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A flame of aspiration for dynamic truth

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What Is True Education ?

The very mention of the word 'Education' in the national context today, is likely to trigger off an uproar over how archaic and irrelevant the education system is to the needs of society. Our children are bombarded with information they could well do without, smothered by books that do little to arouse any creativity, but turn them into mugging machines required to spew forth the same during periodical examinations. They sit glassy-eyed through the classes—in school or university—unmoved, disinterested in what transpires between the four walls.

While trying to make education socially or industrially relevant as some engineering and management institutes have proved, we are by and large serving the interests of consumerism and the materialistic trend of society. But if the human being is truly an evolving soul as Indian Philosophy states, then education should primarily be the means to help the soul in its evolution towards its higher self, both in relation to itself as well as to society.

To touch upon these very issues, 'Sri Aurobindo Research Foundation,' held a two-day workshop on, 'Education for Tomorrow', on 7-8 September 1996, the thrust of which was how Integral Education comprising of physical, vital, mental, psychic and spiritual education can be implemented. In our forthcoming issues, we will reproduce some of the papers read by Mr. Kireet Joshi who had conducted the workshop. The participants were mostly senior and experienced people in the field of education both at the school as well as the university level, many of whom had tried to effect a change in their own way with some degree of success. We believe that this workshop has further enhanced their zeal and would urge them on in making a difference.

The greatest resistance seems to be against introducing psychic and spiritual education which is seen as something mystical or religious, certainly not "useful" to our life on earth.

But as the Mother put it —

"With psychic education we come to the problem of the true motive of life, the reason for our existence upon earth, the discovery to which life must lead and the result of that discovery: the consecration of the individual to his eternal principle..... the creation of an individual being is the result of the projection, in time and space, of one of the countless possibilities latent in the Supreme Origin of all manifestation which, through the one and universal consciousness, is concretized in the law or the truth of an individual and so becomes by a progressive growth its soul or psychic being.It is through the psychic presence that the truth of an individual being comes into contact with him and the circumstances of his life. In most cases, this presence acts, so to say, from behind the veil, unrecognised and unknown; but in some, it is perceptible and its action recognisable, even, in a few among these, the presence becomes tangible and its action quite effective. These go forward in their life with an assurance and a certitude all their own, they are masters of their destiny. It is precisely with a view to obtain this mastery and become conscious of the psychic presence that Psychic education has to be pursued.

".....Why is there a distinction made between the psychic.... and the spiritual education.....? Because the two are usually mixed up under the generic name "yogic discipline", although the life goal they aim at is very different in each case: for one, it is a higher realization upon earth, for the other, an escape from all earthly manifestation, even away from the whole universe, a return to the unmanifest.

"So one can say that the psychic life is the life immortal, endless time, limitless space, ever-progressive change, unbroken continuity in the world of forms. The spiritual consciousness, on the other hand, means to live the infinite and eternal, to throw oneself outside all creation beyond time and space. To become fully aware of your psychic being and to live a psychic life you must abolish in you all selfishness; but to live a spiritual life you must be selfless."—
'The Mother on Education.'

Are we ready for a psychic and spiritual change?

Editor

Man, the Thinking Animal

Sri Aurobindo

A trifling unit in a boundless plan
Amidst the enormous insignificance
Of the unpeopled cosmos' fire-whirl dance,
Earth, as by accident, engendered man:

A creature of his own grey ignorance,
A mind half-shadow and half-gleam, a breath
That wrestles, captive in a world of death,
To live some lame brief years. Yet his advance,

Attempt of a divinity within,
A consciousness in the inconscient Night,
To realise its own supernal Light
Confronts the ruthless forces of the Unseen.

Aspiring to godhead from insensible clay
He travels slow-footed towards the eternal day.

On Ideals

Sri Aurobindo

Ideals are truths that have not yet effected themselves for man, the realities of a higher plane of existence which have yet to fulfil themselves on this lower plane of life and matter, our present field of operation. To the pragmatist intellect which takes its stand upon the ever-changing present, ideals are not truths, not realities, they are at most potentialities of future truth and only become real when they are visible in the external fact as work of force accomplished. But to the mind which is able to draw back from the flux of force in the material universe, to the consciousness which is not imprisoned in its own workings or carried along in their flood but is able to envelop, hold and comprehend them, to the soul that is not merely the subject and instrument of the world-force but can reflect something of that Master Consciousness which controls and uses it, the ideal present to its inner vision is a greater reality than the changing fact obvious to its outer senses. The Idea is not a reflection of the external fact which it so much exceeds; rather the fact is only a partial reflection of the Idea which has created it.

Certainly, ideals are not the ultimate Reality, for that is too high and vast for any ideal to envisage; they are aspects of it thrown out in the world-consciousness as a basis for the workings of the world-power. But they are primary, the actual workings secondary. They are nearer to the Reality and therefore always more real, forcible and complete than the facts which are their partial reflection. Reflections themselves of the Real, they again are reflected in the more concrete workings of our existence. The human intellect, in proportion as it limits itself by the phenomena of self-realising Force, fails to catch the creative Idea until after we have seen the external fact it has created; but this order of our sense-enslaved consciousness is not the real order of the universe. God pre-exists before the world can come into being, but to our experience in which the senses act first and only then the finer workings of consciousness, the world seems to come first and God to emerge out of it, so much so that it costs us an effort to rise out of the mechanical, pluralistic and pantheistic conceptions of Him to a truer and higher idea of the Divine Reality. That which to us is the ultimate is in truth the primary reality. So, too, the Idea which seems to us to rise out of the fact, really precedes it and out of it the fact has arisen. Our vulgar contrast of the ideal and the real is therefore a sensuous error, for that which we call real is only a phenomenon of force working out something that stands behind the phenomenon and

that is pre-existent and greater than it. The Real, the Idea, the phenomenon, this is the true order of the creative Divinity.

The pragmatic intellect is only sure of a thing when it finds it realised in Power; therefore it has a certain contempt for the ideal, for the vision, because it drives always at execution and material realisation. But Power is not the only term of the God-head; Knowledge is the elder sister of Power: Force and Consciousness are twin aspects of being, both in the eternal foundation of things and in their evolutionary realisation. The idea is the realisation of a truth in Consciousness as the fact is its realisation in Power, both indispensable, both justified in themselves and in each other, neither warranted in ignoring or despising its complement. For the idealist and visionary to despise the pragmatist or for the pragmatist to depreciate the idealist and visionary is a deplorable result of our intellectual limitations and the mutual misunderstandings by which the arrogance of our imperfect temperament and mentality shuts itself out from perfection. It is as if we were to think that God the Seer and Knower must despise God the Master of works and energies or the Lord of action and sacrifice ignore the divine Witness and Originator. But these two are one and the division in us a limitation that mankind has yet to conquer.

The human being advances in proportion as he becomes more and more capable of knowing before he realises in action. This is indeed the order of evolution. It begins with a material working in which the Prakriti, the executive Power, is veiled by its works, by the fact it produces, and itself veils the consciousness which originates and supports all its workings. In Life the force emerges and becomes vibrant in the very surface of its works, last, in Mind the underlying consciousness reveals itself. So, too, man is at first subject in his mentality to the facts which his senses envisage, cannot go behind and beyond them, knows only the impressions they make on his receptive mind. The animal is executive, not creative; a passive tool of Matter and Life he does not seek in his thought and will to react upon and use them: the human being too in his less developed state is executive rather than creative; he limits his view to the present and to his environment, works so as to live from day to day, accepts what he may be, has no ideals. In proportion as he goes beyond the fact and seeks to anticipate Nature, to catch the ideas and principles behind her workings and finally to seize the idea that is not yet realised in fact and himself preside over its

execution, he becomes originaive and creative and no longer merely executive. He begins thus his passage from subjection to mastery.

In thus progressing humanity falls apart after its fashion into classes; it divides itself between the practical man and the idealist and makes numerous compromises between the two extremes. In reality the division is artificial; for every man who does anything in the world, works by virtue of an idea and in the force given to him by ideals, either his own or others' ideals, which he may or may not recognise but in whose absence nevertheless he would be impotent to move a single step. The smaller the ideals, the fewer they are and the less recognised and insisted on, the less also is the work done and the progress realised; on the other hand, when ideals enlarge themselves, when they become forceful, widely recognised, when different ideals enter into the field, clash and communicate their thought and force to each other, then the race rises to its great periods of activity and creation. And it is when the ideal arisen, vehement, energetic, refuses to be debarred from possession and throws itself with all the gigantic force of the higher planes of existence on this reluctant and rebellious stuff of life and matter to conquer it that we have the great eras which change the world by carrying out the potentialities of several centuries in the action of a few decades.

Therefore wherever and whenever the mere practical man abounds and excludes or discourages by his domination the idealist, there is the least work and the least valuable work done in that age or country for humanity; at most some preliminary spadework, some labour of conservation and hardly perceptible motion, some repression of creative energies preparing for a great future outburst. On the other hand, when the idealist is liberated, when the visionary abounds, the executive worker also is uplifted, finds at once an orientation and tenfold energy and accomplishes things which he would have otherwise rejected as a dream and chimera, which to his ordinary capacity would be impossible and which often leave the world wondering how work so great could have been done by men who were in themselves so little. The union of the great idealist with the great executive personality who receives and obeys the idea is always the sign of a coming realisation which will be more or less deep and extensive in proportion as they are united or as the executive man seizes more or less profoundly and completely the idea he serves and is able to make permanent in force what the other has impressed upon the consciousness of his age.

Often enough, even when these two different types of men work in the same cause and one more or less fulfils the other, they are widely separated in their accessory ideas, distrust, dislike and repudiate each other. For ordinarily the idealist is full of anticipation which reach beyond the actual possibilities or exceed the work that is destined to

be immediately fulfilled; the executive man, on the other hand, is unable to grasp either all the meaning of the work he does or all its diviner possibilities which to him are illusion and vanity, while to the other they are all that is supremely valuable in his great endeavour. To the practical worker limiting himself by patent forces and actual possibilities the idealist who made his work possible seems an idle dreamer or a troublesome fanatic; to the idealist the practical man who realises the first steps towards his idea seems a coarse spoiler of the divine work and almost its enemy: for by attaching too much importance to what is immediately possible he removes the greater possibilities which he does not see, seems to prevent and often does prevent a larger and nobler realisation. It is the gulf between a Cavour and a Mazzini, between the prophet of an ideal and the statesman of a realisable idea. The latter seems always to be justified by the event, but the former has a deeper justification in the shortcomings of the event. The successes of the executive man hiding away the ideal under the accomplished fact are often the tragedies of the human spirit and are responsible for the great reactions and disappointments it undergoes when it finds how poor and soulless is the accomplished fact compared with the glory of the vision and the ardour of the effort.

It cannot be doubted which of these two opposites and complementaries is the most essential to success. Not only is the upheaval and fertilising of the general consciousness by the thinker and the idealist essential to the practical realisation of great changes, but in the realisation itself the idealist who will not compromise is an indispensable element. Show me a movement without a force of uncompromising idealism working somewhere in its sum of energies and you have shown me a movement which is doomed to failure and abortion or to petty and inconsiderable results. The age or the country which is entirely composed of reasonable, statesmanlike workers ever ready for concession and compromise is a country which will never be great until it has added to itself what is lacking to it and bathed itself in pure and divine fountains and an age which will accomplish nothing of supreme importance for the progress of humanity. There is a difference however between the fanatic of an idea and the true idealist: the former is simply the materialistic, executive man possessed by the idea of another, not himself the possessor of it; he is haunted in his will and driven by the force of the idea, not really illuminated by its light. He does harm as well as good and his chief use is to prevent the man of compromise from pausing at a paltry or abortive result; but his excesses also bring about great reactions. Incapable of taking his stand on the ideal itself, he puts all his emphasis on particular means and forms and overstrains the springs of action till they become dulled and incapable of responding to further excitation. But the true idealist is not the servant of the letter or the form; it is the idea which he loves and the spirit behind the idea which he serves.

Man approaches nearer his perfection when he combines in himself the idealist and the pragmatist, the originative soul and the executive power. Great executive personalities have usually been men of a considerable idealism. Some indeed have served a purpose rather than an ideal; even in the idea that guided or moved them they have leaned to its executive rather than its inspiring and originative aspect; they have sought their driving force in the interest, passion and emotion attached to it rather than in the idea itself. Others have served consciously a great single thought or moral aim which they have laboured to execute in their lives. But the greatest men of action who were endowed by Nature with the most extraordinary force of accomplishment, have owed it to the combination in them of active power with an immense drift of originative thought devoted to practical realisation. They have been great executive thinkers, great practical dreamers. Such were Napoleon and Alexander. Napoleon with his violent prejudice against ideologues and dreamers was himself a colossal dreamer, an incurable if unconscious ideologist; his teeming brain was the cause of his gigantic force and accomplishment. The immense if shapeless ideas of Alexander threw themselves into the form of conquests, cities, cultures; they broke down the barriers of Greek and Asiatic prejudice and narrow self-imprisonment and created an age of civilisation and soul-interchange.

