

INDIAN HISTORY.

# ARYAN INVASION THEORY.

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PART 1

**DAVID.**  
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# The Myth of the Aryan Invasion of India by David Frawley

One of the most controversial ideas about Hindu history is the Aryan invasion theory.

This theory, originally devised by F. **Max Muller** in 1848, traces the history of Hinduism to the invasion of India's indigenous people by lighter skinned Aryans around 1500 BCE.

The theory was reinforced by other research over the next 120 years, and became the accepted history of Hinduism, not only in the West but in India.

**There is now ample evidence to show that Muller, and those who followed him, were wrong.**

Why is the theory no longer accepted? The Aryan invasion theory was based on archaeological, linguistic and ethnological evidence.

Later research has either discredited this evidence, or provided new evidence that combined with the earlier evidence makes other explanations more likely.

Modern historians of the area no longer believe that such invasions had such great influence on Indian history.

It's now generally accepted that Indian history shows a continuity of progress from the earliest times to today.

The changes brought to India by other cultures are not denied by modern historians, but they are no longer thought to be a major ingredient in the development of Hinduism.

## **Dangers of the theory**

The Aryan invasion theory denies the Indian origin of predominant culture, but gives the credit for Indian culture to invaders from elsewhere.

It even teaches that some of the most revered books of Hindu scripture are not actually Indian, and it devalues India's culture by portraying it as less ancient than it actually is.

The theory was not just wrong, it included unacceptably racist ideas:

it suggested that Indian culture was not a culture in its own right, but a synthesis of elements from other cultures

it implied that Hinduism was not an authentically Indian religion but the result of cultural imperialism

it suggested that Indian culture was static, and only changed under outside influences

it suggested that the dark-skinned Dravidian people of the South of India had got their faith from light-skinned Aryan invaders

it implied that indigenous people were incapable of creatively developing their faith

it suggested that indigenous peoples could only acquire new religious and cultural ideas from other races, by invasion or other processes

it accepted that race was a biologically based concept (rather than, at least in part, a social construct) that provided a sensible way of ranking people in a hierarchy, which provided a partial basis for the caste system

it provided a basis for racism in the Imperial context by suggesting that the peoples of Northern India were descended from invaders from Europe and so racially closer to the British Raj

it gave a historical precedent to justify the role and status of the British Raj, who could argue that they were transforming India for the better in the same way that the Aryans had done thousands of years earlier

it downgraded the intellectual status of India and its people by giving a falsely late date to elements of Indian science and culture

One of the main ideas used to interpret - and generally devalue - the ancient history of India is the theory of the Aryan invasion. According to this account, India was invaded and conquered by nomadic light-skinned Indo-European tribes from Central Asia around 1500-100 BC, who overthrew an earlier and more advanced dark-skinned Dravidian civilization from which they took most of what later became Hindu culture. This so-called pre-Aryan civilization is said to be evidenced by the large urban ruins of what has been called the "Indus valley culture" (as most of its initial sites were on the Indus river). The war between the powers of light and darkness, a prevalent idea in ancient Aryan Vedic scriptures, was thus interpreted to refer to this war between light and dark-skinned peoples. The Aryan invasion theory thus turned the "Vedas", the original scriptures of ancient India and the Indo-Aryans, into little more than primitive poems of uncivilized plunderers.

This idea - totally foreign to the history of India, whether north or south - has become almost an unquestioned truth in the interpretation of ancient history. Today, after nearly all the reasons for its supposed validity have been refuted, even major Western scholars are at last beginning to call it in question.

In this article we will summarize the main points that have arisen. This is a complex subject that I have dealt with in depth in my book "Gods, Sages and Kings: Vedic Secrets of Ancient Civilization", for those interested in further examination of the subject.

The Indus valley culture was pronounced pre-Aryans for several reasons that were largely part of the cultural milieu of nineteenth century European thinking. As scholars following Max Muller had decided that the Aryans came into India around 1500 BC, since the Indus valley culture was earlier than this, they concluded that it had to be pre-Aryan. Yet the rationale behind the late date for the Vedic culture given by Muller was totally speculative. Max Muller, like many of the Christian scholars of his era, believed in Biblical chronology. This placed the beginning of the world at 400 BC and the flood around 2500 BC. Assuming to those two dates, it became difficult to get the Aryans in India before 1500 BC.

Muller therefore assumed that the five layers of the four 'Vedas' & 'Upanishads' were each composed in 200 year periods before the Buddha at 500 BC. However, there are more changes of language in Vedic Sanskrit itself than there are in classical Sanskrit since Panini, also regarded as a figure of around 500 BC, or a period of 2500 years. Hence it is clear that each of these periods could have existed for any number of centuries and that the 200 year figure is totally arbitrary and is likely too short a figure.

It was assumed by these scholars - many of whom were also Christian missionaries unsympathetic to the 'Vedas' - that the Vedic culture was that of primitive nomads from Central Asia. Hence they could not have founded any urban culture like that of the Indus valley. The only basis for this was a rather questionable interpretation of the 'Rig Veda' that they made, ignoring the sophisticated nature of the culture presented within it.

Meanwhile, it was also pointed out that in the middle of the second millennium BC, a number of Indo-European invasions apparently occurred in the Middle East, wherein Indo-European peoples - the Hittites, Mittani and Kassites - conquered and ruled Mesopotamia for some centuries. An Aryan invasion of India would have been another version of this same movement of Indo-European peoples. On top of this, excavators of the Indus valley culture, like Wheeler, thought they found evidence of destruction of the culture by an outside invasion confirming this.

The Vedic culture was thus said to be that of primitive nomads who came out of Central Asia with their horse-drawn chariots and iron weapons and overthrew the cities of the more advanced Indus valley culture, with their superior battle tactics. It was pointed out that no horses, chariots or iron was discovered in Indus valley sites.

This was how the Aryan invasion theory formed and has remained since then. Though little has been discovered that confirms this theory, there has been much hesitancy to question it, much less to give it up.

Further excavations discovered horses not only in Indus Valley sites but also in pre-Indus sites. The use of the horse has thus been proven for the whole range of ancient Indian history. Evidence of the wheel, and an Indus seal showing a spoked wheel as used in chariots, has also been found, suggesting the usage of chariots.

Moreover, the whole idea of nomads with chariots has been challenged. Chariots are not the vehicles of nomads. Their usage occurred only in ancient urban cultures with much flat land, of which the river plain of north India was the most suitable. Chariots are totally unsuitable for crossing mountains and deserts, as the so-called Aryan invasion required.

That the Vedic culture used iron - & must hence date later than the introduction of iron around 1500 BC - revolves around the meaning of the Vedic term "ayas", interpreted as iron. 'Ayas' in other Indo-European languages like Latin or German usually means copper, bronze or ore generally, not specially iron. There is no reason to insist that in such earlier Vedic times, 'ayas' meant iron, particularly since other metals are not mentioned in the 'Rig Veda' (except gold that is much more commonly referred to than ayas). Moreover, the 'Atharva Veda' and 'Yajur Veda' speak of different colors of 'ayas'(such as red & black), showing that it was a generic term. Hence it is clear that 'ayas' generally meant metal and not specifically iron.

Moreover, the enemies of the Vedic people in the 'Rig Veda' also use ayas, even for making their cities, as do the Vedic people themselves. Hence there is nothing in Vedic literature to show that either the Vedic culture was an iron-based culture or that their enemies were not.

The 'Rig Veda' describes its Gods as 'destroyers of cities'. This was used also to regard the Vedic as a primitive non-urban culture that destroys cities and urban civilization. However, there are also many verses in the 'Rig Veda' that speak of the Aryans as having cities of their own and being protected by cities up to a hundred in number. Aryan Gods like Indra, Agni, Saraswati and the Adityas are praised as being like a city. Many ancient kings, including those of Egypt and Mesopotamia, had titles like destroyer or conquerer of cities. This does not turn them into nomads. Destruction of cities also happens in modern wars; this does not make those who do this nomads. Hence the idea of Vedic culture as destroying but not building the cities is based upon ignoring what the Vedas actually say about their own cities.

Further excavation revealed that the Indus Valley culture was not destroyed by outside invasion, but according to internal causes and, most likely, floods. Most recently a new set of cities has been found in India (like the Dwaraka and Bet Dwaraka sites by S.R. Rao and the National Institute of Oceanography in India) which are intermediate between those of the Indus culture and later ancient India as visited by the Greeks. This may eliminate the so-called dark age following the presumed Aryan invasion and shows a continuous urban occupation in India back to the beginning of the Indus culture.

The interpretation of the religion of the Indus Valley culture - made incidentally by scholars such as Wheeler who were not religious scholars much less students of Hinduism - was that its religion was different than the Vedic and more likely the later Shaivite religion. However, further excavations - both in Indus Valley site in Gujarat, like Lothal, and those in Rajasthan, like Kalibangan - show large number of fire altars like those used in the Vedic religion, along with bones of oxen, potsherds, shell jewelry and other items used in the rituals described in the 'Vedic Brahmanas'. Hence the Indus Valley culture evidences many Vedic practices that can not be merely coincidental. That some of its practices appeared non-Vedic to its excavators may also be attributed to their misunderstanding or lack of knowledge of Vedic and Hindu culture generally, wherein Vedism and Shaivism are the same basic tradition.

We must remember that ruins do not necessarily have one interpretation. Nor does the ability to discover ruins necessarily give the ability to interpret them correctly.

The Vedic people were thought to have been a fair-skinned race like the Europeans owing to the Vedic idea of a war between light and darkness, and the Vedic people being presented as children of light or children of the sun. Yet this idea of a war between light and darkness exists in most ancient cultures, including the Persian and the Egyptian. Why don't we interpret their scriptures as a war between light and dark-skinned people? It is purely a poetic metaphor, not a cultural statement. Moreover, no real traces of such a race are found in India.

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Anthropologists have observed that the present population of Gujarat is composed of more or less the same ethnic groups as are noticed at Lothal in 2000 BC. Similarly, the present population of the Punjab is said to be ethnically the same as the population of Harappa and Rupa 4000 years ago. Linguistically the present day population of Gujarat and Punjab belongs to the Indo-Aryan language speaking group. The only inference that can be drawn from the anthropological and linguistic evidences adduced above is that the Harappan population in the Indus Valley and Gujarat in 2000 BC was composed of two or more groups, the more dominant among them having very close ethnic affinities with the present day Indo-Aryan speaking population of India.

In other words there is no racial evidence of any such Indo-Aryan invasion of India but only of a continuity of the same group of people who traditionally considered themselves to be Aryans.

There are many points in fact that prove the Vedic nature of the Indus Valley culture. Further excavation has shown that the great majority of the sites of the Indus Valley culture were east, not west of Indus. In fact, the largest concentration of sites appears in an area of Punjab and Rajasthan near the dry banks of ancient Saraswati and Drishadvati rivers. The Vedic culture was said to have been founded by the sage Manu between the banks of Saraswati and Drishadvati rivers. The Saraswati is lauded as the main river (naditama) in the 'Rig Veda' & is the most frequently mentioned in the text. It is said to be a great flood and to be wide, even endless in size. Saraswati is said to be "pure in course from the mountains to the sea". Hence the Vedic people were well acquainted with this river and regarded it as their immemorial homeland.

The Saraswati, as modern land studies now reveal, was indeed one of the largest, if not the largest river in India. In early ancient and pre-historic times, it once drained the Sutlej, Yamuna and the Ganges, whose courses were much different than they are today. However, the Saraswati river went dry at the end of the Indus Valley culture and before the so-called Aryan invasion or before 1500 BC. In fact this may have caused the ending of the Indus culture. How could the Vedic Aryans know of this river and establish their culture on its banks if it dried up before they

arrived? Indeed the Saraswati as described in the 'Rig Veda' appears to more accurately show it as it was prior to the Indus Valley culture as in the Indus era it was already in decline.

Vedic and late Vedic texts also contain interesting astronomical lore. The Vedic calendar was based upon astronomical sightings of the equinoxes and solstices. Such texts as 'Vedanga Jyotish' speak of a time when the vernal equinox was in the middle of the Nakshtra Aslesha (or about 23 degrees 20 minutes Cancer). This gives a date of 1300 BC. The 'Yajur Veda' and 'Atharva Veda' speak of the vernal equinox in the Krittikas (Pleiades; early Taurus) and the summer solstice (ayana) in Magha (early Leo). This gives a date about 2400 BC. Yet earlier eras are mentioned but these two have numerous references to substantiate them. They prove that the Vedic culture existed at these periods and already had a sophisticated system of astronomy. Such references were merely ignored or pronounced unintelligible by Western scholars because they yielded too early a date for the 'Vedas' than what they presumed, not because such references did not exist.

Vedic texts like 'Shatapatha Brahmana' and 'Aitareya Brahmana' that mention these astronomical references list a group of 11 Vedic Kings, including a number of figures of the 'Rig Veda', said to have conquered the region of India from 'sea to sea'. Lands of the Aryans are mentioned in them from Gandhara (Afghanistan) in the west to Videha (Nepal) in the east, and south to Vidarbha (Maharashtra). Hence the Vedic people were in these regions by the Krittika equinox or before 2400 BC. These passages were also ignored by Western scholars and it was said by them that the 'Vedas' had no evidence of large empires in India in Vedic times. Hence a pattern of ignoring literary evidence or misinterpreting them to suit the Aryan invasion idea became prevalent, even to the point of changing the meaning of Vedic words to suit this theory.

According to this theory, the Vedic people were nomads in the Punjab, coming down from Central Asia. However, the 'Rig Veda' itself has nearly 100 references to ocean (samudra), as well as dozens of references to ships, and to rivers flowing in to the sea. Vedic ancestors like Manu, Turvasha, Yadu and Bhujyu are flood figures, saved from across the sea. The Vedic God of the sea, Varuna, is the father of many Vedic seers and seer families like Vasishta, Agastya and the Bhrigu seers. To preserve the Aryan invasion idea it was assumed that the Vedic (and later Sanskrit) term for ocean, samudra, originally did not mean the ocean but any large body of water, especially the Indus river in Punjab. Here the clear meaning of a term in 'Rig Veda' and later times -verified by rivers like Saraswati mentioned by name as flowing into the sea - was altered to make the Aryan invasion theory fit. Yet if we look at the index to translation of the 'Rig Veda' by Griffith for example, who held to this idea that samudra didn't really mean the ocean, we find over 70 references to ocean or sea. If samudra does not mean ocean why was it translated as such? It is therefore without basis to locate Vedic kings in Central Asia far from any ocean or from the massive Saraswati river, which form the background of their land and the symbolism of their hymns.

One of the latest archeological ideas is that the Vedic culture is evidenced by Painted Grey Ware pottery in north India, which appears to date around 1000 BC and comes from the same region between the Ganges and Yamuna as later Vedic culture is related to. It is thought to be an inferior grade of pottery and to be associated with the use of iron that the 'Vedas' are thought to mention. However it is associated with a pig and rice culture, not the cow and barley culture of the 'Vedas'.



Moreover it is now found to be an organic development of indigenous pottery, not an introduction of invaders.

Painted Grey Ware culture represents an indigenous cultural development and does not reflect any cultural intrusion from the West i.e. an Indo-Aryan invasion. Therefore, there is no archeological evidence corroborating the fact of an Indo-Aryan invasion.

In addition, the Aryans in the Middle East, most notably the Hittites, have now been found to have been in that region atleast as early as 2200 BC, wherein they are already mentioned. Hence the idea of an Aryan invasion into the Middle East has been pushed back some centuries, though the evidence so far is that the people of the mountain regions of the Middle East were Indo-Europeans as far as recorded history can prove.

The Aryan Kassites of the ancient Middle East worshipped Vedic Gods like Surya and the Maruts, as well as one named Himalaya. The Aryan Hittites and Mittani signed a treaty with the name of the Vedic Gods Indra, Mitra, Varuna and Nasatyas around 1400 BC. The Hittites have a treatise on chariot racing written in almost pure Sanskrit. The Indo - Europeans of the ancient Middle East thus spoke Indo-Aryan, not Indo-Iranian languages and thereby show a Vedic culture in that region of the world as well.

The Indus Valley culture had a form of writing, as evidenced by numerous seals found in the ruins. It was also assumed to be non-Vedic and probably Dravidian, though this was never proved. Now it has been shown that the majority of the late Indus signs are identical with those of later Hindu Brahmi and that there is an organic development between the two scripts. Prevalent models now suggest an Indo-European base for that language.

It was also assumed that the Indus Valley culture derived its civilization from the Middle East, probably Sumeria, as antecedents for it were not found in India. Recent French excavations at Mehrgarh have shown that all the antecedents of the Indus Valley culture can be found within the subcontinent and going back before 6000 BC.

In short, some Western scholars are beginning to reject the Aryan invasion or any outside origin for Hindu civilization.

Current archeological data do not support the existence of an Indo- Aryan or European invasion into South Asia at any time in the pre- or protohistoric periods. Instead, it is possible to document archeologically a series of cultural changes reflecting indigenous cultural development from prehistoric to historic periods. The early Vedic literature describes not a human invasion into the area, but a fundamental restructuring of indigenous society. The Indo-Aryan invasion as an academic concept in 18th and 19th century Europe reflected the cultural milieu of the period. Linguistic data were used to validate the concept that in turn was used to interpret archeological and anthropological data.

In other words, Vedic literature was interpreted on the assumption that there was an Aryan invasion. Then archeological evidence was interpreted by the same assumption. And both



interpretations were then used to justify each other. It is nothing but a tautology, an exercise in circular thinking that only proves that if assuming something is true, it is found to be true!

Another modern Western scholar, Colin Renfrew, places the Indo-Europeans in Greece as early as 6000 BC. He also suggests such a possible early date for their entry into India.

As far as I can see there is nothing in the Hymns of the 'Rig Veda' which demonstrates that the Vedic-speaking population was intrusive to the area: this comes rather from a historical assumption of the 'coming of the Indo-Europeans.

When Wheeler speaks of 'the Aryan invasion of the land of the 7 rivers, the Punjab', he has no warranty at all, so far as I can see. If one checks the dozen references in the 'Rig Veda' to the 7 rivers, there is nothing in them that to me implies invasion: the land of the 7 rivers is the land of the 'Rig Veda', the scene of action. Nor is it implied that the inhabitants of the walled cities (including the Dasyus) were any more aboriginal than the Aryans themselves.

Despite Wheeler's comments, it is difficult to see what is particularly non-Aryan about the Indus Valley civilization. Hence Renfrew suggests that the Indus Valley civilization was in fact Indo-Aryan even prior to the Indus Valley era:

This hypothesis that early Indo-European languages were spoken in North India with Pakistan and on the Iranian plateau at the 6th millennium BC has the merit of harmonizing symmetrically with the theory for the origin of the Indo-European languages in Europe. It also emphasizes the continuity in the Indus Valley and adjacent areas from the early neolithic through to the flourish of the Indus Valley civilization.

This is not to say that such scholars appreciate or understand the 'Vedas' - their work leaves much to be desired in this respect - but that it is clear that the whole edifice built around the Aryan invasion is beginning to tumble on all sides. In addition, it does not mean that the 'Rig Veda' dates from the Indus Valley era. The Indus Valley culture resembles that of the 'Yajur Veda' and the reflect the pre-Indus period in India, when the Saraswati river was more prominent.

The acceptance of such views would create a revolution in our view of history as shattering as that in science caused by Einstein's theory of relativity. It would make ancient India perhaps the oldest, largest and most central of ancient cultures. It would mean that the Vedic literary record - already the largest and oldest of the ancient world even at a 1500 BC date - would be the record of teachings some centuries or thousands of years before that. It would mean that the 'Vedas' are our most authentic record of the ancient world. It would also tend to validate the Vedic view that the Indo-Europeans and other Aryan peoples were migrants from India, not that the Indo-Aryans were invaders into India. Moreover, it would affirm the Hindu tradition that the Dravidians were early offshoots of the Vedic people through the seer Agastya, and not unarian peoples.

