



THE NEW WORLD ORDER

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Aurobindo though a great champion of the doctrine of nationalism, is an ardent supporter of the whole world as one family. According to him the evolution of nations and the growth of human unity are based on identical principles. He analysed the process of the evolution of human societies to become nations and explored its conditions, difficulties, stages and methods. However, he concluded that if one looked at history, he would find the continuous march of mankind from small groupings and structures to higher and higher integration and organization. Thus the history of humanity is an arresting story of greater and greater integrations. According to him, the principles which have been working behind the formation of nations will also lead to human unity. The United Nations is undoubtedly more broad based than the League of Nations. The future organization of mankind will approximate towards the ideal of human unity. Aurobindo believes that human unity is inevitable and he supports it on metaphysical grounds. The League of Nations came into being as a direct consequence of the First World War; the United Nations, similarly as a consequence of the second world wide conflict. If the third world war, which is regarded by many as inevitable, does come, it is likely to precipitate equally inevitably a further step and perhaps the final outcome of this great world endeavour. He further points out that as the individual and the collectivity are two aspects of the same reality, their harmony is necessary and fundamental. This again is the basis of nations and bigger collectivities. In the words of Aurobindo, "The whole process of nature depends on a balancing and a constant tendency to harmony between two poles of life, the individual whom the whole or aggregate nourishes and whole or aggregate which the individual helps to constitute. Human life forms no exception to

the rule. Therefore, the perfection of human life must involve the elaboration of an as yet unaccomplished harmony between these two poles of our existence, the individual and the social aggregate. The perfect society will be that which most entirely favours the perfection of the individual; the perfection of the individual will be incomplete if it does not help towards the perfect state of the social aggregate to which he belongs to eventually to that of the largest possible human aggregate, the whole of a United humanity.”¹

Modern civilization, however, has not been successful to achieve this ultimate goal, because it is totally materialistic and devoid of spirituality. He further opines that the achievements of modern science are undoubtedly amazing as the prospect of space conquest and journey to various planets are breath taking. With such power over nature and in the abundance of luxuries, the western world can proudly claim peace and plenty. But, a little probing beneath the surface betrays growing emptiness in the heart, immense void and distressing insecurity, manifesting itself in “unprovoked violence, unwarranted crime, juvenile delinquency, frequent divorces, suicides, and moral laxity”.² There are no two opinions that at no time in the history of humanity has man extended the frontiers of knowledge more than today and science has placed tremendous energy in the hands of mankind. But, paradoxically it is also true that at no time was man more disturbed, fear-ridden, and suspicious than today. He is not at peace with himself, nor with his neighbor, nor with nature. The demoralizing threat of nuclear war and the consequent certainty of annihilation of humanity are haunting him. The recurring nuclear test with radio-active fall outs contaminate the physical and mental atmosphere. Man, in the grip of fear, is the enemy of man. The gravest problem before man is how to fight the internal enemies and learn the art of self conquest. It is true that he who conquers self, conquers all. That is why Aurobindo is of the opinion that modern civilization has overrated science and technology just as the older civilization had underrated it. Thus in the ultimate analysis, the modern crisis before mankind is spiritual. Even a materialistic thinker like Bertrand Russell is apt to remark that “we are in the middle of a race between human skill as to means and human folly as to ends”, resulting in strife, insecurity and sorrow. To quote him again, “unless men increase in wisdom as such as in knowledge, increase of knowledge will be increase of sorrow”.³

Aurobindo, with his profound knowledge of human affairs and deep study of world history has looked into the present day crisis of human civilization not only in its psychological and historical meanings

but also in the perspective of the inner purpose of nature, the inherent nisus in her evolutionary process and opined that history bears witness to the extinction of great civilization of Rome, Greece, Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria etc. All these could boast of political power, social order, and intellectual attainments, but their structures were based on material values and so they collapsed. Similarly, the explosive character of western civilization based upon materialism may explode at any time. In his view no amount of political or social manipulation can cure human unrest, and spirituality is sure to go a long way towards averting this catastrophe by ending all dissensions and solving human problems at all levels of life individual, social, national and international, and lead man to self realization.

