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BHAVAN'S BOOK UNIVERSITY

**THE TEACHING
OF
SRI AUROBINDO**
M. P. Pandit

GENERAL EDITORS

K. M. MUNSHI

R. R. DIWAKAR



BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN BOMBAY



What

Bharatiya Vidya Stands for

Bharatiya Shiksha must ensure that no promising young Indian of character having faith in Bharat and her culture Bharatiya Vidya should be left without modern educational equipment by reason merely of want of funds.

2. Bharatiya Shiksha must be formative more than informative, and cannot have for its end mere acquisition of knowledge. Its legitimate sphere is not only to develop natural talents but so to shape them as to enable them to absorb and express the permanent values of Bharatiya Vidya.

3. Bharatiya Shiksha must take into account not only the full growth of a student's personality but the totality of his relations and lead him to the highest self-fulfilment of which he is capable.

4. Bharatiya Shiksha must involve at some stage or other an intensive study of Sanskrit or Sanskritic languages and their literature, without excluding, if so desired, the study of other languages and literature. ancient and modern.

5. The re-integration of Bharatiya Vidya, which is the primary object of Bharatiya Shiksha, can only be attained through a study of forces, movements, motives, ideoforms and art of creative life-energy through which it has expressed itself in different ages as a single continuous process.

6. Bharatiya Shiksha must stimulate the student's power of expression, both written and oral, at every stage in accordance with the highest ideals attained by the great literary masters in the intellectual and moral spheres.

7. The technique of Bharatiya Shiksha must involve—

(a) the adoption by the teacher of the *Guru* attitude which consists in taking a personal interest in the student; inspiring and encouraging him to achieve distinction in his studies; entering into his life with a view to form ideals and remove psychological obstacles; and creating in him a spirit of consecration; and

