

MANKIND'S MARCH TOWARDS UNITY

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In Sri Aurobindo's vision, the goal of human unity, proposed to the conscious elite of mankind, is not based on economic or political prudence as much as it is based on the innate psychological tendencies of human life. The formation and development of the human body starts from the attraction of the sperm to the ovum. This combined unit of cells later goes through rapid stages of development and becomes the complete human body, which, though containing several organs, is enveloped in one consciousness. Similarly, the body of human unity is based on the family-cell. It is this stable nucleus that went through stages of expansion and enlargement. A gathering of a few families formed into a tribe or clan having a common system of security, a common code of behaviors, rules and regulations both on social and religious levels. Just as the human cells combine into different grouping of cells, each group specialized in a certain function, so too, the clans or tribes developed their own specific identity and clubbed themselves in a larger unit, the village.

The village gradually grew as the community economic interests increased, as the political and communal interaction between distant villages increased. And this group unit grew into the township and later into the city-state. The city-state had a tremendous advantage of several binding factors. On the physical level, there was a geographical contiguity, on the life level, there was the cementing factor of common language, common economic and social values, common political ambitions; on the mental level, a strong and almost rigid religious customs and beliefs which bound together all the other facts.

The growth from the family unit to the group-soul of city-state, however long it took, was almost an unconscious, automatic, spontaneous process of Nature, as it were. Man was not consciously instrumental in the expansion of his consciousness. This natural evolution hides, as it were, a deeper design and intention and if we can delve beyond the surface events of social history we may even discover that inherent design.

Examples of such city-states are many in Greece, Italy, Gaul, Egypt, China, Persia, India, Arabia and even in Africa and Australia. There was in a varying degree, in all these city-states 'a general vividness of life and dynamic force of culture*' that has formed the strength of all cultures and civilisations — the European and the Asiatic. Because of the inherent advantage of distance, the citizens of the city-states could take an active part in the common problems and solutions of the community, in the new ideas and feelings that are expressed by different individuals — the elite and the lowly — and they could give it a proper expression in form and organisation without having to go through the boredom of the impersonal offices of the modern cities. They could enjoy

freedom and fraternity in an intense manner which gave them a healthy and creative life of growth.

On the social level too the city-state enjoyed a great democratic equality. Of course, there were in India as well as in Greece and Rome class distinctions, but because of the intimacy of living, these distinctions were not as sharp. Therefore the exclusiveness was tempered with tolerance. The sense of personal superiority or a class superiority was blunted except when they were politically implemented as in Sparta and Venice. In India, the most sacred function and duty of a Rishi was equally open to all aspirants from all classes. The class rigidity and the arrogance of the upper classes came in later, in the larger social and political aggregates.

If the city-states were such ideal cultural and creative life-centres, then why did Nature not adopt it as its permanent mould of human collectivities? Obviously there were some basic problems in the city-states which necessitated their abolition for a higher and a larger group and the nation.

The first glaring defect of the city-states was its attitude towards slaves and women. They were denied all participation in the civic and cultural life of the city. At the most, they were granted a very narrow life which was one full of sorrow, deprivation and suffering. Both the slave and women were meant to be used for the physical and vital comforts and desires of men. In India, slavery was not there, but it had its equivalent in the untouchability, the Shudras. It is true, this social problem is still prevalent all over the world in one form or another and human society has to go a long way before it can rid itself of this cancer.

The second defect, which has also not yet been mitigated, is that of war. As each city-state was insular, there was not much communication between city-states and the only relationship was that of war and conquest. It was not a war of expansion, as was the case in the movement of colonialism; it was a war of self-protection — a protection of one's own culture and comfort.

Because of these two defects Nature perhaps moved on to greater aggregates — the empire and the nation-unit. Seemingly paradoxical, in the process of history, it was the empire that is older than nation with the exception of Egypt, Israel and some stray attempts at building an Indian or a Chinese nation. It was, as it were Nature in its hurry leaped over the stage of nation-building! Or, was it that certain men of vision and ambition, 'colossal dreamers' forced this step of an empire-building over Nation? This was the case with Assyria, Macedon, Rome, Persia and Arabia.

