

The Task of Building India is Spiritual

Second Edition

A Compilation from the Works of
Sri Aurobindo and the Mother

Compiled by Jamshed M Mavalwalla

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Sri Aurobindo Society
AUROPUBLICATIONS
POWERFUL THOUGHTS, INSPIRING VISION

The Task of Building India Is Spiritual

Second Edition

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Vijaybhai's Note on Comprehensive Compilation

All over the world, there is a growing interest in spirituality and Yoga. There is a search for the true meaning and purpose of life, for deeper solutions to the problems that confront us all, and for ways in which we can contribute to evolutionary change and progress.

In this search, more and more people are turning to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother for guidance and enlightenment. But in their voluminous writings, they do not know where to find the answers they are looking for.

In this regard the Mother has said,

> "*It is not by books that Sri Aurobindo ought to be studied but by subjects—what he has said on the Divine, on Unity, on religion, on evolution, on education, on self-perfection, on supermind, etc., etc.*"
>
> (CWM 12: 206)

On another occasion She said:

> "*If you want to know what Sri Aurobindo has said on a given subject, you must at least read all he has written on that subject. You will then see that he seems to have said the most contradictory things. But when one has read everything and understood a little, one sees that all the contradictions complement*

one another and are organised and unified in an integral synthesis."

(CWM 16: 309–310)

While several compilations are now available, many sincere spiritual seekers have felt the need for Comprehensive Compilations from Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on specific subjects, in which the contents are further organised into sub-topics, so that one can find everything one is looking for in one place.

This compilation is an effort to fulfil this need and thus help spiritual seekers in their journey and sadhana. We hope that this compilation will help us gain greater mental clarity about a subject so that we can channel our efforts in the right direction. For Sri Aurobindo has written:

"*It is always better to make an effort in the right direction; even if one fails the effort bears some result and is never lost.*"

(CWSA 29: 87)

We will be glad to receive suggestions and feedback from the readers.

Vijay

Preface

Our entire country is celebrating the auspicious occasion of the 150th Birth Anniversary of Sri Aurobindo and the 75th Anniversary of India's Independence on 15 August 2022. This year, we at Sri Aurobindo Ashram and Sri Aurobindo Society present a series of compilations on "India" from the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

We present the second e-book of the series on India—*The Task of Building India Is Spiritual*. The first book was *India and Her Mission*. Once all the e-books are released, we hope that readers will recognize that the underlying theme of this series is "How India Can Achieve Its Mission". The aim of this series of compilations is to be as comprehensive as possible. All that Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have said about India, as well as all that is directly or indirectly related to India, is included in these compilations.

The quotations in this compilation are from *The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo* (CWSA); *Collected Works of the Mother*, Second Edition; Shri K. D. Sethna's book *India and the World Scene*; *Evening Talks with Sri Aurobindo*, recorded by Shri A. B. Purani, First Edition; *Talks with Sri Aurobindo* by Shri Nirodbaran; and from Sri Aurobindo's Archives and Research Magazines. A few quotations are also from *Conversations of the Mother with a Sadhak*.

Shri K. D. Sethna (Amal Kiran), Shri A. B. Purani, and Shri Nirodbaran were senior sadhaks who were close to Sri Aurobindo.

In the introduction to the book *India and the World Scene*, Shri K. D. Sethna writes, "Not only were my editorials written under his [Sri Aurobindo's] inner inspiration: they were also sent to him for approval. Only when his 'Yes' was wired to us did we plunge into publication." Thus, these quotations can be taken as representing Sri Aurobindo's opinion.

In the books by Shri Purani and Shri Nirodbaran, Sri Aurobindo, while talking to sadhaks, gave his opinion on many subjects.

After each quotation, the following abbreviations are used to represent the book or source from which it is taken.

CWSA: *The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo*
CWM: *Collected Works of the Mother*, Second Edition
IWSKDS: *India and the World Scene* by Shri K. D. Sethna, First Edition
ISWFKDS: *The Indian Spirit and the World's Future* by Shri K. D. Sethna
CTMS: *Conversations of the Mother with a Sadhak*
ETABP: *Evening Talks with Sri Aurobindo,* recorded by A. B. Purani, First Edition
TWSAN: *Talks with Sri Aurobindo* by Nirodbaran

While the passages from Sri Aurobindo are in the original English, most of the passages from the Mother (selections from her talks and writings) are translations from the original French. We must also bear in mind that the excerpts have been taken out of their original context and that a compilation, by its very nature, is likely to have a personal and subjective approach. A sincere attempt, however, has been made to remain faithful to the vision of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Those who would like to go through the fuller text are advised to refer to the original books.

The section headings and sub-headings have been provided by the compiler to bring clarity to the selected topic.

The idea of taking up this comprehensive compilation on India was suggested to me by Vijaybhai [Sri Vijay Poddar] sometime in 2003. The hard copy of this compilation remained with him for many years. It was in May 2022 that he wrote to me: "I was looking again at your compilation on India. It is extremely comprehensive and very well done. I feel we should go ahead immediately to publish it as an e-book on our website." The quotations compiled in 2003 were drawn from the *Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library* SABCL editions. With the devoted assistance of a few proofreaders, we have carefully revised and brought each of these quotations into conformity with

The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo CWSA editions, thus enabling us to bring forth this series of e-books.

I aspire, like the flame of a lamp or a candle, to the Divine, praying that the process of India's achievement of her mission may be hastened.

Compiler: Jamshed M. Mavalwalla

Why a Compilation on "India" from Sri Aurobindo and the Mother?

Why should we learn about India from Sri Aurobindo and the Mother? Sri Aurobindo was born in India, and the Mother was born in France. Their lives, however, were not confined by the boundaries of nationality. For both of them, India represented something far greater than a geographical territory or a political entity. India had a deeper significance—a spiritual destiny, a mission, and a role to play in the evolution of humanity.

It is with this understanding that this compilation of quotations on "India" from Sri Aurobindo and the Mother has been prepared.

Sri Aurobindo writes:

> "I am impelled to this labour by the necessity of turning the mind of young India to our true riches, our real source of power, purification and hope for the future and of safeguarding it in the course of its search both from false lights and from the raucous challenges and confident discouragements cast at us by the frail modern spirit of denial. I write, not for the orthodox, nor for those who have discovered a new orthodoxy, Samaj or Panth, nor for the unbeliever; I write for those who acknowledge reason but do not identify reason with Western

> materialism; who are sceptics but not unbelievers; who, admitting the claims of modern thought, still believe in India, her mission and her gospel, her immortal life and her eternal rebirth." (CWSA 12: 62–63)

These words point towards the purpose of this compilation. It is an attempt to bring together Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's writings on India so that the younger generation may encounter their vision of India—her true riches, her mission, her spiritual heritage, and her future.

But a question may arise: Why should we learn about India from Sri Aurobindo? Part of the answer lies in a letter Sri Aurobindo wrote to his wife, Mrinalini Devi:

> "I know I have the strength to deliver this fallen race. It is not physical strength,—I am not going to fight with sword or gun,—but the strength of knowledge. The power of the Kshatriya is not the only one; there is also the power of the Brahmin, the power that is founded on knowledge. This feeling is not new in me, it is not of today. I was born with it, it is in my very marrow. God sent me to earth to accomplish this great mission. The seed began to sprout when I was fourteen; by the time I was eighteen the roots of the resolution had grown firm and unshakable." August

30, 1905. (Letter written by Sri Aurobindo to his wife Mrinalini)

These words reveal that his concern for India was not merely political or intellectual. It was deeply rooted in his consciousness and in what he regarded as a great mission entrusted to him.

But Sri Aurobindo was not alone in this vision. The Mother, his collaborator in the spiritual work, gives another dimension to the same question:

> "What must be done to pull the country out of its difficulty? Sri Aurobindo has foreseen all the troubles and he has given the solution. Just now we are approaching his Centenary; [1972] … this would be a wonderful occasion to spread his teaching all over the country: ... his teaching about India, how to organise India, the mission of India. ...
>
> About all that has happened and all that is happening now, he has said clearly that to go back to it is useless. We must give the country its true position, that is, the position of relying on the Divine. Naturally, this is at the other end of what people try to believe now. But Sri Aurobindo explains it in such a way that even those who are against it can agree. You understand? He has found a way of saying it which can be understood by everybody. That's the

only solution, as far as I can see; it is the only solution. All the rest will mean complication, contradiction and fighting.

... And this is above politics, you see. ... It is to organise the country beyond politics. And it is the only way. In politics it is always fight and ugly fight—ugly. And it has become so bad. He was telling me always that things would become worse and worse, because it is the *end* of this age. We are entering into an age where things must be organized differently. It is a difficult time because of that.

Because we know what will come, we can help to make it come sooner and with less turmoil. There is no hope in going backwards; it would make things last endlessly. We must go forward, absolutely, and go beyond, beyond party. And nobody can explain that better than Sri Aurobindo, because he was so much, *so* much beyond party; he saw the advantages and disadvantages of all parties and he stated them exactly.

If you read carefully what he has written—so much—you will find the answer to all these questions. And at the same time you will know that you will have the full support of the Divine Power. The Power that was behind him is behind this transformation. It is time for transformation. We can't cling to the past.

The best way to go beyond politics is to spread the message of Sri Aurobindo. Because he is no more a political element wanting to take power; there are only his ideas and ideals. And, of course, if people could understand and realise his programme, the country could be very strong, very strong." (CWM 15: 405–406)

This compilation also contains quotations from the Mother's *Collected Works of the Mother*. Although the Mother was born in France, she always felt that India was her true country, the country of her soul and spirit. She declared herself Indian by choice and predilection.

"I want to mark this day by the expression of a long cherished wish; that of becoming an Indian citizen. From the first time I came to India—in 1914—I felt that India is my true country, the country of my soul and spirit. I had decided to realise this wish as soon as India would be free. But I had to wait still longer because of my heavy responsibilities for the Ashram here in Pondicherry. Now the time has come when I can declare myself.

But, in accordance with Sri Aurobindo's ideal, my purpose is to show that truth lies in union rather than in division. To reject one nationality in order to obtain another is not an ideal solution. So I hope I

shall be allowed to adopt a double nationality, that is to say, to remain French while I become an Indian.

I am French by birth and early education, I am Indian by choice and predilection. In my consciousness there is no antagonism between the two, on the contrary, they combine very well and complete one another. I know also that I can be of service to both equally, for my only aim in life is to give a concrete form to Sri Aurobindo's great teaching and in his teaching he reveals that all the nations are essentially one and meant to express the Divine Unity upon earth through an organised and harmonious diversity." *15 August 1954* (CWM 13: 43)

The reason for the Mother's deep connection with India becomes clearer in another of her statements:

"It is true that this body was born in Paris and that its soul has declared that it is Indian, but I belong to no nation in particular." (CWM 13: 44)

She further explains why she chose France as the country of her birth:

"It is France that can connect Europe with India. There are great spiritual possibilities for France. She will play a big part in spite of her present bad

condition. It is through France that the spiritual message will reach Europe. That is why I chose France for my birth, although I am not French." (CWM 13: 379–380)

These words suggest that, for the Mother, nationality was never an end in itself. India and France could each have their own role, while both could participate in a larger movement towards human unity.

Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, therefore, cannot be understood merely in the narrow sense of being Indian. Their work extended far beyond the boundaries of one country. Their aim was the upliftment of humanity and the movement of the earth towards a higher stage of evolution. Their love for India was intense because they saw in her a special role in the future of humanity.

The Mother says,

"Sri Aurobindo always loved deeply his Motherland. But he wished her to be great, noble, pure and worthy of her big mission in the world. He refused to let her sink to the sordid and vulgar level of blind self-interests and ignorant prejudices. This is why, in full conformity to his will, we lift high the standard of truth, progress and transformation of mankind, without caring for those who, through ignorance, stupidity, envy or bad will, seek to soil it and drag it

down into the mud. We carry it very high so that all who have a soul may see it and gather round it." (CWM 13: 123)

The quotations of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother are several decades old. A natural question therefore arises: How can words spoken so long ago remain relevant to India today?

When a Yogi or a realised person speaks, even on worldly matters, there will be Truth [Capital Truth] in what he says. This Truth will help one much more than what one would arrive at through one's own thinking. Sri Aurobindo and the Mother had the highest spiritual realisations. Sri Aurobindo and the Mother spoke from a vast spiritual vision. Their writings on India were not confined to the problems of a particular decade or generation. Their concern was with the deeper destiny of India and with her place in the evolution of humanity. This is why their words invite us to look beyond the immediate difficulties of the present moment.

Their vision and guidance can only lift India out of the present challenges she faces and help her achieve her mission. If one reads about the mission that India has to achieve and considers the present-day condition of our country, then one will realise that Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's quotations are as valid today as they were at that

time. On reading these compilations, one will feel that they are relevant to today's conditions.

On reading these compilations, one may discover that the words of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother do not belong only to the past. They can become a living subject of reflection for the present and the future.

