring facts; some day the Hindus may have to fight the Muslims and they must prepare for it. Hindu-Muslim unity should not mean the subjection of the Hindus. Every time the mildness of the Hindu has given way. **The best solution would be to allow the Hindus to organise themselves and the Hindu-Muslim unity would take care of itself, it would automatically solve the problem.** Otherwise, we are

lulled into a false sense of satisfaction that we have solved a difficult problem, when in fact we have only shelved it.”²⁸

Talk of 30-12-1939

“**Disciple:** Some people object to Vande Mataram as a national song. And some Congressmen support the removal of some parts of the song.

Sri Aurobindo: In that case the Hindus should give up their culture.

Disciple: The objection is that it speaks of the Hindu goddess Durga and that is offensive to the Muslims.

Sri Aurobindo: But it is not a religious song! It is a national song and the Durga spoken of is India as the Mother. Why shouldn't the Muslims accept it? It is an image used in poetry. If in the conception of Indian nationality the Hindu viewpoint can not find a place then the Hindus may as well be asked to give up their culture; it comes to this that we all become Mohammedans. They don't say it now but they will say it later on, because they have begun to object to the worship of Hindu Gods in national institutions. **Why shouldn't the Hindu worship his Gods? Otherwise, the Hindus must either become Mohammedans or adopt European culture, or become atheists.** The Hindus don't object to their 'Allah ho Akbar'.”²⁹

“**Sri Aurobindo:** ...if the Hindus organised themselves, that would make the rational Muslims think again. And that will give men like Sir Akbar, who want to come to a compromise, a chance to intervene.

Disciple: The Khilafat agitation was a great mistake; it

only added to the fanaticism of the Muslims without giving them patriotism or nationalism.”³⁰

“All fanaticism is false, because it is a contradiction of the very nature of God and of Truth. **Truth cannot be shut up in a single book, Bible or Veda or Koran, or in a single religion.** The Divine Being is eternal and universal and infinite and cannot be the sole property of the Mussulmans or of the Semitic religions only, – those that happened to be in a line from the Bible and to have Jewish or Arabian prophets for their founders. Hindus and Confucians and Taoists and all others have as much right to enter into relation with God and find the Truth in their own way. All religions have some truth in them, but none has the whole truth; all are created in time and finally decline and perish. Mahomed himself never pretended that the Koran was the last message of God and there would be no other. God and Truth outlast these religions and manifest themselves anew in whatever way or form the Divine Wisdom chooses. You cannot shut up God in the limitations of your own narrow brain or dictate to the Divine Power and Consciousness how or where or through whom it shall manifest; you cannot put up your puny barriers against the divine Omnipotence. These again are simple truths which are now being recognised all over the world; only the childish in mind or those who vegetate in some formula of the past deny them.”³¹ (The Greatness of India and Its Culture in the Words of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, The Resurgent India Trust, 2016, pp. 355-62)

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- 24 CWSA 7: 682-84
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- 29 *Evening Talks with Sri Aurobindo, Recorded* by A. B. Purani 2007: PP. 717-18
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- 31 CWSA 32: 109

HIGHLIGHTS

DEVELOPMENTS IN RUSSIA AND UKRAINE

The Russia-Ukraine war continues to be stuck in a deadlocked situation. While Russia has gained control over the eastern parts of Ukraine – around 18% of the Ukrainian territory – comprising of Russian-speaking population, neither side has been able to make any further advances. Russia has repeatedly sent feelers and made statements to the effect that it is willing to negotiate a peace agreement based on the new status quo. In other words, it wants to retain the newly conquered territories in eastern Ukraine. Ukraine has understandably rebuffed these overtures, even as it organizes its own international peace conference in Switzerland to mobilize new support for the war.

The Russian desperation to end the war with a face-saving exit is understandable in the context of the toll this war has taken on the internal situation in Russia. While the uprising by Wagner group last year, the recent murder of rebel political leader, Alexei Navalny and the massive terror attacks in Moscow are some of the major upheavals the country has faced since the war started, there are several constant disturbances that are on the verge of causing dangerous structural changes in Russia. These include dissatisfaction within the Russian provinces populated by various ethnic groups, including Muslim-majority provinces, rising public fatigue against war and the toll it is taking on Russian people.

Most recently, Russian leaders have, in the wake of Moscow terror attacks, begun a stream of consistent tirade against illegal immigrants and the dangers they pose to the Russian society.

The government has also taken the decision to form volunteer battalions in the North Caucasus, consisting of ethnic non-Russian people to fight in the war in place of regular armed forces. It has also passed legislation creating a Cossack “mobilization reserve”, with Cossacks loyal to the Kremlin playing an increasingly active role in Russia’s offensive campaigns. Further, in a sign of growing repression, the government is on course to club various voices of opposition under the single umbrella of an “international social movement for the destruction of the multinational unity and territorial integrity of Russia” – termed the “Anti-Russian Separatist Movement.” Once this fictitious club is declared an extremist organization – the case is currently due to be heard in the Russian Supreme Court – it will unleash many times more potent repression than what is visible at present. These steps not only betray extreme insecurity, but also reflect diminishing military might in many crucial areas.

