

The Resurgent India

A Monthly National Review

August 2024



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

– The Mother

Year 15

Issue 5

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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)

HIGHLIGHTS

DEVELOPMENTS IN RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

Ukraine's Breakthrough:

In a massive breakthrough in the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war, Ukrainian soldiers have occupied large portions of Russia's Kursk region. Even more surprising is the fact that Russia is unable to push them back. While Russia is attempting to obfuscate the extent of occupation in Kursk, Ukraine has claimed that it occupies around 1000 square kilometers of Russian villages in Kursk. Not only this, but Ukraine has also captured hundreds of Russian troops in the region, to be used as bargaining chip for seeking the release of their own soldiers held in Russian captivity.

The development is significant, as this is the first major offensive breakthrough made by Ukraine since the war started in 2022. This marks the largest foreign incursion into Russia since the German army stormed in during the second world war. The fact that Ukraine has partially shifted the theatre of war inside Russia is a critical victory for the former. With Russian forces continuing their offensive in eastern Ukraine, Russia is already stretched on resources and manpower. Putin may accuse the West of precipitating the Ukrainian occupation in Kursk, but the fact remains that the development has given Ukraine a breakthrough and upper hand in the war, while exposing the hollow weakness of Russia's military arsenal.

In occupying Kursk, Ukraine has two specific aims. First, it seeks to draw Russian forces engaged on the frontlines in the eastern part in Donetsk. Second, the occupied territory could

serve as a bargaining chip for Ukraine in future peace negotiations with Russia, which Ukraine has already stated it wants Russia to attend later this year.

However, despite the breakthroughs made in the offensive, Ukraine continues to lag on the eastern front. It is unable to halt the advance of Russian forces in the Donetsk region, with Russia poised to conquer almost the entire region in due course of time. Moreover, the intensity and frequency of Russian attacks in the heart of Ukrainian territory have also increased since the Kursk offensive.

Geopolitics of the War:

1. With the war showing no signs of abating, Russia appears to be turning to desperate geopolitical venues. After growing close relations with pariah states like Iran and North Korea, Russia is now turning towards funding terror groups in the Gulf more actively. The group in question are the Houthi militants waging a war against Yemen's government and the US and Saudi Arabia-led alliance in Yemen. There are damning reports indicating that Russia has been assisting the Houthis in targeting commercial shipping in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden in the group's war in support of Hamas.

While Russia has started supplying anti-ship missiles to Houthis – in response to US authorizing Ukraine to use western weapons to strike deep inside Russia – it is still cautious. Any active Russian involvement in the conflict will impair its relationship with other countries in the Gulf, particularly Saudi Arabia. Further, any active Russian support for Gulf militants would also represent a dangerous expansion of the conflict in Ukraine that would not easily be reversed, thereby linking the two separate wars.

Russia is also becoming increasingly entangled with Islamic terrorist groups, as it draws closer to Taliban in Afghanistan. This has been driven by the growing threat of Islamic State in Khorasan (ISKP) – a branch of the ISIS in Afghanistan – which is creating security challenges for Taliban government in Afghanistan and is also perpetrating terrorist attacks in Russia. ISKP views Russia as a top target mainly due to the legacy of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the Chechen wars, and the 2015 military intervention in Syria to support Bashar al-Assad’s forces. As a result of the growing ISKP threat, Russia has now declared Taliban – itself a major designated terrorist group – an ‘ally’ in Moscow’s fight against terrorism.

2. Russia is rapidly losing influence in its traditional foothold of South Caucasus, as Armenia – a key Russian ally – moves away from the Russian sphere of influence. This is visible in Armenia attempting to reduce economic and military dependence on Moscow through deals with other states, including France, India, and even Iran. Further, recently, Armenia also announced its plans to withdraw from the Russian-dominated Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). Prior to this, Armenia had already initiated agreements for Russian border guards to leave the country. These steps by Armenia signal the changing geopolitical impact of the war on the region, with Armenia seeking greater autonomy, alignment, and cooperation with Western and regional powers.

