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WHAT IS DEVELOPMENT?

Today, development is equated with economic prosperity and social security. It seems obvious that with material progress, the quality of life improves. Worldover, the trend is to transfer finance from the "developed" to the "underdeveloped" or "developing" regions. No doubt such a movement is advantageous to the areas needing the finance provided the amount is spent in the right direction. But this also implies that those who are materially prosperous—whether individuals or nations—are already developed in every way, or are capable of developing themselves since they do not need to struggle for the basic needs of life. Consequently, it is presumed that no extensive effort is required in this area, for development more or less stops at the social, political and economic level.

When we speak of culture, at once voices are raised about traditions, customs and rituals which have been around for decades, if not centuries, however irrelevant and decayed in form they may be today. Even obscurantist religions parade themselves as beacons of culture. The current trend is to glorify the culture of those on the fringes of mainstream society and there is a plethora of intellectuals pleading for their cause in every possible way.

Doubtless, in the larger scheme of things, all falls into place whether material progress or a cultural status quo. But is it enough? If we presume that all these "undeveloped" people will have achieved what they want to in a hundred years, will it automatically become an ideal world? Will they really be able to achieve what they want to without a simultaneous movement which goes deeper than an appeal to the heart and the mind? Can we say that the "developed" portion of humanity today is necessarily superior? Can we be sure that a person earning his own livelihood—even living luxuriously—will be able to live a meaningful life with respect to his own self as well as society? Can we say that a "developed" society will behave responsibly in the international context towards those less "developed"? Or for that matter towards the individuals which comprise its society?

Behind all our thoughts and actions is a psychic consciousness which can guide us towards a truer life. How many feel the need to develop this consciousness? How many are aware that till this consciousness comes forward and enlightens our movements, all work will have been done only on the surface without a radical change in the outlook of humanity? How many agree that developing this consciousness is true development and all other development can run parallel to it but not devoid of it? We—both as individuals and as societies—need to ponder these directed towards outer progress, not inner growth. This applies even to humanitarian efforts. We need to realize that without a simultaneous knowledge through the Spirit, all ideas and actions will not be able to reach their fulfilment as intended. A psychic and spiritual approach to life is not an alternative way of life. It is the only approach which leads towards lasting solutions for the problems that face humanity today.

To quote Sri Aurobindo-

"It is a spiritual, an inner freedom that can alone create a perfect human order. It is a spiritual, a greater than the rational enlightenment that can alone illumine the vital nature of man and impose harmony on its self-seekings, antagonisms and discords. A deeper brotherhood, a yet unbound law of love is the only sure foundation possible for a perfect social evolution, no other can replace it. But this brotherhood and love will not proceed by the vital instincts and the reason where they can be met, baffled by opposite reasonings and other discordant instincts. Nor will it find itself in the natural heart of man where there are plenty of other passions to combat it. It is in the soul that it must find its roots; the love which is founded upon a deeper truth of our being, the brotherhood or, let us say, —for this is another feeling than any vital or mental sense of brotherhood, a calmer, more durable motive-force, the spiritual comradeship which is an expression of an inner realization of oneness. For so only can egoism disappear and the true individualism of the unique Godhead in each man found itself on the true communism of the equal Godhead in the race; for the spirit, the inmost self, the universal Godhead in every being is that whose very nature of diverse oneness it is to realize the perfection of its individual life and nature in the existence of all, in the universal life and nature." - *The Human Cycle*, PP. 206-207

Editor

PRAYER

“Face the danger!” Thou saidst to me, “why dost thou wish to turn away thy gaze or flee far away from action, flee from the battle, into the deep contemplation of Truth? It is its integral manifestation which must be realised, its victory over all the obstacles of blind ignorance and dark hostility. Look the danger straight in the face and it will vanish before the Power.”

O Lord, I understood the weakness of this most external nature which is always ready to surrender material things and escape, as a compensation, into a supreme intellectual and spiritual independence. But Thou expectest action from us, and action does not allow such an attitude. It is not enough to triumph in the inner worlds, we must triumph right down to the most material worlds. We must not flee from the difficulty or obstacle, because we have the power to do so by taking refuge in the consciousness where there are no obstacles.... We must look the danger straight in the face with faith in Thy Omnipotence, and Thy Omnipotence will triumph.

Give me integrally the heart of the fighter,
O Lord and Thy victory is sure.

The Mother
'Prayers and Meditations'
September 5, 1914

SOCIAL REFORM

Reform is not an excellent thing in itself as many Europeanised intellects imagine; neither is it always safe and good to stand unmoved in the ancient paths as the orthodox obstinately believe. Reform is sometimes the first step to the abyss, but immobility is the most perfect way to stagnate and to putrefy. Neither is moderation always the wisest counsel: the mean is not always golden. It is often an euphemism for purblindness, for a tepid indifference or for a cowardly inefficiency. Men call themselves moderates, conservatives or extremists and manage their conduct and opinions in accordance with a formula. We like to think by systems and parties and forget that truth is the only standard. Systems are merely convenient cases for keeping arranged knowledge, parties a useful machinery for combined action; but we make of them an excuse for avoiding the trouble of thought.

One is astonished at the position of the orthodox. They labour to deify everything that exists. Hindu society has certain arrangements and habits which are merely customary. There is no proof that they existed in ancient times nor any reason why they should last into the future. It has other arrangements and habits for which textual authority can be quoted, but it is oftener the text of the modern Smritikars than of Parasara and Manu. Our authority for them goes back to the last five hundred years. I do not understand the logic which argues that because a thing has lasted for five hundred years it must be perpetuated through the aeons. Neither antiquity nor modernity can be the test of truth or the test of usefulness. All the Rishis do not belong to the past; the Avatars still come; revelation still continues.

Some claim that we must at any rate adhere to Manu and the Puranas, whether because they are sacred or because they are national. Well, but, if they are sacred, you must keep to the whole and not cherish isolated texts while disregarding the body of your authority. You cannot pick and choose; you cannot say "This is sacred and I will keep to it, that is less sacred and I will leave it alone." When you so treat your sacred authority, you are proving that to you it has no sacredness. You are juggling with truth; for you are pretending to consult Manu when you are really consulting your own opinions, preferences or interests. To recreate Manu entire in modern society is to ask Ganges to flow back to the Himalayas. Manu is no doubt national, but so is the animal sacrifice and the

burnt offering. Because a thing is national of the past, it need not follow that it must be national of the future. It is stupid not to recognise altered conditions.

We have similar apologies for the unintelligent preservation of mere customs; but, various as are the lines of defence, I do not know any that is imperiously conclusive. Custom is *shishtāchār*, decorum, that which all well-bred and respectable people observe. But so were the customs of the far past that have been discontinued and, if now revived, would be severely discountenanced and, in many cases, penalised; so too are the customs of the future that are now being resisted or discouraged,—even, I am prepared to believe, the future no less than the past prepares for us new modes of living which in the present would not escape the censure of the law. It is the *āchār* that makes the *shishṭa*, not the *shishṭa* who makes the *āchār*. The *āchār* is made by the rebel, the innovator, the man who is regarded in his own time as eccentric, disreputable or immoral, as was Sri Krishna by Bhurisrava because he upset the old ways and the old standards. Custom may be better defended as ancestral and therefore cherishable. But if our ancestors had persistently held that view, our so cherished customs would never have come into being. Or, more rationally, custom must be preserved because its long utility in the past argues a sovereign virtue for the preservation of society. But to all things there is a date and a limit. All long-continued customs have been sovereignly useful in their time, even totemism and polyandry. We must not ignore the usefulness of the past, but we seek in preference a present and a future utility.

Custom and Law may then be altered. For each age its *shāstra*. But we cannot argue straight off that it must be altered in a given direction. One is repelled by the ignorant enthusiasm of social reformers. Their minds are usually a strange jumble of ill-digested European notions. Very few of them know anything about Europe, and even those who have visited it know it badly. But they will not allow things or ideas contrary to European notions to be anything but superstitious, barbarous, harmful and benighted, they will not suffer what is praised and practised in Europe to be anything but rational and enlightened. They are more appreciative than Occidentals themselves of the strength, knowledge and enjoyment of Europe; they are blinder than the blindest and most self-sufficient Anglo-Saxon to its

weakness, ignorance and misery. They are charmed by the fair front Europe presents to herself and the world; they are unwilling to discern any disease in the entrails, any foulness in the rear. For the Europeans are as careful to conceal their social as their physical bodies and shrink with more horror from nakedness and indecorum than from the reality of evil. If they see the latter in themselves, they avert their eyes, crying, "It is nothing or it is little; we are healthy, we are perfect, we are immortal." But the face and hands cannot always be covered, and we see blotches.

The social reformer repeats certain stock arguments like shibboleths. For these antiquities he is a fanatic or a crusader. Usually he does not act up to his ideas, but in all sincerity he loves them and fights for them. He pursues his nostrums as panaceas; it would be infidelity to question or examine their efficacy. His European doctors have told him that early marriage injures the physique of a nation, and that to him is the gospel. It is not convenient to remember that physical deterioration is a modern phenomenon in India and that our grandparents were strong, vigorous and beautiful.

He hastens to abolish the already disappearing nautchgirl, but it does not seem to concern him that the prostitute multiplies. Possibly some may think it a gain that the European form of the malady is replacing the Indian! He tends towards shattering our co-operative system of society and does not see that Europe is striding Titanically towards Socialism.

Orthodox and reformer alike lose themselves in details; but it is principles that determine details. Almost every point that the social reformers raise could be settled one way or the other without effecting the permanent good of society. It is pitiful to see men labouring the point of marriage between subcastes and triumphing over an isolated instance. Whether the spirit as well as the body of caste should remain, is the modern question. Let Hindus remember that caste as it stands is merely *jāti*, the trade guild sanctified but no longer working, it is not the eternal religion, it is not *chaturvarnya*. I do not care whether widows marry or remain single; but it is of infinite importance to consider how women shall be legally and socially related to man, as his inferior, equal or superior; for even the relation of superiority is no more impossible in the future than it was in the far-distant past. And the most important question of all is whether society shall be competitive or co-operative, individualistic or communistic. That we should talk so little about these things and be stormy over insignificant details, shows painfully the impoverishment of the average Indian intellect. If these greater things are decided, as they must be, the smaller will arrange themselves.

There are standards that are universal and there are

standards that are particular. At the present moment all societies are in need of reform, the Parsi, Mahomedan and Christian not a whit less than the Hindu which alone seems to feel the need of radical reformation. In the changes of the future the Hindu society must take the lead towards the establishment of a new universal standard. Yet being Hindus we must seek it through that which is particular to ourselves. We have one standard that is at once universal and particular, the eternal religion, which is the basis, permanent and always inherent in India, of the shifting, mutable and multiform thing we call Hinduism. Sticking fast where you are like a limpet is not the *dharmā*, neither is leaping without looking the *dharmā*. The eternal religion is to realise God in our inner life and our outer existence, in society not less than in the individual. *Esha dharmah sanātanaḥ*. God is not antiquity nor novelty : He is not the Manava Dharmashastra, nor Vidyarnya, nor Raghunandan; neither is He an European. God who is essentially Sacchidananda, is in manifestation *Satyam, Prema, Shakti*, Truth, Strength and Love. Whatever is consistent with the truth and principle of things, whatever increases love among men, whatever makes for the strength of the individual, the nation and the race, is divine, it is the law of Vaivaswata Manu, it is the *sanātana dharmā* and the Hindu *shāstra*. Only, God is the triple harmony, He is not one-sided. Our love must not make us weak, blind or unwise; our strength must not make us hard and furious; our principles must not make us fanatical or sentimental. Let us think calmly, patiently, impartially; let us love wholly and intensely but wisely; let us act with strength, nobility and force. If even then we make mistakes, yet God makes none. We decide and act; He determines the fruit, and whatever He determines is good.

He is already determining it. Men have long been troubling themselves about social reform and blameless orthodoxy, and orthodoxy has crumbled without social reform being effected. But all the time God has been going about India getting His work done in spite of the talking. Unknown to men the social evolution prepares itself, and it is not in the direction they think, for it embraces the world, not India only. Whether we like it or not, He will sweep out the refuse of the Indian past and the European present. But the broom is not always sufficient; sometimes He uses the sword in preference. It seems probable that it will be used, for the world does not mend itself quickly, and therefore it will have violently to be mended.

But this is a general principle; how shall we determine the principles that are particular to the nature of the community and the nature of the Age? There is such a thing as *yugadharmā*, the right institutions & modes of action for the age in which we live. For action depends indeed on the force of knowledge or will that is to be used, but it depends, too, on the time, the place & the

vessel. Institutions that are right in one age are not right in another. Replacing social system by social system, religion by religion, civilisation by civilisation God is perpetually leading man onwards to loftier & more embracing manifestations of our human perfectibility. When in His cosmic circling movement He establishes some stable world-wide harmony, that is man's Satya Yuga. When harmony falters, is maintained with difficulty, not in the nature of men, but by an accepted force or political instrument, that is his Treta. When the faltering becomes stumbling, and the harmony has to be maintained at every step by a careful & laborious regulation, that is his Dwapara. When there is disintegration, & all descends in collapse and ruin, nothing can stay farther the cataclysm that is his Kali. This is the natural law of progress of all human ideas & institutions. It applies always in the mass, continually though less perfectly in the detail. One may almost say that each human religion, society, civilisation has its four Ages. For this movement is not only the most natural, but the most salutary. It is not a justification of pessimism nor a gospel of dumb fate & sorrowful annihilation. It is not, as we too often think in our attachment to the form, a melancholy law of decline & the vanity of all human achievements. If each Satya has its Kali, equally does each Kali prepare its Satya. That destruction was necessary for this creation, and the new harmony, when it is perfected, will be better than the old. But there is the weakness, there is the half success turning to failure, there is the discouragement, there is the loss of energy & faith which clouds our periods of disintegration, the apparent war, violence, ragging, tumult & trample to and fro which attends our periods of gradual creation and half-perfection. Therefore men cry out dismally & lament that all is perishing. But if they trusted in God's Love & Wisdom, not preferring to it their conservative & narrow notions, they would rather cry out that all is being reborn.

So much depends on Time & God's immediate purpose that it is more important to seek out His purpose than to attach ourselves to our own nostrums. The Kala Purusha, Zeitgeist & Death Spirit, has risen to his dreadful work—*lokakshayakritpravridhdhas*—increasing to destroy a world,—and who shall stay the terror & mightiness & irresistibility of Him? But He is not only destroying the world that was, He is creating the world that shall be; it is therefore more profitable for us to discover & help what He is building than to lament & hug in our arms what He is destroying. But it is not easy to discover His drift, & we often admire too much temporary erections which are merely tents for the warriors in this Kurukshetra and take them for the permanent buildings of the future.

The Pandits are therefore right when they make a difference between the practice of the Satya & the practice of the Kali. But in their application of this knowledge, they do not seem to me always wise or learned. They forget

or do not know that Kali is the age for a destruction & rebirth, not for a desperate clinging to the old that can no longer be saved. They entrench themselves in the system of Kalivarjya, but forget that it is not the weakness but the strengths of the old harmony that are being subjected to *varjanam*, abandonment. That which is saved is merely a temporary platform which we have erected on the banks of the sea of change awaiting a more stable habitation; and it too must disappear into the engulfing waters. Has the time arrived for that destruction? We think that it has. Listen to the crash of those waters,—more formidable than the noise of assault, mark that slow, sullen, remorseless sapping,—watch pile after pile of our patched incoherent ramshackle structure corroding, creaking, shaking with the blows, breaking, sinking silently or with a splash, suddenly or little by little into the yeast of those billows. Has the time arrived for a new construction? We say it has. Mark the activity, eagerness and hurrying to and fro of mankind, the rapid prospecting, seeking, digging, founding—see the Avatars & great vibhutis coming, arising thickly, treading each close behind the other. Are not these the signs and do they not tell us that the great Avatar of all arrives to establish the first Satya Yuga of the Kali?

For in the Kali too, say the secret & ancient traditions of the Yogins, there is a perpetual minor repetition of Satya-Treta-Dwapara-Kali subcycles, the subTreta & subDwapara breaks down and disappears in the subKali. The process then begins over again [.....] for each new temporary harmony is fairer and more perfect than its preceding harmony, each new temporary collapse more resounding & terrible than its anterior dissolution. Already ended are the first five thousand years of the Kali which were necessary to prepare for final destruction the relics of the ancient Satya. Weakness & violence, error and ignorance and oblivion rushing with an increasing speed & rhythm over the whole earth have done for us that work. The morning of the first Kali-Satya is ready to break, the first few streaks dimly visible. So runs the not incredible tradition.

