

The Resurgent India

A Monthly National Review

December 2016



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

Year 7

Issue 9

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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 7

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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 13, p. 124-25)

NAGROTA ATTACK: ISSUES FOR INDIA AND PAKISTAN

The attack on XVI Corps of the Indian Army's Northern Command in the high security Nagrota region of Jammu is the first major hit-back by Pakistan sponsored terrorists in the wake of the Uri attack two months back, which had claimed the lives of 19 Indian soldiers. The current attack was carried out by four terrorists with the intent to develop a hostage-like situation in the army camp which housed the women and children as well. While the hostage-like situation was successfully averted by the Quick Reaction Team of the Indian army, seven of our army men were killed while fighting the terrorists. And while three terrorists were killed, the fourth still remains missing, despite the sanitization of the area by the army.

Whether the attack is being seen as a farewell gesture of the outgoing Pakistani Army chief, Raheel Sharif, or, as an indication that the incoming chief Gen. Bajwa will continue the same policy of hostility towards India, what is of immediate concern to India is to urgently mend its own weak system.

Despite the views being circulated by the opponents of the government that this attack raises a question mark over the relevance of the surgical strikes by the Indian army, we need to realize that we have to abandon this bogey of fear – that India should never adopt a retaliatory posture because Pakistan might attack us. Let's get this clear – the purpose of the surgical strikes was never to contain future conflict – even though this may turn out to be the best way of doing it – but to send a befitting reply to Pakistan. Have we so easily forgotten Pakistan's tenacity and outrage during the Uri massacre, whose daring intent far outstripped India's surgical strikes?

At the current juncture, India needs to both aggressively take the lead in sending a message that cross-border terrorism will not be tolerated (a message sent through the issue of surgical strikes) and, simultaneously, strengthen its own inner security systems.

The latter is the part where we are failing and it should become a priority for the government.

STRENGTHENING SECURITY ALONG THE BORDER

This major attack has reinforced the concerns we had raised in the aftermath of the Uri attacks viz. the weakness and complacency of our security establishment. It has raised uncomfortable questions such as – why no action was taken despite the prior intelligence communication on the vulnerability of Nagrota; how is it that the most central and securitized army corps of the Northern Command was so vulnerable; why was the very main gate of the camp left unmanned and how did the terrorists – clad as J&K policemen – keep the camp under a seven-day vigil and scaled the wall, completely undetected.

The attack again represents a major loss that could have been easily contained had our establishment heeded the intelligence agencies which had been monitoring the LeT cell in Kashmir since two weeks and had knowledge that they were plotting an attack on Nagrota.¹

In our last article on the Uri attacks, we had highlighted the technological weaknesses which keep our border security installations weak and our soldiers vulnerable in the absence of foolproof weapons-proof shield and clothing, as well as, the political side of the problem viz. the secret glamourization of the defence sector to benefit the vested interests of the elite at the top through high profile international defence deals and equal number of scandals in the recent years, with no account of how the money spent on these deals is benefitting our security apparatus. It is definitely not going into strengthening the border security. Little has been done, in terms of border infrastructure or manpower protection, since the May 2016 recommendations of the Philip Campose Committee in the aftermath of the Pathankot attack. Another committee, under Sh. Madhukar Gupta, had submitted its report on strengthening the border in August 2016, but there seems to have been little action on these.

PAKISTAN'S COVERT WAR ON INDIA

We need to not just strengthen our border security, but also take

a long-term view of how Pakistan is operating. Pakistan wants to attack India at multiple levels through hybrid warfare, which involves low to medium intensity attacks along the LoC, sponsoring terrorism within Kashmir through separatist outfits to gain the Kashmiri population's support and promote illegal currency flows. At a very recurrent and usual level, Pakistan uses ceasefire violations and cross-border firing as a purely practical measure – as a cover to perpetuate infiltration of terrorists into India, since patrolling along the border becomes difficult when the firing is on. Often, when the Indian army camps' security is exceptionally weak, the terrorists cut the barbed fence, but, like in the current attack, they also enter through underground tunnels.

Pakistan has, however, changed its targets of attack. Under former Army chief Raheel Sharif and escalation of hostilities after Modi became the PM of India, Pakistani terrorists are no longer targeting civilians in J&K, but only army men. This is ostensibly the practical side of Pakistan's increasingly hostile claims on Kashmir, aimed at alienating Kashmiri people from India and supporting Kashmiri terrorists as freedom fighters for the state.

Pakistani military supports entrenched Sunni terror groups within the country like JeM and LeT – inside Pakistan, they are not even regarded as terrorists. Closer to the border, certain 'friendly' terror groups are located at Muridke and Bahawalpur to aid Pakistan in its state of war against India.² At the same time, Pakistan is trying to root out some other homegrown terrorist outfits within its borders.

However, the monster created by Pakistan will inevitably bite its creator sooner or later – as is already happening. The military controls virtually everything inside the country – Raheel Sharif established military tribunals across the country to deal with civilian law and order issues – and has become the driving force behind Pakistan's economy. It operates across agriculture, manufacturing and services, and has established its subsidiary companies also. Recent revelations in the Pakistani media – as a result of which a Pakistani journalist's travel got restricted – also provide a concrete proof of civilian-military tensions and the fact that army is the de facto ruler. Engulfed by the presence of de facto military

governance on all sides, Pakistan faces a threat of destruction. Unless the Pakistani rulers leave their aggression towards India, Pakistan may end up destroying itself.

INDIA'S POSITION

Given this internal state of escalating terrorist siege within Pakistan, through the hand-in glove relationship between Pakistani army and international terrorist groups, and Pakistan's escalating tensions with India, it has become obvious that we are fast reaching a point of no return. It is clear that the comfortable status-quo of the last 60 years, with intermittent periods of conflicts, can no longer be sustained. Both inside Kashmir – the focal point of Indo-Pak conflict – and on the border, all the meticulously built institutions are breaking down and no one can fathom why. The slate is being swept clean of its past.

In the incoming era, the world equations have also drastically altered, so India's Opposition parties which are still living in the old mindset and calling for pacification are living in a dead past. External agencies which used to "mediate" between India and Pakistan – such as the United States, the United Nations and other countries from the West – are grappling with their own quick downward spiral. Their institutions and other symbols of military, economic and geopolitical power have become relics of the past, no longer relevant in today's world which is undergoing a massive transformation.

It no longer matters if the US President-elect Donald Trump aligns with the draconian Philippines and Pakistan or with India and China. These alignments will matter mainly only to the US which has now become a shadow of itself. The ripple created in India by Trump's friendly call with Pakistan was completely unnecessary, since the US and Trump will no longer be so relevant to the world politics. Neither are the UN's Security Council or the other US-dominated international treaties so important. The US is approaching the status of Europe – no longer critically important in world affairs.

At the same time, the world is seeing the rise of radical global

Islam and the equally massive backlash against it, and increasing public support – in all countries – for policies based on popular morality and nationalism and for strong, practical leaders like Modi, Putin, Erdogan, Theresa May and others. The rise of Trump has also cemented the abrupt abortion of the so-called “liberal” and “secular” global intellectual agenda. It was such an agenda that had, in the past, given power to the parties like Congress in India and thereby dictated India’s pacifist policies towards Pakistan and in Kashmir, and, internally, its appeasement of minorities.