Men like Alexander in the ancient times and Napoleon Bonaparte in modern times were such conscious empire-builders. Before a new-born nation could establish itself and lay the foundation of national unity or a national consciousness, a personality like Alexander threw himself into conquests of cities and nations and city-states, breaking the barriers of Greek world and

the Asiatic region and created, however short-lived, "an age of civilisation and soul-interchange." Augustus Caesar was another such person of 'commanding genius' and a massive force who founded the Roman empire, which later was consolidated by Julius Caesar. Immediately after Julius Caesar, the great empire was dominated by Roman ambition and dominance. Rome used Italy as a 'spring-board' to further its conquests and to enrich itself with the boot of the fallen cities and the slaves of the world market.

The early empires had only magnified instead of solving the root problems and defects of the city-states, namely, that of serfdom, women and wars. Secondly, they had destroyed the smaller units by using 'them into food for the dominant organ'. And once nations like Egypt, Spain, Gaul were squeezed out of their essential life-force, the 'voracious centre*' had nothing to live on, and, over a period of time the empires weakened inwardly and later collapsed as a corpse at the first violent attack from the living force of the barbarian races.

On the similar pattern of the Roman and the Macedonian empires, other empire-aggregates were attempted during the medieval period and again in the early 17th and 18th centuries. The Holy Roman Empire of Charlemagne, the empire of the Caliphs in West Asia, Africa and Spain—in the medieval period, and the German dream of a world empire under the domination of the Aryan Race, the French and the British attempts in colonialism - all tried to base themselves on the Roman model. But, in a matter of a couple of centuries all attempts to revive the Roman success failed. "It is as if Nature had said, 'That experiment has been carried once to the logical consequences and once is enough. I have made new conditions...'"¹

It was as if Nature had realised its mistake and it retraced its experiments of empire-aggregates and started afresh on the necessary and logical step of nation-building.

Stages of Nation-Building

In the formation of every human aggregates Nature has followed a definite rhythm of development. She provided first a natural body, then a common life-interest that was the base for the constituents of that body and lastly a 'conscious mind' which is capable of governing and helping the central ego to express and to fulfill itself. The formation of a nation-unit also followed a similar process. The natural body, or the scaffolding or framework needed for building a nation is the first necessity. For this "a kind of lesser yet sufficiently compelling order of society and common type of civilisation" was needed. And in most of the nations such a "compelling order of society" was provided by the structure of social hierarchy of classes. In Western countries, this structure was that of priesthood, nobility, mercantile community and the proletariat. In India, we had the structure of the Brahmin, the Kshatriya, the Vysya and the Shudra classes. In other words, everywhere there were the four different social

activities — spiritual, political, mercantile and service — which became the framework in the formation of nation. It is interesting to note that in the Islamic countries where this social structure was never allowed to develop because of their dominant principle of equality and brotherhood, the nation-building never succeeded and it is only in the present century that out of the pressure of modern ideas and the fear of alien conquest that they have forged themselves into Nations.

The second stage of nation-building is that of “a period of stringent organisation” which would centralise the whole national administration. This is indeed the stage of bitter struggle between the sacerdotal and the military, because what this stage attempted was to bring all power into the hands of a monarchy or kingship. In this process, the history of Europe and the struggle between its Church and Monarchy, is a singular example. Nations passing through the second stage must choose to separate the spiritual and the secular leadership or else combine them in a single authority. Italy is an example of the latter, while England is the example of the former principle. In India the Rajputs achieved in separating the king and the Brahmin while the Sikhs under Guru Nanak combined the spiritual and the secular under the Khalsa. Otherwise in the rest of the country, there was the dominance of the Brahmin, a caste that guided the king as well as the people, but they themselves did not rule or administer. This dominance of this caste, which never stood aside and let the centralisation take place in tune with the demand of times, stood in the formation of the nation-building. A greater foreign ruler was needed to subjugate and remove this caste and make way for the secular and Kshatriya power to come forward and take up the reigns of the nation. In countries where the transfer of power took place smoothly or after great war and bloodshed, the formation of nation-building took place rapidly. It is in this light and evolutionary necessity that the kingship of a country became so very important and even to the extent of being considered sacred and of divine origin and right.

But once the nation was well-formed and got centralised in the king — ‘*L’etat c’est Moi,*’ ‘I am the State’ — the monarchy came tumbling down. All the four classes, revolted, as if, in a chorus and executed the authority of the monarchy. There was a complete collapse of the old world and the birth of a new age was on the horizon.

