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**Spiritual Map of India*

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Editorial

The year 2021-2022 celebrates two events, which were crucial for the world. First, the 150th Birth Anniversary of Maharshi Sri Aurobindo and the 75th Birthday of free India. Sri Aurobindo himself had said this many times that India's freedom was necessary for the world to evolve in the right direction. India leads the world today. Indians are found in every corner of the world. Their enterprising quality is being acknowledged more and more.

Having passed through the pandemic, India has emerged stronger. Despite the problems in our own country, India helped the needy nations. World looks up to India for solutions now – be it the problem of pollution, saving the environment, energy conservation, technology, economic and industrial models or spiritual guidance for the maddening psychological crisis in the world. Did not Sri Aurobindo write on 21st February 1908,

So with India rests the future of the world. Whenever she is aroused from her sleep, she gives forth some wonderful shining ray of light to the world which is enough to illuminate the nations. Others live for centuries on what is to her the thought of a moment. God gave to her the book of Ancient Wisdom and bade her keep it sealed in her heart, until the time should come for it to be opened. Sometimes a page or a chapter is revealed, sometimes only a single sentence. Such sentences have been the inspiration of ages and fed humanity for many hundreds of years. So too when India sleeps, materialism grows apace and the light is covered up in darkness. But when materialism thinks herself about to triumph, lo and behold! a light rushes out from the East and where is Materialism? Returned to her native night. (CWSA 7: 890)

What Sri Aurobindo wrote more than a century ago is happening before our eyes. The material world has awakened to Indian spirituality and seeking answers to questions which are creating tremendous unrest across the world.

The presence of nuclear weapons on earth have not left the earth a safe place to live. But because India leads the world there is some hope. We should not forget that India is leading because Sri Aurobindo worked incessantly to bring down that force which alone can save India and save the world and earth from perishing. The supramental force was pulled down by Sri Aurobindo upon himself for the earth; but this journey began on 24th November 1926 which marks an important landmark in the earth's history. This day Sri Krishna descended into Sri Aurobindo. He explains this phenomenon thus: "The descent of Krishna would mean the descent of the Overmind Godhead preparing, though not itself actually bringing, the descent of Supermind and Ananda." (CWSA 35: 272)

It is to this historical day that we dedicate this issue of *New Race*. We may not necessarily understand the import of Sri Aurobindo's words, but can witness its impact. It is the presence of the Supermind, which is pervading and saving this earth every moment from complete destruction.

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'India on the March' Issue Exploring the evolution of consciousness in Indian Culture

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Immortal Wisdom



Verses from the Bhagavad Gita

Sri Aurobindo

*āśhcharya-vat paśhyati kaśhchid enan
āśhcharya-vad vadati tathaiva chānyah
āśhcharya-vach chainam anyah śhrinoti
śhrutvāpyenam veda na chaiva kaśhchit ||2.29||*

29. One sees it as a mystery or one speaks of it or hears of it as a mystery, but none knows it. That (the Self, the One, the Divine) we look on and speak and hear of as the wonderful beyond our comprehension, for after all our learning from those who have knowledge, no human mind has ever known this Absolute.

Constant subjection to birth and death is an inevitable circumstance of the soul's selfmanifestation. Its birth is an appearing out of some state in which it is not non-existent but unmanifest to our mortal senses, its death is a return to that unmanifest world or condition and out of it it will again appear in the physical manifestation. The to-do made by the physical mind and senses about death and the horror of death whether on the sick-bed or the battlefield, is the most ignorant of nervous clamours. Our sorrow for the death of men is an ignorant grieving for those for whom there is no cause to grieve, since they have neither gone out of existence nor suffered any painful or terrible change of condition, but are beyond death no less in being and no more unhappy in circumstance than in life.



*dehī nityam avadhyo yam dehe sarvasya bhārata
tasmāt sarvāni bhūtāni na tvam śhochitum arhasi ||2.30||*

30. This dweller in the body of everyone is eternal and indestructible, O Bharata; therefore thou shouldst not grieve for any creature.

(Comments and Translation by Sri Aurobindo)

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The Mother and the Nation

Sri Aurobindo

We have lost the faculty of religious fervour in Bengal and are trying now to recover it through the passion for the country by self-sacrifice, by labour for our fellow-countrymen, by absorption in the idea of the country. When a nation is on the verge of losing the source of its vitality, it tries to recover it by the first means which the environment offers, whether it be favourable to it or not. Bengal has always lived by its emotions; the brain of India, as it has been called, is also the heart of India. The loss of emotional power, of belief, of expansiveness of feeling would dry up the sources from which she derives her strength. The country of Nyaya is also the country of Chaitanya, who himself was born in the height of the intellectual development of Bengal as its fine flower and most perfect expression.

The land of Chaitanya is also the chosen home of the Mother and in Bengal she has set her everlasting seat. Immeasurable ages will pass, revolutions shake the land, religions come and go, but so long as the Ganges flows through the plains of the delta, so long shall the Mother sit enthroned in Bengal as sovereign and saviour. New forms she will take, new aspects of power or beauty, but the soul of her Motherhood will live unchanged and call to her sons to adore her. In the new age she has taken to herself a new form, she has come to us with a fresh face of beauty the full sweetness of which we have not yet grasped. When Bankim discovered the mantra *Bande Mataram* and the song wrote itself out through his pen, he felt that he had been divinely inspired, but the people heard his song and felt nothing. "Wait" said the prophet, "wait for thirty years and all India will know the value of the song I have written." The thirty years have passed and Bengal has heard; her ears have suddenly been opened to a voice to which she had been deaf and her heart filled with a light to which she had been blind. The Mother of the hymn is no new goddess, but the same whom we have always worshipped; only she has put off the world-form in which she was familiar to us, she has assumed a human shape of less terrible aspect, less fierce and devastating power to attract her children back to her bosom.

What is a nation? We have studied in the schools of the West and learned to ape the thoughts and language of the West forgetting our own deeper ideas and truer speech, and to the West the nation is the country, so much land containing so many millions of men who speak one speech and live one political life owing allegiance to a single governing power of its own choosing. When the European wishes to feel a living emotion for his country, he personifies the land he lives in, tries to feel that a heart beats in the brute earth and worships a vague abstraction of his own intellect. The Indian idea of nationality ought to be truer and deeper. The philosophy of our forefathers looked through the gross body of things and discovered a subtle body within, looked through that and found yet another more deeply hidden, and within the third body discovered the Source of life and form, seated for ever, unchanging and imperishable. What is true of the individual object, is true also of the general and universal. What is true of the man, is true also of the nation. The country, the land is only the outward body of the nation, its *annamaya*

kosh, or gross physical body; the mass of people, the life of millions who occupy and vivify the body of the nation with their presence, is the *pranamaya kosha*, the life-body of the nation. These two are the gross body, the physical manifestation of the Mother. Within the gross body is a subtler body, the thoughts, the literature, the philosophy, the mental and emotional activities, the sum of hopes, pleasures, aspirations, fulfilments, the civilisation and culture, which make up the *sukshma sharir* of the nation. This is as much a part of the Mother's life as the outward existence which is visible to the physical eyes. This subtle life of the nation again springs from a deeper existence in the causal body of the nation, the peculiar temperament which it has developed out of its ages of experience and which makes it distinct from others. These three are the bodies of the Mother, but within them all is the Source of her life, immortal and unchanging, of which every nation is merely one manifestation, the universal Narayan, One in the Many of whom we are all the children.

When, therefore, we speak of a nation, we mean the separate life of the millions who people the country, but we mean also a separate culture and civilisation, a peculiar national temperament which has become too deeply rooted to be altered and in all these we discover a manifestation of God in national life which is living, sacred and adorable. It is this which we speak of as the Mother. The millions are born and die; we who are here today, will not be here tomorrow, but the Mother has been living for thousands of years and will live for yet more thousands when we have passed away.

(CWSA 7: 1114-1116)

Yours was the fount of man's first inspiration,
The well of wisdom whence he earliest drew.
And yours shall be the floodtime of his reason,
The means of strength which shall his strength renew.

The wisdom of the West is but a madness,
The fret of shallow waters in their bed.
Yours is the flow, the fulness of man's patience,
The ocean of God's rest inherited.

And thou, too, India, mourner of the nations,
Though thou hast died today in all men's sight,
And though upon thy cross with thieves thou hangest,
Yet shall thy wrong be justified in right.

(CWSA 6: 573)

Kaivalyopanishad

Swami Chinmayananda

Part—I

Alhaasvalaayano bhagavantam parameshtinamupasametyovaacha—

Then Ashvalayana approached the Lord Parameshti, (the Creator, Brahma) and said:

Ashvalayana is a famous teacher in the Rig Veda and many are his *Mantras* that go into the bulk of our accepted Hindu Sacred Book. It is such a great teacher who is approaching the greatest master, to gain a fuller confirmation for himself, and if possible, more light upon the Truth. The teacher, here in this Upanishad, is the Creator, Brahma, who was Himself the first teacher who taught the spiritual Wisdom to his first-born sons, the Sanat Kumaras. Therefore, we must understand that here we have a great student approaching the greatest of teachers, seeking Wisdom. Naturally, therefore, the standard of discussion in the Upanishad cannot be cheap, or the thoughts rambling.

The term “then” (*Atha*) is a typical phrase used in the scriptural literature of India, The *Brahmasutras*¹ start with the same word “*Atha*” *Jaimini Sutras* also start with the term “*Atha*” In all these places the word then indicates a time when the student has already undergone all the previous disciplines, that are unavoidable in order to make him fit for the study of this delicate science. Self-analysis, contemplation upon the transcendental and the experience of the Absolute are not readily open for everyone. A certain amount of preparation is unavoidable.

The opening word of the Upanishad “then” indicates that the students Ashvalayana has already prepared himself with all the necessary qualifications such as the spirit of discrimination (*Viveka*): power of detachment (*Vairagya*): the six rules of self-control and self-discipline (*Shad-sampati*) : and a burning aspiration to liberate himself from the thraldom of matter (*Mumukshattvam*)—and, therefore, he is ready to receive the Great Knowledge.

*Adkeehi bhagavan brahmavidyaam varishtaam
sadaa sadbhiih sevyamaanaam nigoodaam
yayaachiraat sarvapaapam vypoehya
paraatparam purusham yaati vidvaan*

(1) Oh, Bhagwan, teach me the highest Science of Reality, cultivated always by the good people, which is” ever a hidden secret for man, a knowledge by which a “wise man, discarding all sins, can reach the Highest “Purusha”.

When a fully qualified student reaches the feet of the teacher, it is always the duty of the student to express his doubts. Then alone will the teacher open his mouth to discuss and try to clear the doubt. In many of the Upanishads we read the seeker’s question, and even where it is not explicitly expressed, from the very trend of the teacher’s answer, it becomes obvious that the student had definitely expressed a doubt of his own.

Ashvalayana’s request was that Lord Brahma should teach him the Science of Reality, called *Brahmavidya*. It is the Science of all Sciences inasmuch as this Knowledge makes all other scientists and professionals better men in their own field-of-knowledge. The Science of Brahman reveals the Supreme Consciousness, which illumines the ideas and

thoughts in all intellects. To unveil this consciousness and thus bring a dearer flood of light into the bosom would be automatically sharpening the quality of all other thinkers and scientists.

Ashvalayana himself indicates why he has sought a teacher for instruction in this Science. All other sciences can, perhaps, to a great extent, be studied directly from some available text books that explain the knowledge of it, if one has the necessary industry and self-application. But in the spiritual field books cannot give us the knowledge ; for language cannot explain that which words cannot define. Nor can this Reality be perceived by an intelligent man, however intelligent he may be, all by himself. It is a great hidden knowledge (*Nigoodham*).

By the term” secret it does not mean that it is a knowledge that “cannot be given out to others”; it only means that it is a knowledge which will be beyond our comprehension until we are initiated into it by some experienced teacher.

The Hindu philosophy is not satisfied by merely giving a theological exposition of what can be the final Reality, but it tries its best to charter for us a way-of-life by which we can come to apprehend subjectively the Ultimate Truth. At the moment of this awakening into the plane of God-consciousness, the individual can no longer be functioning through his equipments of matter—the body, the mind and the intellect. These matter-vehicles have been projected in order to express the existing *Vasanas* and to create new ones in us. When an individual succeeds in transcending his’ “perceiver-feeler-thinker-personality he must necessarily go beyond all his self-accumulated” (*Vasanas*).

These *Vasanas* are called Sin (*Pap*). Sin is that which causes mental fluttering and intellectual agitations. All *Vasanas*, as long as they exist, they will, by their reactions ever try to express themselves in the form of thoughts, feelings, and actions. Naturally, therefore, the Science of Brahman is such that through practice when we ultimately come to experience the Self in us, we would “have, by then gone beyond all the “sins” (*Papas* or *Vasanas*).

Not only do we, at the moment of Self-Realisation, transcend the vehicles of our expression and experience, not only do we then go beyond the very cause of these agitations, namely the *Vasanas*, but we shall have thereby a positive experience of the Transcendental Purusha.

The student is here demanding that knowledge by which he can transcend his Causal-body and come to apprehend and live the Universal Truth, the one Life Eternal, which expresses Itself as a universe of multiple forms and names.

*Tasmai sa hovaacha pitaamahascha
sraddhabhaktidhyaanayogaadavaihi*

(2) To him the Grandsire (Brahma), said,

“ Know this by means of faith, devotion and meditation.”

When a teacher is properly approached by a deserving student, and when the student has placed at the feet of his teacher, his great doubt on the transcendental theme, the teacher is by duty bound to explain, as best as he can, the Science of Life, and thus relieve

the student of his mental confusions. The part that the teacher has to play is unenviable indeed. He has to address the student's intellect—awake in him his powers of creative thinking—guide his thoughts to the very uttermost limits of thinking—and later on help him to transcend his own intellect—and thus help him to reach the Kingdom of the Pure Self. This process of Self-unfoldment, along the guided path, is to be walked indeed by the student himself, if he is to succeed in his subjective quest of Truth.

All these implications and technical difficulties in - teaching Spiritual Knowledge were known to the student Ashvalayana, because he himself was a teacher already. Therefore in the shortest number of words the teacher, Brahma, here indicates the instrument of evolution and the technic of self-unfoldment in the very opening words of his answer.

Thus Brahavidya, the Science of Life, is to be understood, according to the stanza, "By means of faith (*Sraddha*), devotion (*Bhakti*) and meditation (*Dhyana*) The statement is very significant. Faith has been described as "that faculty of the human intellect by which it can reflect and understand the deeper imports of the scriptural declaration and thereafter assimilate those ideas into the very texture of the intellect." This power of understanding and assimilating new ideas, so as to evolve itself, is called *Sraddha*. Thus essentially, *Sraddha* is the function of the intellect It is the power for Self-education.

Devotion is love directed towards a higher ideal whereby the devotee gains an unfoldment, experiences an upliftment and thus comes to outshine his own capabilities. This is essentially a function of the heart: the Temple of Love-is ever in the human heart.

If faith (*Sraddha*) is the function of the intellect, and Devotion (*Bhakti*) is the function of the heart then Meditation (*Dhyana*) is an integral act of both the head and the heart. When the intellectual aspect in our personality, nurtured and nourished by the higher ideas (Faith), and the heart elevated and inspired by its dedication to these very same principles (Devotion) function together it becomes the act of meditation (*Dhyana*). The prepared head intellectually moving forward conquering new possibility and the heart endowed with devotion, following at its heels to consolidate the conquest through its identification—this combined action of both the head and the heart is called meditation.

The declarations of the Upanishads are at best a vain attempt to define the indefinable, to explain the inexplicable, to understand the ununderstandable. Since the theme of the Upanishad is the Subjective Self, which is a realm of experience that lie beyond the frontiers of the intellect, all learned theoretical discussions, or shared intellectual comprehensions, must necessarily fall short of the subjective experience. But at the same time the teacher can instruct and the taught can study only from the level of the intellect. Therefore, the great teacher Brahma, here in the Upanishad, at its very opening, warns the student that this Great Knowledge can be gained not by the usual channel of understanding, but by a special secret technique.

That which cannot be experienced by the heart, can often be comprehended by the intellect in our ordinary life. Scientific theories on economic programmes are examples of knowledge that can be intellectually comprehended even though it cannot be emotionally experienced. But, if there be a Truth which can either be physically seen or emotionally felt, or intellectually thought of, it is to be apprehended by an integration of

all our existing faculties. This power of apprehension, arising out of a combination of all our faculties is called intuition. A harmonised head and heart develop in itself a power of perception which is not the sum total of their faculties, but it transcends itself and this power of subjective perception, in man is called intuition.