Yes. A new harmony, but not the scannel pipes of European materialism, not an Occidental foundation upon half truths & whole falsehoods. When there is destruction it is the form that perishes, not the spirit—for the world and its ways are forms of one Truth which appears in this material world in ever new bodies and constantly varied apparel—the inward Eternal taking the joy of outward Mutability. The truth of the old Satya that is dead is not different from the Truth of the new Satya that is to be born, for it is Truth that [. . . .] always and persists. In India, the chosen land, it is preserved; in the soul of India it sleeps, expectant of that soul's awakening, the soul of India leonine, luminous, locked in the closed petals of the ancient lotus of strength and wisdom, not in her weak, sordid, transient & miserable externals.

India alone can build the future of mankind; in India alone can the effective Avatar appear to the nations. And until He appears, it is for India to gather herself up out of her dust & degradation,—symbol of the shattered Satyayuga—to commune with her soul by Yoga and to know her past & her future. I have not here speculated on what we should build, what we should break, nor shall I now define my detailed opinions—but whatever it be, we must do it in the light and in the spirit of that triple principle of the divine nature; we must act in the reflection of God's Love, Strength & Wisdom.

We are Hindus seeking to re-Hinduise society, not to Europeanise it. But what is Hinduism? Or what is its social principle? One thing at least is certain about Hinduism religious or social, that its whole outlook is Godward, its whole search and business is the discovery of God and our fulfilment in God. But God is everywhere and universal. Where did Hinduism seek Him? Ancient or pre-Buddhistic Hinduism sought him both in the world and outside it; it took its stand on the strength & beauty & joy of the Veda, unlike modern or post-Buddhistic Hinduism which is oppressed with Buddha's sense of universal sorrow and Shankara's sense of universal illusion,—Shankara who was the better able to destroy Buddhism because he was himself half a Buddhist. Ancient Hinduism aimed socially at our fulfilment in God in life, modern Hinduism at the escape from life to God. The more modern ideal is fruitful of a noble and ascetic spirituality, but has chilling and hostile effect on

social soundness and development, social life under its shadow stagnates for want for belief and delight, *shraddhā* and *ānanda*. If we are to make our society perfect and the nation is to live again, then we must revert to the earlier and fuller truth. We must not make life a waiting for renunciation, but renunciation a preparation for life; instead of running from God in the town to God in the forest, we must rather plunge into the mountain solitude in our own souls for knowledge & joy & spiritual energy to sustain any part that may be given to us by the master of the Lila. If we get that strength, any society we build up must be full of the instinct of immortal life and move inevitably towards perfection. As to the precise way in which society will be reconstructed, we have hardly yet knowledge enough to solve the problem. We ought to know before we act, but we are rather eager to act violently in the light of any dim ray of knowledge that may surprise our unreflecting intellects, and although God often uses our haste for great and beneficial purposes, yet that way of doing things is not the best either for a man or a nation. One thing seems to me clear that the future will deny that principle of individual selfishness and collective self-interest on which European society has hitherto been based and our renovated systems will be based on the renunciation of individual selfishness and the organisation of brotherhood,—principles common to Christianity, Mahomedanism and Hinduism.

SriAurobindo

'Essays Divine and Human'

.... *T*hus the law for the individual is to perfect his individuality by free development from within, but to respect and to aid and be aided by the same free development in others. His law is to harmonise his life with the life of the social aggregate and to pour himself out as a force for growth and perfection on humanity. The law for the community or nation is equally to perfect its corporate existence by a free development from within aiding and taking full advantage of that of the individual, but to respect and to aid and be aided by the same free development of other communities and nations. Its law is to harmonise its life with that of the human aggregate and to pour itself out as a force for growth and perfection on humanity. The law for humanity is to pursue its upward evolution towards the finding and expression of the Divine in the type of mankind, taking full advantage of the free development and gains of all individuals and nations and groupings of men, to work towards the day when mankind may be really and not only ideally one divine family, but even then when it has succeeded in unifying itself, to respect, aid and be aided by the free growth and activity of its individuals and constituent aggregates.

SriAurobindo

'The Human Cycle'

TOWARDS CHANGES IN OUR CONSTITUTION : A FEW REFLECTIONS

Introduction

An important stage has been reached in the life of our country when we are required to think of major social, economic and political changes, even of designing a new pattern of our collective existence that might bring us nearer to a more satisfactory framework. It is in this context that there is a current of thought which advocates important changes in our Constitution. According to one line of argument, however, our Constitution has been wisely drafted and, even though it may need some amendments, our attention must be centred on implementing it wisely and efficiently. According to some, our difficulties are not fundamentally rooted in our Constitution but elsewhere, in our inefficient handling of certain basic problems such as population, education, productivity, law and order and foreign relations. We are, therefore, asked to attend to these problems and are assured that if they are solved adequately, we shall see that we can continue with our Constitution more or less as the founding fathers conceived it. There are some, who may concede the need to amend the Constitution and even to amend it extensively, but who believe that the basic features of the Constitution cannot and should not be altered. There is, however, a debate as to what are the basic features, and there is also an argument that there is nothing to prevent the possibility of constituting a new Constituent Assembly which could, in its wisdom, give a radically new Constitution, altering even the "basic features". Sometimes the discussions tend to wear a purely academic character, and they are truly far removed from problems of real importance. Nonetheless, a view is gaining ground that a fresh look at our Constitution is rather urgent and even imperative.

Ambiguities

Three key-words of our Constitution, viz., democracy, socialism and secularism, are ambiguous and our polity seems to have suffered a great deal on account of the inadequacy of the clarity in regard to these words, and varied interpretations that have been put on them. It seems, therefore, necessary to understand the complexity of ideas associated with these words and to suggest that the Constitution incorporates some precise formulations or some guiding connotations of these words.

Concept of Democracy

The concept and practice of democracy were quite

known in the ancient world, pre-eminently in India and Greece; but they have now become fixed among the idea-forces of the future as a result of the individualistic age of Europe, and this is not likely to be entirely eliminated by any temporary reaction. Even though the present forms of democracy may change, the trend is to move forward towards increasing democratic democracy. Individualism has discovered a deeper truth of the individual; it does not look upon the individual as a mere social unit, even though it recognises that the individual has his natural or assigned part in the truth and law of the collective existence. According to this view, an individual's existence, his right and claim to live and grow are not founded solely in his social work and function; the individual is something in himself, an end in himself, a member of the realm of ends, a soul, a being, who has to fulfil his own individual truth and law even when he participates in collective work. The resulting democratic conception underlines, therefore, the right of all individuals as members of the society to the full life and the full development of which they are individually capable. Even the idea of social development and well-being means the development and well-being of all the individuals in the society and not merely the splendour and power of one or two classes.

These deeper truths of democracy tend to be relegated into the background under the pressure of the form, structure and functioning of parliamentary democracy. It may be admitted that parliamentarianism, which is the invention of the English political genius, is a necessary stage in the evolution of democracy; without it the generalised faculty of considering and managing with the least possible friction large problems of politics, economics and legislation concerning considerable aggregates of people cannot easily be developed. It has also been a successful means of preventing the state executive from suppressing the liberties of the individual and nation. On the other hand, it is now increasingly realised that the methods of parliamentarism involve an immense waste of time and energy and a confused, swaying and uncertain action that "muddle out" in the end some tolerable result. Parliamentarism means too, in practice, the rule and often the tyranny of a majority, even of a very small majority. It is true that parliamentarism gives to the individual the right of periodic vote, but this is besieged by a huge machine of

electioneering ruled by various forces that tend to influence that vote in uncertain and irresistible directions, rendering it quite often practically involuntary. Parliamentarism also nourishes a process of a perpetual strife of parties, all of them fighting out a battle of conflicting interests under the banners of conflicting ideas and ideals. But the worst consequence of parliamentarism is that it tends to support and perpetuate a huge organised system and an increasing plutocratic tendency that shocks by its ostentatious grossness and the magnitudes of its gulfs and distances. And in that plutocratic set-up, there is increasing stress of competition which tends to secure survival, not of the spiritually, rationally or physically best, but of the most fortunate and aggressively, egoistically and vitally successful. It is evident that this is not a rational order of society. Democratic liberty tends to engender gross and unjust inequalities.

Trinity of Democracy: Emergence of Socialism

Liberty, equality and fraternity constitute the trinity of democracy, and, ideally, all the three must obtain simultaneously, if we are to have the fulfilment of the dreams of democracy. But consequent upon the failure of individual liberty to harmonise with equality, there is bound to emerge the attempt of the human reason to get rid of the great parasitical excrescence of unbridled competition. Hence the rise of socialism which sets out to replace a system of organised economic battle by an organised order and peace. To begin with, it underlines the importance of equality, not merely a political equality, but a perfect social equality. It advocates equality of opportunity for all, as also equality of status for all. It argues that this equality is impossible if personal, or at least inherited right in property continues to exist; therefore it attacks the right of personal property as it is now understood and makes war on the hereditary principle. It is at this point that the real germ of socialism begins to manifest; for if the individual is not to own or possess property, it is held that it is to be owned and possessed by the community as a whole, and it is to be administered by the community as a whole. In justifying this idea, socialism tends to deny the right of the individual to exist except as a member of the society and for its sake. According to the strict socialistic principle, the individual belongs entirely to the society, not only his property, but himself, his labour, his capacities, his individual life, his family life, the life of his children. And it turns to the collective reasoning mind and will of the community to arrange the life of the individuals, not only all the details of the economic and political life, but of all the aspects. For it begins to affirm increasingly that it is only the collective reason and intelligent will that can overcome the egoism of individualistic life and bring about a perfect principle and rational order of society.

The truth behind socialism is the fact that every society represents a collective being and in it and by it the

individual lives and he owes to it all that he can give it. At the same time, socialism ignores the soul of man and its supreme need of freedom and of a growing self-control instead of a mechanical regulation by the mind and will of others. Democratic socialism therefore attempts to harmonise the truth of the collective being and of the individual. It assumes that it will combine some kind of individual freedom, a limited but all the more true and rational freedom, with the rigours of the collectivist idea. But the history of the present century has manifested the hesitations of social democracy between socialistic regimentation and democratic liberty, and the increasing tendency towards the victory of the vigorous and ruthlessly logical forces of Communism and Fascism. In the northernmost countries of Europe, a temporising, reformist, practical socialism compromising between the right regulation of the communal life and the freedom of the individual has to some extent made good, but the question still remains whether the spirit of compromise can ever achieve an equilibrium of the mental poise, and whether the claims of individual liberty and those of the collective being can be harmoniously reconciled without injury to the deeper truths of the individual and of the collective soul.

Democratic Trinity not Essential for Socialism

The fact is that socialism respects claims for individual liberty and equality only so long as they can be fitted within a frame of collective ordering of society. It does not hesitate to suppress individual liberty or even to destroy it or reduce it to an almost vanishing quantity as and when it is found to collide with the demands of the collective reasoning and will. It even argues that individual liberty of life and action may well mean in practice an undue freedom given to his infra-rational parts of nature and that therefore the collectivity or the state which represents the collectivity has the right to force the individual to realise his higher rational freedom by compelling him to obey the wiser and more universal dictates of collective reason. It goes even farther in its practice as has been shown in the history of Nazism and Communism. It discovers that the equality it creates at a certain stage of its development is rather an artificial equality, having its own irrationalities, its contradictions of the collective good, and its injustices and costly violations of the truth of Nature. Thus equality may also turn out to be not a panacea but an obstacle in the way of the best management and control of life by the collective reason and will of the community. It may, therefore, seem that the central sustaining principle of socialism is neither liberty nor equality but the third member of the democratic trinity, brotherhood, or rather, comradeship, since it seems to square better with the spirit of collectivism. But comradeship without liberty and equality can be nothing more than the like association of all in common service to the life of the nation under the control of the collectivist State. The

result would be totalitarianism, the logical extreme of socialism, for it can be seen that in the ultimate analysis, the collectivist ideal can do very well without liberty, equality and fraternity, for none of them belong to its grain and substance.

In this consequence there is, indeed, the paradox of the march of Reason. For it is the Reason that conceives of collective mind and will, as distinguished from and superior to the individual mind, and it is the collective mind and will in its logical train that arrives at totalitarianism, which is the denial of the development of Reason, since Reason develops best when it develops with a tolerable space of freedom. In the totalitarian system, there is a rapid crystallisation of the social, economic, political life of the people into a rigid organisation effectively controlled at every point. There comes about the compulsory casting of thought, education, expression, action into a set iron mould, with a ruthless repression of all that denies and differs.

Social Democracy in India

Indeed, such a situation cannot last for ever, although it can last long enough to be a menace and a threat to occupy the globe. But now that totalitarianism has collapsed during the recent years, we are now faced with an even deeper question, namely, whether the swing in the opposite direction that tends to encourage competitive spirit of capitalism is the only right road to fulfilment. In India, there was a hope and promise of a success of social democracy, but we are now passing through a stage of a sharp disequilibrium in our economic and political life, the consequences of which may not be entirely within the control of any formula of a compromise between socialism and democracy. We are required to consider once more very seriously what, if any, will be a practical and satisfactory formula of socialism and democracy.

The central difficulty in the practice of the democratic ideal is that when liberty is attempted, equality tends to suffer, and when equality is attempted liberty tends to be sacrificed. And, as far as fraternity is concerned, it seems to be at the mercy of egoistic self-will of individuals or of the mechanical uniformity of the State machinery and finds occasional or imperfect expression in terms of association, cooperation, mental sympathy or comradeship. Fraternity is pre-eminently a matter of the inner spirit and can manifest truly in the free relationships of the inner souls of individuals. Actually, liberty and equality, too, are spiritual in character, and they can only flourish in spiritualised society, and they can be recognised and practised only partially in the framework of institutions and of the State. That is why there is bound to be some kind of disequilibrium between liberty and equality in our present conditions; and when we think of some satisfying formula applicable to our

existing conditions, we have to think not of any fullness but only of maximising the harmony of these two elements, and strive always to fill the lacuna by creating conditions in which the spiritual truth of liberty and equality as also of fraternity can be experienced and expressed progressively and increasingly in various activities and relations as also in the spirit of the working of the individuals and of the cultural, social, economic and political institutions.

Democracy, Socialism and Spirituality

In the ancient polity of India, there was a strong democratic element, although the features of that element were not at all the same thing as modern parliaments and modern democracy. These features were derived from the original Vedic idea of *Rita*, which developed into a complex idea and practice of *Dharma*, always distinguishable from what we call institutional and credal religions. While the ideal conceived in the Indian polity visualised the dispensability of artificial construction of society or of any political government or State, because in that enlightened state the individual and the collectivity would be freely self-determining, yet it admitted that in the actual condition of humanity there has to be superimposed on the natural life of society a state or a sovereign power, with a basic function to ensure that the *Dharma* is observed in vigour and to punish and repress and prevent offences against the *Dharma*.

An important feature of the concept of *Dharma* was that it took note of the individual and group variations, and instead of the erection of one uniform and mechanical law of development, it attempted to penetrate deeper into the spiritual dimension and insisted on the recognition of *swabhava* and *swadharma*, that facilitated at the appropriate stages of development the freedom of a deeper plunge into the spiritual reality of the individual, and even of the transcendence of *Dharma* at a higher stage of development into the state and dynamics of spiritual liberation, *moksha*. Another important feature was the recognition that every epoch or every age has its own *Dharma*, *yugadharma*, and this required fresh discovery and formulation that would be appropriate for the given time. These two features taken together would permit the freedom from bondage to the past and the freedom to advance towards the future.

It is true that the application of the concept of *Dharma* to the economic, social and political life broke down at various stages of our ancient history and we find that the ancient system could advance only up to a point where India's social, economic and political rule of life was able merely to adumbrate deeper spiritual significances. It may also be admitted that, while the Indian experiment discovered the spiritual truths, it

could apply them for the life of the individual only, and even for him it looked beyond the earth for its fulfilment and at earth only as the place of his preparation for a solitary salvation or release from the burden of life. It may even be said that human society itself never seized on the discovery of the soul as a means for the discovery of the law of its own being or on a knowledge of the soul's true nature and need and its fulfilment as the right way of terrestrial perfection.

It is impossible within the limited scope of this essay to expound this important point, but we may only mention that as we are turning our eyes towards the future, and as we are trying to assimilate in our collective life the great and admirable ideas from the West of progress contained in the formula of liberty, equality and fraternity, we need to clarify to ourselves the essential element of the genius of Indian polity, to recognise how far we succeeded and in what respect we made mistakes and faltered in the application of our ideals or were misled into unhealthy exaggerations. It would suffice here to affirm that India has the key to the knowledge and conscious application of the ideal. What was dark to her before in its application, she can, now with a new light, illumine. We may admit that the Indian tradition created fences to protect the outer growth of the spiritual ideal, and these, in due course, became barriers to its expansion and further application. It is for us not to put this problem below the carpet but to make a fresh effort to break down the barriers and give to Indian spirit and its polity a freer field and ampler light. This has become now necessary because the Western ideas of progress have themselves come to a stage of crisis, and we in our application of these ideas in our polity find ourselves arrested. We can move forward only if we can explore our potentialities; it would mean assimilating the knowledge or germs of knowledge lying in the depths of our tradition. It is quite possible that this effort may also provide a new and decisive turn to the problems over which all mankind is labouring and stumbling.

