

CHAPTER SIX: SRI AUROBINDO'S INTERPRETATION & IMPLICATIONS FOR BHARTIYA SANSKRITI

When one goes through the Vedas, even the names of seers in the book are in such a way that they have their own covert references to their meaning. For example Angira, it means illumination. Thus, it is in the Bhartiya Sanskriti to give names have meanings unlike the same we see in Western Culture.

“The Veda is primarily intended to serve for spiritual enlightenment and self-culture. It is, therefore, this sense which has first to be restored.”(1)

So even what we see in our epics is full of melancholy is it with Rama or Krishna. Thus it is only through this pain that we are pushed to know the spirit. Similar concept has been portrayed in Sri Aurobindo's 'Savitri'.

“But as we read the Veda, which has been held as the source of the inspiration of the Indian culture, we find that it presents a dynamic interpretation of the world and assigns to action in the world a profound meaning and significance. It enjoins upon man to act rather than to renounce his activities. It places before man a method of action which has been discovered after a long and intense search by the Vedic seers. This method of action recognizes a secret relationship between the manifest and occult energies and actions that lie behind all that we physically see and experience. This relationship, it is held, is that of an interchange and, which is characteristically described as *yajna*, sacrifice.”(2)

“Sri Aurobindo's vision of a rejuvenated India calls for nothing less than a national yoga- an effort of transformation in which a critical mass of Indians must consciously take part, those who happen to be in a position to change things as well as those who have been victims of the system.”(3)

“It is, however, important to note that the meaning and significance of the vast effort of Indian spirituality and culture began to be understood only in the context of what is happening since the turn of the century in the inner life of India. It is, in fact, through the life and work of Sri Aurobindo that India has taken not only a new course of an integral endeavor, but also in doing so, it has embraced quitenessence of the vast Indian movement of the past and infused it with a new spirit and motivation, and while fulfilling the promises of the early effort, it has broken a new ground for the fulfillment not only of the Indian spirit but of the deepest aspirations of mankind.”(4)

“Sri Aurobindo as an exponent of Indian culture has offered an illuminating interpretation of Indian culture down the centuries in his *The Foundations of Indian Culture* which originally appeared in the *easy-series* in the *Arya* from 15th December 1918 to 15th January 1921. The essays actually grew out of a reply to William Archer’s attack on Indian culture in his book *India and Future* (1917). His interpretation of Indian culture is said to have begun with the series of seven articles he contributed to *Indu Prakash*. In fact, the Baroda years exposed him to the entire spectrum of India’s ancient culture. Almost every article of Sri Aurobindo does interpret Indian culture in some or the other way. It seems that he writes more like a cultural critic with a view to unfolding of the ancient Indian synthetic approach to human life. Establishing the spiritual character of Indian civilization, he lays more stress on the realization of the supreme truth in human life and also the attainment of divine light and power.” (5)

Why the idea of Sri Aurobindo’s supermind is important because it is only after one has reached this stage. One starts to live from the truth as one is able to unleash the truth with. Thus, even for Indian that is the need. Thus, even for India that is the need. Thus only when we have known our truth, we can live from that truth. This is exactly what we see in India’s past which now has been distracted by westernization.

There is soul of a culture, body and mind of a culture. Soul consists of philosophical thoughts. The mind of the culture is all the aesthetic seeking. The body is the outer socio economic organization that we come up with. So the nationalism of India has to be seen from

that of Sanskrit Dharma to go from humanity to super humanity. When Veda talks about Nationalism, it treats Bharat as *Bharat Mata*, no other country does that.

Even the rituals in Sanatana Dharma are considered scientific. Even when we compare the symbols in the Vedas with the scientific process that goes inside us is also science. So what we are talking about is the psychological interpretation given by Sri Aurobindo, it is not barbaric it is scientific. If we replace the symbols with its actual meaning it makes sense to us otherwise it will seem meaningless like in case of European Scholars. Even the science that we knew then and now has different meanings. Earlier times science meant science also of the inner science. That is also a science. Even in different Vedas mention of different sciences are there. What is of importance is to know science means science not only of outer self but also of inner self. Even if we look at the nature of scientific discoveries, they had started from intuition which is again reflection of the inner self hence subjective science. Over the years the European scholars have translated the Vedas but they have failed on the interpretation part.

Vedic poetry is not barbaric because its form is symmetrical and rhythmic. Even Sri Aurobindo as a poet acknowledges this fact.