In short, the teacher warns the student that unlike other sciences of the world, spiritual knowledge cannot come through the head or through heart, but it can be experienced only through the faculty of intuition which is to be cultivated by the student for himself.

*Na karmanaa na prajayaa dhanena
tyaagenaike amrutatvamaanasuhu
Parena naakam nihitam guhaayaam
vibraajate yadyatayo vishanti*

(3) Not by work, nor by birth, nor by wealth, but by renunciation alone, Immortality is attained. Higher than Heaven, Seated in the cave of the intellect, It shines, which the seekers attain.

That the theme of the Upanishad can be experienced only through intuition has been already explained. To confirm that idea, here, the teacher totally denies all effectiveness for other methods-of-acquisitions, in gaining the Supreme Self of the Upanishads. By action and work we generally strive for and acquire the world-of-objects; sometimes an amount of happiness can be gained through the success of or even by the indirect help of those who depend upon us (*Praja*); an amount of happiness can be really ordered by wealth.

Direct effort, indirect help, purchase by wealth— these are the three avenues through which we come to our worldly success and happiness. We achieve happiness in daily life either through our self-effort (*Karmana*) or, sometimes, our self-efforts are supplemented by the help we get from others (*Prajaya*) and, at other times, we gain happiness by purchasing it with wealth (*Dhanena*). None of these methods of transaction, which are available in the world-of-objects, can bring to us the spiritual solace or the subjective Wisdom.

The world-of-objects are apprehended and experienced only through the instruments of the body, mind and intellect. Through the body we perceive the world -of-objects, through the mind we *feel* the emotions, through the intellect we *think* of our ideas and ideals. The theme that has been explained and expounded in the Upanishads, Brahman, is not something that fall under the world-of-objects constituted of the perceptions, the feelings or the thoughts, but it is that Effulgent Consciousness that illumines them all. This Supreme, Divine Subject in us, that presides over us as our own Self can be apprehended only in the subjective experience, at: a time when we are not functioning through our body or mind or intellect.

Therefore, the above statement indicates that by liquidating our identifications with the body, mind and intellect alone can we reach "the still moment of meditation;" and therein alone can we awake ourselves to the Universal Truth. To detach ourselves from the false perceptions, and their apparent joys and sorrows is true renunciation (*Thyag*).

A child looking out into the world through a blue glass will certainly see the world

blue. In order to see the world as it is, if the child exchanges his blue- glass-piece to a red, green or yellow one, it will not serve the purpose. For, when viewed through the different coloured-glass-pieces his vision will be coloured by the very colour of the glass piece and to look at the ID world with the naked eye is the only method to apprehend the world *as it is*.

Similarly, in order to recognise the Truth if we look at It through the body we can only experience the world constituted by so many different stimuli; through the mind, It is interpreted as so many emotions; through the intellect It can be experienced only as thoughts and ideas. In order to recognise the Reality behind the world these distorting instruments of perceptions should be transcended—*renunciation* alone is the true method.¹

At such moments when the individual is no more functioning through his equipments-of-matter, at a time when one is neither perceiving, nor feeling, nor thinking, his individuality melts itself in the experience of the Universal, Eternal, Reality in him.

This great experience is termed in our Upanishads as the ‘State of Immortality’. It is, no doubt, a confusing term until the student is initiated into its special connotation. Change is mortality or death. “Change” not only indicated a new condition, but implies at once the end or destruction of its previous condition of existence. Thus, when morning changes to noon, it is not only the birth of the noon, but it is also at once the death of the morning. In every change the previous condition must die. A chain of such death-and-birth constitute the “realm of change”.

Finitude is experienced when we recognise the world-of-objects through the instruments of the body, mind and intellect. Transcending these three, we awake ourselves to the Self, the Eternal, wherein there is no more change, and, therefore, that experience is called the State of Immortality. The Experience of God-Consciousness is termed thus in our Sasras as the Experience of Immortality.

The Plane of Consciousness thus experienced within our bosom, is indicated here by the closing two lines of the above Mantra.

“*Higher than Heaven*”. Strictly following the style and diction of the Upanishad here in these two lines we get a beautiful description of the State of Immortality. In Sanskrit, ‘*Kam*’ means ‘Joy’ and ‘*A-Kam*’ means ‘Pain’ and ‘*Na-A-Kam*’ means ‘No-Pain’. This term ‘No-Pain’ (*Na-A-Kam*) is employed in the Upanishad to indicate Heaven, meaning thereby that it is a “state beyond pain”; but it is not a positive state of definite joy. This type of a negative condition is experienced by us in our deep-sleep condition when we are in our Causal-body, and we have therein the state of ‘No-Pain’. The positive realm of spiritual glory defined here by the term “Immortality”, is described as something higher than the negative State of ‘No-Pain’ (*Parena Na-A-Kam*).

“Where am I to experience It?” “Where can the seeker search for It, so that he may come to apprehend It?” The stanza answers “*Seated in the cave of the intellect*”. It is a typical Upanishadic phrase, very often used extensively in this literature, and it has a special scientific significance. According to the Upanishadic lore, in the “cave of the heart” is the Seat of the intellect, and the Rishes continue to explain that in the “cave of

the intellect” is the seat of the Self. When we are inside a cave we all know that all around and about us it is nothing but the rocks of the cave. The “cave of the heart”, therefore, must mean an atmosphere wherein all around it is nothing but the “heart”—in philosophy “heart” means the humane qualities of love, tenderness, mercy, etc. A seeker must first of all develop these humane qualities of the heart, and when his intellect comes to function in such a bosom, the intellect can apprehend the very Consciousness which illumines all thoughts, as the very Self. Remember every science has got its own vocabulary and the Rishes of old brought into their Subjective Science of Life the lyricism of their poetic minds.

That which shine (*Vibhrajathe*): In the “cave-of-the-heart” transcending even the state-of-sleep (No-Pain), is the plane of the God-Consciousness into which seekers readily enter (*Vishanthi*).

This stanza is in toto found in Mundakopaniyahad, and almost the same ideas are in Kathopanishad.¹

*Vedantavignaananasunischitaarthaah
samnyasayogaadyatah suddhasatvaah
te bramahlakeshu paraantakaale
paraamrtaatparimuchyanti sarve*

(4) Those who are pure in mind, striving through the path of renunciation, come to ascertain clearly the deeper imports of the Knowledge, which is the theme of the Upanishad (Vedanta). They, in the end, gain the world of Brahma and, liberating themselves from everything, gain the Highest Immortality.

This mantra is a significant one and is found in the *Mundaka Upanishad*. Those who are seekers, when they have relatively quietened the agitations of their minds, they become more and more receptive to the subtler Truth that is indicated in the declarations of the scriptures, A mind that is fully agitated is considered, in the terminology of philosophy, as “impure” (*A-Suddh*). The steady mind, agitationless and alert, is called a “pure” (*Suddh*) mind. In order to penetrate into the deeper depths of the spiritual significances in the scriptural texts, it is unavoidable that one should have a certain amount of mental serenity. Undivided devotion (*Upasana*) is the technique by which this “inner purity” (*Antakarana-Suddhi*) is cultivated.

In order to make the mind steady, the wanderings of the mind are to be controlled. The mind wanders only towards things and situations to which it has developed a clinging attachment. To detach our mind from such objects is called *Sannyas*. Again, we, in our identification with our body-mind-intellect, project ourselves into the world of objects-emotions-thoughts, and, thus open our minds to a psychological climate of withering storms and disturbances. To detach ourselves from our identifications with the matter-vehicles in us is the secret of increasing our *purposeful* mental serenity.

To renounce our attachments to the sense-objects, and thus come to control the reception of stimuli from the world outside, is true renunciation (*Sannyas*). This attitude of renunciation becomes impossible to the many because mind cannot remain without attaching “itself to something or the other. In order to release the mind from the agitation-

breeding preoccupations with the world-of-objects, it must be given another “point of attention” (*Lakshya*). Attuning the mind with the concept of the Highest Reality, and thus heaving the mind from the world of dissipation is called *Yoga* (*Yuj*—to join). Thus, this beautiful phrase, “Detachment through attachment” (*Sannyas Yoga*) has been coined in the Upanishadic Literature.

Through this practice—of attaching our attention to the Higher, and, thereby gaining detachment from the lower—when the seekers develop their “inner purity”. The mind grows richer in its receptivity, alertness, comprehension, and in its powers of apprehension. Such trained minds become fit for plunging into the study of the scriptures. The Upanishads are appended to the Various Vedas, at their close (*Antham*) and, therefore, that literature is called Vedanta (*Ved-antha*). The Vedanta literature not only explains, to us theoretically the Knowledge (*Gyana*) of the Reality, but it explains to us various techniques by which it can become a subjective Knowledge of vivid Experience (*Vignana*). Thus, the study of the scriptures in itself is never complete until the theoretical Knowledge discussed therein becomes our Subjective Experience. Then alone the true meaning (*Artha*) of the scriptural declarations becomes fully apprehended and determined (*Sunisshitam*),

Such seekers, it is declared in the second half of this mantra, experience in themselves a greater unfoldment. According to the degree of this experience gained, the Upanishads declare two types of realisation : (a) Direct Experience of the Infinite, even while we are here, even while continuing in our physical embodiment—called ‘Jivanmukthi’ ‘ and the other is (b) the “Realisation by stages” (*Krama Mukthi*) wherein the seeker, after leaving his physical existence enters into the realm of the Total Mind, the Creator,—the world of the Hiranyagarbha called *Brahma-loka*—and there, while enjoying a subtle life of joys, prepares himself for the highest experience, and he gains it at the end of the dissolution (*Pralaya*). Both these paths are laid out, chartered and described, in the Upanishadic literature.

Here, in the *mantra* under discussion, it is so worded that both these paths are indicated.

Those of the seekers, who have cultivated this inner purity and have come to experience fully the theme of the Upanishads, directly live in God-Consciousness, even while continuing apparently in their old physical structure. The term ‘*Brakmaloka*’ can be dissolved in Sanskrit in two ways. The plane of experience (*Loka*) which is itself Brahman (*Brahmaloka*) ; or it can also be dissolved as the plane of experience in which the Creator, the Total Intellect, Brahma, revels (*Brahmani Lokaha*).

Para-Antha-Kalae: — “At the final end,” is the word meaning of this term. This can be interpreted as at the end of the world’s dissolution (*Pralaya*), or subjectively at the end of the ego-centric existence, realisation in stages and immediate Eternal Experience, are implied by this term.

Para-Amritaha — This term also can be applied for both types of realisation. Liberated in life (*Jivan-Muktas*) come to live that which lie beyond (*Para*), the very Essence of Immortality (*Amrit*). Mortality and Immortality are two intellectual concepts and both

of them are illumined by the Consciousness in us . The illuminator is always, we know, something other than the illumined. In this sense of the term, the Absolute is indicated as a Blazing Factor that transcends the very concepts of mortality and immortality, Such mighty masters who have become one with the Self are naturally indicated here as those who have “gone beyond even Immortality” (*Para-Amritah*). They, who had already reached the Plane of Consciousness called Brahmaloaka, get themselves totally absorbed into the Supreme Reality at the Great *Pralaya*-time.

After this final experience of God- “vision”, the seeker for ever becomes liberated from all bondages experienced by him till then because of his identification with matter, and he gets liberated totally from everything (*Parimuchhanti Sarve*).

When such convincing assertions are made by the teacher, the true student, who is ever a man of practical vision, comes to demand personal experience of the Truth. Vedanta laughs at any theory, however logical it may be, unless there be in it a scientific process visualised by which a diligent seeker can come to experience the Truth in himself. In all the Upanishads we find not only the description of a “vision of life”, but also we get an exhaustive discussion of the technique of Self-realisation as a “way of life”. True to this healthy tradition, here, in the *Kaivalya Upanishad*, also we find exhaustive details regarding *the way of life* and technique by which the students can confirm the vision of the theory with their own inner experience. The path of meditation has been completely chalked out by a few strokes in the following stanzas.

(Taken from *Discourses on Kaivalyopanishad*, Chinmaya Publication Trust, Madras, 1961: 1-16)

There are three necessary elements of the path to Kaivalya, —first, the starting point, vidya, right knowledge, implying the escape from ignorance, non-knowledge and false knowledge; next, the process or means, escape from svpAp, all evil, ie, sin, pain and grief; last, the goal, Purushottam, the Being who is beyond the highest, that is, beyond Turiya, being the Highest. By the escape from sin, pain and grief one attains absolute ananda, and by ananda, the last term of existence, we reach that in which ananda exists. What is that? It is not Turiya who is shivam, shantam, adwaitam, sachidanandam, but that which is beyond shivam and ashivam, good and evil, shantam and kalilam, calm and chaos, dwaitam and adwaitam, duality and unity. Sat, Chit and Ananda are in this Highest, but He is neither Sat, Chit nor Ananda nor any combination of these. He is All and yet He is neti, neti, He is One and yet He is many. He is Parabrahman and He is Parameswara. He is Male and He is Female. He is Tat and He is Sa. This is the Higher than the Highest. He is the Purusha, the Being in whose image the world and all the Jivas are made, who pervades all and underlies all the workings of Prakriti as its reality and self. It is this Purusha that Aswalayana seeks.

(Sri Aurobindo, CWSA 18: 288)

Strength in the Mind



Rabindranath Tagore: The Rising Sun

Shraddha Mohanty

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) has left an indelible mark upon his times and dual centuries by his literary genius and inner and outer growth. His literary output comprises of more than 2000 songs as well as paintings, 3000 poems, dozens of novels, plays, dance dramas, essays and short stories. His educational experiments resulted into the making of Santiniketan and Sriniketan. Tagore's debates and thoughts on national and international matters put a stamp of conformity upon his love for freedom and non-conformity.

Human society has made a lot of progress in the terms of civilization in the fields of science, technology, social structure and standard of living. Still the age old problems of society could not be solved. They come in front in numerous ways. Sri Aurobindo has rightly expressed this in the first line of his work *The Human Cycle*,

Modern Science, obsessed with the greatness of its physical discoveries and the idea of the sole existence of Matter, has long attempted to base upon physical data even its study of soul and Mind of those workings of Nature in man and animal in which a knowledge of psychology is as important as any of the physical sciences....It is not surprising therefore that in history and sociology attention should have been concentrated on the external data, laws, institutions, rites, customs, economic factors and developments, while the deeper psychological elements so important in the activities of a mental, emotional, ideative being like man have been very much neglected.(CWSA 25: 5).

Due to this neglect, the problems of society are still the same and the radical defect could not be removed. Instead, the growth of civilization has resulted into the arrival of various problems resulting into the loosening of social structure and negligence of the spiritual element as an inherent part of social structure.

According to Sri Aurobindo the Vedic age of society was based upon symbolism like the ceremony of sacrifice. The religious dogma like the situation and routine of a widow in Indian Society, still exist in some or the other manner. Baseless adherence to these customs and their false eulogizing resulted into the typical and conventional age which soon transformed into the age of individual and Reason. Tagore was a product of this age. His works questioned the age-old beliefs and customs. He criticized various old practices of the time like the treatment met out to women folk, widow custom, loss of freedom and self-reliance. He also saw the coming of the Subjective Age where the mind of man started opposing the age-old conventions moving towards the negation of few customs and focuses itself upon the discovery of

the age-old truths and laws of life. Tagore also opposed the indifferent approach of society towards the woes of the widowed women. His individualistic and objective approach also opposed the barriers of religion, caste, dogmas and customs and craved for the inner and the outer freedom. He stood on the threshold of the Spiritual Age from inside but his outer atmosphere resonated with the Subjective Age.

Rabindranath Tagore belonged to the period when the Saraswati aspect of Shakti has engulfed the minds and souls of men. Harmony and perfection in the physical was sought after. The inner seeking of mankind saw its evolution in the physical domain.

Sri Aurobindo's views on the writings of Tagore also confirm the same. He clearly pointed towards the changing consciousness, "But Tagore's *Gitanjali* is most un-English, yet it overcame this obstacle. For the poetry of spiritual experience, even if it has true poetic value, the difficulty might lie in the remoteness of the subject. But nowadays this difficulty is lessening with the increasing interest in the spiritual and the mystic."(CWSA 27: 447).

The true poetry of the spirit can only be written when the poet has established contact with the psychic being. This meeting of the inner self and the life soul of nature can lead to the true poetic creation. This contact can be established easily by Eastern poets with their background of Indian ethos and spiritual tradition.