Now, however, with the demise of this agenda and the demise of leaders, institutions and countries that stood for it, the contest is squarely between India and Pakistan. Everything has to be judged – both within and across the borders – in terms of clear division between right and wrong. Vagueness and pacifism will cost us dearly in form of more terrorist attacks, loss of more lives and an increasing precipitation of the Kashmir issue and the division between the Hindus and the Muslims.

At this critical juncture of change, India cannot afford to be complacent and needs to be persistent in its stand that India’s sovereignty is non-negotiable. This stand has already yielded dividends for the BJP-PDP alliance in Kashmir, where government’s persistence has made things reach a breaking point and altered all existing equations. It has wiped out the identity and base of both the opposition parties and the separatist organizations in the Valley. Despite the loss and problems which are currently being faced, both in Pakistan and Kashmir, the government’s firm hand will set things on a more desirable course, albeit with struggles on the way. India can ensure, at this moment, that it sets the agenda and terms for the future of South Asia.

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THE SYL CANAL DISPUTE

The contentious politics over the Sutlej-Yamuna Link Canal (SYL) is back in the limelight. With the upcoming Punjab assembly elections in February 2017, the raising of the SYL canal issue at this point is now poised to turn the electoral stakes in favour of whichever party can gain maximum traction out of it. With the immediate support lent to it by the ruling SAD-BJP government in Punjab, they seem to be leading the show, for now. However, the stakes of this historical issue go much deeper than short-term political mileage.

By claiming unlawful ownership of river waters within the Indian territory to keep the farmers lobby appeased sets, not only a dangerous populist precedent which is detrimental to our national development and unity but also becomes a mask for continuing and justifying the unabated greed with which Punjab, and other states, have destroyed their natural resources since the past few decades, and wreaked havoc on the environment. The current crisis wherein Punjab now has no water to spare is of the state's own making, but given the pervasive culture – across the world – of collective exploitation of natural resources, Punjab has become an exemplar and a victim of circumstances.

HISTORY OF THE DISPUTE AND THE LEGAL CLAIMS

The SYL canal dispute between Punjab and Haryana over the sharing of Sutlej river waters has been going on since Haryana was created as a separate state out of Punjab in 1966. It was raked up again in March this year, as the Punjab Chief Minister began the process of dismantling the canal.

On 10th November, this year, the Supreme Court passed an order stating that the 2004 legislation passed unilaterally and arbitrarily by the Punjab Assembly was illegal. The 2004 legislation basically disregarded all previous agreements between Punjab and Haryana over the sharing of the Sutlej waters and claimed that the entire share belongs to Punjab, since Haryana was not a riparian state, that is, it was neither situated on the banks of the river, nor did the river flow through it.

This was a highly arbitrary position adopted by Punjab, motivated by pure political vote-bank considerations and the Court was right in declaring it illegal. The controversy has been going on since the 1950s and much blood has been shed over it, including Indira Gandhi's own, by the Khalistanis demanding a separate state. They even gunned down the Chief engineer of the SYL canal when the land was finally acquired for the construction of the project during the 1980s.

The history of the SYL canal dispute has its legal genesis in the larger Indus water sharing treaty between India and Pakistan. After the Partition, with the river Indus and its five tributaries cutting across India and Pakistan, one of the main questions that faced both the countries was how to share the Indus river waters. Subsequently, with the signing of the Indus Water Treaty in 1960, it was decided that upper reaches of the Indus waters would be claimed by India, while the lower reaches would be under the Pakistani government. India's share of rivers, thus, included Ravi, Beas and Sutlej.

The sharing of the waters of these rivers was to be done through the Bhakra-Nangal multipurpose dams constructed on river Sutlej, and, the Pong or the Beas dam constructed on river Beas, both lying in Himachal Pradesh.

Bhakra dam was part of the larger multipurpose Bhakra Nangal Project whose aims were to prevent floods in the Sutlej-Beas river valley, to provide irrigation to adjoining states and to provide hydro-electricity. Water flows from Bhakra Dam downstream Nangal dam where it is controlled and released into Nangal Hydrel Channel that later becomes Bhakra Main Line after Ganguwal and Kotla power plants. The Bhakra main line is a canal that mostly supplies irrigation water to the state of Haryana. On the other hand, the Beas Project is a part of the master plan for the utilisation of the waters of the three eastern rivers viz. the Sutlej, the Beas and the Ravi for irrigation and power-generation in an integrated manner.

The SYL conflict goes back to the water sharing arrangement

arising out of diversion of waters from these dams.

Thus, even as the treaty between India and Pakistan was negotiated, there began water conflicts within India over the sharing of the waters of Ravi, Beas and Sutlej. In 1955, the waters of the three rivers were allocated between three states viz. Rajasthan got 8.00 MAF (million acre feet), Kashmir got 0.65 MAF, while Punjab got 7.2 MAF.^a

The dispute between Punjab and Haryana arose after the state of Punjab was bifurcated and the new state of Haryana created in 1966. With this division, Haryana now demanded 4.8 MAF out of the total 7.2 MAF of Punjab, while Punjab claimed the entire share as its own.

Despite legal invocations by both the states and formation of government committees, the issue could not be resolved. Ultimately, it was by an executive order passed by the Indira Gandhi government in 1976 that 3.5 MAF of water was allocated to Haryana and Punjab each, while 0.2 MAF was allocated to Delhi. This allocation was again revised in a 1981 central government order.

Water allocations of Ravi, Beas and Sutlej (in MAF or Million Acre Feet)

	Total water	Punjab	Haryana	Rajasthan	Delhi	J&K
1976 allocation	15.85	3.5	3.5	8	0.2	0.65
1981 allocation	17.17	4.22	3.5	8.6	0.2	0.65

To facilitate the sharing of water, it was agreed that the 214-km Sutlej Yamuna Link canal would be built, of which 122 km would be in Punjab. Haryana completed its portion of the canal – 92 km – in June 1980. Punjab started work only after the 1981 agreement.

However, the Akali Dal opposed the tripartite 1981 agreement.

^a This was the combined share after the merger of PEPSU (Patiala and East Punjab States Union) and Punjab in 1956.

The issue was temporarily resolved in 1985 when Rajiv Gandhi signed an agreement with Akali's Harchand Longowal to create the Eradi tribunal to adjudicate on the disputes, with new deadline being set for August 1986. The construction, however, was aborted – even after the SAD government completed 90% of the construction – due to militancy in Punjab and the murder of the project's chief engineer.

After that the story is the same till now – the Supreme Court's repeated directives to Punjab in 2002 and 2004 to complete the canal fell on deaf ears, with Punjab's Congress's Amarinder Singh government entirely scrapping the project through a legislative bill in 2004, and this year the SAD-BJP government passing a bill to return the land acquired for the canal back to the farmers.

THE LEGAL ARGUMENTS

The story continues till date.

The main arguments being given by Punjab are that Haryana is not a riparian state, in that neither of the two rivers flows through it nor is it situated on the banks of any of them, and, that the fact that Haryana gets Yamuna waters, while Punjab has no water to spare, has not been factored in. These arguments are still being advanced by the state. At that time, Punjab also argued that it planned to increase its cropping intensity, since it is majorly an agricultural state and dependent on irrigation, and that it has no water to spare.

There's also another catch that the Punjab side has on its side viz. that Haryana is already getting 16.2 LAF (Lakh Acre Foot) of water out of the main Bhakra Main Line, since 1976. Out of the total of 35 LAF belonging to Punjab, the SYL dispute is essentially over the remaining 18.8 LAF.¹ Since Haryana, being a non-riparian state is already getting water from all sides, it should not target the 18.8 LAF of Punjab's share. This means that Punjab – given its ongoing water crisis – really has no water to share. And the SYL treaty must be scrapped or revised.