There is a danger that when we speak of *Dharma* and *Swadharma* and of spirituality, we may be arrested by the current notions of codes of conduct and of religion. It is true that *Dharma* may be conceived at one stage as a body or systematic body of duties or of rights and duties, and in an evolutionary process this has its own necessity and utility. But when the society has reached the stage of democratic freedom based upon individualism, there is bound to arise some kind of pluralism and even an attempt to transcend the idea of any uniform content of duties. Therefore the deeper concept of *Dharma* in India has been refined in the context of *swabhava*, the individual law of the development appropriate to each individual's inner nature and soul. This recognises the diversity of individualities and diversities of laws of development. At the same time, the Indian knowledge of

such matters is capable of formulating a universally acceptable science of self-development that can serve as a guide and which, for purposes of collective life, can be recognised and implemented. Such recognition could itself be a great advance over the present confusing and largely unworkable and unimplementable lists of duties.

Ambiguity of Secularism

In this context, we need to reconsider the concept of "secularism" that we find in our Constitution. In the first place, secularism is not defined in our Constitution; it is thus left to everyone to interpret it in any way one thinks best. There is a view of secularism, which consists of equality before law, irrespective of caste, religion and race, as also the idea that the State funds shall not be utilised for the promotion of any religion. There is a tolerant view of secularism, which aims at equal respect for all religions. There is also a synthetic view of secularism, which aims at bringing about unity of religions on the basis of shared moral and spiritual values. There is also a materialistic view of secularism, which has an upper hand in legalistic battles on the subject, since it can be more convincingly made out that materialism is incontrovertibly secular.

But whatever view that one might take, the net effect is that the Constitution promotes confused thought on religion, shuts the doors even on those tendencies in religions and in spiritual planes which lie above religions, which, if consciously acknowledged and promoted, would heal the divisions of religions, bring about greater understanding among them, and would eventually enable us to cultivate the scientific body of spiritual knowledge.

Need of Recognition of the Comprehensive Science of Spiritual Knowledge

What we need today is a positive recognition of spirituality as distinct from religion; we need also to recognise that there exists a scientific body of spiritual knowledge, and that this needs to be promoted by the State. This is all the more necessary when we find that the true truths that lie behind democracy and socialism can be integrated and expressed effectively only when their ultimate spiritual aims are recognised and promoted.

Parliamentary Democracy

What about the defects of parliamentarism and of the evils of plutocracy that tend to be promoted by parliamentary democracy? The central defect lies in the fact that although in theory all the adult members of society are to be partners in the governance of the State, in practice, the effective participation and exercise of power gets vested only in specialised groups, called political parties, their functionaries and their chosen candidates. Political parties harden into citadels of vested interests

who cultivate the rich by various means, fair and foul, and perpetuate their hold on the people and their collective destinies. Political parties also tend to be forces of division in the country, each exclusive of the other, and, like religions, each having its own creed and system of rewards and punishments, and even, in crucial circumstances, authority over the conscience and expression of its members. The Indian anti-defection law brings out quite clearly the extent to which the whip of the party can control the freedom of its members in legislatures. Parliamentary system has therefore become in practice a system of periodic rule by a ruling political party which bears some kind of an aura of the absolution of theocracy. Seeking of wealth, corruption, duplicity and resort to divisiveness—these constitute the air and atmosphere of political parties, and they alone have potential or actual power of effective action in the country.

It has been acknowledged that even though democracy is an evil form of government, it is a necessary evil; it has also been conceded that even though parliamentary democracy is, in any case, the worst form of government, mankind has not been able to invent any better form of government. As against these contentions, it has been held that democracy need not necessarily be an evil form of government, as has been shown by the ancient republics of India. It is evident that these republics enjoyed high reputation throughout India for the excellence of their civil and the formidable efficiency of their military organisation. It has also been noted that the political liberty that obtained in these republics long outlasted the period of Greek republican freedom, which was brilliant but ephemeral and troubled. It has also been noted that some of these republican states appear to have enjoyed a longer and more settled history of vigorous freedom than republican Rome, for they persisted even against the mighty empire of Chandragupta and Ashoka and were still in existence in the early centuries of the Christian era. It has also been held, based upon historical evidence, that even though India as elsewhere developed monarchical states, Indian monarchy right up to the Mohammedan invasion was of an altogether different type, having in it a strong democratic character, since that monarchy was a sort of a limited or constitutional monarchy, and even the continuation of the monarch's rule was far more dependent than that of medieval European kings on the continued will and assent of people. Based on these and similar facts, it has been argued that democratic freedom can be organised on patterns different from those of parliamentarism, and that liberties of people and individuals can be protected, if they are properly blended with various forms of government, monarchical, oligarchical, or republican; the important point that is underlined is that democratic freedom and its protection depend largely upon the democratic spirit among people and among those who happen to have effective political power of governance.

There is, indeed, an overwhelming view that the seal of night is upon monarchy and that it is futile to think of resurrecting a monarchical form of government. At the same time, it is seen that constitutional monarchy such as we find in the symbolic British crown has some kind of persistence, and that the presidential form of government can very well be combined with democratic freedom, provided that the President is subjected to the system of direct election by the people and that his rule is limited in its tenure and freed from the principle of heredity.

Presidential Form of Government

In recent years, a strong view has come to be advanced that India should switch over from parliamentarism and cabinet form of government to the Presidential form of democratic government. It has been argued that our Constitution already provides Presidential form of government, quite distinct from that of the Constitutional monarchy of the U.K., since while the latter is hereditary in character and is not subject to the vote of the people, the former is not hereditary and is subject, if not to the direct vote of the people, still to the election by an electoral college consisting of members of both houses of Parliament and the members of legislative assemblies of the states. It is also pointed out that it is the President who is constitutionally assisted by a Council of Ministers led by the Prime Minister, and that the Council of Ministers holds office during the pleasure of the President, although the President is bound ultimately by the advice of the Council of Ministers and there is ultimately the supremacy of the Prime Minister and his Council of Ministers over the President. It is in the context of this delicate balance between the constitutional position of the Indian President and that of the Prime Minister that it has been suggested that some of the evils of parliamentarism can be cured or mitigated if the Constitution is so amended that the President is elected directly by the entire electorate of the nation in a national election. It has been argued that the character of the sanction behind the Chief Executive would undergo a basic structural change, that this would ensure a sense of unity and oneness amongst the voters of India, and that the electioneering process would require the political parties to override considerations of religion, caste or creed.

It has also been argued that the presidential form of government would give a greater flexibility to ensure that even individuals, eminently suitable but not belonging to any political party or not elected through parliamentary process, can also get a chance to become ministers or political executives, thus minimising the evil stranglehold of some of the undesirable elements involved in the processes of electioneering.

It is also possible to argue in favour of the Presidential form of government that it is easier under that form to

organise more effectively some kind of a system reminiscent of our ancient Indian system which could combine complex communal freedom and self-determination, and that the system could be so organised where the entire parliament could, under important circumstances, function as the President's opposition, which would ensure an effective network of processes of checks and balances.

But even if we are to concede, either because of conviction or for the sake of argument, that Presidential form of government is better for India than the present Parliamentary and cabinet form of government, there is still the question of the role of political parties, their divisive power, their employment of undesirable means of gaining victory in elections, and their encouragement, voluntary or under compulsion of circumstances, of plutocratic tendencies and of the supremacy of the power of wealth. Unfortunately, we find that in the current political debates there is no genuine condemnation of the system of political parties, in spite of their acknowledged evils; it is true that we hear of some proposals of reforms that underline the need to run parties more and more democratically; but otherwise the trend is to harden the party system and there is even a proposal that legislative measures should be adopted which would oblige every potential candidate to legislatures to belong to a political party; this would, in effect, eliminate the existence of what we call "independents" from the political system.

New Forms of Democracy

We hear, undoubtedly, from time to time, of partyless democracy; but this idea has not received as much attention as it deserves, probably because this idea threatens the vested interests of the present political parties, which would under normal circumstances not agree to their own liquidation. In the present circumstances, therefore, the utmost that is being advocated is to create some kind of consensus among political parties on some basic national issues or to create conditions under which political parties could come together to form a national government.

On the other hand, there is a possibility of creating a trend or a new climate of political thought in the hope that under the anvil of favourable circumstances new ideas of democratic democracy, and of the harmony of liberty, equality and fraternity both in their practical and spiritual reality, can be realised progressively, either in a slow motion or even rapidly.

There is a tendency to stigmatise good ideas relating to a possible future polity in our country as impracticable simply because they cannot be implemented uniformly all over the country. But it is possible to conceive that certain new ideas and certain corresponding forms and

structures of new polity can first be actualised only in certain favourable pockets on a small scale, say, in a few districts, or in a few federated groups of villages or towns, where sufficient number of individuals could, moved by idealism and spirit of innovative experimentation, adopt and give unto themselves voluntarily, some form of collective life that could combine the higher truths lying behind democracy and socialism and that could free itself from the limitations of Parliamentary or Presidential form of governance and of plutocratic tendencies. In order that such a possibility could really materialise, we can think of at least three enabling conditions which should at the minimum be made available in the country by some means of constitutional amendment.

First, there could come to be formed a board of disinterested group of thinkers, reformists and experts, whose very task would be to encourage innovative ideas, which could include the following :

(1) that the society should lay stress on the power of the cultivation of human living powers suffused with their corresponding values, rather than on institutions which produce mechanising effects on individuals and collectivities;

(2) that the highest seeking relevant to our time is not only to find our fulfilment within our deeper soul but also to deal with life and its problems with increasing knowledge, even though this might mean development of faculties of truth-perception and truth-action, which have been affirmed so forcefully in Indian culture;

(3) that our efforts should start with the rejection of the theory that many must remain necessarily for ever on the lower ranges of life and only a few climb into the free air and the light. On the contrary, we must aim at the regeneration of the entire life of the earth.

Secondly, this board may encourage or even guide willing individuals or groups of individuals to evolve ideas and forms of collective action that might promote even on a limited scale in districts or selected small areas or groups of villages or towns, practical ideal ways of life that would be free from the disabling and ugly features of plutocracy.

Thirdly, this board may have the power, in consultation with and in concurrence of the Parliament, to implement, even on a limited scale, such ideas and forms which promise a better alternative to the present parliamentary democracy.

Within a brief compass of this paper, it is not possible to bring out in any adequate measure the rationale of this proposal, but it is presented here in barest outline as an idea which may have some chance of being considered

and discussed in due course.

We shall leave this matter at this point and turn, again very briefly, to one more issue which is perhaps one of the most vital and urgent issues of our contemporary polity, viz., the question of the unity and integrity of the country.

Unity and Integrity of India

India's oneness consists of unity in diversity. Right from early times, there was a conscious attempt to harmonise centrifugal and centripetal forces by permitting original elements of differences to develop many living and pulsating centres of life, art, culture, a richly and brilliantly coloured diversity in unity. Evidently, a federal form of government would be the natural form for such a difficult synthesis of commonness and differences. The fact therefore that our Constitution is federal in character is in line with the logic of the 'swabhava' and 'swadharma' of the Indian spirit. But there are some who think that preservation of regional linguistic states tends to harm the genuine interests of the unification of the country. In their view, vigorous unification is the only true union, and the oneness of the country can be ensured by taking recourse to a standardised and uniform administration, language, literature, culture, art, education,—all carried on through the agency of one national tongue. In contrast to this view, there are many who cherish the theme of unity in diversity but would still advocate a greater standardisation and uniformity in our country in order to counteract divisive tendencies that have come to the fore in recent decades, and they feel that regionalism, communalism and linguistic divisions are ruining the solid roots of the unity of the country. At the same time, there is no clear view as to what kind of reorganisation of the states could replace the present dispensation. As a result, there is in our climate of thought a certain uncertainty, even a disequilibrium, which needs to be attended to.

It may legitimately be argued that even within linguistic states there are forces that discourage certain healthy sources of variations and diversities, and that these forces need to be checked or eliminated. It has also been argued that several states are too big, while others are not so large and some are even very small. It is felt that it would be advantageous to have more or less equal states, in terms of their size and their economic viability. It is also felt that the unifying potentialities of the metropolitan cities are not being allowed to grow in their fullness because of their being capitals of their corresponding states. It is argued that many of our metropolitan cities are multi-lingual and have developed healthy cosmopolitan culture; their special characteristics should be encouraged and developed, and this can best be done, it seems, if they are turned into states, somewhat on the pattern on which Delhi is being

proposed to be turned in to a full-fledged state. It is also felt that by this rearrangement, these city-states could serve as centres of centripetal tendencies in the country, counteracting excessive regionalism that is developing in various parts of the country. It is also felt that their prosperity or their surplus could be made available to the whole country, instead of being pooled as is the case today into the economy of only one or the other of the states to which they belong at present. If these metropolitan states become, so to say, Union States, the regional states will develop new towns of their own, which will provide a fresh impetus to the economic growth and cultural efflorescence. In sum, an idea can be proposed for serious consideration to reorganise states on these new lines :

(i) Division of the present states into larger number of states, so as to permit greater diversity than is available at present, as also to bring out some kind of equality among them in terms of size and economic viability;

(ii) Identification of about ten or twelve metropolitan cities in the country and according them a special status of what may be called Union States, which would foster cosmopolitan and centripetal tendencies in the country, and which would also contribute their financial surpluses to the neighbouring states and to the other states and to the Centre, according to some equitable formula, applicable flexibly to each;

(iii) development of programmes of grassroot democracies among all the States that would promote—

(a) new forms of democratic democracy (reducing to the minimum resort to party system);

(b) greater awareness of the unity of the country;

(c) formulating the Indian spirit which looks upon the whole world as one family; and

(d) inter-weaving of education, culture, sports, child-care and youth movements.

Paradoxically, it would seem that a larger number of smaller states in a federal structure would tend to strengthen the Centre in several ways. However, this would prove to be truer if the devolution of powers between the Centre and states is so worked out that greater responsibilities are assigned to the states, and an effective machinery is worked out whereby states are helped by the Centre to develop grassroot democracies in towns and villages.

It is true that the unity and integrity of the country are in a perilous condition; but the causes of this condition are to be found at deeper levels. In any case, resort to methods of unification by uniformity and mechanisation will create greater discontent in the country and will create forces that might tend to take revenge by forcing unhealthy divisions in the country. Variations, diversi-

ties and freedom are necessary for the right and healthy pulsation of life.

It requires no argument to affirm that one of the unifying factors in the country has to be one common language, acknowledged and accepted by the people all over the country. That common language cannot be English, since it presents itself overwhelmingly as an alien language, which was used by the British for its own imperialistic purposes. Our Constitution has declared Hindi to be the official language for the Union. It is also expected that in due course English will be replaced by Hindi, although for the time being English has been given the status of the Associate official language for the Union. It is also expected that Hindi will, sooner rather than later, flourish as the All-India link language, and efforts are being made to fulfil this expectation. Much success has been registered, but it is doubtful whether this can be considered adequate. For resistance to Hindi persists, openly, in a few parts of country, and subtly in many parts. Further thinking on this subject needs to be invited; and we have to evolve a new language policy, which can subsequently be incorporated in suitable form in our Constitution. Already, there is a demand to give a more honourable place to Sanskrit, and this demand deserves to be considered without any bias or prejudgement.

Have we thought of and implemented adequate measures to identify and foster cultural instruments available in our heritage, which, if deliberately encouraged, would ensure spontaneous strengthening of cultural unity of the country? There is no space here to discuss this important question, but it may be said that we have been relying too much on official and administrative means for promoting national integration and neglecting or subordinating injuriously deeper means ethical, intellectual, aesthetic, and spiritual. We tend to forget that as far as India is concerned, its enduring unity has been spiritual and cultural.

Main Tasks Ahead

Spiritual and cultural unity of India has been an achievement which has no parallel in the history of civilization. It had at its base a long tradition of effort directed towards the loftiest, widest and deepest spiritual experiences and their utilisation for the reconciliation and synthesis of hundreds of approaches, methods, systems, that developed in the long history of the country, and inundated the Indian mind with religious, ethical systems, philosophies, disciplines of knowledge, art, craft and arts and sciences of economic, social and political life. In the periods of the high tide of this effort we find the combination of four factors that aided the achievement. First, there was leadership of eminent personalities exemplifying the spirit of synthesis, respected and honoured by the people and the state; secondly, there

was a system of education that promoted not only science but art, not only book-knowledge and information but growth in culture and character; thirdly, there was a widespread diffusion of knowledge in various forms that informed vast masses of people of the ideals of spiritual realisation, synthesis of yoga, of ideas and of codes of conduct, and of lives and characters, historical or otherwise, that could inspire higher aims of life. And fourthly, there was a peculiar system whereby the words of the wise could be adopted with a certain facility by the people and even by the State as a guideline to be implemented in the individual and collective life.