The devolution of consciousness at the time of Tagore took place from mind to spiritual, the proof of which is the statement made by Sri Aurobindo in *The Future Poetry* about Tagore,

And at the subtlest elevation of all that has yet been reached stands or rather wings and floats in a high intermediate region the poetry of Tagore, not in the complete spiritual light, but amid an air shot with its seekings and glimpses, a sight and cadence found in a psycho-spiritual heaven of subtle and delicate soul experience transmuting the earth tones by the touch of its radiance. The wide success and appeal of his poetry is indeed one of the most significant signs of the tendency of the mind of the age.(CWSA 26: 303).

Tagore was impressed by the Vaishnava tradition of bhakti which resonated in his works with a strong devotion for the inner formless. Like the age of Puranas and Bhagvatas, Tagore sang the glories of Almighty through his phrases of Geetanjali and other poems. Sri Aurobindo also confirmed the new creative impulse in the poetry, "which has driven ..., Rabindranath to take hold of the dramatic form for self-expression as well as the lyrical in spite of their dominant subjectivity"(Ibid: 9). In his earlier works Tagore attempted old dramatic forms and later transformed his literary style to suit his temperament. His tone imitated the tone of a prophet, a preacher and a lover of God. Even though, he was few steps ahead of his age, yet he belonged to the verge of subjectivity moving towards the universal subjective

enriched by the spiritual experience of a poet-seer. Though Tagore got only a few glimpses of the spiritual, yet he was able to retain that experience in his spirit. His ways in poetry relied upon the melody and sweetness of the poetic expression. In his hands philosophic truth got converted into beauty by his poetic vision and expression. He carried the Vaishnava tradition with a modern handling. "Today much of the poetry of Tagore is the sign of such a Sadhana, a long inheritance of assured spiritual discovery and inheritance"(Ibid: 236).

Thus, Tagore was far ahead of his time. His works are a living proof of the fusion of subjectivity and spirituality. The subtlety and remoteness of his poetry arose from his indifference and non-attachment to his poetic creation. When the human mind is growing more and more towards self knowledge and self discovery, the need of the hour is the emergence of such poets on the Indian panorama that can create a deeper meaning of the experience of life and "to build bridges of visioned light and rhythm between the infinite and eternal and the limited mind and soul and the embodied life of man"(Ibid: 248).

In "The March of Civilization", Nolini Kanta Gupta has discussed about the age in each society where those people are born who revolt against set conventions and bring a change in their environment. Differentiating between the organizers and creators of larger human movement, he writes, in that great aspiring souls and man of action can be distributed into two categories, "the organisers" or "the nuclei" "centres of reference round which their respective epoch crystallises as a peak culture unit"(Nolini Kanta Gupta. "March of Human Civilization" p.4), or "the creators" who are the harbingers of "some truth, some dynamic revelation -- that was not there before"(4). Tagore was the creator who spread the movement of poetic expression of love towards God and thus became an inspiration for many. The approach of Tagore was an extensive one and his works completed the characteristics of his age.

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Harmony and Beauty in Life



India's Problems and Sri Aurobindo's Solutions

V. Ananda Reddy

The Mother gave a message in 1968: "India has become the symbolic representation of all difficulties of modern mankind. India will be the land of resurrection – the resurrection to a higher and truer life." (CWM 13: 376) This is almost the essence of what I have to say on 'India's Problems and Sri Aurobindo's Solutions'.

Purna Swaraj was the mantra of pre-independence decades. "Freedom to break India" seems to be the shadayantra of post-independence India! As years roll into decades after the independence, the times are getting to be more turbulent, fierce in ideology and putting to shame the spirit of non-violence and Satyagraha that had reigned the spirit of India in her pre-independence years. Fanaticism in the name of religion, creeds, isms stroll in every street, threatening the common and the innocent people. Corruption seems to have corroded our very souls.

The right to freedom of speech and notions of democracy have led to the jungle-raj, where the power and punch of money and political connections rule every act and thought of the helpless common lot. Democracy has turned into demonization and economic revival is transformed into economic survival. And yet, in spite of all these hollow worm-eaters from India, outside India and inside India, Sri Aurobindo was not disillusioned about the great and inevitable glorious future of the country. He wrote, "Within them I find the soul of a civilization alive. Those sleeping, I see upon it consoling sentence of God, 'Because thou hast believed in me, therefore, thou shalt live and not perish.'" (CWSA 1: 560-561)

As the Mother said, "Sri Aurobindo always loved deeply his motherland. But he wished her to be great, noble, pure and worthy of a big mission in the world. He refused to let her sink to the sordid and vulgar level of blind self-interests, and ignorant prejudices." (CWM 13: 128) Sri Aurobindo indeed loved this country very deeply, but at the same time, he was not blind to the weaknesses of our culture, of our society, our politics. So, in one of his writings in the Karmayogin, written almost 100 years back, he wrote, "The Spirit and ideals of India had come to be confined in a mould which, however beautiful, was too narrow and slender to bear the mighty burden of our future. When that happens, the mould has to be broken and even the ideal lost for a while in order to be recovered free of constraint and limitation." (CWSA 8: 245)

Sri Aurobindo traces three main reasons of how India became weak during the Mughal and British rule. The first one, he says is "a sinking of that super-abundant vital energy and a fading of the joy of life and the joy of creation." (CWSA 20: 14)

Second one is, “a rapid cessation of the old free intellectual activity, a slumber of the scientific and the critical mind as well as the creative intuition; what remains becomes more and more a repetition of ill-understood fragments of past knowledge.” (Ibid) As Sri Aurobindo puts it very strongly, “there is a petrification of the mind and life in the relics of the forms which a great intellectual past had created. Old authority and rule become rigidly despotic and, as always then happens, lose their real sense and spirit.” (Ibid)

In another journal, he wrote, “It is my belief that the main cause of India's weakness is not subjection, nor poverty, not a lack of spirituality or religion, but a diminution of the power of thought the spread of ignorance in the birthplace of knowledge.” (*Bengali Writings*: 369) This, I suppose, is one of the most important observations made by Sri Aurobindo. We always blame saying that India has become poor after the British rule etc., though it is not the only reason of India's condition. India has become weak majorly due to this “diminution of the power of thought”. “Everywhere I see an inability or unwillingness to think – incapacity of thought, or ‘thought-phobia’” (Ibid) wrote Sri Aurobindo. This is a remarkable insight by Sri Aurobindo: we should not think that India's deprivation is not because of her economic poverty or for her long years of colonization, etc. Over the centuries we have lost the capacity of thinking for ourselves. We are becoming mere imitators, repeating what the Western world has given to us; even today it is the same trend. However, it is only now, since a few decades that Indians are beginning to think for themselves; searching for their real identity. Till now we have believed what the British presented to us as our real culture. Even today, very unfortunately, the Western media is going all out to paint a false image of our culture.

Today we are re-discovering our own culture and historical roots. And this is what Sri Aurobindo had done in his journal ‘Bande Mataram’, while he was in Calcutta. He aimed at awakening the Indians to the strength of their own culture. And it is very significant that he did so from Bengal because Bengal was the place where the westernization was at its worst. Perhaps it was the right place to address this question.

The third reason Sri Aurobindo has given for India's weakness is: “The spirituality remains, but burns no longer with a large and clear flame of knowledge of former times, but in intense jets and in a dispersed action, which replaces the old magnificent synthesis and in which certain spiritual truths are emphasized to the neglect the others.” (CWSA 20: 14)

Sri Aurobindo has described this in great detail in his book, *Renaissance in India*. He explains that there are intense jets here and there of a spiritual enthusiasm for a few days or months, but the it does not last for long. This is what has become of Indian spirituality today; but we need to revive it. To revive our spirituality and

culture does not mean just reading the Vedas and the Upanishads – one has to imbibe and relive the “magnificent synthesis” that they embodied.

Unless and until we get back that knowledge which synthesizes, Indian spirituality will not awaken to its own truth. And this synthesis is marvellously portrayed in Sri Aurobindo's writings. He is known as a philosopher, a poet or a social thinker, but what can define him best is that he is a “grand synthesis” of the entire Indian spiritual tradition as well as the Western philosophic, psychological and historical thought. Such a synthesis has been his forte. He has shown us the way and he expects from us to bring back the synthesis of the ancient wisdom.

Now we will analyse two major problems of India in the light of Sri Aurobindo. These are the two fields in which we have made a major blunder, post-independence, which resulted in the rapid decline of Indian culture and values. These two fields are – education and parliamentary democracy. We will discuss each one in detail.

Education System

Most of our universities today have come to a standstill, but this was already foreseen by Sri Aurobindo in the early 20th centuries. Here is a passage where he writes,

If the physical training it [the Indian University] provides this contemptible and moral training nil the mental training is also meagre in quantity and worthless and quality... in order for a student to get a degree, let us make it absolutely necessary that he shall have a good education. If a worthless education is sufficient in order to secure his object & a good education, quite unessential, it is obvious that the student will not incur great trouble and diversion of energy in order to acquire what we feels to be unnecessary. (CWSA 1: 358: 60)

This was a prophetic sentence! Written almost 120 years ago, it has become more and more valid and true today. Our education today is worthless and meagre in and quality and quantity both. Every word of Sri Aurobindo has come true. We are aware that today students do not necessarily have to work hard on their subjects to get the certificate and degree. They can adapt any means, moral or immoral, legal or illegal, or any other unfair means to get through the exams. They do not feel the need to work on their studies or have no urge to increase their knowledge. But Sri Aurobindo, suggested a change:

But change the state of things, make culture & true science essential and the same interested motive which now makes him content with a bad education will then compel him to strive after culture and true science... (ibid)

Please note that Sri Aurobindo suggests that we should focus on culture and true science. But we have not paid attention to his advice. Now, the National Education

Policy is trying to implement these two sides – the study of culture and the scientific study.

In spite of the deterioration today, Sri Aurobindo says:

Much as we have lost as a nation, we have always preserved our intellectual alertness, quickness & originality; but even this last gift is threatened by our University system, & if it goes, it will be the beginning of irretrievable degradation & final extinction. (CWSA 1:360)

Even when India had only a few universities, Sri Aurobindo had foreseen the trend that the education system is following now would lead to “irretrievable degradation & final extinction” of our intellectual capacities. So, he even prescribes the steps to be taken to stop this degradation: “The very first step in reform must therefore be to revolutionize the whole aims & methods of our education.” (ibid)

It is indeed worth mentioning that the National Education Policy has aimed at revolutionising the aims and the methods of our education. How, it will take shape and when it will be truly implemented is left to time, but at least an attempt at this revival has been already made.

In India, we had an education system in which “we have been cut off by a mercenary and soulless education from all our ancient roots of culture and tradition”.(ibid: 433) Sri Aurobindo wrote this in early twentieth century and it stands true even now – we have a soulless education, because it has become a commercial venture: our young minds have been brainwashed to earn a handsome salary at any cost; even at the cost of bartering one's soul. Now, whatever NEP is trying to do, basically, we need to bring back India's soul into education. Otherwise, it will be too late for us to recover. And in fact, very interestingly, a great philosopher, poet, critic, called Ananda Coomaraswamy had written something similar. He wrote:

A single generation of English education suffices to break the threads of traditions, and to create a nondescript and superficial being deprived of all roots – a sort of intellectual pariah who does not belong to the East or to the West, the past or the future. (qtd in *India's Spiritual Destiny*, Mangesh Nadkarni: 38)

It is a brilliant description of the young minds of India today. We are not ourselves: we are neither the past nor the present nor the West, nor the East – an intellectual pariah– we belong to nobody! We have retained a small bit of our culture but the influence of materialism of the Western world, have all preoccupied over our thoughts and act. And even if anyone wants to rediscover Indian culture truly, it does not seem possible for the lack of sufficient research. Sri Aurobindo also observes that we have gone far and have become a part of commercialization. Education system also has suffered this turn for it has also become a business, a money minting tool for

the world today. It will take a long time to retrieve the past but, at least the beginning has been made. By the time we see some results, it will take some time.

Parliamentary Democracy

In India there are hundreds of problems, but we are striking at the root of all of them. One is the terrible education and the other is the parliamentary democracy. I was surprised to see and to read a book by Sunil Khilnani, *The Idea of India*. He describes how our Indian Constitution was penned in those beginning years:

Constitutional democracy based on universal suffrage did not emerge from popular pressures for it within the Indian society, it was not wrested by the people from the state; it has given to them by the political choice of an intellectual elite... the drafting of the Constitution rested in the hands of only about two dozen lawyers.

Most people in India had no idea of what exactly they had been given. Like the British Empire it supplanted, India's constitutional democracy was established in a fit of absentmindedness. It was neither unintended, not lacking in deliberation. But it is unwitting in the sense that the elite who introduced it was itself surprisingly insouciant about the potential implications of his actions...

This author has done his research very well. He is quite vocal about the lack of concern shown by the then intellectual elites towards drafting the Constitution of India.

The fact that England does not have a written Constitution speaks of the way in which the Constitution of any country needs to be formed. England developed it over centuries, out of real experience, of their own culture, of their own needs, of their own demands. If we study the birth of democracy in England we have to go back to their history. Over the centuries, when they developed the mental faculty, they chose to systematise their social and political system. Their Constitution was guided by their swabhava and their needs. It was not imposed upon them from outside. These were systems that were practiced for years before they took a formal shape. And yet it remained unwritten since the beginning.

The basis of this democratic system was the rational capacity which the human beings developed as a result of evolution. Reason became the guiding inspiration of humanity and duties and rights were emphasized upon. Since the entire human race has comes today under the purview of being rational, such a rationally drafted parliamentary system was adapted by or prescribed for all. However, this does not take into account the swabhava of each of the nations.

For example, Indian temperament and the nature of her soul is spiritual. Obviously, then, a rationally made system does not suit her. But this was ignored by the makers of our Constitution. We were given only three years to draft our Constitution. It

was given to a group of lawyers who had nothing to do with the past culture of the country or its aspiration for the future.

Democracy is not new to India. We always had this system, but not a parliamentary democracy, not something that was formed in a huddle, put together somehow and copied from the British and others. This Constitution is an imposition on us. It did not emerge from within the country. Once it was given, nobody thought about it later and we were left to suffer its consequences.

Before I read what Sri Aurobindo has spoken about this issue, I would like read the words of the former Speaker of Lok Sabha, Shri Somnath Chatterjee. In August 2012, when he was leaving his post, in his parting words, he gave a very significant message in the Parliament. He said,

After more than six decades of our independence, we have come to a stage when questions are being asked about the workability of our democratic setup, based on the parliamentary system, and about the utility and relevance of our vital democratic institutions. (Source: <https://speakerloksabha.nic.in/speech/SpeechDetails.asp?SpeechId=323>)

People in their moments of wisdom have begun to see the relevance of this democratic system. And this is what was questioned in the Parliament itself, by none other than the Speaker of the Lok Sabha himself.

Sri Aurobindo himself questioned this system even before the Constitution was drafted. He declared that the parliamentary system would not be suitable for India. Knowing the minds of the people well, he knew what shape it might take and therefore his words seem almost prophetic. Though he never wanted to be known as a prophet, all his writings show his foresight.

In another writing, he wrote:

Spirituality is India's only politics, the fulfilment of Sanatana Dharma its only Swaraj I have no doubt We shall have to go through our Parliamentary period in order to get rid of the notion of Western democracy by seeing in practice how helpless it is to make nations blessed. (CWSA 36: 179)

This is indeed a very clear vision. Unfortunately, he says, we have to go through this democracy to realise how terrible and unsuitable it is for India. And this was realised and pronounced by Shri Somnath Chatterjee as late as 2012. He too saw the country suffering and therefore raised his doubts on the Parliamentary system.

Sri Aurobindo wrote elsewhere:

It was mastered in the inception by the inrush of divine force which came in 1905 and aroused it from its state of complete tamasic ajnanam. (CWSA 36: 170)

This is another prophetic utterance. In 1905, there came upon India "a divine force". It came to arouse the country from its slumber, from the *tamas* in which

India was then sleeping. "But as happens also with individuals, all that was evil all the wrong *samskaras* and wrong emotions, and mental and moral habits rose with it and misused the divine force." In 1905 the partition of Bengal was proposed. It was the beginning of a force that really came to help. But there was almost a violent resistance from humans. The force had come to help us but, in order to resist this force, all the negativities, dirt and evil side of humanity came forward. It was the evil that misused the force rather than the positive side using the force to wake up from the slumber. This misused force resulted in the partition of India in 1947.