“As Sri Aurobindo says, as you sing these Vedic verses, you feel as if you were flying with your wings. This is the kind of power that the Vedic verses possess.” (6)

The Hindu Dharma talks about the entire cosmos, not only another human being. It is not philanthropy for us. It is for the whole cosmos including trees and grass, living and non-living everything. So here one directs the attitude towards the cosmos. The objective is that understanding is there.

We popularly known the Rishikas and Rishis of the Veda but not much mention are made about the Rishikas. But all we know is both the Rishis and the Rishikas participated in Vedic Rituals and sacrifices. Below we will find mention of these Rishikas worshipping the Gods of the Rigveda.

In making of the Vedas there is contribution of Rishikas and Rishis. That was the importance of women during the Vedic times. That is why Feminism took birth in the west and we were not the creator of Feminism, we were just the importers of it.

The west uses the methodology of Marxism that is dividing and rule, which follows or supports creating false differences. The harm has been done on our minds as well making us more materialistic and barbarity. Our original bend is towards spiritual quest. More the knowledgeable a person is, simpler he is. Same we see in the cases of our Rishis. That is why materialism emerged in the west because they were not allowed to speculate on metaphysics otherwise they might get killed. In that case we were more liberal. That is why Feminism emerged in the west because they required it. Firstly they have done irreparable harm to us and now they have come with the new trend *down with decolonization*, we here don't require their opinion.

“It is a book of more than ten thousand mantras, each in a specific metre, arranged in ten mandalas. They were revealed to several sages or seers called as rishis, more than one thousand in number. Some of them are women too like Vak Ambrni, Lopamudra, Surya, Apala etc. Thus Hinduism is the only religion in which some of the earliest prophets were women also.” (7)

“Vishvavara said to be an Atreyi invokes Agni, one of the most prominent deities of the Rigveda. It is interesting to note that she is offering the prayers to Agni enkindled by herself on the altar at the commencement of the sacrificial ritual.” (8)

“Thus the glorious illustrations of these ladies prove that the women in the Indo Aryan society received liberal and comprehensive education in almost all branches of knowledge. There was no seclusion of women; they used to move freely in society. The community as a whole was showing proper concern, affection and respect for women, allowing them a considerable freedom in different activities of the social, political and spiritual life.” (9)

This proves in the Vedic and Upanishadic time's women were considered of equal importance making it equal society. Thus women were free and not dominated by men.

It is through Vedas that one can keep the ancient world live today. If we look at Bharata, it has gone through many mutilations be it of Muslims or Britishers. Thus to keep its originality and authenticity live today, after so many externals attack becomes of great importance. Thus here it also becomes importance to know our original roots and keeps those roots live today. If we look at the West it has headed towards technological advancement, they are able to excel in it after causing lot of harm to the nature. Bharata has always emphasized on advancing inwards. So this inner journey of self-knowing comes naturally to us, as it is inculcated deeply in our roots.

The Gods of the West require a messenger to reach them. Also the Gods of the west rest. But in East one can do this realization by them. That is why we have the Mahavakyas of the Vedas. Our Gods don't rest same as energy it may change form but never destroyed or created. This science of the Universe, the science of us is what is explained in the Vedas.

We are inseparable from the Universe that is why we owe a lot to the Universe. The seers acknowledged this therefore worshipped the powers in the Universe. These cosmos are seen as a boat which needs to be sacrificed for the better. Even in the Pasupati seal we see animals behind which represents the animal nature in us which needs to be sacrificed. Therefore the seal is highly symbolic.

The task of the Rishis is to spread the Nectar of the Vedas. Thus different Rishis from different clans have introspections of the Mantras, what they are dealing with is true knowledge. So where even science of now fails to provide answers there philosophy begins. So what the seers experience is a reality, whose results we see in the Vedas.

“The ancients were more aware of subtle and astral realities than we are. They communicated with beings of these worlds, some of whom were very spiritual and benefic, others who were quiet malicious. They mention them as Gods, titans, and demons. While some of them were beings from other physical worlds, most were contacted in the mind, though some did materialize themselves, or gain a connection to the physical world by the power of the worship afforded to them. Humanity did become involved with wars between the Gods and

the demons. Let this is only a symbolism for the eternal battle between truth and falsehood within us that we always have to face.” (10)

The River Saraswati hails a great importance for the Vedic people. Though the river dried up now, but through the hymns we could find out that it flourished once.