(b) the adoption by the student of the *Shishya* attitude by the development of—

(i) respect for the teacher,

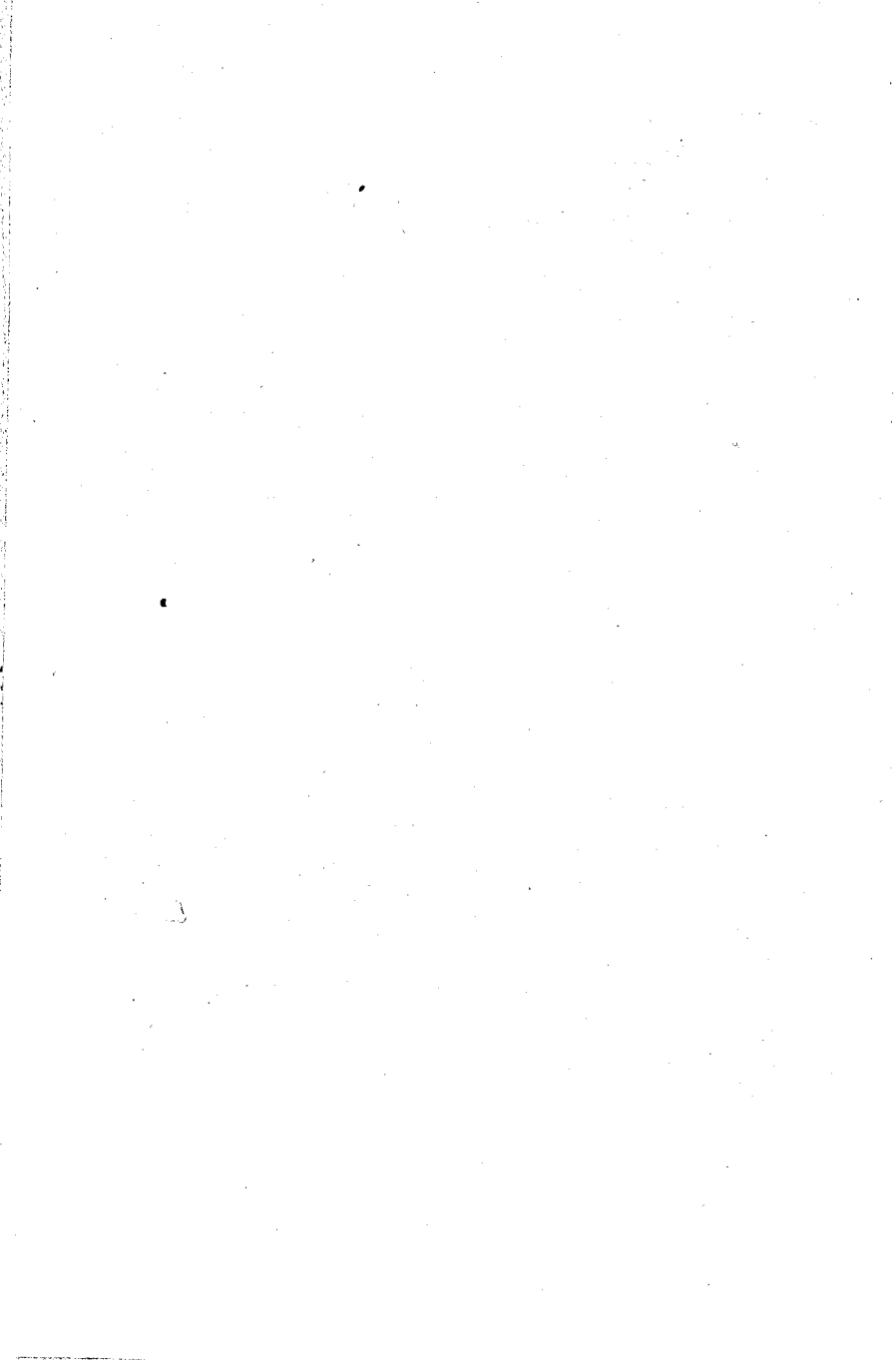
(ii) a spirit of inquiry,

(iii) a spirit of service towards the teacher, the institution, Bharat and Bharatiya Vidya.

8. The ultimate aim of Bharatiya Shiksha is to teach the younger generation to appreciate and live up to the permanent values of Bharatiya Vidya which flowing from the supreme art of creative life-energy as represented by Shri Ramachandra, Shri Krishna, Vyasa, Buddha and Mahavira have expressed themselves in modern times in the life of Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Dayananda Saraswati, and Swami Vivekananda, Shri Aurobindo and Mahatma Gandhi.

9. Bharatiya Shiksha while equipping the student with every kind of scientific and technical training must teach the student, not to sacrifice an ancient form or attitude to an unreasoning passion for change; not to retain a form or attitude which in the light of modern times can be replaced by another form or attitude which is a truer and more effective expression of the spirit of Bharatiya Vidya; and to capture the spirit afresh for each generation to present it to the world.





आ नो भद्राः क्रतवो यन्तु विश्वतः ।

Let noble thoughts come to us from every side

—Rigveda, I-89-i

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By
M. P. PANDIT

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BHAVAN'S BOOK UNIVERSITY

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OF
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M. P. PANDIT



1964

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GENERAL EDITOR'S PREFACE

The Bhavan's Book University volumes had rare success. About a million and a quarter volumes have been sold in about eleven years. However, there is an insistent demand for the stray volumes which the Bhavan has issued from time to time at a lower price. In order to meet this demand, it has been decided to issue the new One-Rupee Book University Series side by side with the Book University Series.