It is only when this resistance is dissolved that the Truth will have a chance, the *sattwic* mind in India will emerge and a really strong spiritual movement will begin as a prelude to India's regeneration.

Sri Aurobindo is not in a hurry. He could see the happenings on the subtle physical level. He was just not a visionary who envisioned good for the nation. He had an inner vision of events and world forces. Through his *trikaladrishti* he could foresee things that would happen hundreds of years before and not events of a few years hence. He knew the present in the light of the future. That is why he could give us the exact analysis of our condition today. As he declared, we have to suffer this democracy before we bring any changes in our society. And even after the Speaker of the Lok Sabha raised his doubts about the system, people have not paid much attention to his concern. Perhaps, we have to suffer more and for longer period before our eyes open up.

Having discussed that Sri Aurobindo did not see Parliamentary democracy as a suitable system for India, one may ask, did he suggest any other system? He did:

Socialistic democracy is the only true democracy. For without it, we cannot get the equalized and harmonized distribution of functions. Each part of the community existing for the good of all, and not struggling for its own separate interests, which will give humanity as a whole, the necessary conditions in which it can turn his best energies to his higher developments. To realize those conditions is also the aim of Hindu civilization, and the original intention of caste. The fulfilment of Hinduism is the fulfilment of the highest tendencies of human civilization, and it must include in its sweep and the most vital impulses of modern life. It will include democracy and socialism also purifying them, raising them about the excessive stress of the economic adjustments, which are the means and teaching them to fix their eyes upon constantly and clearly on the moral, intellectual and spiritual perfection of mankind, which is the end. (CWSA 7: 685)

This is a wonderful hint. Of course, much work needs to be done. Some historians, a few students of Social and Political Sciences, have started to study this alternative about which Sri Aurobindo had written. Those scholars may not be aware of Sri Aurobindo's prophetic statement, but they are working on the same lines.

Having discussed the two grassroots problems of our country, we may realise that Sri Aurobindo was not an armchair philosopher, nor was he indifferent to India's conditions and problems. In fact, even before he came to Pondicherry he wrote on very important issues like poverty, agriculture, irrigation and other such issues which India struggled with at that time and is still struggling today. We shall discuss a few of them here below.

Poverty

Increasing poverty of the masses has been the subject of innumerable pamphlets, speeches and newspaper articles, but we are apt to think our duty done when we have proved that the poverty problem is there; we leave the solution to the future and forget that by the time the solution comes, the masses will have sunk into a condition of decay from which it will take the nation many decades to recover. (CWSA 7: 986)

Sri Aurobindo made these observations even before 1910. But they resonate with the condition in which India is suffering today. Every political party in India has used poverty as an instrument to gain votes. They declare loudly that they are concerned with the economic poverty in the country and there they leave it without really doing anything about it. No one has really attempted to find solutions to this problem.

We have been accustomed to deal only with the economical side of this poverty, but there is a moral side which is even more important. The Indian peasantry have always been distinguished from the less civilised masses of Europe by the superior piety, gentleness, sobriety, purity, thrift and native intelligence." (ibid)

Indeed Sri Aurobindo is a political philosopher, a social philosopher, who doesn't go just by the external reasons of poverty. He reminds us that behind this economic poverty is the moral and intellectual poverty. We have already mentioned how India has been lacking in creative and original thinking based on her swabhava.

Mark Sri Aurobindo's words further. He has dealt with the problem of liquor too:

They are now being brutalized by unexampled oppression; attracted to the liquor shops which a benevolent Government liberally supplies, bestialized by the example of an increasingly immoral aristocracy and gradually driven to the same habits of looseness and brutality which disgrace the European proletariats. (CWSA 7: 985)

We have a recent and live example of the opening of the liquor shops after the Corona Pandemic. Before any other shop opened, the government opened the liquor shops and people stood in long queues to buy them. This of course had an economic drive behind it. During elections liquor is distributed free of cost to all the people. This amounts to moral degradation. This leads them to become bestial. Sri

Aurobindo wrote, "This degeneration is proceeding with an alarming rapidity." This he wrote for his own times, but it is applicable in manifold manner even today.

In some parts of the country it has gone so far that the recovery seems impossible... We have heard of villages where the liquor shops and the prostitute, institutions unknown twenty-five years ago, have now the mastery of the poorest villagers. Many of the villages in West Bengal are now well supplied with the essential of Western civilization.... These conditions of the worst districts tend to become general until and unless something is done to stem the tide of evil, it will sweep away the soul of India in its turbid current and leave only a shapeless monstrosity of all that is the worst in human nature. (CWSA 7: 986)

Agriculture

It is remarkable that a yogi who brought down the Supermind looked into such grass-root problems of India. Perhaps, it should be said that because he was a yogi, he could penetrate deeper into the problem and find a solution.

...only the race which does not sacrifice the soundness of his rural root of life to the urban brilliance of its foliage and flowering, is in a sound condition of certain permanence...We must now turn to the one field of work in which this direction which we have most neglected, the field of agriculture. (SABCL 1: 733-34)

We again get a practical advice from a yogi. If we neglect our agriculture then we are doomed.

We have seen, through all the examples quoted above that Sri Aurobindo's words have been prophetic and at the same time practical. He dealt with the smallest issues of the country, suggested possible solutions for it. While he was involved in his intense tapasya even at Baroda, he had complete knowledge of the social and political condition of the country. He practised what he wrote later: "All life is Yoga".

I wish to end my talk with a message or two from the Mother who has given crucial guidelines regarding the present debate of our national unity:

"The unity of all nations is a compelling future of the world. But for the unity of all nations to be possible, each nation must first realize its own unity." (CWM 13: 371)

It throws light not only the present situation in India which is much divided based on religion or political ideology. One of the questions it answers is why SAARC has been a failure on the whole? As most of the countries in SAARC are still developing their national soul and finding an internal psychological unity, they cannot come under one umbrella of unity. On the other side, we have an example in European Union which has succeeded in its attempt to unite because each of the nations in it

has somewhat succeeded in uniting itself. Its only after completing their individual nationhood, that they have taken the next step of uniting in the European Union.

India can lead the world community of nations only when it has realised its own unity not only within herself but with all those nations which formed her earlier geographical borders but at present its spiritual body which includes, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangla Desh, Myamnar, Nepal etc. Only then can India work for the future and take the lead, that she will recover the true place in the world. This guideline speaks much for the political parties of India at present.

There is another message from the Mother for the present governing bodies of India as well as other countries. Here it is:

Since long, it was the habit to govern through division and opposition. The time has come to govern through union, mutual understanding and collaboration. To choose a collaborator, the value of the man is more important than the party to which he belongs. "The greatness of a country does not depend on the victory of a party but on the union of all the parties". (CWM 13: 377)

It may take a very long time before such a unity develops in India. However, what is important is to realise that Sri Aurobindo has given solutions to issues of India on the national and social levels. All this can be possible if Indians are sincere and honest in their duties to the country.

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Pursuit of Perfection in Matter



Sri Aurobindo and the Mother as Personnel Managers

Anurag Banerjee

(I)

What do we mean by personnel management? As the very name suggests, it deals with the 'people' dimension in management. In the words of Ivancevich and Glueck: 'Personnel/Human resource management is the function performed in organizations that facilitates the most effective use of people (employees) to achieve organizational and individual goals.'¹ Every enterprise aims to utilize the services of its employees and whenever required, training is rendered to them to develop their skills and motivate them to enhance the levels of performance with the view of ensuring that they remain faithful to the organization and work to accomplish the goals of the organization. Human resource management or personnel management consists of four functions: acquiring, developing, motivating and retaining human resources. The function of acquisition begins with the planning for the number of personnel required and ends with staffing. The function of development includes training of employees, management development and career development. The function of motivation includes ascertaining the motivational needs of the employees and ways to motivate them. And the function of retention provides a conducive work environment to the personnel so that they remain attached with the enterprise.

In the bygone eras, there were two approaches to human resource management—the Scientific Management Approach and the Human Relations Approach. Both these approaches had appeared and disappeared in the past century. In recent times the Human Resource Approach has gained prominence as it treats the goals of the enterprise and the needs of the employees as being mutual and compatible. Initially employees were treated only as a factor of production (those who have studied Economics are aware that labour is among the factors of production) but research has enabled us to observe that if the employees are treated as resources then both the enterprise as well as the employees would mutually benefit. Hence the employees are looked upon as assets so time and resources are 'invested' in them by the enterprise to reap better results in the near and long term. So the human resource policies that are framed are employee-friendly. Good personnel policies enable the enterprise to keep its employees satisfied and motivated. It is precisely due to the satisfaction they get from their work and work-environment that people don't leave their jobs despite getting—sometimes—a smaller amount of money as remuneration. Good personnel policies lead to better employee-performance, cost-savings, maintenance of uniformity in administration across the different departments and better control and coordination. However, it should be remembered that the policies framed must be free of any sort of discrimination.

But it is a well-known fact that no matter how much one tries, one can never fully satisfy an individual. This is because man happens to be an insatiable being. Even good human resource policies may not be able to satisfy and motivate him. Moreover, just as four utensils, if kept together, would bang against one another, similarly an individual may clash with his colleague or colleagues. The problems of disharmony emerges from the perception of unsolved discord and ‘the instinct of an undiscovered agreement or unity’ to quote Sri Aurobindo². So in order to overcome all shortcomings of personnel management, a yogic or spiritual approach should be adopted while dealing with people.

In an organization, there exists a variety of employees. Some are industrious, some are comparatively lazy, some are highly efficient while some may be slow at work. Every employee comes from different social backgrounds but they work together as per the organizational culture to fulfill the goals of the organization. It is the duty and responsibility of the leader to see to it that they work for the achievement of the organizational goals. In the Ashram too, Sri Aurobindo and the Mother chose disciples who represented symbolically the difficulties which existed in the outer world for the purpose of conquering them for the work of transformation. The Mother has said that each inmate represented an impossibility to be resolved for the accomplishment of their work. Some of these disciples had difficult characters; some were excessively sensitive, some were hot-tempered, some were extremely impatient and so on. Hence Sri Aurobindo and the Mother had to work, as leaders of the organization, for their inner transformation. While the disciples could meet the Mother and talk to her directly about their problems, they couldn’t do the same with Sri Aurobindo. With Sri Aurobindo the only medium of communication was the correspondence they had with him. As we know, both verbal and written communication plays a very pivotal role in any enterprise. Communication facilitates the development of plans for the accomplishment of organizational targets, utilizes manpower and other resources in the best possible way, enables employee appraisal and performance evaluation, generates motivation among the subordinates and above all, facilitates control over the organization. So, as the leader of the organization, Sri Aurobindo had to perform all the aforesaid functions through the medium of correspondence. Endurance is said to be the most important quality a leader should possess and both Sri Aurobindo and the Mother were epitomes of endurance. If one reads the letters Sri Aurobindo had to write to his disturbed disciples to calm them down, one can sense the pain he had to undertake to maintain harmony in the Ashram and manage the swinging moods of his followers.

Let’s take the example of Dilip Kumar Roy, a creative genius who was exceedingly sensitive so much so that a mere criticism could make him decide to leave the Ashram. Sri Aurobindo who had profound love and affection for him would write innumerable letters to him to persuade him to change his decision. To illustrate the point of how Sri Aurobindo excelled as a personnel-manager, certain passages from the letters he had written to Dilip Kumar are quoted beneath.

- ‘It is quite impossible for me to dismiss you or consent to your going away like

this from us. If the idea of this kind of separation is possible to you, for us it is inconceivable that our close relation should end like this. I had thought that the love and affection the Mother and I bear to you had been made evident by us. But if you say that you cannot believe in it or cannot accept it with the limitations on its outward manifestation that not our choice but inexorable necessity imposes on us for a time, I do not know how to convince you. I could not believe that you could really find it in your heart to go or take such a step when it came to the point. As it is, I can only appeal to you not to allow yourself to be swept away by this attack, to remain faithful even in suffering to your soul that brought you here and to believe in our love that can never waver.’³

- ‘Do not believe all you hear or allow yourself to be driven off your balance by falsehoods of the kind that have been retailed to you. You do not belong to yourself and have not the right to do what you propose to do: you belong to the Divine and to myself and the Mother. I have cherished you like a friend and a son and have poured on you my force to develop your powers—until the time should come for you to make an equal development in the Yoga. I claim the right to keep you as our own here with us. Throw away this despair—rise above the provocations of others—turn back to the Mother.’⁴
- ‘I have not the slightest idea of disowning you or asking you to go elsewhere or giving you up or asking you to abandon the Yoga or this Yoga. It is not that I insist on your finding the Divine through me and no one else or by this way only and no other; I want you to arrive and would be glad to see you do it by whichever way or with whatever help. But even if you followed another way, your place with me would remain, inwardly, physically and in every way. Even if you walked off to the Himalayas to sit in seclusion till you got the thing as I think you sometimes wanted to do, your place would remain waiting for you here. I want you to understand that clearly and not imagine all sorts of things about cutting off or displeasure or abandonment and the rest of it. Nothing could be farther from our minds or from our feelings for you.’⁵

So we observe that Sri Aurobindo was not a leader who kept himself aloof from the problems and difficulties faced by his disciples, on the contrary, he was an excellent personnel manager.

However, one must always remember that love and sympathy cannot always be the best medicine for labour-trouble. At times it is essential to be strict and take disciplinary actions for the benefit of the organization. Unlike Sri Aurobindo, the Mother could be very strict if the situation demanded and she successfully managed all the labour problems that had taken place in the Ashram during and after Sri Aurobindo’s lifetime. While Sri Aurobindo’s approach was more of a persuasive nature, the Mother’s approach was like a direct action. Not only did she solve problems but at times dissolved them.

When the Ashram was formally established in 1926, there were around 24 inmates. This number went up to 36 in 1927 and to 80 in 1928. And by the end of 1951, the number

of inmates stood at 800. The followers who joined the Ashram came from different social, cultural and economic backgrounds and as a result their views and opinions towards life and other things varied to a great extent. It is a well-known fact that whenever there is any kind of difference, disagreements emerge. In the corporate sector as well as in a household, we can observe that when a member is given less, he feels that he has not got what he actually deserves and when others receive more than him, he feels that these 'undeserving individuals' have—in some way or the other—manipulated and therefore got more than him. So he creates unhappiness in his mind and loses not only the sense of harmony but all the joy life has to offer. So irrespective of the nature of organization, the leaders or managers have to face troubles from the personnel.

To give an insight of the nature of personnel problems that Sri Aurobindo and the Mother had to face, a passage from Sri Aurobindo's correspondence with Nirodbaran, one of his foremost disciples who later became his attendant and scribe, is quoted. On one occasion, Sri Aurobindo wrote to him: 'I am all the time occupied with dramas, hysterics, tragic-comic correspondence (quarrels, chronicles, lamentations)... It is not one or two, but twenty dramas that are going on.'⁶ About the same problem he writes in another letter: 'The human vital everywhere, in the Asram also, is full of unruly and violent forces—anger, pride, jealousy, desire to dominate, selfishness, insistence on one's own will, ideas, preferences, indiscipline—and it is these things that are the cause of the disorder and difficulty in the Asram work.'⁷

If we ponder for a while, then we would observe that even we have to face similar troubles in the ordinary course of life and work that Sri Aurobindo and the Mother had to face in a spiritual organization. At the end of the day, it is not the nature of the organization that matters but the nature of the difficulties which count and no one can escape from these universal difficulties. Sri Aurobindo rightly points out the true cause of all difficulties. He writes: '...as each worker wants to do according to his own ideas, on his own lines according to what he thinks to be the right or convenient thing and expects that to be sanctioned. It is one of the principal reasons of difficulty, clash or disorder in the work, creating conflict between the workers themselves, conflict between the workers and the heads of departments, conflict between the idea of the Sadhaks and the will of the Mother.'⁸ As the number of workers in an organization increase, all sorts of influences—which did not exist at the time when the organization was smaller in size—emerge. And that's why many people prefer to work in smaller enterprises. After all, according to some, small is beautiful.