“The Saraswati was the central land of the great Aryan Kings of north India. If we expect to find remains of the Vedic culture we should excavate the Saraswati region under the sands of the Rajasthan desert. The drying up of the Saraswati came at the end of the Vedic age, for a people that had found it to be a great river since their earliest recollections. To place the Vedas after the Indus Valley Culture is a great mistake in the interpretation of history, which hopefully we can begin to move beyond.” (11)

Even in Bhagavad Gita same message is portrayed, where again it is said that after knowing God, one knows all the Vedas and Vedanta. Mahabharata and Puranas are also the carry forwards of the Vedas.

The part of the Veda which talks about the creation part is purana. The Mahavakyas of the Vedas is Rahasya Vidya. The same Rahasya Vidya is what we understand as Upanishads that is that kind of knowledge which is beyond the senses. The Veda is also cyclic. When Mahapralay will be there knowledge will also go back to its original state.

The proposed aim of Bhartiya Sanskriti is to unleash the divinity that is within man and to become one with that of cosmic consciousness. This has been the aim of Indian Culture to explore all the ways of spiritual path. Thus what we see even in the ashrama stages of life, an individual has to go through different stages of life until he goes to explore his spiritual self. Thus there is full acceptance of life.

No culture is complete without its philosophy, thus Bharat has also given to the world philosophy and practicality of Yoga which Sri Aurobindo has made synthesized and given

the philosophy of 'Integral Yoga'. Spirituality came naturally to the East. Thus everything aims at realization with the self. It has always been an inward march for Bharat. And that is the Beauty of Bharat where we find Unity in diversity. The whole aim lies in striving for the perfection in human existence. The entire aim of a culture is to make man something which he is not. India achieved freedom with great sacrifices. Despite the diversity standing as a one nation is what is remarkable for Bharat even today.

To attain Moksha one might need many births. But we can always ask the deities for a blissful life here and in next birth. What we acknowledge is to remove the ignorance of the self, it might take several births. Inner fire needs to be ignited to burn the ignorance within. That is the role agni plays internally which can be achieved with the help of Tapas. How this true knowledge can be achieved is again by removing the ignorance. This is what is depicted in the Vedas through symbolism.

Nowadays we use the term *unity in diversity* but in reality there is no diversity. It is the outsider's way of seeing diversity. The Vedas propagate the idea of oneness, is exactly what we see in Advaita Vedanta. There is no duality. The same essence is within everyone; therefore even the jad has chaitana. Therefore what we take from the environment, it becomes our duty to give it back. The Rishis were the knower of this secret and propounder of this idea.

In yogic perception our perception becomes trans-sensory. That is what makes Yogic perception experiential. Therefore we say our Bhartiya Darshana is experiential and not speculative. Expressions of Sri Aurobindo they are experiential whereas modern world can only speak of cognitively. That is why all world knowledge began in Bharat. When science developed, it developed instruments which would develop the inability of sense organs. Experiential knowledge is stainless, scientific knowledge is always through instruments, there can be various flaws and faults.

Science and tradition should be used complementarily. Unless science is linked with traditional wisdom it doesn't have the essence. The working of both scientific method and

Yogic Method we start with no preconceived notions but in this method we can experience the reality as it is without any assumptions about it. Therefore here we start from zero and then reach some height. In scientific knowledge we require an instrument to carry out experiments. But in yogic method we are the instrument or a vehicle to know the true kind of knowledge as experienced by the Rishikas and Rishis. Why is it important to know the truth because it can enhance our personality and potential as an individual, and can also open channel for great abilities and discoveries. Also with our perfected selves, we can also give back to the society. As Sri Aurobindo explains in his Gnostic and Psychic being.

Bharat has always aimed for spiritual seeking. The same we see in the Vedas. The aim is to realize our full potential and to know the ultimate truth. For the attainment of this ultimate truth, peace is the perfect ambiance. That is what happens in yogic practices. It is only when the mind is tranquil; the mind becomes ready to grasp this truth. Sri Aurobindo too was able to achieve it by the same process.

To know the Vedas one must have a yogic bend of mind because what Yoga does is it makes the mind calm and peace is a much necessary condition to know the truth. Same we can understand from the life of Sri Aurobindo, he too skilled yoga with the help of his Guru Lele.

Yoga saves us from much dogmatism especially from religious biasness. Maybe that's why it appealed more to the westerners and that is what they have picked from us because of its free nature and many benefits.

Bhartiya knowledge tradition has always emphasized spirituality that is the link between divine and the world. The divine aspect of mind which Sri Aurobindo calls as supermind or turiyam svid with this comes his idea of Gnostic beings. He has also emphasized this in his book 'The Life Divine'. We invite all the good things from the world are the view point of the Veda.