Modi’s Ukraine Visit:

In a historic landmark visit, Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, became the first Indian prime minister to visit Ukraine after diplomatic relations were established in 1992. Modi’s visit to Ukraine follows a previous visit to Russia a month before

and a prior immediate visit to Poland – one of Ukraine’s staunchest allies in Europe. The visit to both the countries – while yielding several bilateral agreements on cooperation in various fields and with commitment to elevate India-Ukraine partnership to a ‘strategic’ level – stand out mainly for their larger symbolic and political value. This for the following reasons:

First, the visit indicates India’s change in foreign policy approach in clearly de-hyphenating relations with Russia and Ukraine. This lends more of an instrumental – rather than a deeper strategic value – to Modi’s previous Moscow visit. In the past, India’s relationships with Russia and Ukraine were deliberately linked, with Russia taking precedence and relations with Ukraine and other eastern European countries being determined in the light of India’s relations with Russia. This Russia-dominated world view has been India’s consistent policy in Central and Eastern Europe since the dissolution of the Soviet Union – a policy shaped by India’s lack of interest, and deliberate ignorance of regional European history and politics. This visit marks a landmark change in this entrenched foreign policy position.

Second, Modi’s visit favourably positioned India as a future candidate for mediating peace between Russia and Ukraine. Although Modi did not go with any peace plan, yet both Russia and Ukraine have signalled willingness to seeing India taking a more active role in pacifying the war.

Third, Modi’s visit to Ukraine has larger implications for other countries in the Global South. Till now, the countries of the Global South have either displayed lack of interest in the war or have been more favourably inclined towards Russia.

However, the positive optics and discourse of Modi's visit reflected India's empathy towards understanding the suffering of Ukraine as well as its legitimate positions. This will have a greater impact on countries in the Global South, where India often takes up a leadership role.

Fourth, the fact that Modi even embarked on this landmark visit in the middle of the war – and that India's Defence Minister was in Washington at the same time – shows that India has changed its stance in the war, at least in actions if not in words. The visit signals that India will not be a completely neutral bystander in the war and is willing to signal its moral preferences more clearly. This is also reflected in the fact that prior to Modi's visit, India had – for the first time – signed a Quad statement supporting Ukraine.

In conclusion, it is worthwhile to remember that not all global exchanges and relations have to be rigidly tailored around a concrete agenda and successful outcomes. Many countries – notably, China and Turkey – have sought to position themselves as third-party mediators in the war. However, their approach has been transactional and utilitarian in nature, focused on achieving success, without realizing that there is no clear-cut formula for success in such wars. However, mere empathy – without a necessarily concrete or success-oriented agenda – can still go a long way in creating hidden psychological impacts that may be more meaningful than a rigid transactional approach.

WEST BENGAL HORROR

The horrific rape and murder of a young residential trainee doctor at the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata has once again shaken the conscience of the country. It was in the intervening night of 8th to 9th August that the young trainee

doctor was raped and murdered. The subsequent autopsy report revealed that the victim was also put to brutal sexual torture during the rape and was killed by strangulation. There are also suspicions that there might have been a gangrape, although till now investigations have not confirmed it. According to the sequence of events that has come to light, the victim had, after dining with her juniors, retired into an empty seminar hall at around 2 AM to take a rest. The gruesome horror occurred during that night, with the body being discovered in the morning. The police arrested Sanjoy Roy, a civic police volunteer, as the prime suspect in the crime.