In closing, it is important to examine the social and political implications of the Aryan invasion idea:

First, it served to divide India into a northern Aryan and southern Dravidian culture which were made hostile to each other. This kept the Hindus divided and is still a source of social tension.

Second, it gave the British an excuse in their conquest of India. They could claim to be doing only what the Aryan ancestors of the Hindus had previously done millennia ago.

Third, it served to make Vedic culture later than and possibly derived from Middle Eastern cultures. With the proximity and relationship of the latter with the Bible and Christianity, this kept the Hindu religion as a sidelight to the development of religion and civilization to the West.

Fourth, it allowed the sciences of India to be given a Greek basis, as any Vedic basis was largely disqualified by the primitive nature of the Vedic culture.

This discredited not only the 'Vedas' but the genealogies of the 'Puranas' and their long list of the kings before the Buddha or Krishna were left without any historical basis. The 'Mahabharata', instead of a civil war in which all the main kings of India participated as it is described, became a local skirmish among petty princes that was later exaggerated by poets. In short, it discredited the most of the Hindu tradition and almost all its ancient literature. It turned its scriptures and sages into fantasies and exaggerations.

This served a social, political and economical purpose of domination, proving the superiority of Western culture and religion. It made the Hindus feel that their culture was not the great thing that their sages and ancestors had said it was. It made Hindus feel ashamed of their culture - that its basis was neither historical nor scientific. It made them feel that the main line of civilization was developed first in the Middle East and then in Europe and that the culture of India was peripheral and secondary to the real development of world culture.

Such a view is not good scholarship or archeology but merely cultural imperialism. The Western Vedic scholars did in the intellectual sphere what the British army did in the political realm - discredit, divide and conquer the Hindus.

In short, the compelling reasons for the Aryan invasion theory were neither literary nor archeological but political and religious - that is to say, not scholarship but prejudice. Such prejudice may not have been intentional but deep-seated political and religious views easily cloud and blur our thinking.

It is unfortunate that this this approach has not been questioned more, particularly by Hindus. Even though Indian Vedic scholars like Dayananda Saraswati, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Aurobindo rejected it, most Hindus today passively accept it. They allow Western, generally Christian, scholars to interpret their history for them and quite naturally Hinduism is kept in a reduced role. Many Hindus still accept, read or even honor the translations of the 'Vedas' done by such Christian missionary scholars as Max Muller, Griffith, Monier-Williams and H. H. Wilson. Would modern Christians accept an interpretation of the Bible or Biblical history done by Hindus aimed at converting them to Hinduism? Universities in India also use the Western history books and Western Vedic translations that propound such views that denigrate their own culture and country.

The modern Western academic world is sensitive to criticisms of cultural and social biases. For scholars to take a stand against this biased interpretation of the 'Vedas' would indeed cause a reexamination of many of these historical ideas that can not stand objective scrutiny. But if Hindu scholars are silent or passively accept the misinterpretation of their own culture, it will undoubtedly continue, but they will have no one to blame but themselves. It is not an issue to be taken lightly, because how a culture is defined historically creates the perspective from which it is viewed in the modern social and intellectual context. Tolerance is not in allowing a false view of one's own culture and religion to be propagated without question. That is merely self-betrayal.

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David Frawley

David Frawley is one of the few Westerners ever recognized in India as a Vedacharya or teacher of the ancient wisdom. In 1991 under the auspices of the great Indian teacher, Avadhuta Shastri, he was named Vamadeva Shastri, after the great Vedic Rishi Vamadeva. In 1995 he was given the title of Pandit along with the Brahmachari Vishwanathji award in Mumbai for his direct knowledge of the Vedic teaching. He has received many other awards and honors for his work. Vamadeva works with different aspects of Vedic knowledge on which subjects he has written fifteen books and many articles over the last twenty years. In India his translations and interpretations of the ancient Vedic teachings have been given the highest acclaim in both spiritual and scholarly circles. Dr. Frawley is also a teacher and practitioner of Ayurvedic medicine and Vedic astrology (Jyotish) and has done pioneering work on both these subjects.

## 16. Rewriting Indian history by Francois Gautier

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## CHAPTER 1) THE TAINTED GLASS: A LOOK AT WESTERN CIVILISATION TO UNDERSTAND THE VISION WE HAVE OF INDIA TODAY

A civilisation is like the human soul: it has a childhood, where it struggles to learn; an adolescence where it discovers - sometimes painfully - the hard facts of life; an adulthood, where it enjoys the fruits of maturity; and an old age, which slowly leads to death and oblivion. In this manner, since the dawn of human history, civilisations have risen, reached the top where they gravitate for some time, achieving their enduring excellence -and then slowly began their descent towards extinction. Usually, old age for these civilisations meant that they fell prey to barbarians, because they had lost the vitality and the inner obedience to their particular genius, which they had possessed at the time of their peak and which had protected them. This has been a natural process and barbarians have played an important role in the evolution of humanity, for they made sure, in the most ruthless manner, that civilisations did not stagnate; because like a human being, a civilisation must die many times before it realises the fullness of its soul and attains divine perfection. There have been many such great civilisations which rose and fell throughout the ages: Mesopotamia, Egypt, India, Africa, China, Greece, or Rome. Human nature being what it is, most of these civilisations established their might by military conquest and thus imposed their order and their views upon others, a process which some have called civilisation, others colonisation.

The advent of Jesus Christ heralded the rise of the European-Western civilisation, whose forerunners were the Greek and Roman cultures. For long, Europe was only a disunited lot of barbarian tribes fighting each other. The Crusades signalled the earliest attempt at unity, although the French and the British, for instance, kept warring each other long after them. Some of these nations were great seafarers. Thus Spain and Portugal for instance, reached out to the far world and colonised huge chunks of territories in the Americas from the 14th century onwards. But it can be safely said that with the industrial revolution, European civilisation started reaching its maturity at the beginning of the 19th century and that a great civilisation, whose genius was consciousness in the material, developed henceforth. Simultaneously, of course, as all other civilisations had done before, Europe started expanding outwards and imposed its own civilisation on other cultures, which had lost their vitality and were open to conquest. England, particularly, because it mastered the seas, went farther, faster and acquired more territories than other European nations, such as France, who often had to settle for the crumbs. And certainly, Great Britain's prize possession, the jewel in its colonies, must have been India, whose mighty borders extended then from Afghanistan to Cape Comorin.

Western civilisation must be intimately associated with Christianity, even though Christianity took different forms over the ages : Protestantism, Lutheranism, Russian Orthodoxy... According to the Hindus, Jesus Christ was an "avatar", a direct emanation from God. Christ was surely a great avatar of love (\*).And Christianity certainly had a softening influence on the Western world, where, let's face it, barbarism was the order of the day for many centuries. In the Middle Ages for instance, Christianity was the only island of sanity in a world of rape, black plague, murders and chaos; and as the Brahmins did in India, it was the Christians who preserved the oral and written word for posterity. There have been many great saints in Christianity, men of wisdom, who strove for divine vision in austerity. Such were Saint François of Assisi's, who reached high spiritual experience. Saint Vincent de Paul, who practised true Christian charity. Or

Saint Gregory, who attained authentic knowledge. Unfortunately, Christianity, got somehow politicised and fossilised under the influence of corrupt popes and has often become a magma of dogmas, rites, do's and don't.

Generally, because all Christians believed - like the Muslims - that only their God was the true one, The Christian colons sought to impose upon the people they conquered their own brand of religion - and they used the military authority of their armies to do so. It is true that this was done in good faith, that the " soldiers of Christ " thought that the civilisations they stumbled upon were barbarous, pagan and incomprehensible. True also that they sincerely believed that they brought upon these " savages " the virtues of western civilisation: medicine, education and spiritual salvation. But the harm done by Christian missionaries all over the earth will never be properly assessed. In South America, the Spanish soldiers and priests annihilated, in the name of Jesus, an entire civilisation, one of the brightest ever, that of the Incas and the Aztecs. Everywhere the Christians went, they stamped mercilessly on cultures, eradicated centuries old ways of life, to replace them with totally inadequate systems, crude, Victorian, moralistic, which slowly killed the spontaneity of life of the people they conquered. They were thus able to radically alter civilisations, change their patterns of thinking. And three generations later the children of those who had been conquered, had forgotten their roots, adapted Christianity and often looked upon their conquerors as their benefactors. Yet a few years ago, the West was able to celebrate the anniversary of Columbus, discoverer of the "New World" with fanfare and pomp. But the New World was already quite old when it was discovered by the young Barbarians, much older in fact than the fledgling Western civilisation. And Columbus, however courageous and adventurous, was a ruthless man, whose discovery of the New World triggered an unparalleled rape in human history.

Yet, not only the West still deifies Columbus, but no one in the Third World has been capable to challenge coherently that undeserved status. The truth is that today, not only in the Western world, but also in the entire so-called developing world, we are constantly looking at things and events through a prism that has been fashioned by centuries of western thinking. and as long as we do not get rid of that tainted glass we will not understand rightly the world in general and India in particular. For the stamp of Western civilisation will still take some time to be eradicated. By military conquest or moral assertiveness, the West imposed upon the world its ways of thinking; and it created enduring patterns, subtle disinformations and immutable grooves, which play like a record that goes on turning, long after its owner has attained the age of decline. The barbarians who thought they had become " civilized ", are being devoured by other barbarians. But today, the economic might has replaced the military killing machine.

#### THE FIST DISINFORMATION ON INDIA: ARYANS VS DRAVIDIANS

When the early Christian missionaries arrived in India, they found it very hard to convert Hindus. Not only Hinduism had a broad, well-structured base, but it was also so multi-facet that it accepted in its fold creeds which sometimes ran contrary to its mainstream philosophy. How do you go about converting a religion which says that God takes as many shapes to manifest Himself as there are forms on this earth? The missionaries could not, as the Muslims had done, convert under threat of death; and they quickly realised the hopelessness of their task and soon turned towards more fertile ground: the Tribals and the Dalits. By financial incentive (and also



by immense good work, because the unflagging spirit of missionaries can never be denied, particularly in the field of health and education -but is it not another clever way to attract innocent souls in its fold ?) and patience, the missionaries managed to make important inroads, specially in the border states of East India, Goa and Kerala. This they achieved in great part by pitting the downtrodden tribals and Harijans against the "arrogant" Brahmins and Kshatryas. But there was a flaw in their policy: all belonged to the same Hindu fold and -even when converted- recognised its laws, particularly the reincarnation theory, which could make them Harijans in this life and Brahmins in the next. (Even today, this is visible in Velangani for instance, the "miraculous " Mecca of all Indian Christians, which practises, to the irritation of the priests, a blend of Hinduism and Christianity) So the missionaries, and particularly the Jesuits, who are great dialecticians, took-up a new historical theory which had already been floated around by a few western historians. "Once upon a time, they said, there was a great civilisation called Bharat, or Hindustan, where lived good-natured, peaceful, dark-skinned shepherds, called the Dravidians, adoring good natured pre-Vedic gods, such as Shiva. They had a remarkable civilisation going, witness the city of Mohenjo-Daro in Pakistani Sind, were educated, democratic and possessed a highly refined culture. But around 2000 B.C., they continued, the villains entered the scene: fair-skinned, ruthless and barbaric, nomadic Aryan tribes, adoring the haughty Indra, originating from somewhere in the Caucasus. These bad people colonised the entire peninsula and to forever mark their social boundaries, they devised the caste system, whereby they the priests and princes, ruled over the merchants and labourers"...And to drive the wedge even deeper, the Jesuits added: "but you the aborigines, the tribals, were there in India, before the Aryans, even before the Dravidians. You are the original inhabitants of India, you are the true Indians"... Thus was born the great Aryan invasion theory, of two civilisations, that of the low caste Dravidians and the high caste Brahmins and Kshatryas, always pitted against each other, which has endured till today and has been used by all Western historians, and unfortunately by most Indian text-books too.

Sounds preposterous? Simplistic? Impossible ? Yet this theory not only helped the missionaries to play the Untouchables against the hated Brahmins, who let it be said, managed single-handedly to preserve orally Hindu culture and religion for five millenniums, it also suited the British, who found it an ideal channel to push forward their divide and rule policies. It served also well the Muslim invaders, who used it to convert Harijans (and they still capitalise on that theory today). It even suited Nazi racism with its theory of Aryan supremacy, even though they only borrowed the inverted Aryan cross from India and did not even take pains to read Hindu philosophy, which is one of the least racists and most tolerant creeds in the world.

Of all the Western historians who wrote historical treatises on India, Alain Danielou from France, is probably one of the most enlightened. Danielou had a great love for Hindu culture, which he felt is the backbone of Indian history and people - and we shall later quote extensively from his " Histoire de l'Inde ", which shows a real insight in post-vedic Indian history. Yet Danielou errs like other historians when dealing with the Aryan invasion theory and enters in the same historical controversy: he attributes Vedic religion to the "Aryans", who he says, originated from Turkestan and the plains of Russia. " These original Aryans he remarks, first migrated to Iran and then moved on towards India, through Afghanistan and Pakistan, from 2800 BC onwards. They were intellectually and materially backwards and had no great artistic culture to boast-off. " And Danielou adds: 'the disaster that represents the aryan colonisation of India can be compared to



the conquest of the Incas by the fanatical and illiterate Spanish adventurers and like in South America, the entire dravidian population was reduced to the status of slaves " .

Yet, a few voices have been raised against the Aryan theory, which let us emphasise, has no archaeological evidence: nowhere has there been found traces of a struggle between the Dravidians and the Aryans - and an immense clash is bound to have happened. Contrary to Danielou, the Dutch sociologist Konrad Elst, for instance, holds the theory that it is possible "that the Aryans were originally from North India and the Dravidians from the South, kept in a separate mould by the great Deccan plateau, which seems to have also sheltered the South from later Muslim invasions (Indigenous Indians, page 25)." Evidence for the view that Vedic culture and Harappan (Dravidian) culture were instances of one and the same civilisation, he declares, has been accumulating, while on the other hand, the traditional arguments for the Aryan invasion theory have been discarded after close scrutiny. In fact, Mr Elst's great theory, which he calls "Urheimat", goes exactly opposite from Danielou's: Aryans were originally in India, Elst claims and they migrated outwards, to Iran for instance, where Zoroastrian religion and culture was a watered down version of Vedic religion and Sanskrit culture; then to Turkestan, and hence to Europe: "To the South, not to the East; rather than Indo-Iranians on their way from South Russia to Iran and partly to India, these may as well be the Hitites, Kassites or Mitanni, on their way FROM INDIA, via the Aral Lake area, to Anatolia, or Mesopotamia, where they show up in subsequent centuries".

Sri Aurobindo, too, India's greatest yogi, poet, philosopher- and surely its most ardent revolutionary- spoke against the Aryan theory: "We shall question many established philological myths,-the legend for instance of an Aryan invasion from the North, the artificial and inimical distinction of the Aryan and Dravidian which an erroneous philology has driven like a wedge into the unity of the homogeneous Indo-Afghan race... Like the majority of educated Indians, I has passively accepted without examination, the conclusion of European scholarship"(India's Rebirth, page 103)... Sri Aurobindo recalls that during his first stay in South India, he realised that although the racial division between Northern Aryan and Southern Dravidians is presumed to rest on a supposed difference between the physical types of Aryan and Dravidians and a more definite incompatibility between the Northern Sanskritic and the southern non-sanskritic tongues, he was impressed by the general recurrence of northern or "Aryan" type in the Tamil race: "Wherever I turned, I seemed to recognise with a startling distinctness, not only among Brahmins but in all castes and classes, the old familiar faces, features, figures of my friends in Maharashtra, Gujerat, Hindustan, even though the familiarity was less widespread, of my own province Bengal. The impression I received was as if an army of all the tribes of the North had descended on the South and submerged any previous population that may have occupied it". (India's Rebirth 104). Sri Aurobindo also wonders if the so-called Aryan invasions were but incursions of small bands of a less civilised race who melted away in the original population. " How is it possible, he questions, that a handful of barbarians, entering a vast peninsula occupied by a civilised people, builders of great cities, extensive traders, not without mental and spiritual culture, could impose on them their own language, religion, ideas and manners ". Such a miracle, he maintains, would be just possible if the invaders possessed a very highly organised language, a greater force of creative mind and a more dynamic religious form and spirit. Lastly, he also shatters the myth of the difference of language to support the theory of meeting of races: "But here also my preconceived ideas were disturbed and confounded. For on examining the

vocabulary of the Tamil language, in appearance so foreign to the Sanskrit form and character, I yet found myself continuously guided by words, or families of words supposed to be pure Tamil, in establishing new relations between Sanskrit and its distant sister, Latin, and occasionally between the Greek and the Sanskrit. Sometimes the Tamil vocable not only suggested the connection but proved the missing link in a family of connected words. And it was through this Dravidian language that I came first to perceive what seems to me now the true law, origins and, as it were, the embryology of the Aryan tongues...The possibility suggests itself that they may even have been two diversions, or families derived from one lost primitive tongue".(India's 104)

Recently, the decipherment of the Harappan script by Dr Jha, a scholar of West Bengal, has shown that this script is not proto-dravidian, as most linguists thought, but Sanskrit-related. Which means in effect that there never was any Aryan invasion, which "destroyed" the dravidian cities of Mohenjo-Daro or Harappa. It shows on the contrary that the Aryan influence went from East to West: from India to Iran; from Iran to Greece; from Greece to Europe, where it moulded its philosophy and culture.

Here goes Mr Basham's pet theory of an Aryan invasion, which constitutes the first piece of disinformation on India. But when will the world realise the wrongness of their historical theories on the beginnings of Indian civilisation? History would have then to be rewritten and the consequences of this new theory applied not only to Asia, but also to the entire history of the whole world. For if Vedic civilisation is indeed at least 8000 years old, (some, as the mathematician N.S. Rajaram say 10.000 year old), if it is a unified culture, then it means that it not only influenced other civilisations in the neighbourhood, Iran, or even the Gulf, in pre-Muslim times, but also indirectly the whole planet, witness the slow migration of some Aryan tribe towards Europe, of which the wandering Gypsies emerging in Eastern Europe by the 14th century, may have been the descendants.