When we are working with our colleagues, we have to contend against not only with the difficulties of our personal nature but also with many other problems for we are then representatives of the entire group. An individual member is subject to the influences coming from all others and as a result such influences overpower him in case he is not strong enough to overcome them. We've seen cases where a person who was singularly responsible for the impressive growth of the department he was associated with, was

caught taking bribe from external parties; thus he lost his job and all respect. Such a tragedy reminds us of the following lines of Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri*:

Heaven's call is rare, rarer the heart that heeds;
The doors of light are sealed to common mind
And earth's needs nail to earth the human mass,
Only in an uplifting hour of stress
Men answer to the touch of greater things:
Or, raised by some strong hand to breathe heaven-air,
They slide back to the mud from which they climbed;
In the mud of which they are made, whose law they know
They joy in safe return to a friendly base,
And, though something in them weeps for the glory lost
And greatness murdered, they accept their fall.
To be the common man they think the best,
To live as others live is their delight.⁹

So what should be the foremost principle of personnel management in the light of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother? The answer is: one must not be judgmental. It is not that we are supposed to turn our eyes away from the harsh truth about the nature of the person concerned. We have to observe in a calm, sympathetic and impartial manner and then come to the conclusion. A strict disciplinarian action may not always work—on the contrary, at times it might cause more harm than good—so an attitude of leniency, tolerance and patience is advisable. That's why Sri Aurobindo has advised us to control the tendency to criticize and condemn individuals unnecessarily and find fault in them since such attitudes create a bad atmosphere not only for the critic but for others as well. Since man is not free from faults there should not exist in him the eagerness to find faults with others and condemn them. Even if he has to be judged the judgment should not be done in a censorious spirit or harsh manner.

Whether we revolt or judge, we do it on the basis of the vibrations we receive not from our inner self, but from the ego. Suppose some particular person who happened to hold a superior position in the hierarchy has bullied X during his early days in the organization. X could never forget him so when he got the opportunity he took his revenge in such a way that the bully lost his job. Similarly, a manager might fire an employee on receiving a complaint against him without even trying to find out the truth behind the complaint. All such decisions are taken not by the brain but the ego. And that is why the Mother has offered an ideal solution by analyzing the human nature and the problems it face. According to her: 'In human life the cause of all difficulties, all discords, all psychological sufferings, is the presence in everyone of the ego with its desires, its likes and dislikes... The ego reacts to everything that displeases it, starts an inner storm that rises to the surface and spoils all the work. This work of overcoming the ego is long, slow and difficult: it demands constant alertness and sustained effort. This effort is easier for some and more difficult for others.'¹⁰ And who can forget Sri Aurobindo's immortal words: 'Ego was the helper, ego is the bar.'

There is another principle to personnel management in the light of Sri Aurobindo

and the Mother. It is necessary to present a good example of your own self before your subordinates. How can one expect his subordinates to be good if he himself is anything but good? The manager must set a good instance always and practise the virtues he demands from those personnel who he leads or manages. We have read in the biography of Alexander that he never allowed his soldiers to do any work which he himself could not do. Every manager should keep in mind this true-story. We ask our subordinates to execute a particular task and when he is unsuccessful, we rebuke him and cause him to lose all the satisfaction related to the job. But before assigning any functions, we must ponder that are we ourselves capable of doing the work we have assigned or planning to assign to our subordinates? Such thoughts can automatically lead us to the prospective solutions to all sorts of personnel problems.

And finally, here is a gem of an advice from Sri Aurobindo, the master personnel-manager: 'None should regard or treat another member of the Ashram as his subordinate. If he is in charge, he should regard the others as his associates and helpers in the work, and he should not try to dominate or impose on them his own ideas and personal fancies, but only see to the execution of the will of the Mother. None should regard himself as a subordinate, even if he has to carry out instructions given through another or to execute under supervision the work he has to do.'

'All should try to work in harmony, thinking only of how best to make the work a success; personal feelings should not be allowed to interfere, for this is a most frequent cause of disturbance in the work, failure or disorder.'¹¹

As a personnel manager, the Mother never focused on the negative aspects of an individual but emphasized on his positive aspects only. Here is an anecdote to illustrate the Mother's style of personnel management. In the Ashram there was an old inmate whom everyone found to be absolutely useless, quarrelsome and crazy. One of the inmates asked the Mother: "Why do you keep him?" She replied: "But he makes such nice envelopes! No one makes envelopes as well as he does." She also used to ask people not to look for flaws in others but to concentrate on the flaws they themselves had for its rectification would lead to the emergence of a greater harmony.

When we talk of personnel management, there is another aspect which we need to focus on. It is 'grievance'. There is a distinction between dissatisfaction and grievance; the former occurs when a person is unhappy with his job or when he finds that the enterprise is not recognizing his potentials. When he conveys his dissatisfaction to his colleagues, the dissatisfaction becomes a complaint and when this dissatisfaction is brought to the notice of the management, the complaint becomes a grievance.

When an employee takes his grievance to the management, the management must evaluate it to understand its root cause. In case no corrective action is taken by the management, the morale of the employee declines and as a result his performance gets affected. If more and more employees get dissatisfied, it can lead to industrial unrest as well. Therefore, the management must show genuine concern and while dealing with the

grievances must adopt a humanitarian approach for such grievance has great importance as far as the career and future of the employee in the enterprise are concerned.

What are the causes of employee grievances? There are different factors which include dissatisfaction with his remuneration, disappointment from denial of a promotion, disharmonious relationship with the superior or colleagues, unhealthy working conditions, assignments which neither match the skill nor the aptitude of the employee and lack of adequate opportunities for future growth to name a few.

The procedure of redressing grievance varies from company to company. Often the employee takes the help of the labour union but such an approach is not always advisable. There should be an open-door policy and free channels of communication by the virtue of which any employee can come and express his grievance to his superior. One must keep in mind that in today's time, the enterprise cannot afford to lose able personnel due to grievance so it must try to keep its employees motivated and satisfied. An informal culture and reduced bureaucracy is suggested in organizations to facilitate a smooth employee grievance redressal procedure.

Grievance leads to conflicts in case there is an incompatibility in the aims and expectations of the management and the employees. There should be goal congruence and expectation-match between the enterprise and its employees which would, in turn, result in the smooth functioning of the enterprise.

However, it should be remembered that a conflict can be both good and bad depending on the circumstances. It is said that a constructive conflict can turn out to be productive and beneficial for the enterprise. For example, if no challenging queries are posed to the management then some of its counterproductive decisions might affect the organization as well as its overall performance. Hence, the managers or supervisors must accept the inevitability of conflict and recognize those grievances which are capable of aiding organizational renewal.

There are a number of ways by which conflict can be dealt with. Those who detest confrontations leading to anger and unpleasantness adopt the strategy of 'Avoidance' in which they attempt to withdraw from the given situation than to face it. In other words, the less dominant party withdraws from the conflict. Such individuals are generally sensitive to their own feelings and that of others. There are some who suppress their own needs, feelings and views and by sacrificing their own interests, tries to resolve the conflict in an amicable way. Such people adopt the strategy of 'Accommodating' or 'Smoothing'. Again, there are some people who view conflict as a competition where there has to be a winner and a loser. Therefore they impose their interests and ideas onto others by using various methods like bribery or punishment. Such a strategy is called a 'Win/Lose' approach in which inter-personal relationships suffer to a great extent as one party takes an upper hand. At times, an external party is involved to resolve the conflict in an impartial way and the decision of this external party is taken as final. Such a strategy is called 'Arbitration'. Again, an outside party acts as a mediator and helps the two parties to arrive at conciliation by steering them towards a mutually acceptable settlement. This

strategy is called 'Mediation'. In the strategy of 'Compromise', both the parties meet 'half-way' to arrive at an agreement and each party makes certain compromises to reach an agreeable settlement. Finally, there is the 'Problem-Solving' strategy in which the needs of both the parties are defined and attempts are made to meet those needs equitably with due respect and support the values of both the parties. Hence, a win-win solution is arrived through such strategies.

The Mother was a problem-solver par excellence. Here is an anecdote to show how she had solved a conflict which took place between two inmates of the Ashram who worked in the same department. N., a young inmate, was put in charge of a newly acquired garden named Cazanove by the Mother with the instruction of taking up agricultural farming in the garden which was more like a forest with a number of poisonous snakes as its inhabitants. She assigned another inmate to assist him. With the help of labourers, both of them cleared the forest of the entire 23 acres farm and started farming at Cazanove. They grew pulses, vegetables, some fruits and also built a very small dairy. As per the instructions of the Mother, N. used to give away the insect-eaten or rotten vegetables and fruits to the workers and the paddy, mangoes and coconuts were sent to the Ashram in bulk. After a year, the Mother sent another inmate, named M., to assist N. After his arrival, M. complained that N. was giving away good vegetables to the workers. As the complaint persisted, one day the Mother enquired about it from N. who told her that as she had asked him to do, he gave away only the insect-eaten and half-spoilt vegetables and fruits to the workers. The Mother was satisfied with his explanation. But when the same complaints were made to her against N. by M. repeatedly, she instructed N. to bring the rejected vegetables and fruits along with the other stuffs produced at the farm to her. After she had seen them and as per her instruction those rejected fruits and vegetables were disposed of.

Apparently, this incident would not influence us in any way. But let's look at it from a different angle. The Mother used to be so busy with her work in the Ashram that her day started at 4 a.m. and ended at 2 a.m. She slept or rested for only 2 hours and this schedule she continued till her 95th year. She was always pressed for time yet she found a solution to this recurring complaint made by M. against N. If she had taken no apparent action against N, then M. would have been stricken with grievance. And if N. was punished or rebuked based on the baseless allegations of M., then N. would be grief-stricken. So the best way was not to antagonize anyone yet arrive at the most feasible solution. Since the Mother herself had approved of the fruits and vegetables being sent away after her inspection there was nothing to complain of. This was the Mother's style of management.

Two persons should never be tackled in the same manner. There can never be a general approach. When we deal with men, we have to keep in mind that no men are similar—they come from different backgrounds, they have received different kinds of education, they have different personalities and hence their likes and dislikes won't be similar. When there are such differences, how can one adopt a common or general approach? Therefore it is advisable to deal with men after analyzing their nature. That is what exactly the Mother

did. She has admitted that she never had the habit of imposing her will on others¹² and that she acted differently for each individual according to the necessities of the person concerned¹³. And she made it a point to practise what she preached. Once, K., who was in charge of the Building Service Department of the Ashram, went to the Mother with an old screw in his hand. The screw had rusted and was bent as well. He showed the screw to the Mother and said: 'May I discard this screw?' The Mother observed the screw and replied: 'It can still work for some more time. Heat it well and then straighten it with a hammer. It can still give service.' After K. left, U.—who was the in charge of another department—came to the Mother with a screw whose condition was far better than the previous one. He showed the screw to the Mother and said: 'Mother, I would like to discard this screw. Do I have your permission?' The Mother replied: 'Yes.' After U. left, the Mother was asked why did she allow U. to discard the screw whose condition was quite satisfactory but instructed K. to use the old screw. The Mother replied that K. had come to her to seek her permission for the concerned task and was willing to accept her instruction but U. had already decided to discard the screw and he wanted her to approve of his decision. On another occasion, a student of the Ashram School who was quite close to the Mother had asked her whether he could go to a cinema hall to watch a film. The Mother immediately gave him her permission. The Mother's instant approval somewhat surprised him. He told her that if she had the slightest reluctance then he would not go to watch the film. It was then that the Mother told him that she did not want any inmate to visit a cinema hall as the atmosphere of the place was not consonant with the lifestyle of the Ashram. Needless to say the boy didn't visit the cinema hall. Thus we see how the Mother—despite being the supreme authority of the Ashram—never imposed her will on any of the inmates.

(II)

Leading is an important function of personnel management due to a number of reasons. Firstly, the act of leading works as a group-motivating process which inspires the supporters to work effectively. Secondly, it develops creativity. The leader, often or sometimes, presents a problem before his followers and invites their suggestion regarding the solution. In such cases, the employees are motivated to ponder over the matter and come up with a variety of solutions among which the best would be chosen by the leader. Thirdly, leading leads to the creation of motivation and confidence (which is done through the fulfillment of the employee's objectives). They are motivated by extrinsic rewards like cash prizes, perks and amenities, promotion, recognition, status symbols and praise and intrinsic rewards like satisfaction from executing a challenging task. Fourthly, with his experience and knowledge, the leader guides and directs the employees effectively; such guidance in turn increases the skills and knowledge of the employees. Fifthly, good leading is associated with communication, precise decision-making, cooperation, coordination, integration and creation of better work environment.

In his book *The Synthesis of Yoga*, Sri Aurobindo—while discussing about the role of

the teacher of the integral yoga—has pointed out the attributes of an ideal leader in the following words:

‘The Teacher of the integral Yoga will follow as far as he may the method of the Teacher within us. He will lead the disciple through the nature of the discipline. Teaching, example, influence, — these are the three instruments of the Guru. But the wise Teacher will not seek to impose himself or his opinions on the passive acceptance of the receptive minds; he will throw in only what is productive and sure as a seed which will grow under the divine fostering within. He will seek to awaken much more than to instruct; he will aim at the growth of the faculties and the experiences by a natural process and free expansion. He will give a method as an aid, as a utilisable device, not as an imperative formula or a fixed routine. And he will be on his guard against any turning of the means into a limitation, against the mechanising of process. His whole business is to awaken the divine light and set working the divine force of which he himself is only a means and an aid, a body or a channel.’¹⁴

Sri Aurobindo has explained how an ideal leader should work. As mentioned in the preceding quotation, the Guru or the leader should use ‘teaching’, ‘example’ and ‘influence’ as his instruments. Sri Aurobindo has specifically pointed out the importance of each of these three instruments. According to him, example is much more powerful than instruction. Here, we must remember that by ‘example’ he didn’t refer to the instances of external acts or ‘personal character’. It is the ‘central fact of divine realization within’ that would act as a stimulant to the aspiration in others. The very life of the Teacher in its entirety and all the actions associated with it will serve as an ideal example. This explains the importance of example. However, ‘influence’ is much more important than example. Influence is not the external authority which an ordinary leader imposes upon his subordinates; on the contrary, it is, as defined by Sri Aurobindo, ‘the power of his contact, of his presence, of the nearness of his soul to the soul of another.’ The leader who is in possession of such a power channels it into his subordinates for their development and such an action has been termed by Sri Aurobindo as ‘the supreme sign of the Master’. However, Sri Aurobindo has warned that the leader must not ‘arrogate to himself Guruhood in a humanly vain and self-exalting spirit’. He should be a channel, a representative of the trust from above who should act as a man who would help and guide his brothers. He should be, in the words of Sri Aurobindo, ‘a child leading children, a Light kindling other lights, an awakened Soul awakening souls, at highest a Power or Presence of the Divine calling to him other powers of the Divine.’¹⁵

Sri Aurobindo and the Mother both have pointed out certain conditions which a true leader must satisfy. According to Sri Aurobindo, the leader must have a ‘large view of the One working in all’ which would help to eradicate all ‘rajasic egoism’ and ‘sattvic ego-sense’¹⁶ and that he should be ready to recognize one’s weaknesses and false movements and withdraw from them¹⁷. According to the Mother, the leader must be vigilant so that he does not lose any opportunity to progress or learn or overcome a weakness and also that of correcting or mastering something.¹⁸ She has also added that a true leader must

have absolute control over oneself, no preferences at all and that he should treat everyone equally and be patient and enduring with one and all.¹⁹ However the foremost condition for being a true leader, according to her, is the ability to forget oneself. He must be a master of his ego, obliterate all sorts of self-regard and selfish movements and also have ‘no selfish interests, to want nothing for oneself, to consider only the good of the group, of the whole, the totality that depends on one; to act only with that aim in mind, without wanting any personal profit from one’s action.’²⁰

The tasks of a leader are to lead his subordinates towards the successful accomplishment of the organizational goals, motivate them to work better by improving their morale, imposing discipline whenever and wherever required in the organization and ensuring the establishment of a perfect harmony among them. While imposing discipline, man as a leader should keep in mind that whatever needs to be done should be done in the right spirit. The subordinates should also realize that they are being guided by a leader who may be strict but at the same time is upright, insightful and sympathetic towards them. In one of his letters, Sri Aurobindo has written that efficiency and discipline—though they are indispensable for work—are dependent on the ‘personality of the superior, his influence on the subordinates, his firmness, tact, kindness in dealing with them.’²¹

The true leader not only leads his followers but also strives to help them to overcome their limitations which act as a bar towards their path of progress. His actions might appear strange to the followers initially but in due course of time they realize the significance. Let me narrate an anecdote to show how the Mother enabled a follower to overcome his shortcomings and advance towards perfection. N. was an inmate of Sri Aurobindo Ashram for a decade. He was given the charge of starting agricultural farming at Cazanove, a garden belonging to the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. He began to stay at Cazanove with two dogs given by the Mother with instructions to keep them chained during the day and unchained at night. He was further instructed by the Mother to feed them personally after cooking goat-liver meat with turmeric powder. It was not exactly cooking but only boiling. N. was a Jain and strict vegetarian since his birth and till then he had not even tasted onion or garlic. He told the Mother about his customs but she insisted that he personally boil the meat. Hence, the task of cooking for the dogs became a routine job for him.