This is the third stage in the nation-building process. It is “a period of free external development as soon as the formation is assured and unity has become a mental and vital habit”.² So it happened. After the guillotining of Louis XVI, the French Revolution gave to the new world, that was in the birth-pangs, a new ideal- Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. And the twentieth century has been for most countries the time to realise and to consolidate these three ideals.

Now is the next step beyond nation, internationalism, a world-union. For, just as a village or a city-state survives and prospers and lives only in the

background of the whole nation, so too a nation can exist meaningfully and healthily only through the life of a world union or human unity. If the nations do not move consciously and willingly towards the largest human aggregate, the world-union, then Nature may force it down upon them under crushing circumstances. The transition from the old order of a nationhood to internationalism has to take place, it is the inevitable next stage of human evolution.

Unification of Mankind

Never before has the ideal of human unity been more in the front of human consciousness than in the present times. We do not know if Nature is just testing humanity to see if it is ready for the harmony of mankind that she has been planning. However, this ideal has become a concrete force that shall influence, if not determine as yet, the major changes and upheavals of the world. The mind of man is caught by it and it is being strengthened by the material and economic circumstances, especially the scientific and technological advancements which have tied up the globe in a single web of communicative internet. The elite of humanity has heard the call of the future, but the mass of humanity has yet to hear and respond to this summons from the Future.

The response from peoples and nations is still forthcoming because of the basic difficulties involved in the unification of mankind. The first difficulty is whether the collective egoisms, the nations, are ready to be abolished or modified in the interest of an external unity. Secondly, there is the doubt if the external unity, whatever its form, will not crush the freedom of the individual and the free expression of the national aggregates in the name of unity. Lastly, it is to be debated whether such a unity can be maintained by economic, political or administrative forces or there is the need for such a unity to be preceded by some kind of a 'moral and spiritual oneness'. For, if there is no real change of the heart and mind, all efforts at human unity are foredoomed to failure.

In spite of these difficulties, the effort towards unification must go on for unification of humanity is a thing decreed.

First Stage of Unification

Till the formation of the nation-unit, the original unit of the human aggregate has been the family. Similarly, for all aggregates beyond the level of the nation, the nation-unit promises to be the real unit. There is something eternal about the nation-unit, something indestructible that withstands all ravages of conquest and colonisation. A nation is not formed out of common pacts of profit or alliances. It is made out of dreams and sufferings, labour and love, or as Ernest Renan puts it, "In the past a heritage of glory and regrets to share, in the future the same programme to realise, to have suffered, enjoyed, hoped together, that indeed is better than common customs and strategic frontiers;

that is what one understands in spite of diversities of race and language ... yes, common suffering unites more than common joy. In respect of the memories of a nation griefs are worth more than triumphs."³

The truth of a real national unity is so strong that "even nations which never in the past realised an outward unification" writes Sri Aurobindo, "to which Fate and circumstance and their own selves have been adverse, nations which have been full of centrifugal forces and easily overpowered by foreign intrusions, have yet always developed a centripetal force as well and arrived inevitably at organised oneness."⁴

This has been the case with Greece, which after its empire was broken up survived the ravages of barbarians and the Turkish yoke and ultimately regained its separate body identity. Such has been the case in our times with Germany — the two Wars could not divide it permanently. It has been once again fused into a single country.

India is another striking example of such a phenomenon. Its political history shows a succession of kingdoms and empires each of them being destroyed by centrifugal forces but there was a constant effort towards a nation building. It had always upheld the ideal of Samrat or Chakravarti Raja as seen in the *Mahabharata* or an imperial reign of justice. The psychological basis of unity was always present in India but it is the political unification which took almost two thousand years, even like France, Germany, modern Italy each of which took one to two thousand years to form into a unified national unit.

Since the essential psychological unity was there, since it had the external scaffolding of the social structure needed for making a nation, no amount of external pressure could permanently break India or disintegrate it. No external or internal forces could prevail against its 'obstinate subconscious necessity'.