Punjab is also arguing that, already, the canal to share waters

with Rajasthan (unfairly, since Rajasthan did not deserve any share, according to Punjab) has caused severe waterlogging in some of Punjab's districts, without Punjab getting any compensation, and the SYL will do the same.

Haryana, however, on its part, invoked Section 78 of the Punjab Reorganization Act, under which the successor state – Haryana in this case – was entitled to bear both shares and liabilities under the Beas project. It is being argued that if Punjab acts so unreasonably and arbitrarily today, then even other states can follow suit. Tomorrow Himachal Pradesh, in which lies the catchment area of Ravi and Beas, may say that it won't share the river waters with Punjab anymore.

These positions are being invoked today also.

POLITICS OVER THE ISSUE

In the current scenario, the legal issues are rapidly getting enmeshed in politics. Punjab is currently arguing that the Inter States Water Disputes Act, 1956 applies only to riparian states, so the SYL dispute cannot be settled under it. It is also arguing that the 1976 order was null and void, since it espoused political discrepancies in the way other states were included, with Rajasthan being made a part of it though it was a 'rank outsider'.²

Punjab is also unilaterally undertaking radical actions. And PM Modi finds his hands tied due to the upcoming assembly elections in Punjab. Although he tried to diffuse the tension with Haryana by holding Pakistan responsible for the dispute and saying that India will reclaim its rightful share for Punjab through the Indus Water Treaty, the issue should not be mixed up with the real problem here. The real culprit in this dispute is, indeed, Punjab itself.

Consider this – if any state were to arbitrarily adopt a resolution stating that the country's natural resource belonged solely to it, what will happen to the future of the nation?

Yes, Punjab may have utilized the full armoury of law at its disposal and invoked all kinds of riparian principles to retrospectively

justify its actions, yet the fact remains that it openly – and this includes all political parties in Punjab – disregarded decisions taken by the national government and went its own way. Not only did it refuse to engage in any negotiations, but it also went ahead and returned the farmers' land acquired for the construction of the canal, declaring the issue as settled, in an open defiance of all rational and national-collective logic, and in a dangerous show of muscle power. Should any state be allowed to exercise that kind of power – and, that too, on the whim of political parties that simply want to win the next election? What is happening right now in Punjab is a dangerous thing.

While 'water wars' have been going on in India for some time now – consider the Karnataka-Tamil Nadu conflict over Cauvery, or, the Odisha-Chhattisgarh conflict over Mahanadi – but none of them has been wholly and solely determined by the next elections alone. The latter was a supplementary, though, an important calculation. And none of these states openly defied the Indian Union and openly exhorted their populations to commit violence as is being done now.

Admittedly, Punjab is a different case altogether. Still, is not it ironical that a state that was the epitome of Green Revolution, the 'granary' of India and led the country in the use of harmful chemicals and fertilizers in agriculture and mercilessly extracted groundwater for irrigation purposes, is now complaining that it has no water left to irrigate its fields. It has also been encouraging the production of water-intensive crops, and, also giving subsidies to farmers which lead to further groundwater extraction through tube-wells. Punjab is on the verge of becoming a desert – a barren state in the next 15 years.

And, all the causal factors are interlinked. The SYL controversy must be seen in the light of not just Punjab's defiance of national unity, its unmitigated wastage of water and leading a harmful agrarian revolution, but also its status as, perhaps, the worst state in India in terms of corruption, drug abuse, highest levels of youth unemployment and a highly vitiated political scene – now it is also

becoming vulnerable to terrorist attacks from Pakistan (as Pathankot proved) due to its illegal cross-border drug trade.

CONCLUSION

In the SYL canal case, specifically, the fault may outwardly lie with Punjab. However, the deeper reality is that it reflects on the degradation of our national character. The unfairness of the situation is that first everyone lauded Punjab when it became the leader of Green Revolution and exploited its natural resources. What more – other states even tried to follow suit and they have also used excessive chemicals in their soil and contaminated and depleted their groundwater.

The national government, for so many decades, gave subsidies for such a policy – subsidies to use fertilizers, power subsidies leading to extraction of groundwater, incentives to appease powerful farmers for vote-bank purposes. It was a part of the whole national culture for so many decades. And Punjab was simply a part of that culture. Everyone was equally culpable. The only difference now is that Punjab has become an example of the future suffering that the country may be poised on, and nobody is willing to take responsibility for it, though the crisis is of collective making.

Another problem is that people are allowing such vitiated and violent discourses to continue. Agreed that the people of Punjab may be looking for an alternative government to deliver the state from its multiple diseases, but, at the same time, they are allowing political parties to use them and incite them to violence over issues that are purely constructed for political convenience – issues that serve short-term vote-banks and further damage the national character. At this rate, it will not matter which political party – AAP is certainly not an alternative, given its hopeless national and Delhi-level track record – forms the government in Punjab's upcoming assembly elections. When in power, they will all be of the same colour in exploiting the weaknesses of the people.

Just like in the past, the Congress and SAD (with BJP as a

supporting alliance partner) will take turns to rule the state through the same iron hands and apathy, which they have both shown in the case of the SYL canal controversy. Unless the people begin to decisively stand against the harmful poison being spread by the state's political parties, there will be no deliverance on this or any other issue in a foreseeable future.

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HISTORY OF INDIA – THE VEDIC AGE (24)

XIII. THE PSYCHOLOGICAL AND THE HISTORICAL BASES FOR THE INTERPRETATION OF THE VEDA

B. THE BASIC APPROACH AND THE BEGINNINGS (CONT.)

The third hymn (Sukta) of Madhuchchandas is also, like the second, in movements of three stanzas (Riks), the first addressed to the Ashwins, the second to Indra, the third to the Vishwadevas and the last to Saraswati which according to Sri Aurobindo is a passage of clear psychological significance, of a far greater clarity than those before it. "But this whole hymn is full of psychological suggestions and we find in it the close connection and even identity which the Vedic Rishis sought to establish and perfect between the three main interests of the human soul, Thought and its final victorious illuminations, Action and its last supreme all-achieving puissances, Enjoyment and its highest spiritual ecstasies. The Soma wine symbolises the replacing of our ordinary sense-enjoyment by the divine Ananda. That substitution is brought about by divinising our thought-action, and as it progresses it helps in its turn the consummation of the movement which has brought it about. **The Cow, the Horse, the Soma-Wine are the figures of this triple sacrifice. The offering of *ghṛta*, the clarified butter which is the yield of the cow, the offering of the horse, *avamedha*, the offering of the wine of Soma are its three principal forms or elements. We have also, less prominent, the offering of the cake which is possibly symbolic of the body, of Matter.**"¹

The Cow, the Horse and the Soma-Wine stand respectively, for the principles of Light, Energy and Ananda which, when consecrated to a diviner purpose, take the form of *ghṛta*, *avamedha* and soma-wine – the clarified intelligence, consecrated action and offered enjoyment (the divine ananda).

The first three stanzas addressed to the Ashwins have been translated by Sri Aurobindo as follows:

“O Riders of the Steed, swift-footed, much-enjoying lords of bliss, take delight in the energies of the sacrifice.

‘O Riders of the Steed, male souls effecting a manifold action, take joy of the words, O holders in the intellect, by a luminously energetic thought.