In organizations, the top-level management sets the standards of performance and expects the employees to maintain them. In case there is a deviation between the standards and the actual performance of an employee, the management is compelled to take action as it is a part of corporate norms. But such actions can be used as an instrument to transform the person concerned. Disciplinary actions can be a short term pain but long term gain if it is implemented with a right attitude. In this age of hire-and-fire one need not always fire the employee if he fails to perform. If such action is necessary one may take it but it must be planned in such a way that the so-called punishment would enable him to realize his true potential. Thus in the garb of punishment an opportunity could be provided to the employee to prove himself.

Let me narrate an incident to explain my point. In the Ashram School there was a very naughty and mischievous boy whom none of the teachers could control. The teachers tried to think of various ways to control him but in vain. So they approached the Mother. When the Mother was informed about the matter, she solved the problem by making the boy the monitor of the class. Instantly there was a noticeable change in him. He became a most responsible monitor who executed his duties diligently. A disciplinary action was indeed taken but it was planned and implemented in such a way that it transformed an uncontrollable boy into a responsible individual.

While organizing the enterprise, we must ensure that balanced discipline should exist. The degree of discipline should not be so high that the employees feel suffocated and again it should not be so relaxed that the employees take everything for granted. Hence a balanced discipline is always advised. The Mother was a strict disciplinarian. In the early years of the Ashram some of Sri Aurobindo's disciples found it difficult to cope up with the discipline she had imposed and left the Ashram for ever. This was because prior to her arrival at Pondicherry, they used to have a sort of a camp-life and to them, Sri Aurobindo was just like an elder brother and friend. It was the Mother who came and installed Sri Aurobindo on the pedestal of the Guru. But after some decades the Mother relaxed several strict rules of the Ashram. However, there were certain rules that she never altered and these rules exist even now. She firmly believed that no big creation or proper work (including sadhana) was possible without discipline and hence she asked the inmates of the Ashram—who worked in various departments—to follow the discipline of the concerned departments. She believed that a community life should have a discipline as it ensured that the weaker individuals were not mistreated by the stronger ones and that every member—who wished to live in the community—should respect the discipline. However, she knew that the rule-makers can become the rule-breakers in future. Hence her advise was: ‘...for the community to be happy it is necessary that this discipline should be determined by someone or by those who have the greatest broadness of mind and, if possible, by him or by those who are conscious of the Divine Presence and are surrendered to that.’²²

At times the leader has to face certain circumstances which are beyond his control. What should be done then? What should be the code of conduct if something untoward happens? Sri Aurobindo has advised that in such cases man should have the right inner attitude; he should be open to the spiritual Force and its power or else ego-resistance and ego-centric troubles may emerge and these can destroy a good creation. And with the help of this Force, all the difficulties of the untoward circumstances can be conquered and turned towards the right direction. But no matter how grave the situation becomes, one must have a sense of perfect equanimity or *samata*. Sri Aurobindo has said that the leader must make himself an instrument of this invisible Force coming from above so that it could be used for the necessary purpose. Through the power of equanimity, the Force is capable of transforming not only the attitude of man but also the course of events and actions. To a leader who follows a spiritualized approach to management or leadership, his work does not become an avenue of earning money by maximizing the returns on his

investment. On the contrary, he assumes the role of a servitor and consecrates all that he possesses for the success of his enterprise. He looks upon the business as his medium of sadhana and works for the growth and development of the enterprise as a service to the Divine. He has to be selfless and he relies entirely on the true Self and Spirit from which he receives inner guidance and which is the architect of his destiny. He must not have a superiority complex due to the high position he enjoys in the hierarchy for it may result in the generation of ego. It is essential for him to look at his colleagues and subordinates as *gurubhais* or brother-disciples and treat no work or workers as mediocre or ignorable because in integral management all work is looked upon as work for the Divine. Work is actually worship and the worshippers, that is, the workers, should not be discriminated.

It reminds me of an incident. Once, someone complained to the Mother that people were not working satisfactorily in a particular department. The Mother said: “People work according to their nature and capacity. If you are not getting satisfaction, do it yourself.”

The leader has to have empathy and while dealing with the inter-department or inter-personal problems, he must see the other side of the picture as well. No anger or reproach must exist in him for these elements tend to raise the same on the people involved on the other side. And above all, the leader has to be an epitome of humility. No great work can be done if the leader is not a humble individual. The Mother who was an ideal leader has showed to us how effective leadership can be practised despite being extremely humble. For instance, once she asked a sadhak named Bula (who was in charge of the Electric and Plumbing Department of the Ashram): “Bula, will you please give me a piece of wire?” Bula said: “Mother, why don't you order me? All this belongs to you.” The Mother replied: “I must be an example of how to ask.”

Another feature that must exist in man as a leader is right judgment. He must know what is good and bad for the organization but at the same time he must not be judgmental towards people on the advice of others. It is advisable to rely on the inner command which informs him about his course of action. However, it is important to keep in mind that a person who can lead himself can lead others. If one cannot control himself, how can he expect to control others? Nothing can be done with others unless and until one is able to do it with himself/herself. And that is why the Mother has said that one cannot control outer matter if one does not control inner matter.

Here is an incident to show the Mother's style of judgment: During a novelty race in the Ashram Playground, each participant had to roll a wooden dumbbell with a stick keeping to one's lane. The rule of the game was that the participants would have to reach the finishing line touching neither the lines of the lanes nor the dumbbells by hand and whoever reached first would be the winner. Some of the participants ran fast cutting the lines while some straightened the dumbbells with hand. Some of the judges declared the first three participants who reached the finishing line as winners while other judges emphasized on their disqualifications. There was a total confusion around the Mother who was present at the Playground and was also one of the judges. She asked the judges

to wait till the last participant arrived. The last participant was a young girl whom the Mother declared as the winner saying that though she came last she had followed the rules of the game and also followed a straight line. A witness of this incident remarks: ‘That was the Divine Judge delivering Her judgment and squashing the human erroneous judgments.’²³

However, not all leaders possess the Mother’s sense of judgment. That’s why the need of self-mastery and self-management emerges the first condition of which is to be conscious of one’s own self. One has to awake to his inner movements and nature and must also understand his motives and impulses. If an individual is conscious then he would be able to differentiate between right and wrong. In life we often tend to get confused while differentiating between right and wrong for these are subjective concepts: what may appear right to X might appear wrong to Y. So whom should the leader support? Such dilemmas can be conquered once the leader becomes conscious.

What follows are some guidance on self-management compiled from the writings of Sri Aurobindo.

- ‘Do not allow yourself to be worried or upset by small things. Look at things from an inner point of view and try to get the benefit of all that happens. If you make a mistake, don’t get distressed because you made a mistake—rather profit by it to see the reason so as to get the right movement in future. This you can do only if you look at it quietly from the inner being without sorrow or disturbance.’²⁴
- ‘Why get excited over these small things? or let them disturb you? If you remain quiet, things will go much better and, if there is any difficulty, you are more likely to find out a way in a quiet mind open to the Peace and Power. That is the secret of going on, not to allow things and happenings, not even real mistakes, to upset you, but to remain very quiet, confiding in the Power to lead you and set things more and more right. If one does that, then things do get actually more and more right for learning and steps towards progress.’²⁵
- ‘...One ought not to indulge ideas of incapacity, inability to respond, dwelling too much on defects and failures and allowing the mind to be in pain and shame on their account: for these ideas and feelings become in the end weakening things. If there are difficulties, stumblings or failures, one has to look at them quietly and call in tranquilly and persistently the Divine help for their removal, but not to allow oneself to be upset or pained or discouraged.’²⁶

Sri Aurobindo was not a leader who kept himself aloof from the problems and difficulties faced by his disciples. He acted as a motivator, a coach and a mentor who spent sleepless nights answering hundreds of letters addressed to him. It was like a correspondence workshop of motivation. One of his dearest disciples Dilip Kumar Roy has remarked about him: ‘He never minded if any of us wanted to experiment with an escalator “going in the wrong direction.” For he had never believed in hard and fast taboos...His tolerance and charity would have been incredible had it not been a fact of

almost everyday experience. In the Ashram he tolerated quite a battalion of fire-eaters even when they were found out to be disloyal and treacherous. He gave a long rope even to some insolent rebels who, from calling him names and misrepresenting his catholic views, told deliberate lies—just to do him down. Even such calumniators and traitors he not only declined to expel from the Ashram but actually forgave again and again till I had to ask him which he loved more: to encourage the faithless or discourage the faithful?’²⁷

One might ponder: what was the source of this unlimited patience Sri Aurobindo had for man. The answer is simple. It was based on unbounded divine love. Human love may fail at one point of time but divine love neither fails nor falters. So a true leader should have profound love and sympathy for his subordinates. It is only love and sympathy that can mould and transform the nature, character and personality of man. And that is the mantra of man-power management.

However, let’s not forget that love and sympathy cannot always be adopted to control the subordinates. In case strict action is required, the leader must not hesitate to adopt such measures. The Mother followed a strict disciplinary approach whenever and wherever necessary. For instance, once the workers of the Ashram Press had demanded three months’ bonus and a sum of rupees fifteen as Dearness Allowance; accordingly they had pasted a handwritten notice on the wall of the workers’ washroom. When the Mother came to know of this incident, she remarked: “The best is to take no notice of such demands. These people will never be satisfied: the more we give, the more they ask.” The matter was simply ignored and before long the demands died down. On another occasion, when a worker of the Ashram Press was sacked the Workers’ Union demanded his reinstatement. The workers shouted slogans and caused other workers to stay away from work. Not only did they challenge the manager of the Ashram Press and the Mother but also threatened to continue with their strike for ten days or till the sacked worker was reinstated. The Mother simply said: “Let them do—we shall see who gets tired of it first.” And this strike too died down soon.

So we have two ways of man-power management shown to us by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. The first way is through love and patience as practiced by Sri Aurobindo and the second way is through strict disciplinary measures as practiced by the Mother. The leader should be prepared to adopt both the measures depending on the situation.

No matter how good a leader is, he is also subjected to harsh criticism by his followers. In the corporate sector, we find the Chairman or Managing Director of the company being heckled at the Annual General Meetings for not giving adequate dividends to the shareholders or for some other reasons. They forget what the leader has done or is doing for the organization. The same thing happens with spiritual leaders as well. Even Jesus Christ was betrayed by his follower, Judas. All such things happen because a time comes when no matter how intelligent or loyal a follower is he becomes a prey to some hostile power which compels him to deviate from his path. It would be an error to assume that Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, as leaders of the Ashram, never received any opposition from their disciples. But what is remarkable is the way they had handled the situation

and brought them under control. Once, a disciple wrote a very strong letter to the Mother criticizing her. However, he didn't sign his name in the letter. The Mother, by using her occult force, came to know who the disciple was and she penned a good reply for him. But before sending the letter to the disciple, she went to Sri Aurobindo and read out both the letters—the one written by the disciple and the one written by the Mother. When the Mother asked Sri Aurobindo whether she should send the letter, he replied in just two words: "Don't reply." On another occasion, an attendant of the Mother had become hostile and was spreading slanderous insinuations against her and Sri Aurobindo. When the matter was reported to the Mother, she said: "I've spoken to Sri Aurobindo also about this and he said to me: 'You know well it is not a question of this person or that person. Sending away one person won't help us in any way. We are fighting with the hostile force, not with the person. If you send away one person, it will catch hold of another.'"

Thus we observe that neither the Mother nor Sri Aurobindo favoured the expulsion of the rebel-disciples from the Ashram for they knew such an act would not solve the problem. The act of expulsion could bring about a temporary solution only and what was necessary was a permanent solution. Therefore, they have taught us to identify the roots of all difficulties and work for its total elimination. Let's not forget that man is the only instrument who is capable of doing so with help from the Divine.

We must remember that Sri Aurobindo and the Mother were not graduates from any reputed business schools. Yet they went on to lay the foundations of a new school of management which is best described as 'Integral Management'. It can be claimed without the slightest doubt that Sri Aurobindo's concept of management was given shape by the Mother. Their joint-contribution can be best described in the following words of *Savitri*:

There is a truth to know, a work to do;
Her play is real; a Mystery he fulfils:
There is a plan in the Mother's deep world-whim,
A purpose in her vast and random game.
This ever she meant since the first dawn of life,
This constant will she covered with her sport,
To evoke a Person in the impersonal Void,
With the Truth-Light strike earth's massive roots of trance,
Wake a dumb self in the inconscient depths
And raise a lost Power from its python sleep
That the eyes of the Timeless might look out from Time
And the world manifest the unveiled Divine.²⁸

One cannot even imagine the wonders that could be brought about if organizations adopt integral management for it is beneficial to both the enterprise as well as its employees. Today, unfortunately, it is not given its due importance but a day would come soon when people will be able to realize its significance. Let's not forget:

Night shall awake to the anthem of the stars,
The days become a happy pilgrim march...
A few shall see what none yet understands,
God shall grow up while the wise men talk and sleep;
For man shall not know the coming till its hour
And belief shall be not till the work is done.²⁹

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Spiritual Psychology for Rajarshi Leaders

S. K. Chakraborty

Ringling the Bell

Leadership is a 'soft' field. It turns even more so when it begins to be looked at from the 'Spiritual' perspective. So, every idea or view presented below is not expected to be acceptable to all readers. A little taste for spirituality might however help. The most vital and unique contribution by Bharat's long spiritual history to the 'soft' art of leadership has been that of the 'rajarshi' leader. This model had impregnated all spheres of human existence in India - political, economic, administrative, academic, domestic, etc. Some recent approaches like 'transformational', 'transpersonal' or 'humanistic' leadership, however, lack the backup of prolonged tapasya (asceticism) by yogis or rishis (Burns, 1978; Maslow, 1959; Sutich, 1969).

For example, Burns has argued that 'transactional' leadership is characterized by a 'swapping', or a 'trading', or a 'bargaining' motive in an exchange process between a leader and the led. It lacks durable engagement between the two sides. They 'use' one another mutually- so to say. Transformational leadership, on the other hand, involves the mutual 'raising' of both sides to higher levels of motivation and morality. Mahatma Gandhi has been cited. Mention also occurs about 'transcending' leadership, but it is not explained, nor does the Index include it. Similarly 'spirituality' also does not figure in the index.

Burns, a political scientist, has elaborately formulated his ideas against the canvas of managing nations and peoples, not business. Therefore, he proceeds to 'fashion a general theory of political leadership'. He does speak of 'mutual stimulation and elevation' among leaders and followers. But his 'transformational' leader is assigned the role of 'recognizing and exploiting' the wants, ungratified needs, demands, crushed expectations, etc., of followers or potential followers. Then he is supposed to go beyond all this and engage the whole person in a moral process. Consciousness arousal has also been interpreted in terms of the ability to 'discern signs of dissatisfaction', grounded in the 'seedbed of conflict'. At the same time, there is a mention about followers' 'true' needs. But all such expressions do not match with notions like 'higher purpose', 'true needs', etc. No indication is available about the character of such 'true' needs. It is pertinent here to refer, for example, to Aldous Huxley for a statement about the 'true need' or 'end value' for a human being. 'The last end of man, the ultimate reason for human existence, is unitive knowledge of the divine Ground' (Huxley, 1985). Burns' choice of the political backdrop has precluded such real, spiritual transformational ideas. But if it is sought to include spirituality as an element in the holistic treatment of 'rajarshi' leadership, then formulations like those of Huxley cannot be left out. Such articulations are materially different from the end values mentioned by Burns himself, for example, liberty, justice, and equality.

Bernard Bass and his associates appear to have linked Burns' political theory to the sphere of managing business. A noticeable difference in their approach from that of Burns

is the use of some tools and methods of empirical research. Burns' work is qualitative and conceptual, whereas that of Bass and others tends towards quantification (Bass, 1985).

But even the index of the later Bass-Avolio book does not show any entries for spirituality or transcendence or consciousness. Only one entry appears for 'ethical standards', and the text does not elaborate it (Bass and Avolio, 1994). Four years later, however, we see that terms like 'ethics', 'character', 'transcendence', etc. have been incorporated in the exposition of transformational leadership (Bass, 1998). This later effort has sought a more deep-structure basis for transformational theory in the classical Socratic and Confucian traditions. One can read into such efforts the continuing trend towards greater 'softness' or 'subjectivism' in the development of leadership theory. This chapter attempts to extend this engagement to its Spiritual potential.