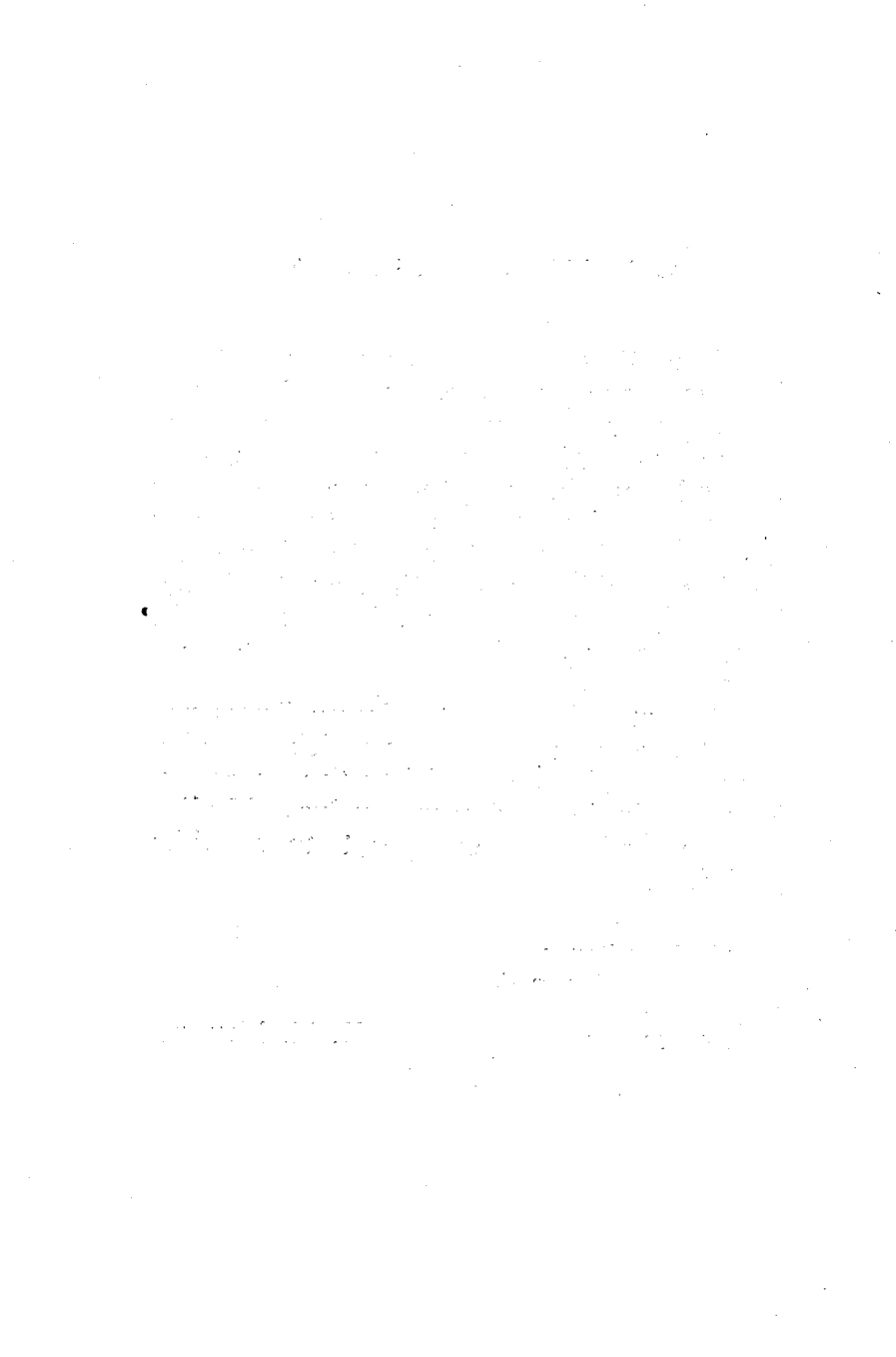
I hope this new One-Rupee Series will have the same good fortune which the other Series had, of being useful to those who are interested in the fundamental values of Indian Culture, and of reaching out to a wider audience.

Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan,
Chowpatty Road, Bombay-7.

Vijaya Dashami

September 28, 1963

K. M. MUNSHI



PREFACE

Perfect Man in a perfected Society has been the dream of seers and saints, thinkers and mystics from times immemorial. Imperfect as man is at present, he can and should achieve a progressive perfection in himself and his fellow-beings. And this he can do by developing his own consciousness beyond the narrow boundaries of his mind and senses. For, it is the state of one's consciousness that determines one's perfection or imperfection.

The Vedic seers speak of Ritam Jyoti, the Truth-Light on attaining which man grows into Immortality, into a supreme Knowledge, Power and Bliss. The Rishis of the Upanishads similarly refer to Mahas, the Vijnana looming over the Planes of Manas which releases one into the splendours of Knowledge and Freedom. In modern times, it is Sri Aurobindo and the Mother who have revived this ancient faith in the Destiny of Man in all its amplitude, envisaged the blossoming of a growing perfection in humanity as an inevitable result of the development of a higher Consciousness, a spiritual Truth-Power above the domain of the Mind,—the Supermind, and have worked to bring the hour of the establishment and operation of this Truth-Consciousness on earth nearer and nearer.

This book seeks to expose the principles of this High Teaching and to elaborate upon the truths of this Knowledge in their bearing on the significance of Man, Nature and God.

