

THE IDEAL SOLUTION FOR HUMAN UNITY

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Human unity is one of the major works, or perhaps an important consequence and outcome of the spiritual work undertaken by the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. While Sri Aurobindo unravels in his treatise *The Ideal of Human Unity* the modalities of working out such an ideal, the Mother, through Auroville, presented to the earth a working model of the concept. According to them, unity in spiritual aspiration and a collective progress towards an ultimate spiritualized society and its manifestation on earth is the key to absolute and enduring peace and happiness on earth.

It appears from history that man is, consciously and unconsciously, goaded towards an ever increasing unity, expanding from family to community to nationality. Presently he is moving towards the threshold of the challenging stage of uniting the whole humanity. Last century witnessed some commendable efforts in bringing an understanding among the various peoples and nations of the world.

Present Scenario

The devastation of the world wars brought in a vague realisation of the necessity of mutual co-operation among the nations. It was a shock to witness centuries of constructive endeavours reduced to smithereens in no time. The League of Nations was established with the main objective of prevention of war and conflicts between nations. But aggressive nations such as Germany and Italy withdrew their support as they felt the dictates

violated their sovereignty and the league collapsed. Yet another gruesome experience, World War II, prompted the formation of the United Nations Organization (UNO). Despite decades of cold war between the two great superpowers which finally had to crumble down, a semblance of peace and co-existence could be established. Benefits were being reaped and the co-operation extended to trade and commerce and other areas of mutual aid such as creating equal opportunities in the fields of health and education. Over time the United Nations branched into several specialized agencies such as United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), World Health Organization (WHO), Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), International Labour Organization (ILO), United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHCR), etc. Several other organizations based on shared ethnicity, shared borders, shared economic and scientific advances came into existence such as SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation), EU (European Union), AU (African Union), G-20 (Group of Twenty – a group of finance ministers and central bank governors from 20 economies), and many others.

These efforts were corroborated by scientific breakthroughs in transport and communication that have shrunk the earth. Computers, internet and mass media brought in the information revolution. Quantum Physics has established the inter-connectivity of the entire creation, strangely echoing the age-old Sanskrit tenet *isavasyam idam sarvam yat kinchit jagatyam jagat*.¹ Environmental crises thrust the burden of shared responsibility. Several environmental organizations, such as Green Peace and World Wildlife Fund, are working across several nations to ensure safe and healthy environment. On the whole, sharing with others and supporting the weak or underprivileged has now gained general acceptance.

Despite all these efforts to foster unity and togetherness, the world is still not a happy place to live in. It is said that as god grows so does the devil to give an equal fight. Religious clashes, terrorism, corruption, power mongering are still the reigning gods and material monstrosity digs into the natural resources. Secularism is defeating its purpose with the danger of losing religions rather than retaining their spiritual essence and transcending them. Scriptures like the Bhagavad Gita or the Old Testament contain spiritual truths that have shaped characters for ages and cannot be abandoned because of the sectarian approach taken by a certain fanatical priesthood. There is an emergence of a global mono-culture that is stifling the creativity and inherent wisdom traditions of native cultures. Economics ridden material culture is fast replacing the inward orientation that is the hallmark of many native cultures. Greece has already lost its unique identity

couched in its mythology and India and China are on the verge of joining the bandwagon. Where did we go wrong or what are we short of?

The world is still in the age of individualism and reasoning with the ego still riding high behind the veil of developments and unifying efforts. A well safeguarded ego or its euphemism 'self-respect' is the underlying motivation for most of the activities, be it security measures or ambitious achievements. The unity among nations is too facile perched on strong national egos that can give way under provocation. Each nation, whatever its contribution to unity, is working under the garb of its own ego and identity and not consciously in response to a higher truth.