(\*) There is some indication that Christ came to India for spiritual initiation and borrowed from Buddhism for his teachings. According to Alain Danielou, the French historian who wrote "Histoire de l'Inde", Many sects which developed in the first century before Christ in Palestine, had a strong Hindu and Buddhist influence and a great number of legends surrounding the birth of Jesus Christ, are strangely similar to Buddhist and Krishnaites stories. He adds that the structures of the church resembles those of Chaitya Buddhism and that the early Christian asceticism seems to have been inspired by Jainism "

## CHAPTER 2) THE SECOND DISINFORMATION: THE VEDAS

The second piece of disinformation concerns the Vedic religion. Ah, the Vedas! So much misconception, so many prejudices, so much distortion have been spewed about this monument of a book, this unparalleled epic. Danielou for instance, maintains that the original Vedas "were an oral Dravidian tradition, which was reshaped by the Aryans and later put down in Sanskrit". According to Danielou, the Mahabarata is the story of how the low caste Dravidians = the Pandavas, revolted against the high caste Aryans =the Kauravas, who had enslaved them during their conquest - and won, helped by the dark-skinned Krishna, a Dravidian of course. Danielou finds lineage between the Vedic religion and the Persian religion (Zarathustra), as well as the Greek Gods; the problem is that he seems to imply that the Vedic religion may have sprung from the Zoroastrian creed! He also puts down all Vedic symbols as purely physical signs: for instance

Agni is the fire that should always burn in the house's altar. Finally, he sees in the Rig-Veda "only a remarkable document on the mode of life, society and history of the Aryans". (Histoire de l'Inde, page 62)

But Danielou must be the mildest of all critics. The real disinformation started again with the missionaries, who saw in the Vedas "the root of the evil", the source of paganism and went systematically about belittling it. The Jesuits, in their dialectical cleverness, brought it down to a set of pagan offerings without great importance. Henceforth, this theory was perpetuated by most Western historians, who not only stripped the Vedas of any spiritual value, but actually post-dated them to approximately 1500 to 1000 years B.C. It is very unfortunate that these theories have been taken-up blindly and without trying to ascertain their truth, by many Indian historians and sociologists such as Romila Tharpar. And even when more enlightened foreigners like Max Mueller, whose Sanskrit scholarship cannot be denied, took up the Vedas, they only saw "that it is full of childish, silly, even monstrous conceptions, that it is tedious, low, commonplace, that it represents human nature on a low level of selfishness and worldliness and that only here and there are a few rare sentiments that come from the depths of the soul" (Foundations of Indian Culture. 262)

If there ever was one who disagreed with the Western view, be it of Danielou, or Max Mueller on the Vedas, it was Sri Aurobindo : "I seek not science, not religion, not Theosophy, but Veda -the truth about Brahman, not only about His essentiality, but also about His manifestation, not a lamp on the way to the forest, but a light and a guide to joy and action in the world, the truth which is beyond opinion, the knowledge which all thought strives after -'yasmin vijñate sarvam vijñatam' (which being known, all is known). I believe that Veda be the foundation of the Sanatan Dharma; I believe it to be the concealed divinity within Hinduism, -but a veil has to be drawn aside, a curtain has to be lifted. I believe it to be knowable and discoverable. I believe the future of India and the world depends on its discovery and on its application, not to the renunciation of life, but to life in the world and among men". (India's Rebirth, page 90) Sri Aurobindo contended that Europeans have seen in the Vedas "only the rude chants of an antique and pastoral race sung in honor of the forces of nature and succeeded in imposing them on the Indian intellect". But he insisted that a time must come "when the Indian mind will shake off the darkness that has fallen upon it, cease to think or hold opinions at second and third hand and reassert its right to judge and enquire in perfect freedom into the meaning of its own scriptures". He argued that the Veda remains the foundation of Indian culture: "the Veda was the beginning of our spiritual knowledge, the Veda will remain its end. The recovery of the perfect truth of the Veda is therefore not merely a desideratum for our modern intellectual curiosity, but a practical necessity for the future of the human race. For I firmly believe that the secret concealed in the Veda, when entirely discovered, will be found to formulate perfectly that knowledge and practice of divine life to which the march of humanity, after long wanderings in the satisfaction of the intellect and senses, must inevitably return." (India's rebirth, 94)

What is the Secret of the Vedas? First we have to discard the ridiculously early dates given by historians and bring it back to at least 4000 BC. Why did historians show such an eagerness in post-dating the Vedas and making of them just a mumble-jumble of pagan superstition? Because it would have destroyed the West's idea of its own supremacy: primitive barbarism could not possibly have risen to such high conceptions so early, particularly when the Westerners have

started our era after the birth of Christ and decreed that the world began on 23rd October 4004 B.C...! Secondly, the Vedic seers, who had attained the ultimate truth, had clothed their oral findings in symbols and images, so that only the initiated would understand the true meaning of their aphorisms. For the more ordinary souls, "those who were not yet twice born", it meant only an outer worship which was fit for their level of spiritual evolution. The Vedic rituals, has lost its profound meaning to us. Therefore, as Sri Aurobindo elucidates, when we read: "Sarama by the path of the Truth discovers the herds", the mind is stopped and baffled by an unfamiliar language. It has to be translated to us.. into a plainer and less figured thought: "Intuitions by the way of Truth arrive at the hidden illuminations". (India's rebirth, 109) Lacking the clues, we only see in the Vedas a series of meaningless mouthings about the herds or the Sun. Sri Aurobindo remarks that the Vedic rishis "may not have yoked the lightning to their chariots, nor weighed sun and star, nor materialized all the destructive forces of Nature to aid them in massacre and domination, but they had measured and fathomed all the heavens and earth within us, they had cast their plummet into the inconscient and the subconscious and the supraconscient; 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". (India's rebirth, 116)

Ah, these are the two secrets of the Vedas, then, the reason why they have remained so obscure and lost their original meaning. Firstly, the Vedic rishis had realized that God is One, but He takes many faces in His manifestation; this is the very foundation of Hinduism. And Secondly, the Vedic rishis had gone down in their minds and their bodies all the way to the roots of Death, to that eternal question which haunts humanity since the beginning of times: why death? What is the purpose of living if one has always to die? Why the inevitable decay and oblivion? And there, in their own bodies, at the bottom rock of the Inconscient, they had discovered the secret of immortality, which Sri Aurobindo called later the Supramental and which he said was the next step in humanity's evolution... "Not some mysterious elixir of youth, but the point, the spring where All is One and death disappears in the face of the Supreme Knowledge and Ananda." (India's rebirth, 95) Is this then the work of a few uncivilized sheperds, who had colonized the poor Dravidians? No wonder the West cannot recognize the Vedas for what they are, the whole foundation of their moral domination would then collapse. All the subsequent scriptures of Hinduism derive from the Vedas, even though some of them lost sight of the original Vedic sense. The Vedas are the foundations of Indian culture; the greatest power of the Vedic teaching, that which made it the source of all later Indian philosophies, religions, systems of yoga, lay in its application to the inner life of man. Man lives in the physical cosmos, subject to death and the falsehood of mortal existence. To rise beyond death, to become one of the immortals, he has to turn from the falsehood to the Truth; he has to turn onto the Light, to battle with and conquer the powers of Darkness. This he does by communion with the Divine Powers and their aid; the way to call down these aids was the secret of the vedic mystics. "The symbols of the outer sacrifice are given for this purpose in the manner of the Mysteries all over the world an inner meaning; they represent a calling of the Gods into the human being, a connecting sacrifice, an intimate interchange, a mutual aid, a communion".(Foundations of Indian Culture. p 145). Sri Aurobindo also emphasizes that the work that was done in this period became the firm bedrock of India's spirituality in later ages and from it "gush still the life-giving waters of perennial never failing inspiration".

## THE THIRD DISINFORMATION: THE CASTE SYSTEM

Even more than the Aryans-Dravidians divide and the Vedas, the caste system has been the most misunderstood, the most vilified subject of Hindu society at the hands of Western scholars and even today by "secular" Indians. But ultimately if one wants to understand the truth, the original purpose behind the caste system, one must go back to the Vedas. "Caste was originally an arrangement for the distribution of functions in society, just as much as class in Europe, but the principle on which this distribution was based was peculiar to India. A Brahmin was a Brahmin not by mere birth, but because he discharged the duty of preserving the spiritual and intellectual elevation of the race, and he had to cultivate the spiritual temperament and acquire the spiritual training which alone would qualify him for the task. The Kshatryia was Kshatryia not merely because he was the son of warriors and princes, but because he discharged the duty of protecting the country and preserving the high courage and manhood of action, and he had to cultivate the princely temperament and acquire the strong and lofty Samurai training which alone fitted him for his duties. So it was for the Vaishya whose function was to amass wealth for the race and the Shudra who discharged the humbler duties of service without which the other castes could not perform their share of labour for the common, good". (Sri Aurobindo, in India's Rebirth, p 26). Many Indian sages have even gone even further than Sri Aurobindo, arguing that in the occult relation India had with the Universal Force, each one was born in the caste CORRESPONDING to his or her spiritual evolution. There are accidents, misfits, errors, they say, but the system seems to have worked pretty well until modern times when it got perverted by the vagaries of materialism and western influence. Can one accept such a theory? Sri Aurobindo, while praising the original caste system, does not spare it in its later stages: "it is the nature of human institutions to degenerate; there is no doubt that the institution of caste degenerated. It ceased to be determined by spiritual qualifications which, once essential, have now come to be subordinate and even immaterial and is determined by the purely material tests of occupation and birth... By this change it has set itself against the fundamental tendency of Hinduism which is to insist on the spiritual and subordinate the material and thus lost most of its meaning. the spirit of caste arrogance, exclusiveness and superiority came to dominate it instead of the spirit of duty, and the change weakened the nation and helped to reduce us to our present condition...(India's Rebirth, p 27). And the Barbarians came !

But finally, have the people who dismiss caste as an Aryan imposition on the Dravidians, or as an inhuman and nazi system, ever attempted to understand its original purpose and genius? Is it really worse than the huge class differences you can see nowadays in Europe ? And can you really exclude it today off-hand, when it still survives so much in the villages - and even in more educated circles, where one still marries in matching castes, with the help of an astrologer? Does the caste system need to be transformed, to recapture its old meaning and once more incarnate a spiritual hierarchy of beings? Or has it to be recast in a different mould, taking into account the parameters of modern Indian society? Or else, will it finally disappear altogether from India, because it has become totally irrelevant today ? At any rate, Hindus should not allow it to be exploited shamelessly against them, as it has been in the last two centuries, by missionaries, "secular" historians, Muslims, and by pre and post-independence Indian politicians -each for their own purpose. Thus, once these three disinformations, that of the Aryans, the Vedas and the caste system, have been set right, one can begin to understand in its proper perspective the Wonder that WAS India.



### Chapter 3: The Wonder that " was " India

As A.L. Basham did, most Europeans have often seen at best in India an exalted civilisation of " religious " and artistic achievements. But India's greatness encompassed ALL aspects of life, from the highest to the most material, from the most mundane to the supremely spiritualised. As Sri Aurobindo emphasises: "The tendency of the West is to live from below upward and from out inward... The inner existence is thus formed and governed by external powers. India's constant aim has been on the contrary, to find a basis of living in the higher spiritual truth and to live from the inner spirit outwards". (India's Rebirth, 109) The old Vedic seers said the same thing in a different form: "their divine foundation was above even while they stood below. Let its rays be settled deep within us."

The foundations of the Indian society were thus unique, because all the aspects of life were turned towards the spiritual. The original social system was divided in four "varnas", or four castes, which corresponded to each one's inner capacities. In turn the life of a man was separated in four ashramas. That of the student, the householder, the recluse and the yogi. The elders taught the student that "the true aim of life is to find your soul". The teaching was always on the guru-chelas principle, and the teacher being considered as a representative of God, he got profound respect and obedience from his pupils. Everything was taught to the students: art, literature, polity, the science of war, the development of the body -all this far away from the cities, in an environment of nature, conducive to inner growth, which was ecological, long before it became imperative and fashionable.

Indian society of that time was neither dry nor ascetic: it satisfied the urges, desires and needs of its ordinary people, particularly of the husband and wife -the beauty and comfort of Mohenjo-Daro is testimony to that fact. It taught them that perfection could be attained in all spheres of life, even in the art of physical love, where Indians excelled, as vouched so powerfully and artistically by Khajurao and the Kama-sutra.

And when man had satisfied his external being, when he had paid his debt to society and grown into wisdom, it was time to discover the spirit and roam the width and breadth of India, which at that period was covered by forests. In time he would become a yogi, young disciples would gather around him and he would begin imparting all the knowledge, worldly and inner, gathered in a lifetime -and the cycle would thus start again. That the great majority did not go beyond the first two stages is no matter; this is the very reason why Indian society provided the system of castes, so that each one fitted in the mould his inner development warranted. "It is on this firm and noble basis that Indian civilisation grew to maturity and became rich and splendid and unique, writes Sri Aurobindo. It lived with a noble, ample and vigorous order and freedom; it developed a great literature, sciences, arts, crafts, industries; it rose to the highest possible ideals of knowledge and culture, of arduous greatness and heroism, of kindness, philanthropy and human sympathy and oneness. It laid the inspired basis of wonderful spiritual philosophies; it examined the secret of external nature and discovered and lived the boundless and miraculous truths of the inner being; it fathomed self and understood and possessed the world"... (Foundations of Indian Culture, p.116-117) How far we are from A.L. Basham's vision of a militant Hinduism and evil Aryans, however brilliant the social and artistic civilisation he describes! For not only did the Hindus (not the Indians, but the Hindus), demonstrate their

greatness in all fields of life, social, artistic, spiritual, but they had also developed a wonderful political system.

#### a) The genius of Indian politics

Another of these great prejudices with which Indians had to battle for centuries, is that whatever the spiritual, cultural, artistic, even social greatness of India, it always was disunited, except under Ashoka and some of the Mughal emperors -just a bunch of barbarian rulers, constantly fighting themselves -and that it was thanks to the Mughals and the British, that India was finally politically united. This is doing again a grave injustice to India. The Vedic sages had devised a monarchical system, whereby the king was at the top, but could be constitutionally challenged. In fact, it even allowed for men's inclination to war, but made sure that it never went beyond a certain stage, for only professional armies fought and the majority of the population remained untouched. Indeed, at no time in ancient India, were there great fratricidal wars, like those between the British and the French, or even the Protestants and the Catholics within France itself. Moreover, the system allowed for a great federalism: for instance, a long time after the Vedic fathers, the real power lay in the village panchayats. Sri Aurobindo refutes the charge (which Basham levels), that India has always shown an incompetence for any free and sound political organisation and has been constantly a divided nation. " There always was a strong democratic element in pre-Muslim India, which certainly showed a certain similarity with Western parliamentary forms, but these institutions were INDIAN ". The early Indian system was that of the clan, or tribal system, founded upon the equality of all members of the tribe. In the same way, the village community had its own assembly, the "visah", with only the king above this democratic body. The priests, who acted as the sacrifice makers and were poets, occultists and yogis, had no other occupation in life and their positions were thus not hereditary but depended on their inner abilities. And it was the same thing with warriors, merchants, or lower class people. "Even when these classes became hereditary, remarks Sri Aurobindo, from the king downwards to the Shudra, the predominance, say of the Brahmins, did not result in a theocracy, because the Brahmins in spite of their ever-increasing and finally predominant authority, did not and could not usurp in India the political power". (Foundations of Indian Culture p. 326). The Rishi had a peculiar place, he was the sage, born from any caste, who was often counsellor to the King, of whom he was also the religious preceptor.

Later it seems that it was the Republican form of government which took over many parts of India. In some cases these "Republics" appear to have been governed by a democratic assembly and some came out of a revolution; in other cases, they seem to have had an oligarchic senate. But they enjoyed throughout India a solid reputation for the excellence of their civil administration and the redoubtable efficiency of their armies. It is to be noted that these Indian Republics existed long before the Greek ones, although the world credits the Greeks with having created democracy; but as usual History is recorded through the prism of the Western world and is very selective indeed. One should also add that none of these Indian republics developed an aggressive colonising spirit and that they were content to defend themselves and forge alliances amongst them. But after the invasion of Alexander's armies, India felt for the first time the need to unify its forces. Thus the monarchical system was raised-up again; but once more, there was no despotism as happened in Europe until the French revolution: the Indian king did enjoy supreme power, but he was first the representative and guardian of Dharma, the sacred law; his



power was not personal and there were safeguards against abuses so that he could be removed. Furthermore, although the king was a Hindu, Hinduism was never the state religion, and each cult enjoyed its liberties. Thus could the Jews and the Parsis and the Jains and the Buddhists, and even the early Christians (who abused that freedom), practised their faith in peace. Which religion in the world can boast of such tolerance ?

As in a human being, a nation has a soul, which is eternal; and if this soul, this idea-force, is strong enough, it will keep evolving new forms to reincarnate itself constantly. "And a people, maintains Sri Aurobindo, who learn consciously to think always in terms of Dharma, of the eternal truth behind man, and learn to look beyond transient appearances, such as the people of India, always survives " (Foundations of Indian Culture, p.334). And in truth, Indians always regarded life as a manifestation of Self and the master idea that governed life, culture and social ideals of India has been the seeking of man for his inner self -everything was organised around this single goal. Thus, Indian politics, although very complex, always allowed a communal freedom for self-determination. In the last stages of the pre-Muslim period, the summit of the political structure was occupied by three governing bodies: the King in his Ministerial Council, the Metropolitan Assembly and the General Assembly of the kingdom. The members of the Ministerial Council were drawn from all castes. Indeed the whole Indian system was founded upon a close participation of all the classes; even the Shudra had his share in the civic life. Thus the Council had a fixed number of Brahmin, Kshatrya, Vaishya and Shudra representatives, with the Vaishya having a greater preponderance. And in turn, each town, each village, had its own Metropolitan Civic Assembly allowing a great amount of autonomy. Even the great Ashoka was defeated in his power tussle with his Council and he had practically to abdicate.

It is this system which allowed India to flower in an unprecedented way, to excel perhaps as no other nation had done before her, in all fields, be it literature, architecture, sculpture, or painting and develop great civilisations, one upon the other and one upon the other, each one more sumptuous, more grandiose, more glittering than the previous one.

The Greatest literature ?

Mr Basham feels that "much of Sanskrit literature is dry and monotonous, or can only be appreciated after a considerable effort of the imagination" (Wonder that Was India, page 401), which shows a total misunderstanding of the greatness of the genius of that " Mother of all languages ". Sri Aurobindo evidently disagrees with him: "the ancient and classical literature of the Sanskrit tongue shows both in quality and in body an abundance of excellence, in their potent originality and force and beauty, in their substance and art and structure, in grandeur and justice and charm of speech, and in the heightened width of the reach of their spirit which stands very evidently in the front rank among the world's great literatures." (Foundations of Indian Culture p. 255) Four masterpieces seem to embody India's genius in literature: the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata. As seen earlier, the Vedas represent "a creation of an early and intuitive and symbolic mentality" (Foundations of Indian Culture, p.260). It was only because the Vedic rishis were careful to clothe their spiritual experiences in symbols, so that only the initiated would grasp them, that their meaning has escaped us, particularly after they got translated in the last two centuries. "The Veda is the WORD discovering truth and clothing in image and symbol, the mystic significance of life", wrote again Sri Aurobindo. (India's Rebirth, p.95)

As to the Upanishads, asserts the Sage from Pondichery, "they are the supreme work of the Indian mind, that of the highest self-expression of genius, its sublimest poetry, its greatest creation of the thought and word.. a large flood of spiritual revelation..." (Foundations of Indian Culture p.269). The Upanishads are Philosophy, Religion and Poetry blended together. They record high spiritual experiences, are a treaty of intuitive philosophy and show an extraordinary poetic rhythm. It is also a book of ecstasy: an ecstasy of luminous knowledge, of fulfilled experience, " a book to express the wonder and beauty of the rarest spiritual self-vision and the profoundest illumined truth of Self and God and the Universe ", writes Sri Aurobindo (Found. of Indian Culture, 269). The problem is that the translations do not render the beauty of the original text, because these masterpieces have been misunderstood by foreign translators, who only strive to bring out the intellectual meaning without grasping the soul contents of it and do not perceive the ecstasy of the seer "seeing" his experiences.

But without doubt, it is the Mahabarata and the Ramayana, which are dearest to all Indians, even today. Both the Mahabarata and the Ramayana are epical, in the spirit as well as the purpose. The Mahabarata is on a vast scale, maybe unsurpassed even today, the epic of the soul and tells a story of the ethics of India of that time, its social, political and cultural life. It is, notes Sri Aurobindo, "the expression of the mind of a nation, it is the poem of itself written by a whole nation... A vast temple unfolding slowly its immense and complex idea from chamber to chamber" (Foundations of Indian Culture, p 287). More than that even, it is the HISTORY OF DHARMA, of deva against asura, the strife between divine and titanic forces. You find on one side, a civilisation founded on Dharma, and on the other, beings who are embodiments of asuric egoism and misuse of Dharma. It is cast in the mould of tales, legends, anecdotes, telling stories of philosophical, religious, social, spiritual values: " as in Indian architecture, there is the same power to embrace great spaces in a total view and the same tendency to fill them with an abundance of minute, effective, vivid and significant detail ". (Foundations of Indian Culture, p 288).

