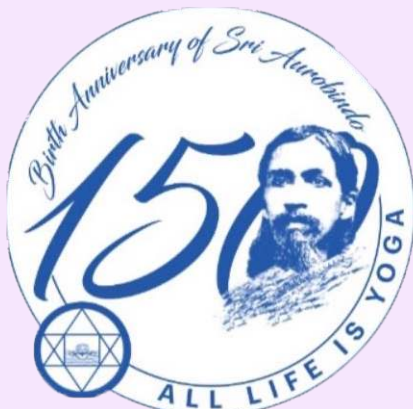
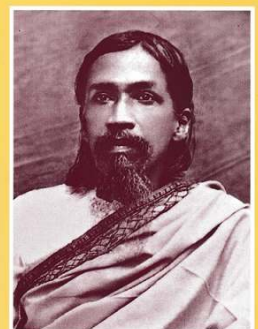




The Call Beyond



The Human Cycle
The Ideal of Human Unity
War and Self-Determination



Sri Aurobindo



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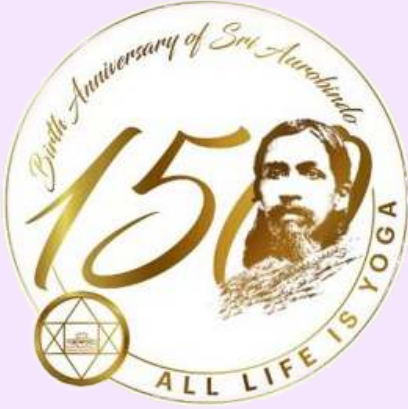
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Celebrating 150 Years of Sri Aurobindo (1872-2022)



Who was Sri Aurobindo? **A freedom fighter**, who shook the British Empire within five years? **A poet**, who could give poetic expression to whispers from the heavens? **A writer**, who would have honoured the Nobel Prize for Literature, if it had been conferred on him? **A linguist**, who raised the level of the English

language to that of Sanskrit, and deciphered the symbolism of the Veda? **A yogi**, who gave the world Integral Yoga, a powerful synthesis that incorporated the major traditional systems of yoga, and went beyond all of them? **A rishi** (a seer) and **a muni** (a thinker) rolled in one? Or, **a spiritual master**, radical, rational and revolutionary, far ahead of his times, who is today the Guru to millions in the world?

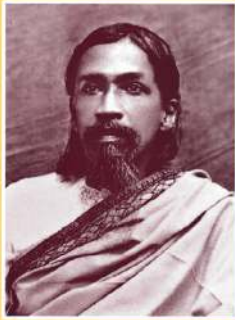
Sri Aurobindo was all this, and more. Due to our limitations, *The Call Beyond*, however, will concentrate on Sri Aurobindo, the writer. In the category of spiritual literature rooted in the Indian tradition, the original of which was written in the English language, Sri Aurobindo's works belong to a class apart, both in quantity and quality. In his works, Sri Aurobindo has given nothing short of a prescription for sculpting humanity into a new shape that would be beyond recognition. Even through the works that have their origin in the *Arya*, which were written over a period of just six years (1914-1920), he has created enough homework for the world to stay busy with for several centuries.

The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo (CWSA) run into 36 volumes. The humble offering of *The Call Beyond*, however, would be limited to bringing you every month just the glimpses of one of the works of Sri Aurobindo.



The Ideal of Human Unity

The Human Cycle
The Ideal of Human Unity
War and Self-Determination



Sri Aurobindo

Human unity is more than a mental ideal. It is an unrealized reality based on the deeper truths of existence. All human beings are united by their origin in the Divine, whose manifestation they all are. Thus, what unites them is a much deeper and higher truth than what divides them on the basis of nationality, language, religion, or the colour of the skin. The fact that the unity does not get reflected in human affairs is because of the ego-driven mental consciousness in which the average human being is rooted, which in turn is because of the ignorance that characterizes the present stage of evolution. As the consciousness moves from ignorance towards knowledge, ego starts giving way to love. Ego divides, whereas love unites. The fact that human affairs are currently dominated by the ego does not mean that it will always be so. Further evolution of consciousness is inevitable, and that would lead to a psychological sense of oneness in the human race. The psychological sense of oneness is likely to get crystallized into a World Government. **Psychological unity eventually leading to political unity is the key idea in Sri Aurobindo's work, *The Ideal of Human Unity*.**

The Ideal of Human Unity was serialized in the *Arya* from September 1915 through July 1918. This was an eventful period in world history. When the series started, the First World War was at its peak. When the series ended, the War was coming to an end. In 1915, Russia was still an Empire and an autocracy. By 1918, the Russian Revolution had changed Russia into a communist country. The series of articles that appeared in the *Arya* were first put together in the form a book in 1919. In his Preface to the 1919 edition, Sri Aurobindo wrote that the idea of unity which was a hesitating idea in 1915 turned through the



swift turn of events into “a settled necessity awaiting speedy formulation.” Further, he wrote in the Preface that the main contentions advanced by him in *The Ideal of Human Unity* had remained “unaffected by the course of events.” What were these contentions? *First*, “the inevitability of the unification ... as a result of ... natural forces which lead ... to the creation of larger and larger human aggregates.” *Secondly*, “the need for preserving ... individual and group freedom within the human unity.” *And finally*, “the insufficiency of formal unity without a growth of the religion of humanity...”

The Ideal of Human Unity has two parts. Part One has 16 chapters, and Part Two 20, which include the “Summary and Conclusion” and “A Postscript Chapter.” Part One deals with political unity as has been achieved repeatedly in the past – tribes and clans coalescing into nations, and nations held together as empires. Part Two is more about the future. It is based on Sri Aurobindo’s vision of evolution of consciousness eventually leading to a psychological unification of the human race, which in turn would lead to a World Government as a natural corollary. However, it is more than a mere feel-good exercise in an unrealistic vacuum. Sri Aurobindo has gone into the details of the nitty-gritty. He has discussed both how a World Government should and can be realized; and how it should not and cannot be but may yet be attempted. He has also supported steps such as The League of Nations, which are baby steps towards a World Government.