Dynamics of Unity

Unity, however much it is desirable, has several inherent challenges at various levels. Men are active, evolving organisms with a will of their own and great vital and mental powers at their disposal. Each man harbours both unitive and divisive powers within himself. Life is complex with layers of forces acting upon the individuals and communities. Uniting such mass of forces, energies and self-interests is no easy walk. A study of the undercurrents of history, not just narration of stories of glory and fall of its heroic figures and significant revolutions, can give away certain inherent tendencies in men and nature that either obstruct or support the great ideal of Human Unity. The American war of independence, French revolution, and industrialization, for example, need to be psychoanalyzed to encounter the psyche of the collective consciousness fighting for freedom and rights – a cry for individual liberty and equality. But an individual does not live in a capsule. One grows within and with the help of the group one lives in. Sharing and sacrificing are not only instinctive but inevitable. It is a single earth and one is bound to share the resources with one and all. Furthermore, collectivity can check negative tendencies in individual human beings. The immense advantages of a group-soul or a collectivity cannot be overstated nor can we ignore the urge in each individual to grow according to his or her needs. Thus, the individual and the collectivity are interdependent and injustice to one will upset the other.

Forced unity is always challenged by the people. England dominated the world and established her colonies only to be retaliated against and thrown out. Socialism and communism which equated unity with uniformity also failed. Individuals refused to be sacrificed at the altar of the group requirements. God's creation is great and abounds with diversity—no two individuals are alike. Individual freedom is very crucial for evolution. All major advancements are initiated by

individuals which later become mass movements. Sri Aurobindo goes to the extent of saying that anarchy is preferable to leveling with force in which creativity and subsequent progress are stifled.² Likewise, organizing people into groups helps in pooling resources — material, intellectual or spiritual — and ensures security. Therefore, the individual and the community grow through a constant interchange of energies and the balance between the two is the secret to a productive yet peaceful human unity. Unity in diversity is the ineluctable law of progress.

Ways of Nature's Working

Sri Aurobindo says that Life has a meaning and nature follows its own destiny. One should understand the work of the 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 utilization for his own greater perfection and happiness or for that and the greater perfection and happiness of his fellow-creatures."³

Sri Aurobindo's theory of the Evolution of Consciousness is a breakthrough in knowledge that can shift the paradigm of our outlook on life and happenings. There is an evolution of life on earth as revealed by even an apparent study — from matter to life to mind. Nature is seeking to express, rather increasingly manifest, herself. The wills or determinations of individuals or masses are just a part of the larger play of the nature's forces. She is relentlessly and covertly working towards her ideal and perfection in her own uncanny style, strengthening some concepts and ideas for a period of time, breaking the same for a greater cause and reaffirming them when required. Thus, she consolidated the individual ego only for it to be given up and evolve into the next stage. She built up national egos through crude external methods to bring about a rudimentary sense of unity among people. Now those very egoistic barriers and those very methods are being challenged for a greater unity and a greater life. She uses external methods until man's inner psychology is ready to accept the new principle of life manifesting from a higher consciousness.

Paradise on earth as expounded by many religious books is indeed Nature's goal but it is the pure and enduring bliss she seeks and not pain afflicted temporal pleasures. Such an ethereal condition is not met in a single step. Within every individual there should first be a harmony of all

parts led by the psychic entity. Spiritual development should become the norm of life in which sacrifice results in higher knowledge. Humanity has to reach a stage in evolution wherein people begin to experience the inner, spiritual unity.

Human aggregates, societies, cultures, nations have only recently begun to move in the direction of concert and cooperation. Referring to a “law of graduality of spiritual advancement of humanity,” Sri Aurobindo writes, “The first stage is the period of conflict and competition which has been ever dominant in the past and still overshadows the present of mankind. For even when the crudest forms of material conflict are mitigated, the conflict itself still survives and the cultural struggle comes into greater prominence. The second step brings the stage of concert. The third and last is marked by the spirit of sacrifice in which, because all is known as the one Self, each gives himself for the good of others.”⁴

Nature is seeking a concert among races, cultures and the entire humanity and it is man’s indispensable purpose to follow nature’s law.