Time and again Aurobindo made it clear that the transformation of the world which science and politics seek is powerless to ensure human welfare without the transformation of human nature itself, which Sanatana Dharma of India seek through discipline of the whole personality. It is only such spirituality disciplined individuals and groups that can ensure for humanity at large the values of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, of fraternity and equality. The peace and happiness of man and the stability and ordered progress of civilization depend entirely upon the intensification of the spiritual awareness of humanity. Hence, Aurobindo is of the view that “with this spiritual awareness for a foundation, the structure of civilization raised by science and democracy becomes strong and steady; without it, it sways in periodic crisis to topple down eventually without the inspiration of religion (Dharma) civilization shall every remain and unstable structure”.⁴

However, Aurobindo maintained that the states should ultimately evolve towards human unity because nationalism was only a necessary stage in the social and political evolution of man. Ultimately there should be human unity through a world union, and the spiritual foundations of such a consummation could be provided by a religion of humanity and the feeling of inner oneness. But there are several grave impediments in the path of human unity through one step has already been taken in this direction in the form of general feeling that human unity must be established. In the evolution towards this goal Aurobindo visualizes the same stages as have to be passed for the making of a nation. The nation, he points out, was born as an indefinite structure in which were present several elements of unification. Organisation and unity in this unit were increased by means of centralization and pressure. In the third stage, the national arrived at

the step where not external pressure but sentiment of nationality became the basis of national unity. According to Aurobindo, if the unity of the human race is to be brought about by the same means and agents and in a similar fashion to that of the nation, we should expect it to follow a similar course.⁵

Here one can see the impediments arising in the way of human unity. Before the sentiment for human unity can grow, humanity will have to pass through the stages of centralization and international pressure. Not much have been done towards this end by the international organization meant for this purpose. These organization can not save the world from a future ware, since, according to Aurobindo, “National egoism remaining, the means of strife remaining, its causes, opportunities, excuses will never be wanting”⁶

The reduction and ceiling on the number of armed forces and war potentials of the nations by international organizations are not the proper course to check and eliminate war because if there is no intention to war, a nation can amass war material in no time and without much difficulty. The greatest impediment in the way of the success of international organization is the fact that while the human beings who are members of families, clans and nations are to some extent developed and civilized, most of the nations are in the animal stages of evolution and no high sentiment or self control can be expected from them. Hence, Aurobindo advised that national egoism and prejudices must be put to an end for the realization of human unity. Just as families and nations cannot be developed so long as individual egoism is intact, similarly true human unity can not be realized so long as national egoism and prejudices towards other nations persist and there will always remain a constant danger of war. Because, as Aurobindo has said, “The law is always the same, that wherever egoism is the root of action it must bear its own proper results and reactions and, however, minimized and kept down they may be by an external machinery, their eventual outburst is sure and can be delayed but not prevented for ever.”⁷ Therefore, human unity cannot be established without national egoism. But this ego is not the self. As has already been pointed out, the evolution of individual soul is not a bar but an aid to the evolution of nation soul. Similarly, evolution of nation soul is advantageous to the evolution of human unity. Therefore, each nation should grow fully and freely. And if each nation will be based on true nation soul then not conflict but harmony will be the basis of international relations and the ideal of human unity will be achieved.

According to Aurobindo, “The ideal society or state is that which respect for individual liberty and free growth of the personal being to his perfection is harmonized with respect for the needs, efficiency, solidarity, natural growth and organic perfection of the corporate being, the society or nation. In an ideal aggregate of all humanity, in the international society or state, national liberty and free national growth and self realization ought in the same way to be progressively harmonized with the solidarity and unified growth and perfection of the human race.”⁸ Aurobindo has harmonized different communities on the basis of the principle which is the basis for the harmony of individual and society. But, according to him, this is not possible through international organization or laws because not moral principles, reason and justice but psychological forces determine the relations among nations. Even when some nation appears to be working on some moral principles, then also either it does not make any special sacrifices for it or if it does then it is under some compulsion. So far as fraternity between various nations is concerned, Aurobindo calls it a mere theory. According to him, “The war brought into relief the fact that it is only the great powers that really count in the international scale; all others merely exist by sufferance or by protection or by alliance.”⁹ Subjugation of Kuwait by Iraq in July, 1990 and her subsequent emancipation through international war in January February 1991, testifies his observation. 50 years after these words were written the United Nations is still in the same state and the group of seven affluent nations, viz. the United States, France, Great Britain, Germany, Japan, Italy and Canada, popularly known as G-7 Nations are trying to keep their economic hegemony through out the world. Thus, the principle of equality has not become operative in international relations. Similarly, democratic ideals have not truly been achieved anywhere in the world. The states which are called democratic are actually being ruled by some capitalists, political leaders and other individuals.