Part One starts with an unusual look at history, sociology and political science as attempts to understand human life. However, all these attempts have failed because they have scratched only the surface. It is the absence of a deeper understanding of human life that has led to the failure of governments, collapse of empires, armed conflicts and full-fledged wars. The deeper understanding should be psychological in nature; it should acknowledge the dual need of man – to form aggregates, and at the same time



to assert individual freedom and identity. Nation States have survived better than empires because they are convenient – big enough to be economically viable, militarily defensible; and yet small enough to accommodate individual freedom. **Within the concept of the State, experiments that have gone to either the extreme of individualism or that of collectivity have both failed, and repeatedly settled for a compromise.** “The non-recognition of the possibilities of human co-operation was the weakness of English individualism; the turning of a utility for co-operative action into an excuse for rigid control by the State is the weakness of the Teutonic idea of collectivism,” says Sri Aurobindo (p. 282).^{*} However, while the States have been experimenting, and empires have been rising and falling, human consciousness has been evolving. The average human consciousness is now approaching a point where human unity could be a real possibility. Further, “increased mutual knowledge and close communication” have kept pace with the evolution of consciousness. The growth, spread and dominance of the internet have taken mutual knowledge and close communication to a level far beyond the times when Sri Aurobindo saw their significance. Today there are more than ever before valid political, administrative and economic arguments in favour of unification of the human race into a vast empire. But the real strength of unification lies in the intellectual grandeur, the emotional appeal, and the undeniable idealism inherent in the idea of human unity. “The political incentives are the baser part in the amalgam; their presence may even vitiate the whole result and lead in the end to a necessary dissolution and reversal of whatever unity may be initially accomplished” (p. 334).

Sri Aurobindo observed two basic principles in the atmosphere: nationalism and internationalism. The former may be seen as an obstacle to unification of the human race, or as a necessary intermediate step. But the fact that internationalism has also emerged as a major principle makes it inevitable that the world government will be a reality one day. The inevitability of the



unification is clear at the present juncture in human history, which is “so rife with the most varied and potent forces, so fruitful of new subjective developments and objective mutations” (p. 372). Thus, the question is not whether there will be a world government one day, but how and when. ‘How’ is anybody’s guess. As Sri Aurobindo says, what form the unification of the human race would take is “a fascinating subject of speculation” (p. 372). Sri Aurobindo offers many such speculations, and seems to be amused by the clumsy attempts and confused experiments that would be guided by “the half-enlightened reason of the world’s intellectuals and the empirical opportunism of the world’s statesmen and politicians” (p. 405). Therefore, not only the first attempt is doomed for failure, it may be followed by several more failures. But all these failures would teach us, if the world cares to learn, why we failed, and how not to avoid at least the same mistakes. An ideal unification would be based on “free and natural groupings” based on cultural affinity and geography (pp. 406-407). **Free grouping implies the freedom of dissent, space for moral centres of revolt, and separation.** It is the absence of this freedom, and the dependence on repression and legalized injustice, that has eventually made empires fall, and would make any world government also fall.

Sri Aurobindo goes on to discuss economic centralization which any world government would try, as every ruler of smaller aggregates has tried in the past. This could be both successful and effective, because “the control over the purse of the nation is the most important sign and the most effective element of real sovereignty” (p. 427). Not so effective and complete are legislative and social centralization, although rulers generally do attempt it. If a ruler attempts more than he can and should, the ruler is likely to fail (p. 436).

Sri Aurobindo has also seen in the recent past signs that seem to make future attempts at a world government more successful



than the empires of the past. Developments in science and technology, rapid communication and transport, and increased travel, have shrunk the world and increased the exchange between diverse cultures. After Sri Aurobindo wrote this, there has been spectacular development in the same direction. The internet has made instant communication possible and access to information easy. Dissemination of ideas and information has been brought within everybody's reach. The result has been westernization of the East, and embracing of Yoga, Buddhism and Ayurveda by the West. At least two unintended and 'unfortunate' events have also ended up contributing to the one-world feeling. One of these is the coronavirus pandemic, which brought teachers and students from all over the world in contact through on-line programs. The other is the large-scale migration of refugees, particularly from the middle east, and their getting transplanted in an entirely alien culture in Europe and Canada. Sri Aurobindo has also not ruled out the possibility of the development of a universal world language. This is supported by the fact that nine languages are getting extinct every year, and words from one language are entering the lexicon of another language at an unprecedented rate.

Towards the end of the book, Sri Aurobindo turns to two great intellectual ideas which were doing the rounds in the West in the early twentieth century. One was 'Internationalism', and the other 'The Religion of Humanity', or rationalistic humanism. Internationalism is rational, and so is humanism. But to give a practical shape to either of these is impossible at the present level of human consciousness. This can be understood in light of the cherished slogan of the late eighteenth century French Revolution: liberty, equality and fraternity. Sri Aurobindo points out the incompatibility of liberty and equality. Given enough liberty, certain sections of the society will corner much more than their share of resources, making equality impossible, as happens in capitalist democracies. On the other hand, achieving any semblance of equality is impossible without taking away



some liberties, as happens under communism. **“A society that pursues liberty as its ideal is unable to achieve equality; a society that aims at equality will be obliged to sacrifice liberty”** (p. 546). The key to both liberty and equality is fraternity, which implies universal brotherhood and sisterhood. I cannot keep myself free, and keep my brothers and sisters in chains; hence liberty is assured. I cannot be well-fed while leaving my brothers and sisters hungry; hence equality is guaranteed. But sincere practice of fraternity is impossible at the present level of human consciousness, which is primarily an ego-centred consciousness. That is why, although both democracy and communism are well-intentioned and rational, neither system has been able to wipe out the twin social evils of inequality and legalised injustice, which in turn lead to cruelty, misery and suffering. These social evils can be eliminated only by a rise in the average level of human consciousness, which in turn will change the typical human nature, making it love-driven instead of ego-driven. That is why, what we need is not the intellectual form of humanism, but the spiritual version of humanism.

In short, nothing except spontaneous human unity on the psychological plane, which not only survives but respects and celebrates diversity, can be the basis of a durable World Government. Sri Aurobindo has discussed the potential, processes and pitfalls of a World Government in such detail and with such thoroughness in *The Ideal of Human Unity* that the book can guide any future attempt to achieve that end, and could save the exercise from failure and many avoidable mistakes.