The Baghavd Gita must be the supreme work of spiritual revelation in the whole history of our human planet, for it is the most comprehensive, the most revealing, the highest in its intuitive reach. No religious book ever succeeded to say nearly everything that needs to be known on the mysteries of human life: why death, why life, why suffering? why fighting, why duty? Dharma, the supreme law, the duty to one's soul, the adherence to truth, the faithfulness to the one and only divine reality which pertains all things in matter and spirit. " Such then is the divine Teacher of the Gita, the eternal Avatar, the Divine who has descended into human consciousness, the Lord seated within the heart of all beings, He who guides from behind the veil all our thought and action ". (Sri Aurobindo; Essays on the Gita, page 17)

The Ramayana's inner genius does not differ from the Mahabharata's, except by a greater simplicity of plan, a finer glow of poetry maybe. It seems to have been written by a single hand, as there is no deviation from story to story... But it is, remarks Sri Aurobindo, "like a vastness of vision, an even more winged-flight of epic in the conception and sustained richness of minute execution in the detail (289). For Indians, the Ramayana embodies the highest and most cherished ideals of manhood, beauty, courage, purity, gentleness. The subject is the same as in the Mahabharata: the struggle between the forces of light and darkness; but the setting is more imaginative, supernatural and there is an intensification of the characters in both their goodness

and evil. As in the Mahabharata too, we are shown the ideal man with his virtues of courage, selflessness, virtue and spiritualised mind. The asuric forces have a near cosmic dimension of super-human egoism and near divine violence, as the chased angels of the Bible possessed after them. " The poet makes us conscious of the immense forces that are behind our life and sets his action in a magnificent epic scenery, the great imperial city, the mountains and the ocean, the forest and wilderness, described with such largesse as to make us feel that the whole world were the scene of his poem and its subject the whole divine and titanic possibility of man, imagined in a few great or monstrous figures ". (Found of Indian Culture page 290)

Does India's literary genius end with the Ramayana? Not at all. It would take too long here to jot down all the great figures of Indian literature and this is not a literary treatise. But we may mention Kalidasa, whose poetry was imitated by all succeeding generations of poets, who tried to copy the perfect and harmoniously designed model of his poetry. The Puranas and the Tantras, " which contain in themselves, writes Sri Aurobindo, the highest spiritual and philosophical truths, while embodying them in forms that are able to carry something of them to the popular imagination and feeling by way of legend, tale, symbols, miracles and parables " (Found of Indian Culture P.312). The Vaishnava poetry, which sings the cry of the soul for God, as incarnated by the love stories of Radha and Krishna, which have struck forever Indian popular imagination, because they symbolise the nature in man seeking for the Divine soul through love. Valmiki, also moulded the Indian mind with his depiction of Rama and Sita, another classic of India's love couples and one that has survived through the myth of enduring worship, in the folklore of this country, along with the popular figures of Hanuman and Laksmanan. "His diction, remarks Sri Aurobindo, is shaped in the manner of the direct intuitive mind as earlier expressed in the Upanishads".

But Indian literature is not limited to Sanskrit or Pali. In Tamil, Tiruvalluvar, wrote the highest ever gnomic poetry, perfect in its geometry, plan and force of execution. In Hindi, Tulsidas, is a master of lyric intensity and the sublimity of epic imagination. In Marathi, Ramdas, poet, thinker, yogi, deals with the birth and awakening of a whole nation, with all the charm and the strength of a true bhakti. In Bengal, there is Kashiram, who retold in simple manner the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, accompanied by Tulsidas who did the same thing in Hindi and who managed to combine lyric intensity, romantic flight of imagination, while retaining the original sublimity of the story. One cannot end this short retrospective without mentioning Chaitanya, Nanak, Kabir, Mirabai...All these remarkable writers have often baffled the Western mind, which could never understand the greatness of Indian literature, forgetting that in India everything was centred around the spiritual.

### 3) Indian art: Turned towards the essential

"The highest business of Indian art has always been to describe something of the Self, of the soul, contrary to Western art, which either harps at the superficially beautiful or dwells at the vital-unconscious level." (Sri Aurobindo. Foundations of Indian Culture p.208) This is indeed the great difference between Indian art and other art forms. For the Indian artist first visualises in his inner being the truth of the element he wants to express and creates it in his intuitive mind, before externalising it. Stories of how Indian sculptors of ancient times used to meditate for one year before starting on their particular work, are common. Not the idea of the intellect or mental

imagination, but the essence, the emotion, the spirit. Thus, for the Indian artist, material forms, colour, line, design, are only physical means of expression, NOT his first preoccupation. So he will not attempt, as in Western art, which in its heydays continuously recreated scenes of Christ's life or that of saints, to reconstitute some scene of Buddha's life, but instead, he will endeavor to REVEAL the calm of Nirvana. And every accessory is an aid, a MEANS to do so. "for here spirit carries the form, while in western art, form carries whatever they think is spirit".(Foundations p.211)

In effect, Indian art, its architecture for instance, demands an inner eye to be appreciated, otherwise its truth will not reveal itself. Great temples in India are an architectural expression of an ancient spiritual culture. Its many varied forms express the manifestation of the infinite multiplicity which fills the oneness of India. And indeed even the Moslem architecture was taken up by India's creative genius and transformed into something completely Indian. Indian sculpture also springs from spiritual insight and it is unique by its total absence of ego. Very few of India's sculptures masterpieces are signed for instance; they are rather the work of a collective genius whose signature could be "INDIA". "Most ancient sculptures of India embody in visible form what the Upanishads threw out into inspired thought and the Mahabaratha and the Ramayana portrayed by the word in life", observes Sri Aurobindo (Foundations, p.230). The Gods of Indian sculpture are cosmic beings, embodiments of some great spiritual power. And every movement, hands, eyes, posture, conveys an INNER meaning, as in the Natarajas for example. Sri Aurobindo admired particularly the Kalasanhara Shiva, about which he said: " it is supreme, not only by the majesty, power, calmly forceful controlled dignity and kinship of existence which the whole spirit and pose visibly incarnates...but much more by the concentrated divine passion of the spiritual overcoming of time and existence which the artist has succeeded in putting into eye and brow and mouth... (Foundations P.233)

Indian painting, has unfortunately been largely erased by time, as in the case of the Ajanta caves. It even went through an eclipse and was revived by the Mughal influence. But what remains of Indian paintings show the immensity of the work and the genius of it. The paintings that have mostly survived from ancient times are those of the Buddhist artists; but painting in India was certainly pre-Buddhist. Indeed in ancient India, there were six "limbs", six essential elements "sadanga" to a great painting: The first is "rupabheda", distinction of forms; the second is "pramana", arrangement of lines; the third is "bhava", emotion of aesthetic feelings; the fourth is "lavanya", seeking for beauty; the fifth is "sadrasya", truth of the form; and the sixth is varnikashanga", harmony of colours. Western art always flouts the first principle "rupabheda", the universal law of the right distinction of forms, for it constantly strays into intellectual or fantasy extravagances which belong to the intermediate world of sheer fantasia. On the other hand in the Indian paintings. Sri Aurobindo remarks that : "the Indian artist sets out from the other end of the scale of values of experience which connect life and the spirit. The whole creative force here comes from a spiritual and psychic vision, the emphasis of the physical is secondary and always deliberately limited so as to give an overwhelmingly spiritual and psychic impression and everything is suppressed which does not serve this purpose". (Foundations, p.246). It is unfortunate that today most Indian painting imitates Western modern art, bare for a few exceptions. And it is hoped that Indian painters will soon come back to the essential, which is the vision of the inner eye, the transcription, not of the religious, but of the spiritual and the occult.

#### 4) THE GREAT CIVILISATIONS

It is upon this great and lasting foundations, cultural, artistic, social and political, that India, Mother India, Sanatana Dharma, produced many wonderful periods. We are not here to make an historical review of them; a few of their glorious names will suffice, for with them still rings the splendour and towering strength of the eternal spirit of the Vedic fathers...

The Kashi kingdom of Benares, which was founded upon the cult of Shiva and was the spiritual and cultural capital of India, was, we are told, a great show of refinement and beauty, and that at least ten centuries before Christ was born, according to conservative estimates. Remember that Gautama the Buddha preached his first sermon in the suburbs of Benares at Sarnat. " Kashi, eulogises Alain Danielou, was a kind of Babylon, a sacred city , a centre of learning, of art and pleasures, the heart of Indian civilisation, whose origins were lost in prehistoric India and its kings ruled over a greater part of northern and even southern India ". We may also mention the Gandhara kingdom, which included Peshawar, parts of Afghanistan, Kashmir and was thus protecting India from invasions, as Sri Aurobindo points out: " the historic weakness of the Indian peninsula has always been until modern times its vulnerability through the North-western passes. This weakness did not exist as long as ancient India extended northward far beyond the Indus and the powerful kingdoms of Gandhara and Vahlka presented a firm bulwark against foreign invasion ". (Found. 373) But soon these kingdoms collapsed and Alexander's armies marched into India, the first foreign invasion of the country, if one discounts the Aryan theory. Henceforth, all the theoreticians and politicians thought about the unifying of India and this heralded the coming of the first great Emperor: Chandra Gupta, who vanquished the remnants of Alexander's armies and assimilated some of the Greek civilisation's great traits. Thus started the mighty Mauryan empire, which represents the first effort at unifying India politically. A little of that time is known through the Arthashastra of Kautilya, or Chanakya, Minister of Chandragupta, who gives us glimpses of the conditions and state organisation of that time. Chandragupta, who was the founder of the Maurya dynasty, came from a low caste, liberated Punjab from the Greeks and managed to conquer the whole of the Indian subcontinent except for the extreme South. The administrative set-up of Chandragupta was so efficient that later the Muslims and the English retained it, only bringing here and there a few superficial modifications. Chandragupta in true Indian tradition renounced the world during his last years and lived as an anchorite at the feet of the Jain saint Bhadrabahu in Shravanabelagola, near Mysore. Historians, such as Alain Danielou, label Chanakya and Chandragupta's rule as Machiavellian: " It was, writes Danielou, a centralised despotism, resting on military power and disguised into a constitutional monarchy ". (Histoire de l'Inde p. 114) This again is a very westernised view of post-vedic India, which cannot conceive that Hindustan could have devised constitutional monarchy before the Europeans. And Sri Aurobindo obviously disagrees: " The history of this empire, its remarkable organisation, administration, public works, opulence, magnificent culture and the vigour, the brilliance, the splendid fruitfulness of life of the peninsula under its shelter, ranks among the greatest constructed and maintained by the genius of earth's great peoples. India has no reason, from this point of view, to be anything but proud of her ancient achievement in empire-building or to surrender to the hasty verdict that denies to her antique civilisation a strong practical genius or high political virtue (Found. 373)



In the South the Andhras were dominating from Cape Comorin to the doors of Bombay. Then came the Pallavas, who were certainly one of the most remarkable dynasties of medieval India. The first Pallavas appeared near Kanchi in the 3rd century, but it is only with king Simhavishnu that they reached their peak. Simhavishnu conquered the Chera, the Cholas, the Pandya dynasties of the South and annexed Ceylon. It is to this period that belong the magnificent frescoes of Mahabalipuram which have survived until today. During the Pallavas' rule, great cities such as Kanchi flourished, busy ports like Mahabalipuram sprang-up, and arts blossomed under all its forms. So did the sanskrit language, which went through a great revival period and the dravidian architecture style of Southern India, famous for its mandapams, which has passed down, from generation to generation until today. The Bhakti movement, also developed in South India during the Pallavas and it gave a new orientation to Hinduism.

At the same time, the dynasty of the Vardhamana was establishing his might in the Centre of India. Founded by King Pushyabhuti, " who had acquired great spiritual powers by the practice of shivaite tantrism ", writes Jean Danielou, it reached its peak under king Harsha, who, starting with Bengal and Orissa, conquered what is today UP, Bihar, extending his empire northwards towards Nepal and Kashmir and southwards to the Narmada river. Jean danielou feels " that King Harsha symbolised all that was right in Hindu monarchy, wielding an absolute power, but each sphere of administration was enjoying a large autonomy and the villages were functioning like small republics ". The Chinese traveller, Hiuen Tsang, another admirer of Harsha, writes that he was an untiring man, just and courageous, constantly surveying all parts of his kingdom. India's influence was then at its highest, her culture and religions expanded all the way to Burma, Cambodia, Siam, Ceylon and in the other direction to the Mecca, where Shiva's black lingam was revered by Arabians. But In 570 AD, the Prophet Mohammed was born and by the year 632, a few years before the death of King Harsha, the Muslim invasions started overtaking India, wave after destructive wave.

## CHAPTER 4) ISLAM AND THE MUSLIM INVASIONS

### A) An apology of Islam

Before going into the Muslim invasions in India, it would be worthwhile to cast a sympathetic look at Islam: why it sprang-up; how it immediately went out in the world with a missionary zeal, unsurpassed in the history of religions; its genius, its beauty, its relevance today; but also the limitations and drawbacks of the world's most militant faith. These are questions best answered by Muslims themselves, although the author does not necessarily agree with all the views expounded here.

Why Islam ? Islam was a cry against the tortured atmosphere of Christianity, an answer to its perpetual ethos of suffering and its propensity to nail its saviours on the cross. Christianity is the first enemy of Islam, although in a sense, both religions are complementary. Why did Europeans succeed in stopping the Arab onslaught, while at the same time Arabs managed to enter India again and again and again? (French King Charles Martel beat Arab armies in 732 in Poitiers, 300 kms away from Paris. If this battle had been lost, the whole of Europe, might have been Muslim today) Because the Kshatryia class had become weak. The warriors of India had become arrogant, degenerate in their clinging to power and the true spirit of the Kshatriyas had been lost

for the centuries to come, except in a few Rajput, Sikh or Mahrattis, like Shivaji. But the Arabs were khsatriyas: they were fired by the zeal to do Allah's work, unafraid of death. They were a young warrior class. But why this extraordinary ferocity of Arabs in India? This brutal zeal to conquer, this militancy to convert by the scimitar is " Jihad ", holy war. It is the giving of oneself to the expansion of the Infinite, Allah, the only one. There is also a beauty in that kind of violence. What is the genius of Islam ? Islam does not kill the soul of a country. It assimilates its culture, as it did in India; take the zero for instance, which was invented by Hindus: Arabs took it up, developed it and made of it a full-fledged mathematics system, which from India travelled all through the Arab empire and reached Europe, thanks to Arab colonisation. Or take the Advaita, which they blended with Islam and transformed into Sufism, probably the most enlightened, mystical branch of Islam. You know, each Muslim has a direct contact with his God, each one is a servant of god and there are no intermediaries like in Hinduism with its idols and gods. It is a religion of the individual, for the individual; each one can thus lead prayers and become in effect a mullah; thus there is no Brahmin class in Islam, no monasteries, no churches. And this is what makes it so popular in the 20th century, why so many Muslims and non-Muslims, disillusioned with western society and its evils are going back to the fundamentals of Islam.

What is the strength of Islam? Islam is a religion of force, it is in the Arab temperament, borne out of the hardship and beauty of the desert and its nomad life. Muslims are devout soldiers; their savagery is not gratuitous, it is the fire of Allah which burns in them. Not the meekness of the Buddhist, which opened India to invasions; not the guiltiness of the Christians which has hampered all western civilisation, but the spirit of might. Why did Islam crush Hinduism so mercilessly ? Hindus adore images and stone Gods and it makes them the number one enemy of Islam. For did not the Prophet say: " thou shalt not worship stone idols "? Thus Arabs, when they invaded India, did not feel guilty when they killed Hindus; on the contrary, it was an obligation, a holy duty. Why the hardening of Islam today, the harping on returning to the shariat, which seems maladjusted to today's modern world ? It is the refusal by the Muslim world to be swallowed by the grey uniform, soul-killing materialism of the West. The unconscious fear of losing one's Muslim identity in the face of the onslaught of the modern, atheist world. Even the burqa is a returning to a fundamental that have baffled all religion: the mystery of the woman, its destabilising effects on men. Hindus themselves forbid women in certain temples; or consider them impure when they are menstruating; or even do not allow them to read the Veda. Why should Islam be judged on the Burqa issue? It may be something that shocks the West, but Islam is not the burqa alone ! And look at what happened in the West with the liberalisation of women: it led to the break-up of the family system and brought in a perverse sexuality. And finally, which is better: wearing a burqa while maintaining one's identity, or finishing as a servant in some western bourgeois home with no dignity left? Moreover, Muslims all over the world feel they are attacked from every corner, whether in Bosnia, Kashmir, Palestine, or Chechnya. And this leads to an entrenched paranoia. What are the qualities of Islam today ? Charity first and foremost. Contrary to the Hindus, who although they are generous people individually, are not concerned by the welfare of their less fortunate brethren - witness the abject poverty in India - Islam cares for their own. It is enough for a Muslim to say " Salam u alli kum " anywhere in the world and be treated like a brother, fed, clothed and sometimes helped financially. They all belong to the Ouma, the great universal Muslim brotherhood. Also the pure of Islam do not smoke, do not take drugs, do not drink alcohol; and this also encourages Muslims leaders all over the world to reimpose the shariat in their countries. After all, if India imposes dry law in some of her states,



nobody has anything to say. Islam does it in the name of Allah instead of that of N.T. Rama Rao! The motto of Islam ? You deal with your material life as if you're going to live eternally; and with your spiritual life as if you are going to die tomorrow ". The best of Islam today ? Without doubt the great mosque of Casablanca, recently completed, symbolises what is most luminous in Islam today and stands as an example of a Muslim nation which has (so far) managed to retain the positive qualities of Islam, while adapting itself to the western world. Each artisan has recreated the splendour of ancient Muslim handicrafts: sculpture, paintings, marble inlay... It's a people's work; every Moroccan has contributed money, however small an amount, for the finishing of the mosque; it is thus a collective work which embodies all the love of beauty inherent in Islam and its moderation. There, after having washed oneself, one can pray in an atmosphere of peace. What Islam borrowed from Hinduism ? Sufism of course, which adopted some of the beauty of India. Mogol architecture, which retained the perfect symmetry of Muslim linear design, while achieving infinite humanity. Hindustan music, enchanting to the ear...But overall, above everything, Islam in India borrowed the Shakti concept of Hinduism. Look at the Islamic countries surrounding India today. They are all governed by women ! Is it not a proof that deep inside him, the Bangladeshi or the Pakistani (or the Sri Lankan for that matter), are still worshipers of the eternal shakti principle: " without her you do not manifest ". Is it not also proof that deep at heart they are still Indians, Indus? About Indian Muslims They can never really be integrated to India, because the philosophy of Islam the essence of its message is in total contradiction with what Hinduism represents. Nevertheless, they are there to stay About Pakistan. Pakistan embodies the fundamental contradiction of the subcontinent, for it symbolises the fact that Islam always refused to be synthesised, absorbed, transmuted by Hinduism as all other religions in India were over a period of time, whether Christianity, Buddhism or Jainism. But Pakistan also prepares the future greatness of India, because the day where the two nations are reunited they will stand as individual entities, with their own culture, own religion; own soul. But for that, Pakistan and Bangladesh will have to recognise their fundamental " Indianness " .

The limitations of Islam ? This is the profession of faith of a Muslim: " I certify that there is no other God than Allah, of whom Mohammed is the only prophet " Which means in effect: " After (and before) Mohammed, there is nobody else, no more avatars ". Thus the whole religion of Islam is based on a negation: nobody but us, no other religion but ours. And if you disagree, you shall die ". This puts a serious limitation to tolerance and from this strong belief sprang all the horrors of the Muslim invasions of India.