And yet Aurobindo had an irrepressible faith in the ideal of human unity. He wrote, “the political and administrative unification of mankind is not only possible but foreshadowed by our present evolution; the collective national egoism which resists it may be over borne by an increasing flood of the present unifying tendency to which the anguish of the European war gave a lovely and an articulate voice.”¹⁰ It is true that seeing the present circumstances the realization of human unity appears to be rather difficult but just as bigger nations have been formed in the world by the combination of smaller nations similarly the

ideal of human unity may be attained in future. This requires tremendous efforts in the fields of social, economic, educational, political and other types of unification. This unity finds a due place for diversity. It will not only admit but even encourage small distinctions. For this mankind will have to develop relationship between the individuals, societies and mankind. All these three are natural units. None of these can be eliminated. Only the self assertive designs of nationalistic imperialism and national egoism, which constitute a danger to human unity and peace, are required to be replaced by cosmopolitanism and world union. In the first stage which is the process of national unification and solidification, the dominant interests of the national unit can preponderate over other local and sectional loyalties and obligations. In the second stage when the nation has become organized and powerful it should minimize its parochial and territorial claims and should preserve itself in a cosmopolitan organization without destroying its existence as a unit, just as the individual preserves himself in the family, the family in the class and the class in the nation. It is essential to solidify the moral and psychological bonds of internationalism. This is the need of the hour. Aurobindo never considers nationalism and patriotism to be narrow fanatical jingoism or chauvinism but envisages “the ultimate unity of mankind”¹¹ But this unity can be established only on the basis of equality and not of domination by some powers over others “we demand the realization of our corporate existence as a distinct race and nation because that is the only way in which the ultimate brotherhood of humanity can be achieved.”¹² The nation units that are to be united do not have to be coerced, nor has their distinct individuality to be challenged or destroyed. What should be eliminated are only the forces of internal disruption and dislocation. In other words according to Aurobindo in the beginning Nature develops the individuals, then the communities are developed and finally mankind will be developed in this very sequence. To quote him, the united progress of mankind would thus be realized by a general principle of inter changes and assimilation between individual and individual and again between individual and community, between community and community and again between the smaller commonality and the totality of mankind, between the common life and consciousness of mankind and its freely developing communal and individual constituents”¹³

In the development of human unity the principle of liberty and diversity is as much important as that of unity because the ultimate reality is both one and many. The general scheme of Nature is based on

infinite diversity. Hence, an ideal society will have all types of freedom viz., individual, national, religious, social and moral. Clarifying the concept of liberty Aurobindo wrote, “By liberty we mean the freedom to obey the law of our being, to grow to our natural fulfillment, to find out naturally and freely our harmony with our environment.”¹⁴ Unity does not hinder but help this liberty. Even after achieving spiritual and psychological unity the individual seeks complete and free development and this is only realized when others also develop freely. Hence, in the ideal unification of mankind the human beings will be allowed freedom to form communities based on social, cultural and economic convenience and there will be no external compulsion upon them. It is essential for human unity that there should be such an organization of free and natural communities that there may be no place for internal conflict, opposition, repression and revolt. Thus it is clear that no human unity can be established by the use of force, whether that of a nation or of some world organization. Aurobindo, therefore, is against the idea of a world state because the power of the state always acts through external pressure, law, police and army. This again can not be achieved through any type of international law. Its only basis will be spirituality, Dharma, reason, will and conscious principles of various nations. Those who imagine a world state for the establishment of human unity, forget that it involves the same difficulties that arise due to state authority in a particular society. Hence, it would not be out of place that even materialist thinker like Karl Marx had advocated, like spiritualist Aurobindo, the stateless society as the fulfillment of human progress. Thus there appears to be hardly any advantage in the establishment of a world state.