Reference

Sri Aurobindo. *The Human Cycle. The Ideal of Human Unity. War and Self-Determination*. Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Second Edition, 1970 (Seventh impression, 1997).

*All Page Numbers cited in the text correspond to this edition, and are slightly different from the corresponding page numbers in the CWSA (Volume 25) edition.



Selections from 'The Ideal of Human Unity'

In Search of the True Law and Aim

Nothing is more obscure to humanity or less seized by its understanding, whether in the power that moves it or the sense of the aim towards which it moves, than its own communal and collective life. Sociology does not help us, for it only gives us the general story of the past and the external conditions under which communities have survived. History teaches us nothing; it is a confused torrent of events and personalities or a kaleidoscope of changing institutions. We do not seize the real sense of all this change and this continual streaming forward of human life in the channels of Time. What we do seize are current or recurrent phenomena, facile generalisations, partial ideas. We talk of democracy, aristocracy and autocracy, collectivism and individualism, imperialism and nationalism, the State and the commune, capitalism and labour; **we advance hasty generalisations and make absolute systems which are positively announced today only to be abandoned perforce tomorrow; we espouse causes and ardent enthusiasms whose triumph turns to an early disillusionment and then forsake them for others, perhaps for those that we have taken so much trouble to destroy.** For a whole century mankind thirsts and battles after liberty and earns it with a bitter expense of toil, tears and blood; the century that enjoys without having fought for it turns away as from a puerile illusion and is ready to renounce the depreciated gain as the price of some new good. And all this happens because our whole thought and action with regard to our collective life is shallow and empirical; it does not seek for, it does not base itself on a firm, profound and complete knowledge. **The moral is not the vanity of human life, of its ardours and enthusiasms and of the ideals it pursues, but the necessity of a wiser, larger, more patient search after its true law and aim.**

(Sri Aurobindo: The Ideal of Human Unity, CWSA Vol. 25, pp. 279-280)



Living According to Nature

For MAN alone of terrestrial creatures to live rightly involves the necessity of knowing rightly, whether, as rationalism pretends, by the sole or dominant instrumentation of his reason or, more largely and complexly, by the sum of his faculties; and what he has to know is the true nature of being and its constant self-effectuation in the values of life, in less abstract language the law of Nature and especially of his own nature, the forces within him and around him and their right utilisation for his own greater perfection and happiness or for that and the greater perfection and happiness of his fellow-creatures. In the old phrase his business is to learn to live according to Nature. But Nature can no longer be imaged, as once it was, as an eternal right rule from which man has wandered, since it is rather a thing itself changing, progressing, evolving, ascending from height to more elevated height, widening from limit to broader limit of its own possibilities. Yet in all this changing there are certain eternal principles or truths of being which remain the same and upon them as bedrock, with them as a primary material and within them as a framework our progress and perfection are compelled to take place. Otherwise there would be an infinite chaos and not a world ordered even in the clash of its forces.

(Sri Aurobindo: The Ideal of Human Unity, CWSA Vol. 25, p.417)

Unity in Diversity

Language is the sign of the cultural life of a people, the index of its soul in thought and mind that stands behind and enriches its soul in action. Therefore it is here that the phenomena and utilities of diversity may be most readily seized, more than in mere outward things; but these truths are important because they apply equally to the thing which it expresses and symbolises and serves as an instrument. Diversity of language is worth keeping because diversity of cultures and differentiation of soul-groups are worth keeping and because without that



diversity life cannot have full play; for in its absence there is a danger, almost an inevitability of decline and stagnation. The disappearance of national variation into a single uniform human unity, of which the systematic thinker dreams as an ideal and which we have seen to be a substantial possibility and even a likelihood if a certain tendency becomes dominant, might lead to political peace, economic well-being, perfect administration, the solution of a hundred material problems, as did on a lesser scale the Roman unity in old times; but to what eventual good if it leads also to an uncreative sterilisation of the mind and the stagnation of the soul of the race? In laying this stress on culture, on the things of the mind and the spirit there need be no intention of undervaluing the outward material side of life; it is not at all my purpose to belittle that to which Nature always attaches so insistent an importance. On the contrary, the inner and the outer depend upon each other. For we see that in the life of a nation a great period of national culture and vigorous mental and soul life is always part of a general stirring and movement which has its counterpart in the outward political, economic and practical life of the nation. **The cultural brings about or increases the material progress but also it needs it that it may itself flourish with an entirely full and healthy vigour. The peace, well-being and settled order of the human world is a thing eminently to be desired as a basis for a great world culture in which all humanity must be united; but neither of these unities, the outward or inward, ought to be devoid of an element even more important than peace, order and well-being, —freedom and vigour of life, which can only be assured by variation and by the freedom of the group and of the individual.** Not then a uniform unity, not a logically simple, a scientifically rigid, a beautifully neat and mechanical sameness, but a living oneness full of healthy freedom and variation is the ideal which we should keep in view and strive to get realised in man's future.

(Sri Aurobindo: The Ideal of Human Unity, CWSA Vol. 25, pp. 519-520)



The Eternal Attributes of the Soul

Freedom, equality, brotherhood are three godheads of the soul; they cannot be really achieved through the external machinery of society or by man so long as he lives only in the individual and the communal ego. **When the ego claims liberty, it arrives at competitive individualism. When it asserts equality, it arrives first at strife, then at an attempt to ignore the variations of Nature, and, as the sole way of doing that successfully, it constructs an artificial and machine-made society. A society that pursues liberty as its ideal is unable to achieve equality; a society that aims at equality will be obliged to sacrifice liberty.** For the ego to speak of fraternity is for it to speak of something contrary to its nature. All that it knows is association for the pursuit of common egoistic ends and the utmost that it can arrive at is a closer organisation for the equal distribution of labour, production, consumption and enjoyment. Yet is brotherhood the real key to the triple gospel of the idea of humanity. The union of liberty and equality can only be achieved by the power of human brotherhood and it cannot be founded on anything else. But brotherhood exists only in the soul and by the soul; it can exist by nothing else. For this brotherhood is not a matter either of physical kinship or of vital association or of intellectual agreement. **When the soul claims freedom, it is the freedom of its self-development, the self-development of the divine in man in all his being. When it claims equality, what it is claiming is that freedom equally for all and the recognition of the same soul, the same godhead in all human beings. When it strives for brotherhood, it is founding that equal freedom of self-development on a common aim, a common life, a unity of mind and feeling founded upon the recognition of this inner spiritual unity.** These three things are in fact the nature of the soul; for freedom, equality, unity are the eternal attributes of the Spirit. It is the practical recognition of this truth, it is the awakening of the soul in man and the attempt to get him to live



from his soul and not from his ego which is the inner meaning of religion, and it is that to which the religion of humanity also must arrive before it can fulfil itself in the life of the race.