We can see that none of these factors subsist today, but if we still have some living experience of the spiritual and cultural unity of the country, it is because of the strong foundation which had been built over millennia. The question remains, however, as to by what means that unity will be sustained and strengthened. The question here is not merely that of administrative manipulation but that of creative action which is faithful to our own spirit, nature, ideals; it is a question of the creation of our own characteristic forms in the new age and the new environment; it is also a question of a strong and masterful dealing with external influences which need not be and cannot be a total rejection.

In this creative action, the most essential task is to recover our old spiritual knowledge in all its height, splendour and depth; for it is that knowledge which acted as the force of unity, harmony and synthesis. This recovery can greatly be aided by the resurrection of Sanskrit, since it is in that language that the greatest treasures of our spiritual knowledge and of the harmonies of spirituality, intellectuality, ethicality, aesthetics and sensuousness are stored. Once this point is grasped and appreciated, it should not be difficult to employ constitutional means to accord recognition to Sanskrit as the language of our spiritual unity and to lay down the means of spreading it, along with other elements of our ancient, classical and modern knowledge, among the people through various means of formal, non-formal and informal education. Another important task is to encourage the flowing of the unifying spiritual knowledge into new forms of philosophy, literature, art, science and critical knowledge. Again, once this point is grasped and appreciated, it would be easier to ask the question whether there are any constitutional means by which this task can be aided. There seems little doubt, if we examine all that is being done now in fields of knowledge and the inadequacies thereof, that we should urge a constitutional provision for the establishment of an autonomous apex body or commission, directly responsible to the Parliament, to encourage and monitor this task at the national level. Finally, fulfilment of the spiritual and cultural unity can be envisaged if India can undertake the task of formulating a greater synthesis of a spiritualised

society. Undoubtedly, this is the most difficult task, and it cannot be fitted within any narrow formula of thought and action. But it is not impossible to envisage the recognition of this task and its over-arching importance, if it can be incorporated at the basic goal of the Indian Republic.

Summary and Conclusions

We may now, in this concluding section, put forth very briefly the basic argument and main points that lie behind that argument.

(1) Our Constitution needs a fresh look and major amendments. We need to elucidate or redefine even the basic ideas of the Constitution such as, democracy, socialism and secularism.

(2) The concepts of democracy and socialism contain certain elements which can make them antagonistic to each other. At the same time, a wise combination of democracy and socialism is necessary and fruitful, but we require greater clarity regarding their meaning and scope.

(3) We need also to state more clearly the functions of the State. It may be maintained rightly that the function of the State is to provide all possible facilities for co-operative action, to remove obstacles, to prevent all really harmful waste and friction. Its function should also include removal of avoidable injustice and to secure for every individual a just and equal chance of self-development and satisfaction to the extent of his powers in the line of his nature. This is the truth behind socialism and this element should remain an unalterable element of our polity.

(4) All unnecessary interference with the freedom of the growth of the human being is or can be harmful. Even co-operative action is injurious if it immolates the individual to a social or group egoism and prevents so much free room and initiative as is necessary for the following of a more perfectly developed humanity. This is the truth behind democracy and individualism, which should also remain an unalterable element in our polity.

(5) Our democratic ideal should also clarify that the individual is not merely a means to an end, but he is also himself a member of the realm of ends, that he is inwardly a soul, capable of transcending the given status of the progress of the society and of opening up new paths by his initiative which may ensure the individual and collective progress. The individual should, therefore, be given the status and aid in accordance with this truth of the individual.

(6) Individualism should not be confused with competitive capitalism, just as socialism should not be confused with the deification of the State and totalitarianism. Both individualism and socialism can become harmonious if the spiritual truths lying behind them are emphasised and cultivated amongst individuals and collectivities.

(7) Liberty, equality and fraternity are spiritual in their fundamental nature and can be progressively harmonised by means of progressive development of spiritual static and dynamic states of consciousness, which are so well studied and organised in India into a scientific body of knowledge.

(8) A major effort of Indian polity should be directed towards the condition where the State and the Constitution explicitly recognise this Indian science of spiritual knowledge.

(9) The concept of secularism needs to be clarified and stated with precision; it needs to be clarified that secularism does not mean materialism but it aims not only at non-interference of the State in matters of recognised institutional religions, but also at the State's positive endeavour to promote a greater understanding among religions, and a unity or harmony of religions.

(10) Right men and women should be in their places and our Constitution should be so designed that only individuals who combine honesty, wide vision and organisational ability should be able to come to power. Parliamentary democracy, on account of its plutocratic tendencies, has become incapable of implementing this desirable objective. Hence, vigorous efforts should be made to develop better forms of democracy with experimental forms of democratic democracy, grassroot democracy, and partyless democracy, on a smaller scale in different parts of the country. For this to happen, suitable provisions should be made in the Constitution.

(11) Presidential form of government seems better than the cabinet form of government, and our Constitution may be amended to implement this idea.

(12) Oneness of India is based upon the principle of unity in diversity; hence the federal form of government envisaged by the Constitution is in accordance with the inmost nature of our country and its historical development.

(13) Federalism has, however, to go farther and there should be greater devolution of powers on the States, and the States themselves, particularly the large ones, should be further divided so that in size and in economic viability they are more or less equal. Metropolitan cities should be formed into Union States, and grassroot democracy (without party system) should be developed in villages and towns.

(14) Positive steps should be taken to preserve and strengthen the unity; and unless this unity is strengthened, other means of dealing with fundamentalism, communalism, regionalism, linguism will not meet with adequate success.

(15) Three main tasks should be undertaken to strengthen the spiritual and cultural unity of the country. First, there should be recovery of the old spiritual knowledge in all its amplitude, since it is that knowledge which laid down the foundations of synthesis, harmony and unity. For this purpose, Sanskrit should be resurrected, and along with the ancient and classical knowledge that

it contains, it should be encouraged and widely diffused in the country. Secondly, the ancient spiritual knowledge should be allowed to flow into new forms of modern disciplines of knowledge under the supervision of an apex body which can be set up under a fresh provision of the Constitution. Finally, the goal of the

Indian Republic should be explicitly declared to consist of the establishment of a spiritualised society where the individual and the society harmonise with each other in the highest fulfilment of liberty, equality and fraternity.

Kireet Joshi

.... ***T**hus in effect the Indian polity was the system of a very complex communal freedom and self-determination, each group unit of the community having its own natural existence and administering its own proper life and business, set off from the rest by a natural demarcation of its field and limits, but connected with the whole by well-understood relations, each co-partner with the others in the powers and duties of the communal existence, executing its own laws and rules, administering within its own proper limits, joining with the others in the discussion and the regulation of matters of a mutual or common interest and represented in some way and to the degree of its importance in the general assemblies of the kingdom or empire. The State, sovereign or supreme political authority, was an instrument of co-ordination and of a general control and efficiency and exercised a supreme but not an absolute authority; for in all its rights and powers it was limited by the Law and by the will of the people and in all its internal functions only a co-partner with the other members of the socio-political body.*

This was the theory and principle and the actual constitution of the Indian polity, a complex of communal freedom and self determination with a supreme co-ordinating authority, a sovereign person and body, armed with efficient powers, position and prestige, but limited to its proper rights and functions, at once controlling and controlled by the rest, admitting them as its active co-partners in all branches, sharing the regulation and administration of the communal existence, and all alike, the sovereign, the people and all its constituent communities, bound to the maintenance and restrained by the yoke of the Dharma. Moreover the economic and political aspects of the communal life were only a part of the Dharma and a part not at all separate but inextricably united with all the rest, the religious, the ethical, the higher cultural aim of the social existence. The ethical law coloured the political and economic and was imposed on every action of the king and his ministers, the council and assemblies, the individual, the constituent groups of the society; ethical and cultural considerations counted in the use of the vote and the qualifications for minister, official and councillor; a high character and training was expected from all who held authority in the affairs of the Aryan people. The religious spirit and the reminders of religion were the head and the background of the whole life of king and people. The life of the society was regarded not so much as an aim in itself in spite of the necessary specialisation of parts of its system, but in all its parts and the whole as a great framework and training ground for the education of the human mind and soul and its development through the natural to the spiritual existence.

Sri Aurobindo

'The Foundations of Indian Culture'

CONSCIOUSNESS APPROACH TO BUSINESS MANAGEMENT - 2

Resources, Ideals and Harmony

The principle of full utilisation of available resources—labour, materials, energy—is a fundamental principle of modern enterprise. Wastage, loss, hoarding, carelessness in distribution are all acts of unconsciousness, lack of attention, ignorance of inner divinity of those things which have come to us. What is not commonly realized is that proper usage of what one has generates a momentum of flow that keeps the supply uninterrupted. At one time the manager of Mother Estates was finding it difficult to attract a sufficient labour supply for the work at hand. Despite all the usual inquiries and efforts no increase was possible. He decided to examine present usage of available labour and see if some lapse was apparent. During the meeting he found that the men had been working under poor supervision and sometimes without any supervision for the past week or so and that their work output had been very low by any standards. He decided to clamp down and require a full day's work for a full day's wage. After a single day the supervisor in charge reported over a 100% increase in work completed and the very next morning three new men appeared for work unsolicited. He continued his efforts and in the following days men continued to come until there was no longer a shortage.

This principle holds good even when the required resource is in general shortage. About the same time there was a nation-wide shortage of cement because power cuts had reduced factory production time. When the manager tried to obtain cement for building an irrigation system, the government officers told him there was a waiting list of 500 people for approximately six months. He decided to try another method. First he ordered a search of the entire garden for unused cement, anything from a handful to a bag and gathered about three bags which he immediately used to begin the irrigation project. Then he reviewed the entire history of cement purchases and utilization at the garden and uncovered areas of wastage and misuse. He made an inner effort to arrive at the proper attitude and feelings towards the cement already used and that which was yet to come. Within three days a cousin of one of the staff called to offer 5 bags of cement at market rates. The cement was purchased and utilized. A few days later someone in town offered 15 more bags which the manager purchased. Thus he could complete all the pending work.

During the power cut in 1973 there was not sufficient electricity for running the water pumps at Mother Estates. Local officials appealed to the farmers not to raise the next crop. The current supply reached a minimum of four hours per day. Even when the current was on, often the voltage was below the level required for the larger motors. Besides this there were frequent shutdowns during the four hours so that each pump had to be restarted one or more times. Furthermore, the pumps were far apart and the responsibility for starting them was given to only a few responsible men wasting additional time in travel from one pump to the next. Between all these factors 30 to 40 minutes would be lost daily before all the pumps were commissioned. The staff made collective resolution that every minute of power must be utilized. New systems were employed to cut down on each of the sources of waste. On the first day all of the pumps were started within the first 5 minutes. Gradually the time was reduced to 15 seconds. The next day there was an announcement by the Government that 7 hours of electricity would be given. A few days later it was extended to 9 hours. Within two weeks it rose to 15 hours and finally to 20 hours during the hot season.

Besides these considerations, there is also a relationship between the availability of resources and the distribution of the final product. When the product is neglected for any reason, there may be difficulty in acquiring resources. This point is illustrated below.

II

Stagnation in the sale and distribution of the final product results from a mental inertia or hesitation on the part of management to make decisions and execute them in action. This inertia will also express itself in other places, e.g. back-up of work, delay of orders, raw material shipments, payments, etc. Often a product will accumulate in stock and, after initial efforts to move it fail, it is ignored or forgotten. The remedy lies in establishing full awareness of the product, of all possible avenues for distribution, removing hesitation and taking active initiative. When proper attention is given and all possibilities are exhausted, even when one's initiative leads only to movement of a fraction of the quantity, life will respond by attracting buyers for the remainder.

The son of a liquor merchant came for guidance because business had been unusually slow. In the course of discussions he mentioned a \$ 4000 consignment of wine

that had been sitting for 6 months in the cellar without a single sale. We highlighted this unsold stock as the major cause of the business slump and requested him to examine every fact relating to the consignment from the day of purchase, to look for movements of indecisiveness, hesitation, laziness, forgetfulness, unconsciousness in his own and his father's attitude, to take a firm mental decision with genuine feeling that wine stock must be sold, to exhaust every possibility for sales and report back in two days. In short, to give the product the attention it deserved. The man returned four days later and apologized for his delay. He said that in the intervening days over half the consignment had been sold and general business had increased so much that he had no time to come earlier.

A manufacturer of hand-made paper asked us to study his factory. He said that the local supply of raw materials for the paper was in abundance but he was running into continuous delays in getting his own supplies on time. In the course of investigation we came across a stockpile of drawing paper worth \$ 5000 which had been produced about a year earlier and then the order cancelled. Since then it had been lying forgotten in storage. We gave him a similar recommendation, adding that he should take initiative to remove delays from every aspect of his production lines, including delays in his response to other companies or prospective clients. The manufacturer made a firm decision to act. The next morning a truck load of raw materials arrived. But the manufacturer's hesitation remained and he failed to make a serious effort to market the paper. A few weeks later he realized his mistake and reaffirmed his decision. Within five minutes a man came in and offered to arrange the sale of the entire stock overseas. The response of life to our decisions is immediate. Accumulation of unsold stock retards the availability of raw materials, the sale of other products and the receipt of new orders.

III

In any institution, communication plays a vital role. In a dynamic organization such as a business enterprise this communication is not only composed of mental ideas and instructions, but must carry with it the enthusiasm, interest, forcefulness necessary to provoke a clear response in the recipient and motivate him to proper action. Where there is similarity of purpose, language, background, understanding and interest, words and explanations and orders are easily communicated, but where any of these are lacking, difficulties may arise. First there may be a problem in communicating a mental idea. Even if this is accepted, it requires also a response of interest and enthusiasm to prepare the listener to act on it, and still it requires the proper receipt of instructions to know how the idea is to be implemented in practice.

For all these levels of communication, silent will can be a very effective medium. A prior condition for the

effective use of silent communication is a general tuning of the different levels of the institution to the central purpose. This can be commercial in nature or psychological or spiritual. Where this tuning is present, where employees are consciously aware of the central purpose, a climate is created of receptivity and harmony in which new thought is easily introduced. Most often when a new idea or plan arises man has the tendency to speak it out immediately, to elaborate it through conversation, to test it by expression. The result is that much of the energy carried by a new inspiration or fresh thought is dissipated in premature unclarified discussion which often leads to misunderstanding, argument or initially poor response that hampers later acceptance of the finished product. Instead one can retain the fresh thought and allow it to develop quietly for some time, gradually becoming aware of the points of unclarity, weakness or possible objection. The idea is allowed to ripen and mature. One can then silently concentrate on the idea and will that others receive and accept it. One can patiently and carefully put seeds and suggestions into the atmosphere and, when the climate is right and the people receptive, give a fuller expression which will come with a far greater intensity due to the conservation and retention of energies. What commonly happens when such a procedure is followed is that either the idea is readily accepted on being presented or, even before presentation, the identical thought will be expressed by another member of the organization. This latter possibility is a very good one, for if one can suspend the egoistic need to impress others with his ideas, and allow them to accept a new thought as their own, he finds that the idea is much more readily accepted and supported.

The general climate of an organization can be made ripe for silent communication by means of periodical or regular meetings of staff. At these times emphasis can be placed on increasing the awareness of the central purpose, or introducing higher aims, or allowing open expression among the staff, all of which help to create and sustain an atmosphere of harmony, sympathy, interest, enthusiasm and participation among the members. Staff meetings have the further effect of allowing individuals and departments to become conscious of the work in all other areas of the organization and so increase their awareness of the entire institution in its dynamic wholeness. In such an atmosphere communication is made easy and is not limited to the communication of ideas. Plans are far more effectively put into action when the person involved feels it to be his own idea or at least is given voice in the development and finalising of the procedure and a degree of discretion in the execution. Silent will can bring this about by creating a basic commonality of viewpoint and receptivity.

There are certain people who habitually respond to new ideas with a note of pessimism or by attacking and

questioning them. There are others who have a vested interest in the status quo and resist changes or improvements in another's work. Such reactions drain the strength from a new idea, throw up a blanket of confusion and hesitation, reduce one's will and determination. In any situation where communicating a new idea is likely to meet with negativity, resistance, hostility, it is better to refrain from expression and to work inwardly until the idea has gained greater strength or the climate is more receptive. On the contrary, if one has the confidence of another person of similar disposition or close emotional identification, a certain amount of communication strengthens the movement represented by the idea and accelerates effectuation. Still moderation in speech is a valuable guideline to follow and conscious silence is a very powerful means of effectuation.