#### B) Why the Muslim invasions of India ?

Nobody will ever be able to estimate the incredible damage done to Indian culture, civilisation, human population and environment, during the Muslim invasions which spanned nearly ten centuries. But it should be interesting to see why these invasions happened, for no civilisation, if its inner core is strong and dynamic, can be trampled upon so mercilessly, as the Arabs trampled India. What ever happened to that great Vedic culture, which gave birth to so many wonderful dynasties, which in turn devised illustrious democratic systems and whose Kshatriyas were supposed to protect the land of Bharat against barbarian invaders?

Since the beginning of Human History, all civilisations have gone through the same cycle: birth-rise-peak maturity-decline-death. And so many great civilisations are no more but in the

memories of our text-books: Mesopotamia; Egypt; Rome; Great Africa; Greece...Yet, because of its extraordinary spirituality, because of the Dharma stored by its great Rishis, India always had the extra impetus to renew itself, to spring forward again, when it seemed she was on the brink of collapsing. It blossomed thus for at least five millenniums, more than any other civilisation before or ever after. Then India started faltering and Alexander was able to invade her sacred soil and later the Arabs raped her beloved land. Why?

Buddhists believe that each nation, like the human soul, packs karma in each of its lives or cycles. Good karma or Bad karma have one unique characteristics: they are like a tiny seed, bearing their fruits ages or cycles later, often giving the impression to the ignorant mind of total injustice done to innocent souls. Thus the individual who seems to suffer unfair circumstances in this life, may be paying for a bad karma done dozens of lives ago. In the same manner, a nation which appears to suffer inexplicable hardships: persecution, earthquakes, great natural catastrophes, dictatorships, may be amending for a karma accomplished centuries ago. The Tibetan people's plight seems to be a good example of this phenomenon. Here is one of the most harmless, peaceful, adorable culture on earth, spiritualised on top of that, who suffered and is still suffering the worst ignominies at the hands of the Chinese communists, who have eradicated their culture, razed to the ground hundreds of ancient and marvellous temples, killed either directly or indirectly - concentration camps, torture, famine - more than one million of this adorable people! Why? WHY? The Dalai-Lama, himself, one of the last great spiritual figures of this era, admits that it was because of an ancient "black karma", bad deeds. Was it feudalism? Was it not opening itself to the world for so long? Or misuse of Tantrism? Who knows and who can judge? But it's a good bet to say that there is probably NO total injustice in this world. Everything springs from a mathematical, ultra-logical system, where one gets the exact reward one deserves, which bears NO moral connotation like in Christianity.

Thus for India, the Muslims invasions and later the European ones, must be the result of a bad karma. But the difference with Tibet, is that India's soul is so strong, so old, so vibrant, that she has managed so far to survive the terrible Muslims onslaughts and later the more devious British soul-stifling occupation. There seemed to be two reasons for the decline of Indian civilisation. The foremost is that in India, Spirit failed Matter. At some point, Her yogis started withdrawing more and more in their caves, Her gurus in their ashrams, Her sannyasins in their forests. Thus slowly, a great tamas overtook matter, an immense negligence towards the material, an intense inertia set in, which allowed for the gradual degradation of the physical, a slackening of the down to earth values, an indifference towards the worldly, which in turn permitted successive invasions, from Alexander to the Muslim and finally the European, the rape the land of the Vedas. The second reason and the one which has been most commonly invoked, including by Muslim apologists -see beginning of this chapter - because is it so obvious, is the fossilisation of the caste system and the gradual take-over of India by an arrogant Brahmin and kshatriya society. What used to be a natural arrangement - a Kshatriya became a warrior to express heroic tendencies in him developed from countless births on earth- turned-out to be an inherited legacy, which was not merited by chivalrous deeds. A Brahmin who used to deserve his status by his scholarship and piety, and was twice-born in the spiritual sense, just inherited the charge from his father. And the shudras were relegated to a low status, doing the menial chores, when in their heyday, they fulfilled an indispensable role, which granted them recognition from the king himself. Thus Hindu religion lost its immense plasticity, which allowed her to constantly renew

herself - and India became ripe for invasions. And finally, Buddhism and its creed of non-violence, however beautiful and noble, opened India's gates wide. Buddhists forgot the eternal principle of the Gita: "protecting one's country from death, rape, mass slaughter, is "dharma"; and the violence you then perform is not only absolved, karma-free, but it also elevates you.

### C) The Muslim invasions of India

Let it be said right away: the massacres perpetrated by Muslims in India are unparalleled in history, bigger than the Holocaust of the Jews by the Nazis; or the massacre of the Armenians by the Turks; more extensive even than the slaughter of the South American native populations by the invading Spanish and Portuguese. We shall quote from the French historian Alain Danielou, as well as the Dutch scholar Koenraad Elst who has written a very interesting book called "Negationism in India (see next chapter), and finally from Sri Aurobindo, who was one of the very few amongst Indian revolutionaries, who had the courage to say the truth about what was called then "the Mahomedan factor".

"From the time when Muslims started arriving, around 632 AD, remarks Alain Danielou, the history of India becomes a long monotonous series of murders, massacres, spoliations, destructions. It is, as usual, in the name of "a holy war" of their faith, of their sole God, that the Barbarians have destroyed civilisations, wiped-out entire races. Mahmoud Ghazni, continues Danielou, was an early example of Muslim ruthlessness, burning in 1018 of the temples of Mathura, razing Kanauj to the ground and destroying the famous temple of Somnath, sacred to all Hindus. His successors were as ruthless as Ghazni: in 1030 the holy city of Benares was razed to the ground, its marvellous temples destroyed, its magnificent palaces wrecked. Indeed, the Muslim policy "vis à vis" India, concludes Danielou, seems to have been a conscious systematic destruction of everything that was beautiful, holy, refined". (Histoire de l'Inde, p.222) In the words of another historian, American Will Durant: "the Islamic conquest of India is probably the bloodiest story in history. It is a discouraging tale, for its evident moral is that civilisation is a precious good, whose delicate complex order and freedom can at any moment be overthrown by barbarians invading from without and multiplying within".

But more horror was to come, for without any doubt the bloodiest Muslim deeds in India were done from the 14th century onwards, thanks to the Mughals, who today have been nearly raised to the ranks of great art patrons and benevolent rulers, bringing to India such treasures as the art of miniature painting, ghazals and Sufism. For instance, Danielou points out that the sack of the magnificent city of Vijayanagar, which was like an island of civilisation, chivalry, and beauty, in the midst of a shattered and bleeding India, by Husain Nizam Shah, was an horror: "During nearly FIVE months, reminisces Danielou, the Muslims set themselves to the task of destroying everything, the temples, the palaces, the magnificent residences. The scenes of terror and massacre were unparalleled and mightier than the imagination can ever fathom. The victors grabbed so much richness in gold, jewels, precious furniture, camels, tents, girls, boys, slaves, weapons, armours, that there was not a single plain soldier who did not depart a rich man. And nothing remained after their departure of the most beautiful and prosperous city of that time, but smoking ruins". (Histoire de l'Inde, p.251)

Babur was another ferocious conqueror, indulging in unnecessary massacres and his ultimate goal was the destruction and the enslaving of the Hindus. His successor, Sher Khan, was no better, ravaging Punjab, betraying his word to the Rajputs of Malwa, who were all massacred one by one after they had honourably surrendered. Women and children were killed by the Rajput themselves, knowing what would happen to them if they fell in Muslims hands. As for Humayun, History has treated him well, forgetting that he too, was a staunch Muslim. Under his reign, a terrible famine ravaged India, people were killed, erring miserably in their land. What happened to the beautiful land of Bharat, where once honey and wine flowed like an Himalayan delight?

Akbar was the exception in a sea of monsters, although he had his preceptor Bairam, and the regent Adam Khan killed, and was responsible for the great massacre of Chittor. In his 40 years of conquests, he too must have slaughtered his fair share of Hindus. Nevertheless, he was better than the average lot, maybe because his mother was Persian and he married Hindu wives. His intelligence, his love of arts, his interest for his people, his religious liberalism, make of him a unique emperor. Through his Rajput spouses, Akbar had a close contact with Hindu thought and he dreamed of a new religion that would be a synthesis of all creeds - and under him the Hindus were allowed some breathing space. Unfortunately, his successors started again their policy of massacre and persecution of the Hindus. Jahangir, Akbar's son, had Guru Arjun Singh killed. Jehangir was a warped personality, "he was moved by the shivering of elephants in winter, says Danielou, but had people he disliked whipped in front of him until they died. The story of how he had Husain Beg and Abdul Aziz, two enemies, sewn in the skins of a donkey and a cow and paraded in the city, has never been forgotten". (Danielou, *Histoire de l'Inde*, p.269)

But the worst of the Mughal emperors must be Aurangzeb. He had his father imprisoned till the end of his life, ordered his brothers executed and his own son imprisoned for life. Aurangzeb's religious fanaticism plunged India again in chaos, famine and misery. Aurangzeb was foremost a Sunni Muslim, puritan, unbending; he had the koranic law applied in its strictest sense, chased from the court all musicians and poets, banned all Hindu religious festivals and imposed the very heavy "jizya" tax on unbelievers. He thus made once more the Mughal monarchy highly unpopular and everywhere revolts sprang-up, such as the one of the Satnamis of Alwar. "Aurangzeb had them massacred until the last one, leaving an entire region empty of human beings". (Danielou p. 278). Aurangzeb also battled the Sikhs and the Rajputs. But it's against the great Mahrattas, who spearheaded a Hindu renaissance in India, that Aurangzeb was most ferocious: he had Shambuji, Shivaji's son and his Minister Kavi-Kulash tortured scientifically for THREE weeks and after that they were cut in small pieces till they died on 11 march 1689. Aurangzeb was also the first Mughal who really attempted to conquer the South. By the end of his reign, there was nothing left in the coffers, culture and arts had been erased and the Hindus were once more haunted by persecution.

Fortunately, by then the Mughal empire was already crumbling; but the woes of Hindus were not finished. Nadir Shah, of Iran attacked Delhi in 1739 and for one whole week his soldiers massacred everybody, ransacked everything and razed the entire countryside, so that the survivors would have nothing to eat. He went back to Iran taking with him precious furniture, works of arts, 10.000 horses, the Kohinoor diamond, the famous Peacock throne and 150 million rupees in gold, (Danielou p.290). After that blow, the Mughal dynasty was so enfeebled, that India was ready for its next barbarians: the Europeans.

## Rewriting Indian History

by Francois Gautier

### CHAPTER 5) NEGATIONISM AND THE MUSLIM CONQUESTS

It is important to stop a moment and have a look at what the Belgian scholar Koenraad Elst, has called "negationism in India". In his foreword to the book of the same title, Koenraad explains that negationism, which means in this context "the denial of historical crimes against humanity", is not a new phenomenon. In modern history, the massacre by the Turks of 1,5 millions Armenians, or that of the 6 million Jews by the Nazis, the several millions of Russians by Stalin, or again the 1 million Tibetans by the Chinese communists, are historical facts which have all been denied by their perpetrators... But deny is not the exact word. They have been NEGATED in a thousand ways: gross, clever, outrageous, subtle, so that in the end, the minds of people are so confused and muddled, that nobody knows anymore where the truth is. Sometimes, it is the numbers that are negated or passed under silence: the Spanish conquest of South America has been one of the bloodiest and most ruthless episodes in history. Elst estimates that out of the population of native Continental South America of 1492, which stood at 90 million, only 32 million survived; terrible figures indeed but who talks about them today ? "But what of the conquest of India by Muslims", asks Elst? In other parts of Asia and Europe, the conquered nations quickly opted for conversion to Islam rather than death. But in India, because of the staunch resistance of the 4000 year old Hindu faith, the Muslim conquests were for the Hindus a pure struggle between life and death. Entire cities were burnt down and their populations massacred. Each successive campaign brought hundreds of thousands of victims and similar numbers were deported as slaves. Every new invader made often literally his hill of Hindu skulls. Thus the conquest of Afghanistan in the year 1000, was followed by the annihilation of the entire Hindu population there; indeed, the region is still called Hindu Kush, 'Hindu slaughter'. The Bahmani sultans in central India, made it a rule to kill 100.000 Hindus a year. In 1399, Teimur killed 100.000 Hindus IN A SINGLE DAY, and many more on other occasions. Koenraad Elst quotes Professor K.S. Lal's "Growth of Muslim population in India", who writes that according to his calculations, the Hindu population decreased by 80 MILLION between the year 1000 and 1525. INDEED PROBABLY THE BIGGEST HOLOCAUST IN THE WHOLE WORLD HISTORY. (Negat.34)

But the "pagans" were far too numerous to kill them all; and Hinduism too well entrenched in her people's soul, never really gave up, but quietly retreated in the hearts of the pious and was preserved by the Brahmins' amazing oral powers. Thus, realising that they would never be able to annihilate the entire Indian population and that they could not convert all the people, the Muslims rulers, particularly under the Hanifite law, allowed the pagans to become "zimmis" (protected ones) under 20 humiliating conditions, with the heavy "jizya", the toleration tax, collected from them. "It is because of Hanifite law, writes Mr Elst, that many Muslim rulers in India considered themselves exempted from the duty to continue the genocide of Hindus". The last "jihad" against the Hindus was waged by the much glorified Tipu Sultan, at the end of the 18th century. Thereafter, particularly following the crushing of the 1857 rebellion by the British, Indian Muslims fell into a state of depression and increasing backwardness, due to their mollah's



refusal of British education (whereas the elite Hindus gradually went for it) and their nostalgia for the "glorious past". It is only much later, when the British started drawing them into the political mainstream, so as to divide India, that they started regaining some predominance.

Negationism means that this whole aspect of Indian history has been totally erased, not only from history books, but also from the memory, from the consciousness of Indian people. Whereas the Jews have constantly tried, since the Nazi genocide, to keep alive the remembrance of their six million martyrs, the Indian leadership, political and intellectual, has made a wilful and conscious attempt to deny the genocide perpetrated by the Muslims. No one is crying for vengeance. Do the Jews of today want to retaliate upon contemporary Germany? NO. It is only a matter of making sure that history does not repeat its mistakes, as alas it is able to do today: witness the persecution of Hindus in Kashmir, whose 250.000 Pandits have fled their 5000 year old homeland; or the 50.000 Hindus chased from Afghanistan; or the oppression of Hindus in Bangladesh and Pakistan. And most of all, to remember, is to BE ABLE TO LOOK AT TODAY WITH THE WISDOM OF YESTERDAY. No collective memory should be erased for appeasing a particular community.

Yet, what has happened in India, at the hand of Hindus themselves, is a constant denial and even a perversion of the genocide committed by Muslims in India. Hasn't the "radical humanist" M.N. Roy, written "that Islam has fulfilled a historic mission of equality and abolition of discrimination in India, and that for this, Islam has been welcomed in India by the lower castes". "If AT ALL any violence occurred, he goes on to say, it was a matter of justified class struggle by the progressive forces against the reactionary forces, meaning the feudal Hindu upper classes.." Want to listen to another such quote? This one deals with Mahmud Ghaznavi, the destroyer of thousands of Hindu temples, who according to his chronicler Utbi, sang the praise of the Mathura temple complex, sacred above all to all Hindus... and promptly proceeded to raze it to the ground: "Building interested Mahmud and he was much impressed by the city of Mathura, where there are today a thousand edifices as firm as the faith of the faithful. Mahmud was not a religious man. He was a Mahomedan, but that was just by the way. He was in the first place a soldier and a brilliant soldier"... Amazing eulogy indeed of the man who was proud of desecrating hundreds of temples and made it a duty to terrorise and humiliate pagans. And guess from whom is that quote? From Jawaharlal Nehru himself, the first Prime Minister of India and one of the architects of independence!

M.N. Roy, and Nehru in a lesser degree, represent the foremost current of negationism in India, which is Marxist inspired. For strangely, it was the Russian communists who decided to cultivate the Arabs after the First World War, in the hope that they constituted a fertile ground for future indoctrination. One should also never forget that Communism has affected whole generations of ardent youth, who saw in Marxism a new ideology in a world corrupted by capitalism and class exploitation. Nothing wrong in that; but as far as indoctrination goes, the youth of the West, particularly of the early sixties and seventies, were all groomed in sympathising with the good Arabs and the bad Jews. And similarly in India, two or three young generations since the early twenties, were tutored on negating Muslim genocide on the Hindus. In "Communalism and the writing of Indian history", Romila Thapar, Harbans Mukhia and Bipan Chandra, professors at the JNU in New Delhi, the Mecca of secularism and negationism in India, denied the Muslim genocide by replacing it instead with a conflict of classes. The redoubtable Romila Thapar in her

"Penguin History of India", co-authored with Percival Spear, writes: "Aurangzeb's supposed intolerance, is little more than a hostile legend based on isolated acts such as the erection of a mosque on a temple site in Benares". How can one be so dishonest, or so blind? But it shows how negationism is perpetuated in India.

What are the facts? Aurangzeb (1658-1707) did not just build an isolated mosque on a destroyed temple, he ordered ALL temples destroyed, among them the Kashi Vishvanath, one of the most sacred places of Hinduism and had mosques built on a number of cleared temples sites. All other Hindu sacred places within his reach equally suffered destruction, with mosques built on them. A few examples: Krishna's birth temple in Mathura, the rebuilt Somnath temple on the coast of Gujarat, the Vishnu temple replaced with the Alamgir mosque now overlooking Benares and the Treta-ka-Thakur temple in Ayodhya. (Neg 60). The number of temples destroyed by Aurangzeb is counted in 4, if not 5 figures; according to his own official court chronicles: "Aurangzeb ordered all provincial governors to destroy all schools and temples of the Pagans and to make a complete end to all pagan teachings and practices". The chronicle sums up the destructions like this: "Hasan Ali Khan came and said that 172 temples in the area had been destroyed... His majesty went to Chittor and 63 temples were destroyed..Abu Tarab, appointed to destroy the idol-temples of Amber, reported that 66 temples had been razed to the ground".. Aurangzeb did not stop at destroying temples, their users were also wiped-out; even his own brother, Dara Shikoh, was executed for taking an interest in Hindu religion and the Sikh Guru Tegh Bahadur was beheaded because he objected to Aurangzeb's forced conversions. As we can see Romila Thapar and Percival Spear's statement of a benevolent Aurangzeb is a flagrant attempt at negationism. Even the respectable Encyclopedia Britannica in its entry on India, does not mention in its chapter on the Sultanate period any persecutions of Hindus by Muslims, except "that Firuz Shah Tughlaq made largely unsuccessful attempts at converting his Hindu subjects and sometime persecuted them". The British, for their own selfish purpose, were of course greatly responsible for whitewashing the Muslims, whom they needed to counterbalance the influence of the Hindus and the Congress. It is sad that Jawarlhal Nehru and the Congress perpetuated that brand of negationism. But that is another story.