Diversity

Those who imagine a world state or a world nation in which the individuality of the nation will be abolished, forget that uniformity is nowhere the principle of life. In nature there is diversity in unity and this principle is particularly important in the biological world. It is for this reason that too much centralization is considered to be unnatural in human society and, on the other hand, most of the political thinkers support decentralization. Underlying this diversity is the principle that each individual and each group has to grow according to its own nature or Swadharma. Hence, according to Aurobindo, “the unity of human race to be entirely sound and in consonance with the deepest laws of life must be founded on free groupings, and the groupings again must be the natural associations of free individuals.”¹⁵ This diversity among human groups

or the freedom of different nations should be realized in the different aspects of culture such as language, literature and art etc.

Therefore, Aurobindo has supported the growth of a national language in each nation. He agrees that the English language had undoubtedly helped us in maintaining our contact with other societies and nations but at the same time he is of the considered view that English can never be a substitute for the national language. This is equally true of other constituents of culture.

In other words Aurobindo would not stand for a rigidly mechanical and centralized world-state because this would mean only the external form and not the spirit of unity. He is critical of a world state and favours a world union. There are, according to him, three possible institutional means to effectuate the scheme of unity of mankind. There can be a centralized unitary world state due to its mechanical orientation will lead to stagnation and decline of the autonomous spirit of the nations. A strong federation of the world would destroy the spirit of national variation and multiple self-expression. A loose confederacy, on the other hand, may lead to the eruption of centrifugal forces. It cannot be permanent and may end either in centralization or in disintegration.¹⁶

But even if the actually existing free and non-imperial states are included in whatever international council or other system may be established, their position is likely to be very much like that of vassals rather than of equal. The position of a minor state standing out against the will of the Big Powers or rather a party of powers would be worse than that of small neutrals in the second world war. Even if the Constitution of international unity were outwardly democratic, it would be a few great empires that would govern in the name of humanity.

World Union :

Ever since man pondered over the ideal of human unity, the idea of federation of nations of some type or the other has been in his mind. After the first world war, the league of Nations was founded. The idea of the league had kept in mind the principle of unity in diversity but due to several other causes it could not save the world from the clutches of the Second World War. In his famous treatise 'The Ideal of Human Unity' Aurobindo has dwelt upon these causes in detail.¹⁷ However, the mankind established the United

Nations Organisation after this great catastrophe. As to how for this world organization will be able to save human society is a matter of discussion but since a future. Third world war would be fatal to the very existence of mankind. Aurobindo has suggested ways by which the aims and objectives of the United Nations can be achieved. According to him all the nations on earth should voluntarily join this organization; justice and truth should be its basis; its constitution should be such as is likely to resolve international problems and points of serious frictions; and a permanent powerful central authority should be organized by it which should be sanctioned by all the nations.¹⁸ However, the question of human unity is not disputed by anyone because it is eternal. If the United Nations fails to achieve this objective it will meet the fate of the League of Nations. Explaining the conditions of a free world organization Aurobindo remarks. "A free world. Union must in its very nature be a complex unity based on a diversity and that diversity must be based on free self-determination."¹⁹ No mechanical unity can be established in a world organization. Each nation should join it by its own free will. For this no pressure should be exercised on any one since such pressure is against the ideal of self-determination. Man's aim is to establish a world culture in which each national culture gets fullest opportunity for development. This is possible only when no nation is under pressure of any other nation and each enjoys local, territorial and regional freedom.