M. P. PANDIT

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CHAPTER I

PHILOSOPHY

EVERY thinking person asks himself, in his awakened moments, what is the meaning of this life? Or, has it any meaning at all? What is this world? How has it come to be? Where is it drifting to? And what is man? Had he a past? Has he a future? What is the significance of his present?

Many have thought over these questions before and the answers they have given are varied and often contradictory. The universe, it is said, is a creation of an Almighty God who has brought all creatures into being by a fiat and rules over them with the scales of justice in his hands. He rewards good with happiness and punishes evil with misery. All continues till, one day, he is pleased to dissolve the empire.

There are others who pronounce there is no God. God is only a figment of the anthropomorphic imagination of man. The world is self-existent. All is a result of the action and reaction of elements and forces; each form comes into existence and passes out of it mechanically as a result of certain combinations and break-up of material elements. Consciousness is only an epiphenomenon of the physical organism. There is neither past nor

CHAPTER II

YOGA

MAN is normally aware of only a little part of himself. The mind with which he thinks and acts, the life-energy by which he is moved and sustained and the physical body in which both the mind and life are housed are all that he knows. But that is only his external being, a small part. He has a larger, inner being of which the outer is really a projection.

Behind the ordinary mind which is limited in its means of knowledge and modes of operation there is an inner mind with greater faculties and a vaster reach. Behind the life-entity arrested by the bounds in which it is involved there is an inner life-being with a freer and larger dynamism. And corresponding to the physical frame so obviously circumscribed there is also a subtle-physical body with a wider range. These three, the inner mental, the inner life or vital, the inner physical—the *manomaya purusa*, *pranamaya purusa*, and the *annamaya purusa* of the Upanishad—together constitute the inner being of man. Deeper than these, supporting them in their life-evolution, is still another being, the soul, the *antaratman*, who is a living spark of the Divine. This inmost being is the divine entity in man around which the rest of his being is centred for the significance of its life-jour-

CHAPTER III

THE DIVINE MOTHER

THE Supreme Reality is One, Indescribable. But when perceived as related to manifestation, It reveals itself as a Being, an Existent with a supreme Consciousness. The Consciousness is inherent, it is in fact the very nature of the Being. It is not merely an awareness of itself; it is a Consciousness that is at once self-aware and all-aware. It is instinct with a dynamis; it is the Power of the Divine Being. From the immensity of the Being, Brahman, it manifests myriad Names and Forms, measures out finites from the depths of the Infinite, shapes the Many out of the One,—it is the Maya. She is the Shakti by whom the One Conscious Being, the Sole Purusha effects a manifold purposive Creation.¹ Not only does She manifest from what is contained in the Being of the Lord, Ishwara, but She continues to direct, lead and rule over what is so brought into creation; She is the Ishwari.

The Divine Being and the Consciousness-Force, the Purusha and the Shakti are not two different, separate realities. Indeed, the Consciousness-Force is the Being itself as Consciousness-

¹ *Svet. Up.* VI. 8

CHAPTER IV

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

WHAT is true of man is equally true of aggregates of men. For, after all, the collectivity is formed out of association of individuals and it is their natures, their movements, their aspirations and ideas that go to shape the life of the group. And yet, it is not merely a conglomeration of individuals. The collectivity acquires and builds up its own mores, its own individuality and direction, determined no doubt, largely, by the characteristic temperament, the trend of life and thought-movement of the men forming it, but also exercising its own subtle influence over the life and progress of its constituent individuals. Each society has its distinct career, its purpose and goal. This is so because the collectivity also is an expression of the manifesting Godhead even as the individual is. The Individual and the Collective are two terms of the Revelation. The aim of both is the same: to serve That which transcends both, to manifest God. The one actualises the possibility of the Divine's self-revelation in each individual centre and form, while the other works to bring out the potentialities in the mass. The destiny of the individual is also the

CHAPTER V

THE IDEAL OF HUMAN UNITY

ALLIED to the question of the individual and his society is the larger problem of the society and the collectivity of societies—the entire human race. Here too, the solution is envisaged on the same lines on which the rights and claims of man and his environmental society are reconciled. For, as Sri Aurobindo observes, the issue is basically the same. There is One Spirit, the Divine Reality, which manifests itself singly in the individual and multiply in the humanity. The society is the middle term in this collective manifestation. At the core there is an underlying unity throughout. To awake to this truth of existence and to realise this basic unity of one's self with the rest of his fellow beings as jets of a common fount is the way to a radical solution of the problem.