A nation once it achieves the inner necessity of a psychological unity, it may be dominated or destroyed temporarily, but it refuses to be annihilated for good that it is because "the nation stands as the one living group-unit of humanity into which all others must merge or to which they must become subservient. Even old persistent race unities and cultural unities are powerless against it.... The nation in modern times is practically indestructible, unless it dies from within.... All modern attempts to destroy by force or break up a nation are foolish and futile, because they ignore this law of the natural evolution. Empires are still perishable political units; the nation is immortal. And so it will remain until a greater living unit can be found into which the nation-idea can merge in obedience to a superior attraction."⁵

Second Stage of Unification

The time has come for 'the nation to merge in obedience to a superior attraction* — the attraction of a human unity. The ideal of one human family has become

insistent and the nations which have found their psychological as well as their political unity, are becoming a hindrance in the further evolution of human aggregate. Just as the city-states or the religious forces could not baulk Nature's efforts in bringing about a nation-unity, so too, now, no nation or group of nations can arrest Nature's march towards the next evolutionary step—the human unity. The choice of the new form to be evolved is left to the nations, but the centralisation of the nations has to take place in whatever manner and form.

However, in the meanwhile, several alternatives stand before humanity, alternatives of the external form, that this ideal of human unity can take. Sri Aurobindo discusses a few amongst the most prominent ones. Just as in the second stage of the development of a nation, there came up a centralised monarchy, so too, if the nations cannot come to a swift formation of a unity, there could be the birth of a king-nation with the mission to break the national borders and to fuse them into some kind of a unity. It may not be by war, for a military conquest of the whole world is an impossibility of the present age, but by a successful diplomacy and with enough of skill to federate the different nation-constituents a king-nation could be born. At present, America is in such a position and earlier Germany had such an ambition of a king-nation. This may be a brutal method indeed, but, Nature may adopt this means of a temporary domination by a powerful country if “the incoherence is too great for the trend of unification to triumph.”

Another simpler possibility, if the nations realise their need and necessity and are willing to forego some of their interests would be an imperial aggregation consisting partly of federal, partly of confederate commonwealths or empires. With the present national egoism, this possibility may seem to be remote, but there are some steps that are being taken in this direction. Attempts like SAARC and ASEAN countries are such imperial units which could serve as ‘half-way house’ towards humanity, that is ‘an experiment in administrative and economic confederation on a large scale.’ They could also serve as a training in international living — one ‘common political family’ cutting across differences of race, traditions, colour and civilisation.

After the Second World War, one of the major steps taken to eliminate any future World War, was the establishment of an International Court. Because of the innate possibility of this law being obeyed by countries as long as it was expedient, it is necessary, wrote Sri Aurobindo in the early 1920s, that's some form of a ‘European Federation, however loose, is... essential’. In a footnote added before the publication of *The Ideal of Human Unity* he predicted that the “United States of Europe is now a practical possibility and has begun to feel towards self-accomplishment”⁶ This prediction became a reality of the present with the formation of E. E. C. (European Economic Community).

Based on similar principles, “the unity of mankind could most rationally and conveniently arrange itself upon the basis of a European grouping, an

Asiatic grouping, an American grouping, with two or three sub-groups in America, Latin and English-Speaking, three in Asia, the Mongolian, Indian and West-Asian, with Moslem North perhaps as a natural annex to the third of these, four in Europe, the Latin, Slavonic, Teutonic and Anglo- Celtic ..."⁷

All these steps of imperial aggregates may ultimately lead toward the formation of a World-State. In fact, the two great Wars shocked human sense of individual security, and the nations are forced to move to a collective and group security in some form of a world-state or a world-union. Of course, the formation of a world-state has to take place in a graded manner over a length of time, for, any haste may result in the recoil of the movement. Sri Aurobindo traces the process of this evolution as thus:

At first, taking up the regulation of international disputes and of economic treaties and relations, the international authority would start as an arbiter and an occasional executive power and change by degrees into a legislative body and a standing executive power...

At first it might confine itself to the most important questions and affairs which obviously demanded itself to the most important questions and affairs which obviously demanded its control; but it would tend increasingly to stretch its hand to all or most matters that could be viewed as having an international effect and importance...

And eventually it would permeate the whole system of the national life and subject it to international control in the interests of the better co-ordination of the united-life, culture, science, organisation, education, efficiency of the human race. It would reduce the now free and separate nations first to the position of the States of the American Union... and eventually perhaps to that of geographical provinces... of the single nation of mankind.⁸

We see that the process of the formation of a World-State is similar to the process of centralisation adopted by a Nation-Unit. Depending on the psychological pressures from within or a shock of forces from outside, the World-State would have to become a symbol of human race providing the nations and the peoples of the constituent nations common benefits which would outweigh the advantages of nationhood. The World-authority has to abolish the sharp divisions of race, colour, religion, country which are the cause of a major suffering of humanity. Instead, it has to bring about a sense of common humanity and collective life on a global scale.