A related topic is that of gossip. In every institution there is a good measure of private conversation among staff and management concerned with the behaviour of other company members. When this conversation includes derogatory comments, sarcasm, a perverse pleasure in criticising others, it is a very powerful vibration which undermines the relationship between individuals and erodes the atmosphere of the institution. Gossip is always a negative movement which destroys harmony and goodwill. If one cannot speak positively about another or offer a mature constructive suggestion, it is better not to speak at all.

IV

We have said earlier that the institution is a living organism capable not only of expansive growth but also of rising to higher levels of functioning, a soul evolution. Like the individual, it makes such vertical upward progress when it looks up to a higher ideal and attempts to uplift its level of functioning to be in accordance with that ideal. This is Yoga. The institution has a personality determined by the purpose and circumstances of its founding, the social conditions of the time, the capacities of the founding members and all those who have since participated in its functioning. This personality is capable of a certain expansion; for instance, a business is capable of certain growth in its volume of business which is limited by the ideal, purpose, social milieu, etc.: in short, by the institution's personality. Beyond that limit if the institution wants to expand further, it has to change its personality, it has to evolve into a higher order of institution.

Most of the principles so far discussed help to bring about a maximum growth on the horizontal level. But for growth beyond this point, the institution must consent to change itself, it must make the necessary effort of will. Horizontal expansion requires dynamic practical skills. For a vertical expansion, vision, creativity and perception are necessary.

Most business organizations are founded on an economic motive. Within this area there is still a hierarchy of levels. The proprietor can be concerned solely with his own economic security and sees all his employees merely as a means to that and nothing more. This can be expanded to include concern for the economic security of the employees as well, and even further to help foster the prosperity of an industry or community or larger social group. But most institutions are moved by psychological motives as well. The founders usually have a need for creative expression, channelling of energies, the urge to adventure or new knowledge and new area of social acceptance, prestige, advancement. In these areas, too, it is possible for the institution to grow by working for the growth of these dimensions in those who work for the firm. And on a wider level the institution may begin to work towards a growth of the community. It may develop an interest in perfecting its product or service not only to increase its economic position but also for the sake of providing good service, out of a sense of social responsibility, ethics, aesthetic values. Beyond this there are even higher levels, institutions which function solely or partly for social improvement, charity, political ideals, national or international prosperity. Each time an institution gives attention to a higher level than its present functioning it takes an evolutionary step.

Established business houses often take one or more vertical steps unintentionally or unconsciously. When a firm becomes proud of its product or reputation, when it seeks to reward its employees by a fairer allotment of profits, when it takes interest in working conditions and family benefits, etc. Often such steps are taken hesitantly because they appear to be at the expense of the economic motive which has been primary. But in the history of large institutions it can be seen that this vertical growth brings with it not a loss on the economic levels but a manifold increase in profits. This is a fundamental point. When an institution rises to a higher level all the lower levels beneath receive a large expansion far beyond the limits of that lower level but in accordance with the broader potentials of a higher level.

Every institution is constantly faced with opportunities to take steps to a higher level of functioning. We start from where we are and take the next step. The resulting positive expansion then serves as an impetus for further growth so long as one does not remain satisfied with a single advance and level off there. In each part of the institution one can set an ideal a little higher than is now practised. It aids expansion of the whole. As an institution turns to a wider or higher field of life activities, the corresponding energy of that higher level uplifts the institution.

An added dimension of this principle can be seen in the evolving attitudes of the working staff. As an institution

rises in ideals, the ideals and attitudes of employees will change to the degree they are identified with the institution. Where management is concerned solely with profit, employees care only for their wage share. When management shows concern for the quality of its product, employees take increased interest in the quality of work. When the firm actively gives attention to the well-being and development of its workers, the workers take a corresponding interest in the growth of the institution. When the role of the institution becomes primarily of one genuine social service, the employees give service to further the institution. By so doing not only the institution evolves but the employees evolve as well as receive all the benefits of a higher level of existence.

V

Sri Aurobindo has written that all problems of nature are essentially problems of harmony. Every living organism depends on the smooth harmonious interaction and co-operation of its composite parts for growth and survival. Harmony in an institution is not limited to co-operative relations among employees or between employees and management. There is the harmony between the idea, the systems or schemes for execution and the actual outer expression. There is a harmony between principles and practice, and between understanding, acceptance and practice. For there to be a harmony there must be a tuning of the different layers of the institution to the central purpose. The ideal of harmonious relations, between parts of itself, acts as a powerful center for progress and the expansion of the entire institution. It is the universal harmony which supports all smaller conflicts. Harmony is not, as many think of it, a static or stagnant existence. It is the firm foundation of peace and stability upon which creativity, expansion and growth can flourish. Harmony brings to your service all the possibilities of the past that were missed. A general atmosphere of harmony, sympathy, goodwill can be aided by not speaking critically of others, refraining from all unnecessary negative expression, particularly anger, spite and jealousy. If one forgoes negative expression even when justified, he rises to a higher level. Harmony attempted in a situation yields greater results than authority, strategy or force.

There is a harmony possible on the level of thoughts and the level of feelings; there is also a greater harmony which lies deeper in each individual, founded on the unity of all souls. If any individual in an institution makes an effort to relate to others from the deepest possible center of being, to harmonize the many divergent and conflicting elements in his own consciousness, he can release a very powerful movement of harmony in the institution as a whole. Such a movement is the most propitious condition for an expansion of the company.

VI

Every reader will surely have anticipated our attitude on movements of falsehood such as lying, deceit, misrepre-

sentation, but the basis for this position may not be equally apparent. It is not necessary to add to the age-old debate on whether crime pays. It is certainly true that many an entrepreneur has grown wealthy by following a policy based on falsehoods of every kind. As Sri Aurobindo points out, the law of action and reaction, *karma*, is valid for each level of existence within its own domain. Lying and the like are actions on the ethical plane of mind, while business transactions are on the socio-economic plane of life. The two are not directly connected. Acts of falsehood may very well lead to economic prosperity but they also lead to moral degeneration and poverty. And since the ethical plane is a higher level of existence than the economic, the total result is a retrogression in development for the individual or institution involved. The aim of human activity is growth, progressive evolution of all the parts of the individual being and every aspect of collective life. This evolution is movement from unconsciousness to consciousness, from ignorance and falsehood to knowledge and truth, from suffering to fulfilment. There is no possible way to further this development by a conscious act of falsehood. Moreover, though such an action may yield a material fruit, it inevitably evokes a like response from outer life. Where one has obtained business from others by misrepresentation, others will seek business from you by the same means. Where one has charged another an unreasonably high price for a product, one's own staff or suppliers or someone else will do likewise toward you. As one is to life, so life responds in one form or another.

Secrecy, concealment, hiding are conditions in which falsehood thrives. As man and his institutions develop he relies less on such means, cultivates an open and illumined climate for conducting affairs and advances more rapidly in this brighter air.

It sometimes happens that an institution is treated falsely by others even when its own attitudes and behaviour have been true. When this happens it is a good indication that the institution is on the verge of a progress to a higher level of functioning and these lower forces come to impede that movement. The only support they can ever have is from the tinge of false methods the institution sometimes permits. The solution is to fight the falsehood only by Truth. Review the past and present behaviour. Examine and correct lapses in attitudes and modes of functioning. Falsehood can never be fought by falsehood.

A nationally known firm in the U.S. was awarded a large contract by one of the State Governments. The official in-charge said the only condition was that the consultant must demand an extra large fee and hand over the excess to him. The consultant refused the illegal proposition and lost the job. Some years later under a new govern-

ment administration the same consulting firm was awarded the largest consulting contract the state had ever issued. This time it was all legal.

One's own latent capacity for falsehood, slander, ill-

will and jealousy, even when unexpressed, leaves one open to over-negativity from others. The best protection is a sincere examination of the root of such vibrations within oneself.

Gary Jacobs

...So long as one insists on success, one is doing the work partly at least for the ego; difficulties and outward failures come to warn one that it is so and to bring complete equality. This does not mean that the power of victory is not to be acquired, but it is not success in the immediate work that is all-important; it is the power to receive and transmit a greater and greater correct vision and inner Force that has to be developed and this must be done quite coolly and patiently without being elated or disturbed by immediate victory or failure.



To discourage anybody is wrong, but to give false encouragement or encouragement of anything wrong is not right. Severity has sometimes to be used (though not overused), when without it an obstinate persistence in what is wrong cannot be set right. Very often, if an inner communication has been established, a silent pressure is more effective than anything else. No absolute rule can be laid down; one has to judge and act for the best in each case.



It (disciplining the subordinates) has to be done in the right spirit and the subordinates must be able to feel that it is so—that they are being dealt with in all uprightness and by a man who has sympathy and insight and not only severity and energy. It is a question of vital tact and a strong and large vital finding always the right way to deal with the others.



.....To take advantage of what is good in others keeping one's eye always on that, and to deal tactfully with their mistakes, faults and defects is the best way; it does not exclude firmness and maintenance of discipline, even severity is due; but the latter should be rare and the others should not feel it as if it were a permanent attitude.



This is the right inner attitude of equality—to remain unmoved whatever may outwardly happen. But what is needed for success in the outward field (if you do not use human means, diplomacy or tactics,) is the power to transmit calmly a Force that can change men's attitude and the circumstances and make any outward action at once the right thing to do and effective.

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SRI AUROBINDO AND THE DOMINANT INTELLECTUAL PARADIGMS OF OUR AGE

In his centenary tribute to Sri Aurobindo, K.D. Sethna (*Mother India*, 1972) observed: "This age, seen in its many-sided whole, will show itself secretly Aurobindonian. Sri Aurobindo will stand out as its truth-source and truth-focus, its natural gatherer-up and destined fulfiller." I present in this paper some evidence that will substantiate Sethna's claim about Sri Aurobindo. I shall show briefly what light Sri Aurobindo throws on some of the most influential intellectual paradigms of our age, such as, the liberal conception of man enshrined in the Western democracies, the Marxist conception of an ideal society, and the religious ideal of a transcendental fulfilment of life. Such an exploration will inevitably lead us to an examination of Marx, Freud and Darwin, the dominant intellectual influences of our age. In my opinion, although each one of these thinkers has brought to humanity a great truth, the illumination Sri Aurobindo's writings throw on them reveals their exaggerations and incompleteness and also offers to each of them the corrective needed.

I

Romain Rolland described Sri Aurobindo as "the completest synthesis that has been realised to this day of the genius of Asia and the genius of Europe". The English novelist Dorothy M. Richardson once wrote to K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar:¹ "Has there ever existed a more synthetic consciousness than that of Sri Aurobindo? Unifying he is to the limit of the term." S. K. Maitra² has demonstrated in some detail how Indian and Western thought have met in Sri Aurobindo. He says: "...[that] this meeting is not a mere handshake, but [that] there is a real synthesis of these two types of thought in him. There is even something more, a fulfilment of what each aims at but has not been able to realise." Thus one of the most striking features of Sri Aurobindo's intellectual temper is his capacity for finding the core of truth each intellectual perspective contains and to harmonise it with the truths contained in other perspectives which are equally valid but to a superficial view not mutually congruous.

Professor Gabriel Monod-Herzen,³ the well-known French physicist, once explained in what sense Sri Aurobindo embodied for him the quintessence of the

scientific spirit. "There are two attitudes in him which I most admire: The first is that he does not reject anything or anyone; there is a place for all opinions, even those which he does not accept, in his work. He has come to find that particle of truth that exists in everything because without it that opinion itself could not exist. One never feels a prisoner of ideas when one reads him. One never says, "This is falsehood", or else "That person is wrong"; one says, "Here is an incomplete idea." Being a physicist, I was deeply struck because I had always been greatly impressed by the fact that the long succession of scientists did not contradict one another, as say those who have not studied science themselves. In fact they complement one another."

This is a most remarkable feature of Sri Aurobindo's intellectual temper. The human intellect by nature is incapable of seeing the truth of anything in its integrality. It has to break reality into parts and if it seizes upon one or more parts, it has automatically to reject some other. But Sri Aurobindo is the one thinker I know of who overcomes this inherent limitation of human reason. To cite a couple of examples of this: Although Sri Aurobindo does not accept in its entirety either the philosophy of Buddhism or of the Vedanta as interpreted by Shankara, he is second to none in acknowledging the truth of the spiritual experiences on which these philosophies were based and the great contributions made to spirituality by Buddha and Shankara. Similarly, although he does not favour asceticism, he pays high tribute to asceticism and recognises the value of the spiritual experience supporting it.¹ Among numerous such instances in his writings, I would like to refer here particularly to one which occurs in his brief essay on Materialism.² In this article he goes on to say that the godheads of Materialism, namely, reason, science, progress and freedom in fact are preparing humanity for a greater religion than it has had in the past.

This brings me to the main point I wish to make here. In the intellectual domain what Sri Aurobindo offers us is not just one more corpus of a logically established theory about some aspect or domain of human life or of Nature but an integral theory of Man, Nature and God which is explanatorily more adequate than any other

1. *Sri Aurobindo: a biography and a history* (1985)

2. *The Meeting of the East and the West in Sri Aurobindo's Philosophy* (1968)

3. *Reminiscences of Sri Aurobindo in Mother India* (1972)

1. *The Life Divine*, Centenary Edition, p. 24

2. *Supramental Manifestation and Other Writings*, Centenary Edition, p. 245

theory available to us now. In fact it made him far too comprehensive and global for the limited interests and mental horizon of most intellectuals. If anybody offers such a comprehensive theory we are either not interested or too sceptical about the whole enterprise and tend to dismiss it out of hand.

Is his theory verifiable? Sri Aurobindo has explained several times how spiritual truths require verification of a kind other than what is feasible in physical sciences. In *A Defence of Indian Culture*, he refers to experience, experimental analysis and synthesis, reason and intuition as the tests which are valid for spiritual truths as they are for scientific truths. This is also explained in several of his letters.

Another feature of Sri Aurobindo's writings is that whether it is the exegesis of ancient scriptural texts like the Gita, or the Vedas, or the future of evolution, or of something as specific as English poetry, he always speaks with the supreme assurance of one who knows what he is talking about, of somebody who is merely describing what he has seen. Often the details which he gives of them are so precise that only one who has seen what he is describing could have given them. He is a seer in the real sense of the term. In his writings there is not the tension of a purely speculative philosopher who builds an elaborate logical structure to convince himself that what he is saying is after all plausible but is never sure he has in fact guarded all his flanks. Sri Aurobindo affirms this when he says: "Experience and formulation of experience I consider as the true aim of philosophy. The rest is merely intellectual work and may be interesting but nothing more." Monod-Herzen also refers to this quality of Sri Aurobindo's writings when he says: "The impression I had in reading *The Life Divine* was not at all that of receiving what is ordinarily called a lesson in philosophy, but of listening to a traveller who had discovered a new land."

The sheer brilliance and grandeur of Sri Aurobindo as a seminal and creative thinker is an aspect of him which we often tend to overlook because of his achievements as a yogi and mystic. To give only two examples, it can be said without being guilty of exaggeration of partisanship that nobody has built a metaphysical thought-structure as grand as the one in Sri Aurobindo's *The Life Divine*, or sounded the depths of the soul-culture of India as he has in his *The Secret of the Veda* and *The Foundations of Indian Culture*. His comprehensive writings on yoga, on the evolution of social and political institutions, on the desirability and possibility of a World Union, on literary criticism, his exegeses of Indian scriptural literature, his scintillating letters on a variety of life-problems, and his literary output which finds its crowning achievement in the cosmic epic *Savitri*—every one of these is stamped with the force of his intellectual genius.

And yet, none of these seems to have persuaded the academics in Indian universities to take more than peripheral interest in Sri Aurobindo. Some years ago C.D. Narasimhaiah,¹ the well-known literary scholar and critic, observed that in his *The Future Poetry*, Sri Aurobindo had given certain clear guidelines which if allowed would have led to the inauguration of an Indian school of literary criticism. Narasimhaiah notes with anguish that this lead was not followed by our academics and even today, nearly seventy years after *The Future Poetry*, we continue to produce literary criticism which is derivative and imitative of the West.

What Narasimhaiah has pointed out about Sri Aurobindo's literary criticism is true in my view of Sri Aurobindo's writings in general. For most of the intelligentsia in our country, particularly for those in our universities, Sri Aurobindo is no more than a vague and misty figure. At best they have heard of him as a mystic and a Vedantin, and therefore they feel fully justified in dismissing him as someone whose concern was other-worldly and therefore of no consequence to their scholarly interests. His epochal role in shaping the political consciousness of this country in the early years of this century is probably known only to specialist students of Indian history. His contribution to political and social thought, to psychology, to the discovery of the real meaning of the Vedas, to the philological studies of Indian languages, his luminous interpretations of India's past, his epoch-making contributions to Yoga, and to philosophy which offer the best framework for reconciling most of the antinomies of the East and the West,—none of these has created any enthusiasm among our professional intellectuals in the universities. His work as a small part of the corpus of his writings that has received some attention, for the most part hostile, from poets, poetasters, and sundry critics most of whom, I dare say, did not have the decency of reading him before pronouncing on him.