Spirituality- Based Assumptions and Definitions

This extension towards the deep-structure subjective, as against the superficial objective, for leadership needs support and direction from the corpus of classical spiritual psycho-philosophy of India. There are at least three main reasons to glean some major insights from this literature. Its chief characteristics are as follows:

1. They have formed the bedrock of a highly durable and sustainable civilization, one which has been non-aggressive and non-acquisitive in its relationships with Nature and other cultures.
2. They constitute a living tradition to this day, as exemplified by the 'rajarshi' leadership of Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi, Vinoba Bhave (and many others like them of whom the world may not be aware).
3. This tradition has been built on the parallel and complementary development of both 'philosophical aims' and 'psychological methods' to fulfill them. Hence the compound phrase 'psy-cho-philosophical' is used above. The most profound of such psycho-philosophical pairs is that of Yoga-Vedanta (Y-V).

Vedanta is the philosophical base of Oneness (Advaita). Yoga is the psychological process which accelerates and stabilizes the experience of this Oneness, this union. It may be marked that the Y-V framework is not affiliated to any individual name. This insures against the dangers of diabolical charisma or institutional dogma. For the same reason, it gets closer to transcendence than other viewpoints. There are of course several other spiritual approaches within the sanatan Indian tradition itself (e.g. Kundalini Yoga in Tantra, Vipassana in Buddhism, Preksha Dhyana in Jainism). Other world cultures must also be having their own disciplines.

Very briefly, Y-V ontology posits the following:

The Infinite, the Eternal, is the foundation of the finite, the changing.

- The 'whole' comprises both the infinite and finites.
- The individual's manifest empirical 'self' is an outer instrument of action,

disconnected from the transcendent 'Self' within and above. So, the typical human person is not experientially holistic, though essentially he/she is.

Complementing the ontological position, Y-V epistemology holds the following:

- The faculty of mental reasoning, though higher than vital instinct is insufficient for knowing the 'whole'.
- Reason and intellect proceed by dividing and fragmenting; therefore receptive mental silence, with an aspiration for directly perceiving the whole, the Self within, is indispensable.

The above blend of ontology-epistemology has always been amenable to systematic self discipline, followed by experiential realization. A few examples of contemporary leaders cast in this mould will be given below. Long before the Christian era, in Emperor Asoka (BC 304-232) period, the world had witnessed the example of a leader who had metamorphosed himself from Asoka-the-fierce (Chandasoka) to Asoka-the-benign (Dharmasoka). Vincent Smith has observed about him: he managed to reconcile the apparently inconsistent positions of monk and monarch, and that, he was wonderfully successful in holding together for forty years an empire rarely exceeded in magnitude' (Smith, 1988). Asoka's grandfather, Chandragupta Maurya, too, symbolized the monk-monarch symbiosis, typical of Bharat's tradition. Asoka had built upon the foundations laid by Chandragupta. The latter's mentor was Chanakya, the former's Upagupta-both renunciant yogis. Such leaders in Indian history have been called rajarshis (i.e. royal sages or monk emperors). Plato's philosopher-king has some apparent similarity with them-only in theory, but hardly ever practised (Chakraborty and Chakraborty, 2004).

The following more or less descriptive definitions, embedded in the metaphysical framework just mentioned, should now be helpful:

Transcendence. Nature has already evolved by transcending to life above matter, to mind/reason above life. The next leap of transcendence implicit in the above evolutionary journey is towards Spirit above mind reason.

The practical import of the transcendence principle in the social setting is its power to yield a more far-sighted (*doordrishti*), holistic view (*antar-drishti*) of complex ground-level happenings. It fosters an integral, long-term perspective which cannot be gained through seeing-by-succession on the ground only.

Consciousness. Consciousness is independent of the reactions of personality to the forces of environment. Consciousness is the inherent reality, the fundamental essence common to existence. When it is self-impelled to evolve slowly out of matter, it emerges as life, as animal, and as man. In man, it can transform beyond mind to Spirit. Evolution in form itself ceases (Sri Aurobindo, 1999).

Spirituality. Spirituality means beginning to become aware of a Consciousness higher than that of the body-mind-centred ego, and the ability to live more and more in it or under its guidance. It is this Consciousness-non-contingent, self-existent, pure of

ego—which is Spirit or Self (Aurobindo, 1999). Saving leaders of humanity have always possessed this subjective power of cent per cent purity.

Transformation. Transformation, in the spiritual sense of Y-V psycho-philosophy, is the gradual progress to that state of Consciousness which is holistic, non-egoistic and hence flawless.

Ethics. It may be defined negatively. It is unethical when an entity, individual or collective, intentionally uses its power or authority to gain some advantage at the expense of another entity, of which the latter is unaware, or defenceless (Chakraborty and Chakraborty, 2006b). Minimizing the incidence of such unethicality should promote wide revival of ethicality. Disciplined transcendence of the empirical lower self, tied to the separative ego consciousness, could transform the perpetrating entity towards inviting/awakening the awareness of the Self.

The Rajarshi Leader - A Corporate Example

The transforming leadership process is usually understood as flowing towards the followers. This naturally presupposes that it is the leader who originates and sustains such a transforming or metamorphosing flow. It is also implicit that transformation here is a positive notion—constructive, wholesome and elevating. The spirituality perspective necessarily embraces such elements. The source of the transforming influence, *the leader, therefore needs to 'transform' him/ herself in the first place. Only a transformed leader can transmit transforming influence.* History bears ample testimony to this fact. Therefore, we concentrate on the transformation of the leader as a prior step. The examples given below will illustrate this principle.

There is a significant Indian proverb (from Kautilya—see Chapter 10 for details) relevant to this issue: *yatha raja, tatha praja* (like leader, like followers). Although, there may be exceptions where the reverse (like followers, like leader) could be true, the more widespread, natural cause-and-effect relationship is understood in terms of leader-to-follower. This is as it should be. Although the keynote of reciprocal relationship has been continuously emphasized by Burns, yet he too mentions about the leader taking 'the major part', about the leader's main strength being the ability to operate close enough to the followers to draw them up to the leader's level of moral development' (Burns, 1978). We may now offer some flavour of such a transformed leader by reproducing small portions from a published interview with R. K. Talwar. He was the most respected Chairman—Chief Executive, successively of the State Bank of India (the country's largest and best commercial bank) and the Industrial Development Bank of India (the country's largest development banking institution) (Chakraborty and Chakraborty, 2006a). Talwar's philosophy of work-life was based on the Gita. He had secret access to it from his mother when he was only thirteen. Ever since he had stayed with it, and it 'grew into him'. As an adult he had become a follower-devotee of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother (Sri Aurobindo's spiritual protégée and partner). Here is a small extract:

Question. How did the thoughts of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother influence your approach to work?

Answer. Let me narrate to you one incident...One day the president of the local Board of SBI came late for a meeting. Then for some unknown reason he began to talk ill of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. That hurt me much. So I asked him, 'You are a big businessman. Why are you working so hard for your business?' He replied, 'So that my children will be happy'. My response was, 'Your aim is very low...My aim is: I am the Mother's appointee, let the Divine work through me'.

Question. When faced with problems which appear to baffle your reason or experience, what do you do?

Answer. 'The Mother has explained the process by which one could receive Divine guidance in crisis situations. Her formula is:

Sincerity + Silence + No Preference = Divine Voice

Question. Any comment on the phenomenon called 'organizational politics'?

Answer. I am not a political animal; I am Mother's worker, it is her Bank. It is fortunate that the Mother runs this Bank. If there are claps or praise at any time, I close my eyes and remember the Mother.

The same book informs that three more CEOs, who were former juniors of Talwar and later headed other large banks/institutions, had also been interviewed. They all corroborated how Talwar had created a small enclosure in his office with a folding partition in one corner. Whenever he felt that a problem or a dilemma was proving to be beyond his experience, reason or logic, he would take a break and sit within that enclosure. All communication would cease for sometime. In that quiet space and time, Talwar would practise the formula mentioned above. Original clues, creative solutions and renewed convictions regarding nagging dilemmas or risky choices emerged, either during that very process of silent opening up to the higher and the whole, or within a few days thereafter. ('Talwar's practice may also be viewed as one which tapped the dormant/right brain' by stilling the hectic 'left brain'.)

Long after his departure from the scene he still continues to be an inspiring role model, and even today SBI is on top rung in the Indian banking industry. The lesson is: *Let the leader be spiritualized first the leadership process will then tend to be more spontaneously exalting in its impact on organizational members.* This is likely to be so because the leader's own existential matrix is no longer conventionally transactional (i.e. hunger for career, power, stock options, fame, etc.). In other words, the transformed leader radiates transformational influence because he/she functions 'essentially', not 'circumstantially'. Variable circumstances faced while leading are not avoided or ignored, but the essence stays in constant focus. This is the benefit that could accrue in the organizational context from the leader's capacity for Spirit-centred transcendence when required.

Another part of the dialogue with Talwar quoted above, for example, contains references to the machinations of the very second person in the hierarchy headed by Talwar. He was a drag on the CEO's energy. With the large majority of other direct subordinates working for Talwar, the transformational influence was however positive.

The same dialogue provides us with two such instances. He followed strictly the rule that no letter on his table should take more than 48 hours to reply. Talwar's subordinates responded to this self-imposed discipline by often handing over relevant papers to the doorman of his residence in the evenings (at times as late as 10 or 11 pm). But he had not asked for this from them. It was spontaneous loyalty from their heart. On another occasion he was handling an intricate employee negotiation problem. The All-India Trade Union leader of SBI one day came to talk to him on a contentious issue. The union leader soon turned aggressive and insolent. After a short pause Talwar told him coolly: 'Look, you are first an employee of SBI, then a trade union leader. So, behave yourself or go'. This had a dramatic positive impact on the whole process.

The Self of the Rajarshi Leader

The above snapshots from Talwar serve to highlight a number of key aspects of a leader's self-transformation from the viewpoint of spiritual psychology. Talwar's leadership provides a genuine case of the ontology ('I am the Mother's appointee, Her worker'), and the epistemology (silence + sincerity + no preference = Divine voice) of transformation conceived here.

Margaret Wilson (the daughter of an American President, Woodrow Wilson) had written the following lines in a long letter to Sri Aurobindo in 1936 (Wilson, 2002).

'... I am convinced that I shall never again come under the illusion that the little self can be useful, except it be guided and activated by the higher Self.'

She received an equally elaborate reply from Sri Aurobindo. The burden of this response was, as distilled by us for this chapter (Aurobindo, 1987).

1. According to Y-V psychology, one method of understanding human personality is to visualize it at two levels: the lower self' and the 'higher Self'.
2. The 'lower self' is constitutionally deficit-driven. These deficits are lurking or manifest, subtle or gross. Individual strivings prompted from this level, despite deceptive bright interludes, tend to degenerate into unethicity.
3. The 'higher Self' is the inalienable, inherent core within every individual. But we remain severed from it due to the turbulent cross-currents of the lower self.
4. There is another technical phrase 'psychic being' which Sri Aurobindo employs synonymously for higher Self. It 'is the inmost being of all; a perception of truth which is inherent in the deepest substance of the consciousness, a sense of the good, true, beautiful...is its privilege' (Aurobindo, 1989).

Margaret Wilson had been able to correctly grasp and honestly admit the absence of self-leadership in her. But, through some of Talwar's own words quoted earlier, and through other reliable sources (like other interviews incorporated in the book Culture, Society and Leadership), one may conclude that his higher-Self character was able to display sustained dignity and integrity. For instance, he did have a credit card or two

gifted by others, but never used them. If he had to borrow sometimes, he would do so only against his own bank deposits (Chakraborty and Chakraborty, 2006a).

In so far as words can express, we may now hear from Sri Aurobindo himself a little more about the true nature of Self (Aurobindo, 1999).

1. '...Self remains...pure and stainless, unaffected by the stains of life, by desire and ego, and ignorance. It is realized as the true being of the individual, but also more widely as the same being in all, and as the Self in the cosmos...'
2. 'The first realization of Self as something intensely silent and purely static is not the whole truth of it; there can also be a realization of Self...as the condition of world-activity and world- existence.'

Thus, the journey from a 'self-transactional' leader to a 'self-transformed' leader is a rather long and sacred haul. It may also not be immediately or entirely comprehensible at present. Yet, to be informed about its true nature can save us from premature confidence that a few short and hasty steps at the foot of the hill mean we are close to the summit.

The self-transactional leader is the lower 'deficit-driven self' tending to resort readily to greed, deception, manipulation, etc. The Indian corporate world had witnessed during the 1990s a number of deplorable cases of top leadership which had been anything but transformational (e.g. ITC, TISCO, India Hotels, SAIL, UTI). There is a deep contradiction between 'careeristic' leadership and 'rajarshi' leadership.

Spirituality for a 'Rajarshi Leader'

We turn to Sri Aurobindo again for authentic and adequate light on it (Aurobindo, 1997):

1. 'Spirituality has meant...the recognition of something greater than mind and life...a surge and rising of the soul in man out of the littleness and bondage of our lower parts towards a greater thing secret within him.'
2. 'the divine perfection is always there above us; but for man to become divine in consciousness and act, and to live inwardly and outwardly the divine life is what is meant by spirituality— all lesser meanings given to it are inadequate fumbings...'

The leader-in-transformation is informed through these benchmark statements that the lower self or lower parts are imperfect, whereas the higher Self is perfection itself. In spiritual discourse such perfection is called Divine. 'Be thou perfect as thy Father in Heaven is perfect' says the Bible too. This yearning for 'spiritual perfection' is poles apart from subservience to 'secular success'. Psychologically speaking, perfection is the capacity to preserve equanimity (*samatwa*) — through both success and failure. The Sanskrit word for perfection is *siddhi* or *sansiddhi*. Note that Sri Aurobindo speaks of divine 'perfection', not divine 'success'.

The thinking, reasoning mental being is expected to guide, control and uplift our physical and vital being levels. But the persistent, painful reality is that the reasoning

mind is itself being enslaved by the raw powers and instincts of the physical-vital levels. So, some conscientious thinkers have been feeling that the world is being led from chaos to crisis to catastrophe. It seems necessary to hold up this big picture as a backdrop while investigating uplifting change in leaders and organizations. While etching these contours of modern society, such thinkers have not felt obliged to express their views with reference to the huge accumulation of previous academic research and scholarship. Uninhibited extra-orbital insights from such thinkers, not researchers or scholars, are clearly more helpful.

Here is a sample of such big picture cautions from the unfettered minds of Einstein (1950), Russell (1927), Toynbee (1987), Beer (1994) and Korten (1998), respectively:

1. 'Everything is dominated by the cult of efficiency and of success, and not by the value of things and men in relation to the moral ends of human society.'
2. 'Science is no substitute for virtue. If men were rational in their conduct-intelligence would be enough to make the world a paradise.'
3. The present widespread disillusionment with politicians..., is putting democracy in jeopardy...Present-day man's social environment has become crushingly massive...this lowers his self-respect and, with it, his ethical standards.'
4. The devastation wrought in the quality of life in the advanced industrial countries by the use of science and technology is plain to see. Do developing countries really wish to follow the same road?'
5. 'Material monism has led us to that brink of self-destruction because it leads so naturally to the embrace of Hobbesian values that alienate us from any higher meaning or purpose'

It is appropriate to add to the above citations an accurate forecast, made as early as in 1920, about the post-war crisis, by Tagore, India's Nobel Laureate sage-poet (Tagore, 1996):

...with the help of science the possibility of profit has suddenly become immoderate. The whole of human society...has felt the gravitational pull of a giant planet of greed. It has carried to our society a distinct deviation from its moral orbit.

It is hoped all these sagacious, beyond the orbit, identical cautions from those who had or have transcended the domains of research and scholarship to those of pure thought and realization, may inspire non-careeristic, spiritually anchored leadership to become holistically adorable.

Without the practice of detachment, however, such transcendence cannot be attained. But detachment here does not mean callousness. It implies commitment, but with a perspective uncluttered by egotism. Such a perspective and higher-Self wisdom flourish together. Spiritual perception represents understanding that is higher and wider than what mental thinking and reasoning can yield. The dominant left-brain leadership of the world during the last few centuries has been, on the whole, short-sighted as realized by

the great minds above. The corrective move implies Spirit-centered, right-brain, rajarshi leadership informed by transcendence and holism.