The gains of a World-State would be immense, indeed. Firstly, there would be an assured peace of the world, a state of existence for which mankind has been even dreaming. In such an atmosphere of co-existence, all the negative forces of mind would be put to use for the well-being of all the nations with the added advantage that the best minds of the world would work as one instead of working separately and against each other. This could lead to unprecedented efflorescence of cultural and intellectual activities for there would be a common

fund of monies, ideas, energies. There would be something like a golden age with a global ease and amenity in the development of human life. All humanity would enjoy a kindly and friendly disposition towards each other and there would be a near "fraternity" though not a real brotherhood for true brotherhood cannot come by mere political peace or a social and cultural union.

But this utopian world may not last long. Like the Roman empire, it may undergo a static condition, leading to stagnation, decay and disintegration. The main reason for this predictable collapse is that the 'conditions of a vigorous life would be lost', there will not be liberty and mobile variation, essential in a thriving life of humanity. It is true that democracy would be the guiding principle of a world-state, but, 'democracy is by no means a sure preservative of liberty*. Democracy, for what it has come out to be nowadays is a tyranny of the majority, suffocating the individual's sense of well-being. And such a tyranny would be felt a hundred-fold more if man were to be exposed to the tyranny of the whole mankind.

Secondly, in trying to bring unity, the World-State may end up in a steam-rolled uniformity 'enforced practical convenience'. This may result in abolishing national individuality and cultural variation; it would be a kind of death in life for the individual. Such a suppression is bound to bring forth a reaction and a revolt from the intellectual, vital and spiritual seekings. "A centralised mechanical World-State must rouse in the end a similar force against it and might well terminate in a crumbling up and disintegration, even in the necessity for a repetition of the cycle of humanity ending in a better attempt to solve the problem."⁹

If the formation of a World-State is predestined to failure because of its inherent faults, then, the only way left for mankind to unite itself is in the form of a World-Union which may be either 'a close federation or a simple confederacy of the people for the common ends of mankind'. Unlike the World-State which may regard the nations and the geographical groupings as 'so many conveniences for provincial division, for the convenience of administration', a World-Union would maintain the living diversity of people and nations, for the very basis of a World-Union would be a complex unity based on a diversity and that diversity must be based on free self-determination'. There would be a free grouping of nations depending upon their freewill and natural affinities. The present groupings of nations like SAARC and ASEAN and EEC are more based on economic and cultural affinities. But there could be a coherence of nations divided by geographical distance but united by a common culture like Australia and England.

In a World-Union the advantages would be far superior to those seen in a World-State. There would be peace and no military aggression. There would be a variety of cultures and nations, but no dominance of the stronger over the weaker nations, for all differences would be sorted out by agreement or arbitration. The forceful exploitation on the economic front would disappear

though there would remain a peaceful economic struggle and separativeness based on mutual accommodation and settling of differences by common agreement.

This ideal unification of mankind may not be practicable at present and we may be too far from it because the prerequisite conditions for such a unification do not yet exist. However, the creation of the U. N. O. after the Second War promises to take human unity towards this goal. In its present status, the U. N. O. may not be very effective but some such arranged centre of order has become indispensable 'if modern civilisation is not to collapse in bloodshed and chaos'.

It is the 'capital event', says Sri Aurobindo, 'the crucial and decisive outcome' of Nature's working towards a human unity. It forms the beginning of an outer basis for a 'fairer and brighter and nobler life for all mankind'. In spite of its 'blunders and the malignancies' that may jeopardise its very existence, the future of the world depends on U. N. O. and it must be preserved, mended where it is faulty though, a too hasty endeavour to rectify its defects may lead to 'a crash of the whole edifice'. The leaders of the nations who are responsible in making decisions in U. N. O. must find ways to circumvent, without breaking the institution, all the obstinate difficulties and oppositions. They must work with patience and an open-mind and 'the frustration of the world's hope prevented at any cost'. There is, on the horizon of human evolution, no other organisation or way except U. N. O. that could take humanity towards its destiny, unless and until there is the miracle of the change of human nature or there is a greater way or solution laid open by the Divine Will.