But these great personalities do not contain in themselves the combination which humanity most needs; not the man of action driven by ideas, the pragmatist stirred by a half-conscious exaltation from the idealistic, almost the mystic side of his nature, but the seer who is able to execute his vision is the higher term of human power and knowledge. The one takes his stand in the Prakriti, the executive Force, and is therefore rather driven than leads himself even when he most successfully leads others; the other takes his stand in the Purusha, the knower who controls executive force, and he possesses the power that he uses. He draws nearer to the type of the divine Seer-Will that has created and governs the universe. But such a combination is rare

and difficult; for in order to grasp the ideal the human soul has to draw back so far from the limitations, pettiness, denials of the world of phenomenal fact that the temperament and mentality become inapt for executive action upon the concrete phenomena of life and matter. The mastery of the fact is usually possible to the idealist mind only when its idealism is of no great depth or power and can therefore accommodate itself more easily to the actual life-environment.

Until this difficulty is overcome and the Seer-Will becomes more common in man and more the master of life, the ideal works at a disadvantage, by a silent pressure upon the reluctant world, by occasional attacks and sudden upheavals; a little is accomplished in a long time or by a great and sudden effort, a little that is poor enough, coarse enough, material enough compared with the thing seen and attempted, but which still makes a farther advance possible though often after a period of quiescence and reaction. And times there are, ages of stupendous effort and initiative when the gods seem no longer satisfied with this tardy and fragmentary working, when the ideal breaks constantly through the dull walls of the material practical life, incalculable forces clash in its field, innumerable ideas meet and wrestle in the arena of the world and through the constant storm and flash, agitation of force and agitation of light the possibility of the victoriously fulfilled ideal, the hope of the Messiah, the expectation of the Avatar takes possession of the hearts and thoughts of men. Such an age seems now to be coming upon the world. But whether that hope and expectation and possibility are to come to anything depends upon whether men prepare their souls for the advent and rise in the effort of their faith, life and thought to the height and purity of a clearly-grasped ideal. The Messiah or Avatar is nothing but this, the divine Seer-Will descending upon the human consciousness to reveal to it the divine meaning behind our half-blind action and to give along with the vision the exalted will that is faithful and performs and the ideal force that executes according to the vision.

The Supramental Manifestation and Other Writings

Not to go for ever repeating what man has already done is our work, but to arrive at new realisations and undreamed-of masteries. Time and soul and world are given us for our field, vision and hope and creative imagination stand for our prompters, will and thought and labour are our all-effective instruments.



What is there new that we have yet to accomplish? Love, for as yet we have only accomplished hatred and self-pleasing; Knowledge, for as yet we have only accomplished error and perception and conceiving; Bliss, for as yet we have only accomplished pleasure and pain and indifference; Power, for as yet we have only accomplished weakness and effort and a defeated victory; Life, for as yet we have only accomplished birth and growth and dying; Unity, for as yet we have only accomplished war and association. In a word, godhead; to remake ourselves in the divine image.

Sri Aurobindo
The Life Divine

Education For Tomorrow

Kireet Joshi

The modern age is marked by breathtaking discoveries and inventions. But nothing is perhaps so significant and pregnant for the future as the discovery of the child and the modern educationist's efforts for the invention of the New Education which would be appropriate to the ever-fresh discoveries of the mysteries of the child.

The modern educationist has been wonder-struck by the tremendous feat of learning that the child performs in the first few years of its life. What is the secret, he has asked, of this tremendous speed of learning?

He has observed, with fresh eyes, the child craving for the moon, and its wonder at the stars that twinkle. And he has made fresh propositions. The child learns so fast, he says, because it has no other occupation than that of learning; or rather, for the child, all the occupations are occupations of learning. To it, all play is learning and all learning is a play. The child learns so fast, he continues, because it has before it a living book, the open book of Nature itself. And the child learns so fast, he concludes, because the child "reads" this book of Nature with its total being, by the happy exercise of all its faculties, by the concrete urge of experience.

The modern educationist is led to apply these propositions to all aspects of education, and he finds that this application implies a radical change in the contents, methods and structure of education, and above all, in the very aim of education.

This is the central context of innovations in education all over the world.

We have begun to look upon the child as the creator of the New Future. And the educationist is, therefore, necessitated to look into the Future, not merely as a happy exercise of imagination or even of direction, but as an object of a serious and scientific study that can be used as a tool for current planning. Indeed, at no time was the Future so central to the present.

An important realisation has come to us that the future which the modern age has been labouring to fashion seems possible only on the basis of the fulfilment of one condition, namely, a universal and lasting peace. It has been realised that war must be eliminated, that actual wars are fought primarily in the mind, and that, therefore, there is a need to change the very working of the mind.

The educationist is called upon to define this change and to present new contents, methods and structures of education that would, in their total effect, enable us to develop not merely the normal manhood, but to develop in such a way and to such a degree that we would be able to transmute ourselves, to eliminate from ourselves the wars that are fought in our minds, and to grow into a new kind of global beings.

The modern educationist is called upon to find the right means of the education by which the growing child may, in due course, come to transmute its ordinary texture and grow into a new kind of being, into a new lotus of light that would radiate the breath of peace and harmony and live by intimate mutuality with the entire universe.

We must note that this task is new, its dimensions are multiple, and it invites the educationist to soar high above all his narrow preoccupations and to apply himself to the task of innovation with a new mind and a new heart. This task is imperative and urgent.

Is there, we have to ask, something in the child itself that has an inherent capacity to grow like an angel of light and to meet all the pains of growth without getting entangled into the knots of ordinary human thought and action, which limit and bind man into the stifling grooves of jealousies and rivalries and narrow and suicidal loyalties? For if there is nothing in the child which is intrinsically angelic, if it is true that eros and thanatos are the alpha and omega of the child, then it is impossible to predict any ultimate and harmonious survival of human existence on this planet.

But as we stand at the frontiers of science and of human potentialities developed to their highest value, we are led to an optimistic conclusion. The brilliant messages that come to us by flashes and inspirations, when studied impartially with a scrupulous scientific rigour, give a clue to the domains of knowledge that seem so pertinent to the basic premises of the educationist. These domains of knowledge await the quest of the educationist and there is a promise that just as he has discovered the child, he will discover also the soul of the child, the real angel of light. And in this discovery may lie, it is suggested, the true justification of his aspirations and his efforts.

The educationist has today spoken of "Learning to Learn" and of "Learning to Be"; he has spoken of the necessity of breaking the walls of the school and of

removing the boundaries of studies. But it has been suggested that it is only when the soul of the child is discovered that we shall find the true justification of these pronouncements of the modern educationist. It has been suggested that there must be freedom in the process of education, not for any reason, but because the soul of the child is, in its nature, free, and that it can grow to its fullness under the conditions of freedom. There must be, it is affirmed, the breaking of the walls of the school, not for any reason, but because the soul is not a prisoner, and because it is the breaker of the bonds and fetters. The boundaries of studies must be removed, it is confirmed, not for any reason, but because the entire universe—the expanding universe—is the soul's own home. Learning must be to learn, for that is the essential method of the soul's growth in the universe, and learning must be to be, because to know, to possess, and to be is the natural breath of the soul. It is on these premises that our future innovations in education, I think, can find their right direction and goal.

Permit me, in this context, to read out to you a passage from Sri Aurobindo that indicates the value of the modern educationist's discoveries and the direction of his task ahead:

“The discovery that education must be a bringing out of the child's own intellectual and moral capacities to their highest possible value and must be based on the psychology of the child-nature was a step forward towards a more healthy because a more subjective system; but it still fell short because it still regarded him as an object to be handled and moulded by the teacher. But at least there was a glimmer of the realisation that each human being is a self-developing soul and that the business of both the parent and teacher is to enable and to help the child to educate himself, to develop his own intellectual, moral, aesthetic and practical capacities and to grow freely as an organic being, not to be kneaded and pressured into form like an inert plastic material. It is not yet realised what the soul is or that the true secret, whether with the child or man, is to help him to find his deeper self, the real psychic entity within. That, if we ever give it a chance to come forward, and still more if we call it into the foreground as “the leader of the march set in our front,” will itself take up most of the business of education out of our hands and develop the capacity of the psychological being towards realisation of its potentialities of which our present mechanical view of life and man and external routine methods of dealing with them prevent us from having any experience or forming any conception.”

We speak today of the need for mass education. And in India, we have indeed a massive problem of mass education. Mass media are no doubt a powerful aid for the solution of this problem, and all the innovations that are being attempted in this direction are not only welcome but ought to be augmented both in regard to quantity and quality. But still we need to underline a very important phenomenon which has begun to emerge more rapidly in recent times. It is the phenomenon of an increasing demand, implicit or explicit, from the members of the masses to provide them individualised education. This is a phenomenon which is not sufficiently known. But the psychological law of awareness is that it always tends more and more towards “self-awareness”. It is for this reason that wherever the mass media have begun to operate successfully, there has arisen, within a short period, a need to provide means of education that will cater to the problems of individual growth. Failure to provide this has led to a sense of suffocation among the masses and to an implicit or explicit unrest. One of the root causes of the massive youth unrest all over the world can be traced to such a failure. For while the masses of the youth have become more and more aware by various media of education, there has not been, at the same time, a sufficient realisation of the need to provide as soon as possible individualised education to these large masses of the youth. We try to persuade ourselves that we can still postpone the demands of what may be called massive individualised education. But this postponement is neither possible nor desirable. An important field of innovation in education, therefore, is how to provide individualised education to larger and larger masses of people.

We come now to the area of individualised learning itself. Individualised learning means, it may be suggested, learning that is suitable and appropriate to the individual in question. Each individual, although a member of a group, and although he shares the commonness of the group to which he belongs, has still in him a special and unique combination of qualities, latent or active, which follow a special law of development towards the fulfilment of a specific and unique function. To use the Indian terminology, we may say that each one of us has his own *swabhāva* and *swadharma*, and a learning process that answers to the rhythms and cycles of *swabhāva* and *swadharma* is what may properly be called individualised learning. And it may safely be said that the central preoccupation of all the modern educational methodology and innovations is to invent a flexible structure of education that would fulfil the demands of individualised learning.

And we may at once state the heart of the problem that is related to individualised learning. The central knot lies in the intertwining of three needs in a meaningful process of learning, the need for self-learning, the need for different kinds and degree of help from the teacher, and the need for a group or a collaborative study or work-experience. These needs are interlocked, and yet the organisation demanded by each is so different from the one demanded by the other, that a series of antinomies begins to emerge as soon as we try to conceive or work out some complex and flexible organisation which would harmonise all the needs.

A close examination of this issue maybe suggested so that a satisfactory solution could be evolved. To most of us, who address themselves to the learning process which is circumscribed within the walls of the lecture system, syllabus system and examination system, and yet who aspire to initiate and organise a meaningful learning process, the solution of this problem is a thing of paramount importance.

It seems to me that in order to arrive at this solution, a number of difficult things need to be done patiently and laboriously, and each one of them could constitute a project of innovative experimentation. For instance, the grouping of students will need a new basis; and this will largely be determined by the nature of areas of studies in question. Teachers will need to prepare materials which can be studied by students without much help, and there will be a need of a new material which can be used as a part of the environment. Again, in regard to each area of study, we shall need to determine with some precision the essential elements, and differentiate them from that which is peripheral or which is a matter of detail. We shall need to determine several different ways and approaches to learn the same topic or subject. We may also need to enquire if there is something like most essential and indispensable knowledge that we, as human beings, must possess, and if so, what is the best method of acquiring it.

The way in which we should study, for instance, the inner meaning of Indian culture is evidently to be different from the way in which we learn, say, the details of some geographical area. History for instance, can be learnt in several different ways. It can be learnt predominantly through biographies or predominantly through an account of events, or else, through the study of the growth of institutions or cultures. One may like to begin the study of history from modern times and then go backwards, or one may prefer to study "then" and "now" in a systematic sequence.

Moreover, areas of study where general stimulation is needed, methods of environmental influence by mass media may be found suitable. And areas of study where detailed precision is necessary, various methods of individual study or methods of individual consultation with the teachers will have to be employed.