There is, however, one caution that needs to be kept in mind while reading the quotations of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother: one need not become dogmatic about them. One really needs to live in the spirit behind these quotations.

It is not enough to know what Sri Aurobindo and the Mother said about India. The greater question is whether we can discover the spirit behind their words and allow that spirit to awaken something within us.

India, in their vision, is not merely a country with a glorious past. She is a country with a future to fulfil. And if that future is indeed a part of humanity's larger evolution, then these words are not merely words about India. They are an invitation—to remember, to understand, to aspire, and to participate.

Jamshed M. Mavalwalla

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Section One: True Spirituality Is to Make Life Perfect

I—True Spirituality Is to Make Life Perfect with the Divine Perfection

1.

"True spirituality is not to renounce life, but to make life perfect with the Divine Perfection.

This is what India must show to the world now." (CWM 13: 357)

II—Spirituality Does Not Mean a Remote Metaphysical Mind or the Tendency to Dream Rather Than to Act

1.

"One thing seems at any rate certain, that the spiritual motive will be in the future of India, as in her past, the real originative and dominating strain. By spirituality we do not mean a remote metaphysical mind or the tendency to dream rather than to act. ... Metaphysical thinking will always no doubt be a strong element in her mentality, and it is to be hoped that she will never lose her great, her sovereign powers in that direction; ... Though in later times it led too much away from life, yet that was not its original character whether in its early Vedantic intuitional forms or in those later developments of it, such as the Gita, which belong to the period of its most vigorous intellectual originality and creation. ... To realise intimately truth of

spirit and to quicken and to remould life by it is the native tendency of the Indian mind, and to that it must always return in all its periods of health, greatness and vigour." (CWSA 20: 23–24)

Section Two: All Great Awakenings in India Have Been Deep Religious Awakenings

I—Whenever the Deep Religious Awakening Was Complete and Grand, the National Energy Was Gigantic and Puissant

1.

"All great awakenings in India, all her periods of mightiest and most varied vigour have drawn their vitality from the fountain-heads of some deep religious awakening. Whenever the religious awakening has been complete and grand, the national energy it has created has been gigantic and puissant; wherever the religious movement has been narrow or incomplete, the national movement has been broken, imperfect or temporary. The persistence of this phenomenon is proof that it is ingrained in the temperament of the race. If you try other and foreign methods we shall either gain our end with tedious slowness, painfully and imperfectly, or we shall not attain it at all. Why abandon the plain way which God and the Mother have marked out for you, to choose faint and devious paths of your own treading?" (CWSA 6: 86–87)

II—Real Religion, That Is Spirituality, Is the Whole Destiny of Humanity

1.

"The European is proud of his success in divorcing religion from life. Religion, he says, is all very well in its place, but

it has nothing to do with politics or science or commerce, which it spoils by its intrusion; it is meant only for Sundays when, if one is English, one puts on black clothes and tries to feel good, and if one is continental, one puts the rest of the week away and amuses oneself. In reality, the European has not succeeded in getting rid of religion from his life. It is coming back in Socialism, in the Anarchism of Bakunin and Tolstoy, in many other *isms;* and in whatever form it comes, it insists on engrossing the whole of life, moulding the whole of society and politics under the law of idealistic aspiration. It does use the word God or grasp the idea, but it sees God in humanity. What the European understood by religion, had to be got rid of and put out of life, but real religion, spirituality, idealism, altruism, self-devotion, the hunger after perfection is the whole destiny of humanity and cannot be got rid of. After all God *does* exist and if He exists, you cannot shove Him into a corner and say, 'That is your place and as for the world and life it belongs to us.' He pervades and returns. Every age of denial is only a preparation for a larger and more comprehensive affirmation." (CWSA 8: 21–22)

III—Religion in the Sense of Following the Spiritual Impulse

1.

"Religion has been a central preoccupation of the Indian mind; some have told us that too much religion ruined India, precisely because we made the whole of life religion or religion the whole of life, we have failed in life and gone under. I will not answer, adopting the language used by the poet in a slightly different connection, that our fall does not matter and that the dust in which India lies is sacred. The fall, the failure does matter, and to lie in the dust is no sound position for man or nation. But the reason assigned is not the true one. If the majority of Indians had indeed made the whole of their lives religion in the true sense of the word, we should not be where we are now; it was because their public life became most irreligious, egoistic, self-seeking, materialistic that they fell. It is possible, that on one side we deviated too much into an excessive religiosity, that is to say, an excessive externalism of ceremony, rule, routine, mechanical worship, on the other into a too world-shunning asceticism which drew away the best minds who were thus lost to society instead of standing like the ancient Rishis as its spiritual support and its illuminating life-givers. But the root of the matter was the dwindling of the spiritual impulse in its generality and

broadness, the decline of intellectual activity and freedom, the waning of great ideals, the loss of the gust of life.

Perhaps there was too much of religion in one sense; the word is English, smacks too much of things external such as creeds, rites, an external piety; there is no one Indian equivalent. But if we give rather to religion the sense of the following of the spiritual impulse in its fullness and define spirituality as the attempt to know and live in the highest self, the divine, the all-embracing unity and to raise life in all its parts to the divinest possible values, then it is evident that there was not too much of religion, but rather too little of it—and in what there was, a too one-sided and therefore an insufficiently ample tendency." (CWSA 20: 38–39)

Section Three: Why the Task of Building India Is Spiritual?

I—India Has the Great Body of Spiritual Knowledge and Experience

1.

"The task we set before ourselves is not mechanical but moral and spiritual. We aim not at the alteration of a form of government but at the building up of a nation. … We shall devote ourselves not to politics alone, nor to social questions alone, nor to theology or philosophy or literature or science by themselves, but we include all these in one entity which we believe to be all-important, the *dharma*, the national religion which we also believe to be universal. There is a mighty law of life, a great principle of human evolution, a body of spiritual knowledge and experience of which India has always been destined to be guardian, exemplar and missionary. This is the *sanatana dharma*, the eternal religion. Under the stress of alien impacts she has largely lost hold not of the structure of that *dharma*, but of its living reality. For the religion of India is nothing if it is not lived. It has to be applied not only to life, but to the whole of life; its spirit has to enter into and mould our society, our politics, our literature, our science, our individual character, affections and aspirations. To understand the heart of this *dharma*, to experience it as a truth, to feel the high emotions to which it rises and to express and execute it in life is what we understand by Karmayoga. We believe that it is to make the *yoga* the ideal

of human life that India rises today; by the *yoga* she will get the strength to realise her freedom, unity and greatness, by the *yoga* she will keep the strength to preserve it. It is a spiritual revolution we foresee and the material is only its shadow and reflex." (CWSA 13: 4)

II—Spirituality Is Indeed the Master-Key of the Indian Mind

1.

"Spirituality is indeed the master-key of the Indian mind; the sense of the infinite is native to it. India saw from the beginning,—and, even in her ages of reason and her age of increasing ignorance, she never lost hold of the insight,—that life cannot be rightly seen in the sole light, cannot be perfectly lived in the sole power of its externalities. She was alive to the greatness of material laws and forces; she had a keen eye for the importance of the physical sciences; she knew how to organise the arts of ordinary life. But she saw that the physical does not get its full sense until it stands in right relation to the supra-physical; she saw that the complexity of the universe could not be explained in the present terms of man or seen by his superficial sight, that there were other powers behind, other powers within man himself of which he is normally unaware, that he is conscious only of a small part of himself, that the invisible always surrounds the visible, the

suprasensible the sensible, even as infinity always surrounds the finite." (CWSA 20: 6–7)

III—India, Ingrained in Spirituality, Saw That Man Can Become One with God

1.

"She [India] saw too that man has the power of exceeding himself, of becoming himself more entirely and profoundly than he is,—truths which have only recently begun to be seen in Europe and seem even now too great for its common intelligence. She saw the myriad gods beyond man, God beyond the gods, and beyond God his own ineffable eternity; she saw that there were ranges of life beyond our life, ranges of mind beyond our present mind and above these she saw the splendours of the spirit. Then with that calm audacity of her intuition which knew no fear or littleness and shrank from no act whether of spiritual or intellectual, ethical or vital courage, she declared that there was none of these things which man could not attain if he trained his will and knowledge; he could conquer these ranges of mind, become the spirit, become a god, become one with God, become the ineffable Brahman. And with the logical practicality and sense of science and organised method which distinguished her mentality, she set forth immediately to find out the way. Hence from long ages of this insight and practice there was ingrained in her her

spirituality, her powerful psychic tendency, her great yearning to grapple with the infinite and possess it, her ineradicable religious sense, her idealism, her Yoga, the constant turn of her art and her philosophy." (CWSA 20: 7)

IV—India Had Spiritual Tendencies Together with Opulent Vitality and Intellectuality

1.

"Indeed without this opulent vitality and opulent intellectuality India could never have done so much as she did with her spiritual tendencies. It is a great error to suppose that spirituality flourishes best in an impoverished soil with the life half-killed and the intellect discouraged and intimidated. The spirituality that so flourishes is something morbid, hectic and exposed to perilous reactions. It is when the race has lived most richly and thought most profoundly that spirituality finds its heights and its depths and its constant and many-sided fruition." (CWSA 20: 10)

V—The Key to India's Renaissance Is Spirituality

1.

"What will finally come out of all this stir and ferment, lies yet in the future. There has been an introduction of fresh fruitful impulses to activity: there has been much revival of

the vitality of old forms, a new study, rehabilitation, resort to old disciplines and old authorities and scriptures,—we may note that Vedanta, Veda, Purana, Yoga, and recently the same thing is being initiated with regard to the Tantra, have each in their turn been brought back into understanding, if not always yet to a perfect understanding, to practice, to some efficacy on thought and on life; there has been an evolution of enlarging truth and novel forms out of ancient ideas and renewed experience. Whatever the last upshot may be, this spiritual and religious ferment and activity stand out as the most prominent feature of the new India; and it may be observed that while in other fields the tendency has been, until quite recently, more critical than constructive, here every impulse has been throughout powerfully creative. Especially, we see everywhere the tendency towards the return of the spirit upon life; the reassertion of a spiritual living as a foundation for a new life of the nation has been a recognisable impulse. … This is at present the most significant immediate sign of the future. Probably, here lies the key of the Indian renaissance, in a return from forms to the depths of a released spirituality which will show itself again in a pervading return of spirituality upon life." (CWSA 20: 25–26)

Section Four: The Indian Mass Is Open to Spirituality

I—The Average Indian Is Open and Understands Spiritual Qualities

1.

"*Is the average Indian more advanced spiritually than the average man in other countries, like those of Europe, for instance?*

There is an essential difference, but generally if he has not been contaminated by European materialism, when someone speaks to him about spiritual things, he has an opening, he understands. In the countries of the West, if you are in touch with the average man and speak to him of spiritual things, he is absolutely closed up and, moreover, if you speak to him of a possibility of relation with higher states of consciousness, he looks at you as though you were mad! If someone renounces the ordinary life to live an ascetic life, they think he is out of his senses!

… While here, ordinary people, people of the 'lower' classes don't perhaps have any discernment, perhaps they cannot distinguish between the imposter and the sincere man, but it is understood that if somebody comes along in the yellow robe and with the beggar's bowl, he will be given something, he won't be kicked out. If a man did that in Europe (naturally there is no question of the yellow robe), but if he came in sordid clothes, he would be immediately taken to the first police station and arrested for indigence.

It is understood that in the so-called civilised countries, if you don't have the minimum money in your pocket, you are a vagabond, and the vagabond has no right to be on the streets, he is put into prison for vagabondage. That is the difference." (CWM 4: 311-312)

2.

"It goes without saying that for those who are in India, it is extremely easy, extremely easy; there is a living tradition; whoever wants to do yoga will always find someone to give him information. And even the most ignorant and uneducated have a vague idea of what ought to be done or of what can help them." (CWM 7: 338)

II—In India Spiritual Reality Has Permeated Religion, Literature, Art and Popular Songs

1.

"… the main metaphysical truths of Indian religious philosophy in their broad idea-aspects or in an intensely poetic and dynamic representation have been stamped on the general mind of the people. The ideas of Maya, Lila, divine Immanence are as familiar to the man in the street and the worshipper in the temple as to the philosopher in his seclusion, the monk in his monastery and the saint in his hermitage. The spiritual reality which they reflect, the profound experience to which they point, has permeated

the religion, the literature, the art, even the popular religious songs of a whole people.