(Sri Aurobindo: The Ideal of Human Unity, CWSA Vol. 25, pp. 569-570)

Religion of Humanity

A spiritual religion of humanity is the hope of the future. By this is not meant what is ordinarily called a universal religion, a system, a thing of creed and intellectual belief and dogma and outward rite. Mankind has tried unity by that means; it has failed and deserved to fail, because there can be no universal religious system, one in mental creed and vital form. The inner spirit is indeed one, but more than any other the spiritual life insists on freedom and variation in its self-expression and means of development. **A religion of humanity means the growing realisation that there is a secret Spirit, a divine Reality, in which we are all one, that humanity is its highest present vehicle on earth, that the human race and the human being are the means by which it will progressively reveal itself here.** It implies a growing attempt to live out this knowledge and bring about a kingdom of this divine Spirit upon earth. By its growth within us oneness with our fellow-men will become the leading principle of all our life, not merely a principle of cooperation but a deeper brotherhood, a real and an inner sense of unity and equality and a common life. There must be the realisation by the individual that only in the life of his fellow-men is his own life complete. **There must be the realisation by the race that only on the free and full life of the individual can its own perfection and permanent happiness be founded.** There must be too a discipline and a way of salvation in accordance with this religion, that is to say, a means by which it can be developed by each man within himself, so that it may be developed in the life of the race. To go into all that this implies would be too large a subject to be entered upon here; it is



enough to point out that in this direction lies the eventual road. No doubt, if this is only an idea like the rest, it will go the way of all ideas. But if it is at all a truth of our being, then it must be the truth to which all is moving and in it must be found the means of a fundamental, an inner, a complete, a real human unity which would be the one secure base of a unification of human life. **A spiritual oneness which would create a psychological oneness not dependent upon any intellectual or outward uniformity and compel a oneness of life not bound up with its mechanical means of unification, but ready always to enrich its secure unity by a free inner variation and a freely varied outer self-expression, this would be the basis for a higher type of human existence.**

(Sri Aurobindo: The Ideal of Human Unity, CWSA Vol. 25, pp. 577-578)

Factors Contributing to The Social Evolution

The social evolution of the human race is necessarily a development of the relations between three constant factors, individuals, communities of various sorts and mankind. Each seeks its own fulfilment and satisfaction, but each is compelled to develop them not independently but in relation to the others. **The first natural aim of the individual must be his own inner growth and fullness and its expression in his outer life; but this he can only accomplish through his relations with other individuals, to the various kinds of community religious, social, cultural and political to which he belongs and to the idea and need of humanity at large.** The community must seek its own fulfilment, but, whatever its strength of mass consciousness and collective organisation, can accomplish its growth only through its individuals under the stress of the circumstances set for it by its environment and subject to the conditions imposed by its relations to other communities and individuals and to humanity at large. Mankind as a whole has at present no consciously organised common life; it has only an



inchoate organisation determined much more by circumstances than by human intelligence and will. And yet the idea and the fact of our common human existence, nature, destiny has always exercised its strong influence on human thought and action. **One of the chief preoccupations of ethics and religion has been the obligations of man to mankind.** The pressure of the large movements and fluctuations of the race has always affected the destinies of its separate communities, and there has been a constant return-pressure of separate communities social, cultural, political, religious to expand and include, if it might be, the totality of the race. And if or when the whole of humanity arrives at an organised common life and seeks a common fulfilment and satisfaction, it can only do it by means of the relation of this whole to its parts and by the aid of the expanding life of individual human beings and of the communities whose progress constitutes the larger terms of the life of the race.

(Sri Aurobindo: The Ideal of Human Unity, CWSA Vol. 25, p. 421)

Unity and Uniformity

To remove freedom in order to get rid of disorder, strife and waste, to remove diversity in order to get rid of separatism and jarring complexities is the impulse of order and regimentation by which the arbitrary rigidity of the intellectual reason seeks to substitute its straight line for the difficult curves of the process of Nature. **But freedom is as necessary to life as law and regime; diversity is as necessary as unity to our true completeness. Existence is one only in its essence and totality, in its play it is necessarily multiform.** Absolute uniformity would mean the cessation of life, while on the other hand the vigour of the pulse of life may be measured by the richness of the diversities which it creates. At the same time, while diversity is essential for power and fruitfulness of life, unity is necessary for its order, arrangement and stability. Unity we must create,



but not necessarily uniformity. If man could realise a perfect spiritual unity, no sort of uniformity would be necessary; for the utmost play of diversity would be securely possible on that foundation. If again he could realise a secure, clear, firmly-held unity in the principle, a rich, even an unlimited diversity in its application might be possible without any fear of disorder, confusion or strife. Because he cannot do either of these things he is tempted always to substitute uniformity for real unity. While the life-power in man demands diversity, his reason favours uniformity. It prefers it because uniformity gives him a strong and ready illusion of unity in place of the real oneness at which it is so much more difficult to arrive. It prefers it, secondly, because uniformity makes easy for him the otherwise difficult business of law, order and regimentation. It prefers it too because the impulse of the mind in man is to make every considerable diversity an excuse for strife and separation and therefore uniformity seems to him the one secure and easy way to unification. Moreover, uniformity in any one direction or department of life helps him to economise his energies for development in other directions. If he can standardise his economic existence and escape from its problems, he is likely to have more leisure and room to attend to his intellectual and cultural growth. Or again, if he standardises his whole social existence and rejects its farther possible problems, he is likely to have peace and a free mind to attend more energetically to his spiritual development. Even here, however, the complex unity of existence asserts its truth: in the end man's total intellectual and cultural growth suffers by social immobility,—by any restriction or poverty of his economic life; the spiritual existence of the race, if it attains to remote heights, weakens at last in its richness and continued sources of vivacity when it depends on a too standardised and regimented society; the inertia from below rises and touches even the summits.