There is also the question of time-tables. To create a situation in which time-tables could be flexible is perhaps one of the most difficult tasks of innovators in education. There are a number of areas of studies in regard to which regular and fixed time-tables are necessary, but there are others where a free pursuit without the constraints of "periods" is quite legitimate. It is true that a "rough" solution is always possible, but I do not think that we, as educational scientists, should feel satisfied with any rough solutions. We need to invent a new system which reconciles all the needs of the total process of learning accurately and harmoniously.

There are still further areas for our innovative effort. We may state some of them.

We witness today an endless explosion of knowledge, and we do not know if we can psychologically contain this explosion. We need to ask, as in the *Chhandogya Upanishad*, if there is knowledge possessing which all can be known.

Is there, we may ask, an all-embracing project of work-experience that would generate a continuing process of life-long education?

Is there a programme, we may ask, which would necessitate an effortless synchronisation of the needs of personal development with the needs of collective development of humanity?

Is there, it may be asked, a tool of the acceleration of the summing up of the past and the unfolding of the future?

And we may ask if there is a secret which we can educationally provide to the child whereby it can grow continuously and yet remain a child, like Newton, playing with pebbles on the shores of the ocean of knowledge. In other words, is there a secret of perpetual progress and of perpetual youth?

All these are fascinating questions, and we can suggest that all of them are centrally relevant to answer the question as to why we need a new education for tomorrow.

Sri Aurobindo And Modern Psychology

A. S. Dalal

In the West, where modern psychology was born and cradled, psychological thought had for centuries been part of philosophical enquiry into the nature of the human being. As such, psychology was a handmaiden of philosophy. The emergence of psychology as an independent field of study in its own right and as an empirical science is generally traced to the founding of the first laboratory of experimental psychology by the German physiologist Wilhelm Wundt, in Leipzig in 1879. During its earliest stage, psychology, overshadowed by the natural sciences, developed strictly as a laboratory science, becoming what has been described as a "brass-instrument psychology". It studied relatively superficial aspects of behaviour, such as reaction time, conditioned reflexes, perceptual functions, attention span, localization of functions in the brain, and other similar areas of psychology which border on physiology. Alluding to this early psychology, Sri Aurobindo observed in 1916:

"Modern Science, obsessed with the greatness of its physical discoveries and the idea of the sole existence of Matter, has long attempted to base upon physical data even its study of Soul and Mind and of those workings of Nature in man and animal in which a knowledge of psychology is as important as any of the physical sciences. Its very psychology founded itself upon physiology and the scrutiny of the brain and nervous system."¹

Regarding the superficial nature of the early psychology and the need for a deeper view, Sri Aurobindo wrote:

"...Psychological enquiry in Europe (and without enquiry there can be no sound knowledge) is only beginning and has not gone very far, and what has reigned in men's minds up to now is a superficial statement of the superficial appearances of our consciousness as they look to us at first view and nothing more. But knowledge only begins when we get away from the surface phenomena and look behind them for their true operations and causes... All Science is like that, a contradiction of the sense-view or superficial appearances of things and an assertion of truths which are unguessed by the common and the uninstructed reason. The same process has to be followed in psychology if we are really to know what our consciousness is, how it is built and made and what is the secret of its functionings or the way out of its disorder."²

The first major development which ushered in a deeper view of psychology came through the work of the Austrian psychiatrist Sigmund Freud (1856-1939). The study of psychopathological behaviour led Freud to the discovery of what he called the unconscious—that part of the mind which is the storehouse of instincts, impulses and other psychological contents that are not only outside conscious awareness but also ordinarily inaccessible to it. The discovery of the unconscious gave rise to Psychoanalysis, which connotes the psychological theory formulated by Freud as well as the method devised by him for the study of the unconscious. Psychoanalysis, which some have called the First Force among the various movements in the history of psychology, had a twofold impact on the development of psychology as a science. In the first place, it gave birth to Depth Psychology—the study of the human being in the light of unconscious motives and attitudes—which had a profound impact and a revolutionary influence, particularly in the fields of psychiatry and psychology. Secondly, because of the trenchant one-sidedness of its theories, psychoanalysis led to the founding of several divergent offshoots and reactionary schools of thought. What evoked the strongest reaction in the psychoanalytical theory was its pansexualism, which attempts to explain the entire gamut of normal as well as abnormal human behaviour—an infant's sucking reflex no less than literary and religious pursuits as well as the aberrations of hysteria and psychosis—in terms of the libidinal impulse. Regarding the one-sided, exaggerated views and over-generalisations of psychoanalysis, Sri Aurobindo wrote in a letter :

"It [psychoanalysis of Freud] takes up a certain part,.... the lower vital subconscious layer, isolates some of its most morbid phenomena and attributes to it and them an action out of all proportion to its true role in the nature. Modern psychology is an infant science, at once rash, fumbling and crude. As in all infant sciences, the universal habit of the human mind—to take a partial or local truth, generalise it unduly and try to explain a whole field of Nature in its narrow terms—runs riot here."¹

Freud's dogmatism which assigned an exclusive role to the sexual drive and its associated dynamics in the motivation of all human behaviour led to the first two major rival offshoots of psychoanalysis—Individual Psychology founded by Alfred Adler (1870-1937) and Analytical Psychology promulgated by Carl Jung (1875-1961). Adler regarded the urge for power, rather than

1. *The Human Cycle*, Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1970-73), Vol. 15. p.1.
2. *Letters on Yoga* (SABCL, Vol 22), pp.321-22.

1. *Letters on Yoga* (SABCL, Vol. 24), p. 1606.

the sexual urge, as the chief motivating factor underlying human behaviour. As for Jung, he differed from Freud chiefly in two respects. In the first place, Jung maintained that the libido is not a purely sexual drive, but a general "psychic energy" or "life-instinct" (somewhat similar to Bergson's *élan vital*) which expresses itself in diverse forms, including the sexual urge. Secondly, Jung believed that besides the unconscious in the individual spoken of by Freud, there is a collective unconscious which is common to the human race as a whole. The collective unconscious, according to Jung, plays a far greater role in determining an individual's behaviour than the personal unconscious. Jung's broader concept of the libido as a general instinctual energy is somewhat akin to what Sri Aurobindo has termed the vital which he speaks of as follows :

"Vitality means life-force — wherever there is life, in plant or animal or man, there is life-force—without the vital there can be no life in matter and no living action."¹

"The vital is the Life-nature made up of desires, sensations, feelings, passions, energies of action,.... and of all that play of possessive and other related instincts, anger, fear, greed, lust, etc., that belong to this field of the nature."²

It should be evident that Sri Aurobindo's concept of the vital is more inclusive than even Jung's broad concept of the libido. The former connotes life-force in all its gradations, from the relatively grosser life-energy (called Prana in Indian Philosophy) which animates plants, animals as well as human beings, to the higher forms of the vital such as feelings and emotions. Though compared to Freud's or Adler's views, Jung's view of the libido is closer to that of Sri Aurobindo, the relative truth of what Freud and Adler maintained is corroborated by Sri Aurobindo according to whom the three strongest motivating forces for the ordinary individual are power, wealth and sex.³ (It is striking that whereas modern psychology has recognized the primary role played by the sexual urge and the urge for power in the motivation of human behaviour, it has overlooked the role of wealth with its associated instinct of greed. By contrast, in Indian thought greed for wealth has always been viewed as one of the most powerful motivating forces in human life.) In Jung's concept of the collective unconscious, too, we find some degree of concurrence between modern psychology and Sri Aurobindo. Freud regarded the unconscious as partly the outcome of repression; the contents of the unconscious, therefore, according to Freud, differ from person to person, depending upon

1. *Letters on Yoga* (SABCL, Vol. 22), p. 346.
 2. *Ibid.*, p. 321.
 3. *The Mother* (SABCL, Vol. 25), p. 11.

the vicissitudes of an individual's psychosexual development. However, Jung, in working with dreams and fantasies, came across images which could not be explained in terms of the personal unconscious, and which Jung ascribed to the collective unconscious of the human race, common to all individuals. Jung thus added a new dimension to the concept of the unconscious, distinguishing the personal from the collective unconscious. Jung's distinction between the personal and the collective is somewhat akin to, though narrower than the distinction between the individual and universal which Sri Aurobindo applies to all parts of an individual's nature as in the following statements:

"There are two aspects of physical Nature as of all Nature—the individual and the universal."¹

"The subconscious is universal as well as individual like all the other main parts of the Nature."²

A further distinction, however, made by Sri Aurobindo is between what he terms the subconscious—that which lies below the level of consciousness—and the subliminal—that which lies behind the surface consciousness. Regarding such a distinction, Sri Aurobindo states:

"The real subconscious is a nether diminished consciousness close to the Inconscient*; the subliminal is a consciousness larger than our surface existence. But both belong to the inner realm of our being of which our surface is unaware, so both are jumbled together in our common conception and parlance."³

"The subliminal self stands behind and supports the whole superficial man; it has in it a larger and more efficient mind behind the surface vital, a subtler and freer physical consciousness behind the surface bodily existence. And above them it opens to higher superconscious as well as below them to lower subconscious ranges."⁴

The last of the above quoted extracts contains still another important distinction which has not yet been made in modern psychology—the distinction between the physical, the vital and the mental aspects which characterise not only the ordinary waking consciousness but also the subconscious and the subliminal. Regarding the prevailing lack of such a distinction, Sri Aurobindo writes:

1. *Letters on Yoga* (SABCL, Vol. 24), p. 1435.
 2. *Letters on Yoga* (SABCL, Vol. 22), p. 354.
 3. *The Life Divine* (SABCL, Vol. 18), p. 223fn.
 4. *Letters on Yoga* (SABCL, Vol. 24), p. 1606.

* It should be noted that Sri Aurobindo distinguishes between the subconscious and the Inconscient. The latter, for which there is no equivalent in modern psychology, is the most involved state of consciousness, below even the subconscious.

"Each plane of our being—mental, vital, physical—has its own consciousness, separate though interconnected and interacting; but to the outer mind and sense, in our waking experience, they are all confused together."¹

From the viewpoint of Sri Aurobindo's yoga psychology, Freud and Jung, who could not make the distinctions pointed out above, were led to confound the various aspects of the human psychological make-up, and to assert the truth of their partial discoveries to the exclusion and denial of whatever militated against their own findings. Sri Aurobindo's integral view, on the other hand, affirms the element of truth contained in both Freud's and Jung's discoveries, including the Freudian theory of repression and "repetition compulsion"—exaggerated by Freud and underplayed by Jung—as maybe seen from what Sri Aurobindo states about the nature of the subconscious:

"...there are different parts or planes of the subconscious. All upon earth is based on the Inconscient as it is called, though it is not really inconscient at all, but rather a complete 'sub-conscience, a suppressed or involved consciousness, in which there is everything but nothing is formulated or expressed. The subconscious lies between this Inconscient and the conscious mind, life and body. It contains the potentiality of all the primitive reactions to life which struggle out to the surface from the dull and inert strands of Matter and form by a constant development a slowly evolving and self-formulating consciousness; it contains them not as ideas, perceptions or conscious reactions but as the fluid substance of these things. But also all that is consciously experienced sinks down into the subconscious, not as precise though submerged memories but as obscure yet obstinate impressions of experience, and these can come up at any time as dreams, as mechanical repetitions of past thought, feelings, action etc. as 'complexes' exploding into action and event, etc. The subconscious is the main cause why all things repeat themselves and nothing ever gets changed except in appearance. It is the cause why people say character cannot be changed, the cause also of the constant return of things one hoped to have got rid of for ever.... All too that is suppressed without being wholly got rid of sinks down there and remains as seed ready to surge up or sprout up at any moment."²

The primary emphasis on unconscious motivation—which is the chief characteristic of depth psychology in general and psychoanalysis in particular—led to a reactionary movement and gave rise to Behaviourism—the Second Force in psychology. The viewpoint of

behaviourism was first systematically stated by J.B. Watson in a paper entitled "Psychology as a Behaviourist Views It" published in 1913. Watson stated that the proper subject matter of psychology is objectively observable behaviour which must be explained as a response to internal and external stimuli. Psychology, said Watson, must become "a purely objective experimental branch of natural science". Deprecating the "mind-gazing" methodology of introspection and eschewing all hypothetical concepts which cannot be tested experimentally, the new school adopted a purely objective approach based on observation and experiment for the study of behaviour. Using largely rats and other laboratory animals, it sought to explain human behaviour strictly in terms of stimulus and response. Psychology once again became primarily a laboratory science, the old "brass-instrument psychology" being replaced by what has disparagingly been a "rat psychology". Behaviourism became the dominant school of psychology in the 1920s, and though its influence has to some extent declined, and though clinical practice has continued to be dominated by psychoanalytical and other non-behaviouristic approaches, behaviourism has to this day occupied a commanding position in the mainstream of academic psychology.