The subsequent handling of the case by the West Bengal authorities has been a source of disgrace. Even as massive protests by doctors and doctors' associations broke out all over the country, with West Bengal being the main state witnessing protests, the state government went even further on the backfoot, attempting to deal aggressively with the protestors and hide the crime – at one point, even shielding the principal of the college who was accused of corruption – instead of investigating transparently. It was also disgraceful that under the protection of the state government, the college principal had completely mishandled the crime, attempting to cover up the whole case and pass it off as suicide. When he was forced to resign from RG Kar Hospital, the West Bengal government rewarded him by instituting him as a principal of Calcutta Medical College and Hospital. Further revelations showed the dire lack of safety and basic facilities in the hospital – this is indeed the case in most public hospitals. It also threw light on the extremely long inhuman working hour shifts of junior and trainee doctors, with up to 36 hours of duty at a stretch.

The disgraceful and delayed response of the West Bengal government prompted the Kolkata High Court to transfer the case to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). Subsequently, at least 25 people were arrested in connection with the case, and many have been interrogated. Even the Supreme Court took *suo moto* cognizance of the case.

The protests are also continuing – especially in Kolkata – unabated, with the protests demanding justice and a list of demands to assure the safety and security of doctors. The Court criticized the State government, Kolkata police, as well as the college administration for mishandling the case. The court heavily criticised the law enforcement for the time delay between the discovery of the body and the registration of a first information report. Further, there were also allegations – by protesting doctors – that the goons of the ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC) had attempted to forcefully enter the hospital and destroy evidence.

The case highlights, at once, all that is wrong with our system. Such crimes reveal a culture where perversions have become normalized. A society where revenge, lust, and other animal instincts in human nature are justified becomes a breeding ground for such gruesome cases. While the exact details and motivations behind the crime will be revealed only in the due course of the CBI investigation, the one thing that stood out was the degree of psychological distortion that has afflicted our society. The fact that the state government could even contemplate hiding the crime and protecting the accused shows that such base things have become too normalized in present societies. The West Bengal government has belatedly woken up to public resentment and passed a strict anti-rape law in the legislature (the ‘Aparajita’ Act).

However, there is no dearth of laws penalizing rape and other such offences. Particularly, the institutional architecture around the anti-rape laws was strengthened after the gruesome 2012 ‘Nirbhaya’ rape case. This case was also followed by widespread public protests and subsequent institutional steps were taken by the government. However, despite the laws and elaborate machinery established to tackle such crimes, the graph of sexual violence in India has steadily gone up. Part of the reason is that the society is so pervaded by all varieties of corruption that there is hardly any fear of law - one thing that Indians understand well is that law can be bought with money.

But this is merely the tip of the iceberg. Even in countries where corruption is less and laws are respected – such as the Western countries – the problem of sexual violence and crimes has gone up. That is because the deeper problem lies in the depths that collective psychology has plumbed, where all kinds of moral perversities are allowed, ignored and sometimes even glorified. In Islamic countries, sexual violence is used as a punishment to show women their place. In war torn countries or those with ethnic strife, rape is used as an instrument of institutionalized, systematic and deliberate revenge. Same is the case in prisons. In autocracies like China, the situation is largely better than others due a mixture of strong national system interspersed with traditional cultural values. The larger point is that the root cause of the problem lies in the values that modern societies have glorified and cultivated. The combination of a highly magnified vital ego and half-developed mental capacities is the characteristic of the modern man, who Sri Aurobindo has termed a ‘Philistine’. Our societies have merely become a reflection of our psychological barbarism.

THE GREATNESS OF INDIA AND ITS CULTURE (42)