(Sri Aurobindo: The Ideal of Human Unity, CWSA Vol. 25, pp. 423-424)



Language – A Natural Instrument of Expression

Nothing has stood more in the way of the rapid progress in India, nothing has more successfully prevented her self-finding and development under modern conditions than the long overshadowing of the Indian tongues as cultural instruments by the English language. It is significant that the one sub-nation in India which from the first refused to undergo this yoke, devoted itself to the development of its language, made that for long its principal preoccupation, gave to it its most original minds and most living energies, getting through everything else perfunctorily, neglecting commerce, doing politics as an intellectual and oratorical pastime,—that it is Bengal which first recovered its soul, re-spiritualised itself, forced the whole world to hear of its great spiritual personalities, gave it the first modern Indian poet and Indian scientist of world-wide fame and achievement, restored the moribund art of India to life and power, first made her count again in the culture of the world, first, as a reward in the outer life, arrived at a vital political consciousness and a living political movement not imitative and derivative in its spirit and its central ideal. **For so much does language count in the life of a nation; for so much does it count to the advantage of humanity at large that its group-souls should preserve and develop and use with a vigorous group-individuality their natural instrument of expression.**

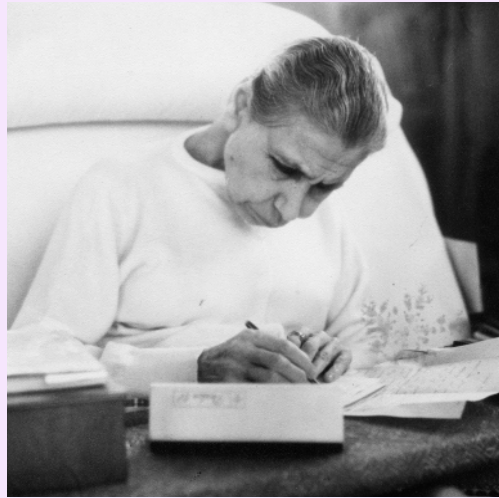
(Sri Aurobindo: The Ideal of Human Unity, CWSA Vol. 25, pp. 517-518)

The nation is a persistent psychological unit which Nature has been busy developing throughout the world in the most various forms and educating into physical and political unity.

- Sri Aurobindo (The Ideal of Human Unity, CWSA Vol 25, p. 309)



Get Rid of All Ties



If your aim is to be free, in the freedom of the Spirit, you must get rid of all the ties that are not the inner truth of your being, but come from subconscious habits. If you wish to consecrate yourself entirely, absolutely and exclusively to the Divine, you must do it in all completeness; you must not leave bits of yourself tied here and there....

When you come to the Yoga, you must be ready to have all your mental buildings and all your vital scaffoldings shattered to pieces. You must be prepared to be suspended in the air with nothing to support you except your faith. You will have to forget your past self and its clings altogether, to pluck it out of your consciousness and be born anew, free from every kind of bondage. Think not of what you were, but of what you aspire to be; be altogether in what you want to realise. Turn from your dead past and look straight towards the future. Your religion, country, family lie there; it is the DIVINE.

The Mother ('The Great Adventure', p. 46)

All the pages of The Mother's work, 'The Great Adventure', in Tara Didi's voice, have been uploaded on the YouTube channel of Sri Aurobindo Ashram – Delhi Branch. The link to the channel is: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCcmF6JzAOsBMdqJjZbnmyng>



The Origin and Evolution of the Nation States

Bharati

The idea of a nation state has come to acquire such a sanctity that to question it looks like a sin. To consider oneself a Punjabi or a Bengali, a Hindu or a Muslim, smacks of narrow-mindedness, but to consider oneself an Indian raises no eyebrows. But looking at it rationally, after all a nation is also a human creation. The Divine did not create the earth with boundaries demarcating one nation from another. How nations evolved, how a nation came to be regarded as a sacrosanct entity, and why conglomerates smaller or bigger than a nation could neither endure nor achieve that exalted status, are some of the questions Sri Aurobindo has discussed in *The Ideal of Human Unity*.

Evolution of nations

As in the case of any topic, Sri Aurobindo goes to the very root of an issue, touching a depth that one could not have even imagined. Sri Aurobindo links the evolution of nation states with all creation showing two opposing tendencies – assertion of individual identity on one hand, and forming aggregates on the other. These contradictory tendencies characterize all creation from subatomic particles such as electrons all the way up to human beings. In human societies, the tendency to form aggregates led to clans and tribes, which were relatively homogenous in terms of language, diet and dress. The similarities encouraged intimacy, and social and economic necessities helped consolidate the groups into well-defined entities. The well-defined entities acquired further stability through an administrative machinery, with a chieftain at the top of the hierarchy. In general, there was a conflict between homogeneity and viability. A unit that was culturally very homogenous was too small to be viable. A compromise led to consolidation of units that were reasonably homogenous, and yet economically and administratively viable.



Geographical considerations, such as rivers and hills, also helped demarcate these units one from the other.

However, human nature being what it is, the egoistic tendencies of the chieftains made them greedy for larger territories. The greed of the chieftains found support in the 'we versus they' thinking among the people. This led to a cold war, and sometimes to a full-fledged war with a neighbouring clan or tribe. Thus, the clans and tribes often lived in a state of an uneasy and fragile co-existence, with the boundaries frequently changing. On the whole, larger units found it easier to annex smaller units, leading to larger aggregates. The larger the aggregate, the more heterogeneous it became. The lifespan of the heterogeneous unit created by military conquest depended on the political skills of the chieftain. Units considerably bigger than clans and tribes came to be called nations, and their chieftains were labeled kings.

Crystallization of a Nation

Sri Aurobindo has generalized the process, by which nation states got crystallized, into three stages.

The first stage was that of an uneasy truce between small units such as clans and tribes. Periodic wars led to the second stage.