Though diametrically opposed to each other in their views regarding the proper subject-matter of psychology and the appropriate method for studying it, psychoanalysis and behaviourism share one fundamental view in common: they both regard the human being as essentially an animal organism. According to psychoanalysis, the human being, like the animal organism, is driven exclusively by the psychobiological energies of the id, the ego and the superego which, from the psychoanalytic viewpoint, constitute the *sui generis* characteristics of the human being, do not alter the fundamental dynamics attributed to the animal organism, namely, the constant tendency to seek a state of homeostasis or internal equilibrium. According to behaviourism, human behaviour is determined by the same laws of stimulus and response which were discovered by Pavlov in his experiments with dogs and by the same principles of reward and punishment which have been found by Skinner and other neobehaviourists to operate in laboratory animals. Thus both psychoanalysis and behaviourism are characterised by reductionism, which consists in an attempt to explain the complex behaviour of the more highly evolved human organism in terms of the same physiological and biological principles applicable to the simpler behaviour of the less evolved animal organism. Sri Aurobindo made some pertinent observations applicable to reductionism when he wrote:

"Still less can we find the clue [to the psychological complexity of human nature and the way to its transformation] in a scientific psychology with a

1. *Letters on Yoga* (SABCL, Vol 22), p. 347.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 354-55.

materialistic basis which assumes that the body and the biological and physiological factors of our nature are not only the starting-point but the whole real foundation and regards human mind as only a subtle development from the life and the body. That may be the actual truth of the animal side of human nature and of the human mind in so far as it is limited and conditioned by the physical part of our being. But the whole difference between man and the animal is that the animal mind, as we know it, cannot get for one moment away from its origins, cannot break out from the covering, the close chrysalis which the bodily life has spun round the soul and become something greater than its present self, a more free, magnificent and noble being; but in man mind reveals itself as a greater energy escaping from the restrictions of the vital and physical formula of being. But even this is not all that man is or can be: he has in him the power to evolve and release a still greater ideal energy which in its turn escapes out of the restrictions of the mental formula of his nature and discloses the supramental form, the ideal power of a spiritual being."¹

Psychoanalysis carried the reductionism to an extreme and earned notoriety by reducing even mystical experiences to the unconscious strivings of the id. In this regard, Sri Aurobindo made the following remarks:

"I find it difficult to take these psychoanalysts at all seriously when they try to scrutinise spiritual experience by the flicker of their torch-lights..... They look from down up and explain the higher lights by the lower obscurities; but the foundation of these things is above and not below.... The superconscient, not the subconscious, 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 secret is to be found in the heavenly archetype of the lotus that blooms for ever in the Light above 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."²

As a reaction to the reductionism of psychoanalysis and behaviourism, there arose what has been regarded as the Third Force in psychology—the school of Humanistic Psychology. According to humanistic psychologists, there are unique aspects of the human being which cannot be adequately explained in terms of the prehuman or animal functioning. One of these unique aspects which is particularly stressed by humanistic psychology is the human individual's inner urge to grow through the development of one's latent

potentials. Psychoanalysis regards the human organism as seeking essentially the maintenance of a state of homeostasis. Behaviourism holds that an individual's behaviour is merely a reaction to stimuli. According to humanistic psychology, however, an individual does not seek merely to maintain the existent state of homeostasis, nor can human behaviour be explained solely as response to stimuli: the human being is impelled from within to exceed the actual or existent state in order to actualize the latent potentials. Abraham Maslow, one of the founders of the humanistic movement in psychology, has attempted to develop a comprehensive view of human potentials which encompass, in the words of one of the titles of his books, "the farther reaches of human nature", including the attainment of "peak experiences"—states which are generally associated with mystical or semi-mystical experiences. Maslow thus comes close to voicing what has been stated by Sri Aurobindo regarding "the whole difference between man and the animal" in the last but one passage quoted above.

In turning more and more to the consideration of man's highest potential, Maslow and other humanistic psychologists moved beyond humanism to a consideration of what transcends the ordinary state of human consciousness. During the later phase of his work, Maslow wrote:

"I consider Humanistic, Third Force Psychology, to be transitional, a preparation for a still 'higher' Fourth Psychology, transpersonal, transhuman, centred in the cosmos rather than in human needs and interest, going beyond humanness, identity, self-actualization, and the like."¹

Anthony Sutich, another founder of humanistic psychology, also eventually came to a similar conclusion as Maslow's regarding the humanistic approach. He stated:

"I felt that something was lacking in the [humanistic] orientation... and that it did not....give sufficient attention to the place of man in the universe or cosmos. A special problem was my growing realization that the concept of self-actualization was no longer comprehensive enough."²

The "still 'higher' psychology" envisaged by Maslow strikingly echoes Sri Aurobindo's prevision of "the greater psychology awaiting its hour". In the late 1960s, Maslow, Sutich and other prominent humanistic psychologists founded an association for the study of what they called Transpersonal Psychology, thereby

1. *The Synthesis of Yoga* (SABCL, Vol. 21), pp. 597-98.
2. *Letters on Yoga* (SABCL, Vol 24), pp. 1608-09.

1. Maslow, A.H. *Toward a Psychology of Being*. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold. 1968.
2. Cited in John Welwood (Ed.) *The Meeting of the Ways* (New York: Schocken Books. 1979). p. 224.

launching the latest major movement in psychology, regarded by a growing number of psychologists as the Fourth Force.

One of the most significant features of transpersonal psychology is its revolutionary view and definition of psychology. The view has been well expressed by Robert Ornstein, research psychologist at Langley Porter Neuropsychiatric Institute in San Francisco and President of the Institute for the Study of Human Knowledge. Ornstein writes:

"Psychology is, primarily, the science of consciousness. Its researchers deal with consciousness directly when possible and indirectly, through the study of physiology and behaviour, when necessary."¹

Here again we have a partial echo of what Sri Aurobindo had written several decades earlier regarding the nature and scope of psychology. In an unrevised, and perhaps incomplete piece of writing on "Psychology", published posthumously, Sri Aurobindo wrote:

"Psychology is the science of consciousness and its states and operations in Nature and, if that can be glimpsed or experienced, its states and operations beyond what we know as Nature...."

"Our observable consciousness, that which we call ourselves, is only the little visible part of our being. It is a small field below which are depths and farther depths and widths and ever wider widths which support and supply it but to which it has no visible access. All that is our self, our being; what we see at the top is only our ego and its visible nature."

"Even the movements of this little surface nature cannot be understood nor its true law discovered until we know all that is below or behind and supplies it—and know too all that is around it and above."²

It is, of course, not the first time that psychology is being defined as the science of consciousness. It was so defined by E.B. Titchener (1867-1927) and other psychologists of the old introspectionist school for whom psychology was the study of the "elements of consciousness". However, what the early introspectionist psychologists studied was the superficial aspect of consciousness which is observable through introspection. The study of consciousness did not include what lies outside conscious awareness and what is therefore not accessible to introspection. Regarding this early view of consciousness, Sri Aurobindo wrote:

"Consciousness is usually identified with mind, but

1. Ornstein, R. *The Psychology of Consciousness*. San Francisco: W.H. Freeman, 1972.
2. "Psychology: in *The Hour of God and Other Writings* (SABCL, Vol. 17), pp. 21-22.

mental consciousness is only the human range which no more exhausts all the possible ranges of consciousness than human sight exhausts all the gradations of colour or human hearing all the gradations of sound—for there is much above or below that is to man invisible and inaudible. So there are ranges of consciousness above and below the human range, with which the normal human has no contact and they seem to it unconscious—supramental or overmental and submental ranges."¹

In the redefinition of psychology as the science of consciousness, the term no longer implies merely that which constitutes conscious or mental awareness, but rather something which as Sri Aurobindo states above, has various ranges, similar to the gradations of colour or of sound. Perhaps the clearest expression of this new concept of consciousness in modern psychology is to be found in Ken Wilber, a leading writer on the psychology of consciousness. Wilber, using a metaphor similar to those used by Sri Aurobindo in the first of the two extracts just quoted, has formulated the concept of "the spectrum of consciousness" which he explains as follows :

"...human personality is a multi-levelled manifestation or expression of a single consciousness, just as in physics the electromagnetic spectrum is viewed as a multi-banded expression of a single, characteristic electro-magnetic wave.... Each level of the spectrum is marked by a different and easily recognized sense of individual identity, which ranges from the supreme identity of cosmic consciousness through several gradations or bands to the drastically narrowed sense of identity associated with egoic consciousness."²

Wilber's view of ego-consciousness as representing a "drastically narrowed sense of identity" is in some respects a total reversal of what modern psychology has hitherto held regarding the ego. For, from the viewpoint of modern psychology in general and of psychoanalysis in particular, the ego represents the most advanced stage in the psychological development of an individual. A normal and psychologically healthy person is deemed to be one who has an adequately developed ego. When the ego is ill-developed in an individual and as a result, the individual suffers from certain ego-deficits, or, when after having developed an adequately strong ego there is a breakdown in some of the ego functions due to outer stress or inner conflict, the individual suffers from neurosis or psychosis. Therefore, modern psychology, which has hitherto been preoccupied with what is regarded as the "normal" personality, has extolled the ego, equating a well-developed ego with the state of normality and psychological health.

1. *Letters on Yoga* (SABCL, Vol 22), p. 234.
2. Ken Wilber, "Psychologia Perennis: The Spectrum of Consciousness", *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 1975. Vol. 7, p. 137.

Even Jung, who was strongly influenced by Eastern thought, and who, in his concept of the collective unconscious, was one of the earliest thinkers in modern psychology to speak of something that is transpersonal, did not admit of a state of consciousness in which the ego is transcended or abolished. He categorically asserted that "consciousness is inconceivable without an ego....If there is no ego there is nobody to be conscious of anything."¹ According to Jung, to lose the ego is to fall into a state of unconsciousness.

Jung's difficulty in conceiving of consciousness without an ego is rooted in the very nature of the normal human consciousness which is ego-bound. But Sri Aurobindo's experience testifies—as does that of others who, transcending the ego-consciousness, have discovered the self—that the ego, with its sense of a separate individuality, is only a shadow of the true individuality which is characterised by a sense of oneness with the all. As Sri Aurobindo states: "Our ego is only a face of the universal being and has no separate existence; our apparent separative individuality is only a surface movement and behind it our real individuality stretches out to unity with all things....."²

The model of the spectrum of consciousness, which admits of states of consciousness other than that of the ego, is according to Wilber, a core concept of the "perennial psychology"—a universal doctrine regarding the nature of man common to all major metapsychological traditions of the world—and "yet at the same time gives ample consideration to the insights of such typical Western disciplines as ego-psychology, psychoanalysis, humanistic psychology, Jungian analysis, interpersonal psychology, and the like."³

If psychology is the study of consciousness, the view that consciousness consists of gradations above and

below the normal state of ego consciousness would suggest that the study of psychology and knowledge of the self are intimately related and must go hand in hand. This thought has been well expressed by John Welwood, and editor for the *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* and *PreVision*. Suggesting the directions that a new psychology might take, Welwood writes:

"This new approach needs to be a *self-knowledge psychology*, based on an inner empiricism, an investigation of experience and its deeper nature...

"It needs to be based on self-knowledge *disciplines* (such as the practice of meditation). Every body of knowledge is based on a certain discipline, an orderly and precise approach of observing, practising, and learning. A self-knowledge discipline is one in which attention is trained to actively examine the nature of one's experience....."¹

Such a view of psychology as a self-knowledge discipline was adumbrated by Sri Aurobindo who spoke of "psychological methods of discipline by which man purifies and perfects himself,—the work of psychology, not as it is understood in Europe, but the deeper practical psychology called in India yoga".²

In presaging the emergence of psychology as a science of consciousness and as a self-knowledge discipline lies perhaps Sri Aurobindo's greatest relevance to modern psychology. However, besides foreshadowing the "greater psychology awaiting its hour", Sri Aurobindo has through personal exploration and experience, mapped out and intimately described the entire terrain of consciousness in all its gradations. Embodied in his yoga, such a science of consciousness, which is also a discipline for self-knowledge and self-transformation, awaits discovery by those who are turning towards the new horizons on psychology.

1. Cited in Swami Ajaya. *Psychotherapy East and West* (Honesdale, Pennsylvania: The Himalayan International Institute, 1983), p. 105.
2. *The Life Divine* (SABCL, Vol. 18), p. 401.
3. Ken Wilber, "Psychologia Perennis: The Spectrum of Consciousness", *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 1975. Vol. 7, p. 105.

1. John Welwood (Ed.) *The Meeting of the Ways*, pp. 224-25.
2. "Our Ideal" in *The Supramental Manifestation and Other Writings*, (SABCL, Vol. 16), p. 314.