‘I have piled the seat of sacrifice, I have pressed out the vigorous Soma juices; fulfillers of action, powers of the movement, come to them with your fierce speed on the path.’”²

Here the Ashwins are described as the riders of the steed (horse), “...the Ashwa, symbolic of force and especially of life-energy and nervous force, the Prana. Their common character is that they are gods of enjoyment, seekers of honey; they are physicians, they bring back youth to the old, health to the sick, wholeness to the maimed.”³

From the indications given above in the three stanzas (I.3.1-3) it is clear that “...the Ashwins are twin divine powers whose special function is to perfect the nervous or vital being in man in the sense of action and enjoyment. But they are also powers of Truth, of intelligent action, of right enjoyment. They are powers that appear with the Dawn, effective powers of action born out of the ocean of being who, because they are divine, are able to mentalise securely the felicities of the higher existence by a thought-faculty which finds or comes to know that true substance and true wealth.... The Ashwins are to come as effective powers of action, *puruda sas nar*, to take delight in the Words and to accept them into the intellect where they shall be retained for the action by a thought full of luminous energy. They are to come to the offering of the Soma wine, in order to effect the action of the sacrifice, *dasr*, as fulfillers of action, by giving to the delight of the action that violent movement of theirs, *rudravartan* which carries them irresistibly on their path and overcomes all opposition. They come as powers of the Aryan journey, lords of the great human movement, *Msaty*. We see throughout that it is energy which these Riders on the Horse are to give; they are to take delight in the sacrificial energies, to take up the word into an energetic thought, to bring to the sacrifice their own violent movement on the path. And it is effectiveness of

action and swiftness in the great journey that is the object of this demand for energy. **I would call the attention of the reader continually to the consistency of conception and coherence of structure, the easy clearness and precision of outline which the thought of the Rishis assumes by a psychological interpretation, so different from the tangled confusion and incoherent abruptness of the interpretations which ignore the supreme tradition of the Veda as a book of wisdom and deepest knowledge.**"⁴

Just as in the second hymn (I.2) where Madhuchchandas called Vayu who supplies the vital force, brings his steeds of life; here he calls the Ashwins who use the vital forces and ride on the steed. And, as before, here too he proceeds from the vital or nervous action to the mental and invokes the might of Indra to assist in the journey. The outpourings of the wine of delight (Soma) desire him; they desire the luminous mind (Indra) to take possession of them for its activities. This hymn also, like the second before it, is a hymn of the Soma sacrifice. Again in the first two verses of the 15th hymn of the ninth Mandala we have, "Soma advances, heroic with his swift chariots, by the force of the subtle thought, *dhiyā dīvyā*, to the perfected activity (or perfected field) of Indra and takes many forms of thought to arrive at that vast extension (or, formation) of the godhead where the Immortals are."⁵

Sri Aurobindo here dwells on these points "...in order to show how entirely symbolical is the Soma-wine of the Vedic Rishis and how richly surrounded with psychological conceptions, – as anyone will find who cares to go through the ninth Mandala with its almost overcharged splendour of symbolic imagery and overflowing psychological suggestions."⁶

"The Ashwins like the other gods descend from the Truth-consciousness, the Ritam; they are born or manifested from Heaven, from Dyaus, the pure Mind; their movement pervades all the worlds, – the effect of their action ranges from the body through the vital being and the thought to the superconscious Truth. It commences indeed from the ocean, from the vague of the being as it emerges out of the

subconscient and they conduct the soul over the flood of these waters and prevent its foundering on its voyage. They are therefore *Ṛsatyā*, lords of the movement, leaders of the journey or voyage.

They help man with the Truth which comes to them especially by association with the Dawn, with Surya, lord of the Truth, and with Suryā, his daughter, but they help him more characteristically with the delight of being. They are lords of bliss, *Ṛubhaspatī* their car or movement is loaded with the satisfactions of the delight of being in all its planes; they bear the skin full of the overflowing honey; they seek the honey, the sweetness, and fill all things with it. They are therefore effective powers of the Ananda which proceeds out of the Truth-consciousness and which manifesting itself variously in all the three worlds maintains man in his journey. Hence their action is in all the worlds. They are especially riders or drivers of the Horse, Ashwins, as their name indicates, – they use the vitality of the human being as the motive-force of the journey: but also they work in the thought and lead it to the Truth. They give health, beauty, wholeness to the body; they are the divine physicians. Of all the gods they are the most ready to come to man and to create for him ease and joy, *Ṛgamiṇī*, *Ṛubhaspatī* For this is their peculiar and perfect function. They are essentially lords of weal, of bliss, *Ṛubhaspatī*”⁷

“The great Light of lights, the Sun of Truth, the illumination of the Truth-consciousness is rising up out of the movement of life to create the illumined Mind, Swar, which completes the evolution of the lower triple world. *Ṛa sya bhīnur udiyarti*. By this rising of the Sun in man, the full movement of the Ashwins becomes possible; for by the Truth comes the realised Delight, the heavenly beatitude. Therefore, the chariot of the Ashwins is being yoked upon the height of this Dyaus, the high level or plane of the resplendent mind. That chariot is all-pervading; its motion goes everywhere; its speed runs freely on all planes of our consciousness.”⁸

“The full all-pervading movement of the Ashwins brings with it the fullness of all the possible satisfactions of the delight of being. ...The satisfactions or delicacies which are carried in the car of the

Ashwins ... correspond to the three movements or worlds of our progressive consciousness, – satisfactions of the body, satisfactions of the vitality, satisfactions of the mind. If they are in three pairs, then we must understand that on each plane there is a double action of the delight corresponding to the double and united twinhood of the Ashwins. It is difficult in the Veda itself to distinguish between these brilliant and happy Twins or to discover what each severally represents. We have no such indication as is given us in the case of the three Ribhus. But perhaps the Greek names of these two Dioskouroi, *Divo napā*, sons of Heaven, contain a clue. Kastor, the name of the elder, seems to be Kashtri, the Shining One; Poludeukes may possibly be Purudansas, a name which occurs in the Veda as an epithet of the Ashwins, the Manifold in activity. If so, the twin birth of the Ashwins recalls the constant Vedic dualism of Power and Light, Knowledge and Will, Consciousness and Energy, Go and Ashwa. In all the satisfactions brought to us by the Ashwins these two elements are inseparably united; where the form is that of the Light or Consciousness, there Power and Energy are contained; where the form is that of the Power or Energy, there Light and Consciousness are contained.”⁹

“But these three forms of satisfaction are not all that their chariot holds for us; there is something else, a fourth, a skin full of honey and out of this skin the honey breaks and overflows on every side. *Dvīsturvayomadhuno virapāte*. Mind, life and body, these are three; *turvāya*, the fourth plane of our consciousness, is the superconscious, the Truth-consciousness. The Ashwins bring with them a skin, *dvī*, literally a thing cut or torn, a partial formation out of the Truth-consciousness to contain the honey of the superconscious Beatitude; but it cannot contain it; that unconquerably abundant and infinite sweetness breaks out and overflows everywhere drenching with delight the whole of our existence.