9. INDIA AND THE WEST

I. East and West

“The main difference between our country and Europe is this, our life is turned inward, Europe’s outward. We judge of good and evil, etc., from the point of motive, Europe judges it on the basis of action done. Knowing God as one who dwells within and who knows all that passes in our minds we seek Him in the soul, Europe looks upon Him as the King of the world and seeks and worships Him in the world outside. The heaven of Europe is in the material world; worldly riches, beauty, luxury are welcome and to be sought after; if they imagine any other heaven, that too is a reflection of these riches, beauty and luxury. Their God is akin to our Indra, who rules his world empire, sitting like an earthly monarch on a bejewelled throne, swollen by the hymns and prayers of a thousand flatterers. Our Shiva is the supreme among gods, yet he is but a beggar, out of his senses, uncaring and forgetful; our Krishna is a youth, fond of laughter, fun and love, it is in his nature to be playful. The God of Europe never laughs or plays, since His majesty is hurt by these activities, His godhead suffers. The extrovert attitude is at the back of it – signs of wealth are, for them, the support of splendour, they cannot see a thing unless they see the sign, they have no divine, no subtle vision, everything is material. Our Shiva is a beggar, but to the spiritual seeker he easily gives away all the wealth and wisdom of the three worlds; he is generous to a fault, but the wisdom beyond the reach

of the wise is his inborn possession. Our loving, gay Krishna is the hero of the Kurukshetra, father of the worlds, friend and companion of the universe. India's immense knowledge and subtle vision, unfettered divine vision pierces through the material veils and brings out the inner attitude, the true truth, the inner and subtle principles.

* * *

The same order is observed about good and evil. We look at the inner attitude. There may lurk holy feeling behind an activity that we condemn, just as behind the outwardly good or sanctimonious conduct may lie hidden the self-seeking of a scoundrel; good and evil, joy and sorrow are subjective factors, the outer activity is but a veil. We know this; though for the sake of the social order we respect outward good and evil as evidence of the activity, but the inner attitude is what we really cherish. The renunciant, *sannyāsin*, who behaves like inert-mad-fiend, *jaḍonmattapiśacabat*, as beyond rules and conventions, duty or otherwise, beyond good and evil, such a one, who has risen above laws, we call the supreme person. The western intellect is unable to accept such a principle; he who behaves as inert it treats him as inert, he who behaves as if he is mad it treats him as off his head, he who behaves like a fiend, it treats him as a disgusting, lawless devil; for it has no subtle vision, and is unable to look at the inner attitude or truth.

* * *

Bound to this outward view of things European scholars say that at no time was there democracy in India. In the Sanskrit language words to describe democracy are not found, those days there were no legislative bodies like the

modern parliament, the absence of the outer signs of democracy denotes the absence of democracy. We too on our part have been content to accept as valid this western view. In our ancient Aryan rule there was no lack of democracy; its external instruments were no doubt insufficient, but the democratic attitude permeated the core of society and the government, and stood guard over the people's welfare and progress. First, every village was run entirely on democratic lines, the villagers would come together and, on the basis of the general will and guided by the elderly and leading personalities provided for the administration of the village, and of society; this rural democracy was kept intact during Mughal rule, it vanished only the other day, under the oppression of the British government. Secondly, even in the small principalities, where there existed conditions favourable to a convention of the masses, this custom was in force. In Buddhist literature, in Greek records, in the *Mahabharata* there is abundant evidence in support of this. Thirdly, in the larger kingdoms, where it was impossible for these ingredients or external conditions to be available, the democratic attitude guided the monarchy. The subjects may not have a legislative body, but neither did the king have the least right to pass laws or modify the existing laws. The king was but the keeper of the codes, conventions and laws which the subjects were in the habit of observing. The Brahmins, like the lawyers and judges of today, would explain to the king these regulations admitted and observed by the subjects and they would record in writing the gradual changes which they had observed. The responsibility of governing was indeed the king's, but that power was also severely limited by laws; other than these the king had to act in accordance with the

wishes of his subjects, he would never do anything that might displease his subjects, this political practice was observed by all. If the king violated this rule, the subjects were no longer obliged to respect and follow him.