Out of its several different attempts to bring together the nations and to bring in peace to humanity, the U. N. O. tried to have an international control through 'a composite armed force of control set over the nations and their separate military strength'. Though it has used this control successfully in some instances, there have been instances when some nations refused to participate in some military operations initiated by the U. N. O. This is, therefore, an inherent problem in this system, namely, the affiliations of the soldiers of the composite army be more with their nation than with the nebulous entity of the U. N. O.

In the recent years, there has been an attempt at the limitation of armies and armaments. The move began with U. S. A. and U. S. S. R. but this ideal stood ineffective as soon as the clash of war became a reality as was exemplified by the U. S. A and Iran war. What we learn from this move is that it can only lighten the national burden in peace but actually 'it cannot prevent or even minimise the disastrous intensity and extension of war'. Ultimately, even if war were to be eliminated or minimised by a strange twist of circumstances, the internal strife within the constituent countries would use arms and armies to crush or to control the revolts against injustice and oppression and violation of human rights.

After the break-up of the U. S. S. R, there is an attempt by the U. S. A to become a dominant Power with the support of European allies and with the 'monopoly of an overwhelming superiority in the use of some of the tremendous' weaponry that science has put at its use.

The nations of the world have realised this ominous danger and they have put forward the idea of a nuclear test ban with the idea of preventing the military use of these inventions. But 'so long as the nature of mankind has not changed, this prevention must remain uncertain and precarious', for the unscrupulous ambition of the dominant power may use this nuclear weaponry. In the present condition of the world, such a possibility may seem impossible, but the possibility has to be noted and measures of prevention have to be taken —one of them being the total and not partial ban of the nuclear test, the stand taken by India.

Apart from these attempts at world peace and unity, the U. N. O has to move positively towards some outer form. There are two alternatives that present themselves as possibilities. A federation of free nationalities on the model adopted in the formation of the U. S. A and Australia. In this form all nations would have an equal status. But a confederacy of nations for a common goal, wedded to the ideal of 'removal of all causes of strife and difference' and yet enjoying 'full internal freedom and power of self-determination,' is another alternative.

These two possibilities, the world-federation and the world-confederation, although the best alternatives for the future of humanity, also are not without inherent weaknesses. A federal system, as is seen in the U. S. A, tends towards a 'general type of human life, institutions and activities', for the attitudes of the federal government do trickle down to the state level influencing the institutions and the law controlled by the states. A federal government on the international level also would eradicate all the variation of cultures leaving room for a play of minor variation only. On the other hand, a confederacy, being a much looser unity wherein the nations are just allied keeping independent their governments and cultures, may invite centrifugal forces. 'The spirit of separativeness and the causes of clash' may ultimately take over and the confederacy may break up and get back into its original elements.

Any system or form of the U. N. O. — may be a federation or a confederation — which has been brought together on the basis of political ideas and machinery, wooing the nations with economic advantages, that is, 'by the idea of and experience of the material advantages, conveniences, well-being secured by unification, is bound to break down ultimately, by the suppressed desire of the constituent nations to recover the lost element of variation and independence. The only solution to keep together a world-union, irrespective of what form it takes, a World-State, a World-Federation or a World-Confederation — is an inner change of human heart and mind.

“That change would be the growth of the living idea or religion of humanity, for only so could there come the psychological modification of life and feeling and outlook which would accustom both individual and group to live in their common humanity first and most, subduing their individual and group egoism, yet losing nothing of their individual or group-power to develop and express in its own way the divinity in man which, once the race was assured of its material existence, would emerge as the true object of human existence.”¹⁰

Third Stage of Unification

Just as in the formation of a nation, there is the third stage of detente and devolution of central authority towards an equality and freedom - the monopoly and privileges of kings disbanned, the bourgeois capitalism reduced to an economic order in which the suffering of the poor is sought to be eliminated, dignity and freedom of man restored, - there has got to be in the unification of mankind such a third stage when the national-units, though politically united under one roof, must move towards a deeper bond of unity, mutuality and harmony. One of the strongest features that the nation has developed in its attempts at unification and harmony was the religion of country, not an officially established religion, but the country itself looked upon as a deity, like the idea of Bharatmata.

A similar psychological force has to be developed to bring about unity, mutuality and harmony amongst the nations of the world to keep them united under one roof. Man has to recognise that he belongs to a single Soul of humanity of which each man and each people is an incarnation and soul-form. The practical means of achieving this psychological oneness is education and a religion of humanity.