It is true that these things are realised by the mass of men more readily through the fervour of devotion than by a strenuous effort of thinking; but that is as it must and should be since the heart of man is nearer to the Truth than his intelligence. It is true, too, that the tendency to put too much stress on externals has always been there and worked to overcloud the deeper spiritual motive; but that is not peculiar to India, it is a common failing of human nature, not less but rather more evident in Europe than in Asia. It has needed a constant stream of saints and religious thinkers and the teaching of illuminated Sannyasins to keep the reality vivid and resist the deadening weight of form and ceremony and ritual. But the fact remains that these messengers of the spirit have never been wanting. And the still more significant fact remains that there has never been wanting either a happy readiness in the common mind to listen to the message. The ordinary materialised souls, the external minds are the majority in India as everywhere. How easy it is for the superior European critic to forget this common fact of our humanity and treat this turn as a peculiar sin of the Indian mentality! But at least the people of India, even the 'ignorant masses' have this distinction that they are by centuries of training nearer to the inner realities, are divided from them by a less thick veil of the universal

ignorance and are more easily led back to a vital glimpse of God and Spirit, self and eternity than the mass of men or even the cultured elite anywhere else. Where else could the lofty, austere and difficult teaching of a Buddha have seized so rapidly on the popular mind? Where else could the songs of a Tukaram, a Ramprasad, a Kabir, the Sikh gurus and the chants of the Tamil saints with their fervid devotion but also their profound spiritual thinking have found so speedy an echo and formed a popular religious literature? This strong permeation or close nearness of the spiritual turn, this readiness of the mind of a whole nation to turn to the highest realities is the sign and fruit of an age-long, a real and a still living and supremely spiritual culture." (CWSA 20: 185-186)

2.

"India's central conception is that of the Eternal, the Spirit here incased in matter, involved and immanent in it and evolving on the material plane by rebirth of the individual up the scale of being till in mental man it enters the world of ideas and realm of conscious morality, *dharma*. This achievement, this victory over unconscious matter develops its lines, enlarges its scope, elevates its levels until the increasing manifestation of the sattwic or spiritual portion of the vehicle of mind enables the individual mental being in man to identify himself with the pure spiritual consciousness beyond Mind. India's social system is built

upon this conception; her philosophy formulates it; her religion is an aspiration to the spiritual consciousness and its fruits; her art and literature have the same upward look; her whole dharma or law of being is founded upon it. Progress she admits, but this spiritual progress, not the externally self-unfolding process of an always more and more prosperous and efficient material civilisation. It is her founding of life upon this exalted conception and her urge towards the spiritual and the eternal that constitute the distinct value of her civilisation. And it is her fidelity, with whatever human shortcomings, to this highest ideal that has made her people a nation apart in the human world." (CWSA 20: 56–57)

III—India Must Affirm Her Deeper Truths against the Imposition of Western Culture

1.

"Whether the future hope of the race lies in a rational and an intelligently mechanised or in a spiritual, intuitive and religious civilisation and culture,—that, then, is the important issue." (CWSA 20: 68)

2.

"An Indian mind faithful to its ideals would contend on the contrary that while reason and science and all other auxiliaries have their place in the human effort, the real

truth goes beyond them. The secret of our ultimate perfection is to be discovered deeper within us and things and Nature; it is to be sought centrally in spiritual self-knowledge and self-perfection and in the founding of life on that self-knowledge." (CWSA 20: 69)

3.

"India's nature, her mission, the work that she has to do, her part in the earth's destiny, the peculiar power for which she stands is written there in her past history and is the secret purpose behind her present sufferings and ordeals. A reshaping of the forms of our spirit will have to take place; but it is the spirit itself behind past forms that we have to disengage and preserve and to give to it new and powerful thought-significances, culture-values, a new instrumentation, greater figures…. But these changes themselves must be cast in the spirit and mould of India and not in any other, not in the spirit of America or Europe, not in the mould of Japan or Russia. …

An original truth-seeking thought is needed if we are to take this stand and make this movement, a strong and courageous intuition, an unfailing spiritual and intellectual rectitude." (CWSA 20: 88-89)

4.

"If we are to live at all, we must resume India's great interrupted endeavour; we must take up boldly and

execute thoroughly in the individual and in the society, in the spiritual and in the mundane life, in philosophy and religion, in art and literature, in thought, in political and economic and social formulation the full and unlimited sense of her highest spirit and knowledge. And if we do that, we shall find that the best of what comes to us draped in occidental forms, is already implied in our own ancient wisdom and has there a greater spirit behind it, a profounder truth and self-knowledge and the capacity of a will to nobler and more ideal formations. Only we need to work out thoroughly in life what we have always known in the spirit. There and nowhere else lies the secret of the needed harmony between the essential meaning of our past culture and the environmental requirements of our future." (CWSA 20: 91-92)

5.

"That view opens out a prospect beyond the battle of cultures which is the immediate dangerous aspect of the meeting of East and West. The Spirit in man has one aim before it in all mankind; but different continents or peoples approach it from different sides, with different formulations and in a differing spirit. Not recognising the underlying unity of the ultimate divine motive, they give battle to each other and claim that theirs alone is the way for mankind. The one real and perfect civilisation is the one in which they happen to be born, all the rest must perish or go

under. But the real and perfect civilisation yet waits to be discovered; for the life of mankind is still nine tenths of barbarism to one tenth of culture." (CWSA 20: 92)

6.

"Indian culture proceeded on the principle of a concert [coordination] that strove to find its base in a unity and reached out again towards some greater oneness. Its aim was a lasting organisation that would minimise or even eliminate the principle of struggle. … In the end it lost its force of aggression, weakened its power of assimilation and decayed within its barriers. A static and limited concert, not always enlarging itself, not plastic becomes in our human state of imperfection a prison or a sleeping-chamber." (CWSA 20: 92–93)

7.

"Concert cannot be anything but imperfect and provisional in its form and can only preserve its vitality and fulfil its ultimate aim if it constantly adapts, expands, progresses. Its lesser unities must widen towards a broader and more comprehensive and above all a more real and spiritual oneness. In the larger statement of our culture and civilisation that we have now to achieve, a greater outward expression of spiritual and psychological oneness, but with a diversity which the mechanical method of Europe does not tolerate, will surely be one leading motive. A concert,

a unity with the rest of mankind, in which we shall maintain our spiritual and our outer independence will be another line of our endeavour. But what now appears as a struggle may well be the first necessary step, before we can formulate that unity of mankind which the West sees only in idea, but cannot achieve because it does not possess its spirit. Therefore Europe labours to establish unity by accommodation of conflicting interests and the force of mechanical institutions; but so attempted, it will either not be founded at all or will be founded on sand. Meanwhile she wishes to blot out every other culture, as if hers were the only truth or all the truth of life and there were no such thing as truth of the spirit. India, the ancient possessor of the truth of the spirit, must resist that arrogant claim and aggression and affirm her own deeper truths in spite of heavy odds and against all comers. For in its preservation lies the only hope that mankind instead of marching to a new cataclysm and primitive beginning with a constant repetition of the old blind cycles will at last emerge into the light and accomplish the drive forward which will bring the terrestrial evolution to its next step of ascent in the progressive manifestation of the Spirit." (CWSA 20: 93)

Section Five: The Importance of India's Renaissance to the World

I—The Importance of the Renaissance, New Birth in India, Is of Immense Significance to Herself and the World

1.

"This Renaissance, this new birth in India, if it is a fact, must become a thing of immense importance both to herself and the world, to herself because of all that is meant for her in the recovery or the change of her time-old spirit and national ideals, to the world because of the possibilities involved in the rearising of a force that is in many respects unlike any other and its genius very different from the mentality and spirit that have hitherto governed the modern idea in mankind, although not so far away perhaps from that which is preparing to govern the future." (CWSA 20: 3)

II—Indian Spirituality Is the Starting-point of Her Renaissance

1.

"… Indian spirituality which has always maintained itself even in the decline of the national vitality; it was certainly that which saved India always at every critical moment of her destiny, and it has been the starting-point too of her renascence. … Now that the salvation, the reawakening has come, India will certainly keep her essential spirit, will

keep her characteristic soul, but there is likely to be a great change of the body. The shaping for itself of a new body, of new philosophical, artistic, literary, cultural, political, social forms by the same soul rejuvenescent will, I should think, be the type of the Indian renascence,—forms not contradictory of the truths of life which the old expressed, but rather expressive of those truths restated, cured of defect, completed." (CWSA 20: 5)

2.

"Thus an ingrained and dominant spirituality, an inexhaustible vital creativeness and gust of life and, mediating between them, a powerful, penetrating and scrupulous intelligence combined of the rational, ethical and aesthetic mind each at a high intensity of action, created the harmony of the ancient Indian culture." (CWSA 20: 10)

III—The Indian Mind Is Not Only Spiritual and Ethical, but Intellectual and Artistic

1.

"For the Indian mind is not only spiritual and ethical, but intellectual and artistic, and both the rule of the intellect and the rhythm of beauty are hostile to the spirit of chaos. In every extreme the Indian spirit seeks for a law in that extreme and a rule, measure and structure in its

application. Besides, this sounding of extremes is balanced by a still more ingrained characteristic, the synthetical tendency, so that having pushed each motive to its farthest possibility the Indian mind returns always towards some fusion of the knowledge it has gained and to a resulting harmony and balance in action and institution. Balance and rhythm which the Greeks arrived at by self-limitation, India arrived at by its sense of intellectual, ethical and aesthetic order and the synthetic impulse of its mind and life." (CWSA 20: 12)

IV—All of India's Great Past Is Still Dormant, Waiting to Assume New Forms

1.

"The present is only a last deposit of the past at a time of ebb; it has no doubt also to be the starting-point of the future, but in this present all that was in India's past is still dormant, it is not destroyed; it is waiting there to assume new forms. ... To judge therefore the possibilities of the renascence, the powers that it may reveal and the scope that it may take, we must dismiss the idea that the tendency of metaphysical abstraction is the one note of the Indian spirit which dominates or inspires all its cadences. Its real key-note is the tendency of spiritual realisation, not cast at all into any white monotone, but many-faceted, many-coloured, as supple in its adaptability as it is intense

in its highest pitches. The note of spirituality is dominant, initial, constant, always recurrent; it is the support of all the rest." (CWSA 20: 12–13)

2.

"But this spiritual tendency does not shoot upward only to the abstract, the hidden and the intangible; it casts its rays downward and outward to embrace the multiplicities of thought and the richness of life." (CWSA 20: 13)

3.

"For whatever temporary rotting and destruction this crude impact of European life and culture has caused, it gave three needed impulses. It revived the dormant intellectual and critical impulse; it rehabilitated life and awakened the desire of new creation; it put the reviving Indian spirit face to face with novel conditions and ideals and the urgent necessity of understanding, assimilating and conquering them. The national mind turned a new eye on its past culture, reawoke to its sense and import, but also at the same time saw it in relation to modern knowledge and ideas. Out of this awakening vision and impulse the Indian renaissance is arising, and that must determine its future tendency." (CWSA 20: 15)

V—The Work of the Renaissance in India Is to Make Spirituality Once More a Creative and Dominant Power

1.

"But the method of India is on the contrary to discover the spirit within and the higher hidden intensities of the superior powers and to dominate life in one way or another so as to make it responsive to and expressive of the spirit and in that way increase the power of life. ... The work of the renaissance in India must be to make this spirit, this higher view of life, this sense of deeper potentiality once more a creative, perhaps a dominant power in the world." (CWSA 20: 16)

2.

"The process which has led up to the renaissance now inevitable, may be analysed, both historically and logically, into three steps by which a transition is being managed, a complex breaking, reshaping and new building, with the final result yet distant in prospect,—though here and there the first bases may have been already laid,—a new age of an old culture transformed, not an affiliation of a new-born civilisation to one that is old and dead, but a true rebirth, a renascence. The first step was the reception of the European contact, a radical reconsideration of many of the prominent elements and some revolutionary denial of the

very principles of the old culture. The second was a reaction of the Indian spirit upon the European influence, sometimes with a total denial of what it offered and a stressing both of the essential and the strict letter of the national past, which yet masked a movement of assimilation. The third, only now beginning or recently begun, is rather a process of new creation in which the spiritual power of the Indian mind remains supreme, recovers its truths, accepts whatever it finds sound or true, useful or inevitable of the modern idea and form, but so transmutes and Indianises it, so absorbs and so transforms it entirely into itself that its foreign character disappears and it becomes another harmonious element in the characteristic working of the ancient goddess, the Shakti of India mastering and taking possession of the modern influence, no longer possessed or overcome by it." (CWSA 20: 17)

3.

"India has to get back entirely to the native power of her spirit at its very deepest and to turn all the needed strengths and aims of her present and future life into materials for that spirit to work upon and integrate and harmonise. Of such vital and original creation we may cite the new Indian art as a striking example. The beginning of this process of original creation in every sphere of her

national activity will be the sign of the integral self-finding of her renaissance." (CWSA 20: 22)

4.

"India is the meeting-place of the religions and among these Hinduism alone is by itself a vast and complex thing, not so much a religion as a great diversified and yet subtly unified mass of spiritual thought, realisation and aspiration." (CWSA 20: 25)

5.

