

## Feminism's Conundrum

10 June 1990

From *The Vishaal Newsletter*

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...When X first gave me the book you sent, *The Chalice and the Blade*, [by Riane Eisler, Harper & Row, 1988] and when I started reading it almost immediately, I wanted very much to write to you giving my impressions. Then, as I wrote, I got involved...and so it was impossible. I am still reading the book, and my impressions have not changed. In the first instance it looks as if it will be very instructive and perhaps illuminating. But then, as one reads on, it gets rather dull. This is, I believe, because the entire thesis hinges on a few facts or factors. In other words, she builds her thesis on just a few insights. How far can you go like that? But then, most academics do this, I am sure you have noted...

Yet, what she is saying – only that in times when the Goddess was worshipped the Earth was a peace-loving place; then, those Indo-European hordes descended from the north and brought with them worship of male deities, which cults fostered wars and aggression and suppression, by consequence, of the female deities. This is all fine, except that it is rather shallow and not at all enlightening as to the REASON why this invasion took place. She states it as a fact and that thereafter we were left with this deplorable situation.

But why? One can only find solutions to the type of problems she describes if one understands what lay at the root or behind the invasions and transference from female to male divinity worship. So far in the book (I am more than halfway through it) the author does not give any explanation. Just a fact. Therefore it is shallow and flawed. A further indication is that she has preferred to ignore the fact that there *is* a place on Earth where the Goddess is still worshipped – centrally, by almost the whole population. This is India. At no point in the book does she dwell on this fact. When she refers (briefly) to India in this context, it is always in citing the ancient scriptures; and even this is done only in passing and very superficially.

But you see, if the author were to admit that in India, in this modern age, worship of the Goddess thrives, her whole thesis might appear to be threatened. The claim that when the Goddess is worshipped there is no war, or very little, is a total fallacy. Indeed, we have even a Goddess of War in Durga, who herself wages battles and conquers by 'the blade'. So, this is an example of intellectual dishonesty – ignoring certain facts in order to encourage the acceptance of one's private theory.

At the same time, had she studied the Indian reality she would have found support for that theory – had she penetrated deeply into the matter. This comes from the fact that India has never been an aggressive culture or society. Even Hinduism is non-aggressive in the sense that there is no proselytizing, no seeking to impose one's beliefs on others by various forms of violence, camouflaged or overt. Nor has India ever been a territorial aggressor. This would be an important point for her to make. However, she cannot because in doing so she would have to reshape much of her thesis. At the same time, it would encourage her to go more deeply into the matter: Why has the feminine deity been so thoroughly displaced in favour of a MONOTHEISTIC God. This is the most important point. Connected to this is idol worship. So far in the book I have not come across any explanation – deep and true – as to why, really speaking, idol worship was condemned in these new beliefs.

I think that only in my work do you find the most complete explanation of this development. This is because only in my work does one find the question of Form dealt with. Consequently, there is Time as well. The two go hand in hand. And this brings in the question of

the Multiplicity. And finally Movement. These are all issues which enter into the discussion. But nowhere in her book does she bring in these elements. Hence it becomes a shallow discussion. And sentimental. It appears to be just another women's liberation manifesto, hardly a thorough and scientifically satisfying study. Yet this type of theorising is acclaimed by the intellectual greats of the day as '*...A gem...a rare combination of poetic expression and sober substance*'... '*The most stimulating, path breaking, important book I have read in many years – perhaps a key to our survival...An enormous achievement that may save us all*'... '*A seminal work, destined to be debated and discussed for years to come...Required reading for anyone concerned about our destiny on earth*'... And so on they go. It really makes me wonder about the condition of academia. When I picked up the book and read through these more than a dozen praises from the important intellectuals of the day – especially in the feminist movement – I really believed that I was entering a new experience and that this woman had really hit upon IT. Well, I am still searching in the book and hoping for the best.

Why I write 'hoping for the best' is because we WANT intellectuals and academics to have genuine breakthroughs in perception so that the new can really take root at all levels of society, especially with the intelligentsia. But lamentably we find that the nature of the academic pursuit is the very element which blocks deep and true perception. It obliges a superficial approach; and if one were to penetrate deeper this would have to be beyond the scope of academia. Then the shouting begins!

I am obliged to ask the author how she can treat this subject without dealing with Time and Movement and Form. First she must try to understand what or who the Goddess really is. What are the distinguishing features between the male and feminine deities? And this difference is not restricted to 'peace-loving' and 'war-mongering'. This is a very shallow perception. There is much more to it. There is the question of the Immobile and the Mobile. There is the question of Permanence and the Impermanent. There is the question of Unity and Multiplicity. There is the question of Rest and Motion. If one penetrates these mysteries then one can begin to unravel the real Mystery at the heart of it all. But that requires really bold thinking and a reliance on an intuitive faculty which is unknown in academia. Not that by intuition I mean a hocus-pocus, illogical basis which is anathema to all serious study. I mean that initial INSIGHT which carries one beyond the appearance through to a DIRECT EXPERIENCE and PERCEPTION, via an identification of consciousness with the 'essence' of that element, that 'goddess'. This is the only way to true understanding. People who write books such as this one have no DIRECT experience. They are in the mental realm, and while this can be very appealing and stimulating, it is never the REAL THING. It is always an external view, never a perception centred in the heart of the thing to be known, never a LIVED EXPERIENCE.