The 'Mind' in the ordinary use of the word covers indiscriminately the whole consciousness, for man is a mental being and mentalises everything; but in the language of this yoga the words 'mind' and 'mental' are used to connote specially the part of the nature which has to do with cognition and intelligence, with ideas, with mental or thought perceptions, the reactions of thought to things, with the truly mental movements and formations, mental vision and will, etc., that are part of his intelligence. The vital has to be carefully distinguished from mind, even though it has a mind element transfused into it; the vital is the Life nature made up of desires, sensations, feelings, passions, energies of action, will of desire, reactions of the desire-soul in man and of all that play of possessive and other related instincts, anger, fear, greed, lust, etc., that belong to this field of the nature. Mind and vital are mixed up on the surface of the consciousness, but they are quite separate forces in themselves and as soon as one gets behind the ordinary surface consciousness one sees them as separate, discovers their distinction and can with the aid of this knowledge analyse their surface mixtures.

Sri Aurobindo
Letters on Yoga

Consciousness Approach to Business Management-3

Responsibility, Powers and Freedom

Gary Jacobs.

Sri Aurobindo writes that "Freedom is the highest law and the last consummation". To the extent that an individual is committed to the central aims of an institution and identified with it, he should be given freedom to err as well as succeed, for only so can he and the institution grow. Man responds to pressure, force, commands and outer discipline by a behavioural conformity which tends to revert to old forms as soon as the pressure is removed. It is only under conditions of freedom that man will impose discipline upon himself and only self-discipline, meaning a true consent of the will, can create true personality growth.

To put it another way, to the extent that a man shows the capacity to exercise freedom in a disciplined manner without letting it fall into licentiousness, he must be given room to exercise his free choice. Each man will have strong areas where freedom can be given and here he should be given free scope. The very act of giving freedom to a man in a new area serves as an incentive for him to extend his trust-worthiness to other areas. One should look for this development and encourage it.

Yet the freedom one gives should not become an occasion for another to exploit you. It is as wrong from the higher point of view to allow oneself to be exploited as to exploit others. The fact is that when freedom is given man almost always utilizes it both for constructive growth and for greater self-indulgence—the two are distinct yet usually go together. To give freedom to others requires that one is himself established in that freedom inwardly, possessing a great inner stability, strength, patience and will for man's growth. If these qualities are not there in some measure it is better to proceed cautiously, otherwise an initial gesture of freedom to others will be followed by a rapid withdrawal of the same and may lead to a demoralised atmosphere in which the individual takes less interest or initiative than ever. Some degree of misuse or exploitation will always be there and is tolerable. It is the price paid for the truest and most rapid growth of oneself, those around and the institution as a whole. Freedom implies and complements responsibility. If freedom is given it should eventually result in evolving a greater sense of and capacity for accepting responsibility on the part of the entrusted individual. As these grow, the man and the institution flourish.

In institutional life, freedom and responsibility express themselves as an attitude of professionalism. Management implicitly recognizes the qualifications,

competence, maturity and capacity of each man to properly exercise a certain degree of freedom and responsibility in a constructive manner. To relate to another as a professional is essentially a gesture of respect for his capabilities. Yet the true basis for respect is not training or experience. It is founded on the essential divinity and dignity which is common to all human beings and the capacity of every man to develop his personality and capabilities further by the unfolding of the hidden potentialities within him. Every man merits a certain degree of respect and possesses a certain capacity for responsible activity. If one relates to the essential core of divinity in a man, he responds by bringing forward his best qualities and properly utilizing the freedom and responsibility given him.

II

Individuals and institutions make decisions on many levels according to many standards of conduct, ranging from motives of pure self-interest, social custom, legal right, moral and ethical right, to spiritual or inner right. At times a business may be faced with a situation in which what is permitted by law does not coincide with what is really fair to the party concerned. For example, law may establish a certain minimum wage for labourers, yet the work required does not truly fall in the normal labour category and one has the prerogative to pay by the law. By ignoring the legal standard and acting according to a more just guideline, one raises the level of the institution and fosters its growth. In fact, each time an individual or an institution acts according to a higher standard than that which the situation necessitates, he makes a growth in consciousness.

An industrialist was plagued with complete shutdown of his three factories due to a labour strike. The trouble had been instigated by a single man who became leader of the workers and made untenable demands on their behalf. After more than two months this leader was caught in possession of a stolen watch belonging to one of the supervisors. The police placed him in jail. The industrialist knew of this principle for the exercise of power and wanted to rely on the justness of his position rather than on legal power. After great hesitation he decided not to press charges and ordered the police to release the man. The leader-thief came directly to the industrialist. He apologized for his behaviour, requested the workers to accept the fair terms offered and abandon their strike, and then he promptly left the company and the city.

The greatest power available to a man is his highest

ideal or his deepest faith—that is the Divine for him. Let his ultimate reliance be on these. Then lower authorities such as law can be resorted to when necessary as an instrument for this power to express itself.

III

Exhaust your resources and life will respond. Often it happens that in one or more areas of a project a bottleneck is reached and progress grinds to a halt. It may be a need for new ideas, new informations, more men, money, materials, etc. At these times it is good to step back from the particular issue at hand and examine the overall functioning of the institution in the light of the principles already described. One may observe how far the operating principles have strayed from the basic ideas of the institution, how adequately attention has been given to the different elements of the work, what areas lack or have lost a basic harmony of functioning, and so on.

After such an investigation has been carried out and corrections been implemented, it may still be that the particular problem at hand needs an added impetus to get it moving. Where the atmosphere surrounding the work is favourable, where disharmony continues to prevail, it is better to patiently refrain from action until the mood changes. But where the atmosphere is good and all elements seem ready for a breakthrough, then it may be that a token effort will turn the corner and bring success. This means to make a determined initiation and

persistent endeavour to no matter how small an extent it may be possible, and do whatever can be done in the given circumstances, exhaust all possibilities, potentials and resources. At the point where one has fully exhausted his energies and capacities, life responds by bringing the components necessary to complete the work. Where human effort is exhausted, one opens to the forces of universal life which take up the movement. But if one stops at the penultimate step, there is no response.

IV

In the process of making institutional decisions one is constantly faced not only with two or more alternatives, but the opportunity to act out of a higher set of values. When one chooses the higher, it leads to growth and incidentally includes the possible benefit of the lower. A few examples are given of priorities which help the institution to expand:

Long term over short term
Progress over profit
Convention over convenience
Effort over comfort
Sublimation over diversion
Resolution into a harmony over solution
Institution's welfare over department's welfare
Employee's utility over management utility
Confrontation over appeasement
Compromise at a higher level over confrontation.

I may say, however, that I do not regard business as something evil or tainted, anymore than it is so regarded in ancient spiritual India. If I did, I would not be able to receive money from X or from those of our disciples who in Bombay trade with East Africa; nor could we then encourage them to go on with their work but would have to tell them to throw it up and attend to their spiritual progress alone. How are we to reconcile X's seeking after spiritual light and his mill? Ought I not to tell him to leave his mill to itself and to the devil and go into some Ashram to meditate? Even if I myself had the command to do business as I had the command to do politics I would have done it without the least spiritual or moral compunction. All depends on the spirit in which a thing is done, the principles on which it is built and the use to which it is turned. I have done politics and the most violent kind of revolutionary politics, ghoram karma, and I have supported war and sent men to it, even though politics is not always or often a very clean occupation nor can war be called a spiritual line of action. But Krishna calls upon Arjuna to carry on war of the most terrible kind and by his example encourage men to do every kind of human work, sarvakarmāni. Do you contend that Krishna was an unspiritual man and that his advice to Arjuna was mistaken or wrong in principle? Krishna goes further and declares that a man by doing in the right way and in the right spirit the work dictated to him by his fundamental nature, temperament and capacity and according to his and its dharma can move towards the Divine. He validates the function and dharma of the Vaishya as well as of the Brahmin and Kshatriya, it is in his view quite possible for a man to do business and make money and earn profits and yet to be a spiritual man, practise Yoga, have an inner life. The Gita is constantly justifying works as a means of spiritual salvation and enjoining a Yoga of Works as well as of Bhakti and Knowledge. Krishna, however, superimposes a higher law also that work must be done without desire, without attachment to any fruit or reward, without any egoistic attitude or motive, as an offering or sacrifice to the Divine. This is the traditional Indian attitude towards these things, that all work can be done if it is done according to the dharma and, if it is rightly done, it does not prevent the approach to the Divine or the access to spiritual knowledge and the spiritual life.

Sri Aurobindo
SABCL Vol.23.

A Challenge to India's Psyche

Manoj Das

"Would that I could discover truth as easily as I could uncover falsehood!" said Cicero some two thousand years ago. His regret assumes a resurgent significance in the current backdrop of several masks of holiness falling down in rapid succession and revealing a parade of impish mortals, a charlatan who passed off as a saviour of souls and a common rapist who masqueraded as an arch-ascetic, so on and so forth.

Falsehood is thus uncovered, as it happens from time to time; alas, the process does not help us discover truth.

"India's biggest export-quality intellectual property, her Yoga, spirituality and mysticism, seem to be getting discredited at home," commented a visitor who has seen a hundred clubs bloom along his lovely Californian shores, some of them selling Nirvana through the telephone and some others promising cosmic consciousness if you meditate on a certain cushion available for a handsome price—all basically inspired by Indian gurus, but improved upon by their worthy American disciples.

The visitor, I suspect, breathed relief, for the situation in India seems to have assured him that he need not labour after any truth beyond his pragmatism. At the same time, he was sad that pragmatism was all he must contend with even after a pilgrimage to India.

His paradoxical feeling is in no way unique. As Sri Aurobindo wrote: "The earliest preoccupation of man in his awakened thoughts and, as it seems, his inevitable and ultimate preoccupation,—for it survives the longest periods of scepticism and returns after every banishment,—is also the highest which his thought can envisage. It manifests itself in the divination of Godhead, the impulse towards perfection, the search after pure Truth and unmixed Bliss, the sense of a secret immortality. The ancient dawns of human knowledge have left us their witness to this constant aspiration; today we see a humanity satiated but not satisfied by victorious analysis of the externalities of Nature preparing to return to its primeval longings. The earliest formula of Wisdom promises to be its last—God, Light, Freedom, Immortality."¹

The visitor from California too would get over his scepticism and resume his quest beyond his pragmatism, if not in this life—as mystics would inform us—in his next life. The process is inescapable.

1. *The Life Divine*.

But the scope of this article is limited to examining a plethora of misconceptions and confusions regarding spirituality, often said to be India's supreme discovery, vis-a-vis religious faiths, Yoga, Tantra, miracles and occultism.

Most of the religious faiths might have originated with individuals who had profound spiritual experiences of an ultimate truth and of the promise in man to attain it. But once formalised, a religious faith loses its vitality because all its followers do not belong to the same plane of consciousness. Spirituality gets lost in rituals and rigidity, whereas freedom and flexibility are the basis of a true spiritual quest. Even the world's first atheistic doctrines—those of the Charvakas, the Javalas and the Ajivikas—were formulated in India and their exponents were given the status of sages, for they too were seekers in a serious way.

The philosophy of Yoga (which literally means union) is based on the hypothesis that man is essentially Divine, but is separated from his source and this separation is at the root of his ego and ignorance. It is possible for him, through Yoga, a discipline pursued consciously and intensely, to become united with his source. The discipline demands his rejecting certain habits and diversions which prolong the separation and subject the self to a continued bondage to the process of birth and death, of Karma and its consequences.

Here steps in the Tantra and it dares to declare that since there was nothing in this creation which was bereft of Divinity, nothing need be rejected. It deliberately embraces every attraction of life, not to be enslaved by it through indulgence and involvement, but to emerge victorious over it keeping the sole motive of discovering the Divine truth lying hidden in them.

That out of a thousand who enter the dangerous tunnel of Tantra only one might come out at its sunlit exit whereas the rest lose their ways in a deceptive labyrinth dazzling with puny *Siddhis*, is a different matter. But these *Siddhis*, often manifested in one's power to perform miracles, is billed out as spirituality. They are not. Miracles are no signs of spirituality, nor are they necessarily magic or fraud. Miracles can be performed by manipulating occult laws; a paperweight tossed up and suspended in the air may strike as a wonder to our eyes, but the mystic sees far superior wonder in things taken for granted—in the mighty sun suspended amidst nothing, for instance.

The bigger the truth, the wider is the scope for fakers and frauds to carry on commerce under its counterfeit banner, or to garner other satisfactions out of it such as influence, proximity to the seats of power, etc. They generally prove fascinating to the curious or the ambitious.