With that honey the three pairs of satisfactions, mental, vital, bodily are impregnated by this all-pervasive overflowing plenty and they become full of its sweetness, *madhumanta*. And so becoming, at once they begin to move upward. Touched by the divine delight all

our satisfactions in this lower world soar upward irresistibly attracted towards the superconscient, towards the Truth, towards the Beatitude. And with them, – for, secretly or openly, consciously or subconsciously it is the delight of being that is the leader of our activities, – all the chariots and horses of these gods take the same soaring upward movement. All the various movements of our being, all the forms of Force that give them their impulsion, all follow the ascending light of Truth towards its home.”¹⁰

“...great change from the inner obscurity to the illumination is effected by the Ashwins, lords of the joyous upward action of the mind and the vital powers, through the immortal wine of the Ananda poured into mind and body and there drunk by them. They mentalise the expressive Word, they lead us into the heaven of pure mind beyond this darkness and there by the Thought they set the powers of the Delight to work. But even over the heavenly waters they cross, for the power of the Soma helps them to dissolve all mental constructions, and they cast aside even this veil; they go beyond Mind and the last attaining is described as the crossing of the rivers, the passage through the heaven of the pure mind, the journey by the path of the Truth to the other side. Not till we reach the highest supreme, *param* *par* *vat*, do we rest at last from the great human journey.”¹¹

“By the action of the Ashwins man’s progress towards the beatitude becomes itself beatific; all his travail and struggle and labour grows full of a divine delight. As it is said in the Veda that by Truth is the progress towards the Truth, that is to say by the growing law of the Truth in the mental and physical consciousness we arrive finally beyond mind and body to the superconscient Truth, so here it is indicated that by Ananda is the progress towards the Ananda, – by a divine delight growing in all our members, in all our activities we arrive at the superconscious beatitude.

In the upward movement the horses that draw the chariot of the Ashwins change into birds, into swans, *ha* *s* *sa*. The Bird in the Veda is the symbol, very frequently, of the soul liberated and upsoaring, at other times of energies so liberated and upsoaring, winging upwards

towards the heights of our being, winging widely with a free flight, no longer involved in the ordinary limited movement or labouring gallop of the Life-energy, the Horse, Ashwa. Such are the energies that draw the free car of the Lords of Delight, when there dawns on us the Sun of the Truth. These winged movements are full of the honey showered from the overflowing skin, *madhumanta*. They are unassailable, *asridha*, they come to no hurt in their flight; or, the sense may be, they make no false or hurtful movement. And they are golden-winged, *hira* *yapar*. Gold is the symbolic colour of the light of Surya. The wings of these energies are the full, satisfied, attaining movement, *par*, of his luminous knowledge. For these are the birds that awake with the Dawn; these are the winged energies that come forth from their nests when the feet of the daughter of Heaven press the levels of our human mentality, *divo asya snavi*. Such are the swans that bear the swift-riding Twins.”¹²

“...the immortal movement of the delight of the Ashwins; the movement of a bliss that does not fade or grow old or exhaust itself, – it is ageless and undecaying, *ajara*, – because it is drawn by perfect and liberated energies and not by the limited and soon exhausted, soon recalcitrant horses of the human vitality. *Pra m avocam dvin dhiya dh, ratha sva vo ajaro yo asti*. In this movement they traverse in a moment all the worlds of the lower consciousness, covering it with their speeding delights, and so arrive to that universal enjoyment in man full of his offering of the Soma-wine by which they can lead him, puissantly entering into it, through all opposers and to the great goal.”¹³

“The Divine is existence all-embracing, infinite and pure; Varuna brings to us the infinite oceanic space of the divine soul and its ethereal, elemental purity. The Divine is boundless consciousness, perfect in knowledge, pure and therefore luminously right in its discernment of things, perfectly harmonious and happy in its concordance of their law and nature; Mitra brings us this light and harmony, this right distinction and relation and friendly concord, the happy laws of the liberated soul concordant with itself and the Truth in all its rich thought,

shining actions and thousandfold enjoyment. The Divine is in its own being pure and perfect power and in us the eternal upward tendency in things to their source and truth; Aryaman brings to us this mighty strength and perfectly-guided happy inner upsurging. The Divine is the pure, the faultless, the all-embracing, the untroubled ecstasy that enjoys its own infinite being and enjoys equally all that it creates within itself; Bhaga gives us sovereignly that ecstasy of the liberated soul, its free and unfallen possession of itself and the world.

This quaternary is practically the later essential trinity of Sachchidananda, – Existence, Consciousness, Bliss with selfawareness and self-force, Chit and Tapas, for double terms of Consciousness; but it is here translated into its cosmic terms and equivalents. Varuna the King has his foundation in the all-pervading purity of Sat; Mitra the Happy and the Mighty, most beloved of the Gods, in the all-uniting light of Chit; many-charioted Aryaman in the movement and all-discerning force of Tapas; Bhaga in the all-embracing joy of Ananda. Yet as all these things form one in the realised godhead, as each element of the trinity contains the others in itself and none of them can exist separately from the rest, therefore each of the Four also possesses by force of his own essential quality every general attribute of his brothers.”¹⁴

In the present hymn the image is that of the soma-juices desiring Indra (I.3.4-6). “He comes impelled by the thought, driven forward by the illumined thinker within, *dhiye* *ito vipra* *ta*, to the soul-thoughts of the Rishi who has pressed out the wine of delight and seeks to manifest them in speech, in the inspired mantras; *sur* *vata upa brahm* *i v* *ghata*. He comes with the speed and force of the illumined mind-power, in possession of his brilliant horses to those thoughts, *tu* *na upa brahm* *i hariva*, and the Rishi prays to him to confirm or hold the delight in the Soma offering, *sute dadhi* *va na* *cand*. **The Ashwins have brought and energised the pleasure of the vital system in the action of the Ananda. Indra is necessary to hold that pleasure firmly in the illuminated mind so that it may not fall away from the consciousness.**

‘Come, O Indra, with thy rich lustres, these Soma-juices desire thee; they are purified by the subtle powers and by extension in body.

‘Come, O Indra, impelled by the mind, driven forward by the illumined thinker, to my soul-thoughts, I who have poured out the Soma-juice and seek to express them in speech.

‘Come, O Indra, with forceful speed to my soul-thoughts, O lord of the bright horses; hold firm the delight in the Soma-juice.”¹⁵

“Madhuchchandas, son of Vishwamitra, invokes in the Soma-offering Indra, the Master of luminous Mind, for increase in the Light. The symbols of the hymn are those of a collective sacrifice. Its subject is the growth of power and delight in Indra by the drinking of the Soma, the wine of immortality, and the consequent illumination of the human being so that the obstructions of his inner knowledge are removed and he attains to the utmost splendours of the liberated mind.

But what is this Soma, called sometimes amrita, the Greek ambrosia, as if it were itself the substance of immortality? It is a figure for the divine Ananda, the principle of Bliss, from which, in the Vedic conception, the existence of Man, this mental being, is drawn. A secret Delight is the base of existence, its sustaining atmosphere and almost its substance. This Ananda is spoken of in the Taittiriya Upanishad as **the ethereal atmosphere of bliss without which nothing could remain in being**. In the Aitareya Upanishad Soma, as the lunar deity, is born from the sense-mind in the universal Purusha and, when man is produced, expresses himself again as sense-mentality in the human being. For delight is the *raison d’être* of sensation, or, we may say, **sensation is an attempt to translate the secret delight of existence into the terms of physical consciousness**. But in that consciousness, – often figured as *adri*, the hill, stone, or dense substance, – divine light and divine delight are both of them concealed and confined, and have to be released or extracted. Ananda is retained as *rasa*, the sap, the essence, in sense-objects and sense-experiences, in the plants and growths of the earth-nature, and among these growths the mystic Soma-plant symbolises that element behind all sense activities and their enjoyments which yields the divine essence. **It has to be distilled**

and, once distilled, purified and intensified until it has grown luminous, full of radiance, full of swiftiness, full of energy, *gomat*, ग॒म॒त॒, *yuvaku*. It becomes the chief food of the gods who, called to the Soma-oblation, take their share of the enjoyment and in the strength of that ecstasy increase in man, exalt him to his highest possibilities, make him capable of the supreme experiences. **Those who do not give the delight in them as an offering to the divine Powers, preferring to reserve themselves for the sense and the lower life, are adorers not of the gods, but of the Panis, lords of the sense-consciousness, traffickers in its limited activities,** they who press not the mystic wine, give not the purified offering, raise not the sacred chant. It is the Panis who steal from us the Rays of the illumined consciousness, those brilliant herds of the sun, and pen them up in the cavern of the subconscious, in the dense hill of matter, corrupting even Sarama, the hound of heaven, the luminous intuition, when she comes on their track to the cave of the Panis.