The happiest in this matter must be the Muslims themselves. What fools these Hindus are, they must be telling themselves: We killed them by the millions, we wrested a whole nation out of them, we engineer riots against them, and they still defend us!... But don't the Hindus know that many orthodox Indian Muslims still cling to the Deoband school, which says that India was once "Dar-ul-Islam", the house of Islam, and should return to that status. Maulana Abul Kala Azad, several times Congress President, and Education Minister in free India, was a spokesman for this school. The Aligarh school on the contrary, led by Mohammed Iqbal, propounded the creation of Pakistan. What particularly interests us in the Aligarh school is the attempt by Muslim historians, such as Mohamed Habīb, to rewrite the Chapter of Muslim invasions in India. In 1920, Habīb started writing his magnum opus, which he based on four theories: 1) that the records (written by the Muslims themselves) of slaughters of Hindus, the enslaving of their women and children and razing of temples were "mere exaggerations by court poets and zealous chroniclers to please their rulers". 2) That they were indeed atrocities, but mainly committed by Turks, the savage riders from the Steppe. 3) That the destruction of the temples took place because Hindus stored their gold and jewels inside them and therefore Muslim armies plundered these. 4) That the conversion of millions of Hindus to Islam was not forced, "but what happened was there was a



shift of opinion in the population, who on its own free will chose the Shariat against the Hindu law (smriti), as they were all oppressed by the bad Brahmins" ...!!! (Negationism p.42)

Unfortunately for Habib and his school, the Muslims invaders did record with glee their genocide on Hindus, because they felt all along that they were doing their duty; that killing, plundering, enslaving and razing temples was the work of God, Mohammed. Indeed, whether it was Mahmud of Ghazni (997-1030), who was no barbarian, although a Turk, and patronised art and literature, would recite a verse of the Koran every night after having razed temples and killed his quota of unbelievers; or Firuz Shah Tughlak (1351-1388) who personally confirms that the destruction of Pagan temples was done out of piety and writes: "on the day of a Hindu festival, I went there myself, ordered the executions of all the leaders AND PRACTITIONERS of his abomination; I destroyed their idols temples and built mosques in their places". Finally, as Elst points out, "Muslim fanatics were merely faithful executors of Quranic injunctions. It is not the Muslims who are guilty but Islam". (Negationism in India, p. 44)

But ultimately, it is a miracle that Hinduism survived the onslaught of Muslim savagery; it shows how deep was her faith, how profound her karma, how deeply ingrained her soul in the hearts of her faithfuls. We do not want to point a finger at Muslim atrocities, yet they should not be denied and their mistakes should not be repeated today. But the real question is: Can Islam ever accept Hinduism? We shall turn towards the Sage, the yogi, who fought for India's independence, accepting the Gita's message of karma of violence when necessary, yet had a broad vision that softened his words: "You can live with a religion whose principle is toleration. But how is it possible to live peacefully with a religion whose principle is "I will not tolerate you? How are you going to have unity with these people?...The Hindu is ready to tolerate; he is open to new ideas and his culture and has got a wonderful capacity for assimilation, but always provided India's central truth is recognised.. (Sri Aurobindo India's Rebirth 161,173) Or behold this, written on September 1909: "Every action for instance which may be objectionable to a number of Mahomedans, is now liable to be forbidden because it is likely to lead to a breach of peace. And one is dimly beginning to wonder whether worship in Hindu temples may be forbidden on that valid ground (India's Rebirth p. 55). How prophetic! Sri Aurobindo could not have foreseen that so many Muslim countries would ban Rushdie's book and that Hindu processions would often be forbidden in cities, for fear of offending the Muslims. Sri Aurobindo felt that sooner or later Hindus would have to assert again the greatness of Hinduism.

And here we must say a word about monotheism, for it is the key to the understanding of Islam. Christians and Muslims have always harped on the fact that their religions sprang-up as a reaction against the pagan polytheist creeds, which adored many Gods. " There is only one real God they said (ours), all the rest are just worthless idols ". This " monotheism versus polytheism business " has fuelled since then the deep, fanatic, violent and murderous zeal of Islam against polytheist religions, particularly against Hinduism, which is the most comprehensive, most widely practiced of all them. It even cemented an alliance of sorts between the two great monotheist religions of the world, Christianity and Islam, witness the Britishers' attitude in India, who favoured Indian Muslims and Sikhs against the Hindus; or the King of Morocco who, even though he is one of the most moderate Muslim leaders in the world, recently said in an interview: " we have no fight with Christianity, our battle is against the Infidel who adores many gods ". But the truth is that Hinduism is without any doubt the most monotheist religion in the World, for

it recognises divine unity in multiplicity. It does not say: " there is only one God, which is Mohammed. If you do not believe in Him I will kill you ". It says instead: " Yes Mohammed is a manifestation of God, but so is Christ, or Buddha, or Krishna, or Confucius ". This philosophy, this way of seeing, which the Christians and Muslims call " impious ", is actually the foundation for a true monotheist understanding of the world. It is because of this " If you do not recognize Allah (or Christ), I will kill you ", that tens of millions of Hindus were slaughtered by Arabs and other millions of South Americans annihilated by the Christians. And ultimately the question is: Are the Muslims of today ready to accept Hinduism ? Unfortunately no. For Muslims all over the world, Hinduism is still the Infidel religion " par excellence ". This what their religion tell them, at every moment, at every verse, at the beginning of each prayer : " Only Allah is great ". And their mollahs still enjoin them to go on fight " jihad " to deliver the world of the infidels. And if the armies of Babar are not there any longer; and if it is not done any more to kill a 100.000 Hindus in a day, there is still the possibility of planting a few bombs in Bombay, of fuelling separatisms in the hated land and eventually to drop a nuclear device, which will settle the problem once and for all. As to the Indian Muslim, he might relate to his Hindu brother, for whatever he says, he remains an Indian, nay a Indu; but his religion will make sure that he does not forget that his duty is to hate the Infidel. This is the crux of the problem today and the riddle if Islam has to solved, if it wants to survive in the long run.

We will never be able to assess the immense physical harm done to India by the Muslim invasions. Even more difficult is to estimate the moral and the spiritual damage done to Hindu India. But once again, the question is not of vengeance, or of reawakening old ghosts, but of not repeating the same mistakes. Unfortunately, the harm done by the Muslims conquest is not over. The seeds planted by the Moghols, by Babar, Mahmud, or Aurangzeb, have matured: the 125 million Indian Muslims of today have forgotten that they were once peaceful, loving Hindus, forcibly converted to a religion they hated. And they sometimes take-up as theirs a cry of fanaticism which is totally alien to their culture. Indeed, as Sri Aurobindo once said: "More than 90% of the Indian Muslims are descendants of converted Hindus and belong as much to the Indian nation as the Hindu themselves"...(Rebirth of India, p.237) The embryo of secession planted by the Mahomedans, has also matured into a poisonous tree which has been called Pakistan and comes back to haunt India through three wars and the shadow of a nuclear conflict embracing South Asia. And in India, Kashmir and Ayodhya are reminders that the Moghol cry for the house of Islam in India is not yet over.

\* For more details, read "Negationism in India, concealing the record of Islam", by Koenraad Elst, Voice of India, New Delhi.

## CHAPTER 6) : THE EUROPEAN INVASIONS

Of the early European colonisers, the Portuguese seem to symbolise best the total disregard, ill will and destructive spirit of the West towards India. Whatever all the folklore today about the "relaxed atmosphere" of Portuguese Goa (the good life, the wine, the sensuous women), the Portuguese were a ruthless lot. In 1498, Vasco de Gama, the Portuguese "hero", was generously received by Zamorin, the Hindu king of Calicut, who granted him the right to establish warehouses for commerce. But once again, Hindu tolerance was exploited and the Portuguese wanted more and more: in 1510 Alfonso de Albuquerque seized Goa, where he started a reign of

terror, burning "heretics", crucifying Brahmins, using false theories to forcibly convert the lower castes and encouraging his soldiers to take Indian mistresses. Indeed, the Inquisition in Goa had nothing to envy the Muslims, except in sheer number. Ultimately, the Portuguese had to be kicked out of India, when all other colonisers had already left.

There is no need to rewrite here the story of British India. From 1600, when the East India Company received its charter from Queen Elizabeth, to 1947, when Mountbatten packed up the Union Jack, the history of the British in India has been one of subtle treachery, crass commercial exploitation and sometimes of savagery. The English might have been totally ignorant of India's past greatness, when they set upon acquiring bit by bit their empire, but at least there was some early attempt at understanding each other between a few enlightened Britishers and some Indians. But after the mutiny of 1857, the English went into a frenzy of murder, revenge and atrocity and alienated themselves for ever from the "natives". Henceforth they would live separately in their forts, or their cantonments, and would be totally segregated from Indians, ending for ever any chance of bridging the gap between the two cultures. Indeed, Danielou feels that the crushing of the revolt, "was to trigger the slow and insidious destruction of one of the greatest civilisations of the world, of its philosophy, its arts, its sciences and its techniques now despised and discouraged. This was disaster for universal culture, he concludes". (Histoire de l'Inde p. 329)

Another question should also be asked: was the European conquest a unifying factor in India? According to Western historians, such as A.L. Basham, yes. For prior to the British conquest, they label India as a nation of feudal kings, constantly infighting each other. But as seen earlier, when one discounts the theory of an Aryan invasion, when one understands the genius of Vedic India, the greatness of its institutions, the unparalleled tolerance and spiritual vision of Hinduism and how it had devised a remarkable political system adapted to its own needs and psychology, this theory does not stand under scrutiny. In truth, the British divided India; they exploited the schism between Hindus and Muslims and aggravated a small discontentment in the Sikh community. Dividing India to them was only a practical need to further their imperial dream - it was not done out of sheer fanatical conviction. But does that make it more acceptable? Nevertheless, when History will be rewritten, the British will have to share the blame for the harm that was done to India. And their share has four names: MISSIONARIES, SECULARISM, INDIAN ELITE, REPRESSION.

## 1) THE MISSIONARIES PRE-INDEPENDENCE

The missionaries arrived in India on the heels of the British. As mentioned in the first chapter, their first prey were the Adivasis, the tribal people, which they promptly proceeded to name as the "original" inhabitants of India, who were colonised by the "bad" Brahmins, during the mythical Aryan invasion. "Was it not right, they said, to free them from the grip of their masters, who had enslaved them both socially and religiously"? Thus they set the Advisees against the mainstream of Hindu society and sowed the seeds of an explosive conflict which is ready to blow up today, particularly in UP, where the caste conflict is exploited politically by Malaya Sing and Chance Ram and in Bizarre by Laloo Prasad. The missionaries in India were always supporters of colonialism; they encouraged it and their whole structure was based on "the good Western civilised world being brought to the Pagans". In the words of Charles Grant (1746-1823),

Chairman of the East India Company: "we cannot avoid recognising in the people of Hindustan a race of men lamentably degenerate and base...governed by malevolent and licentious passions...and sunk in misery by their vices". (as quoted by Sitaram Goel, in his book "History of Hindu-Christian encounters, page 32). Claudius Buccchanan a chaplain attached to the East India Company, went even further: "...Neither truth, nor honesty, honour, gratitude, nor charity, is to be found in the breast of a Hindoo"! what a comment about a nation that gave the world the Vedas and the Upanishads, at a time when Europeans were still fornicating in their caves! Lord Hastings, Governor General of India from 1813, could not agree more; he writes in his diary on October 2d of the same year: "The Hindoo appears a being nearly limited to mere animal functions...with no higher intellect than a dog or an elephant, or a monkey..." No wonder that the British opened the doors wide for missionaries! After the failed mutiny of 1857, the missionaries became even more militant, using the secular arm of the British Raj, who felt that the use of the sword at the service of the Gospel, was now entirely justified. Remember how Swami Vivekananda cried in anguish at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago: "if we Hindus dig out all the dirt from the bottom of the Pacific Ocean and throw it in you faces, it will be but a speck compared to what the missionaries have done to our religion and culture "" . These missionaries indeed poisoned the minds of the people they converted, making them hate their own religion, their own country sometimes, cutting them from their own cultural roots. What better example of this than the Anglo-Indians, a race which became neither here nor there, disallowing their Indianness, but never being fully accepted as their own by their British masters. Hence they had to die: evolution does not tolerate a people that loses its soul. It is the same with the "Pondichériens" the French of Tamil origin from Pondichery. Originated from lower castes, they were converted by the early French missionaries and in time assumed French names, French manners and considered themselves as French. But today the French have forgotten them, they cost too much to their government and apart from a few brilliant exceptions, they are also a race which is slowly dying and is gradually engulfed by the Indian Tamils. It is also true that the missionaries, such as "Saint" François Xavier, broke down many "idol" temples to build their churches, although it never had the ruthlessness and ferocity of the Muslims. Nevertheless, the missionaries in India were (and still are) a divisive force, which used the Adivasis for advocating covertly a breaking-up of the country. Prof. A.K. Kishu, Secretary General of the Indian Council of Indigenous and Tribal people, has been lobbying hard at the UN so that the Adivasis are recognised as "the original settlers of India". Koenraad Elst writes that the missionaries were ultimately all set to trigger a Christian partition in India: "at the time of Independence, Christian mission centres had dreamed up a plan for a Christian partition in collaboration with the Muslim League. The far north-east, Chotanagur and parts of Kerala were to become Christian states, forming a non-Hindu chain with the Nizam's Hyderabad and with Pakistani Bengal. The secret agreement between the Muslim League and missionaries acting as "representatives of tribal interest", is sometimes used in Muslim propoganda, as proof that "Muslims and tribals are natural allies". Sadly for the Christians, Sardar Patel foiled their plans. (Indigenous Indian Page 229) Even after independence, the missionaries seem to have been involved in secessionist activities in India's north-east, as well as on the Burmese side of the border. Always pretending to act as mediators, they appear to have actually helped the separatists with vital informations. Since then, they have been dictating policies in Nagaland, Megalayam and Mizoram, which recently celebrated with great fanfare its century of Christian rule.

Finally, no history of the missionary involvement in India, can be complete without mentioning the health and education services they rendered. It is true, that unparalleled selfless service was given and is still rendered all over the country, that Kerala got 100% literacy, thanks in greater part to Christianity, that the best schools in India are Catholic, that the medical care is unique and most advanced. True also that sometimes this service is rendered out of true Christian charity, without any ulterior motive. But nevertheless, there is no doubt about the ultimate purpose of that selfless service. The South Indian Missionary Conference of 1858, set forth very clearly the goals of education in India: "the object of all missionary labour should not be primarily the civilisation, BUT the evangelization of the heathen...schools may be regarded as converting agencies and their value estimated by the number who are led to renounce idolatry and make an open profession of Christianity"... Has this policy really changed today? Not that much. The International School of Kodaikanal, under the guise of "religious studies", still tries to convert its students, many of whom are Indians. And nothing symbolises better today the continuing spirit of the missionaries in India than Mother Theresa and other missionaries, who have been glorified by the book "the City of Joy" by Dominique Lapierre, a wonderfully written book, which unfortunately gives the impression that a small part of India (the slums of Calcutta), represents the whole of the country.

## 2) SECULARISM

Many post-independence Indians, particularly the Congress politicians, have always harped on the fact that "The British left no greater legacy in India than secularism". But in the name of secularism, how much irreparable harm has been done to India, how much damage, slander, stupidity has been heaped upon the land of Bharat! The beauty and the genius of a truly secular India is indeed appealing. Who would not dream of an India where all would live in harmony: Muslims, Hindus, Christians, Parsis, Buddhists, Jains, Jews, North Indians, South Indians, Assamese, Kashmiris, Sikhs, Nepalese... Which country in the world can boast of such a diversity, such an incredible mosaic of races, religions, ethnic groups ? There would be at the centre a benevolent, non-religious, liberal, reform-oriented, secular government, which would allow for unlimited religious and regional autonomies, so that the soul of each culture, each religion, finds its right expression in the fold of a united India. Is this then the democratic inheritance left by India's erstwhile masters ?

In reality, when the British arrived in India, they were only a handful, and realised that they could not govern such a huge country with so few of theirs. They then set upon dividing the nation, pitting each community against the other. In the Muslims they found a ready ear. It would be a total lie to say that the British engineered the Muslim-Hindu enmity and are to be held responsible for the creation of Pakistan. The Muslim-Hindu divide was a problem of religious incompatibility, on the parts of the Muslims, who saw in Hinduism an infidel religion, which had to be wiped-out. Now the clash of swords was no more, and the British were there to pacify everybody; but they very quickly scented blood and felt they could use the ardent wish of Indian Muslims to be separate on their own, now that the bitter realisation had dawned upon them that they could not make of India a Dar-ul-Islam, a house of Islam. In the same way, the British were prompt to seize upon the dissatisfaction of the Sikhs, who had fought them ferociously but in peace served them as faithfully, forming with the Gurkhas their best soldiers. But in treating a minority community, the Muslims (or the Christians), on par with the majority community, the



Hindus, the British conveniently forgot that there were more than 300 millions Hindus in India, that Hinduism is more than a religion, it is the very basis, for India's greatness and identity and that which unites all other Indian cultures and even religions: Dharma, the living truth.

### 3) THE INDIAN ELITE

The harm that the British did by using secularism for their own selfish purposes is not over. For when they came, they set upon establishing an intermediary race of Indians, whom they could entrust with their work at the middle level echelons and who could one day be convenient tools to rule by proxy or semi-proxy. They thus allowed a small minority of upper class Indians to be educated in England, hoping that in time with a few generations to spare, these brown Britishers would not only completely adopt English views, but would be convenient and supple instruments to use. These people, whether maharajas, lawyers, or journalists, were made to feel ashamed of their ways, to look down upon their compatriots, and thus tried to become more British than the Britishers, be it in their dress, in their thinking... or in their Hinduism-bashing. And today the dream has come true: the greatest exponents of secularism, those who flaunt this immoral weapon at every instance, are those who are in control of India, the elite of this country: the politicians, the journalists, the top bureaucrats, in fact the whole Westernised cream of India. And what is even more paradoxical, is that most of them are Hindus. But do they realise that this particular brand of secularism is a colonial leftover? That it has been planted in their minds? That they are traitors to their brothers, to their religion, whose greatness, tolerance, non-violence, compassion, is unparalleled in the world? An incredible harm to India was done by these Brown Sahibs. It is they who entertained the whims of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and later Jinnah, who very early advocated openly a separate nation for the Muslims of India, thereby setting the stage for the partition of India, all in the name of secularism of course. It is they who upon getting independence, have denied India its true identity and copied blindly from the West to frame its Constitution, unfit to India's own ways and needs. But again, this is another story.

### 4) REPRESSION, IMPOVERISHMENT

The British were certainly not the Muslims, whose ruthlessness and atrocities have never been equalled in India's history. Nevertheless, they did their fair share of harm to India, which has not yet really recovered from two centuries of Raj. Their brutality, whether the hangings of Indian nationalists, or the incredible ferocity which followed the great Indian Mutiny, or the massacre of Jalianwala Bagh, are today part of history. They ruled for two centuries with the unshakeable conviction of their own racial superiority which made Fitzjames Stephen, the philosopher of the Indian Civil Service say: "Ours is essentially an absolute government, which has for base not the consent of the Indians, but their conquest. It does not want to represent the concept of the indigenous population of life and government and can never do, because then it would represent idolatry and barbarism. It represents a belligerent civilisation and nothing could be more dangerous than to have in one's administration, at the head of a government founded on conquest-implying in all points the superiority of the conquering race, its institution, its principles, that men who hesitate to impose themselves openly". One of the most important aspects of British India was the development of the British system of education and of the English language as the sole base of university teaching. Only the British diplomas were



recognised and permitted to obtain a job. The ancient centres of Hindu culture got gradually bypassed and only the Brahmins kept the knowledge of Sanskrit alive.

Industrially, the British suffocated India, gradually strangling Indian industries, whose finished products, textiles in particular, were of a quality unique in the world, which had made them famous over the centuries. Instead, they oriented Indian industry towards jute, cotton, tea, oil seeds, which they needed as raw materials for their home industries. They employed cheap labour for their enterprises, while traditional artisanat were perishing. India, which used to be a land of plenty, " where milk and honey flowed ", started slowly dying. According to British records, One million Indians died of famine between 1800 and 1825; 4 million between 1825 and 1850; 5 million between 1850 and 1875; and 15 million between 1875 and 1900. Thus, 25 million Indians died in one hundred years ! The British may be proud of their bloody record. It is probably more honourable and straightforward to kill in the name of Allah, than under the guise of petty commercial interest and total disregard for the ways of a 5000 year civilisation. Thus, by the turn of the century, India was bled dry and had no resources left. Fortunately, visionaries, like Jemshadji Tata, started important industries so that there would be a structure at independence, but in the face of so much resistance by the British. In textiles for example, they imposed the free entry of Lancashire products and slapped a heavy tax on export of Indian textiles. Is it necessary to remind too, how the English "exported" Indian labour all over the world in their colonies, whether to Sri Lanka for the tea plantations, to Fiji, to South Africa, or to the West Indies?