"The Renaissance thus determining itself, but not yet finally determined, if it is to be what the name implies, a rebirth of the soul of India into a new body of energy, a new form of its innate and ancient spirit, *prajñā purāṇī,* must insist much more finally and integrally than it has as yet done on its spiritual turn, on the greater and greater action of the spiritual motive in every sphere of our living." (CWSA 20: 32)

6.

"Spirit without mind, spirit without body is not the type of man, therefore a human spirituality must not belittle the mind, life or body or hold them of small account: it will rather hold them of high account, of immense importance, precisely because they are the conditions and instruments of the life of the spirit in man. The ancient Indian culture

attached quite as much value to the soundness, growth and strength of the mind, life and body ... Therefore to everything that serves and belongs to the healthy fullness of these things, it gave free play, to the activity of the reason, to science and philosophy, to the satisfaction of the aesthetic being and to all the many arts great or small, to the health and strength of the body, to the physical and economical well-being, ease, opulence of the race,—there was never a national ideal of poverty in India as some would have us believe, nor was bareness or squalor the essential setting of her spirituality,—and to its general military, political and social strength and efficiency. Their aim was high, but firm and wide too was the base they sought to establish and great the care bestowed on these first instruments. Necessarily the new India will seek the same end in new ways under the vivid impulse of fresh and large ideas and by an instrumentality suited to more complex conditions; but the scope of her effort and action and the suppleness and variety of her mind will not be less, but greater than of old. Spirituality is not necessarily exclusive; it can be and in its fullness must be all-inclusive." (CWSA 20: 33–34)

7.

"The spiritual view holds that the mind, life, body are man's means and not his aims and even that they are not his last and highest means; it sees them as his outer instrumental

self and not his whole being. It sees the infinite behind all things finite and it adjudges the value of the finite by higher infinite values of which they are the imperfect translation and towards which, to a truer expression of them, they are always trying to arrive." (CWSA 20: 34)

VI—The Physical Too Is an Expression of the Spirit and Its Perfection Is Worth Having

1.

"We aim at the health and vigour of the body; but with what object? For its own sake, will be the ordinary reply, because it is worth having; or else that we may have long life and a sound basis for our intellectual, vital, emotional satisfactions. Yes, for its own sake, in a way, but in this sense that the physical too is an expression of the spirit and its perfection is worth having, is part of the dharma of the complete human living; but still more as a basis for all that higher activity which ends in the discovery and expression of the divine self in man." (CWSA 20: 35)

VII—The Mental, Emotional and Aesthetic Parts Too Are the Expressions of the Spirit

1.

"The mental, the emotional, the aesthetic parts of us have to be developed, is the ordinary view, so that they may

have a greater satisfaction, or because that is man's finer nature, because so he feels himself more alive and fulfilled. This, but not this only; rather because these things too are the expressions of the spirit, things which are seeking in him for their divine values and by their growth, subtlety, flexibility, power, intensity he is able to come nearer to the divine Reality in the world, to lay hold on it variously, to tune eventually his whole life into unity and conformity with it. Morality is in the ordinary view a well-regulated individual and social conduct which keeps society going and leads towards a better, a more rational, temperate, sympathetic, self-restrained dealing with our fellows. But ethics in the spiritual point of view is much more, it is a means of developing in our action and still more essentially in the character of our being the diviner self in us, a step of our growing into the nature of the Godhead." (CWSA 20: 35)

VIII—The Truth of Existence Is Found by Intuition and Inner Experience

1.

"But from the spiritual view-point truth of existence is to be found by intuition and inner experience and not only by the reason and by scientific observation; the work of philosophy is to arrange the data given by the various means of knowledge, excluding none, and put them into

their synthetic relation to the one Truth, the one supreme and universal reality. Eventually, its real value is to prepare a basis for spiritual realisation and the growing of the human being into his divine self and divine nature." (CWSA 20: 36)

IX—Spiritualised Culture Will Make Room for Science, Art, Poetry, Politics, Society and Economy

1.

"Science itself becomes only a knowledge of the world which throws an added light on the spirit of the universe and his way in things. Nor will it confine itself to a physical knowledge and its practical fruits or to the knowledge of life and man and mind based upon the idea of matter or material energy as our starting-point; a spiritualised culture will make room for new fields of research, for new and old psychical sciences and results which start from spirit as the first truth and from the power of mind and of what is greater than mind to act upon life and matter. The primitive aim of art and poetry is to create images of man and Nature which shall satisfy the sense of beauty and embody artistically the ideas of the intelligence about life and the responses of the imagination to it; but in a spiritual culture they become too in their aim a revelation of greater things concealed in man and Nature and of the deepest spiritual and universal beauty. Politics, society, economy

are in the first form of human life simply an arrangement by which men collectively can live, produce, satisfy their desires, enjoy, progress in bodily, vital and mental efficiency; but the spiritual aim makes them much more than this, first, a framework of life within which man can seek for and grow into his real self and divinity, secondly, an increasing embodiment of the divine law of being in life, thirdly, a collective advance towards the light, power, peace, unity, harmony of the diviner nature of humanity which the race is trying to evolve. This and nothing more but nothing less, this in all its potentialities, is what we mean by a spiritual culture and the application of spirituality to life." (CWSA 20: 36–37)

X—True Spirituality Rejects No New Light

1.

"India can best develop herself and serve humanity by being herself and following the law of her own nature. This does not mean, as some narrowly and blindly suppose, the rejection of everything new that comes to us in the stream of Time or happens to have been first developed or powerfully expressed by the West. Such an attitude would be intellectually absurd, physically impossible, and above all unspiritual; true spirituality rejects no new light, no added means or materials of our human self-development." (CWSA 20: 38)

XI—Revivalism Implies the Resurgence Leading to the Destiny of a Life Divine

1.

"A revivalism enlightened and progressive, free from superficial orthodox restraints and insularities, moving out from an enriched inward centre is our burning need, rather than a neutral secularism ignoring the deep foundation which the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity must seek if they are to become living and spontaneous facts. This revivalism does not imply the entry of terms like Brahman, Atman and Ishwara into our Constitution: it has in that respect no quarrel with the Secular State. But it does imply the resurgence and the furtherance within us of the profound sense India once had of man's origin from the Eternal, his oneness with the Infinite and his destiny of a Life Divine." (IWSKDS: 43–44)

2.

"The renascence of India is as inevitable as the rising of tomorrow's sun, and the renascence of a great nation of three hundred millions with so peculiar a temperament, such unique traditions and ideas of life, so powerful an intelligence and so great a mass of potential energies cannot but be one of the most formidable phenomena of the modern world." (CWSA 25: 333)

Section Six: Secular for Indians Is to Be Spiritual

I—India a Secular State

1.

"INDIA has been declared a Secular State and the advanced elements in the country are proud of this declaration—but in a rather vague way. Nobody seems to know what are the exact implications of secularity." (IWSKDS: 31)

II—Can India Be Considered a Secular State?

1.

"Even Nehru, socialist though his tendencies are, honoured with his presence the occasion of the return of sacred Buddhist relics to India from abroad. Not only that, but he actually made a most humble namaskar to the relics, joining his palms together and bowing his head over them—a gesture almost of worship. He also affirmed recently that true religion is very precious and that its absence in what is conventionally termed religious is to be regretted. As for Sardar Patel and Rajagopalachariar and most of the Congress notables, they make no secret in public of their reverence for the teachings of the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Gita. All of them and Nehru himself never tire of pronouncing Gandhiji's ideals and principles to be true, and everybody knows that Gandhiji's entire attitude to life was dictated by a firm faith in God,

especially God as incarnated in the traditional Hindu figure Rama. If those who stand as symbols of the Government are avowedly in favour not only of a religious world-view but also of the Hindu religion, how, it is asked, can India be considered a Secular State?

The question does not go to the root of the matter." (IWSKDS: 31)

III—To Be Secular Has Many Meanings

1.

"Secularity has many meanings. In its extreme form it is defined as total indifference to and discouragement of religious concepts and practices. The Soviet State is the outstanding example of anti-religious secularity. But there can be a less positive and more non-committal form. France and the U.S.A. are not pledged in their constitutions to any religion, but they have no hostility towards religious beliefs and bodies; they regard religion as the individual's private business and let no religious partiality mould their political conduct. Great Britain, inasmuch as the King is entitled the Defender of the Faith, implies reference not only to God but also to a particular brand of religion, and yet in actual working she is without any political bias prompted by the Established Protestant Church.

If by secularity we mean all omission of the idea of God, Great Britain is a theocratic State. If we mean lack of

religious favouritism, then she is certainly secular. India is at present secular like France and the U.S.A. rather than like Great Britain. But she is very far indeed from being secular in the Soviet sense. And even as compared to France and the U.S.A., she is more secular in principle than practice, for, while there is a strong irreligious strain among the individuals who compose France and a considerable amount of scepticism among the American people, the majority of Indians are free from the agnostic attitude no less than the atheistic. Rank atheism is rare in India; agnosticism is confined to only a part of the literate population which is itself a small part of the humanity surging within our sub-continent. This is not to deny that, with a great many of our literati, religion is just a hazy background and what governs their thought and behaviour is a too-worldly utilitarianism and hedonism à la the modern West. But our finest minds are alive to the importance of the religious consciousness and the large multitude of Indians are believers. It would be more in conformity with our turn of mind as a nation if we had a constitution framed less according to the temper of the French or the American State than to that of the British. In other words, if the name 'God' had a place in our constitution, we should be truer to the psychological condition of the country." (IWSKDS: 31–32)

IV—The Indian Secular Concept

1.

"The first point to be settled is: can India avow belief in God, and yet be secular? The second point is: can that belief be Hindu-coloured without vitiating secularity? India called herself secular for only one purpose: she wanted to make it clear that Muslims, Christians, Parsis, Jews and Jains living within her borders would suffer no discrimination or penalty or suppression on account of their not being Hindus and not partaking in the Hindu conventions of worship. India wished to stress political liberty and communal equality irrespective of different religious conventions: that is why she chose the designation of 'secular'. She never had the intention of favouring atheism and agnosticism, or of hiding the fact that on the whole her fundamental beliefs are those which constitute the core and kernel of Hinduism as distinguished from its shell and superficies. Sometimes the inner and outer Hinduisms are joined together: in that case, the leaders and ministers who symbolise the Government have to see, before they lend their personal support to religious occasions, that the inner is a living force and not stifled by rigid rule and uninspired ceremony. But there is nothing basically inconsistent in their reverence for religious values—even those which are closely connected with the Hindu religion as distinguished from any other. Read in its

proper context, understood in its root motive, India's secular constitution does not run counter to a belief in God by the majority of the nation who are religious and whose voice is echoed in the Government. Nor does it run counter to the Government's being Hindu in essential religion, for if the majority of India follow the Hindu religion what else should we expect a representative Government to do?" (IWSKDS: 32–33)

2.

"In consideration of the fact that minorities subscribe to non-Hindu religions, the Hinduism of the Government must strip itself of all sectarianism, bigotry and orthodoxy and be the pure quintessence [the most perfect example] of the Hindu faith. The quintessence consists simply in the doctrine that there is an Infinite, Eternal, Perfect Being who is one yet capable of a myriad forms of manifestation, a Being whose divinity lives like a secret fire in all things and creatures and can guide and enlighten the human to unite with the divine, a Being who down the ages manifests also in a special sovereign form of spirituality which is the Avatar, the direct divine Incarnation. The Vedas, the Upanishads and the Gita are all here in a seed-significance to which, under one aspect or another and with this or that qualification, the living substance of all religions held in India today can be virtually reduced." (IWSKDS: 33)

3.

"Let us avoid all confusion about the Indian secular concept. There can be envisaged in it neither a conflict between the secular and the religious nor the absence of religion by virtue of the absence of God's name nor the absence of Hinduism's inner meaning. The term 'secular' and the omission of God's name must be taken merely to be expedients to avoid bringing up philosophical subtleties and to give no chance to the minorities to fear political and communal oppression. When the present period of intercommunal unsettlement is over, we should not be afraid of having the word 'theocracy" hurled at us, provided we take care to be different from orthodox semi-obscurantist theocracies like Spain and Eire and Pakistan." (IWSKDS: 34)

V—Secular for Indians Is To Be Widely Spiritual Rather Than Narrowly Religious

1.

"The spiritual light that is Mother India is wider than religiosity. It has room for a thousand different ways of worship. Inasmuch as it is not limited to a narrow sectarianism it makes for a secular view of the State. But by 'secular' we must not understand indifference to the instinct of divinity. To be secular can be for Indians nothing except being widely spiritual rather than narrowly religious.

The instinct of divinity we must never lose hold on: without it we shall be false to our whole historical development and to the power that has made us great in the past and led to our survival while all other ancient civilisations have died. It shows us our 'swabhava', our real fountainhead of action. If we deny our 'swabhava' we shall miss our goal.