* * *

The unification of the East and the West is the religion of today. But in this task of unification, if we consider the West as the foundation or the chief support we shall be making a grievous error. The East is the foundation, the chief support. The outer world is established in the inner, not *vice versa*. Respect and emotion, or inner attitude (*bhāva*), are the source of energy and activity, one has to be faithful to one's inner attitude (*bhāva*) and sense of reverence, but one is not to be attached to the application of force and the external forms and means of activity. The occidentals are busy with the outward forms and means of democracy. But the external form is only for the purpose of expressing the inner attitude; it is this attitude that shapes the form, it is one's reverence that creates the means or the instrument. The occidentals are so attached to the forms and instruments that they are unable to notice that in their external expressions the inner attitude and reverence are languishing. These days in the eastern countries the inner attitude and respect for democracy are becoming fast clearer and creating external means and building its outward forms, while in the western countries that feeling is getting dimmed, that respect is much attenuated. The East has set its face towards the dawn, moving towards the light – the West is moving back towards the dark night.

* * *

The reason for this is the ill effects of democracy that follow from an attachment to its outward forms and instruments. So long, having created a government wholly favourable to democracy, America was fond of declaring that there was no other country which was equally free. But, in reality, the President and the executive officers, with the help of the Congress, rule despotically, and support the wrongs done by the rich, the injustice and the all-consuming greed, and they themselves grow fat by the abuse of power. The subjects are free only at the time of electing representatives, but even then the rich maintain their power through huge expenditure, and even later, by buying up the representatives of the people, they exploit and dominate arbitrarily. France is the birth-place of democracy and freedom, but the administrators and the police who had been created as instruments to run, according to the people's wish, the departments, they have now turned into numerous miniature autocrats, of whom the people are afraid and tremble. Such a confusion has not taken place in England, it is true, but the other dangers of democracy have declared themselves there. Since the government and politics are determined by every change in the opinion of the fickle and half-educated electorate, the British race has lost its earlier political tact and is faced with danger from within and without. In order to maintain their interest and influence, the rulers, devoid of their sense of duty, by tempting or by trying to put fear into them or else misleading them, are perverting the mind of the people, adding to its fickle-mindedness and restlessness. Because of these factors some people who look upon democracy as an error are becoming sworn enemies of freedom, on the other hand, the number

of anarchists, socialists and revolutionaries is going up. The conflict between these two groups is going on in England – in the sphere of politics; in America – in the conflict between workers and capitalists; in Germany – among ideological groups; in France – between the army and the navy; in Russia – between the police and the assassins; everywhere there is confusion, excitement, absence of peace.

* * *

Such a consequence is inevitable for the extrovert outlook on life. For a while, swelled with *rājasic* forces, the *asura* grows powerful, great and glorious, then its inherent defects begin to come out, and everything breaks and dissolves. The country whose main principle of education is the value of inner attitude and reverence, willed and nonattached activity, only in such a country by its synthesis of the inner and the outer, the East and the West, can the social, economic and political problems find a satisfactory and practical solution. But we shall not be able to arrive at a solution if we follow western knowledge and education. **We shall have to assimilate the West by standing firm on the basis of the principles of the East.** The foundation within, the expression without. By adopting western instruments we shall be in danger, we have to create in keeping with our own nature and the eastern view of things.”¹

“The West is full of interest in phenomena, and it is for this reason that no great religion has ever come out of the West. Asia on the other hand is full of interest in Brahman and she is therefore the cradle of every great religion. **Christianity, Mahomedanism, Buddhism and the**

creeds of China and Japan are all offshoots of one great and eternal religion of which India has the keeping.”²

II. Life and Society in Europe

“Was life always so trivial, always so vulgar, always so loveless, pale and awkward as the Europeans have made it? This well-appointed comfort oppresses me; this perfection of machinery will not allow the soul to remember that it is not itself a machine.

Is this then the end of the long march of human civilisation, this spiritual suicide, this quiet petrification of the soul into matter? Was the successful business-man that grand culmination of manhood toward which evolution was striving? After all, if the scientific view is correct, why not? An evolution that started with the protoplasm and flowered in the ourang-outang and the chimpanzee, may well rest satisfied with having created hat, coat and trousers, the British Aristocrat, the American capitalist and the Parisian Apache. For these, I believe, are the chief triumphs of the European enlightenment to which we bow our heads. For these Augustus created Europe, Charlemagne refounded civilisation, Louis XIV regulated society, Napoleon systematised the French Revolution. For these Goethe thought, Shakespeare imagined and created, St. Francis loved, Christ was crucified. What a bankruptcy! What a beggary of things that were rich and noble!