The second stage was that of the formation of larger aggregates, with a strong centre. At the centre was the dominant power that was responsible for the creation and consolidation of the larger aggregate. The larger aggregate so formed is potentially a nation. The kings who were successful in creating nations that survived for long periods adopted a dual policy. **One limb of the policy** was to deny diversity, and to try to wipe it out. Although homogeneity was not possible, they tried to achieve some sort of uniformity by imposing their culture on the conquered units. The justification for the imposition was that they were superior, and that was the reason they had been able to conquer others. In order to achieve uniformity, they unleashed repression, to the extent necessary,



by using the power of the state. Thus, by taking away liberty and mutilating diversity, they consolidated the unit. Thus the unit was founded on conquest and held together by instilling fear. But the really successful kings did not do just that. **The second limb of their policy** was to instill, through propaganda, a national consciousness and a national conscience. National consciousness means that we may be different, but we are all citizens of one nation. The nation comes first, our original clan or tribe only after that. National conscience means that believing in our relationship based on citizenship of one nation is a virtue; emphasizing our differences based on our original narrow identity is a sin. After systematic and prolonged brainwashing made people not only grasp the idea of the nation but also accept it as the new reality, the kings unrolled **the third stage of their policy**. In the third stage, the king restored some of the liberties that had been taken away. The cultural differences between the constituent units were neither ignored nor suppressed any more. The new axiom was 'unity in diversity'. Acknowledging diversity as a virtue added the element of cultural richness to the process of unification.

Beyond the nation

However, the kings could be as greedy for ruling larger units as were the chieftains of clans and tribes. When circumstances were favourable for further expansion, a nation conquered other nations and created empires. However, empires could not be consolidated through a process similar to that which had worked in case of creation of nations. The reasons perhaps were the difficulties involved in holding a very large aggregate together by force, and the cultural differences of the constituent units, which were too wide to bridge. The national pride which had been built up over centuries could not be dissolved overnight. The dominant power tried to impose its language and culture on the empire, but achieved very limited success. In short, empires fell because in the absence of a psychological unity, the unification achieved by force could not last.



World government based on human unity

Great minds have always perceived a psychological unity, or at least a strong basis for a psychological unity, that should unite the entire human race. After all, our being human is a deeper and higher reality than our national identity. Based on the ideal of human unity, great thinkers have dreamt of a world government, which would end all wars because the whole world would then be just one nation. They have also emphasized that a world government can be created only on the basis of a genuine respect for diversity. But the dream of a world government has remained just a utopian dream, an impractical ideal. Why it has been so is because, first, a world government can be founded only on a psychological unity, not on unification by force. Secondly, true psychological unity cannot be based on the mere mental belief that we are all one because we are all human beings. True psychological unity can be based only on the spiritual truth that we are all one because we are manifestations of the Divine; or in simpler language, we are all children of God. Till the average human consciousness reaches a level that this spiritual truth becomes so real to the average man and woman that human affairs get organized around this perception, world government will remain only a distant dream. **In short, the problems associated with forming a world government are rooted in the same limitation, that is, the limited and limiting mind of man, which is at the root of all problems of human existence.** And the solution for all these problems is the expansion of consciousness, which is exactly what the goal of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother was, exactly what they worked for and created the atmosphere for, during their stay in this world.

Closing thoughts

The idea of a nation is a mental construct, and nation states are man-made entities. God did not draw the lines that divide nations on the world map. A nation is an arbitrary unit; a pragmatic



compromise; an economic, social and administrative necessity glorified by a respectable identity, sanctified by a commitment, and elevated by convention to the level of an ideal beyond question. Although an internationalist at heart and a lover of humanity, Sri Aurobindo had a passionate love for India. He loved India because in her spiritual wisdom lay the key to the change in human consciousness and the solution to the problems of human existence. For India to play this role in the world, it was necessary, although not sufficient, that India achieve political freedom. That is why Sri Aurobindo wanted India to be free. For Sri Aurobindo, India's freedom was the doorway to a new world order, an order founded in human unity at the psychological level, which in turn is the prerequisite for a world government worthy of the ideal that its very idea signifies.



The ego is not the true circle of the self; the law of mutuality which meets it at every turn and which it misuses, arises from the truth that there is a secret unity between our self and the self of others and therefore between our own lives and the lives of others.

- Sri Aurobindo (The Ideal of Human Unity, CWSA Vol 25, p. 632)

The ideal society or State is that in which respect for individual liberty and free growth of the personal being to his perfection is harmonised with respect for the needs, efficiency, solidarity, natural growth and organic perfection of the corporate being, the society or nation.

- Sri Aurobindo (The Ideal of Human Unity, CWSA Vol 25, p. 395)



‘Emotional Intelligence’ is More Vital for Achievement Than IQ

John Gottman

*Parents know that mastering traditional intellectual skill is one key to child’s success. But helping the child master his emotional world is even more vital to achievement in all walks of adult life than is IQ, says University of Washington psychologist **John Gottman** in an interview to **Karen S. Peterson**. He calls the child with a healthy emotional life “emotionally intelligent”.*

Gottman’s research is supported by the National Institutes of Mental Health. His team studied 199 children in two, 10-year studies. Those who thrived had parents who understood their own emotions and could transmit this knowledge to their children.

*His programme for helping parents become “emotion coaches” is explained in **The Heart of Parenting: Raising an Emotionally Intelligent Child** (Simon & Schuster).*

Q: What do you mean by “emotional intelligence”?

A: The concept involves four things. First, you must know your own emotions and how to manage them. That includes the ability to control impulses, delay gratification, cope with life’s ups and downs.

Second, you must be able to recognize emotions in others, respond empathetically to them, read their social cues.

You must be able to handle relationships with others well.

And last, you must be able to motivate yourself in an optimistic fashion and be confident of your feelings, your accomplishments, your abilities as you go through the world.

Q: In what ways do children benefit?

A: I have never seen any childhood development data so clear. Kids with emotional intelligence are on a better development course.



Emotional intelligence is a better predictor of how children will do in life than anything else. Emotionally intelligent children can soothe and calm themselves better than those whose parents dismissed their emotions as unimportant.

Their academic achievement levels are higher—math and reading scores are higher, even when you control for standard IQ scores.

Their relationships with people are more meaningful. They have fewer behaviour problems and better physical health. Emotional intelligence appears to be a buffer against stress; so, they do better if there is marital conflict or divorce.

Q: How do most parents handle children's emotions?

A: Many parents are afraid of their child's negative emotions – fear, anger, sadness – and want to get rid of them quickly.