A true and living education, in whatever system, must emphasise upon three things — the man, the nation and universal humanity. A proper education must bring out all that is in the individual man - his physical, vital and mental capacities. At the same time, the individual must be taught about the true nature and culture and the proper role of one's country in the terrestrial orchestra. He has to be helped to enter into his right relation with the life and society and soul of the country to which he belongs. Along with the idealism of one's country, the individual must be given 'a wider understanding of the role of other nations' which form 'a separate and yet inseparable' part of the soul of humanity.

Internationalism, which is at present a living fact of humanity, grew up out of a historical necessity — a need based upon political, economic, mechanical factors and the desire for a great international coordination which would promote not only economic and political interests of a country but also avert the danger of a global war. The basic attitude of internationalism, on a psychological

level, is that it looks at man in his manhood 'only', not at his background of social status or birth or colour or rank or nationality or creed. Science and technology have helped establish this idea of internationalism; scientific spirit is in itself an international spirit and the present world being strongly under the sway of scientific attitude has spread this attitude of internationalism. But, as the situation is today, this idea of internationalism has caught only the mind of the ruling bodies of governments or elitist sections of society only, it has not sunk into the deeper levels of life itself. A greater element is required to make internationalism a living reality.

The intellectual religion of humanity, of which the spirit of internationalism is the outer, mental expression, is the shadow of a spirit that is yet unborn, but is preparing for its birth. Though not yet fully bodied, the idea of the religion of humanity is at present a mind-born reality.

The religion of humanity with its based idealism has by now achieved many things which an orthodox religion could not do. As its faith is in humanity and its earthly' future, unlike orthodox religion which has its eyes on a life beyond death, the religion of humanity, has to some degree "humanised society, humanised law and punishment, humanised the outlook of man on man, abolished legalised torture and the cruder forms of slavery... stimulated philanthropy and charity and service of mankind, encouraged everywhere the desire of freedom ... but it was a remarkable record for a century and a half or a little more..."¹¹

In spite of its grand achievements, this ideal of the religion of humanity has not been able to achieve the eternal aspiration of man—"love, mutual recognition of human brotherhood, a living sense of human oneness and practice of human oneness in thought, feeling and life, the ideal which was expressed first some thousands of years ago in the ancient Vedic hymn ('One and common be your aspiration, united your hearts, common to you be your mind, — so that close companionship be yours.' *Rig Veda*, X, 191) and must always remain the highest injunction of the spirit within us to human life upon earth".¹² The cause of this failure is obvious — the religion of humanity, like all other religious efforts, addressed itself more to the mind and the emotion of humanity and not to the inner being of man. Therefore, it got stuck with 'the egoism of the individual, the egoism of class and nation and thereby could not realise the third ideal of the French Revolution, fraternity or brotherhood.

The religion of humanity has, therefore, to take a spiritual dimension if it has to fulfil its mission. A spiritual dimension does not mean a universal religion because there can be no such religion 'one in mental creed and vital form'. The spiritual dimension 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... There must be a 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".¹³

In order to make this spiritual oneness as the base of the psychological oneness, independent of all outward or mechanical uniformity, what is needed is a growing number of men who will realise this truth and seek to develop it in themselves, "so that when the mind of man is ready to escape from its mechanical bent, — perhaps when it finds that the mechanical solutions are all temporary and disappointing, — the truth of the Spirit may step in and lead humanity to the path of its highest possible perfection".¹⁴

In the meanwhile, until such a number of men of spiritual realisation of humanity's truth increases and becomes influential, the work of the mechanical means of human unity must proceed.

References:

1. Sri Aurobindo, SABCL. Vol. 15. p. 298
2. Ibid, p. 349
3. Quoted by Nolini kanta Gupta, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 94
4. Sri Aurobindo, SABCL. Vol. 15, p. 287
5. Ibid, pp. 240-41
6. Ibid, p. 329
7. Ibid, p. 411
8. Ibid, p. 472
9. Ibid, p. 553
10. Ibid, p. 524
11. Ibid, pp. 543-44
12. Ibid, p. 545
13. Ibid, p. 554
14. Ibid. p. 555

(N.B.: This article, based on *The Ideal of Human Unity*, presents the book's major arguments.)