But these self-proclaimed agents of God alone are not to blame. They thrive on the weakness of the politician or trader who makes a beeline to them, to cash in on the puny supernatural powers they have or they pretend to have. Such powers, if these godmen really have any, bring their followers some temporary success, generally to make them a laughing stock later. It is useless to ask why. These powers do not operate along rational lines. Deities who preside over such powers were there long before the evolution of man and the development of his

rational wisdom. The domains of wealth and power are still the sportsground of these dark deities and are yet to be conquered by spiritual consciousness.

But such facts do not discredit spirituality and Yoga, India's greatest heritage and her supreme contribution to the process of human enlightenment. If anything, the wide misuse of such institutions are a challenge to India's psyche; to its capacity for regenerating its own truth. No true seeker is abandoned by God to become a prey of the so-called godmen. Spirituality is a strictly personal relationship with the Divine; each one, however illiterate in the lore or infantile, can find his own way to his spiritual destiny, once he begins to aspire for it, for the Divine embedded in his own being assumes the role of his guide. A determined seeker may falter, but he never fails.

The occultist sought to know the secret of physical things also and in this effort he furthered astronomy, created chemistry, gave an impulse to other sciences, for he utilised geometry also and the science of numbers; but still more he sought to know the secrets of supernature. In this sense occultism might be described as the science of the supernatural; but it is in fact only the discovery of the supra-physical, the surpassing of the material limit,—the heart of occultism is not the impossible chimera which hopes to go beyond or outside all force of Nature and make pure phantasy and arbitrary miracle omnipotently effective. What seems to us supernatural is in fact either a spontaneous irruption of the phenomena of other-Nature into physical Nature or, in the work of the occultist, a possession of the knowledge and power of the higher orders or grades of cosmic Being and Energy and the direction of their forces and processes towards the production of effects in the physical world by seizing on possibilities of interconnection and means for a material effectuality. There are powers of the mind and the life-force which have not been included in Nature's present systematisation of mind and life in matter, but are potential and can be brought to bear upon material things and happenings or even brought in and added to the present systematisation so as to enlarge the control of mind over our own life and body or to act on the minds, lives, bodies of others or on the movements of cosmic Forces. The modern admission of hypnotism is an example of such a discovery and systematised application,—though still narrow and limited, limited by its method and formula—of occult powers which otherwise touch us only by a casual or a hidden action whose process is unknown to us or imperfectly caught by a few; for we are all the time undergoing a battery of suggestions, thought suggestions, impulse suggestions, will suggestions, emotional and sensational suggestions, thought waves, life waves that come on us or into us from others or from the universal Energy, but act and produce their effects without our knowledge. A systematised endeavour to know these movements and their law and possibilities, to master and use the power or Nature-force behind them or to protect ourselves from them would fall within one province of occultism: but it would only be a small part even of that province; for wide and multiple are the possible fields, uses, processes of this vast range of little explored Knowledge.



Science itself is in its own way an occultism; for it brings to light the formulas which Nature has hidden and it uses its knowledge to set free operations of her energies which she has not included in her ordinary operations and to organise and place at the service of man her occult powers and processes a vast system of physical magic,—for there is and can be no other magic than the utilisation of secret truths of being, secret powers and processes of Nature.

Sri Aurobindo
The Life Divine

Our Real National Anthem

K. D. Sethna

Out of all the fatuities with which modern India is infested, the most egregious is the long drawn-out discussion on the choice of a national anthem. The two songs that have been pitted against each other are really like two worlds apart and it is supreme lack of insight to set them up as equal candidates for election posing us a most perplexing problem. Once we understand, first, the prerequisites of the ideal national anthem and, secondly, the living associations and potencies of Bankim Chandra's *Bande Mātaram* on the one hand and Tagore's *Jana Gana Mana* on the other, there cannot remain the slightest doubt that nothing except *Bande Mātaram* can be the creative cry and the sustaining call on the lips of resurgent India.

We are often told that the prime consideration is that a national anthem should be suitable for collective singing, that it should have an effective orchestration. But these are, for all their importance, purely technical points. And woe betide the nation which appoints a committee of technicians to decide its anthem! Orchestral skill has certainly to be brought into play and a popular song which ultimately fails to be made suitable for collective singing will never get accepted. But such a song exists only in the imagination: the very fact that a song has been popular implies that it has possibilities of collective and orchestral treatment. The right kind of treatment may not be easy to come by; yet to say that there is a fundamental defect in the popular song, rendering the right kind impossible, is to indulge in extreme partisanship for a rival ditty and in gross underestimation of a country's musical talent: already we have more than one excellent notation of *Bande Mātaram*, to balance that for which *Jana Gana Mana* has been commended. In the controversy about a national anthem, the prime consideration, where a popular song is concerned, can never be a technical one. We have to go down to its significance and its emotion, we have to look at its history and its impact on the times.

What would be the ideal national anthem? Most people would think immediately of the stirring language and music of *La Marseillaise*. If we look at the history of this song and its impact on the times, it will be seen to fulfil every demand we can stipulate: it appeared at the right psychological moment, expressed the precise mood of revolutionary France wanting to be a republic, and on its magnificent flood an entire country swept to liberation from century-old bondage. It is also intensely inspired—every word rings authentic and carries the high

passion for man's erect and unobstructed growth. We cannot hope for a fierier strain packed more creatively with a whole nation's yearning for liberty, equality and fraternity. But, though from a political and social angle it is the example par excellence of what a national anthem should be, it leaves certain wider and deeper needs unsatisfied.

The Reality of National Being

The ideal national anthem must not only express the political and social man or even the complete self of thinking and feeling individuals composing a people, but also bring home to us the reality of national being. What is a nation? Of course, a nation must have certain common cultural features in all its geographical distributions and linguistic differentiations. These common features require for their complete crystallisation, so to speak, a well-defined territory, a distinguishable physical shape of the land in which they have emerged. Certain collective confrontations of momentous and perilous issues turn all the more concrete the common and widely prevalent traits of cultural consciousness held within marked boundaries of mountain and river and ocean. But if we stop with these definitions and believe that we have done with nationhood when we have applied them to an aggregate of individuals we shall be committing a folly to which the modern mind is excessively prone—the folly of regarding the diversity of existence as real and concrete and the underlying unity as merely conceptual and abstract. But a nation can never be an aggregate of individuals any more than a country is just a large piece of land. When we speak of India we are alive to the presence and power of a single being whose outermost shell is the territorial expanse indicated on our maps and whose more subtle and plastic body is the collection of human beings living in that expanse and sharing and expressing certain cultural characteristics. But our too intellectual turn leads us to dismiss this awareness as a figurative mode of feeling; we declare that we are only practising patriotic personification and that there is no actual entity beyond the individuals inhabiting the land. But this is a patent self-deception. No patriot has ever fought and died for anything except a vast, moving and mighty supra-individual personality—a hidden Goddess, a gigantic Beloved, a great Mother. Especially as a great Mother this personality inspires him, for a country is felt as either fatherland or motherland and the latter aspect is the most intimately alive and commanding. Not in the cold dissecting rational mind but in the heart with its mysteries and profundities, its intuitions of the

beyond, its inexplicable visions of the superhuman and the divine, the essence of patriotism, as of every other individual-transcending passion, lies. A patriot who does not stir to the call of the great Mother that is his country and that is the unifying force of the millions inhabiting it is an impotent imposter. Or else if one feels the tremendous Presence and yet intellectually denies it one is effective for various ends but the schism within him will always impair his effectivity and his very triumphs will be unrounded and carry a proclivity to defeat.

The Vital Value of Nationalism

The ideal national anthem, therefore, brings out in full the reality of the single Being whose multiple expression is the myriads living in a country. And, mind you, it is the national Being and not just the Spirit of Man or the universal Spirit that is to be present in it. Nationalism has no meaning without this particularity. We may argue against the power of Nationalism, we may say that modern progressive thought minimises Nationalism in the hope of achieving a world-unity. But the very fact that we are talking of a national anthem implies the importance of the national Being. And the implication is perfectly justified. In point of fact, this Being is so far the only supra-individual entity that has concretely emerged in human consciousness. The sense of the Supreme Divine may be very strong in individuals, it may even be an effective force in certain human collectivities or nations, but not every collectivity or nation possesses it, whereas the sense of a Britannia, a *belle France*, a Cathleen ni Houlihan, a *Bhārat Mātā* is most vivid. Millions have lived and died for the national Being. Even avowed atheists are instinctively awake to it. Even the Russian Communists have a feeling of "Holy Russia", and if there will be a split in World Communism it will come, as portended in the case of Yugoslavia *versus* Russia, by way of an intense awareness of the distinct character of a national collectivity. Furthermore, not only is the national Being an already realised if not always intellectually acknowledged entity, but also is it a valuable, an essential part of the scheme of human evolution. Neither the consciousness of the one Spirit of Man in all countries nor that of the universal Spirit should annul the consciousness of nationhood. The wonderful world around us and above us and within us is never a featureless and colourless unity: it is a one-in-many, a unity-in-diversity, and we should err as much by stressing the single and the uniform as by concentrating exclusively on the multifold and the various. Life is not necessarily divided and broken up by being myriad-aspected; it is made richer, more capable of self-expression, more free and fiery, provided the inner unity is not forgotten or erased. Just as the uniqueness of the individual must never be regimented out of existence but carefully woven into a social symphony, so too the uniqueness of the national collectivity must be cherished without setting it at odds with the rest of mankind. Every large human aggregate

has its distinct qualities of culture that are precious and that could never emerge if the aggregate did not stand out in its own rights. Nationalism is vital to the full development of humanity. Consequently, no national anthem can be ideal unless it brings, however subtly and refinedly, to the forefront the typical national Being of a country: even if all humanity or all divinity be hymned, there must be in the face and figure of the invoked Spirit something clearly and fervently national.

The Typical Genius of the Indian Nation

When we say "national", we must not mean merely a vague image of the country's consciousness. There must be a powerful suggestion of the precise colour and shape of the country's culture. Aggressiveness and fanaticism are, of course, to be avoided, though not at all the martial mood which keeps the sword ready and the soul keen-edged to combat any attempt at physical conquest or psychological enslavement. The powerful suggestion that is desirable cannot wholly come without this mood of manly self-sanctity, this ardent defensive attitude. But such an attitude itself is not sufficient to give the needed force of national individuality. What must be articulated is the typical genius of a nation. Thus, England's genius is a practical dynamic expansive life-instinct, with a background of vague poetic idealism. France's genius is an ordering brilliant clarity of intellect allied with a warm and often tempestuous enthusiasm for personal rights. The genius of India is in the first place an intense mysticism deriving from an ineradicable intuition of the Godhead that is the All and even more than the All, a creatively emanating and manifesting Consciousness and Delight, and in the second place a richness of varied, complex, adventurous, even fantastic-seeming forms of existence which yet carries a certain stability and self-balance by being rooted in a spontaneous organic energy. Something quintessential of this genius must pervade any anthem that aims at being ideally national in India. And here a point of considerable moment is the true meaning of Indianness.

When we speak of Indian spiritual culture expressing itself harmoniously with a varied vitality we mean the culture whose initial significances and original splendours are to be found in the Rig Veda and whose wide and luminous developments are in the Upanishads and the Gita and the Tantra and whose culmination and complete outburst of light we find today in the poetry and prose of Sri Aurobindo. This is not a narrow religion that cramps and divides: it is a profound synthesising multi-faceted movement of revelatory and transformative power not only expressed in inspired *sutra* or *shloka*, penetrating exposition or evocative exegesis, but also in the very stuff of the living consciousness and in the very gesture and action of the living body. Indian spiritual culture, true to the multiply-single Divinity of its vast intuition and experience and to the *élan* of its audacious diversely creative life-force, stands like a

parliament of all faiths and philosophies, a federation of all ethical and social forms. No doubt a few lines of growth have become rigidly assertive, but, in their exaggeration of some aspects out of the many that were natural to the Indian genius, they are not fundamental. Not these unplastic survivals of certain necessities called for by particular circumstances are what we mean by cultural Indianness. They conflict with the norms and forms set up by several religions. But the basic soul and shape of cultural Indianness can take into itself the uniqueness, the subtle nuance, of every religion. This remarkable quality of it has been evident to the students, in the West no less than in the East, of its prolific scripture and literature. Hence Indian spiritual culture cannot be objected to as being sectarian. But, on the other hand, we should be de-nationalising it if we refused to admit whatever ideas or terms in it distinguished it from the Islamic, Christian, Jewish, Zoroastrian, Sikh, Jain or even Buddhist culture. It has, for all its catholicity, characteristics of its own, and these characteristics it must retain in one manner or another if it is to be in any valid sense Indian. Take away these characteristics and it ceases being what the world knows it to be. Expunge them from a national anthem which claims to be Indian and you have a general non-descript religious terminology, lacking in all national savour and drained of all distinguishable and dynamic vitality. The Godhead hailed must bring the light and colour and configuration of what the descendants of the Rishis have felt and seen. The feeling and seeing are, because of their essential catholicity of motive, really acceptable by even a person who though in India does not think and pray with a consciousness in direct tune with the typical Indian spirituality; but if anyone takes objection to them because of their non-Islamic, non-Christian, non-Jewish, non-Zoroastrian, non-Sikh, non-Jain and even non-Buddhist suggestion, then he fails to understand what ultimate India is and he is trying to rob her of all genuine cultural value and to suppress a national genius that is, from the mystical and metaphysical viewpoint, the most wonderful in existence and, from the worldly and pragmatic viewpoint, no less wonderful by its wealth of varied creativeness and its capacity of almost unlimited organic assimilation. The concept of secularity prominent today in our Constitution must never encourage us to water down this genius: its function is discharged as soon as it ensures freedom of religious belief and ceremony, absence of bigotry, non-discrimination on communal grounds. Over-touchiness with regard to the minorities is a blunder no less serious than riding roughshod over them. As settled dwellers in this sub-continent they are to be granted equal civic and individual rights with the majority that is called Hindu; but for their sake the majority must never diminish the marvellous potentialities of cultural Indianness. The national anthem of India cannot be ideal without burning with historical India's own distinct beauty of worship together with her broad vision of the

universal Divine. If it does not thus burn, the India whose representative utterance it claims to be is just an artificial construct and not a grandly alive entity: she will be just a gilded simulacrum and the sum-total of her history will be a cypher.