Culturally, there is no need to recall the rape of India. The thousands of art treasures, the diamonds, the priceless statues, stolen, which now adorn the houses of the rich in England, or the Queen's private collections. That the British still do not feel the need to hand back these treasures to India is a shame. The ecological rape of India is also a fact: the tens of thousands of tigers needlessly shot, the great massacre of trees and forests for the voracious railways and the razing of old forts and houses.

Finally, the history of the British would be incomplete without mentioning the positive side. The unification of India by a single language, although it is hoped that it will be eventually replaced by India's true language of the future, acceptable to all. The vast railway system, which more than anything else unified India. The remarkable Postal system, whose structures have survived till today. The roads network of India. But all these were not really meant for the welfare of India, but for a better administration of their own colony. And ultimately, the question should be asked: "did the British leave India with any understanding, any inkling of the greatness of the country they had lived with for two centuries"? Except for a few souls like Annie Besant or Sister Nivedita, the answer seems to be: NO. And today, John Major probably does not understand one bit more about India than Lord Mountbatten did. But then Mountabatten ought to have known better.

## CHAPTER 7: THE INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT

It is hoped that one day the history of India's independence movement will be totally rewritten. For what is now taught, both in the West and in India, is often the history of the superficial, the apparent, the false even. And those who have least contributed to India's independence, or worse who were partially responsible for its most terrible traumas, occupy a place of honour in those

books, while those who had a deeper vision and worked with dedication for a true, wholesome independence, are in the shadow and have been waylaid by Historians.

History wants us to believe that the independence movement started with the Indian National Congress. But originally, the Congress was a tool fashioned by the British for their own use. Witness the fact that it all began in December 1885, with an Englishman, A.O. Hume, with the avowed aim to: "Allow all those who work for the national (read British) good to meet each other personally, to discuss and decide of the political operations to start during the year". And certainly, till the end of the 19th century, the Congress, who regarded British rule in India as a "divine dispensation", was happy with criticising moderately the Government, while reaffirming its loyalty to the Crown and its faith in "liberalism" and the British innate sense of justice"!!! Thus for a long time, the Britishers considered favourably the Congress and sought to use it to justify their continuing occupation of India. But soon of course it changed into suspicion and downright hostility, as the Congress, realising its folly, turned towards constitutional agitation to obtain from the British Parliament a few laws favourable to India. And the Englishmen did hand over a few crumbs here and there, such as giving Lord Sinha (Lord Sinha indeed!) the honour of becoming the first Indian to be part of the Governor's Executive Council...So what ?

What must be understood to grasp the whole history of the Congress, is that its pre-independence leaders were anglicised, western educated Indians, whose idealism was at best a dose of liberalism peppered with a bit of socialism "British Labour style". They were the outcrop of an old British policy of forming a small westernised elite, cut off from its Indian roots, which will serve in the intermediary hierarchies of the British Raj and act as go-between the master and the slaves. Thus, not only were these Congress leaders "moderate " (as they came to be called), partially cut-off from the reality of India, from the greatness that Was India, the soul-glory of its simple people, but because their mind worked on the pattern of their masters, they turned to be the greatest Hindu-baiters and haters of them all -as verily their descendants, even until today, still are.

But these westernised moderate Congress leaders, found it difficult to get identified by the vast mass of India which was deeply religious. Thus they encouraged the start of "reformed" Hindu movements, such as the Arya Samaj or the Brahma Samaj, through which they could attack the old Hindu system, under the guise of transforming it, which is perfectly acceptable to all Hindus, as Hinduism has always tolerated in its fold divergent movements. It is these early Congress leaders who began the slow but insidious crushing of the Hindu society. For instance, the Congress Governments, which were installed after July 1937 in most of the provinces, encouraged everywhere the development of education modelled on the British system. And comments Danielou: "the teaching of philosophy, arts, sciences, which constituted the prestigious Indian cultural tradition, became more and more ignored and **COULD ONLY SURVIVE THANKS TO THE BRAHMINS**, without any help whatsoever from the State." When the first true cultural, social and political movements, which had at heart the defence of India's true heritage started taking shape, such as the much decried Hindu Mahashaba, which attempted to counterbalance the Muslim League's influence, or the even more maligned Rama Rajya Parishad, initiated by the remarkable Hindu monk Swamy Karpatri, they were ridiculed by the Congress, which used to amplify the problems of untouchability, castes, or cow worshipping, to belittle

these movements, which after all, were only trying to change India from a greatness that was to a greatness to be.

"The Congress, writes Danielou, utilised to the hilt its English speaking press to present these Hindu parties as barbaric, fanatical, ridiculous; and the British media in turn, took-up, as parrots, the cry of their Indian counterparts". (Histoire de l'Inde, p. 345) To this day, nothing has changed in India: the English-speaking press still indulges in Hindu-bashing and it is faithfully copied by the western correspondents, most of whom are totally ignorant of India and turn towards Indian intellectuals to fashion their opinions. But this strategy was good enough to convince the British that when they left, they would have to hand over power to the "respectable" Congress (after all, we are all gentlemen), even though it constituted a tiny westernised minority, whereas India's true Hindu majority would be deprived of their right. The Congress did turn radical finally in 1942, when because of Mahatma Gandhi's rigorous non-violence policy, it adopted a non-co-operation attitude towards the war effort. Thus the British declared the Congress illegal, jailed most of its leaders and embarked on a policy of heavy repression. But the truth is that those of the Congress who were imprisoned and are deified today for that fact, went there not directly for India's independence, but because Mahatma Gandhi refused to cooperate in the second world war.

So, ultimately, what was true nationalism? Who were the real revolutionaries, those who had an inner vision of what the British really represented, those who knew what was the genius of India and how it was destined to be great again? Once more, we have a wrong understanding of nationalism, because we are induced in error by the West's opinions about it. In Europe, nationalism means external revolutionary movements, revolutionaries, materialism. But India's greatness has always been her spirituality, her strength was always founded upon her Spirit's hold. Not only her Brahmins, but also her Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras even, drew their heroism from that fountain. Thus in India, the nationalist movement, the REAWAKENING of India's soul started at the source, in her Spirit.

Sometimes a nation's soul is more predominant in one region, in one particular culture. In India's early independence movement, it was Bengal which held high the light of reawakening. This has often been forgotten and justice should be done again. Thus, in Bengal, there was born a man who could not read and write a single word. A man without intellectual training, a man who would be considered totally useless by Britishers, or westernised Indians. But this man's inner strength was so great, his truth so radiating, that from all over India, educated and uneducated, rich and poor, they came to the temple of Dakshineswar in Calcutta and bowed at the feet of Shri Ramakrishna. The work of salvation, the work of raising India out of her lethargic sleep HAD BEGUN. Narendarnath Dutta, later known as Swami Vivekananda, was the brightest disciple of Ramakrishna, and a true son of India. He was the first spiritualised Indian political leader, an ardent Hindu, who was not afraid to call for Hinduism's adaptation to the modern world. He was also the first to inspire in the Western world a certain respect towards Hinduism, because of his education and his forceful personality.

But the man who was the true visionary of an independent India, the man who worked most of all for her liberation, the man who was a yogi, a saint, an avatar, has been mostly ignored by history. Others, who played only a superficial role and did not have a millionth of his vision took

the forefront. That man of course was Sri Aurobindo. Born on the 15th August 1872 in Calcutta, he spends his first years at Rangpur (now in Bangladesh) and at the age of 5 is sent to Loreto Convent school in Darjeeling. His father, who wants him to have a thorough Western education, packs him to England, where he enters St Paul's School in London in 1884 and King's College, Cambridge in 1890. Sri Aurobindo is a brilliant student and passes the I.C.S., but "fails" to appear for the riding test and is disqualified. After 13 years in England Sri Aurobindo returned to India on February 6, 1893 at the age of 20. He joined the Baroda State Service from 1897 to early 1906 and taught French and English at the Baroda college, before eventually becoming its Principal. It was at that time that he started writing a series of articles "New lamps for Old" in the Indu Prakash, a Marathi-English daily from Bombay. Sample of his early writings: "I say of the Congress that its aims are mistaken, that the spirit in which it is proceeding is not a spirit of sincerity and whole-heartedness and that the methods it has chosen are not the right methods, and their leaders in whom it trusts, not the right sort of men to be leaders. In brief that we are at present the blind led, if not by the blind, at least by the one-eyed. (Rebirth of India, p. 10). From 1900 onwards, Sri Aurobindo realised that passive resistance, constitutional agitation "A La Congress", was not the right path to achieve an independent India. In the true spirit of a yogi, he re-enacted the Baghavad Gita's great message: that violence is sometimes necessary, if it flows from Dharma -and today's Dharma is the liberation of India. Thus he began contacting revolutionary groups in Maharashtra and Bengal and tried to co-ordinate their action. One should remember that at that time, and indeed until independence, violence against the oppressive British was not organised; it was the work of a few individuals or a sudden outburst of uncontrolled anger and that the famous freedom fighters of the Congress only went jail because they were passive resisters. At Sri Aurobindo's initiative, P. Mitter, Surendranath Tagore and Sister Nivedita formed the first Secret Council for revolutionary activities in Bengal. But action was accompanied by inner vision: "While others look upon their country as an inert piece of matter, forests, hills and rivers, I look upon my country as the Mother. What would a son do if a demon sat on her mother's breast and started sucking her blood?..I know I have the strength to deliver this fallen race. It is not physical strength- I am not going to fight with sword or gun, but with the strength of knowledge" (India's Rebirth, p. 16) In 1905, the terrible Lord Curzon partitioned Bengal. This divide-and-rule move was meant to break the back of Bengali political agitation and use the East Bengal Muslim community to drive a wedge between Hindus and Muslims, a policy that was to culminate in India's partition in 1947. Bengal responded to its partition with massive and unanimous protests in which many personalities took part, such as Rabindranath Tagore, Surendranath Banerjee, Bepin Chandra Pal... The ideal of Swadeshi, which called for the boycott of British goods, spread widely.

It was at this time that B.C. Pal launched the famous English daily, Bande Mataram; Sri Aurobindo joined it and soon became its editor. Day after day, he jotted down his vision and tried to instil fire and courage in the nation through the pages of Bande Mataram. What was true nationalism for Sri Aurobindo? "Nationalism is not a mere political programme; nationalism is a religion that has come from God; Nationalism is a creed which you shall have to live.. If you are going to be a nationalist, if you are going to assent to this religion of Nationalism, you must do it in the religious spirit. You must remember that you are the instruments of God... Then there will be a blessing on our work and this great nation will rise again and become once more what it was in the days of spiritual greatness. You are the instruments of God to save the light, to save the spirit of India from lasting obscurity and abasement.."(Bande Mataram, P.655) But Sri

Aurobindo had to fight against the Congress Moderates (who, it must be remembered came out openly for complete independence only in 1929) of whom he said: "There is a certain section of India which regards Nationalism as madness and they say Nationalism will ruin the country.. They are men who live in the pure intellect and they look at things purely from the intellectual point of view. What does the intellect think? Here is a work that you have undertaken, a work so gigantic, so stupendous, the means of which are so poor, the resistance to which will be so strong, so organised, so disciplined, so well equipped with all the weapons science can supply, with all the strength that human power and authority can give... (Bande Mataram, p. 656)

Sri Aurobindo was very clear in what was demanded of a leader of India: "Politics is the work of the Kshatriya and it is the virtues of the Kshatriya we must develop if we are to be morally fit for freedom (India's Rebirth, p. 19). Or: "What India needs at the moment is the aggressive virtues, the spirit of soaring idealism, bold creation, fearless resistance, courageous attack". (India's rebirth, p. 22) But if the Moderates dismissed Sri Aurobindo as a "mystic", Lord Minto, then Viceroy of India, made no such mistake, calling him, "the most dangerous man we have to deal with at present". Thus Sri Aurobindo was arrested on May 2d 1908, following a failed assassination attempt on a British judge by a nationalist belonging to his brother's secret society. Sri Aurobindo spent a year in jail, which proved to be the turning point of his life as he went through the whole gamut of spiritual realisations. When he came out, the nationalist movement had nearly collapsed and he set about giving it a fresh impetus, launching a new English weekly, the Karmayogin, as well as a Bengali weekly, Dharma. This following is an extract from his famous Uttarpara speech, where he speaks of his spiritual experiences in jail: " Something has been shown to you in this year of seclusion, something about which you had your doubts and it is the truth of the Hindu religion. It is this religion that I am raising up before the world, it is this that I have perfected and developed through the rishis, saints and avatars, and now it is going forth to do my work among the nations. I am raising this nation to send forth my word...When therefore it is said that India shall rise, it is the Santana Dharma that shall rise. When it is said that India shall be great, it is the Santana Dharma that shall be great. But what is the Hindu religion? It is the Hindu religion only, because the Hindu nation has kept it, because in this peninsula it grew up in the seclusion of the sea and the Himalayas, because in this sacred and ancient land it was given as a charge to the Aryan race to preserve through the ages. That which we call the Hindu religion is really the eternal religion, because it is the universal religion which embraces all others. If a religion is not universal, it cannot be eternal. A narrow religion, a sectarian religion, an exclusive religion can live only for a limited time and limited purpose...I say no longer that Santana Dharma is for us nationalism... Santana Dharma IS nationalism" (India's Rebirth, p.46)

In mid-February 1910, news reached that the British had again decided to arrest Sri Aurobindo and close down the offices of the Karmayogin. By that time Sri Aurobindo had the vision that India was free; for the external events are always preceded by an occult happening, sometimes long before they become "fait accompli". Sri Aurobindo then received an "Adesh", an inspiration that he must go to Pondichery, then under French rule. He settled there, with a few disciples, the number of whom slowly swelled, until it became known as the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. He wrote all his masterpieces and devoted the remaining of his life to bringing down what he called the "supramental manifestation on the earth". The great Sage passed away on 5 December 1950.



Hinduism, true Hinduism was for Sri Aurobindo the basis for India's past greatness, it was also the essence of nationalism, the MEANS of liberating India and ultimately the foundation of the future India. Unfortunately, the leaders of the Indian National Congress did not have the same vision. Of these leaders, history has mostly remembered two, the most famous of all: Jawaharlal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi.

## JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

Nehru, writes Danielou, "was the perfect replica of a certain type of Englishman. He often used the expression 'continental people', with an amused and sarcastic manner, to designate French or Italians. He despised non-anglicised Indians and had a very superficial and partial knowledge of India. His ideal was the romantic socialism of 19th century Britain. But this type of socialism was totally unfit to India, where there was no class struggle and where the conditions were totally different from 19th century Europe." (Histoire de l'Inde p. 349) It should be added that Nehru was not a fiery leader, maybe because of his innate "gentlemanship" and often succumbed not only to Gandhi's views, with which he sometimes disagreed, not only to the blackmailing of Jinnah and the fanatical Indian Muslim minority, but also to the British, particularly Lord Mountbatten, whom history has portrayed as the benevolent last Viceroy of India, but who actually was most instrumental in the partition of India, whatever "Freedom at Midnight" a very romanticised book, says. (Remember Churchill's words on learning about Partition: "At last we had the last word". It may be added that the British had a habit of leaving a total mess when they had to surrender a colony, witness Palestine, or India-Pakistan - and they are today in the process of doing exactly the same thing in Hong Kong, under the guise of "democracy").

## MAHATMA GANDHI

Mahatma Gandhi was indeed a great soul, an extraordinary human being, a man with a tremendous appeal to the people. But, unfortunately, he was a misfit in India. Karma or fate, or God, or whatever you want to call it, made a mistake when they sent him down to the land of Bharat. For at heart, Gandhi was a European, his ideals were a blend of Christianity raised to an exalted moral standard and a dose of liberalism "à la Tolstoy". The patterns and goals he put forward for India, not only came to naught, but sometimes did great harm to a country, which unquestionably he loved immensely. Furthermore, even after his death, Gandhism, although it does not really have any relevance to Modern India, is still used shamelessly by all politicians and intellectuals, to smoke-screen their ineffectiveness and to perpetuate their power. To understand Gandhi properly, one has to put in perspective his aims, his goals, and the results today.

One has to start at the beginning. There is no doubt that after his bitter experiences with racism in South Africa, he took to heart the plight of fellow Indians there. But what did he achieve for them? Second class citizenship! Worse, he dissociated them from their black African brothers, who share the same colour and are the majority. And today the Indians in South Africa are in a difficult position, sandwiched between the Whites who prefer them to the Blacks, but do not accept them fully as their own and the Blacks who often despise them for their superior attitudes. Ultimately, they sided with the Moderate Whites led by De Klerk and this was a mistake as Mandela was elected and the Blacks wrested total power in South Africa -and once more we



might have an exodus of Indians from a place where they have lived and which they have loved for generations.

The Mahatma did a lot for India. But the question again is: What remains today in India of Gandhi's heritage? Spinning was a joke. "He made Charkha a religious article of faith and excluded all people from Congress membership who would not spin. How many, even among his own followers believe in the gospel of Charkha? Such a tremendous waste of energy, just for the sake of a few annas is most unreasonable", wrote Sri Aurobindo in 1938 (India's Reb 207). Does any Congress leader today still weave cotton? And has Gandhi's khadi policy of village handicrafts for India survived him? Nehru was the first to embark upon a massive "Soviet type" heavy industrialisation, resolutely turning his back on Gandhi's policy, although handicrafts in India do have their place.

Then, nowhere does Gandhi's great Christian morality find more expression than in his attitude towards sex. All his life he felt guilty about having made love to his wife while his father was dying. But guiltiness is truly a Western prerogative. In India sex has (was at least) always been put in its proper place, neither suppressed, as in Victorian times, nor brought to its extreme perversion, like in the West today. Gandhi's attitude towards sex was to remain ambivalent all his life, sleeping with his beautiful nieces "to test his brahmacharya", while advocating abstinence for India's population control. But why impose on others what he practised for himself? Again, this is a very Christian attitude: John Paul II, fifty years later, enjoins all Christians to do the same. But did Gandhi think for a minute how millions of Indian women would be able to persuade their husbands to abstain from sex when they are fertile? And who will suffer abortions, pregnancy and other ignominies? And again, India has totally turned its back on Gandhi's policy: today its birth control programme must be the most elaborate in the world -and does not even utilise force (except for a short period during the Emergency), as the Chinese have done.

For all the world, Gandhi is synonymous with non-violence. But once more, a very Christian notion. Gandhi loved the Mahabharata. But did he understand that sometimes non-violence does more harm than violence itself? That violence sometimes is "Dharma", if it is done for defending one's country, or oneself, or one's mother, or sisters? Take the Cripps proposals for instance. In 1942, the Japanese were at the doors of India. England was weakened, vulnerable and desperately needs support. Churchill sent Sir Stafford Cripps to India to propose that if India participated in the war effort, Great Britain would grant her Dominion status (as in Australia or Canada) at the end of the war. Sri Aurobindo sent a personal letter to the Congress, urging it to accept. Nehru wavered, but ultimately, Gandhi in the name of non-violence put his foot down and the Cripps proposal was rejected. Had it been accepted, history might have been changed, Partition and its terrible bloodshed would have been avoided. Gandhi also never seemed to have realised the great danger that Nazism represented for humanity. A great Asuric wave had risen in Europe and threatened to engulf the world and it had to be fought -with violence. Calling Hitler "my beloved brother", a man who murdered 6 million Jews in cold-blood just to prove the purity of his own race, is more than just innocence, it borders on criminal credulity. And did not Gandhi also advise the Jews to let themselves be butchered?...