We found parents fall generally into four parenting styles:

“Dismissing parents” treat a child's feelings as trivial. Characteristically, they use some kind of distraction to shut the child's emotions down. **They believe the child's strong emotions reflect badly on them as parents.**

“Disapproving parents” are much like dismissing parents, but they are more negative. They tend to think of their children as bratty and manipulative when they are negative. **They judge and criticise the child's emotional expression.**

“Laissez-faire parents” freely accept all emotional expression from their children but offer little guidance on behaviour. They have trouble setting limits and let their kids get pretty much out of control. They want to be buddies with their children and think they will do damage by being tough. But the children really want limits: they give them security, a sense of boundaries.

Q: And what about the fourth style, the “emotion coaching” parents?

A: First, they become aware of their children's emotions. **They see emotions when the intensity is still low, without waiting for it to escalate.**



If your five-year-old is nervous about an upcoming trip to the dentist, it's better to explore that fear the day before than to wait until the child is at the dentist and throwing a full-blown tantrum.

We found some parents, when we asked, "What do you do when Jessica is sad?" said, "Oh, Jessica is never sad". They never even saw that emotion. Emotion coaches recognise emotion as an opportunity for intimacy and teaching, instead of being afraid of it ...

These parents use their heart to feel what their children are feeling. **They pay attention to the child's body language, facial expression and gestures.**

Emotion coaches help the child label emotions. Providing words like "tense", "worried", "hurt", "angry", "sad" and "afraid" help children transform an amorphous, scary, uncomfortable feeling into something definable, something that has boundaries and is a normal part of everyday life.

A Legacy of Stability

Children raised by parents who are "emotion coaches" learn to trust their feelings, regulate their own emotions and solve problems, says psychologist John Gottman. The emotion coach:

- Is aware of and values his or her own emotions.
- Tolerates a sad, angry or fearful child.
- Is sensitive to even subtle emotional states.
- Respects a child's emotions.
- Does not dictate how a child should feel.
- Does not need to fix a child's every problem.
- Uses emotional moments to achieve intimacy.

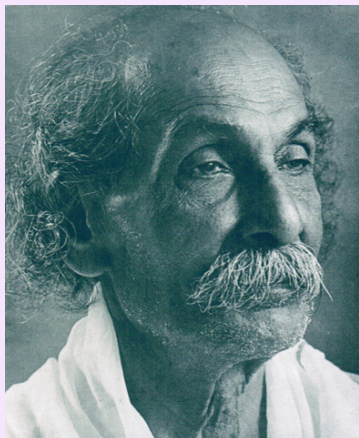
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A Journey of a Thousand Miles

Aditi Kaul



Nolini Kanta Gupta
(1889-1984)

A young boy from rural Bengal with a thirst for knowledge and the fire of patriotism came to Calcutta for higher studies. Within a short period of joining the college, the burning fire of patriotism and the desire to free his motherland drove him towards the revolutionary activities in college. After a few years, he left his studies and joined the revolutionary movement, full-time. It was during his association with the revolutionary movement during his college days that he had his first darshan of Sri Aurobindo. Little did he know then that this short exchange will lead to an association for life and even beyond. This young boy was none other than Nolini Kanta Gupta, affectionately called 'Nolini-da', one of the foremost disciples of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

As the revolutionary activities increased with time, so did his interaction with Sri Aurobindo. He was one of those acquitted in 1909 along with Sri Aurobindo in the Alipore Bomb Case. After his release from jail, he started working with Sri Aurobindo as the editor of the *Dharma* and the *Karmayogin*, the two publications initiated by Sri Aurobindo in 1909. It is during this period that his direct learning under the guidance of Sri Aurobindo began - from giving comments on his writings to teaching him French. As time went along, their bond only grew stronger. In 1910, this guru-disciple relationship that had just begun to take shape turned deeper when Nolini-da became one of the first associates of Sri Aurobindo to join him in Pondicherry.

For the first few years, before the arrival of The Mother, the few young men who lived with Sri Aurobindo treated him rather



like a friend and close companion. In his reminiscences Nolini recalls, “although in our mind and heart he had the position of a guru, in our outward relations we seemed to behave as if he were just like one of ourselves.” Coming of The Mother, not only established Sri Aurobindo as the Guru but also taught these young men the importance of order in the outer life. Even with The Mother, Nolini-da’s relations grew with time, from that of reverence to that of a devotee and finally to that of a child who bowed down with love and adoration at the feet of his Mother. In later years, when the ashram was established, along with being the Secretary of the Ashram, he was the ‘mail man’ for both the masters. As Sri Aurobindo had retired into seclusion and only communicated with disciples through correspondence, Nolini was that connecting bridge who did to and fro with the letters. Further, if a disciple found it difficult to understand Sri Aurobindo’s reply to his letter, Nolini da explained, simplified and elaborated upon the answer to make the disciple grasp what Sri Aurobindo perhaps wanted to say. Also, all the foreign posts for the Mother were brought from the post office by Nolini-da.

As Sri Aurobindo’s and The Mother’s yoga was acquiring a more concrete shape in the Ashram, Nolini-da’s life experiences were also getting deeper and wider. Once Sri Aurobindo wrote in one of this communications with a disciple; “If Nolini is not doing my yoga, who is doing it?” In fact, in one of the birthday messages for him, The Mother wrote “Nolini en route towards the superman.” This gives us a clue to his bond with the masters and the potential they saw in him. Nolini-da was known in the Ashram as a man of few words. His silence was sometimes mistaken for rudeness, but people who knew him could sense the ocean of love and compassion he held within. He had a special bond with children in the Ashram, as pure and simple uncluttered souls generally do. He had a calming presence that radiated peace and love from his inner being of light, and people often came to him for help.