A last hint remains now to be given about the ideal national anthem for us. When a country's genius itself is cast in the mystical mould, when to be truly Indian is to be charged with an instinct of the Divine and a presence of the Eternal in a way not common to other nationalities, the ideal national anthem will hardly echo the essential nature if it sings of God as a Power separate from the national Being rather than as having a core of identity with it. To draw everywhere a line, however faint, between the two and to suggest merely that God presides over or guides the Being that is India is to make the song miss the exquisite finishing touch that is the ever-so-little-more without which we are worlds away from truth and perfection. Our national Being, the Mother-Power whose children we are, must itself be visioned and voiced as ultimately the Supreme and the Eternal standing here in the evolving cosmos and in the process of time with the face and figure of our country's Soul but with all the glories of the Infinite Mystery suffusing them and spreading from them to the ends of the earth. Break up the core of direct identity and you at once muffle the master-tone of the anthem.

The Merits and Defects of "Jana Gana Mana"

Let us proceed to ask: does Tagore's *Jana Gana Mana* fulfil the several *desiderata* we have mentioned? There is no denying its noble sentiment, poetic merit and musical charm. After all, it was the incomparable Rabindranath who composed it, and it has a fine accent of country-wide friendliness as much as of gentle devotion to God. We must dismiss at once the ludicrous charge that it is an eulogy of George V on the occasion of his visit to India or even the cunning accusation that it lends itself easily to the apotheosis of any particular Indian deemed worthy of praise, say, Gandhi. The phrase running like a refrain through the whole poem "Thou dispenser of India's destiny"—cannot be interpreted in its context as signifying anything except God, for this dispenser is addressed also as "Eternal Charioteer". Nor must we allow ourselves to be misguided by the contention that, because *Jana Gana Mana* refers only to certain provinces and not to all, it is insufficiently national: the song is intended to be a hymn to the one God who is pictured as looking after and uniting the diverse races of India, and the geographical names thrown in are poetically suggestive of some of the physical and ethnological features of the country, no aim is there to make an exhaustive inventory of places and races: the aim is to give a notion of India in her broad and general entirety moving in rhythm to the will of the Lord. Yes, Tagore's piece has a fineness

deserving respect. But has it the qualities that are wanted in the ideal national anthem for India?

Unfortunately it fails on every count. There is not the intense consciousness of India as a mighty supra-individual Being; the mention of the country or of the nation is on the purely ideative or nobly sentimental level; the deep heart has not felt the huge presence and the words are vacant of its intimate force. India the puissant and beloved Mother does not flame out of the poem. There is not even an apostrophe to her as the Mother. The one sentence which brings in the term runs in Tagore's own translation: "Thy mother-arms were round her and thine eyes gazed upon her troubled face in sleepless love....." Here it is not India but God who is the Mother. This clinches the point that the poem is not directly an invocation of the national Being, much less does it visualise this Being in all its powerful particularity. As a result the ardour to preserve and defend it from losing that particularity is absent: the warrior and the hero are dumb in *Jana Gana Mana*. Neither does it embody the essence of historical India, the country that had created sublime scripture and royal epic and beautiful drama, gripped life with a happy inexhaustible versatility, built grandly in stone and wood, fashioned majestic institutions, cast the lines of harmonious politics and thrilled with the luminous colourful patterns of the careers of memorable men, the country that had grown a passionate pilgrim of both eternity and time and developed a flexible yet ineradicable individuality numerous centuries before Islam's crescent ever dawned on its farthest horizon. Where in *Jana Gana Mana* are the recognisable features of cultural Indianness? We have only a blurred beauty, a diffused light which can never serve to draw forth the deep *swabhāva* of the national Being which has broken through all bonds and risen again with its world-unifying yet characteristically Indian face. Those two words, "Eternal Charioteer", are scarcely clear enough to stamp any vivid Indianness upon it: they make just a poetic image, they do not call up the figure of Sri Krishna who charioted Arjuna at the same time to triumph over his enemies and to the Vision of the Cosmic Deity—the Vision that is itself so typically Indian. Throughout the poem we feel a disappointing though never undignified washing away of the fact that the force of unification cannot come by an assembled and outwardly constructed "universal religion" but only by plunging into the wide vibrating heart of the Indian spiritual consciousness which, behind all sectarian excrescences, holds in its multi-rhythmed rapture the secret of a spontaneous fundamental universality. To achieve lasting and natural unity of being we must not annul Indianness but be Indian in the central infinity-focussing sense and develop out of its ancient spiritual potencies a new vision that is no less recognisably Indian for all its modernism and secular State-idea. Lastly, *Jana Gana Mana* keeps a cleavage between the concept of India and the concept of the Divine, instead of making

them converge and fuse: India here is only the country whose destiny is dispensed by God, she is collectively held to be separate from the Supreme in the phrase about the latter, "Thy finger points the path to all people," and in the sentence about the former, "My country lay in a deathlike silence of swoon." There is indeed a pervading suggestion that India has a spiritual aspiration and adventure, but it is not set aglow and her spiritual origin and destiny are not revealed with a flaming finality by making the Supreme shine out through her Soul.

All that *Jana Gana Mana*, despite its fineness, fails to convey is brought out with rare felicity in *Bande Mātaram*. The unique union, as Sri Aurobindo puts it, of sweetness, simple directness and high poetic force in *Bande Mātaram* is difficult to translate with absolute accuracy into English verse from the original Sanskrit interspersed with a few Bengali words. But the inspired drive of it is admirably caught in general in Sri Aurobindo's own rendering which is born of his having felt it in his very bloodstream during the days when he led the revolt of Bengal against foreign rule:

Mother, I bow to thee!
Rich with thy hurrying streams,
Bright with thy orchard gleams,
Cool with thy winds of delight,
Dark fields waving, Mother of might,
Mother free.
Glory of moonlight dreams,
Over thy branches and lordly streams,
Clad in thy blossoming trees,
Mother, giver of ease,
Laughing low and sweet!
Mother, I kiss thy feet,
Speaker sweet and low!
Mother, to thee I bow.
Who hath said thou art weak in thy lands,
When the swords flash out in twice seventy million hands
And seventy million voices roar
Thy dreadful name from shore to shore?
With many strengths who art mighty stored,
To thee, I call, Mother and Lord!
Thou who savest, arise and save!
To her I cry who ever her foemen drave
Back from plain and sea
And shook herself free.

Thou art wisdom, thou art law,
Thou our heart, our soul, our breath,
Thou the love divine, the awe
In our hearts that conquers death.
Thine the strength that nerves the arm,
Thine the beauty, thine the charm,
Every image made divine
In our temples is but thine.

Thou art Durga, Lady and Queen,

With her hands that strike and her swords of sheen,
 Thou art Lakshmi lotus-throned,
 And the Muse a hundred-toned,
 Pure and perfect without peer,
 Mother, lend thine ear.
 Rich with thy hurrying streams,
 Bright with thy orchard gleams,
 Dark of hue, candid-fair
 In thy soul, with jewelled hair
 And the glorious smile divine,
 Loveliest of all earthly lands,
 Showering wealth from well-stored hands!
 Mother, mother mine!
 Mother sweet, I bow to thee,
 Mother great and free!

Not a single demand in order to get the ideal national anthem for India is left unanswered here by a poetic language and rhythm that come with the mystical inevitability of what is called the *mantra*—the visionary word—springing by some identification of the hidden poetic self with the deep heart of the thing to be uttered, and catching in the moment of identification the secret divine truth and reality which has figured forth that thing. Not only is each phrase replete with precise and necessary significance, but the various phrases form an unfolding scheme both artistically and philosophically satisfying, a three-stepped progression which, in a speech delivered thirty-one years ago in the grand square of the National School of Amraoti, Sri Aurobindo is reported to have explained. As with the individual, so with the nation, there are three sheaths or bodies—the gross or outer, the subtle or inner, the causal or higher. The first consists of the physical elements, the shape, the visible organic functioning. In Bankim Chandra's poem it is the rapid rivers and the glimmering orchards, the winds and the harvests waving, the moon-magical nights in forest and on riverside. A transition from the outer body of the Nation-Mother to the inner is through the human populations, the warrior men who are the physical instruments of the fine frenzy of freedom that is hers. Their teeming vitality is the cry of independence she sends forth from the inner to the outer—the inner that is a formation of beautiful disciplined powers, an inspired energy, a pure passion, an illumined thought, a righteous will, an aesthesis enchanting and refining. This subtle sheath of her being bears hints of a still greater mode of her existence and by those hints the supra-individual and national self of her mingles, in our enthusiasms as well as in our meditations, with all the symbols of the Infinite and the Eternal our religious nature installs everywhere in our land. That still greater mode is the prime creative archimage, at once single and many-aspected, whose evolving expression is the vast world with its nations and peoples. Cause and controller from its transcendental status, it is the Divine Truth of all formulated being, the ever-living supreme Personality whose power and bliss and knowledge are the perfection

towards which we aspire in this country of ours when we love so vehemently the soil sanctified by hero and saint and seer and when we fling ourselves so happily into the service of the majestic and maternal Presence that we feel to be the indivisible India stretched in a myriad harmonious moods across space and time.

The revelatory vision and the mantric vibration distinguishing *Bande Mātaram* throw *Jana Gana Mana* entirely into the shade. And it is no wonder that not Tagore's but Bankim's song has been the motive-force of the whole struggle for India's freedom. Until it burned and quivered in the hearts of our patriots and rose like a prayer and incantation on their lips, the country was striving with an obscure sense of its own greatness: there was a vagueness, a lukewarmness, a fear: we were overawed by the material prowess and pomp of our foreign rulers and our efforts to find our true selves were spoiled by either an unthinking imitation of the West or else a defensive anti-Western conservatism. We had not struck upon the master-key to the problem of national existence. Then, out of a book that had been neglected when it first appeared, the music of *Bande Mātaram* rang into the ambiguously agitated air of the nation's reawakening consciousness. Sri Aurobindo was at that time the political guru of Bengal. He realised at once the creative energy packed into this poem. With a gesture as of an ultimate world-secret found at last, he scattered the words of Bankim Chandra all over idealistic Bengal from whose "seventy million voices" that are rightly celebrated in the poem they spread to Gujarat and Maharashtra and beyond. In his own life he incarnated the presence of the mighty Mother with her aura of mystical consciousness. Under the spell of this presence a giant determination and zest took birth in the entire land, beginning a movement whose goal was bound to be independence. No sacrifice was too exacting, no suffering too poignant to be endured, not death itself could terrify. Laughing and singing, the patriots fought and served and died. Through all the long years during which the struggle for *swarāj* went on, *Bande Mātaram* stimulated and supported the peoples of India, instilling into them a hope and a strength beyond the human. It is the one cry that has made modern Indian history; not political speeches, but this magical strain breaking through Bankim Chandra from the inmost recesses of resurgent India's heart and interfused by Sri Aurobindo with India's mind and life as the true national anthem, brought us, in 1947, on the fifteenth of August which was also the seventy-fifth birthday of Sri Aurobindo, our political liberation. To put such a saviour-song on any other footing than that of national anthem is to be disloyal to the Power that has given us a new birth. To overlook the fact that it has been a saviour-song because it is ideally the national anthem of India is to set ourselves out of tune with the glorious future calling to our glorious past.