Europe boasts of her science and its marvels. But an Indian cannot content himself with asking like Voltaire, as the supreme question, “What have you invented?” His glance

is at the soul; it is that into which he is accustomed to inquire. To the braggart intellect of Europe he is bound to reply, "I am not interested in what you know, I am interested in what you are. With all your discoveries and inventions, what have you become? Your enlightenment is great, – but what are these strange creatures that move about in the electric light you have installed and imagine that they are human?" Is it a great gain for the human intellect to have grown more acute and discerning, if the human soul dwindles?

But Science does not admit the existence of soul. The soul, it says, is only an organised republic of animalcules, and it is in the mould of that idea Europe has recast herself; – that is what the European nations are becoming, organised republics of animalcules, – very intelligent, very methodical, very wonderful talking and reasoning animalcules, but still animalcules. Not what the race set out to be, creatures made in the image of the Almighty, gods that having fallen from heaven remember and strive to recover their heritage. **Man in Europe is descending steadily from the human level and approximating to the ant and the hornet.** The process is not complete but it is progressing apace, and if nothing stops the debacle, we may hope to see its culmination in this twentieth century. After all our superstitions were better than this enlightenment, our social abuses less murderous to the hopes of the race than this social perfection.

It is a very pleasant inferno they have created in Europe, a hell not of torments but of pleasures, of lights and carriages, of balls and dances and suppers, of theatres and cafés and music halls, of libraries and clubs and Academies, of National

Galleries and Exhibitions, of factories, shops, banks and Stock Exchanges. But it is hell all the same, not the heaven of which the saints and the poets dreamed, the new Jerusalem, the golden city. London and New York are the holy cities of the new religion, Paris its golden Paradise of Pleasure.

It is not with impunity that men decide to believe that they are animals and God does not exist. For what we believe, that we become. The animal lives by a routine arranged for him by Nature; his life is devoted to the satisfaction of his instincts bodily, vital and emotional, and he satisfies himself mechanically by a regular response to the working of those instincts. Nature has regularised everything for him and provided the machinery. Man in Europe arranges his own routine, invents his own machinery, and adds to the needs of which he is a slave, the intellectual. But there will soon be no other difference.

System, organisation, machinery have attained their perfection. Bondage has been carried to its highest expression, and from a passion for organising external liberty Europe is slaying her spiritual freedom. When the inner freedom is gone, the external liberty will follow it, and a social tyranny more terrible, inquisitorial and relentless than any that caste ever organised in India, will take its place. The process has already begun. The shell of external liberty remains, the core is already being eaten away. Because he is still free to gratify his senses and enjoy himself, the European thinks himself free. He does not know what teeth are gnawing into the heart of his liberty.

Still in his inmost self he has an uneasy consciousness of something terribly, vitally wrong, and therefore he is

turning more and more to Socialism among the thinking or cultured, among the unthinking to Anarchism. The Socialist hopes, by accepting, swiftly fulfilling and thoroughly organising the inevitable tyranny of society, at least to recover leisure and create a breathing space in which to realise the dignity, beauty and repose of the god in man. The Anarchist sees in Government and Society the enemy of the race and gropes for the bomb and the revolver to recover individual liberty and destroy the tyranny of the majority. Both are guilty of the same fallacy, the mechanical fallacy. One hopes to liberate man by perfecting machinery, the other by destroying it.