This is a sad situation because it has made our country deny to itself the benefit of reviving itself at the fountain of one of the most creative intellectuals of this century. Did the French savant Romain Rolland not describe him as the last of the great Rishis who held in his hand, in firm unrelaxed grip, the bow of creative energy? The creative energy of Sri Aurobindo's writings, if only we had tapped it, would have by now freed the minds of our countrymen from the stranglehold of Western domination, and shown us the way of building up a country strong, prosperous, confident, united and abundantly creative in all fields of art, science, culture and human endeavour.

1. *Aurobindo: Inaugurator of Modern Indian Criticism* in *The Literary Criterion*: Volume 15, No. 2, 1980.

The Indian intellectual today is in a most unenviable position. He hesitates to turn for inspiration to his own indigenous tradition or anything based on this tradition because of his superstition that it is obscurantist, anti-intellectual, emasculating other-worldly and life-negating. His normal mood is one of cynicism, and his role in the life of the country has in effect been more destructive than constructive. Such a stance is hardly conducive to willed action in the diverse fields of national endeavour. If only our countrymen had followed the lead given by Sri Aurobindo, India would have by now been well on its way to realise its destiny.

With this we now return to the main objective of this paper, which is to review the intellectual contours of this age in the light of Sri Aurobindo, most aptly described by C.R. Reddy as "the sole sufficing genius of our age".

II

We begin with Marxism. The recent happenings in the Soviet Union and other East European countries clearly suggest that Marxist communism has swiftly collapsed. It is true that Sri Aurobindo rejected Marxism as an erroneous and fallacious doctrine, but he gave it credit for the role it has played in shaping the progressive movement of humanity, particularly during the fifty years after the end of the first World War. It has dealt a crushing blow to the monster of European capitalist industrialism and humanised it. Capitalism may have survived but it is no more the cruel thing that Marx found it to be in his time, and we have to be grateful to Marxism for this human face it has forced on capitalism.

On the theoretical level, it is becoming increasingly difficult to identify the characteristic doctrines of Marxism because there are at least three main versions of it. The oldest of these is the social-democratic version; the second is the communist version which acquired widespread influence after the October 1917 Russian Revolution, and the third version is what emerged after the Second World War and which deals primarily with the problem of human alienation and how to overcome it.¹ The last of these is the Existentialist theory of Marxism and is based on Marx's *Economic-Philosophical Manuscripts* which remained unpublished until 1932. It has been pointed out by students of Marxism that accepting any one of these versions entails rejecting in large parts the two other versions. The Existentialist view of Marxism is based on the manuscripts of Marx written before he had become a Marxist.

Marx's theory of alienation arises out of his theory of the nature of man. In the West there is the liberal conception of man competing with the Marxist conception. The liberal conception of man was developed by such classical writers as Locke, Adam Smith, Bentham, Sydney Hook, *Marxism and Beyond*, Rowman and Littlefield, 1983.

and John Stuart Mill and is enshrined in the liberal democracies of the West and is incorporated in the thinking of influential philosophers like Karl Popper. The defenders of Western democracies such as Karl Popper do not deny that, as in all social orders, in Western democratic societies too, there has been injustice and repression, poverty and destitution. But these evils are constantly combated in Western societies, and as a result there is less injustice and repression there, less poverty and destitution, than in any other social order we know of. Popper advocates rational argument and democratic process as the best way of bringing about gradually the changes required in these democracies.¹ Critics of Western democracies find this assumption of Popper's quite naive, because there is an important difference between the development of scientific theories and the relations between individuals and classes in society, namely the presence of power-dimension in the latter.

Sri Aurobindo of course would have no sympathy with the basically hedonistic concept of man in this ideology, because it regards man as no more than an animal with a mind. He recognises that reason is a powerful tool in the analysis and eradication of the ills in the social, political and economic life of human societies but that does not make reason a sufficient basis for democracy. In practice it is often a dominant class which rules over the ignorant masses. Sri Aurobindo has pointed out that the expectation that universal education will strengthen human rationality has also proved to be unfounded.²

Sri Aurobindo is as much a firm believer in the Open Society and democracy as Karl Popper is, except that in his view the true democratic ideal cannot be achieved except on the foundation of spiritual comradeship or brotherhood; human rationality alone is too frail for this task.

For Marx alienation is man's losing himself in the things he makes, man's inability to experience himself as the acting agent in his grasp of the world. It is essentially experiencing the world and oneself passively, receptively, as the subject separated from the object. It is the lack of a sense of meaning, as if one's life has become a pawn that is being manipulated. Lack of self-realization is one of the main forms of alienation. The worst feature of capitalism is that people do not even realise that they are alienated. Capitalism drives people to be mere consumers and curbs their aspiration for self-realization. He defines self-realization as the full and free actualization and externalization of the powers and abilities of the individual. Marx believes that alienation can be overcome only in a society whose end is man, not the production of

1. A.T.Ferguson, *Revolution or Reform*, (ed.), New University Press (1956).

2. *The Human Cycle*.

objects.

This Marx sounds almost like a resident of Auroville or of some such spiritually oriented community because his primary concern for self-realization is, what I would call, basically spiritual. In some places in the *Manuscripts* he seems to suggest that some primordial act of alienation has taken place in human development which is not to be traced to the economic process, but which in fact generates private property and its attendant evils. What was this act of alienation? Unfortunately, the *Manuscripts* breaks off before we have the answer. The answer that Marx was seeking but could not formulate is that alienation in the generalised sense is primarily psychic, not sociological. It is not a proprietary distinction that exists between men of different classes but rather a disease that is rooted inside all men.

But unfortunately Marx himself did not seem to appreciate the implications of his insight, because he goes on to maintain the thesis that it was "not the consciousness of men that determines their social being, but on the contrary their social being that determines their consciousness".¹

There can be no doubt that Marx was wrong in coming to this conclusion. For one thing the typical alienation phenomena are observable in socialist economic systems as well. Secondly, as pointed out by Erich Fromm,² alienation is not a distinctive characteristic that can be assigned to any social or economic structure, and that change in these structures alone will not eradicate alienation. There must be spiritual liberation as well. Socialisation of the means of production, Fromm recognises, is only a necessary but not a sufficient condition for overcoming alienation.

One of the most balanced appraisals of communism and socialism can be found in Sri Aurobindo's *The Human Cycle*. The following two quotes from his *Thoughts and Aphorisms* very neatly summarise his critique of Marxist Socialism.

1. "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."

2. "If communism ever re-establishes itself successfully upon earth, it must be on a foundation of soul's brotherhood and the death of egoism. A forced association and a mechanical comradeship would end in a world-wide fiasco."

We need not dwell on this aspect of Marxism here

because we are now dealing with the Existentialist, the almost-spiritual Marx. With respect to Marx's struggle to understand the phenomenon of alienation, I have often felt about Marx what Sri Aurobindo once said about D.H. Lawrence¹—that he was a Yogi who had missed his way. If only he had the benefit of an understanding of the spiritual complexities of the being of man, he would not have floundered on the question whether alienation is brought about by the exploitative reality of the social system or by deeper psychic reasons. It is such an understanding of the spiritual complexities of the being of man that is one of the great contributions of Sri Aurobindo. He was emphatic that man must turn inwards and seek a deeper source of guidance than the fallible intellect and that he must live in his soul and make it the leader of the march. If this is not the solution, then, he said, there is no other.

Marx shows some intuitive awareness of the need for such a spiritual foundation to social institutions when he describes his conception of a classless society as one in which the freedom of each person will find in the freedom of every other person "All in the Self, the Self in all, and all as the Self."

III

Like Marx, Freud too held that man is the victim of false consciousness from which he must be freed if he is to achieve fulfilment; but their diagnoses are built around entirely different principles. Marx blamed the exploitative reality of the social system for the falsification while Freud blamed it on the hidden content of the subconscious. In his *Civilization and Its Discontent*,² Freud made explicit his assumption that human nature and society can have conflicting demands, and this can lead to a sick society. For him the cure to this sickness lay in self-knowledge. But for him self-knowledge meant "the knowledge of personal causes, not transcendent needs, of organic appetites, not spiritual purpose. Freud's conviction was that the quest for the self must take us down and back—into the juice and tissue of our physical nature, into its infantile fantasies and passions. The way to sanity lay through history of the body and its many thwarted gratifications."³

Sri Aurobindo in one of his letters refers to the new psychologists and psychiatrists in the West and gives his evaluation of them as follows: "This new psychology looks to me very much like children learning some summary and not very adequate alphabet, exulting in putting their a-b-c-d of the subconscious and the mysterious underground superego together and imagining that their first book of obscure beginnings (c-a-t cat, t-r-e-e tree) is the very heart of real knowledge. They look from down up and explain the higher lights by the lower

1. *The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* (1932).
2. *Marx's Concept of Man* (1961).

1. *Th enary Edition*, p. 536.
2. Translated by J. Rivière (1953).
3. Theodore Roszak, *The Making of Counter Culture* (1969).

obscurities; but the foundation of these things is above and not below, *upari budhna eshām*. The superconscious is the true foundation of things. The significance of the lotus is not to be found by analysing the secrets of the mud from which it grows here; its mystery is to be found in the heavenly archetype of the lotus that blooms for ever in the Light above. The self-chosen field of these psychologists is besides poor, dark and limited; you must know the whole before you can know the part and the highest before you can truly understand the lowest. That is the promise of the greater psychology awaiting its hour before which these poor gropings will disappear and come to nothing.¹

Indra Sen² and Charles Maloney³ have written most insightfully about the evolutionary or Integral psychology of Sri Aurobindo, and shown how the movement which Freud began finds its proper direction and fulfilment in Sri Aurobindo. Here it is only necessary to compare briefly the salient features of the psychology of Freud with those of Sri Aurobindo's Integral psychology.

As Maloney has pointed out, Freud gave to the West a whole new concept of mental health and of the therapies needed to combat such cultural ailments as loneliness, boredom, anxiety, alienation from self, others and nature. The basis of these therapies is the analysis of the subconscious and the raising of the suppressed cause of the ailment to the plane of consciousness. In recent years there has been an increase in the range of therapies practised and we have today transactional analysis, Rolfing primal therapy, psychodrama, Gestalt, hypnotherapy, existential analysis, drug therapy and behavioural therapies. These therapies emphasise as the principle of integration and healing either the mind, or feelings and emotions, or the body. But can the basic truth of our being be sufficiently explained in terms of the mind, the vital and the physical? Sri Aurobindo has shown that the consciousness and force necessary for the integration of the being resides not in the mental, vital or physical components but in a higher consciousness which both transcends and is immanent in the three aspects of our being,—in the spiritual dimension of our being. The spiritual, according to Sri Aurobindo, is "the true foundation of things ...the promise of the greater psychology awaiting its hour...." The concept of Yoga developed in India can be an excellent and surer foundation for psychotherapies than anything that Freud or his disciples have come up with. Sri Aurobindo describes Yoga as "nothing but practical psychology" but with a much greater range and depth than the goals and techniques of most Western psychology. Yoga demands as a preparatory requirement that we become conscious fully of ourselves, of our nature, of how and why we do things or feel or think them, of our motives

1. *Letters on Yoga, Centenary Edition*, pp. 608-609.

2. *Integral Psychology* (1986).

3. *Evolutionary Psychology: Mother India* (1975).

and impulses, of the forces apparent and hidden that move us. In this attempt to be conscious of all the parts of our being, we discover our spiritual being as well. This higher consciousness of the spirit is knowledge as well as power and holds the key to a total healing and integration of the being.

He views the problem also from the evolutionary perspective. He looks upon the present organisation of the human consciousness which is an amalgam of mind-formations, life-movements and physical functioning as transitional. The aim of Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga is not only to bring about the integration of the human being which is the aim of psychotherapy but also to hasten immeasurably the realisation of the supramental consciousness. Sri Aurobindo's challenge to psychologists is that they recognise this fourth or the spiritual dimension in man, because one must know the whole before one can know the part and the highest before one can truly understand the lowest.

Not too long ago when Indra Sen drew the attention of some of our academics in Indian universities to the rich psychological systems implicit in the traditional Hatha Yoga, Raja Yoga, Jnana Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Karma Yoga, Tantric Yoga and also in the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo, the responses he got from some of the academics were interesting. "They showed a clear recognition and appreciation of the tradition of psychological knowledge in India and yet do not know how to recover that tradition in the present situation and bring it into an adjustment with the Western approach which is now the established fact with us."¹ Some of these scholars pleaded ignorance of the psychological facts involved in the yogic and religious experience. We still seem to be awaiting a Carlos Castenda to teach us how to go about making a study of the psychology of yoga academically respectable!

IV

Lewis Mumford tells us that every historical era has its dominant themes and emergent themes. While science, secular humanism, social revolution, and global industrialism have been the dominant themes of this age, its emergent theme has been developed by those who see man as an unfinished animal, or in Sri Aurobindo's terms, man as a "transitional being" summoned to rise to his unrealised evolutionary possibilities. It is a sure indication of Sri Aurobindo's centrality to our age that this happens to be a cornerstone of his theory of Man, Nature and God.

It is said that *The Bible*, Newton's *Principia Mathematica*, Marx's *Das Kapital*, and Darwin's *Origin of the Species* rank among the most influential (if least read!) books of all time. The full title of Darwin's book spells out its message unambiguously: *The Origin of the Species by*

1. Indra Sen, *Integral Psychology* (1986).

Means of Natural Selection; it has also a subtitle which further clarifies its message: *The Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*. When the idea of evolution was presented in the middle of the 19th century it is said to have broken like a hurricane on the entire intellectual life of the day. [*The Origin of the Species* was published on 24 November 1859 and all the copies were sold out the same day.] But Darwin's theory of evolution now looks vulnerable, even from a scientific point of view, and the time seems to be ripe for a concept more profound to come on the stage.

During the last 150 years many theories of evolution have been propounded. In the West, the problem of evolution has been tackled from two points of view—biological and metaphysical. Among the former there are mechanistic theories of Darwin, Spencer, Weisman, and De Vries. According to these theories there is no goal in evolution, and evolution is purely the outcome of chance variation in structure and function. The Lamarckian theory introduces the element of purpose in evolution. Bergson's creative evolution opposes both the mechanistic theory of Darwin and also the teleological theory of Lamarck. Bergson posits a life-force which goes on creating ever new forms. Loyd Morgan and Alexander developed the theory of emergent evolution, which provides for the emergence of a new quality in the process of evolution. Hegel developed the metaphysical theory of evolution and used the dialectic method to show how evolution of thought proceeded.

It is the uniqueness of Sri Aurobindo that not only does his theory of evolution bring together the best in the Eastern and Western systems, but it also opens up new vistas. He has explained the difference between the scientific theory of form-evolution and his theory of the evolution of consciousness in these words: "A theory of spiritual evolution is not identical with a scientific theory of form evolution and physical-life evolution; it must stand on its own inherent justification: It may accept the scientific account of physical evolution as a support or an element, but the support is not indispensable. The scientific theory is concerned only with the outward and visible machinery and process, with the detail of Nature's execution, with the physical development of things in Matter; its account of the process may have to be considerably changed or may be dropped altogether in the light of new discovery, but that will not affect the self-evident fact of a spiritual evolution, an evolution of Consciousness, a progression of the soul's manifestation in material existence."¹

It is through his theory of evolution that Sri Aurobindo so triumphantly brings together the fundamental truths of materialism and spirituality. According to him what is evolving is consciousness, and evolution is basically spiritual. Evolution is preceded by involution. First;

1. *The Life Divine*, Cent. Ed., pp. 835-36.

there is the descent of the absolute Reality into the density of the Inconstant from where it again climbs back to the plenary splendour of the Divine consciousness. Mind evolved out of Life because Mind was involved in Life, and Life evolved out of Matter because it was involved in Matter. Evolution is not mechanical; it has a goal and it is upward bound. The higher level of consciousness is always the emergent principle, and it is the Divine who is both the alpha and the omega of evolution. For Sri Aurobindo the Absolute is both being and becoming. He emphasises how with the emergence of a higher principle the lower principles are transformed under its power. And finally for him evolution is individual as well as cosmic.