Our Bhartiya knowledge tradition debates with all. Because they have their own ways of knowing things that is their epistemology. They are again divided by two points. One through

which reality can be explained by language and other where reality cannot be explained through words. Even if we look at the sanatana parampara, same kind of shabdavali we can find just like in case of maya.

The beauty of the Veda is that, one may appreciate it or criticize it but you cannot ignore it. That is why we consider it as a source of knowledge. That is why we have smriti and shruti because it is not a work of one Rishi but it is the works of all the Rishikas and Rishis. It is considered as swatah pramana. That is truth in itself. What is tested is what we call as smriti, shruti works in groups. Wherever there will be a clash between smriti and shruti, shruti will win because Vedas is a work of collective wisdom, that too that of Rishikas and Rishis. Therefore no one can challenge that because you cannot challenge collective wisdom. Therefore shruti will always win.

How the west interprets the text is in a framework which they call it as a theory. But the nature of their theory keeps on changing. Therefore, it lacks authenticity. If it is a theory it should be unchangeable, but here it is not so. The Bhartiya knowledge tradition uses pramana and vaada. Therefore one can verify it themselves, but in the west the authority is given to someone else.

As to make the Vedas, there is the contribution of both Rishikas and Rishis. In the same way there is contributor of these Rishikas and Rishis belonging to different sampradaya so when one becomes Rishi, their sampradaya dissolves, because being a Rishi is something they have earned through tapas. The Bhartiya knowledge tradition is made up of people belonging to different sampradaya. That is why this knowledge tradition is still alive. *Brahman* is the one who knows Brahman. There is no authoritarianism in the Vedas but it is a work of collective minds of that of Rishikas and Rishis.

Bhartiya knowledge tradition follows praman vyavasta, Veda means knowledge. Our first text is about knowledge. From the beginning more importance is given to knowledge in Bhartiya tradition which we need to protect. If we see the whole Bharat is following the traditions of Vedanta, because as we have the different Vedanta. Therefore we also have

many followers of these Vedantas who are actually living their life based on the teachings of these Vedanta.

Rishikas and Rishis believe in only one truth. There are two kinds of mind, form and essence oriented. Form may change but the essence remains the same. Same follows with the nature of consciousness that is why we say *Tattvamasi*. Rishis says we only understand the knowledge of this. That is the conclusion of all things, which puts a full stop to *Raag, Dvesha and Moha*. The happiness that we get from the senses it is limited just like the senses. But the kind of happiness we get from *yogaja* knowledge that is unlimited. This discovery of the Rishis is what saved Bharat till now. The essence is one that is why we say *sarvam khalvidam brahman*. It is because Bharat is blessed with mighty resources that Bharat can dwell into philosophical conquest.

In purusha sukta what we understand by Purush is pure consciousness. What consciousness is in me is the same consciousness that is in you. The tattva or essence is the same. In the Vedic sahitya we don't get the use of the word Jati, we only find the use of the word Varna. In the Yajur Vedas mantra we find that the vani of Vedas is for all. In the Vedas Rishis says to do *mimamsa* and then go ahead.

One sighted people, one cultured people, where people share same properties are one's who are called as Bhartiya. That is how we have the meaning of the words. Because these properties are there that is why we have the word *Bhartiya*. Shastra doesn't differ from people.

In Karmakanda one cannot have vaada but in Jnanakanda one can have vaada. The shastra of vaada we see came from the writings of various sutras. Unless we don't do a comparative analysis of various sutras we cannot go ahead.

When we see ekta in anekta same follows with the case of women. Therefore there is no question of creating differences, atleast we don't require to. Because in our tradition we see the judgement of a Vaada was given to opponent's wife. That is the level of trust and

broadness we had. In our culture we have the trend of worshipping female Goddesses which are also present within us in the form of energies. In the west we don't see the role of women in any religious activities. Therefore they consider women inferior to men. But in the East, we see oneness in every being that is the secret. Both East and the west are taking from each other. The west is taking our culture and we are adapting the western culture. This reminds me of the grass being greener on the other side.

“For the Rig Veda belongs to an age when the social stage of the race was profoundly religious and imaginative in its religion as is always the case with human society in its beginnings- we may call it primitive- whether or not it is cultured, civilized & economically advanced. A strongly symbolic mentality governs its thought, customs & institutions.” (12)

Most of the religions we see they aim at the teaching of self-realization. Each of them has their own ways. The beauty of Vedic teachings is that we don't have to belong to a particular religion to follow it. It is more based on individualism knowing the Divine within and in others. It is the discovery of our truer self that matters in this journey.