The Indian Spirit and the World's Future

Charity

The Mother

In its most general sense, charity may be defined as the act of giving to each one what he lacks.

That is to say, in the last analysis, to put each thing in its place, which would result in the establishment of the supreme justice upon earth.

Such is the theory, but in practice charity could be considered as the path men ought to follow in their groping advance towards justice.

For, in his present state of evolution, man is incapable not only of realising justice in his earthly abode, but also of conceiving it as it is in its absolute essence. Charity is the living acknowledgement of this inability.

Indeed, in our ignorance of true justice, the justice which is one with perfect harmony, perfect equilibrium and perfect order, our wisest course is to take the path of love, the path of charity which shuns all judgement.

This is what justifies the attitude of those who always set charity against justice, Justice is, in their eyes, rigorous, merciless, and charity must come to temper its excessive severity.

Certainly, they cannot speak thus of divine justice, but more rightly of human or rather of social justice, the egoistic justice which is instituted to defend a more or less extensive grouping of interests and is as much opposed to true justice as shadow is contrary to light.

Then we speak of justice as it is rendered in our so-called civilised countries, we should call it not rigorous and merciless but blind and monstrous in its ignorant pretension.

So we can never make too many amends for its fatal effects, and there charity finds an opportunity to apply itself fruitfully.

But this is only one side of the question and before delving deeper into our subject, I would like to remind you that charity, like all other human activities, is exercised according to four different modes which must be simultaneous if its action is to be integral and truly effective. I mean that no charity is complete if it is not at the same time material, intellectual, spiritual or moral and, above all, loving, for the very essence of charity is love.

At present charity is considered almost exclusively from the external standpoint and the word is synonymous with the sharing of part of one's possessions with life's rejects. We shall see in a moment how mean this conception is even when confined to the purely material field.

The three other modes of action of charity are admirably summed up in this counsel given by the Buddha to his disciples:

"With your hearts overflowing with compassion, go forth into this world torn by pain, be instructors, and wherever the darkness of ignorance rules, there light a torch."

To instruct those who know less, to give to those who do evil the strength to come out of their error, to console those who suffer, these are all occupations of charity rightly understood.

Thus charity, regarded from the individual point of view, consists, for each one, of giving to others all they need, in proportion to one's means.

This brings us to two observations.

The first is that one cannot give what one does not have at one's command.

Materially this is so evident that it is unnecessary to insist upon it. But intellectually, spiritually, the same rule holds true.

Indeed, how can one teach others what one does not know? How can one guide the weak on the path of wisdom if one does not tread the path oneself? How can one radiate love if one does not possess it within oneself?

And the supreme charity, which is integral self-giving to the great work of terrestrial regeneration, implies first of all that one can command what one wants to offer, that is to say, that one is master of oneself.

Only he who has perfect self-control can consecrate himself in all sincerity to the great work. For he alone knows that no contrary will, no unexpected impulse can ever again come to impede his action, to check his effort by setting him at variance with himself.

In this fact we find the justification of the old proverb which says: "Charity begins at home."

This maxim seems to encourage every kind of egoism, and yet it is the expression of a great wisdom for one who understands it rightly.

It is because charitable people fail to conform to this principle that their efforts so often remain unfruitful, that their goodwill is so often warped in its results, and that, in the end, they are forced to renounce a charity which, because it has not been rightly exercised, is the cause of nothing but confusion, suffering and disillusionment.

There is evidently a wrong way of interpreting this maxim, which says, "First let us accumulate fortune, intelligence, health, love, energies of all kinds, then we shall distribute them."

For, from the material standpoint, when will the accumulation stop? One who acquires the habit of piling up never finds his pile big enough.

I have even been led to make an observation about this; that in most men generosity seems to exist in inverse proportion to their pecuniary resources.

From observing the way in which workmen, the needy and all the unfortunate act among themselves, I was forced to conclude that the poor are far more charitable, far more prepared to succour their fellow-sufferers than are those more favoured by fortune. There is not enough time to go into the details of all that I have seen, but I assure you that it is instructive. I can, in any case, assure you that if the rich, in proportion to what they have, gave as much as the poor, soon there would no longer be a single starving person in the world.

Thus gold seems to attract gold, and nothing would be more fatal than wanting to accumulate riches before distributing them.

But also, nothing would be more fatal than a rash prodigality which, from lack of discernment, would squander a fortune without benefiting anyone.

Let us never confuse disinterestedness, which is one of the conditions of true charity, with a lack of concern that springs from idle thoughtlessness.

Let us learn therefore to make judicious use of what we may have or earn while giving the least possible play to our personality and, above all, let us not forget that charity should not be confined to material aid.

Nor in the field of forces is it possible to accumulate, for receptivity occurs in proportion to expenditure: the more one expends usefully, the more one makes oneself capable of receiving. Thus the intelligence one can

acquire is proportionate to the intelligence one uses. We are formed to manifest a certain quantity of intellectual forces, but if we develop ourselves mentally, if we put our brains to work, if we meditate regularly and above all if we make others benefit by the fruit, however modest, of our efforts, we make ourselves capable of receiving a greater quantity of ever deeper and purer intellectual forces. And the same holds true for love and spirituality.

We are like channels; if we do not allow what they have received to pour out freely, not only do they become blocked and no longer receive anything, but what they contain will spoil. If, on the contrary, we allow all this flood of vital, intellectual and spiritual forces to flow abundantly, if by impersonalising ourselves we know how to connect our little individuality to the great universal current, what we give will be returned to us a hundredfold.

To know how not to cut ourselves off from the great universal current, to be a link in the chain which must not be broken, this is the true science, the very key of charity.

Unfortunately there exists a very widespread error which is a serious obstacle to the practical application of this knowledge.

This error lies in the belief that a thing in the universe may be our own possession. Everything belongs to all, and to say or think, "This is mine", is to create a separation, a division which does not exist in reality.

Everything belongs to all, even the substance of which we are made, a whirl of atoms in perpetual movement which momentarily constitutes our organism without abiding in it and which, tomorrow, will form another.

It is true that some people command great material possessions. But in order to be in accord with the universal law, they should consider themselves as trustees, stewards of these possessions. They ought to know that these riches are entrusted to them so that they may administer them for the best interests of all.

We have come a long way from the narrow conception of charity restricted to the giving of a little of what we have in excess to the unfortunate ones that life brings in our way! And what we say of material riches must be said of spiritual wealth also.

Those who say, "This idea is mine", and who think they are very charitable in allowing others to profit from it, are senseless.

The world of ideas belongs to all; intellectual force is a universal force.

It is true that some people are more capable than others of entering into relation with this field of ideas and manifesting it through their conscious cerebrality. But this is nothing other than an additional responsibility for them: since they are in possession of this wealth, they are its stewards and must see that it is used for the good of the greatest number.

The same holds true for all the other universal forces. Only the concept of union, of the perfect identity of everything and everyone, can lead to true charity.

But to come back to practice, there is one more serious pitfall in the way of its complete and fruitful manifestation.

For most people, charity consists of giving anything to anyone without even knowing whether this gift corresponds to a need.

Thus charity is made synonymous with sentimental weakness and irrational squandering.

Nothing is more contrary to the very essence of this virtue.

Indeed, to give someone a thing he has no need of is as great a lack of charity as to deny him what he needs.

And this applies to the things of the spirit as well as to those of the body.

By a faulty distribution of material possessions one can hasten the downfall of certain individuals by encouraging them to be lazy, instead of favouring their progress by inciting them to effort.

The same holds true for intelligence and love. To give someone a knowledge which is too strong for him, thoughts which he cannot assimilate, is to deprive him for long, if not for ever, of the possibility of thinking for himself.

In the same way, to impose on some people an affection, a love for which they feel no need, is to make them carry a burden which is often too heavy for their shoulders.

This error has two main causes to which all the others can be linked: ignorance and egoism.

In order to be sure that an act is beneficial one must know its immediate or distant consequences, and an act of charity is no exception to this law.

To want to do well is not enough, one must also know.

How much evil has been done in the world in the name of charity diverted from its true sense and completely warped in its results!

I could give you many examples of acts of charity which have led to the most disastrous results because they were performed without reflection, without discernment, without understanding, without insight.

Charity, like all things, must be the result in us of a conscious and reasoned will, for impulse is synonymous with error and above all with egoism.

Unfortunately it must be acknowledged that charity is very seldom completely disinterested.

I do not mean charity which is performed for the purpose of acquiring merit in the eyes of a personal God or to win eternal bliss.

This utterly base form is the worst of all bargaining and to call it charity would be to tarnish this name.

But I mean charity which is performed because one finds pleasure in it and which is still subject to all kinds of likes or dislikes, attractions or repulsions.

That kind of charity is very rarely completely free from the desire to meet with gratitude, and such a desire always atrophies the impartial clear-sightedness which is necessary to any action if it is to have its full value.

There is a wisdom in charity as everywhere, and it is to reduce waste to the minimum.

Thus to be truly charitable one must be impersonal.

And once more we see that all the lines of human progress converge on the same necessity: self-mastery, dying to oneself in order to be born into the new and true life.

To the extent that we outgrow the habit of referring everything to ourselves, we can exercise a truly effective charity, a charity one with love.

Besides, there is a height where all virtues meet in communion: love, goodness, compassion, forbearance, charity are all one and the same in their essence.

From this point of view, charity could be considered as the tangible and practical outer action determined by the application of the virtues of love.

For there is a force which can be distributed to all, always, provided that it is given in its most impersonal forum: this is love, love which contains within itself light and life, that is, all the possibilities of intelligence, health, blossoming.

Yes, there is a sublime charity, one which rises from a happy heart, from a serene soul.

One who has won inner peace is a herald of deliverance wherever he goes, a bearer of hope and joy. Is not this what poor and suffering humanity needs above all things?

Yes, there are certain men whose thoughts are all love, who radiate love, and the mere presence of these individuals is a charity more active, more real than any other.

Though they utter no word and make no gesture, yet the sick are relieved, the tormented are soothed, the ignorant are enlightened, the wicked are appeased, those who suffer are consoled and all undergo this deep

transformation which will open new horizons to them, enable them to take a step forward which no doubt will be decisive, on the infinite path of progress.

These individuals who, out of love, give themselves to all, who become the servants of all, are the living symbols of the supreme Charity.

I invite all of you here, my brothers, who aspire to be charitable, to join your thought with mine in expressing this wish: that we may strive to follow their example a little more each day so that we may be like them, in the world, messengers of light and love.

Words of Long Ago

“One of the commonest forms of ambition is the idea of service to humanity. All attachment to such service or work is a sign of personal ambition.” Why do you say that this is ambition?

Why do you want to serve humanity, what is your idea? It is ambition, it is in order to become a great man among men. It is difficult to understand?...

The Divine is everywhere. So if one serves humanity, one serves the Divine, isn't that so?

That's marvellous! The clearest thing in this business is to say:

“The Divine is in me. If I serve myself, I am also serving the Divine!” In fact, the Divine is everywhere. The Divine will do His own work very well without you.

I see quite well that you do not understand. But truly, if you do understand that the Divine is there, in all things, with what are you meddling in serving humanity? To serve humanity you must know better than the Divine what must be done for it. Do you know better than the Divine how to serve it?

The Divine is everywhere. Yes. Things don't seem to be divine.... As for me, I see only one solution: If you want to help humanity, there is only one thing to do, it is to take yourself as completely as possible and offer yourself to the Divine. That is the solution. Because in this way, at least the material reality which you represent will be able to grow a little more like the Divine.....

In any case, you are not powerful enough to do it. How do you expect to help another if you do not have a higher consciousness than he? It is such a childish idea! It is children who say: “I am opening a boarding-house, I am going to build a creche, give soup to the poor, preach this knowledge, spread this religion....” It is only because you consider yourself better than others, think you know better than they what they should be or do. That's what it is, serving humanity. You want to continue all that? It has not changed things much. It is not to help humanity that one opens a hospital or a school.

All the same it has helped, hasn't it? If all the schools were abolished...

I don't think that humanity is happier than it was before nor that there has been a great improvement. All this mostly gives you the feeling “I am something.” That's what I call ambition.

If these very people who are ready to give money for schools were told that there was a divine Work to be done, that the Divine has decided to do it in this particular way, even if they are convinced that it is indeed the Divine's Work, they refuse to give anything, for this is not a recognised form of beneficence—one doesn't have the satisfaction of having done something good! This is what I call ambition. I had instances of people who could give lakhs of rupees to open a hospital, for that gives them the satisfaction of doing something great, noble, generous. They glorify themselves, that's what I call ambition.

*The Mother
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