This is the basis of Yoga. It is to bring this sort of direct understanding via a 'union' (yoga) with the thing to be known. In India we know that Knowledge can only come in this way, never otherwise. Witness the yogas involving the Goddess of Knowledge, Saraswati, union with whom will bring that special perception and knowledge. Hence all my work has evolved from the yogic experience which brought direct contact and identification of the consciousness with the essence to be fathomed. Then one is carried into levels which can never be reached through the mental approach. In this New Way we go even further: a method such as the one which is followed in this work introduces a SPHERICAL perception. Understanding is holistic in the widest and deepest sense. Therefore I say that the author's insight is shallow because it does not present us with the WHY of it all. I am not satisfied with the archaeological and historic discoveries, or the anthropological unravellings which prove that in such and such millennium the Goddess was worshipped and then that this worship was covered up ('the great cover-up') after the invaders from the north introduced their warring Gods and banished the Goddess. That tells me nothing. That is, it states a fact of history. Period. But this does not fulfil the claim of the author in the sub-title of her book to reveal our future course: 'Our history, Our Future'. The

reason is simple enough to explain: If she proposes that we must return to worship of the Goddess in order to save the Earth, then the next point is, How do we achieve this?

It is this point which I find most unsatisfyingly dealt with in all feminist literature and theories. In fact, it is not dealt with at all (I cannot take serious the groups which have invented new rituals in praise of the feminine deity). You see, we cannot mentally affirm that the Goddess is the answer and then expect a major shift in the collective consciousness. It has to be a LIVED EXPERIENCE. Essentially this is the reason why I wrote *The Tenth Day of Victory*. It was to describe that LIVED EXPERIENCE. One may have all the ideas and theories and dogmas in the world, but they get us nowhere in the real condition of our individual and collective lives unless there is that 'something' that goes much deeper than the mental stratum. But let us be honest, can an academic ever allow him or herself to be carried through those 'lived experiences' such as I have described? Or which Sri Aurobindo has described? Clearly resistance would be formidable and absolute in most cases. Yet it is only via this sort of 'yoga' that one can acquire real understanding.

The answer does indeed lie with Woman. But what is that? In my understanding this has only very little to do with sex distinctions. True, women have a greater potential for the 'lived experience'. But this is simply because her mental faculties because of her 'suppression' have not been allowed to suffocate other parts of the being which are required for the total and lived experience I am referring to. And since we are dealing with 'the truth of that which moves', and that this is the essence of the feminine divinity or *creative* essence, then of course women are better predisposed to this lived experience of the Essence. But not always. And increasingly this capacity is being stifled as women seek to emulate men and rely on mental development, as the masculine mind has imposed it in academia for instance, to achieve the desired result. Finally, very little has been achieved of the Real Thing. Changes have been introduced on the social and political level (hardly sufficient yet), but this will not turn the world upside-down, so to speak. To revolutionise our life on Earth and to introduce the new way, we have to come to terms with Form, with that infamous bugaboo of mine: that despicable Void!; and hence with the Nothingness... And this means we have to tread upon very big toes. First of all we have to knock down a few sacred idols from very high pedestals. Gautam the Buddha is one. How many are willing to tackle such a 'heavy weight' as the Buddha? Name me just one – and where is the woman who understands what the problem is in such beliefs and even spiritual realisations? Significantly, many feminists follow these very paths which had signalled their own demise, in the distant past. Or in modern times there are the delirious followers of Rajneesh, now renamed more appropriately, Osho, in keeping with the solution he offers, which is the Void and the Nothingness. Are they aware of this? Certainly not. And not being aware, women end up by perpetuating those very beliefs and experiences which have carried us to the sorry state we find ourselves in.

Again we must ask WHY? If I criticise Riane Eisler for not telling us why evolution and destiny permitted those northern hordes to 'stand reality on its head' (to use her expression), then I do not want to be accused of the same sin. Thus, the problem at the root of it all is simply a penetrating understanding of the real purpose for this evolutionary play on Earth, and its mechanism; and this question of Integrality, of the development of a complete species in place of the species of half-light (both men and women) which describes our race. The central issue is that the mental principle does not represent the complete scale or potential for the individual. Yet having entered into an Age in which this question had to be dealt with, we were cast fully into the domain (and dominance) of Mind – (not male dominance) to work out that 'knot' in the species' evolution of consciousness, to finally come to the higher reality which is an integration of all the parts of the being. This can only come to pass once that highest Principle is integrated into the evolutionary process. And this is done by successfully emerging from the present transitional phase.

Finally, women have to go beyond orthodox religions if they want to have that LIVED experience of the Goddess. How many are willing to do this? First of all, they must understand what religions signify, what makes them tick, so to speak. Thus one comes to understand that Religion is the child of the mental principle. In its essence and taken in isolation from the other cosmic principles – which is the nature of what we are experiencing in this transition: separation and division – Mind is a dualistic principle. Hence religions have divided humanity in the past and they continue to do so today, and they will continue to do so tomorrow. Thus to proclaim that the way to emerge from the impasse humanity is in is through something like an ‘interfaith dialogue’, for example, the latest brainchild of Dr. Karan Singh, is ridiculous. One attempts to use the tool of division for the process of healing. It is ludicrous. But the human being – or should I say, the human mind – is at the end of its tether. The paucity of inspiration we are faced with is pathetic. Karan Singh – another academic – goes to the extent of proclaiming that this ‘interfaith dialogue’ would be a way to realise the vision of such seers as Sri Aurobindo! Whom, by the way, he lumps together with Mohandas Gandhi! (I was tempted to write an article in response to his in ‘The Times of India’ refuting his claim, but what’s the point...).

Well, the answer lies in the LIVED EXPERIENCE of the Goddess. Let women have that experience, and men. Then we will truly know a new world. And finally, true understanding arises when one realises that those invading hordes of male-deity worshippers were *themselves the Mother!* This is the whole point.

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