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The Ideal of Human Unity

Sri Aurobindo’s Ideal of Human Unity guarantees the individual freedom within a well-organized collectivity that effectively channelizes all energies towards the sublime goal of enduring peace and happiness on earth. It is liberty with law and co-operation with competition. The first principle of the ideal is the free and natural grouping of nations united not by repression or compulsion but by a free choice based on a common psychic bent of mind towards growth and perfection. A deeper psychological element other than language or race binds people together beyond all restlessness.

Every nation keeps its unique identity through self-determination but also fulfils its part in the larger unity of humanity. While some countries contribute in technology and economics, yet others make up for the spiritual deficit. Each nation contributes in its unique way in keeping with its soul-nature.

Human beings have to transcend all the barriers which they have built around themselves, and the most formidable perhaps is the religious barrier. A 'deeper awakening' within oneself beyond the ego and its insecurities will make the work easier. There is a spiritual reality within oneself that unites the entire creation which brings a spontaneous joy with every sacrifice made towards higher realization. According to Sri Aurobindo, there are three aspects to reality—individual, universal and transcendental. As one moves deeper into oneself and identifies with the soul within, one becomes the universe. On further expansion of consciousness, one can unify with the transcendental *sachidananda* or the sublime stage of unity in absolute existence-consciousness-force-bliss. With increasing inner awareness one's voluntary participation quickens the process.

Modus Operandi to Reach the Ideal

Growth is not a linear process but an integral progression on several fronts. Several parameters are simultaneously worked upon to achieve perfection. Both the external and internal methods should complement each other for a holistic development of human unity.

Externally, all the international organizations and associations which are operational at present should promote goodwill and camaraderie by keeping up their good work in helping nations collaborate in areas of security, commerce and scientific knowledge. They should make as their primary objectives eradication of global poverty and provision of basic amenities such as education and health care to all the peoples and nations of the world. Physical and emotional needs form the foundation for channeling the energies towards higher purposes.

Internally, the authentic spiritual groups of the world, regardless of the country to which they belong, should use their influence to urge these international organizations as well as the common masses to make spiritual advancement as the ultimate ideal for humanity, not as a theory or a dogma but in practice. This ensures loosening up of the egos and looking deep within oneself for the place of permanent harmony and happiness. It creates a vision beyond the immediate material and vital needs and ensures a peaceful journey towards the ideal of human unity. Countries like India and China have a great role to play. The paths of Yoga, Tao and Buddhism, to name a few, have developed time-tested methods in attaining inner realization and leading perfect and beautiful lives. Renunciation of life is a misconception that surfaced in the Middle Ages. Perfection of life, manifestation of divinity on earth is the essential aim of spirituality. A

psychic culture must be worked out and developed within humanity which would herald the onset of the subjective age as explained by Sri Aurobindo.

In a subjective age, humanity is no more ruled by rationality or ego-based individualism, but by the inner divinity called the psychic. This identification and gradual governance by the psychic need to happen not only on the individual level but also on the collective level, level of the nations. "For it is necessary, if the subjective age of humanity is to produce its best fruits, that the nations should become conscious not only of their own but of each other's souls and learn to respect, to help and to profit, not only economically and intellectually but subjectively and spiritually, by each other." ⁵

Humanity should first become conscious of a larger, happier life of sharing and fortifying each other beyond petty demands and insecurities. It is not an easy trek. The path is gorged with several challenges and miles to go before one rests assured. While nature is sure of her goal, willing contribution by humanity can mitigate disastrous consequences and ensure a smoother and swifter journey towards the goal.

A great opportunity awaits humanity!

References

1. Ishopanishad, *All this is for habitation by the Lord, whatsoever is individual universe of movement in the universal motion.* (Translation by Sri Aurobindo)
2. "Better anarchy than the long continuance of a law which is not our own or which our real nature cannot assimilate". Sri Aurobindo, *The Ideal of Human Unity*, CWSA, Vol. 25, p. 426
3. Sri Aurobindo, *The Ideal of Human Unity*, CWSA, Vol. 25, p. 417
4. Sri Aurobindo, *The Renaissance of India and Other Essays on Indian Culture*, CWSA, Vol. 20, p. 59
5. Sri Aurobindo, *The Human Cycle*, CWSA, Vol. 25, p. 40.