The ways of the Vedas is not semitic as it doesn't force you to believe in any God and doesn't aim at convertism. The misleading translation of the Vedas was done for converting Hindus into Christianity. In the oxford university during that time a chair was made especially for this purpose whose chairperson was Monier Monier. Later they reformed their policies, so that no one would doubt the main purpose of creating that chair. Max Muller was a no scholar, same we can make out in the letters that he had written, where he mentions that he has been paid more than he deserved. The main reason of hiring a German was no one would suspect the main motive of interpretations of the Vedic texts. Vedas cannot be compared with the contemporary religious texts because what we are dealing with is very ancient text and such comparisons are not justifiable.

The Veda that we know is about the end of that Vedic period, for us it remains very ancient but the commencement of this Vedic period is what we don't know. Its revival is what we

find in the Upanishads. No matter how we interpret the Vedas that is subjective but the point is to reach the wisdom of the Veda. And what we gain in the end is again *Sat Chit Ananda*.

If we look at Sat Chit Ananda they can be achieved through spiritual activity. Their goal is to give us ultimate truth, pure consciousness and pure bliss. It provides us with the certitude of truth which further has the capacity to bring peace, calm and happiness to our mind of the ultimate level. Sri Aurobindo could achieve this state through Yoga itself. Therefore we cannot underestimate the power of Yoga and our culture. Our culture too teaches to respect all the living beings. Therefore we do recognize everyone's right to be happy, be it the smallest micro-organism.

There has been exportation of culture both ways, from the east and the west. But a line should be drawn from where and what we are importing from other culture that is the good or the bad. But we should not deviate from our roots and completely adopt an alien culture. But if we look at both the culture, both are of importance, because both have their own values individually, and their own importance and beauty too. Nothing can be right or wrong. Each has its own different values at different places. Both provide with knowledge of different things. Therefore both are essential and required that is the materialistic and spiritual knowledge. Both are quest, therefore all is good as long as everything is in limit because excess of anything is poison, which applies to everything. Both are science technology is also science. Spiritual knowledge is also science.

The nature of culture should be for a large number of people and not restricted to a particular group, it should be able to assimilate the other influences but it would be better if it assimilates only the good influences. But that is how the nature of culture is, it is able to assimilate both good and bad and that is how it has evolved.

Many things are originated from the seeds of the Veda be it Upanishads or the Indian philosophical systems. For all this knowledge the root remains the same that is the Vedas. All other knowledge is bloomed like a tree of knowledge from the seed of the Vedas. No matter in how many ways the Vedas are interpreted, the essence of the Vedas cannot change.

“That is to say, if you trace world history, and if you try to find out what was the earliest composition from the earliest stage of humanity, nothing is available to us today- except the Veda. This is the only document, the only composition which is available to humanity. There were of course many other traditions in ancient times, and there was certainly a great tradition of knowledge. There were traditions which you find in ancient Chaldea, in ancient Persia, in Egypt, in Greece, but all these traditions have been lost. There is hardly anything available, in the form of any text. There are ideas; there are mythologies. Even Greek mythology which is available is a later statement of the earlier Illeusian tradition. But as far as texts & their secret knowledge are concerned, these are lost.” (13)

“There is, therefore, a natural tendency or need to form different subcultures within society. While it certainly can become a form of oppression, it may have an appropriate form we have to adjust to. Such diversification may be necessary for the full flowering of the different potentials of humanity or for the development of the full range of experience necessary for the human soul to grow. We are not all of one level in humanity. We do not all have the same stage of development. Just as there are different classes in a school that appeal to students of different temperaments, like science, mathematics or art, so there may need to be different areas of learning in society for different souls to pursue. Some may need to pursue business as an exclusive aim, others politics, others knowledge or art. Just as there are different grades in school, so grades in society may also exist. There may be a spiritual class which has advanced beyond ordinary humanity to the point where we should look up to it for guidance.” (14)

“The goal of the soul in evolution is mergence into the Divine or the inner self. This brings about freedom from the cycle of rebirth (samsara). This is the highest goal of human life through which everything is accomplished. It can be brought about only through self-knowledge. All life is an experience to provide us with self-knowledge. To see our self in all beings and all beings in our self is the essence of life. Only by becoming all can we go beyond all.” (15)

We are rather compelled to accept few things in an inseparable manner. On a final analysis, for everything one depends on the Vedas and the Vedopanishadic knowledge tradition in

many ways, and for that entire one may do or undo, the desideratum shall be *Moksha*. The more the bearing of Bhartiya Sanskriti in a person, the more inescapable it becomes for him.

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