There is, of course, in every nation the instinct of divinity. It is, however, not the master-instinct and has not played too fundamental a part. That is why, more than any other nation, we Indians have to keep it burning if we are to fulfil ourselves and be to the entire world a source of illumination. Many things today work to dim this instinct. Perhaps the most dangerous of all things is the idea assiduously spread that it is unworldly and impoverishes earth-life. We have to admit that there has been a trend in India to look too much beyond the world and renounce earth-life. But it is not the only trend, and spirituality can be dynamic as so often spirituality has been in India. The full flowering, the full richness of life on earth is what we aim at when we point to the instinct of divinity as the 'swabhava' of the Indian nation." (IWSKDS: 4)

2.

"When it comes to making this seed-significance a dynamic for man's growth out of his ignorance and incapacity into a greater poise of consciousness, Hinduism cannot help being stressed more than the other religions, for it is

universally acknowledged by all who have seriously looked into the matter to have the best psychological methods of God-realisation. The Government could not be criticised for any such stress: if the minorities are ignorant of those methods they should be illuminated and if they refuse illumination they have nobody save themselves to blame for feeling slighted. To assure them of safety from sectarianism the Government can be said to have done their best so long as the constitution guarantees freedom from Hinduism's outer husk." (IWSKDS: 33–34)

3.

"Secularism should mean nothing more than that every citizen of India is free to follow his beliefs, religious or non-religious, and has equal civic rights and that no discrimination will be made against him in any sphere because of his particular creed. It must never signify that India will not be regarded any longer as basically the land of Hinduism and that Hinduism in its essentials will not be allowed to mould increasingly the life of the three hundred million people who have inherited it from the most glorious spiritual past any country can claim." (IWSKDS: 41]

4.

"A final point to remember is that an India which sets up the ideals of liberty and quality is bound to answer why these ideals are selected. No answer short of saying that

they are the true principles of life will satisfy." (IWSKDS: 34)

5.

"If honesty and other virtues are held to be the best policy in the long run, it is only because some eternal Law is on their side and the sense of it in human breasts works ultimately on their behalf. Our morals and ideals may not always image the divine depths of the eternal Law; but there can be nothing like morality and idealism without an effort or aspiration to image the depths that are divine of a Law that is eternal." (IWSKDS: 35)

6.

"Not only the ideals of liberty and equality but all ideals whatever must imply a divine sanction when they are offered us as true. … A Secular State which is indifferent to religion and yet tries to be based on true ideals is a contradiction in terms!" (IWSKDS: 35)

VI—Secularity in the Most Appropriate and Vital Sense

1.

"If words like 'theocratic' and 'religious' smack of an outward credal formality, let us choose a word like 'spiritual' which has a freshness and wideness and

inwardness of suggestion. But let us clearly perceive the right significance of secularity. Especially a country like India cannot keep indulging in a misinterpretation of it, for predominantly spiritual is the Indian genius. And until this character of the Indian genius is fully recognised—nay, felt in the heart and all along the blood—we shall never rise to the golden top of our bent and we shall waste the magnificent possibilities that seers like Sri Aurobindo bring us today of initiating a new world-order inspired and illumined by the divinity hidden within man.

Mention of Sri Aurobindo lays here a further shade of the right significance we should attach to secularity. One meaning of 'secular' is: 'concerned with the affairs of this world'; it is opposed to 'other-worldly'. Spirituality in India has had two orientations: an earth-renouncing orientation and an earth-embracing one. The Aurobindonian spirituality is averse to all escapism, however sub lime, and is emphatic about the need of transmuting and fulfilling earth's life with the light of the Eternal, the Infinite, the Perfect. It can therefore be described as secular spirituality, and it is the dynamic modern *Zeitgeist*, the active temper of our time, in the finest and deepest form. As such, it illustrates the most appropriate and vital sense in which India can be faithful to her spiritual genius without either failing to be abreast of modernism or ceasing to be a Secular State." (IWSKDS: 35–36)

VII—Essential Hinduism Is Steeped in the Tradition of Spirituality

1.

"Hinduism means essentially to live in a constant sense, ultimately rising to a continual realisation, of the Divine Being, infinite and eternal, who has emanated this universe and dwells within it as well as beyond it as its single yet multifarious Self and Sovereign. Hinduism implies essentially the progressive irradiation of one's whole life down to the most physical movements by the Divine Being's supra-intellectual Consciousness and Delight. … A direct all-round turn towards supra-intellectual experience—a concrete mystical and Yogic trend of the widest order—is therefore the final definition of being a Hindu. The phrase 'widest order' has importance, for it distinguishes the ideal Hindu God-knower and God-lover from the ideal mystics of other religions in two ways: most religions draw a line between spiritual and secular and feel that God is the business of certain parts of our being and not the be-all and end-all of our entire life, and most religions confine themselves to a particular splendid formula of the deific and fight shy of certain sides of mystical experience—Christianity, for instance, of the pantheistic realisation or the realisation of absolute union between God and man, and Islam not only of these realisations but also of the God with form as well as of the incarnate Godhead, the Avatar. Of course, there are some

lines of Christian mysticism that escape here and there from these limits just as the Sufi developments of Islam do, but this is so because overtly or covertly the influence of Hinduism has been felt by them. Hence to be a Hindu, as distinguished from a Christian or Muslim or Jew or even Buddhist, is to be steeped in the tradition of a spirituality which, while admitting of various kinds of contact and communion with the Infinite Eternal and so granting the validity of various approaches according to temperament, holds the vision of an experience combining all approaches and all contacts and communions. Thereby it is able to include and allow every sort of religious experience in even an exclusive form precisely because it holds that wide and comprehensive vision and keeps it at the back of all the differing experiences so that there is mutual understanding among them and a deep tolerance." (IWSKDS: 39)

2.

"Of Hinduism, thus defined, India is the land and all that is finest and grandest in our history has sprung from it. Not to put the utmost stress possible on this Hinduism is to castrate spiritually a people that has had the unique distinction of being one of the very few who have kept a living continuity with the hoary past and survived unimpoverished in cultural vitality. Try to take away or relegate to the background the wonderful Hindu spirituality and you do your best to render India utterly impotent as a

truly cultural force. That spirituality is the greatest historical fact in our country and it is the very core of India. It is also something that opens up the profoundest possibilities of human growth and provides the power for the next step in evolution ...” (IWSKDS: 40)

VIII—Hindu Spirituality Shows Genuine Brotherhood and Human Perfection

1.

“Unless a single Self in all creatures becomes a concrete experience, unless a derivation of every being from the one Divine Creative Person is inherent part of our life-sense, there can be no genuine brotherhood and harmony on earth. Other modes and means of promoting equality and peace are mere patching-up devices, temporary and restricted expedients or at best halfway houses to the basic spiritual unity-in-diversity. If we have any ideal before us of human perfection, individual and collective, the large and liberal and all-permeating Hinduism of which we have spoken is the world's prime necessity. Not for a moment must we forget or ignore the fact that India by the fundamentals of her Hinduism is the brightest hope of the earth's future.” (IWSKDS: 40)

IX—Tendency in Officialdom to Refrain from Hinduism

1.

"To be a revivalist of this vastly transformative power is the duty of every Indian. And if secularism is the enemy of that power, then we must fight secularism tooth and nail. Such secularism is no authentic foe of the communalist mind but a destroyer of India and a destroyer too of the only foundation on which non-communalism can be built with any lasting security. There is a tendency in officialdom to refrain from giving encouragement to anything which breathes markedly of Hinduism. Moral maxims from the Hindu scriptures are culled because they bear a resemblance to ethical aphorisms from other religions, but an openly religious and spiritual song like Vande Mataram—a cry of obeisance to the divine creative Power that is mother of the world and that is visioned as the ultimate being of the National Soul of India the God-intoxicated country—is made to play second fiddle to a much inferior though by no means crude national anthem which never inspired any heroism or sacrifice as the other constantly did during the course of our struggle for freedom. That Vande Mataram should ever have been challenged on the ground that it was too Hindu and not secular enough for a country where there were millions of Muslims is a sad symptom of national decadence. Perhaps

a still sadder one is the lukewarm apologia put up for it at times—namely, that the Goddess invoked should not worry anybody since nobody now believes in the reality of such a being and she can be taken as a harmless poetic metaphor for the motherland. Heaven save us from this kind of secularism!" (IWSKDS: 40–41)

Section Seven: It Would Be Tragic If India Discarded Her Spiritual Heritage

I—Throwing Away Spiritual Heritage Is Forfeiting Its *Swadharma*, Losing Its Soul

1.

"There are deeper issues for India herself, since by following certain tempting directions she may conceivably become a nation like many others evolving an opulent industry and commerce, a powerful organisation of social and political life, an immense military strength, practising power-politics with a high degree of success, guarding and extending zealously her gains and her interest, dominating even a large part of the world, but in this apparently magnificent progression forfeiting its Swadharma, losing its soul. Then ancient India and her spirit might disappear altogether and we would have only one more nation like the others and that would be a real gain neither to the world nor to us. There is a question whether she may prosper more harmlessly in the outward life yet lose altogether her richly massed and firmly held spiritual experience and knowledge. It would be a tragic irony of fate if India were to throw away her spiritual heritage at the very moment when in the rest of the world there is more and more a turning towards her for spiritual help and a saving Light. This must not and will surely not happen; but it cannot be said that the danger is not there. There are indeed other numerous and difficult problems that face this country or will very soon face it. No doubt we will win

through, but we must not disguise from ourselves the fact that after these long years of subjection and its cramping and impairing effects a great inner as well outer liberation and change, a vast inner and outer progress is needed if we are to fulfil India's true destiny." (CWSA 36: 503–504)

II—India Is Not to Barter Her Spiritual Ideal for a Lower Ideal Alien to Her Nature

1.

"It may well be that both tendencies, the mental and the vital and physical stress of Europe and the spiritual and psychic impulse of India, are needed for the completeness of the human movement. But if the spiritual ideal points the final way to a triumphant harmony of manifested life, then it is all-important for India not to lose hold of the truth, not to give up the highest she knows and barter it away for a perhaps more readily practicable but still lower ideal alien to her true and constant nature." (CWSA 20: 74)

III—Obey the Law of Our Nature or Bear the Penalty of Decay and Deterioration

1.

"There is behind our imperfect cultural figures a permanent spirit to which we must cling and which will remain permanent even hereafter; there are certain fundamental

motives or essential idea-forces which cannot be thrown aside, because they are part of the vital principle of our being and of the aim of Nature in us, our *svadharma*. But these motives, these idea-forces are, whether for nation or for humanity as a whole, few and simple in their essence and capable of an application always varying and progressive. … There is this permanent spirit in things and there is this persistent swadharma or law of our nature; but there is too a less binding system of laws of successive formulation,—rhythms of the spirit, forms, turns, habits of the nature, and these endure the mutations of the ages, *yugadharma*. The race must obey this double principle of persistence and mutation or bear the penalty of a decay and deterioration that may attaint even its living centre." (CWSA 20: 86–87)

IV—Now the West Is Admitting the Truths of the Spirit

1.

"But let us remember that Europe itself is labouring to outgrow the limitations of its own conceptions and precisely by a rapid infusion of the ideas of the East,—naturally, essential ideas and not the mere forms,—which have been first infiltrating and are now more freely streaming into Western thought, poetry, art, ideas of life, not to overturn its culture, but to transform, enlighten and

aggrandise its best values and to add new elements which have too long been ignored or forgotten.

It will be singular if while Europe is thus intelligently enlarging herself in the new light she has been able to seize and admitting the truths of the spirit and the aim at a divine change in man and his life, we in India are to take up the cast-off clothes of European thought and life and to straggle along in the old rut of her wheels, always taking up today what she had cast off yesterday. We should not allow our cultural independence to be paralysed by the accident that at the moment Europe came in upon us, we were in a state of ebb and weakness, such as comes some day upon all civilisations. That no more proves that our spirituality, our culture, our leading ideas were entirely mistaken and the best we can do is vigorously to Europeanise, rationalise, materialise ourselves in the practical parts of life,—keeping perhaps some spirituality, religion, Indianism as a graceful decoration in the background,—than the great catastrophe of the war proves that Europe's science, her democracy, her progress were all wrong and she should return to the Middle Ages or imitate the culture of China or Turkey or Tibet. Such generalisations are the facile falsehoods of a hasty and unreflecting ignorance.

We have both made mistakes, faltered in the true application of our ideals, been misled into unhealthy exaggerations. Europe has understood the lesson, she is

striving to correct herself; but she does not for this reason forswear science, democracy, progress, but purposes to complete and perfect them, to use them better, to give them a sounder direction. She is admitting the light of the East, but on the basis of her own way of thinking and living, opening herself to truth of the spirit, but not abandoning her own truth of life and science and social ideals. We should be as faithful, as free in our dealings with the Indian spirit and modern influences; correct what went wrong with us; apply our spirituality on broader and freer lines, be if possible not less but more spiritual than were our forefathers; admit Western science, reason, progressiveness, the essential modern ideas, but on the basis of our own way of life and assimilated to our spiritual aim and ideal; open ourselves to the throb of life, the pragmatic activity, the great modern endeavour, but not therefore abandon our fundamental view of God and man and Nature. There is no real quarrel between them; for rather these two things need each other to fill themselves in, to discover all their own implications, to awaken to their own richest and completest significances.**"** (CWSA 20: 37-38)

V—The Cessation of the Evolutionary Spiritual Urge Can Make Nature Reject Man

1.