But the conception of this hymn belongs to a stage in our inner progress when the Panis have been exceeded and even the Vritras or Coverers who seclude from us our full powers and activities and Vala who holds back the Light, are already overpassed. But there are even then powers that stand in the way of our perfection. They are **the powers of limitation, the Confiners or Censurers, who, without altogether obscuring the rays or damming up the energies, yet seek by constantly affirming the deficiencies of our self-expression to limit its field and set up the progress realised as an obstacle to the progress to come.** Madhuchchhandas calls upon Indra to remove the defect and affirm in its place an increasing illumination.

The principle which **Indra represents is Mind-Power released from the limits and obscurations of the nervous consciousness.** It is this enlightened Intelligence which fashions right or perfect forms of thought or of action not deformed by the nervous impulses, not hampered by the falsehoods of sense. The image presented is that of a cow giving abundantly its yield to the milker of the herds. The word *go* means in Sanskrit both a cow and a ray of light. This double sense is used by the Vedic symbolists to suggest a double figure which was

to them more than a figure; for light, in their view, is not merely an apt poetic image of thought, but is actually its physical form. Thus, the herds that are milked are the Herds of the Sun, – Surya, God of the revelatory and intuitive mind, or else of Dawn, the goddess who manifests the solar glory. The Rishi desires from Indra a daily increase of this light of Truth by his fuller activity pouring rays in a rich yield upon the receptive mind.

The activity of the pure illuminated Intelligence is sustained and increased by the conscious expression in us of the delight in divine existence and divine activity typified by the Soma wine. As the Intelligence feeds upon it, its action becomes an intoxicated ecstasy of inspiration by which the rays come pouring abundantly and joyously in. ‘Light-giving indeed is the intoxication of thee in thy rapture.’^a

For then it is possible, breaking beyond the limitations still insisted upon by the Confiners, to arrive at something of the finalities of knowledge possible to the illuminated intelligence. **Right thoughts, right sensibilities, – this is the full sense of the word *sumati*; for the Vedic *mati* includes not only the thinking, but also the emotional parts of mentality. *Sumati* is a light in the thoughts; it is also a bright gladness and kindness in the soul.** But in this passage the stress of the sense is upon right thought and not on the emotions. It is necessary, however, that the progress in right thinking should commence in the field of consciousness already attained; there must not be flashes and dazzling manifestations which by going beyond our powers elude expression in right form and confuse the receptive mind. Indra must be not only illuminer, but a fashioner of right thought-formations, *surāpakṛnu*.”¹⁶

After this the Rishi Madhuchchandas passes on to third set of stanzas (I.3.7-9) addressed to the Vishwadevas, the all-gods – the universal collectivity of the divine powers. These Riks pertaining to all-gods are translated by Sri Aurobindo as follows:

‘O fosterers who uphold the doer in his work, O all-gods, come

^a I.4.2

and divide the Soma-wine that I distribute.

‘O all-gods who bring over to us the Waters, come passing through to my Soma-offerings as illumined powers to your places of bliss.

‘O all-gods, you who are not assailed nor come to hurt, free-moving in your forms of knowledge, cleave to my sacrifice as its upbearers.”¹⁷

In the above Riks the all-gods are called for a general action which supports and completes the functions of the Ashwins and Indra. “They are to come to the sacrifice in their collectivity and divide among themselves, each evidently for the divine and joyous working of his proper activity, the Soma which the giver of the sacrifice distributes to them...”¹⁸

“And the epithets of the Vishwadevas, qualifying their character and the functions for which they are invited to the Soma-offering, have the same generality; they are common to all the gods and applied indifferently to any or all of them throughout the Veda. ...The fostering or increasing of man in all his substance and possessions, his continual enlargement towards the fullness and richness of the vast Truth-consciousness, the upholding of him in his great struggle and labour, this is the common preoccupation of the Vedic gods. Then, they are *aptura*, they who cross the waters, or as Sayana takes it, they who give the waters. This he understands in the sense of ‘rain-givers’ and it is perfectly true that all the Vedic gods are givers of the rain, the abundance (for *ṛ*; rain, has both senses) of heaven, sometimes described as the solar waters, *svarvat* *ṛ apa*, or waters which carry in them the light of the luminous heaven, *Svar*. **But the ocean and the waters in the Veda, as this phrase itself indicates, are the symbol of conscient being in its mass and in its movements.** The gods pour the fullness of these waters, especially the upper waters, the waters of heaven, the streams of the Truth, *ṛasya dh* across all obstacles into the human consciousness.”¹⁹

As pointed out above (I.3.9), “...the gods are all free from effective

assailants, free from the harm of the hurtful or opposing powers and therefore the creative formations of their conscious knowledge, their Maya, move freely, pervasively, attain their right goal, – *asridha ehim y so adruha*. If we take into account the numerous passages of the Veda which indicate the general object of the sacrifice, of the work, of the journey, of the increase of the light and the abundance of the waters to be the attainment of the Truth-consciousness, Ritam, with the resultant Bliss, Mayas, and that these epithets commonly apply to powers of the infinite, integral Truth-consciousness we can see that it is this attainment of the Truth which is indicated in these three verses. The all-gods increase man, they uphold him in the great work, they bring him the abundance of the waters of Swar, the streams of the Truth, they communicate the unassailably integral and pervading action of the Truth-consciousness with its wide formations of knowledge, *m y*. ...They are the powers of Truth entering into the outpourings of the Ananda in man as soon as that movement has been prepared by the vital and mental activity of the Ashwins and the pure mental activity of Indra.”²⁰

“The sacred poems in which the All-Gods and the Adityas, the sons of the Infinite, and Aryaman, Mitra and Varuna are praised, – not the mere hymns of formal invocation to the sacrifice, – are among the most beautiful, solemn and profound that the imagination of man has conceived. The Adityas are described in formulas of an incomparable grandeur and sublimity. **No mythic barbarian gods of cloud, sun and shower are these, no confused allegories of wonder-stricken savages, but the objects of worship to men far more inwardly civilised and profound in self-knowledge than ourselves.** They may not have yoked the lightning to their chariots, nor weighed sun and star, nor materialised all the destructive forces in Nature to aid them in massacre and domination, but they had measured and fathomed all the heavens and earths within us, they had cast their plummet into the Inconscient and the subconscious and the superconscient; they had read the riddle of death and found the secret of immortality; they had sought for and discovered the One and known and worshipped

Him in the glories of His light and purity and wisdom and power.”²¹

And finally in the last three Riks of this third Sukta “...we have the clear and unmistakable indication of the Truth-consciousness as the goal of the sacrifice, the object of the Soma-offering, the culmination of the work of the Ashwins, Indra and the All-gods in the vitality and in the mind. For these are the three Riks devoted to Saraswati, the divine Word, who represents the stream of inspiration that descends from the Truth-consciousness, and thus limpidly runs their sense:

‘May purifying Saraswati with all the plenitude of her forms of plenty, rich in substance by the thought, desire our sacrifice.