As much as he loved intellectual explorations, he was equally interested in games, especially football. Even after coming to Pondicherry, he continued to play, and earned laurels in sports. He was about 60 when the Mother introduced Gymnastics to the young and old alike in the ashram to keep the body fit for the supramental descent. He took to gymnastics like a fish to water, and continued with the practice for two decades. He lived in the true spirit of Integral Yoga, not leaving any part of his being unattended. The taste of writing which he got during his Bengal days turned into a full-time immersion into clear, precise and crisp expression of his thoughts, which has given us a large volume of highly readable literature in Bangla as well as English. He undertook, and completed, the mammoth task of translating 'Savitri' into Bangla, which till-date remains one of the best translations. His writings were logical, and had to them a depth which connected with a lot of people. But he chose to remain aloof and was hardly seen interacting with people in the Ashram. It was only after The Mother left her body in 1973 that Nolini-da had to come out of his usual silence as all eyes turned towards him for guidance, and for help – spiritual and mundane. He continued to guide, and be present for everyone in the Ashram till his last days. His ailing health did not come in the way of his love for his fellow disciples right up to the day he breathed his last at the age of 95 in 1984. He will be always remembered as a disciple who could perfectly absorb, reflect and act upon the teachings of his masters, Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

Forces take the first place in actual effectuation; moral principles, reason, justice only so far as forces can be compelled or persuaded to admit them or, as more often happens, use them as subservient aids or inspiring battle-cries, a camouflage for their own interests.

- Sri Aurobindo (The Ideal of Human Unity, CWSA Vol 25, p. 397)



Tolerance – A Great Virtue

Aditi Kaul

For the world, Sri Aurobindo's yogic journey began after he moved to Pondicherry. Before that he was known as a great teacher during his Baroda days, and as a revolutionary, fighting for the freedom of his Motherland during the Calcutta period. When he quit politics and decided to be in Pondicherry to pursue spiritual goals, everyone wondered why this sudden turn. But when we take a closer look at Sri Aurobindo's pre-Pondicherry days, we find that he was always a yogi in his attitude towards life. Filled with love and compassion, always there for others, but never keeping for his own needs anything more than what was necessary for meeting bare necessities. Never did he complain about the taste of the food served to him, or the high temperatures during the summer season. His personality was so calm and wide that it accepted with equal delight whatever the world offered to him. One incident that reflects Sri Aurobindo's love and vastness was shared by Dinendra Kumar Roy, who was with Sri Aurobindo for about two years during his Baroda period. Once, when Roy had high fever and had no family member by his side, it was Sri Aurobindo who took great care of him by being by his bedside all the time, providing silently all the care required. They were staying in a lodge with no electricity, and the summer heat was so severe that at noon the wet towel put on the body would dry up in an hour. Even in this extreme condition, not once did Sri Aurobindo complain or take off his shirt. He quietly tolerated the heat and continued to nurse Roy. At another time, sharing about Sri Aurobindo's experience with food, Roy recalled how lunch was laid out for Sri Aurobindo before 11 am and that he would glance through the newspaper while eating. Sometimes the items were so badly cooked that it would be normally impossible to swallow even a morsel from any of the dishes. But Sri Aurobindo would gulp them down



without the slightest murmur. He never got angry or uttered a word of displeasure to the cook.

This makes us reflect on our life situations and how often we express our displeasure or get angry when things do not meet our demands. We are seldom able to see the situation or the person in front of us as we are too blinded by the need for comfort and fulfilling our desires. Accepting the situation and taking a wider view can help us count our blessing, being grateful for what we have, and appreciating the people who do something for us, even if imperfectly so. There is a greater joy in giving and being there for people than in receiving, grumbling and complaining. Cultivating an attitude of tolerance helps us improve our relationship with the people around us and the world in general as we move beyond the ego-centric lens of our personality towards a wider sense of oneness.

(Based on 'Sri Aurobindo: Life and Times of the Mahayogi' by Manoj Das, pp. 106-107)



By liberty we mean the freedom to obey the law of our being, to grow to our natural self-fulfilment, to find out naturally and freely our harmony with our environment.

- Sri Aurobindo (The Ideal of Human Unity, CWSA Vol 25, p. 425)

The social evolution of the human race is necessarily a development of the relations between three constant factors, individuals, communities of various sorts and mankind. Each seeks its own fulfilment and satisfaction, but each is compelled to develop them not independently but in relation to the others.

- Sri Aurobindo (The Ideal of Human Unity, CWSA Vol 25, p. 421)



Feedback and Encouraging Words

Feedback on Madhuban

Hello Anju Didi

This is Noah the cellist from Saraswati's group. Wonderful to meet you and stay with you in this magical place.

Noah (Hoffeld)

(in an email dt 7 April 2022)

Dear Anju Didi,

I woke up today in New York City still feeling like I was in Mother's Ashram. Quite an experience being with you all. My partner Ioana and I visited Matagiri yesterday.

Noah (Hoffeld)

(in an email dt 22 April 2022)

Feedback on the Online Course YES.02

A selection from the comments in the chat box:

Enlightening session ... very simply and clearly explained. Very soothing.

Veena Hora

Thanks you so much for a wonderful session, as ever indeed!

Mukund Kajale

Great explanation; Very enlightening

Pranay Chaturvedi

Very soothing.

Sushmita Malla.

Very beautiful experience with the divine music.

Sowmya Arun

Class recordings of the course YES.02 are available on https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLKYy7iXI_Z_03B1nqK0j4Ck3Y32cO-NDa (Practicals: Asanas and Pranayamas) and on https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLKYy7iXI_Z_2Uom25azXdzP48X-NHi8v_ (Theory: Nutrition)



Contact us

Our quarterly magazine in Hindi, 'Sri Aravind Karmadhara', is also available on-line now, and may be viewed on our website www.sriaurobindoashram.net.

For a free subscription to 'Sri Aravind Karmadhara', please send an e-mail to sakarmdhara@gmail.com

To get 'The Call Beyond' online regularly, month after month, please send an e-mail to: callbeyond@aurobindoonline.in

To learn about the recent and forthcoming activities through the Ashram's e-magazine, 'Realization', send an email to: callbeyond@aurobindoonline.in

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- 1. Subject: Subscribe*
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If you subscribe either to 'Realization', or to 'The Call Beyond', you will start receiving, month after month, both the magazines.

For information about Auro-Mira Service Society and the Kechla project, please visit the website www.auromira.in



Note

In view of the Hundred and Fiftieth Birth Anniversary of Sri Aurobindo on 15 August 2022, the Ashram is expanding its mailing list to reach out to more and more who may benefit from the teachings of the Master and the Mother. To get included in the Mailing List, please go to <http://erp.saaonline.net.in/addcontacts.cfm> to fill in a form, which will take you only a few minutes.



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Feedback

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