"… there is another danger, [if there is no spiritual ideal]—for a cessation of the evolutionary urge, a crystallisation into a stable comfortable mechanised social living without ideal or outlook is another possible outcome. Reason by itself cannot long maintain the race in its progress; it can do so only if it is a mediator between the life and body and something higher and greater within him; for it is the inner spiritual necessity, the push from what is there yet unrealised within him that maintains in him, once he has attained to mind, the evolutionary stress, the spiritual nisus. That renounced, he must either relapse and begin all over again or disappear like other forms of life before him as an evolutionary failure, through incapacity to maintain or to serve the evolutionary urge. At the best he will remain arrested in some kind of mediary typal perfection, like other animal kinds, while Nature pursues her way beyond him to a greater creation." (CWSA 22: 1089–1090)

Section Eight: India Should Recognise Its Own Indian Genius

I—Unless We Recognise Spirituality as Indian Genius, We Shall Never Rise to the Golden Top

1.

"... predominantly spiritual is the Indian genius. And until this character of the Indian genius is fully recognised—nay, felt in the heart and all along the blood—we shall never rise to the golden top of our bent and we shall waste the magnificent possibilities that seers like Sri Aurobindo bring us today of initiating a new world-order inspired and illumined by the divinity hidden within man." (IWSKDS: 35)

II—If Indians Can Bring Forth the Real Genius, the Global Degeneration Will Be Halted

1.

"There is at present, because of many causes, a general decline of values and a general confusion of mind all over the earth. In India this state of affairs has a critical significance obtaining nowhere else … India has been in history the home of the immensest aspiration and the intensest search after the Good, the Beautiful and the True. ... For, if Indians can bring forth the real genius of their country the world's degeneration will be halted: the hope of the future is in the renascence and resurgence of essential India. … she is a meeting-ground of the East and

the West, and the consciousness with which she works is profoundly Asiatic with yet a strong European colour. …

But how shall we defeat this dangerous tide? Or, to put it more positively, how shall we grow in spirituality? Paradoxically the answer is: 'Not only by overcoming all that has been looked upon as unspiritual but also by getting beyond what at the present day we take to be spiritual.' The fact is that our current ideas about spirituality are inadequate and the inadequacy is itself a portion of the harm wrought by the dangerous tide we have to defeat. We talk of India's ancient wisdom, but we conceive it in terms that do it scant justice … We never stop to ask: What is meant by India's ancient wisdom? Surely the most pointed answer is: the Upanishads and the Gita. There are various interpretations of these scriptures, but no interpretation can have any value if it denies that these scriptures put before us a life of direct concrete experience of the Eternal, the Infinite, the Divine… To be a knower of Brahman, Atman, Ishwara and let that supra-intellectual knowledge issue in a life lived in the light of a more-than-human consciousness is something far greater than to be a moralist following certain set principles of conduct by means of will-power and fellow-feeling. The moral life in itself can be a fine thing, but it cannot be compared in greatness to the mystical life—the life of a Krishna, a Chaitanya, a Mirabai, a Ramakrishna, a Vivekananda. Nor can we deny that it is the mystical life,

the Yogic spirituality, that is the aim and ideal of the Upanishads and the Gita, the vibrant luminous essence of India's ancient wisdom." (IWSKDS: 12–13)

III—Without God-Realisation, Man Cannot Give a New Vitality to India's Ancient Wisdom

1.

"God-realisation is the essence of Karma Yoga as of all other Yogas.

Without this God-realisation a man cannot give a new vitality, a contemporary life, to India's ancient wisdom—for he will not at all embody that wisdom at its purest and profoundest. … If India has anything to give humanity at present, it is that wisdom in a form suitable and applicable to modern needs, that wisdom with a further development of its potency in certain directions. …

Of course, all men cannot be Yogis in the full sense. But there must be a clear recognition of what genuinely constitutes the Indian ideal and in some way or other the ordinary existence must be brought into touch with it. Also, there must be whole-hearted acknowledgment of the actualisation of the ideal in those who have dedicated themselves for years to it. And towards these rare souls the mind of the nation must turn more and more." (IWSKDS: 14–15)

2.

"A mastering and helpful assimilation of new stuff into an eternal body has always been in the past a peculiar power of the genius of India." (CWSA 20: 78)

Section Nine: How India Can Spiritualise Herself

I—The Recovery of the Old Spiritual Knowledge

1.

"The recovery of the old spiritual knowledge and experience in all its splendour, depth and fullness is its first, most essential work; the flowing of this spirituality into new forms of philosophy, literature, art, science and critical knowledge is the second; an original dealing with modern problems in the light of the Indian spirit and the endeavour to formulate a greater synthesis of a spiritualised society is the third and most difficult. Its success on these three lines will be the measure of its help to the future of humanity." (CWSA 20: 15)

II—A Great Stream of Aspiration Must Be Poured to Fertilise the Heart of the Nation

1.

"The force of a great stream of aspiration must be poured over the country, which will sweep away as in a flood the hesitations, the selfishnesses, the fears, the self-distrust, the want of fervour and the want of faith which stand in the way of the spread of the great national awakening … A mightier fountain of the spirit must be prepared from which this stream of aspiration can be poured to fertilise the heart of the nation." (CWSA 7: 939)

III—To Recover Originality, Aspiration and Energy Lost Due to the Spiritual Divorce in Schools and Universities

1.

"Most vital of all, the spiritual and intellectual divorce from the past which the present schools and universities have effected, has beggared the nation of the originality, high aspiration and forceful energy which can alone make a nation free and great. To reverse the process and recover what we have lost, is undoubtedly the first object to which we ought to devote ourselves. And as the loss of originality, aspiration and energy was the most vital of all these losses, so their recovery should be our first and most important objective. The primary aim of the prophets of Nationalism … They pointed the mind of the people to a great and splendid destiny, not in some distant millennium but in the comparatively near future, and fired the hearts of the young men with a burning desire to realise the apocalyptic vision. … they pointed persistently to the great achievements and grandidose civilization of our forefathers and called on the rising generation to recover their lost spiritual and intellectual heritage. … To raise the mind, character and tastes of the people, to recover the ancient nobility of temper, the strong Aryan character and the high Aryan outlook, the perceptions which made earthly life beautiful and wonderful, and the magnificent spiritual

experiences, realisations and aspirations which made us the deepest hearted, deepest thoughted and most delicately profound in life of all the peoples of the earth, is the task next in importance and urgency. We had hoped by means of National Education to effect this great object as well as to restore to our youth the intellectual heritage of the nation and build up on that basis a yet greater culture in the future." (CWSA 8: 245–246)

IV—Let the Force of Spirituality Have Its Play in the Country

1.

"The spiritual flood which has come is for the most part a new form of the old. It is not a real change. But it too was needed. Bengal has been awakening within itself all the old yogas in order to exhaust their ingrained tendencies, extracting their essence and with it fertilizing the soil. First it was the turn of Vedanta: the doctrine of non-dualism, asceticism, the Illsionism od Shankara, and so forth. Now, according to your description, it is the turn of Vaishnava Dharma—Lila, love, the intoxication of emotional experience. All this is very old, unfitted for the new age and will not endure—for such excitement has no capacity to last. But the merit of the Vaishnava Religion: the Divine Play, love, losing one-self in the delight of spiritual emotion. All this is very old and unsuitable for the new age.

It cannot last, for such exicitement has no lasting-power. But the Vaishnava way has this merit, that it keeps a certain connection between God and the world and gives a meaning to life. But because it is partial thing, the connection the meaning are not complete. The sectarianism you have noticed was inevitable. This is the law of the mind: to take one part and call it the whole, excluding all other parts. The realised man who comes with an idea keeps, even if he leans on the part, some awareness of the whole—although he may not be able to give it form. But his disciples are not able to do this, because the form is lacking. They are tying up their bundles—let them. When God descends completely on the country, the bundles will open of themselves. All these things are signs of incompleteness and immaturity. I am not disturbed by them. Let the force of spirituality have its play in the country in whatever way and through as many sects as there may be. Afterwards we shall see. This is the infancy, the embryonic state, even, of the new age, just a hint, not yet the beginning." (A part of the letter from Sri Aurobindo to his younger brother Barin.) (SRI AUROBINDO *Archives and Research*: Vol 4, No.1, pg 13-14)

V—India Must Find Again and Manifest Her Soul

1.

"India must find back and manifest her soul." (CWM 13: 369)

2.

"You have said in one of Your messages: "The number one problem for India is to find back and manifest her soul."

How to find back India's soul?

Become conscious of your psychic being. Let your psychic being become intensely interested in India's Soul and aspire towards it, with an attitude of service; and if you are sincere you will succeed." (CWM 13: 370)

3.

"The Soul of India is one and indivisible. India is conscious of her mission in the world. She is waiting for the exterior means of manifestation." (CWM 13: 351)

4.

"India is the country where the psychic law *can and must* rule and the time has come for that *here*. Besides, it is the only possible salvation for this country whose consciousness has unfortunately been distorted by the influence and domination of a foreign nation, but which, in spite of everything, possesses a unique spiritual heritage. Blessings." (CWM 13: 370)

5.

"In the whole creation the earth has a place of distinction, because unlike any other planet it is evolutionary with a

psychic entity at its centre. In it, India, in particular, is a divinely chosen country." (CWM 13: 368)

6.

"India has become the symbolic representation of all the difficulties of modern mankind.

India will be the land of its resurrection—the resurrection to a higher and truer life." (CWM 13: 368)

7.

"We have to awaken the true soul of India and to do everything in accordance with it. For the last ten years I have been silently pouring my influence into this foreign political vessel, and there has been some result. I can continue to do this wherever necessary. But if I took up that work openly again, associating with the political leaders and working with them, it would be supporting an alien law of being and a false political life. People now want to spiritualise politics—Gandhi, for instance. But he can't get hold of the right way. What is Gandhi doing? Making a hodge-podge called *satyagraha* out of '*Ahimsa parama dharma',* Jainism *hartal*, passive resistance, etc; bringing a sort of Indianised Tolstoyism into the country. The result—if there is any lasting results—will be a sort of Indianised Bolshevism. I have no objection to his work; let each one act according to his own inspiration. But it is not the real thing. If the spiritual force is poured into these impure

forms—the wine of the spirit into these unbaked vessels—the imperfect thing will break apart and spill and waste the wine. Or else the spiritual force will evaporate and only the impure form remain. It is the same in every field of activity. I could use my spiritual influence; it would strength to those who received it and they would work with great energy. But the force would be expended in shaping the image of a monkey and setting it up in the temple of Shiva. If the monkey is brought to life it may grow powerful, and in the guise of the devotee Hanuman do much work for Rama—so long as the life and strength remain. But in the Temple of India we want not Hanuman but the Godhead, the Avatar, Rama himself." (A part of the letter from Sri Aurobindo to his younger brother Barin.) (SRI AUROBINDO *Archives and Research*: Vol 4, No.1, pg 16)

VI—India Needs an Institution of Spiritual Workers Trained in Every Field

1.

"What is needed now is a band of spiritual workers … We need an institution in which under the guidance of highly spiritual men workers will be trained for every field, workers for self-defence, workers for arbitration, for sanitation, for famine relief, for every species of work which is needed … The winning of freedom is an easy task, the keeping of it is less easy. The first needs only one

tremendous effort in which all the energies of the country must be concentrated; the second requires a united, organised and settled strength. If these two conditions are satisfied, nothing more is needed, for all else is detail and will inevitably follow. … India … requires to organise her scattered strength into a single and irresistible whole." (CWSA 7: 939)

2.

"One institution is required which will train and support men to help those who are now labouring under great disadvantages to organise education, to build up the life of the villages, to spread the habit of arbitration, to help the people in time of famine and sickness, to preach Swadeshi. These workers must be selfless, free from the desire to lead or shine, devoted to the work for the country's sake, absolutely obedient yet full of energy. They must breathe the strength of the spirit, of selfless faith and aspiration derived from the spiritual guides of the institution. The material is ready and even plentiful, but the factory which will make use of the material has yet to be set on foot. When the man comes, who is commissioned by God to do it, we must be ready to recognise him." (CWSA 7: 940)

VII—A Communal Life Based on the Principle of Spiritual Change as the First Necessity

1.