Thus, Aurobindo does not favour that concept of internationalism and human unity which characterizes it as the attempt of human mind and life to grow out of the national idea and form and even in a way to destroy it in the interest of the larger synthesis of mankind. According to him it is not the true ideal of human unity because this idea of internationalism is the result of the fear of war. So Aurobindo points out that "We cannot rely too greatly of ideas and resolutions formed in a moment of abnormal crisis under the violent stress of exceptional circumstances."²⁰ Similarly he does not adhere to the view that with the increase in international contacts due to the progress of science, opinion has grown in favour of internationalism. He is of the view that such type of analysis or the foundations of human unity are too shallow and the events of human history testify that this advancement of science and technology has resulted so far in more and more exploitation of one nation to other nation. Again the European or the western concept of race equality is based on sociological and anthropometrical research but is devoid of the spiritual fundamental unity of mankind. Whereas Vedantic philosophy of spiritual monism proclaims the equality of

all peoples and therefore, in the writings of all great modern thinkers of India viz. Swami Dayananda, Swami Vivekananda, Gandhi and Aurobindo etc. We find that their doctrine of nationalism is supplementary to the ideal of human unity and internationalism. Thus, Aurobindo's religion of humanity involves "the clear recognition by man in all his thoughts and life of a single soul in humanity of which each man and each people is an incarnation."²¹

The Religion of Humanity

Hence, if the ideal of human unity has to be realized, it should not be based on external pressures, laws and mechanical principle but on the religion of humanity. This religion of humanity will perform the same function in the formation of a world-nation as has always been done by the sentiment of nationality in the formation of nations. It will raise men up from narrow egoism and establish their unity with others. Underlying the religion of humanity is the idea that humanity is the highest ideal or God and the family, state or nation cannot replace it. On the other hand, family, state or nation are valuable because they are helpful in the realization of human unity. The basic principle underlying the religion of humanity is "Man must be sacred to man regardless of all distinctions of race, creed, colour, nationality, status, political or social advancement."²² The principle of non-violence is included in the idea of human sanctity. The sanctity of man means sanctity of human body, life, heart, mind etc. all of which must be respected and each should get opportunity for free development. Fraternity is the basis of the religion of humanity. Without its growth, the ideal of human unity cannot be achieved. This fraternity among human beings is based on the fact that liberty, equality and unity are the eternal traits of the human soul.

In other words Aurobindo is of the view that "while it is possible to construct a precarious and quite technical unity by political and administrative means, the unity of human race—can only be secured and can only be made real if the religion of humanity, which is at present the highest active idea of mankind, spiritualises itself and becomes the general inner law of human life."²³ In the path of the achievement of the ideal of human unity, there will be difficulties greater than those faced in the evolution of nations. But just

as nations evolved to fulfil the purpose of Nature similarly a world union will also evolve overcoming these difficulties. If man fails to achieve this purpose, Nature may take some other step to find out it. But the establishment of human unity on this earth is sufficiently grounded in the very nisus of Nature.

To conclude it may be observed that Aurobindo's faith in the ideal of human unity is based upon his theory of evolution. If man is an evolving being, he will gradually evolve to world union as he has evolved upto nation because nation is not the ultimate and final unit. The affiliations among different nations may fulfil only some temporary needs but these groups can not be considered to be ultimate and final units. The very process of evolution in Nature will take us towards the ideal of human unity. To quote Aurobindo, "We may rely, if on the evolutionary urge and, if on no other greater hidden power, on the manifest working and drift or intention in the world energy. We call Nature to carry mankind at least as far as the necessary next step to be taken, a self preserving next step; for the necessity is there, at least some general recognition of it has been achieved and of the thing to which it must eventually lead the idea has been born and the body of it is already calling for its creation."²⁴

Thus the transformation of the world which science and politics seek is powerless to ensure human welfare with out the transformation of human nature itself, which religion seeks through discipline of the whole personality. It is only such spiritually disciplined individuals and groups who can ensure for humanity at large the values of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness of fraternity and equality. The peace and happiness of man and the stability and ordered progress of civilizations depend entirely upon the intensification of the spiritual awareness of humanity. With this spiritual awareness for a foundation, the structure of civilization raised by science and democracy becomes strong and steady; without it, it sways in periodic crises to topple down eventually. Without the inspiration of Dharma civilization shell ever remain an unstable structure. In other words it goes to the credit of Aurobindo who sympathized the modern science and technology of the west with the Vedantic philosophy of the orient, more particularly of India and thus showed the path of salvation for the mankind.

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