Ultimately, it must be said that whatever his saintliness, his extreme and somehow rigid asceticism, Gandhi did enormous harm to India and this harm has two names: Muslims and

Untouchables. The British must have rubbed their hands in glee: here was a man who was perfecting their policy of rule-and-divide, for ultimately nobody more than Gandhi contributed to the partition of India, by his obsession to always give in to the Muslims, by his obstinate refusal to see that the Muslims always started rioting - Hindus only retaliated; by his indulgence of Jinnah, going as far as proposing to make him the Prime Minister of India. Sri Aurobindo was very clear about Hindu-Muslim unity: "I am sorry they are making a fetish of Hindu-Muslim unity. It is no use ignoring facts; some day the Hindus may have to fight the Muslims and they must prepare for it. Hindu-Muslim unity should not mean the subjection of the Hindus. Every time the mildness of the Hindu has given way. The best solution would be to allow the Hindus to organise themselves and the Hindu-Muslim unity would take care of itself, it would automatically solve the problem. Otherwise we are lulled into a false sense of satisfaction that we have solved a difficult problem, when in fact we have only shelved it." (India's Rebirth, p. 159)

Gandhi's love of the Harijans, as he called them, was certainly very touching and sprang from the highest motivations, but it had also as its base a Christian notion that would have found a truer meaning in Europe, where there are no castes, only classes. Glorifying the scavenger as a man of God makes good poetry, but little social meaning. In the words of Sri Aurobindo: "the idea that it needs a special "punya" to be born a Bhangi is, of course one of these forceful exaggerations which are common to the Mahatma and impress greatly the mind of his hearers. The idea behind is that his function is an indispensable service to society, quite as much as the Brahmin's, but that being disagreeable, it would need a special moral heroism to choose it voluntarily and he thinks as if the soul freely chose it as such a heroic service to the society and as reward of righteous acts- but that is hardly likely. In any case, it is not true that the Bhangi life is superior to the Brahmin life and the reward of special righteousness, no more that it is true that a man is superior because he is born a Brahmin. A spiritual man of pariah birth is superior in the divine values to an unspiritual and worldly-minded Brahmin. Birth counts but the basic value is in the soul behind the man and the degree to which it manifests itself in nature". (India's Rebirth, p.201) Once more Gandhi took the European element in the decrying of the caste system, forgetting the divine element behind. And unfortunately he sowed the seeds of future disorders and of a caste war in India, of which we see the effects only today.

Non-violence, you say? But Gandhi did the greatest violence to his body, in true Christian fashion, punishing it, to blackmail others in doing his will, even if he thought it was for the greater good. And ultimately, it may be asked, what remains of Gandhi's non-violence to day? India has fought three wars with Pakistan, had to combat the Chinese, has the second biggest army in the world and has to fight counter-insurgency movements in Punjab, Assam and Kashmir. Gandhi must have died a broken man indeed. He saw India partitioned, Hindus and Muslims fighting each other and his ideals of Charhka, non-violence and Brahmacharya being flouted by the very men he brought-up as his disciples.

However, his heritage is not dead, for it survives where it should have been in the first instance: in the West. His ideals have inspired countless great figures, from Martin Luther King, to Albert Einstein, to Nelson Mandela, the Dalai-Lama or Attenborough and continue to inspire many others. Gandhi's birth in India was an accident, for here, there is nothing left of him, except million of statues and streets and saintly mouthings by politicians, who don't apply the least bit what Gandhi had taught so ardently.

History will judge. But with Nehru on one side and his westernised concept of India and Gandhi on the other, who tried to impose upon India a non-violence which was not hers, India was destined to be partitioned. Thus when the time came, India was bled into two, in three even, and Muslims took their pound of flesh while leaving. India never recovered from that trauma and today she is still suffering from its consequences. Yet has anybody really understood the lessons of history ?

P.S. The history of India's independence movement would be incomplete without mentioning the West's contribution. Perhaps the redeeming factor for the Britisher's utter insensitiveness, lies in Sister Nivedita's recognising India's greatness and consecrating her life and work not only to India but to its independence. The Theosophical Society started in 1875 by Mrs Blavatsky, a Russian and an American, Colonel Olcott, and brought to glory by Annie Besant, has also done a great deal to further abroad Hinduism's cause. Its philosophy is founded upon the recognition of Hinduism as one of the highest forms of revelation, as Mrs Besant wrote: "The action to pursue is to revitalise ancient India to bring back a renewal of patriotism, the beginning of the reconstruction of the nation". Unfortunately, the Theosophical Society got often bogged down in concentrating on the "magical mystical Orient".

#### CHAPTER 8) 1947: INDEPENDENCE

India was free. But at what price! Was this the independence that so many nationalists had fought for and for which they had lost their lives? Was this truncated, diminished, partitioned India the true Bharat of old, whose mighty borders extended from Cape Comorin to Afghanistan?

Moreover, who was responsible for the Partition of India? Yes, the British used to the hilt the existing divide between Hindus and Muslims. Yes, the Congress was weak; it accepted what was forced down its throat by Jinnah and Mountbatten, even though many of its leaders, including Nehru, and a few moderate Muslims, disagreed with the principle of partition. It was also Gandhi's policy of non-violence and gratifying the fanatical Muslim minority, in the hope that it would see the light, which did tremendous harm to India and encouraged Jinnah to harden his demands. But ultimately, one has to go back to the roots, to the beginning of it all, in order to understand Partition. One has to travel back in history to get a clear overall picture. This is why memory is essential, this is why Holocausts should never be forgotten.

For Jinnah was only the vehicle, the instrument, the avatar, the latest reincarnation of the medieval Muslims coming down to rape and loot and plunder the land of Bharat. He was the true son of Mahmud Ghaznavi, of Muhammed Ghasi, of Aurangzeb. He took up again the work left unfinished by the last Mughal two centuries earlier: 'Dar-ul-Islam', the House of Islam. The Hindu-Muslim question is an old one - but is it really a Muslim-Hindu question, or just plainly a Muslim obsession, their hatred of the Hindu pagans, their contempt for this polytheist religion? This obsession, this hate, is as old as the first invasion of India by the original Arabs in 650. After independence, nothing has changed: the sword of Allah is still as much ready to strike the Kafirs, the idolaters of many Gods. The Muslims invaded this country, conquered it, looted it, razed its temples, humiliated its Hindu leaders, killed its Brahmins, converted its weaker sections. True, it was all done in the name of Allah and many of its chiefs were sincere in thinking they were doing their duty by hunting down the Infidel. So how could they accept on 15th August 1947 to

share power on an equal basis with those who were their slaves for thirteen centuries? "Either the sole power for ourselves, and our rule over the Hindus as it is our sovereign right, we the adorers of the one and only true God - Or we quit India and found our own nation, a Muslim nation, of the true faith, where we will live amongst ourselves".

Thus there is no place for idolaters in this country, this great nation of Pakistan; they can at best be "tolerated" as second-class citizens. Hence the near total exodus of Hindus from Pakistan, whereas more than half the Muslim population in India, chose to stay, knowing full well that they would get the freedom to be and to practice their own religion. In passing, the Muslims took revenge on the Hindus -once more- and indulged in terrible massacres, which were followed by retaliations from Sikhs and hard core Hindus, the ultimate horror. Partition triggered one of the most terrible exodus in the history of humanity. And this exodus has not ended: they still come by the lakhs every year from Bangladesh, fleeing poverty, flooding India with problems, when the country has already so many of her own. Some even say that they bring with them more fundamentalism, a Third Column, which one day could organise itself in a political, social and militant body.

For Danielou, the division of India was on the human level as well as on the political one, a great mistake. "It added, he says, to the Middle East an unstable state (Pakistan) and burdened India which already had serious problems". And he adds: "India whose ancient borders stretched until Afghanistan, lost with the country of seven rivers (the Indus Valley), the historical centre of her civilisation. At a time when the Muslim invaders seemed to have lost some of their extremism and were ready to assimilate themselves to other populations of India, the European conquerors, before returning home, surrendered once more to Muslim fanaticism the cradle of Hindu civilisation ." (Histoire de l'Inde, p.355)

For Sri Aurobindo also, the division of India was a monstrosity: " India is free, but she has not achieved unity, only a fissured and broken freedom...The whole communal division into Hindu and Muslim seems to have hardened into the figure of a permanent political division of the country. It is to be hoped that the Congress and the Nation will not accept the settled fact as for ever settled, or as anything more than a temporary expedient. For if it lasts, India may be seriously weakened, even crippled; civil strife may remain always possible, possible even a new invasion and foreign conquest. The partition of the country must go...For without it the destiny of India might be seriously impaired and frustrated. That must not be." (Message of Sri Aurobindo on the 15th of August 1947).

Sri Aurobindo had long seen through the British and Jinnah's games and had warned the nation as early as the beginning of the century. His answer to a disciple on October 7, 1940 is very illustrative of the point:" Q. But now that our national consciousness is more developed, there is more chance of unity if the British don't bolster up Jinnah and his Muslim claims. A. Does Jinnah want unity?...What he wants is independence for Muslims and if possible rule over India. THAT IS THE OLD SPIRIT... But why is it expected that Muslims will be so accommodating?" Nevertheless, Sri Aurobindo thought that although the old spirit of the real warriors of Islam, the Muslim invaders, was still present, the majority of Indian Muslims were unconcerned: "The idea of two nationalities in India is only a new-fanged notion invented by Jinnah for his purposes and contrary to the facts. More than 90% of the Indian Muslims are descendants of converted Hindus

and belong as much to the Indian nation as the Hindu themselves. Jinnah is himself a descendant of a Hindu named Jinahbahai... (India's Rebirth, p. 237) Sri Aurobindo also sought to dispel the widespread notion that the Muslims brought so much to India: "The Islamic culture hardly gave anything to the world which may be said of fundamental importance and typically its own Islamic culture was mainly borrowed from the others. Their mathematics and astronomy and other subjects were derived from India and Greece. It is true they gave some of these things a new turn, but they have not created much. Their philosophy and their religion are very simple and what they call Sufism is largely the result of Gnostics who lived in Persia and it is the logical outcome of that school of thought largely touched by the Vedanta... Islamic culture contributed the Indo-Saracenic architecture to Indian culture. I do not think it has done anything more in India of cultural value. It gave some new forms to art and poetry. Its political institutions were always semi-barbaric. (p.189 India's Reb). How could Partition have been avoided? Sri Aurobindo had advocated firmness: "As for the Hindu-Muslim affair, I saw no reason why the greatness of India's past or her spirituality should be thrown into the waste paper basket in order to conciliate the Moslems who would not be conciliated at all by such a policy. What has created the Hindu-Moslem split was not Swadeshi, but the acceptance of a communal principle by the Congress". (India's Rebirth, p. 189). History was going to show the accuracy of Sri Aurobindo's predictions: the Congress' obstinate pandering to Jinnah and his terms, proved to be disastrous and the partition of India was a blow from which the nation has not yet recovered.

All right, Nehru got his 'tryst with destiny', although a truncated tryst. India was free and everything was anew, the sky was the limit and a new glory was awaiting the land of Bharat. But what did Nehru and the Congress proceed to do with this new India? Writes Danielou: "The Hindus who had mostly supported the Congress in its fight for independence, had thought that the modernist ideology of an Anglo-Saxon inspiration of its leaders was only a political weapon destined to justify independence in the eyes of Westerners. They thought that once independence was acquired, the Congress would revise its policies and would re-establish proper respect towards Sanskrit culture, Hindu religious and social institutions, which form the basis of Indian civilisation. But nothing doing, the minority formed by the Congress leaders was too anglicised, to reconsider the value of what they had learnt. Few things changed in Indian administration, only the colour of the skin of the new rulers, who were most of the time lower ranks officials of the old regime". (Histoire de l'Inde, p. 348) And indeed, on top of the Partition tragedy, there is the other calamity of modern India: namely that under Nehru's leadership, it chose to turn its back on most of its ancient institutions, social and political and adapted blindly and completely the British system, constitutional, social, political, judicial, and bureaucratic. For not only the Greatness that WAS India was ignored, but unconsciously, it is hoped, one made sure that there would never be a greatness that IS India.

Democracy was then the new name of the game for India. But Sri Aurobindo had very clear ideas on "western democracy: "I believe in something which might be called social democracy, but not in any of the forms now current, and I am not altogether in love with the European kind, however great it may be an improvement upon the past. I hold that India, having a spirit of her own and a governing temperament proper to her own civilisation, should in politics as in everything else, strike out her original path and not stumble in the wake of Europe. but this is precisely what she will be obliged to do if she has to start on the road in her present chaotic and unprepared condition of mind". This was written, mind you, on January 5 1920 (India's Reb 143)- and it was



exactly what happened. Sri Aurobindo also felt : "The old Indian system grew out of life, it had room for everything and every interest. There were monarchy, aristocracy, democracy; every interest was represented in the government. While in Europe the Western system grew out of the mind: they are led by reason and want to make everything cut and dried without any chance for freedom or variation. India is now trying to imitate the West. Parliamentary government is not suited to India..."

Socialism certainly has its values, as Sri Aurobindo observed in 1914. "The communistic principle of society is intrinsically as superior to the individualistic as is brotherhood to jealousy and mutual slaughter; but all the practical schemes of Socialism invented in Europe are a yoke, a tyranny and a prison."(India's Reb 99). "At India's independence, Nehru opted for what Danielou calls "romantic socialism". Was socialism best suited for India? It was maybe a matter for the best in the worst, to forestall a complete take-over by communism, (\*) which would have, as in China, entirely killed the soul of India and damaged for ever its Dharma. But if Nehru and the Congress leaders had not been so anglicised and had known a little more of the exalted past of their country, they would have opted for a more indianised system of socialism, such as the ancient panchayat system (which Rajiv Gandhi would attempt to revive later). Their socialism, although it was full of great and noble intentions, created great evils in India. Writes Danielou: "But this socialism was empty of meaning, for there existed no class struggle in India, nor social conditions similar to those in Europe. The controls established by a an incapable and corrupted bureaucracy, the ruin of private property, the incredible taxes slapped on capital, the confiscations, the dictatorial exchange controls, and the heavy custom duties, plunged India in a terrible misery. The lands of the zamindars were distributed to the poor peasants, without any institution of agricultural financing, and farmers depending 100% on the loan shark, got completely ruined and agricultural production went into a slump. The prohibition to export profits as well as the excessive taxes, forced all capitalist to flee the country." (Histoire de l'Inde p. 349)

One of the worst legacies of Nehru and the Congress is political. Like the British, Nehru centralised all the power at the Centre, the states were formed in an arbitrary manner and very little political autonomy was left to them. This created a land of babus and bred corruption. In turn, it triggered in certain states such as Tamil Nadu, whose culture has been preserved much more than in North Indian states, (maybe because it was more sheltered from Muslim incursions by the Deccan plateau), a resentment against the Centre, who was trying to impose Hindi on them, for instance, and fostered a seed of separatism. And why should the Centre try to impose Hindi on all Southern states? Hindi is a language which is spoken only by a few Northern states. And why for that matter should the Centre impose anything on the States, except in vital matters such as Security and External Affairs?

Nehru also initiated the entire bureaucratisation of India, which was a terrible mistake, if only because it was a system established by the British who wanted to centralise and control everything from the top. It was all right when the English were there, they were the masters, they made their riches out of plundering the country and had no need to be corrupt. But how do you give so much power to an insensitive babu, who earns only a few thousand rupees a month? Hence corruption and bureaucracy flourished together in India under Nehru. The Soviet-type industrialisation, such as massive state industries, big steel, mills and mega dams, have already



proved a failure in the West; yet Nehru and his successors all went for it. India became a state owned country which produced sub-standard quality goods. The only merit it had was to shelter her from a take-over by multinationals and allow her to develop her own products, however deficient.

Nehru's foreign policy was often misguided. Nothing exemplifies this better than his attitude vis a vis Red China. He made the mistake of applying to the letter his famous "Hindi chini bhai-bhai" slogan, when he should have known that China could not be trusted. And indeed the Chinese attacked India treacherously in 1962, humiliated the Indian army and took away 20,000 square kilometres of her territory, which they have not yet vacated. Nehru was generous enough to offer India's hospitality to the Dalai lama and his followers when they fled the Chinese occupation of their sovereign country in 1959. But in order not to offend the Chinese, Nehru and all the successive Prime Ministers, let down Tibet, not only by not helping them to regain their independence, but also by stopping the Dalai lama from any political activity in India. Do the Chinese show any gratitude? Not at all! They are still claiming Indian territory, particularly the beautiful Arunachal Pradesh and have used the Tibetan plateau to point their nuclear missiles at North Indian cities (exactly 90 IRBM -US Senate Foreign Committee report). More than that, India could never see that Tibet was the ideal buffer between her and China, if denuclearised and demilitarised, as the Dalai-lama has proposed in the European Parliament of Strasbourg. And India's betrayal of Tibet will come back to haunt her, as it did recently, when the Indian occupation of Kashmir was equalled with the Chinese occupation of Tibet. The Chinese killed 1,2 million Tibetans and wiped out in 45 years a wonderful 2000 year old civilisation. On the other hand, in Kashmir, there has been no genocide, only war casualties and India is fighting to retain what has been hers for 5000 years.

Indians are so proud of their judicial system; but isn't it a carbon copy of the British one, with as a consequence, a flurry of problems, whether it is the political interference in the naming of judges, the incredible backlog of pending cases, or the overcrowding of jails? Again, the Indian judiciary relies for his judgements on western values, on European jurisprudence, which are totally unfit for India. Once more, it is proud of its " secular " values and often comes down heavily on the fanatical bigots, meaning the Hindus. In education, Nehru carried on with the British policy of imposing a westernised English system: more and more the universities and schools of India, many of them run by Christians missions, produced a generation of English speaking diploma holders, who did not belong any more to Hindu society, but only to a fake bureaucratic society with westernised manners.

Finally, Hindu-bashing became a popular pastime under Nehru's rule. Jawaharlal had a great sympathy for communism (\*), like many men of his generation and indeed of the generations thereafter till the early 70's. We have all been duped by communism, whose ideal is so appealing in this world of inequalities, but whose practise was taken over by Asuric forces, whether in Stalin's Russia, or in Maoist China. Nehru encouraged Marxist think-tanks, such as the famous JNU in Delhi, which in turn bred a lot of distinguished "Hindu-hating scholars" like the venomous Romila Thapar, who is an adept at negating Muslim atrocities and running to the ground the greatness of Hinduism and its institutions. Today even, most of the intellectuals, journalists and many of India's elite have been influenced by that school of thinking and regularly ape its theories.

But ultimately, whatever his faults, Nehru was part of India's soul. He fought for her independence with all his heart; and when freedom came, he applied to India the ideals he knew best, however misconceived they might have been. He was lucky enough to be in office while India went through a relatively peaceful period of her post-independence history, except for the first war with Pakistan and the China invasion. And he must have felt gratified to see his beloved country through the first stages of her recovery from the yoke of colonialism.

(\* ) One does not want to dwell too much on communism in India, such as the one practised in Bengal, although in its defence it must be said that on the one hand it is an Indian brand of communism, as the influence of Hinduism was able to soften it. On the other, that the Bengalis are too great a race for completely being bowled over by a thoroughly materialistic ideology. Naxalism also had its meaning: when one sees the injustice going on in India, with the amazing gap between the incredibly rich with black money, marrying their daughters for lakhs of rupees in the five star hotels in Delhi -and the very poor, who can barely eat one meal a day, one feels like taking a gun and doing one's own justice. But once again this is not the way for India, for she has another wisdom waiting to be used again and solve all her problems without violence. What is the future of communism in India? Like the rest, it may be absorbed back in her psyche, transformed and adapted to her psychology, for even communism can find its place, as long as it recognises the central Dharma of India. Or maybe will it disappear altogether from the land of Bharat.