"Our first object shall be to declare this ideal, insist on the spiritual change as the first necessity and group together all who accept it and are ready to strive sincerely to fulfil it: our second shall be to build up not only an individual but a communal life on this principle. An outer activity as well as an inner change is needed and it must be at once a spiritual, cultural, educational, social and economical action. Its scope, too, will be at once individual and communal, regional and national, and eventually a work not only for the nation but for the whole human people. The immediate object of this action will be a new creation, a spiritual education and culture, an enlarged social spirit founded not on division but on unity, on the perfect growth and freedom of the individual, but also on his unity with others and his dedication to a larger self in the people and in humanity, and the beginning of an endeavour towards the solution of the economic problem founded not on any Western model but on the communal principle native to India." (CWSA 13: 510—511)

VIII—Form a Group of People with Spiritual Knowledge

1.

"There must be a group forming a strong body of cohesive will with the spiritual knowledge to save India and the world. It is India that can bring Truth in the world. By manifestation of the Divine Will and Power alone, India can preach her message to the world and not by imitating the materialism of the West. By following the Divine Will India shall shine at the top of the spiritual mountain and show the way of Truth and organise world unity." (CWM 13: 353)

2.

"I can associate with everyone, but only in order to draw them all onto the true path, while keeping the spirit and form of our ideal intact. If that is not done we will lose our way the true work will not be accomplished. If we are spread out everywhere as individuals, something no doubt will be done; if we are spread out everywhere in the form of a *sangha*, a hundred times more will be accomplished. But the time has not yet come for this. If we try to give it form hastily, it will not be the exact thing I want. The *sangha* will at first be in a diffused form. Those who have accepted the ideal, although bound together, will work in different places. Afterwards, bound into a *sangha* with a form like a spiritual commune, they will shape all their

activities according to the Self and according to the needs of the age. Not a fixed and rigid form like that of the old Aryan society, not a stagnant back water, but a free form that can spread itself out like the sea with its multitudinous waves—engulfing this, inundating that, absorbing all—and as this continues, a spiritual community will be established. This is my present idea; it is not yet fully developed. … The result is in God's hands—let his will be done." (A part of the letter from Sri Aurobindo to his younger brother Barin.) (SRI AUROBINDO *Archives and Research*: Vol 4, No.1, pg 16–17)

IX—This Spiritual Life Can Take Up All Human Activities to Transfigure the World

1.

"The West has put its faith in its science and machinery and it is being destroyed by its science and crushed under its mechanical burden. It has not understood that a spiritual change is necessary for the accomplishment of its ideals. The East has the secret of that spiritual change, but it has too long turned its eyes away from the earth. The time has now come to heal the division and to unite life and the spirit.

This secret too has been possessed but not sufficiently practised by India. It is summarised in the rule of the Gita, *yogasthaḥ kuru karmāṇi*. Its principle is to do

all actions in Yoga, in union with God, on the foundation of the highest self and through the rule of all our members by the power of the spirit. And this we believe to be not only possible for man but the true solution of all his problems and difficulties. This then is the message we shall constantly utter and this the ideal that we shall put before the young and rising India, a spiritual life that shall take up all human activities and avail to transfigure the world for the great age that is coming. India, she that has carried in herself from of old the secret, can alone lead the way in this great transformation of which the present *sandhyā* of the old *yuga* is the forerunner. This must be her mission and service to humanity,—as she discovered the inner spiritual life for the individual, so now to discover for the race its integral collective expression and found for mankind its new spiritual and communal order." (CWSA 13: 510)

X—Indian Leaders and Followers Both Require a Deeper *Sadhana*

1.

"We must remember that we are a nation not yet trained in the vaster movements of modern politics. Not only our rank and file, but our captains and our strategists need the training of events, the wisdom of experience to make them perfect. … But the perfect experience of the veteran in

great battles, the acute political intelligence which comes of long familiarity with the handling of high affairs and national destinies, these are yet in us immature and in a state of pupillage. But God Himself is our master and teacher, for He would give to His chosen nation a faultless training and a perfect capacity. Only we must be ready to acknowledge our mistakes, to change our path, to learn. Then only shall we victoriously surmount all obstacles and move steadily, impetuously, but without stumbling or swerving, to our goal.

Moreover, we have weaknesses that are still rampant and uncorrected in our midst. It is our first duty to purge these out of our hearts with a merciless surgery. If the intellectual equipment is deficient, the spiritual equipment is also far from perfect. Our leaders and our followers both require a deeper Sadhana, a more direct communion with the Divine Guru and Captain of our movement, an inward uplifting, a grander and more impetuous force behind thought and deed. … not in the strength of a raw unmoralised European enthusiasm shall we conquer. Indians it is the spirituality of India, the sadhana of India, *tapasya, jnanam, sakti* that must make us free and great. And these great things of the East are ill-rendered by their inferior English equivalents, discipline, philosophy, strength. *Tapasya* is more than discipline; it is the materialisation in ourselves by spiritual means of the divine energy creative, preservative and destructive. *Jnanam* is

more than philosophy, it is the inspired and direct knowledge which comes of what our ancients called *drishti,* spiritual sight. *Shakti* is more than strength, it is the universal energy which moves the stars, made individual. It is the East that must conquer in India's uprising. It is the Yogin who must stand behind the political leader or manifest within him; Ramdas must be born in one body with Shivaji, Mazzini mingle with Cavour." (CWSA 8: 463–464)

2.

"Knowledge will not come without self-communion, without light from within, not even the knowledge of the practical steps that can lead to success. Every step that is taken in the light of a lower wisdom will fail until the truth is driven home.

The work that has begun at Dakshineshwar is far from finished, it is not even understood. That which Vivekananda received and strove to develop, has not yet materialised." (CWSA 8: 465)

XI—Spiritual Flag of United India

1.

"(*About 'the Mother's flag, which contains her symbol in gold centred on a silver-blue background*)

It is the flag of India's spiritual mission. And in the accomplishment of this mission will India's unity be accomplished." *15 August 1947* (CWM 13: 352)

2.

"(*On 1 November 1954 Pondicherry and the other French settlements in India were transferred to the Indian Union. To celebrate the occasion the flag with Mother's symbol at its centre was hoisted at the Ashram at 6.20 a.m., when Mother read out the following message.*)

For us the 1st November has a deep significance. We have a flag which Sri Aurobindo called the Spiritual Flag of United India. Its square form, its colour and every detail of its design have a symbolic meaning. It was hoisted on the 15th August 1947 when India became free. It will now be hoisted on the 1st November 1954 when these settlements get united with India and it will be hoisted in the future whenever India recovers other parts of herself. United India has a special mission to fulfil in the world. Sri Aurobindo laid down his life for it and we are prepared to do the same." *1 November 1954* (CWM 13: 354)

Section Ten: Indian Government to Recognise Yoga as a Form Education

"I would like them (the Government) to recognise Yoga as education, not so much for ourselves, but it will be good for the country. Matter will be transformed, that will be a solid base. Life will be divinised. Let India take the lead." (CWM 16: 363)

I—In Any Country the Best Education Is in Teaching the True Nature and the Mission of Its Country

1.

"In any country the best education that can be given to children consists in teaching them what the true nature of their country is and its own qualities, the mission their nation has to fulfil in the world and its true place in the terrestrial concert. To that should be added a wide understanding of the role of other nations, but without the spirit of imitation and without ever losing sight of the genius of one's own country." (CWM 12: 252–253)

1.

"An integral education which could, with some variations, be adapted to all the nations of the world, must bring back the legitimate authority of the Spirit over a matter fully developed and utilised." (CWM 13: 361)

II—Basic Issues of Indian Education

1. In view of the present and the future of national and international living, what is it that India should aim at in education?

Prepare her children for the rejection of falsehood and the manifestation of Truth.

2. By what steps could the country proceed to realise this high aim? How can a beginning in that direction be made?

Make matter ready to manifest the Spirit.

3. What is India's true genius and what is her destiny?

To teach to the world that matter is false and impotent unless it becomes the manifestation of the Spirit.

4. How does the Mother view the progress of Science and Technology in India? What contribution can they make to the growth of the Spirit in man?

Its only use is to make the material basis stronger, completer and more effective for the manifestation of the Spirit." (CWM 12: 250)

III—Make Yoga the Ideal of Human Life

1.

"We believe that it is to make the *yoga* the ideal of human life that India rises today; by the *yoga* she will get the strength to realise her freedom, unity and greatness, by the *yoga* she will keep the strength to preserve it. It is a spiritual revolution we foresee and the material is only its shadow and reflex." (CWSA 8: 24)

IV—What is Yoga?

1.

"Yoga means union with the Divine—a union either transcendental (above the universe) or cosmic (universal) or individual or, as in our yoga, all three together. Or it means getting into a consciousness in which one is no longer limited by the small ego, personal mind, personal vital and body but is in union with the supreme Self or with the universal (cosmic) consciousness or with some deeper consciousness within in which one is aware of one's own soul, one's own inner being and of the real truth of existence. In the yogic consciousness one is not only aware

of things, but of forces, not only of forces, but of the conscious being behind the forces. One is aware of all this not only in oneself but in the universe." (CWSA 30: 422)

2.

"The piercing of the veil between the outer consciousness and the inner being is one of the crucial movements in yoga. For yoga means union with the Divine, but it also means awaking first to your inner self and then to your higher self,—a movement inward and a movement upward. It is, in fact, only through the awakening and coming to the front of the inner being that you can get into union with the Divine. The outer physical man is only an instrumental personality and by himself he cannot arrive at this union,—he can only get occasional touches, religious feelings, imperfect intimations. And even these come not from the outer consciousness but from what is within us.

There are two mutually complementary movements; in one the inner being comes to the front and impresses its own normal motions on the outer consciousness to which they are unusual and abnormal; the other is to draw back from the outer consciousness, to go inside into the inner planes, enter the world of your inner self and wake in the hidden parts of your being. When that plunge has once been taken, you are marked for the yogic, the spiritual life and nothing can efface the seal that has been put upon you." (CWSA 30: 215)

3.

"Essentially, Yoga is a generic name for the processes and the result of processes by which we transcend or shred off our present modes of being and rise to a new, a higher, a wider mode of consciousness which is not that of the ordinary animal and intellectual man. Yoga is the exchange of an egoistic for a universal or cosmic consciousness lifted towards or informed by the supra-cosmic, transcendent Unnameable who is the source and support of all things. Yoga is the passage of the human thinking animal towards the God-consciousness from which he has descended." (CWSA 13: 119)

4.

"For we mean by this term [Yoga] a methodised effort towards self-perfection by the expression of the secret potentialities latent in the being and—highest condition of victory in that effort—a union of the human individual with the universal and transcendent Existence we see partially expressed in man and in the Cosmos." (CWSA 23 - 24: 6)

5.

"Yoga, as Swami Vivekananda has said, may be regarded as a means of compressing one's evolution into a single life or a few years or even a few months of bodily existence." (CWSA 23 - 24: 6)

6.

"When one takes up the yoga and wishes to consecrate one's life to the Divine, these ordinary motives of the vital being have no longer their full and free play; they have to be replaced by another, a mainly psychic and spiritual motive, which will enable the sadhak to work with the same force as before, no longer for himself, but for the Divine. If the ordinary vital motives or vital force can no longer act freely and yet are not replaced by something else, then the push or force put into the work may decline or the power to command success may no longer be there. For the sincere sadhak the difficulty can only be temporary; but he has to see the defect in his consciousness or his attitude and to remove it. Then the divine Power itself will act through him and use his capacity and vital force for its ends." (CWSA 29: 233)

V—Yogic Methods

1.

"Yogic methods have something of the same relation to the customary psychological workings of man as has the scientific handling of the force of electricity or of steam to their normal operations in Nature. And they, too, like the operations of Science, are formed upon a knowledge developed and confirmed by regular experiment, practical analysis and constant result. All Rajayoga, for instance,

depends on this perception and experience that our inner elements, combinations, functions, forces, can be separated or dissolved, can be new-combined and set to novel and formerly impossible workings or can be transformed and resolved into a new general synthesis by fixed internal processes. Hathayoga similarly depends on this perception and experience that the vital forces and functions to which our life is normally subjected and whose ordinary operations seem set and indispensable, can be mastered and the operations changed or suspended with results that would otherwise be impossible and that seem miraculous to those who have not seized the rationale of their process. And if in some other of its forms this character of Yoga is less apparent, because they are more intuitive and less mechanical, nearer, like the Yoga of Devotion, to a supernal ecstasy or, like the Yoga of Knowledge, to a supernal infinity of consciousness and being, yet they too start from the use of some principal faculty in us by ways and for ends not contemplated in its everyday spontaneous workings. All methods grouped under the common name of Yoga are special psychological processes founded on a fixed truth of Nature and developing, out of normal functions, powers and results which were always latent but which her ordinary movements do not easily or do not often manifest." (CWSA 23: 7)

2.

"The object of the divine life, on the other hand, is to realise one's highest self or to realise God and to put the whole being into harmony with the truth of the highest self or the law of the divine nature, to find one's own divine capacities great or small and fulfil them in life as a sacrifice to the highest or as a true instrument of the divine Sakti." (CWSA 36: 303–304)

3.