In the final analysis evolution, for Sri Aurobindo, is "nothing but the progressive unfolding of Spirit out of the density of material consciousness and the gradual self-revelation of God out of this apparent animal being". Sri Aurobindo has given to the world his Integral Yoga which is a methodist effort at individual as well as cosmic fulfilment. All life is in fact Nature's yoga undertaken to manifest the Divine involved in Nature. This is in fact the true aim of all religions. However, religions including Hinduism are facing a crisis because they have lost sight of this true aim.

What then is the ideal that humanity or the Time Spirit cherishes today, no matter what religion one belongs to? A divine and terrestrial perfection of the human being, not just the perfection of the soul but the harmonious perfection of the whole being of man. Such an integral perfection is the deepest, ineradicable urge of the human consciousness. We must develop a new yoga which aims not at a departure out of the world and life into Heaven or Nirvana, but at a change of life and existence, not as something subordinate or incidental, but as a distinct and central objective. It is not enough to have yogas which enable us to rise to the higher levels of consciousness; it is necessary also to have a yoga which enables us to bring down the power of these higher supramental levels of consciousness to transform the lower nature so that there can be a divine fulfilment of life. The objective here is not an individual achievement of divine realisation for the sake of the individual, but something to be gained for the earth consciousness as a whole. No Plato and no Marx ever thought of such a Republic based on a communism of the spirit. The Divine Materialism and Spiritual Communism advocated by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother is such a revolutionary concept that it is no wonder that the world has yet to grasp its full implications.

I am conscious of the fact that I have not been able to give more than a hurried and very sketchy account of in what sense Sri Aurobindo is, in Sethana's words, "the truth-focus and natural gatherer-up and destined fulfiller of our age". An indication of what he has given us can only be given in his own words from *Savitri*:

He sang the Inconscient and its secret self,
 Its power omnipotent knowing not what it does,
 All shaping without will or thought or sense,
 Its blind unerring occult mystery,
 And darkness yearning towards the eternal Light,
 And Love that broods within the dim abyss,
 And waits the answer of the human heart,
 And death climbs to immortality.
 He sang of the Truth that cries from Night's blind deeps,
 And the Mother Wisdom hid in Nature's breast
 And the Idea that through her dumbness works
 And the miracle of her transforming hands,
 Of life that slumbers in the stone and sun

And mind subliminal in mindless life,
 And the consciousness that wakes in beasts and men.
 He sang of the glory and marvel still to be born,
 Of the Godhead throwing off at last its veil,
 Of bodies made divine and life made bliss,
 Immortal sweetness clasping immortal might,
 Heart sensing heart, thought looking straight at thought,
 And the delight when every barrier falls,
 And the transfiguration and the ecstasy.¹

Mangesh V. Nadkarni
 'Amal Kiran Poet and Critic'

1. Savitri, cent. Ed., pp. 416-17

All That you say only amounts, on the general issue, to the fact that this is a world of slow evolution in which man has emerged out of the beast and is still not out of it, light out of darkness, and a higher consciousness out of first a dead and then a struggling and troubled unconsciousness. A spiritual consciousness that one can meet the Divine, Religions full of vital and mental, mixed, troubled and ignorant stuff, can only get glimpses of the Divine; positivist reason with its questioning based upon things as they are and refusing to believe in an thing that may or will be cannot get and vision at all. The spiritual is a new consciousness that has to evolve and has been evolving. It is quite natural that at first and for a long time only a few should get the full light, while a greater number but still only a few compared with the mass of humanity, should get it partially. But what has been gained by the few can at a stage of the evolution be completed and more generalised and that is the attempt which we are making. But if this greater consciousness of light, peace and joy is to be gained, it cannot be by questioning and scepticism which can only fall back on that is and say: "It is impossible, what has not been in the past cannot be in the future, what is so imperfectly realised as yet cannot be better realised in the future." A faith, a will, or at least a persistent demand and aspiration are needed—a feeling that with this and this alone I can be satisfied and a push towards it that will not cease till it is done. That is why a spirit of scepticism and denial stands in the way, because they stand against the creation of the condition under which spiritual experience can unroll itself.

The descent of the supermind is a long process, or at least a process with a long preparation, and one can only say that the work is going on sometimes with a strong pressure for completion, sometimes retarded by the things that rise from below and have to be dealt with before further progress can be made. The process is a spiritual evolutionary process, concentrated into a brief period; it could be done otherwise (by what men would regard as a miraculous intervention) only if the human mind were more flexible and less attached to its ignorance than it is. As we envisage it, it must manifest in a few first and then spread, but it is not likely to overpower the earth in a moment. It is not advisable to discuss too much what it will do and how it will do it, because these are things the supermind itself will fix acting out of the Divine Truth in it, and the mind must not try for it grooves in which it will run. Naturally the release from subconscious ignorance and from disease, duration of life at will, and a change in the functioning of the body must be among the ultimate elements of a supramental change; but the details of these things must be left for the supramental Energy to work out according to the Truth of its own nature.

The descent of the supramental is an inevitable necessity in the logic of things and is therefore sure. It is because people do not understand what the supermind is or realise the significance of the emergence of consciousness in a world of inconscient Matter that they are unable to realise this inevitability. I suppose a matter-of-fact observer if there had been one at the time of the unrelieved reign of inanimate Matter in the earth's beginning, would have criticised any promise of the emergence of life in a world of death earth and rock and mineral as an absurdity and chimera; so too, afterwards he would have repeated this mistake and regarded the emergence of thought and reason in an animal world as an absurdity and a chimera. It is the same now with the appearance of supermind in the stumbling mentality of this world of human consciousness and its reasoning ignorance.

Sri Aurobindo
 Letters on Yoga I

PHYSICS OR PHILOSOPHY

What is the world that we see really like? Is it mental, is it material? This is a question, we know, philosophers are familiar with, and they have answered and are still answering, each in his own way, taking up one side or other of the antinomy. There is nothing new or uncommon in that. The extraordinary novelty comes in when we see today even scientists forced to tackle the problem, give an answer to it,—scientists who used to smile at philosophers, because they seemed to assault seriously the windmills of abstract notions and airy concepts, instead of reposing on the *terra firma* of reality. The tables are turned now. The scientists have had to start the same business—the *terra firma* on which they stood as on the securest rock of ages is slipping away under their feet and fast vanishing into smoke and thin air. Not only that, it is discovered today that the scientist has always been a philosopher, without his knowledge—a cryptophilosopher,—only he has become conscious of it at last. And further—*mirabile dictu!*—many a scientist is busy demonstrating that the scientist is, in his essence, a philosopher of the Idealist school!

Physical Science in the nineteenth century did indeed develop or presuppose a philosophy of its own; it had, that is to say, a definite outlook on the fundamental quality of things and the nature of the universe. Those were days of its youthful self-confidence and unbending assurance. The view was, as is well-known, materialistic and deterministic. That is to say, all observation and experiment, according to it, demonstrated and posited:

First, that this universe is made up of particles that push and pull each other, the particles having certain constant values such as in respect of mass and volume.

Secondly, that the laws governing the relations among the particles, in other words, their push and pull, are laws of simple mechanics; they are fixed and definite and give us determinable and measurable quantities called coordinates—by which one can ascertain the pattern of configuration of things at a given moment and deduce from that the pattern of configuration of things at any other moment and deduce from that the pattern or configuration of things at any other moment: the chain that hangs things together is fixed and uniform and continuous and is not broken anywhere.

The scientific view of things thus discovered or af-

firmed certain universal and immutable facts—axiomatic truths—which were called constants of Nature. These were the very basic foundations upon which the whole edifice of scientific knowledge was erected. The chief among them were: (1) conservation of matter, (2) conservation of energy, (3) uniformity of nature and (4) the chain of causality and continuity. Above all, there was the fundamental implication of an independent—an absolute—time and space in which all things existed and moved and had their being.

The whole business of experimental science was just to find the absolutes of Nature, that is to say, facts and laws governing facts that do not depend for their existence upon anything but themselves. The purely objective world without any taint of an intruding subject was the field of its inquiry. In fact, the old-world or Mediaeval Science—there was a Science even then—could not develop properly, did not strike the right line of growth, precisely because it had a strong subjective bias: the human factor, the personal element of the observer of experimenter was unconsciously (at times even deliberately) introduced into the facts and explanations of Nature. The new departure of Modern Science consisted exactly in the elimination of this personal element and making observation and experiment absolutely impersonal and thoroughly objective.

Well, the old-world spirit has had its revenge complete and absolute in a strange manner. We are coming to that presently. Now, the constants or absolutes of which we spoke, which were the bed-rock of Modern Science, were gradually found to be rather shaky—very inconstant and relative. Take, for example, the principle of conservation of matter. The principle posited that in a given system the quantity of matter is constant in and through all transformations. Modern Science has found out that this law holds good only in respect of gross matter belonging to man-size Nature. But as soon as we enter into the ultimate constituents of matter, the units of electric charges, the infinitesimals, we find that matter is destroyed and is or can be recreated: material particles are dematerialised into light waves or quanta, and light quanta are precipitated back again into electric particles of matter. Similarly, the law of conservation of energy—that energy = $\frac{1}{2}mv^2$ (m being mass, v velocity)—does not hold good in respect of particles that move with the speed of light: mass is not a constant as in Newtonian mechan-

ics, but varies with velocity. Again, in classical mechanics, position and velocity are two absolute determinates for all scientific measurement, and Science after all is nothing if not a system of measurements. Now, in the normal size world, the two are easily determined; but in the sub-atomic world things are quite different; only one can be determined accurately; the more accurate the one, the less so the other; and if both are to be determined, it can be only approximately, the closer the approximation, the hazier the measure, and the farther the approximation, the more definite the measure. That is to say, here we find not the exact measures of things, but only the probable measures. Indeed, not fixity and accuracy, but probability has become the central theme of modern physical calculation.

The principle of indeterminacy carries two revolutionary implications. First, that it is not possible to determine the movement of the ultimate particles of matter individually and severally, it is not possible even theoretically to follow up the chain of modulations of an electron from its birth to its dissolution (if such is the curve of its destiny), as Laplace considered it quite possible for his super-mathematician. One cannot trace the complete evolution of each and every or even one particular particle, not because of a limitation in the human capacity, but because of an inherent impossibility in the nature of things. In radioactive substances, for example there is no ground or data form which one can determine which particle will go off or not, whether it will go off the next moment or wait for a million years. It is mere chance that seems to reign here. In radiation too, there is no formula, and no formula can be framed for determining the course of a photon in relation to a half-reflecting surface, whether it will pass through or be reflected. In this field of infinitesimals what we know is the total behaviour of an assemblage of particles, and the laws of nature are only laws of average computation. Statistics has ousted the more exact and rigid arithmetics. And statistics, we know, is a precarious science: the knowledge it gives is contingent, contingent upon the particular way of arranging and classifying the data. However, the certainty of classical mechanistic knowledge is gone, gone too the principle of uniformity of nature.

The second element brought into the indeterminacy picture is the restoration of "subject" to its honoured or even more than the honoured place it had in the Mediaeval Ages, and from which it was pulled down by young arrogant Science. A fundamental question is now raised in the very methodology of the scientific apparatus. For Science, needless to say, is first and foremost observation. Now it is observed that the very fact of observation affects and changes the observed fact. The path of an electron, for example, has to be observed; one has then to throw a ray of light—hurl a photon—upon it: the impact is sufficient to deflect the electron from the

original path. If it is suggested that by correction and computation, by a backward calculation we can deduce the previous position, that too is not possible. For we cannot fix any position or point that is not vitiated by the observer's interference. How to feel or note consistency of a thing, if the touch itself, the temperature of the finger, were sufficient to change the consistency? The trouble is, as the popular Indian saying goes, the very amulet that is to exorcise the ghost is possessed by the ghost itself.

So the scientists of today are waking up to this disconcerting fact. And some have put the question very boldly and frankly: do not all laws of Nature contain this original sin of the observer's interference, indeed may not the laws be nothing else but that? Thus Science has landed into the very heart—the bog and quagmire, if you like—of abstruse metaphysics. Eddington says, there is no other go for Science today but to admit and declare that its scheme and pattern of things, as described by what is called laws of Nature, is only a mental construct of the Scientist. The "wonderful" discoveries are nothing but jugglery and legerdemain of the mind—what it puts out of itself unconsciously into the outside world, it recovers again and is astonished at the miracle. A scientific law is a pure deduction from the mind's own disposition. Eddington goes so far as to say that if a scientist is sufficiently introspective he can trace out from within his brain each and every law of Nature which he took so much pains to fish out from Nature by observation and experiment. Eddington gives an analogy to explain the nature of scientific law and scientific discovery. Suppose you have a fishing net of a particular size and with interstices of a particular dimension; you throw it into the sea and pull out with fishes in it. Now you count and assort the fishes, and according to the data thus obtained, you declare that the entire sea consists of so many varieties of fish and such sizes. The only error is that you could not take into account the smaller fishes that escaped through the interstices and the bigger ones that did not at all fall into the net. Scientific statistics is something of this kind. Our mind is the net, and the pattern of Nature is determined by the mind's own pattern.

Eddington gives us absolutely no hope for any knowledge of an objective world apart from the objectification of mind's own constructs. This is a position which a scientist, *qua* scientist, finds it difficult to maintain. Remedies and loop-holes have been suggested with what result we shall presently see.

Einstein's was, perhaps, the most radical and revolutionary solution ever proposed. Indeed, it meant the reversal of the whole scientific outlook, but something of the kind was an imperative need in order to save Science from inconsistencies that seemed to be inherent

in it. The scientific outlook was vitiated, Einstein said, because we started from wrong premises; two assumptions mainly were responsible for the bankruptcy which befell latter-day Science. First, it was assumed that a push and pull—a force (a gravitational or, more generally, a causal force) existed and that acted upon isolated and independent particles strewn about; and secondly, they were strewn about in an independently existing time and an independently existing space. Einstein has demonstrated, it seems, successfully that there is no Time and no Space actually, but times and spaces (this reminds one of a parallel conception in Sankhya and Patanjali), that time is not independent of space (nor space of time) but that time is another co-ordinate or dimension necessary for all observation in addition to the three usual co-ordinates (or dimensions). This was the explanation he found of the famous Michelson-Morely experiment which failed to detect any difference in the velocity of light whether it moved with or against a moving object, which is an inconsistency according to the mechanistic view.¹ The absolute dependence of time and space upon each other was further demonstrated by the fact that it was absolutely impossible to synchronise two distant clocks (moving with different speeds and thus forming different systems) with perfect accuracy, or determine exactly whether two events happened simultaneously or not. In the final account of things, this relative element that varies according to varying particulars had to be eliminated, sublated. In order to make a law applicable to all fields—from the astronomical through the normal down to the microscopic or sub-atomic — in an equally valid manner, the law had to divest itself of all local colour. Thus, a scientific law became a sheer mathematical formula; it was no longer an objective law that governed the behaviour of things, but merely a mental rule or mnemonics to string together as many diverse things as possible in order to be able to memorise them easily.

Again, the generalised law of relativity (that is to say, laws governing all motions, even accelerated motion and not merely uniform motion) that sought to replace the laws of gravitation did away also with the concepts of force and causality: it stated that things moved not because they were pulled or pushed but because they followed the natural curve of space (they describe geodesics, i.e., move in the line of least distance). Space is not a plain surface, smooth and uniform, but full of dimples and hollows, these occurring in the vicinity of masses of matter, the sun, for instance, (although one does not see how or why a mass of matter should roll

1. The constancy of the velocity of light, it must be noted, is not altogether an objective fact: it is a supposition by which Einstein tried to explain certain anomalies in previous theories. It is really, as some have pointed out (e.g. Hans Reichenbach—*Atom and Cosmos*—p. 136), a mental formula, part of a built-in structure, arbitrary to a certain extent which is so arranged that the speed becomes constant and equal for systems in different states of motion.

down the inclined plane of a curved surface without some kind of push and pull — the problem is not solved but merely shifted and put off). All this means to say that the pattern of the universe is absolutely geometrical and science in the end resolves itself into geometry: the laws of Nature are nothing but theorems or corollaries deduced and deducible from a few initial postulates. Once again, on this line of enquiry also the universe is dissolved into abstract and psychological factors.

Apart from the standpoint of theoretical physics developed by Einstein, the more practical aspect as brought out in Wave Mechanics leads us into no less an abstract and theoretical domain. The Newtonian particle-picture, it is true, has been maintained in the first phase of modern physics which specialised in what is called Quantum Mechanics. But waves or particles—although the questions as to their relative validity and verity still remains open—do not make much difference in the fundamental outlook. For in either view, the individual unit is beyond the ken of the scientist. A wave is not a wave but just the probability of a wave: it is not even a probable wave but probability wave. Thus the pattern that Wave Mechanics weaves to show the texture of the ultimate reality is nothing more than a calculus of probabilities. By whichever way we proceed we seem to arrive always at the same inevitable conclusion.