The 'knowledge' of a Spirit-centred leader was characterized in these words by Sri Aurobindo, on the basis of life-long realization beyond Intellectual speculation (Aurobindo, 1974):

It is sovereign stillness which is the calm of the yoga. The more complete the calm...the greater the force in action. In this calm right knowledge comes... In that voiceless stillness illumination comes upon the mind, error begins to fall away...clarity establishes itself in the higher stratum of the consciousness...he rises above reason to that direct and illuminated knowledge which we call vijñanam.

Interestingly, former Indian President Abdul Kalam has reported about Albert Einstein recalling Werner Heisenberg's words to him (Kalam, 2002):

You know, in the West we have built a large, beautiful ship. It has all the comforts in it, but one thing is missing: it has no compass and does not know where to go. Men like Tagore and Gandhi and their spiritual forebears had found the compass. Why can this compass not be put in the human ship so that both can realize their purpose?

Recovery of this compass could thus be the true aim of tomorrow's 'rajarsi' leader, drawing strength from spirituality.

Chakraborty has developed a five-step psycho-spiritual discipline, derived from the Y-V framework, to help go forward in this direction (Chakraborty, 1991). It is called the 'Mind Stilling Exercise' or 'Quality Mind Process'. [This is an approximate equivalent of the Rajyoga definition of Yoga as *chittavritti-nirodha*, that is, cessation of mental turbulence. (1.1)] it is a synthesis of some of the keynotes from the ontology-epistemology outlined earlier. Over the years It has been widely practised with managers/leaders In India, and occasionally abroad. The steps are as follows.

1. Deep, slow, *mindful* breathing, in and out through alternate nostrils (12-15 cycles).
2. Normal *mindful* breathing using both nostrils (5 min. or so).

These two steps help to stabilize the agitated nervous system, and to interiorize the discursive, centrifugal mind. It is a fundamental rule of yoga psychology that integral perception is positively correlated to consciously disciplined breathing. *Awareness interiorization* thus achieved is a great source of empowerment. Brief periods of *centripetalization* from the centrifugal workings of the mind recoup the power of integral effectiveness from within. It is also possible and necessary to use the attentive breathing process to absorb the fine particles, as it were, of human values and purge those of dis-values from within. Breathing thus becomes even more human and purposive.

3. Becoming *aware of the space within* the head and suggesting to it gently and

silently: let go, let go... 'This step helps to unwind the congested, tight left brain,' to make it relatively still and free from the mechanical, grinding, random thoughts. This is called 'thought stilling' or 'brain-stilling' (5-7 min).

This third step is crucial for 'right brain' revival, transcendence and holistic perception. Aldous Huxley had cautioned in 1946 that 'the habit of analytical thought is fatal to the intuitions of integral thinking.'

4. *Opening up upwards* above the head—by contemplating a lotus at dawn silently unfolding its petals and opening up to the pure golden rays of the rising sun (5-7 min).

This step attempts to put the ego-anchored awareness, Imprisoned within the limited, conditioned body-life-mind cage, in touch with the infinite, unconditioned, universal and transcendent power, in-telligence. Step 3 facilitates this process (Aurobindo, 1991). A kind of effortless but ardent receptivity is needed.

5. *Concentrating the awareness* on the self-luminous, self-fulfilled higher. Self or Spirit in the centre of the psychological heart (hriday guha or cave of the heart). One may visualize a strong and steady golden flame as a symbol of the Self to concentrate upon (5-7 min). Alternatively, one's benign ishtam or chosen deity may also be contemplated with quiet emotional ardour. (It could be beneficial to grasp the essence of step 5 this way also: Our executive, outer self is a tangle of 'variables' arising from the body, the vital energy, the mind, etc. Yet, deep in our being there is a 'constant' too. This is like the constant in an equation comprising many variables. The constant is crucial to the whole equation. Awareness in contact with the inner 'constant' is Yoga.)

This final step helps one to achieve a stable and holy inner anchor. One can cut loose from externals, and retire to it as and when the need for *recentering* is felt. Steps 4 and 5 lend height and depth, respectively, to our flat consciousness. All the five steps together also strengthen the power of *introspection*. One can watch a sort of 'slow motion action replay' of the mind's wrong movements, and so check them.

Ego, Ethics and the Spiritualized Leader

Since Mahatma Gandhi has been mentioned as a transforming leader, it may be useful to listen to him a little. Way back in 1925, the concluding paragraph of the preface to his autobiography said this (Gandhi, 1972):

'For it is an unbroken torture to me that I am still so far from Him Who, as I fully know, governs every breath of my life, And Whose offspring I am.'

This testament is a good example of what transcendence for a transforming or rajarshi leader could truly mean. Mahatma Gandhi yearns and prays for transcending the ego-consciousness in order to experience the light and wisdom of the original source—God, Spirit, Divine, Self.

Burns mentions that it was in South Africa where Mahatma Gandhi was transformed

into a leader. But no reference occurs about the central role of his spiritual struggles and aspirations. Curiously, attention has been drawn to his reading of Ruskin, Thoreau, Tolstoy, but not the Gita. The psycho-analytic framework has also been applied (rather mis-applied) to understand him (Burns, 1978). However, a recent biography by an Indian authority (Rajmohan Gandhi, Gandhi's grandson) has christened the Mahatma's striving as one for god-centred power; the higher power which pervades yet transcends everything (Gandhi, 1996). Elsewhere Gandhi himself had disclosed his childhood development in the following words (Gandhi, 1977):

- 1 '...what I failed to get there (in school) I obtained from my nurse (who) suggested to me as a remedy for fear (of ghosts and spirits) the repetition of Ramanama. So at a tender age I began repeating Ramanama to cure my fear'
2. 'As a child I was taught to call upon Rama when I was seized with fear. I present it also to the reader whose vision is not blurred and whose faith is not damped by over-much learning.'

Such then were the true mainsprings of Mahatma Gandhi's 'rajarshi' leadership process in early life. Outwardly, for his Indian followers, and masses in general, it was his spiritual depth and authenticity which had acted as the transforming force. Secular modes of interpretation applied to profiles such as those of Mahatma Gandhi (and Asoka, Talwar, etc) incur the capital error of trying to explain the higher through the lower.

It may also be noted that Burns has cited numerous political leaders as examples, of which only two are from Asia, and among them all it is only Mahatma Gandhi who is spiritually grounded (Burns, 1978). His strikingly different evolution raises this issue: If spiritually transforming leadership theory is to be universal, can it exclude genuine spirituality from due consideration? Even if this can be done, should it be done? We may listen to the supra-scholastic Huxley once more (Huxley, 1994):

A viable society is one in which those who have qualified themselves to see indicate the goals to be aimed at, while those whose business it is to rule respect the authority and listen to the advice of the seers. In theory at least, all this was well- understood in India, and until the Reformation, in Europe...

This 'seer-ruler' (*rajarshi*) symbiosis still prevails in India in all professions—howsoever unobtrusively or crudely maybe. One may recall here the Vedantic parable - a lame friend on the shoulders of another who is blind, complementing one another.

Here is a telling example of the ethical and transmuting influence of Mahatma Gandhi on his followers. This incident had occurred in the 1920s when he was also a labour leader. He had guided the workers of a textile mill to launch non-violent strike for some legitimate demands against a mill owner who was well known to him. But after two weeks the strikers began to lose moral strength and turned to violence, black-legging, desertions, etc. What happened then at the start of the third week is best heard in his own words (Gandhi, 1972).

'One morning—it was at a mill-hands' meeting—while I was still groping and

unable to see my way clearly, the light came to me. Unbidden and all by themselves the words came to my lips: “Unless the strikers rally? I declared to the meeting, “and continue the strike till a settlement is reached, or till they leave the mills altogether, I will not touch any food.” The labourers were thunderstruck... (They) broke out, “Not you but we shall fast.... Please forgive us for our lapses, we will now remain faithful to our pledge to the end.”

The strike was settled amicably and permanently at the end of the third week. The elevating power of a spiritually developed leader is self-evident from above. Gandhi’s spiritual charisma is entirely different from that of religious demagogues or political fanatics.

Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902), another realized master of Y-V psycho-philosophy, and the builder of an international sacro-secular organization, had voiced these startling remarks to an elite London audience in 1896 (Vivekananda, 1958):

1. ‘Renunciation is the very basis upon which ethics stands. There never was an ethical code preached which had not renunciation for its basis.’
2. ‘The senses say “Myself first”; ethics says “I must hold myself last.”’
3. ‘...the goal, the scope, the idea of all ethics is the destruction and not the building up, of the individual.’

A dispassionate examination of the current spate of leadership unethically in all spheres should prompt us to fathom the rishi message Imbedded in Swami Vivekananda’s words. (It Is Important for scholars and practitioners of leadership to know that the principle of servant leadership’ was enunciated by Vivekananda way back in the 1890s (Complete Works, Vol. 6; pp. 284-285). There is much ignorance and vanity in India and the West behind denying the ‘devil’ Its due.)

Yet this ego is a creation of Nature to serve as an initial nucleus for a distinct personality. But this is a provisional, intermediate individualization. Sticking to it, with coatings of reason, intellect, etc., acts as a bar against exalting transformation. The bound and the limited ego (or lower self) necessarily implies ‘smallness of being’, ‘contraction of consciousness’, ‘limitation of knowledge’, ‘scission of oneness’, ‘disharmony and failure of sympathy’, etc. (Aurobindo, 1988). It is for such reasons that in a letter written in 1894, Swami Vivekananda had declared: ‘It is very difficult to take on the role of a leader. ...One must be a servant of servants, and must accommodate a thousand minds’ (Vivekananda, 1962).

There is at present a huge corpus of ‘compliance ethics’ (codes, legislation, etc.) and ‘cognitive ethics’ (intellectual theories). Yet, unethicity is on the rise. The clue to this paradox lies in not knowing or ignoring a third, higher-level response. The third prong, termed here as ‘Consciousness Ethics’, should complement the prevailing two- pronged combat strategy against mounting unethicity. One of the chief leaders in the Indian epic Mahabharata had confessed: ‘I know what is right, yet I cannot act upto it; I also know what is wrong, yet I cannot desist from doing it’. This universal human predicament tells

us that ‘right knowing’ does not automatically lead to ‘right behaving’. The true answer for this breach has to be sought in ‘Consciousness’. Sri Aurobindo had argued for this approach to ethics in the following words (Aurobindo, 1995):

‘To do the right thing in the right way in each case and at each moment one must be in the right consciousness...it can never be done by following a fixed mental rule...’

True enough, as a Vedantic metaphor tells, the world is like a dog’s tail. It can never be fully or permanently straightened. Yet, a three-pronged, rather than a two-pronged, strategy for ethics should work better. If we recall the views of the six great thinkers-realizers (Tagore et al.) cited earlier, it becomes clear that they all felt/feel that the ‘cognitive-scientific-secular-rational’ leadership approach falters on the moral and ecological planes. It may have been observed also that the above Y-V metaphysical framework for ethics does not hinge on any denominational, credal religion or its founder. So, ‘consciousness ethics’, anchored in a spiritual psychological theory and process as suggested here, is a surer bet. A modest degree of initial faith is needed to get started—as much in science for matter, as in spirituality for ‘rajarshi’ leadership.

What is this ‘right consciousness’? It is a ‘consciousness other than the ego’—as the definition of spirituality by Sri Aurobindo quoted earlier states. History has been repeatedly showing that egoistic reason becomes an accomplice of our vitalistic passions. All too often the leader (reason) becomes the led. Mahatma Gandhi says (Gandhi, 1962):

‘I know that ultimately one is guided not by the intellect, but by the heart. The heart accepts a conclusion for which the intellect subsequently finds reasoning... Man often finds reason in support of whatever he wants to do.’

So, rational ethics from the thinking mental plane tends to fail again and again. Sri Aurobindo confirms this evaluation (Aurobindo, 1982):

‘All attempts to moralize the race within the limits of his egoistic nature end in general failure...since reason has also to start from the senses which are consistent falsifiers of values, ratio-nal knowledge...is pursued by vast dimnesses and uncertainties.’

‘Consciousness ethics’ thus implies the leader’s attempt to transcend his present proclivity towards reasoning of convenience. ‘Spiritual consciousness’ should help one to realize the Self in all and all in the Self. This ‘right consciousness’ is the antidote to the present consciousness of competitive divisiveness, which is the root of unethicity. While explaining Aristotelean ‘virtue ethics’ for business, Solomon doubts the practical value of impressive tracts on cognitive ethics so full of intricate macro issues. He says: ‘Accordingly, I want to defend business ethics as a more personally oriented ethics rather than as public policy’ (Solomon, 1993). He is acceptable when he says that virtue is part of social practice ‘which goes beyond the individual and binds him or her to a larger human network’. The Indian approach towards the ‘rajarshi’ has confirmed for long Solomon’s primary focus on the personal dimension of ethics for the ‘individual-in-society’. So long

as the chronically divisive ego- consciousness remains the pivot, the ‘bond’ that Solomon rightly insists upon will not be forged.

Conclusion

Literature on transformational leadership in the West has hitherto been concentrating on the individual, the group and the organization. This by itself is a major step forward from the limited focus in leadership studies on initiating structure and consideration (Seltzer and Bass, 1990). But this promising effort awaits a still higher leap towards sustainability beyond political and business organizations only. A few serious Western observers outside the commercial and political mainstreams are voicing great concern about growing psycho-social disintegration and irreversible ecological destruction (Hawken, 1993; Quinn, 1993).

Sri Aurobindo’s transcendent spiritual insight had, however, accurately foreseen and warned us about this gathering crisis during 1916- 1919—(Aurobindo, 1970):

‘... in a commercial age with its ideal...of success, vitalistic satisfaction, productiveness and possession the soul of man may linger a while...but cannot permanently rest. If it persisted too long, Life would become clogged and perish of its own plethora or burst in its straining to a gross expansion. Like the too massive Titan it will collapse by its own mass, mole ruet sua!

Leadership forces that tend to seduce humanity into a 24-hour, 7-day deficit-driven society, with no time to pause and draw a deep breath, to stand and stare, will nourish neither ethics nor happiness. The world beyond politics and business therefore awaits the arrival of more and more ‘rajarshi’ leaders in every sphere who are able to grasp that, while economics may be the first activity of humanity, it is not its final aim. Pitrim Sorokin had thus diagnosed the human problem during the 1950s—(Sorokin, 1962).

‘Beginning roughly with the sixteenth century... the modern form of our culture emerged: the sensory, empirical, secular, and ‘this worldly’ culture. It may be called sensate. It is based upon, and is integrated around, this new principal value: the true reality and value is sensory.’

He castigated this major premise of sensate culture as undesirable, and recommends its replacement by the more desirable major premise of altruism. After examining Hindu, Buddhist and other spiritual traditions, Sorokin was convinced about the efficacy of the supreme transmuting principle: ‘complete subordination of all values, norms, goals and egos to one absolute value, God, Nirvana, Brahman. This supreme singleness of value for transcending all relative values is exactly the right formula for integrating a multitude of antagonistic egos...’

Dag Hammarskjold had uttered these candid words (Hammarskjold, 1966):

It is not sufficient to place yourself daily under God. What really matters is to be only under God. The slightest division of allegiance opens the door to day-dreaming, petty conversation, petty boasting, petty malice—all the petty satellites of death instinct.’

Thus, both Sorokin and Hammarskjold had pointed out the need to transcend the sensate, deficit-driven, conflict-ridden self for the sake of constructive leadership.

Once again Sri Aurobindo had articulated succinctly the correct subjective guideline for the ‘rajarshi’ leader of today and tomorrow, way back in 1910, presaging Sorokin and Hammarskjold by several decades.

‘The problems which have troubled mankind can only be solved by conquering the kingdom within, not by harnessing the forces of Nature to the service of comfort and luxury.’

The sacred moorings of power therefore need strengthening by transformed leaders for ‘true’ human needs (Chakraborty and Bhattacharya, 1991). Leadership at present bends towards consumerist business or divisive politics. So, the ‘hard’ call of the transmuting rajarshi (Y-V) model, in the ‘soft’ arena of leadership is: ‘Leader, lead thyself— svarat samrat bhavati.’

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India of the ages is not dead nor has she spoken her last creative word; she lives and has still something to do for herself and the human peoples. And that which must seek now to awake is not an anglicised oriental people, docile pupil of the West and doomed to repeat the cycle of the Occident's success and failure, but still the ancient immemorable Shakti recovering her deepest self, lifting her head higher towards the supreme source of light and strength and turning to discover the complete meaning and a vaster form of her Dharma.

Sri Aurobindo