Further, in signs of growing desperation to keep itself relevant, Russia is accelerating its activities to sabotage political systems of smaller countries in the neighbourhood, particularly Georgia and Belarus. While Belarus has officially deployed the Russian tactical nuclear weapons (TNWs), the pro-Moscow Georgian government is set to pass a foreign agents law in a bid to reduce western influence in the country. Russia is also using Cyprus – a non-NATO EU member – to conduct various operations against the European countries. In the Balkans, Serbia is actively courting Russia and China, with the new government appointing a number of Kremlin-linked ministers. Finally, Russia – with the Chinese backing – is engaging in an increasing attempt to stoke tensions in the Svalbard region over which Norway claims sovereignty (as per the 1920 Svalbard Treaty, which was

negotiated by excluding the Soviet Union), and which is supposed to be multinational, especially having large numbers of Russians and some Chinese people. Russia maybe planning to use Svalbard as the first site of attack on West in case the war expands.

DEVELOPMENTS IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

The fatigue with Artificial Intelligence (AI) is already visible. Even as new developments continue apace, the increasing trend of societies becoming accustomed to AI – in its present limited form – is fast giving way to fatigue. In recent times, AI applications have become increasingly standardized across various sectors and arenas. For now, it has become another tool for complementing human convenience without posing any substantial risks, even though doomsday predictions continue to abound. Its increasing use is also being accompanied by increased regulation from governments. Following the AI Safety Summit at Bletchley Park in the United Kingdom last year, a mini summit was recently held in South Korea, where companies like Google, Meta and OpenAI made voluntary safety commitments, including restricting their cutting-edge systems if they can't rein in the most extreme risks.

Besides these regulations, recent innovations in this field are more visible in AI applications in the field of science and medicine. For instance, in a significant contribution to the field of speech-restoration neuroprostheses, for the first time, a brain implant has helped a bilingual person who is unable to articulate words to communicate in both of his languages. An artificial-intelligence (AI) system coupled to the brain implant decodes, in real time, what the individual is trying to

say in either Spanish or English. The findings provide insights into how our brains process language, and could one day lead to long-lasting devices capable of restoring multilingual speech to people who can't communicate verbally.

While such innovations proceed, doubts about the limitations of AI are also well-acknowledged. The promise of objectivity that AI holds – which is what attracts scientists to this tool, based on the assumption that maximum possible objectivity can be assured through AI in a way that can limit human intervention and accompanying biases as much as possible – is now being increasingly questioned. For, AI can never provide pure objectivity – even if such a thing exists – as AI models are only as good as the data that is used to train them, which is ultimately subject to human interventions.

ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR

The Israel-Hamas war continues alongside Israeli incursions into Rafah. The US -and key European countries like Germany and France – continue to solidly stand behind Israel, even as some European countries like Spain, Norway and Ireland have proceeded to grant official recognition to Palestine. They claim that it is the best possible way towards a peaceful two-state solution.

These actions come in the wake of Karim Khan, a prosecutor at the International Criminal Court, putting in a plea before the Court to issue an arrest warrant for various individuals, including Benjamin Netanyahu and Israeli Defence Minister and individual leaders of Hamas. Absurdly, the plea for a warrant seeks to place leaders of a democratic country on the same footing as those of a non-state terrorist organization. The US rightly rejected such calls.

Even as international pressure continues to build on Israel, the country claims it is determined that any peaceful solution will have to involve a complete dismantling and destruction of Hamas.

TRUMP CONVICTION

In a landmark ruling, Donald Trump, the former United States President and putative Republican nominee for the White House, has been found guilty of falsifying records to cover up a hush money payment he made in 2016 to an adult film actor. This charge is just first among the four major offences that Trump has been charged with and is also relatively less serious compared to others. With this verdict, Trump is now officially a felon, a criminal convicted of a serious crime, which presents an unprecedented situation in American political history. He has not yet been sentenced, with the sentencing being set for July.

Practically, the verdict means that Trump – who is registered to vote in Florida – cannot vote there until completion of his sentence. Under federal law, he cannot possess a firearm. But he can still run for president and serve in office, because nothing in the Constitution disqualifies people with convictions – or who are in prison – from running for, or serving as, president. In fact, even if Trump is jailed, he can campaign from prison. The sentencing is scheduled to take place in July just before the Republican Party Convention, and much may depend on how seriously Trump is sentenced, although it is believed that he will be chosen as the Republican Presidential nominee.

The cases against Trump can cut either way. They can polarize the country further or they can turn the tide by turning

the public sentiment of Republican voters against Trump. Much will depend on how this case develops further.

The Future of India

“India cannot perish, our race cannot become extinct, because among all the divisions of mankind it is to India that is reserved the highest and the most splendid destiny, the most essential to the future of the human race. It is *she* who must send forth from herself the future religion of the entire world, the Eternal religion which is to harmonise all religion, science and philosophies and make mankind one soul.”

– Sri Aurobindo
(Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo 6: p. 84)