Unity is the base and unity the summit of the whole evolutionary movement. Nature starts with a solid unity in Matter; there at the basis all is concretely one. It is only with the eruption of the life-element that this unity is apparently broken up and there is a diversity of forms which go on multiplying variously till there appears the principle or power of an overt consciousness or half-conscious-

CHAPTER VI

THE SECRET OF THE VEDA

THIS in sum is the Teaching of Sri Aurobindo. It is based on his Truth-vision and yogic realisation. The validity of this Knowledge can indeed be tested by any one who chooses or is called upon to do so; only, he has to take to the appropriate means therefor i.e. to practise the yogic discipline relevant to it. A verifiable formulation of Truth-knowledge such as this needs no other external support to buttress or commend it. Yet, it is interesting, even instructive, to see how far it is in consonance with the body of higher knowledge and practice that has formed the core of the Indian spiritual tradition dating from prehistoric origins. And this tradition has been recorded in the hymns of the Veda, the Upanishads and the Gita. How far do they corroborate the integral truth of Sri Aurobindo's Teaching which embraces all life as a real manifestation of God, affirms its character as a progressive revelation of an immanent Divine Power and envisages a growing displacement of its characteristic features of Ignorance, Incapacity and Death by the emergent verities of Knowledge, Power and Immortality? Sri Aurobindo has plumbed into these scriptures and

CHAPTER VII

THE UPANISHADS

For those who have vision It is even here in this world.—(Mundaka Up.)

THE tradition is preserved in the Upanishads. The Upanishads, Sri Aurobindo points out, are not in any sense departures or apostasies from the Veda as is sought to be made out by western scholarship. They are, on the other hand, a continuation of the Vedic tradition. In fact, they represent a successful attempt to revive that tradition long after it had ceased to be a living force. For, with the passage of time a long period did intervene when the Vedic Religion—both the inner esoteric and the outer ceremonial—had exhausted its original impetus and was lost under growths which had little to do with the truth and vision of the founder mystics. It is fortunate that this decay was not allowed to pass into death. After a time, perhaps centuries, a powerful movement for the revival of the true Vedic Religion set in; the Upanishads which form one wing of this movement strove to reestablish the deeper, the spiritual, Knowledge-content of the Veda, while the Brahmanas constituting the other wing attempted to re-

CHAPTER VIII

THE GITA

As the Upanishads take up and formulate anew the kernel of the spiritual and psychological experience recorded in the Hymns of the Veda, the Gita represents a living synthesis of Vedantic thought and experience and the several lines of its subsequent development.

The text is an integral part of the Mahabharata and forms a high water mark in the large sweep of the Great Epic investing the whole with an abiding spiritual significance. The scene is Kurukshetra, the field of the Battle of life. The one who gives the Message is none other than the Divine Lord Himself in human form—an Avatar. He who waits for the Word and receives it is the aspiring Man—the very cream of evolving humanity. The occasion is the crisis of the human soul when confronted with the conflicting pulls of the complex nature in which it is encased. At this moment of utter bewilderment, Arjuna—himself the finest flower of heroic manhood—finds himself all at sea, realises the inadequacy of his own powers and faculties and goes down on his knees before Sri Krishna praying for his saving Knowledge and delivering Strength. What is life? Whither all this movement? What is

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THE AUTHOR

Born in 1918 at Sirsi, Mysore State, Madhav Pundalik Pandit came, even at the tender age of 13, under the guiding influence of Sri Kapali Sastriar, the great savant and yogin, who moulded his career in the direction of the Spirit. Sri Pandit joined Sri Aurobindo Ashram when he was 21 and has been there ever since closely associated with its activities. Asked if he has found it worthwhile to have spent the best part of his life—25 years—in the Ashram, he says: "Every moment here has been a rich experience. In the Mother I have found God. To realise Her fully is my one aim and this identity grows with each day."

Happily, Sri Pandit has been sharing the fruits of his studies and his **sadhana** through his varied writings on the Veda, Upanishad, Tantras, Yoga etc. Here is an authentic exposition of his Master's Teaching.