‘She, the impeller to happy truths, the awakener in consciousness to right mentalising, Saraswati, upholds the sacrifice.

‘Saraswati by the perception awakens in consciousness the great flood (the vast movement of the Ritam) and illumines entirely all the thoughts.’

This clear and luminous finale throws back its light on all that has preceded it. It shows the intimate connection between the Vedic sacrifice and a certain state of mind and soul, the interdependence between the offering of the clarified butter and the Soma juice and luminous thought, richness of psychological content, right states of the mind and its awaking and impulsion to truth and light. **It reveals the figure of Saraswati as the goddess of the inspiration, of *Bruti*. And it establishes the connection between the Vedic rivers and psychological states of mind. The passage is one of those luminous hints which the Rishis have left scattered amidst the deliberate ambiguities of their symbolic style to guide us towards their secret.**”²²

“The symbolism of the Veda betrays itself with the greatest clearness in the figure of the goddess Saraswati. In many of the other gods the balance of the internal sense and the external figure is carefully preserved. The veil sometimes becomes transparent or its corners are lifted even for the ordinary hearer of the Word; but it is never entirely removed. One may doubt whether Agni is anything more

than the personification of the sacrificial Fire or of the physical principle of Light and Heat in things, or Indra anything more than the god of the sky and the rain or of physical Light, or Vayu anything more than the divinity in the Wind and Air or at most of the physical Life-breath. In the lesser gods the naturalistic interpretation has less ground for confidence; for it is obvious that Varuna is not merely a Vedic Uranus or Neptune, but a god with great and important moral functions; Mitra and Bhaga have the same psychological aspect; the Ribhus who form things by the mind and build up immortality by works can with difficulty be crushed into the Procrustean measure of a naturalistic mythology. Still by imputing a chaotic confusion of ideas to the poets of the Vedic hymns the difficulty can be trampled upon, if not overcome. But Saraswati will submit to no such treatment. She is, plainly and clearly, the goddess of the Word, the goddess of a divine Inspiration.

If that were all, this would not carry us much farther than the obvious fact that the Vedic Rishis were not mere naturalistic barbarians, but had their psychological ideas and were capable of creating mythological symbols which represent not only those obvious operations of physical Nature that interested their agricultural, pastoral and open-air life, but also the inner operations of the mind and soul. If we have to conceive the history of ancient religious thought as a progression from the physical to the spiritual, from a purely naturalistic to an increasingly ethical and psychological view of Nature and the world and the gods – and this, though by no means certain, is for the present the accepted view, – we must suppose that the Vedic poets were at least already advancing from the physical and naturalistic conception of the Gods to the ethical and the spiritual. But Saraswati is not only the goddess of Inspiration, she is at one and the same time one of the seven rivers of the early Aryan world. The question at once arises, whence came this extraordinary identification? And how does the connection of the two ideas present itself in the Vedic hymns? And there is more; for Saraswati is important not only in herself but by her connections.”²³

“Saraswati means, ‘she of the stream, the flowing movement’, and is therefore a natural name both for a river and for the goddess of

inspiration. But by what process of thought or association does the general idea of the river of inspiration come to be associated with a particular earthly stream? And in the Veda it is not a question of one river which by its surroundings, natural and legendary, might seem more fitly associated with the idea of sacred inspiration than any other. For here it is a question not of one, but of seven rivers always associated together in the minds of the Rishis and all of them released together by the stroke of the God Indra when he smote the Python who coiled across their fountains and sealed up their outflow. It seems impossible to suppose that one river only in all this sevenfold outflowing acquired a psychological significance while the rest were associated only with the annual coming of the rains in the Punjab. The psychological significance of Saraswati carries with it a psychological significance for the whole symbol of the Vedic waters.

Saraswati is not only connected with other rivers but with other goddesses who are plainly psychological symbols and especially with Bharati and Ila. In the later Puranic forms of worship Saraswati is the goddess of speech, of learning and of poetry and Bharati is one of her names, but in the Veda Bharati and Saraswati are different deities. Bharati is also called Mahi, the Large, Great or Vast. The three, Ila, Mahi or Bharati and Saraswati are associated together in a constant formula in those hymns of invocation in which the gods are called by Agni to the Sacrifice.

ī sarasvatī mahī, tisro devī mayobhuva;

barhi s dantvasridha. (I.13.9)

‘May Ila, Saraswati and Mahi, three goddesses who give birth to the bliss, take their place on the sacrificial seat, they who stumble not,’ or ‘who come not to hurt’ or ‘do no hurt.’ The epithet means, I think, they in whom there is no false movement with its evil consequences, *duritam*, no stumbling into pitfalls of sin and error. The formula is expanded in Hymn 110 of the tenth Mandala:

*Ā no yajā bhāratīyam etu,
ī manu vad iha cetayant;*

*Tisro devāṁ barhir edaṁ syonaṁ,
sarasvatī svapasaṁ sadantu.*

‘May Bharati come speeding to our sacrifice and Ila hither awakening our consciousness (or, knowledge or perceptions) in human wise, and Saraswati, – three goddesses sit on this blissful seat, doing well the Work.’

It is clear and will become yet clearer that these three goddesses have closely connected functions akin to the inspirational power of Saraswati. Saraswati is the Word, the inspiration, as I suggest, that comes from the Ritam, the Truth-consciousness. Bharati and Ila must also be different forms of the same Word or knowledge. In the eighth hymn of Madhuchchandas we have a Rik in which Bharati is mentioned under the name of Mahi.

*Evā hyasya sāmānā, virapāṇā gomāt mahā;
pakvā ākhā na dāduḥe.*

‘Thus Mahi for Indra full of the rays, overflowing in her abundance, in her nature a happy truth, becomes as if a ripe branch for the giver of the sacrifice.’

The rays in the Veda are the rays of Surya, the Sun. Are we to suppose that the goddess is a deity of the physical Light or are we to translate ‘go’ by cow and suppose that Mahi is full of cows for the sacrificer? The psychological character of Saraswati comes to our rescue against the last absurd supposition, but it negatives equally the naturalistic interpretation. This characterisation of Mahi, Saraswati’s companion in the sacrifice, the sister of the goddess of inspiration, entirely identified with her in the later mythology, is one proof among a hundred others that light in the Veda is a symbol of knowledge, of spiritual illumination. Surya is the Lord of the supreme Sight, the vast Light, *bṛhāj jyotiḥ*, or, as it is sometimes called, the true Light, *īdā jyotiḥ*. And the connection between the words *ītam* and *bṛhat* is constant in the Veda. ...

As Saraswati represents the truth-audition, *ṛuti*, which gives the inspired word, so Ila represents *dṛiti*, the truth-vision. If so,

since *āditi* and *ṛuṭi* are the two powers of the Rishi, the Kavi, the Seer of the Truth, we can understand the close connection of *Ila* and *Saraswati*. *Bharati* or *Mahi* is the largeness of the Truth-consciousness which, dawning on man's limited mind, brings with it the two sister Puissances. We can also understand how these fine and living distinctions came afterwards to be neglected as the Vedic knowledge declined and *Bharati*, *Saraswati*, *Ila* melted into one.