So it is frankly admitted that what Science gives is not a faithful description of actuality, not a representation of material existence, but certain conventions or convenient signs to put together, to make a mental picture of our sensations and experiences. That does not give any clue to what the objective reality may or may not be like. Scientific laws are mental rules imposed upon Nature. It may be asked why does Nature yield to such imposition? There must be then some sort of parallelism or commensurability between Nature and the observing Mind, between the pattern of Nature and the Mind's scheme or replica of it. If we successfully read into Nature things of the Mind, that means that there must be something very common between the two. Mind's readings are not mere figments, hanging in the air; for they are justified by their applicability, by their factual translation. This is arguing in a circle, a thorough-going mentalist like Eddington would say. What are facts? What is life? Anything more than what the senses and the mind have built up for us?

Jeans himself is on the horns of a dilemma.¹ Being a scientist and not primarily a mathematician like Eddington, he cannot very well acquiesce in the liquidation of the material world; nor can he refute successfully the facts and arguments that Science itself has brought forward in favour of mentalism. He wishes to keep the question open for further light and surer grounds. In the

1. *Physics and Philosophy*, by Sir James Jeans.

meanwhile, however, he is reconciled to a modified form of mentalism. The laws of Nature, he says, are surely subjective in the sense that astronomical or geographical concepts, for example, such as the system of latitudes, longitudes, equator and axis, ellipse and quadrant and sextant, are subjective. These lines and figures are not drawn physically upon the earth or in space: they are mental constructs, they are pointers or notations, but they note and point to the existence and the manner of existence of real objects in a real world.

In other words, one tries to come back more or less to the common-sense view of things. One does not argue about what is naturally given as objective reality; whatever the mental gloss over it, it is there all the same. One accepts it, takes it on trust, if you like—one can admit even that it is an act of faith, as Russell and the Neo-Realists would maintain.

But Jeans' position is remarkable and very significant in one respect. When cornered in the process of argument, feeling that the world is inexorably dematerialised and mentalised, he suggests an issue which is natural to a philosopher, a mystic philosopher alone. Well, let him state his position in his own words, the passage, I repeat, is so remarkable and significant:

“When we view ourselves in space and time, our consciousnesses are obviously the separate individuals of a particle-picture, but when we pass beyond space and time, they may perhaps form ingredients of a single continuous stream of life. As it is with light and electricity, so it may be with life; the phenomena may be individuals carrying on separate existence in space and time, while in the deeper reality beyond space and time we may all be members of one body. In brief, modern physics is not altogether antagonistic to an objective idealism like that of Hegel.” (p.204)¹

A la bonne heure! That runs close to Upanishadic knowledge. It means that the world is objective—it is not the figment of an individual observer; but it is not material either, it is consciousness in vibration. (Note the word “consciousness” is Jeans' own, not mine). Jeans is not alone to have such a revolutionary and unorthodox view. He seems to take courage from Dirac also. Dirac too cannot admit an annihilation of the material world. His proposal to save and salvage it follows a parallel line. He says that the world presented or pictured by physical science may not be and is not the actual world, but it posits a substratum of reality to which it conforms: the pattern presented by subjective laws is so composed because of pressure, an impact from an analogous substratum. There is no chain of causal relation in the pattern itself, the relation of causality is

between the substratum reality and the pattern that it bodies forth. Here again we find ourselves at the end of physical inquiry driving straight into tenuous spaces of spiritual metaphysics. We have one more example of how a modern physicist is metamorphosed into a mystic. What Dirac says is tantamount to the very well-known spiritual experience that the world as it appears to us is a vesture or symbol of an inner order of reality out of which it has been broadcast—*sah paryagāt*—and the true causes of things are not on the surface, the so-called antecedents, but behind in the subtler world called therefore the causal world, *kāraṇa jagat*.

Even Eddington is not so absurd or impossible as it may seem to some. He says, as we have seen, that all so-called laws of Nature can be discovered from within the mind itself, can be deduced logically from psychologically given premises; no empirical observation or objective experimentation is necessary to arrive at them: they are found *a priori* in the subject. Now, mystic experience always lays stress on extra-sensory knowledge: it declares that such a knowledge is not only possible, but that this alone is the right and correct knowledge. All things—matter and mind and life and all—being but vibrations of consciousness, even as the colours of a spectrum are vibrations, electro-magnetic waves of different frequency, mystic discipline enables one to enter into that condition in which one's consciousness mingles with all consciousness or with another particular consciousness (Patanjali's term is *samyama*), and one can have all knowledge that one wishes to have by this inner contact or concentration or identification, one discovers the knowledge within oneself, no external means of sense observation and experimental testing, no empirical inductive process is needed. We do not say that Eddington had in view anything of this kind, but that his attitude points in this direction.

That seems to be the burden, the underlying preoccupation of modern physical science: it has been forced to grope towards some kind of mystic perception; at least, it has been put into a frame of mind, due to the crumbling of the very fundamentals of the past structure, which is less obstructive to other sources and spheres and ways of knowledge. Certainly, we must admit that we have moved very far from Laplace when we hear today a hard-boiled rationalist like De Broglie declare:

The idealisations more or less schematic that our mind builds up are capable of representing certain facets of things, but they have inherent limitations and cannot contain within their frames all the richness of the reality.¹

The difficulty that modern Science encounters is not, however, at all a difficulty: it may be so to the philoso-

1. op. cit.

1. *La Physique Nouvelle et les Quanta*, by Louis de Broglie, p.12.

pher, but not to the mystic, the difficulty, that is to say, of positing a real objective world when all that we know or seize of it seems to be our own mental constructions that we impose upon it. Science has come to such a pass that it can do no more that take an objective world on trust.

Things need not, however, be so dismal looking. The difficulty arises because of a fundamental attitude—the attitude of a purely reasoning being. But Reason or Mind is only one layer or vein of the reality, and to see and understand and explain that reality through one single track of approach will naturally bias the view, it will present only what is real or immediate to it, and all the rest will appear as secondary or a formation of it. That is, of course, a truth that has been clearly brought out by the anti-intellectualist. But the vitalist's view is only through this prism of vital force. It is the old story of the

Upanishad in which the seeker takes the Body, the Life and the Mind one after another and declares each in its turn to be the only and ultimate reality, the Brahman.

The truth of the matter is that the integral reality is to be seized by an integral organon. To an integralised consciousness the integral reality is directly and immediately presented, each aspect is apprehended in and through its own truth and substance. The synthesis or integration is reached by a consciousness which is the basis and continent of all, collectively and severally, and of which all are various formations and expressions on various levels and degrees. This is the knowledge and experience given by the supreme spiritual consciousness.

Nolini Kanta Gupta

'Collected Works of Nolini Kanta Gupta'

Volume 1

A distinction, the distinction very keenly made here, between the plane of phenomenal process, of externalised Prakriti, and the plane of Divine Reality ranks among the first words of the inner wisdom. The turn given to it in these pages is not merely an ingenious explanation; it expresses very soundly one of the clear certainties you meet when you step across the border and look at the outer world from the standing-ground of the inner spiritual experience. The more you go inward or upward, the more the view of things changes and the outer knowledge Science organises takes its real and very limited place. Science, like most mental and external knowledge, gives you only truth of process. I would add that it cannot give you even the whole truth of process; for you seize some of the ponderables, but miss the all-important imponderables; you get, hardly even the how, but the conditions under which things happen in Nature. After all the triumphs and marvels of Science the explaining principle, the rationale, the significance of the whole is left as dark, as mysterious and even more mysterious than ever. The scheme it has built up of the evolution not only of this rich and vast and variegated material world, but of life and consciousness and mind and their workings out of a brute mass of electrons, identical and varied only in arrangement and number, is an irrational magic more baffling than any the most mystic imagination could conceive. Science in the end lands us in a paradox effectuated, an impossibility that has somehow happened,—it has shown us a new, a material Maya, aghatana-ghatana-patiyasi, very clever at bringing about the impossible, a miracle that cannot logically be and yet somehow is there actual, irresistibly organised, but still irrational and inexplicable. And this is evidently because Science has missed something essential; it has seen and scrutinised what has happened and in a way how it has happened, but it has shut its eyes to something that made this impossible possible, something it is there to express. There is no fundamental significance in things if you miss the Divine Reality; for you remain embedded in a huge surface crust of manageable and utilisable appearance. It is the magic of the Magician you are trying to analyse, but only when you enter into the consciousness of the Magician himself can you begin to experience the true origination, significance and circles of the Lila. I say "begin" because the Divine Reality is not so simple that at the first touch you can know all of it or put it into a single formula; it is the Infinite and opens before you an infinite knowledge to which all Science put together is a bagatelle. But still you do touch the essential, the eternal behind things and in the light of That all begins to be profoundly luminous, intimately intelligible.

Sri Aurobindo

'Letters on Yoga' Volume 1

THE SCIENCE OF LIVING

(TO KNOW ONESELF AND CONTROL ONESELF)

An aimless life is always a miserable life.

Everyone of you should have an aim. But do not forget that on the quality of your aim will depend the quality of your life.

Your aim should be high and wide, generous and disinterested; this will make your life precious to yourself and to others.

But whatever your ideal, it cannot be perfectly realised unless you have realised perfection in yourself.

To work for your perfection the first step is to become conscious of yourself, of the different parts of your being and their respective activities. You must learn to distinguish these different parts one from the other, so that you may find out clearly the origin of the movements that occur in you, the many impulses, reactions and conflicting wills that drive you to action. It is an assiduous study which demands much perseverance and sincerity. For man's nature, specially his mental nature, has a spontaneous tendency to give a favourable explanation for whatever he thinks, feels, says and does. It is only by observing these movements with great care, by bringing them, as it were, before the tribunal of our highest ideal, with a sincere will to submit to its judgment, that we can hope to educate in us a discernment which does not err. For if we truly want to progress and acquire the capacity of knowing the truth of our being, that is to say, the one thing for which we have been really created, that which we can call our mission upon earth, then we must, in a very regular and constant manner, reject from us or eliminate in us whatever contradicts the truth of our existence, whatever is in opposition to it. It is thus that little by little all the parts, all the elements of our being, could be organised into a homogeneous whole around our psychic centre. This work of unification demands a long time to be brought to some degree of perfection. Hence, to accomplish it, we must arm ourselves with patience and endurance, with a determination to prolong our life as far as it is necessary for the success of our endeavour.

As we pursue this labour of purification and unification, we must at the same time take great care to perfect the external and instrumental part of our being. When the higher truth will manifest, it must find in you a mental being supple and rich enough to be able to give to the idea seeking to express itself a form of thought which preserves its force and clarity. This thought, again, when it

seeks to clothe itself in words must find in you a sufficient power of expression so that the words reveal the thought and not deform it. And this formula in which you embody the truth should be made articulate in all your sentiments, all your willings and acts, all the movements of your being. Finally, these movements themselves should by constant effort, attain their highest perfection. All this can be realised by means of a fourfold discipline the general outline of which is given here. These four aspects of the discipline do not exclude each other, and can be followed at the same time, indeed it is better to do so. The starting-point is what can be called the psychic discipline. We give the name 'psychic' to the psychological centre of our being, the seat within of the highest truth of our existence, that which can know and manifest this truth. It is therefore of capital importance for us to become conscious of its presence within us, to concentrate on this presence and make it a living fact for us and identify ourselves with it.

Through space and time many methods have been framed to attain this perception and finally to achieve this identification. Some methods are psychological, some religious, some even mechanical. In reality, everyone has to find out that which suits him best, and if one has a sincere and steady aspiration, a persistent and dynamic will, one is sure to meet in one way or another, externally by study and instruction, internally by concentration, meditation, revelation and experience, the help one needs to reach the goal. Only one thing is absolutely indispensable: the will to discover and realise. This discovery and this realisation should be the primary occupation of the being, the pearl of great price which one should acquire at any cost. Whatever you do, whatever your occupation and activity, the will to find the truth of your being and to unite with it must always be living, always present behind all that you do, all that you experience, all that you think.

To complete this movement of inner discovery, it is good not to neglect the mental development. For the mental instrument can be equally a great help or a great hindrance. In its natural state the human mind is always limited in its vision, narrow in its understanding, rigid in its conceptions, and a certain effort is needed to enlarge it, make it supple and deep. Hence, it is very necessary that one should consider everything from as many points of view as possible. There is an exercise in this connection which gives great suppleness and elevation to thought. It is as follows. A clearly formulated thesis is set; against it is opposed the antithesis, formulated with

the same precision. Then by careful reflection the problem must be widened or transcended so that a synthesis is found which unites the two contraries in a larger, higher and more comprehensive idea.

Many exercises of the same kind can be undertaken; some have a beneficial effect on the character and so possess a double advantage, that of educating the mind and that of establishing control over one's feelings and their results. For example, you must never allow your mind to judge things and people; for the mind is not an instrument of knowledge—it is incapable of finding knowledge—but it must be moved by knowledge. Knowledge belongs to a region much higher than that of the human mind, even beyond the region of pure ideas. The mind has to be made silent and attentive in order to receive knowledge from above and manifest it. For it is an instrument of formulation, organisation and action. And it is in these functions that it attains its full value and real utility.

Another practice may be very helpful for the progress of the consciousness. Whenever there is a disagreement on any matter, such as a decision to take, or an act to accomplish, one must stick to one's own conception or point of view. On the contrary, one must try to understand the other's point of view, put oneself in his place and, instead of quarrelling or even fighting, find out a solution which can reasonably satisfy both parties; there is always one for men of goodwill.

Here must be mentioned the training of the vital. The vital being in us is the seat of impulses and desires, of enthusiasm and violence, of dynamic energy and desperate depression of passions and revolt. It can set in motion everything, build up and realise, it can also destroy and mar everything. It seems to be in the human being, the most difficult part to train. It is a long labour requiring great patience, and it demands a perfect sincerity, for without sincerity one will deceive oneself from the very first step, and all endeavour for progress will go in vain. With the collaboration of the vital no realisation seems impossible, no transformation impracticable. But the difficulty lies in securing this constant collaboration. The vital is a good worker, but most often it seeks its own satisfaction. If that is refused, totally or even partially, it gets vexed, sulky and goes on strike; the energy disappears more or less completely and leaves in its place disgust for people and things, discouragement or revolt, depression and dissatisfaction. At these moments one must remain quiet and refuse to act; for it is at such times that one does stupid things and in a few minutes can destroy or spoil what one has gained in months of regular effort, losing thus all the progress made. These crises are of less duration and are less dangerous in the case of those who have established a contact with their psychic being sufficient to keep alive in them the flame of aspiration and the consciousness of the ideals to be realised. They can, with the help of this consciousness, deal with their vital as one deals with a child in revolt,

with patience and perseverance showing it the truth and light, endeavouring to convince it and awaken in it the goodwill which for a moment was veiled. With the help of such patient intervention each crisis can be changed into a new progress into a further step towards the goal. Progress may be slow, falls may be frequent but if a courageous will is maintained one is sure to triumph one day and see all difficulties melt and vanish before the radiant consciousness of truth.

Lastly, we must, by means of a rational and clear-seeing physical education, make our body strong and supple so that it may become in the material world a fit instrument for the truth-force which wills to manifest through us. In fact, the body must not rule, it has to obey. By its very nature it is a docile and faithful servant. Unfortunately it has not often the capacity of discernment with regard to its masters, the mind and the vital. It obeys them blindly, at the cost of its own well-being. The mind with its dogmas, its rigid and arbitrary principles, the vital with its passions, its excess and dissipations soon do everything to destroy the natural balance of the body and create in it fatigue, exhaustion and disease. It must be freed from this tyranny; that can be done only through a constant union with the psychic centre of the being. The body has a wonderful capacity of adaptation and endurance. It is fit to do so many more things than one can usually imagine. If instead of the ignorant and despotic masters that govern it, it is ruled by the central truth of the being, one will be surprised at what it is capable of doing. Calm and quite, strong and poised, it will at every minute put forth effort that is demanded of it, for it will have learnt to find rest in action, to recuperate through contact with the universal forces the energies it spends consciously and usefully. In this sound and balanced life a new harmony will manifest in the body, reflecting the harmony of the higher regions which will give it the perfect proportions and the ideal beauty of form. And this harmony will be progressive, for the truth of the being is never static, it is a continual unfolding of a growing, a more and more global and comprehensive perfection. As soon as the body learns to follow the movement of a progressive harmony, it will be possible for it, through a continuous process of transformation, to escape the necessity of disintegration and destruction. Thus the irrevocable law of death will have no reason for existing any more.

As we rise to this degree of perfection which is our goal, we shall perceive that the truth we seek is made up of four major aspects: Love, Knowledge Power and Beauty. The psychic will be the vehicle of true and pure love, the mind that of infallible knowledge, the vital will manifest an invincible power and strength and the body will be the expression of a perfect beauty and a perfect harmony.

The Mother
'The Mother on Education'