And yet the true secret is ready to their hand in the formula of the great Revolution. **Two ideas of that formula Europe has pursued with some eagerness, Liberty and Equality; but she has totally rejected the third and most necessary, Brotherhood.** In its place she has erected the idol of her heart, Machinery, and called it Association; for Association without Brotherhood is merely Machinery. Yet what can be more evident than that the French thinkers were perfectly guided in their selection of the three things necessary for an ideal associated happiness? **It is only Love that can prevent the misuse of Liberty; it is only Brotherhood which can make Equality tolerable.**”³

III. Achievements of Europe

“For my part **I see failure written large over all the splendid and ostentatious achievements of Europe.** Her costliest experiments, her greatest expenditure of intellectual and moral force have led to the swiftest exhaustion of creative

activity, the completest bankruptcy of moral elevation and of man's once infinite hope. When one considers how many and swift her bankruptcies have been, the imagination is appalled by the discouraging swiftness of this motor ride to ruin. The bankruptcy of the ideas of the French Revolution, the bankruptcy of Utilitarian Liberalism, the bankruptcy of national altruism, the bankruptcy of humanitarianism, the bankruptcy of religious faith, the bankruptcy of political sincerity, the bankruptcy of true commercial honesty, the bankruptcy of the personal sense of honour, how swiftly they have all followed on each other or raced with each other for precedence and kept at least admirable pace. Only her many sided science with its great critical and analytical power and all the contrivances that come of analysis, is still living and keeps her erect. There remains that last bankruptcy yet to come, and when that is once over, what will be left? Already I see a dry rot begun in this its most sapful and energetic part. The firm materialism which was its life and protection, is beginning also to go bankrupt, and one sees nothing but craze and fantasy ready to take its place.

No, it is not in the stress of an intolerant patriotism that I turn an eye of disparagement upon Europe. The immediate past of these Western peoples I can admire more than I admire the immediate past of our Indian nations. It is their present that shocks my aspirations for humanity. Europe is full of the noise and the apparel of life, of its luxurious trappings, of a myriad-footed material clang and tread, but of that which supports life she is growing more and more empty. When they had less information, her people had wiser and stronger souls. They had a literature, a creative intellectual force, a belief, a religion good or bad, a light that led onwards, a fixed path.

Now they have only hungers, imaginations, sentiments & passions. The hungers are made to look decent; they even disguise themselves & parade about as ideals and rights. The sentiments are deftly intellectualised, – some even care to moralise them superficially, but that is growing out of fashion. The imaginations are tricked out to look like reason and carefully placarded on the forehead, with the names of rationalism, science and enlightenment, though they are only a whirl of ephemeral theories when all is said and done. The passions are most decorously masked, well-furnished & lodged, sumptuously clothed. But a dress does not change truth and God is not deceived.

They criticise everything subtly rather than well, but can create nothing – except machines. They have organised society with astonishing success and found the very best way to spread comfort and kill their souls.”⁴

References:

- 1 *Bengali Writings: 253-58*
- 2 *CWSA 7: 890*
- 3 *CWSA 1: 545-48*
- 4 *CWSA 1: 556-57*

INDIA STILL LIVES

“The ancient nations, contemporaries of India, and many younger born than she are dead and only their monuments left behind them. Greece and Egypt exist only on the map and in name, for it is not the soul of Hellas or the deeper nation-soul that built Memphis which we now find at Athens or at Cairo. Rome imposed a political and a purely outward cultural unity on the Mediterranean peoples, but their living spiritual and cultural oneness she could not create, and therefore the east broke away from the west, Africa kept no impress of the Roman interlude, and even the western nations still called Latin could offer no living resistance to barbarian invaders and had to be reborn by the infusion of a foreign vitality to become modern Italy, Spain and France. But India still lives and keeps the continuity of her inner mind and soul and spirit with the India of the ages. Invasion and foreign rule, the Greek, the Parthian and the Hun, the robust vigour of Islam, the levelling steam-roller heaviness of the British occupation and the British system, the enormous pressure of the Occident have not been able to drive or crush the ancient soul out of the body her Vedic Rishis made for her.”

– Sri Aurobindo
(CWSA 20: 430-31)