We may note also that these three goddesses are said to bring to birth for man the Bliss, *Mayas*. I have already insisted on the constant relation, as conceived by the Vedic seers, between the Truth and the Bliss or *Ananda*. It is by the dawning of the true or infinite consciousness in man that he arrives out of this evil dream of pain and suffering, this divided creation into the Bliss, the happy state variously described in *Veda* by the words *bhadram*, *mayas* (love and bliss), *svasti* (the good state of existence, right being) and by others less technically used such as *īryam*, *rayā*, *īyā*. For the Vedic Rishi Truth is the passage and the antechamber, the Bliss of the divine existence is the goal, or else Truth is the foundation, Bliss the supreme result.

Such, then, is the character of *Saraswati* as a psychological principle, her peculiar function and her relation to her most immediate connections among the gods. How far do these shed any light on her relations as the Vedic river to her six sister streams? The number seven plays an exceedingly important part in the Vedic system, as in most very ancient schools of thought. We find it recurring constantly, – the seven delights, *sapta ratnāni*; the seven flames, tongues or rays of *Agni*, *sapta arcā*, *sapta jyā*; the seven forms of the Thought-principle, *sapta dhīraya*; the seven Rays or Cows, forms of the Cow unslayable, *Aditi*, mother of the gods, *sapta gōva*; the seven rivers, the seven mothers or fostering cows, *sapta mātara*, *sapta dhenava*, a term applied indifferently to the Rays and to the Rivers. All these sets of seven depend, it seems to me, upon the Vedic classification of the fundamental principles, the *tattvas*, of existence. The enquiry into the number of these *tattvas* greatly interested the speculative mind

of the ancients and in Indian philosophy we find various answers ranging from the One upward and running into the twenties. In Vedic thought the basis chosen was the number of the psychological principles, because all existence was conceived by the Rishis as a movement of conscious being. However merely curious or barren these speculations and classifications may seem to the modern mind, they were no mere dry metaphysical distinctions, but closely connected with a living psychological practice of which they were to a great extent the thought-basis, and in any case we must understand them clearly if we wish to form with any accuracy an idea of this ancient and far-off system.”²⁴

Saraswati is a power of the Truth which is called inspiration. “Inspiration from the Truth purifies by getting rid of all falsehood, for **all sin according to the Indian idea is merely falsehood, wrongly inspired emotion, wrongly directed will and action. The central idea of life and ourselves from which we start is a falsehood and all else is falsified by it. Truth comes to us as a light, a voice, compelling a change of thought, imposing a new discernment of ourselves and all around us. Truth of thought creates truth of vision and truth of vision forms in us truth of being, and out of truth of being (*satyam*) flows naturally truth of emotion, will and action. This is indeed the central notion of the Veda.**”²⁵

“Saraswati, the inspiration, is full of her luminous plenitudes, rich in substance of thought. She upholds the Sacrifice, the offering of the mortal being’s activities to the divine by awakening his consciousness so that it assumes right states of emotion and right movements of thought in accordance with the Truth from which she pours her illuminations and by impelling in it the rise of those truths which, according to the Vedic Rishis, liberate the life and being from falsehood, weakness and limitation and open to it the doors of the supreme felicity.

By this constant awakening and impulsion, summed up in the word, perception, *ketu*, often called the divine perception, *daivya ketu*,

to distinguish it from the false mortal vision of things, – Saraswati brings into active consciousness in the human being the great flood or great movement, the Truth-consciousness itself, and illumines with it all our thoughts. We must remember that this truth-consciousness of the Vedic Rishis is a supra-mental plane, a level of the hill of being (*adrestanu*) which is beyond our ordinary reach and to which we have to climb with difficulty. It is not part of our waking being, it is hidden from us in the sleep of the superconscious. We can then understand what Madhuchchhandas means when he says that **Saraswati by the constant action of the inspiration awakens the Truth to consciousness in our thoughts.**

But this line may, so far as the mere grammatical form of it goes, be quite otherwise translated; we may take *maharāṣi* in apposition to Saraswati and render the verse ‘Saraswati, the great river, awakens us to knowledge by the perception and shines in all our thoughts.’ If we understand by this expression, ‘the great river’, as Sayana seems to understand, the physical river in the Punjab, we get an incoherence of thought and expression which is impossible except in a nightmare or a lunatic asylum. But it is possible to suppose that it means the great flood of inspiration and that there is no reference to the great ocean of the Truth-Consciousness. Elsewhere, however, there is repeated reference to the gods working by the vast power of the great flood (*mahar maharāṣi*) where there is no reference to Saraswati and it is improbable that she should be meant. It is true that in the Vedic writings Saraswati is spoken of as the secret self of Indra, – an expression, we may observe, that is void of sense if Saraswati is only a northern river and Indra the god of the sky, but has a very profound and striking significance if Indra be the illumined Mind and Saraswati the inspiration that proceeds from the hidden plane of the supramental Truth. But it is impossible to give Saraswati so important a place with regard to the other gods as would be implied by interpreting the phrase *mahar maharāṣi* in the sense “by the greatness of Saraswati”. The gods act, it is continually stated, by the power of the Truth, *ṛena*, but Saraswati is only one of the deities of the Truth and not even the most important or universal of them. The

sense I have given is, therefore, the only rendering consistent with the general thought of the Veda and with the use of the phrase in other passages.”²⁶

References:

- 1. Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo, Vol.15, p.80, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry**
- 2. *Ibid*, pp.84-85**
- 3. *Ibid*, p.83**
- 4. *Ibid*, pp.83-84**
- 5. *Ibid*, pp.85-86**
- 6. *Ibid*, p.86**
- 7. *Ibid*, pp.84-85**
- 7. *Ibid*, pp.328-29**
- 8. *Ibid*, p.329**
- 9. *Ibid*, pp.329-30**
- 10. *Ibid*, pp.330-31**
- 11. *Ibid*, p.130**
- 12. *Ibid*, pp.332-33**
- 13. *Ibid*, p.335**
- 14. *Ibid*, p.497**
- 15. *Ibid*, p.86**
- 16. *Ibid*, pp.260-63**
- 17. *Ibid*, p.90**
- 18. *Ibid*, p.87**
- 19. *Ibid*, pp.87-88**
- 20. *Ibid*, p.89**
- 21. *Ibid*, pp.491-92**
- 22. *Ibid*, p.90**
- 23. *Ibid*, pp.91-92**
- 24. *Ibid*, pp.93-98**
- 25. *Ibid*, p.100**
- 26. *Ibid*, pp.100-102**

EAST AND WEST

“East and West have the same human nature, a common human destiny, the same aspiration after a greater perfection, the same seeking after something higher than itself, something towards which inwardly and even outwardly we move. There has been a tendency in some minds to dwell on the spirituality or mysticism of the East and the materialism of the West; but the West has had no less than the East its spiritual seekings and, though not in such profusion, its saints and sages and mystics, the East has had its materialistic tendencies, its material splendours, its similar or identical dealings with life and Matter and the world in which we live. East and West have always met and mixed more or less closely, they have powerfully influenced each other and at the present day are under an increasing compulsion of Nature and Fate to do so more than ever before.”

– Sri Aurobindo

(Complete works of Sri Aurobindo 36, p.551)