"In the right view both of life and of Yoga all life is either consciously or subconsciously a Yoga. … But all life, when we look behind its appearances, is a vast Yoga of Nature who attempts in the conscious and the subconscious to realise her perfection in an ever-increasing expression of her yet unrealised potentialities and to unite herself with her own divine reality. In man, her thinker, she for the first time upon this Earth devises self-conscious means and willed arrangements of activity by which this great purpose may be more swiftly and puissantly attained. … A given system of Yoga, then, can be no more than a selection or a compression, into narrower but more energetic forms of intensity, of the general methods which are already being used loosely, largely, in a leisurely movement, with a profuser apparent waste of material and energy but with a more complete combination by the great Mother in her vast upward labour. It is this view of Yoga that can alone form

the basis for a sound and rational synthesis of Yogic methods. For then Yoga ceases to appear something mystic and abnormal which has no relation to the ordinary processes of the World-Energy or the purpose she keeps in view in her two great movements of subjective and objective self-fulfilment; it reveals itself rather as an intense and exceptional use of powers that she has already manifested or is progressively organising in her less exalted but more general operations." (CWSA 23: 6–7)

VI—Psychic and Spiritual Education

Psychic Education

1.

"Still, to sketch a general outline of psychic education, we must give some idea, however relative it may be, of what we mean by the psychic being. One could say, for example, that the creation of an individual being is the result of the projection, in time and space, of one of the countless possibilities latent in the supreme origin of allmanifestation which, through the medium of the one and universal consciousness, takes concrete form in the law or the truth of an individual and so, by a progressive development, becomes his soul or psychic being.

…

It is through this psychic presence that the truth of an individual being comes into contact with him and the circumstances of his life. …

The starting-point is to seek in yourself that which is independent of the body and the circumstances of life, which is not born of the mental formation that you have been given, … You must find, in the depths of your being, that which carries in it a sense of universality, limitless expansion, unbroken continuity. Then you decentralise, extend and widen yourself; you begin to live in all things and in all beings; the barriers separating individuals from each other break down. You think in their thoughts, vibrate in their sensations, feel in their feelings, live in the life of all. What seemed inert suddenly becomes full of life, stones quicken, plants feel and will and suffer, animals speak in a language more or less inarticulate, but clear and expressive; everything is animated by a marvellous consciousness without time or limit. And this is only one aspect of the psychic realisation; there are others, many others. All help you to go beyond the barriers of your egoism, the walls of your external personality, the impotence of your reactions and the incapacity of your will.

But, as I have already said, the path to that realisation is long and difficult, strewn with snares and problems to be solved, which demand an unfailing determination. It is like the explorer's trek through virgin forest in quest of an unknown land, of some great

discovery. The psychic being is also a great discovery which requires at least as much fortitude and endurance as the discovery of new continents. …

(1) The first and perhaps the most important point is that the mind is incapable of judging spiritual things. All those who have written on this subject have said so; but very few are those who have put it into practice. And yet, in order to proceed on the path, it is absolutely indispensable to abstain from all mental opinion and reaction.

(2) Give up all personal seeking for comfort, satisfaction, enjoyment or happiness. Be only a burning fire for progress, take whatever comes to you as an aid to your progress and immediately make whatever progress is required.

(3)Try to take pleasure in all you do, but never do anything for the sake of pleasure.

(4)Never get excited, nervous or agitated. Remain perfectly calm in the face of all circumstances. And yet be always alert to discover what progress you still have to make and lose no time in making it.

(5)Never take physical happenings at their face value. They are always a clumsy attempt to express something else, the true thing which escapes our superficial understanding.

(6)Never complain of the behaviour of anyone, unless you have the power to change in his nature what

makes him act in this way; and if you have the power, change him instead of complaining.

(7)Whatever you do, never forget the goal which you have set before you. There is nothing great or small once you have set out on this great discovery; all things are equally important and can either hasten or delay its success.

(8)Thus before you eat, concentrate a few seconds in the aspiration that the food you are about to eat may bring your body the substance it needs to serve as a solid basis for your effort towards the great discovery, and give it the energy for persistence and perseverance in the effort.

(9)Before you go to sleep, concentrate a few seconds in the aspiration that the sleep may restore your fatigued nerves, bring calm and quietness to your brain so that on waking you may, with renewed vigour, begin again your journey on the path of the great discovery.

(10)Before you act, concentrate in the will that your action may help or at least in no way hinder your march forward towards the great discovery.

(11)When you speak, before the words come out of your mouth, concentrate just long enough to check your words and allow only those that are absolutely necessary to pass, only those that are not in any way harmful to your progress on the path of the great discovery.

To sum up, never forget the purpose and goal of your life.

The will for the great discovery should be always there above you, above what you do and what you are, like a huge bird of light dominating all the movements of your being.

Before the untiring persistence of your effort, an inner door will suddenly open and you will emerge into a dazzling splendour that will bring you the certitude of immortality, the concrete experience that you have always lived and always shall live, that external forms alone perish and that these forms are, in relation to what you are in reality, like clothes that are thrown away when worn out. Then you will stand erect, freed from all chains, and instead of advancing laboriously under the weight of circumstances imposed upon you by Nature, which you had to endure and bear if you did not want to be crushed by them, you will be able to walk on, straight and firm, conscious of your destiny, master of your life." (CWM 12: 31-35)

[The numbering done from (1) to (11) is done by the compiler and not present in the original.]

2.

"There is another quality which must be cultivated in a child from a very young age: that is the feeling of uneasiness, of a moral disbalance which it feels when it has done certain things, not because it has been told not to do them, not because it fears punishment, but spontaneously. For

example, a child who hurts its comrade through mischief, if it is in its normal, natural state, will experience uneasiness, a grief deep in its being, because what it has done is contrary to its inner truth.

For in spite of all teachings, in spite of all that thought can think, there is something in the depths which has a feeling of a perfection, a greatness, a truth, and is painfully contradicted by all the movements opposing this truth. If a child has not been spoilt by its milieu, by deplorable examples around it, that is, if it is in the normal state, spontaneously, without its being told anything, it will feel an uneasiness when it has done something against the truth of its being. And it is exactly upon this that later its effort for progress must be founded.

…

There is only one true guide, that is the inner guide, who does not pass through the mental consciousness.

Naturally, if a child gets a disastrous education, it will try ever harder to extinguish within itself this little true thing, and sometimes it succeeds so well that it loses all contact with it, and also the power of distinguishing between good and evil. That is why I insist upon this, and I say that from their infancy children must be taught that there is an inner reality—within themselves, within the earth, within the universe—and that they, the earth and the universe exist only as a function of this truth, and that if it did not exist the child would not last, even the short

time that it does, and that everything would dissolve even as it comes into being. And because this is the real basis of the universe, naturally it is this which will triumph; and all that opposes this cannot endure as long as this does, because it is That, the eternal thing which is at the base of the universe." (CWM 4: 24–25)

Spiritual Education

1.
"*What is a change of consciousness?*

A change of consciousness is equivalent to a new birth, a birth into a higher sphere of existence.

How can a change of consciousness change the life upon earth?

A change in human consciousness will make possible the manifestation upon earth of a higher Force, a purer Light, a more total Truth." (CWM 15: 61)

VII—India the Land of Saints and Sages Will Once More Burn With the Fire of Ancient Yoga

"God has set apart India as the eternal fountain-head of holy spirituality, and He will never suffer that fountain to

run dry. … Once more in the land of the saints and sages will burn up the fire of the ancient Yoga and the hearts of her people will be lifted up into the neighbourhood of the Eternal." (CWSA 7: 876)

Section Eleven: India’s Role Is to Spiritualise Life on Earth

I—The Function of India Is to Supply the World with a Perennial Source of Light and Renovation

1.

"… the function of India is to supply the world with a perennial source of light and renovation. Whenever the first play of energy is exhausted and earth grows old and weary, full of materialism, racked with problems she cannot solve, the function of India is to restore the youth of mankind and assure it of immortality. She sends forth a light from her bosom which floods the earth and the heavens, and mankind bathes in it like St. George in the well of life and recovers strength, hope and vitality for its long pilgrimage. Such a time is now at hand. The world needs India and needs her free. The work she has to do now is to organize life in the terms of Vedanta, … She cannot do it without taking the management of her own life into her own hands." (CWSA 7: 1086)

II—The Widest and Highest Spiritualising of Life on Earth Is the Meaning of India's Existence

1.

"A widest and highest spiritualising of life on earth is the last vision of all that vast and unexampled seeking and experiment in a thousand ways of the soul's outermost and innermost experience which is the unique character of her

past; this in the end is the mission for which she was born and the meaning of her existence." (CWSA 20: 213)

2.

"If a great social revolution is necessary, it is because the ideal of Swaraj cannot be accomplished by a nation bound to forms which are no longer expressive of the ancient and immutable Self of India. She must change the rags of the past so that her beauty may be re-adorned. She must alter her bodily appearance so that her soul may be newly expressed. We need not fear that any change will turn her into a second-hand Europe. Her individuality is too mighty for such degradation, her soul too calm and self sufficient for such a surrender. … India can never so far forget the teaching which is her life and the secret of her immortality as to become a replica of the organised selfishness, cruelty and greed which is dignified in the West by the name of Industry. She will create her own conditions, find out the secret of order which Socialism in vain struggles to find and teach the peoples of the earth once more how to harmonise the world and the spirit." (CWSA 7: 905–906)

III—The Future of India and the World Depends on the Application of the Veda which Is the Foundation of the *Sanatan Dharma*

1.

"I seek a light that shall be new, yet old, the oldest indeed of all lights. I seek an authority that accepting, illuminating and reconciling all human truth, shall yet reject and get rid of by explaining it all mere human error. I seek a text and a Shastra that is not subject to interpolation, modification and replacement, that moth and white ant cannot destroy, that the earth cannot bury nor Time mutilate. I seek an asceticism that shall give me purity and deliverance from self and from ignorance without stultifying God and His universe. I seek a scepticism that shall question everything but shall have the patience to deny nothing that may possibly be true. I seek a rationalism not proceeding on the untenable supposition that all the centuries of man's history except the nineteenth were centuries of folly and superstition, but bent on discovering truth instead of limiting inquiry by a new dogmatism, obscurantism and furious intolerance which it chooses to call common sense and enlightenment; I seek a materialism that shall recognise matter and use it without being its slave. I seek an occultism that shall bring out all its processes and proofs into the light of day, without mystery, without jugglery, without the old stupid call to humanity, 'Be blind, O man,

and see!' In short, I seek not science, not religion, not Theosophy, but Veda—the truth about Brahman, not only about His essentiality, but about His manifestation, not a lamp on the way to the forest, but a light and a guide to joy and action in the world, the truth which is beyond opinion, the knowledge which all thought strives after—yasmin vijñāte sarvaṁ vijñātam. I believe that Veda to be the foundation of the Sanatan Dharma; I believe it to be the concealed divinity within Hinduism,—but a veil has to be drawn aside, a curtain has to be lifted. I believe it to be knowable and discoverable. I believe the future of India and the world to depend on its discovery and on its application, not to the renunciation of life, but to life in the world and among men." (CWSA 12: 62)

IV—India Rises for the World to Spread *Sanatan Dharma*, the Eternal Religion

1.

"Then in the seclusion of the jail, of the solitary cell I asked for it again. I said, 'Give me Thy *adesh*. I do not know what work to do or how to do it. Give me a message.' In the communion of Yoga ... messages came. ... 'Something has been shown to you in this year of seclusion, something about which you had your doubts and it is the truth of the Hindu religion. It is this religion that I am raising up before the world, it is this that I have perfected and developed

through the *rishis*, saints and *avatars*, and now it is going forth to do my work among the nations. I am raising up this nation to send forth my word. This is the Sanatana Dharma, this is the eternal religion which you did not really know before, but which I have now revealed to you. The agnostic and the sceptic in you have been answered, for I have given you proofs within and without you, physical and subjective, which have satisfied you. When you go forth, speak to your nation always this word, that it is for the Sanatana Dharma that they arise, it is for the world and not for themselves that they arise. I am giving them freedom for the service of the world. When therefore it is said that India shall rise, it is the Sanatana Dharma that shall rise. When it is said that India shall be great, it is the Sanatana Dharma that shall be great. When it is said that India shall expand and extend herself, it is the Sanatana Dharma that shall expand and extend itself over the world. It is for the Dharma and by the Dharma that India exists." Uttarpara Speech (CWSA 8: 10)

2.

"That ideal is now being preached by Srijut Bepin Chandra Pal in every speech he delivers … The ideal is that of humanity in God, of God in humanity, the ancient ideal of the *sanatana dharma* but applied, as it has never been applied before, to the problems of politics and the work of national revival. To realise that ideal, to impart it to the

world is the mission of India. She has evolved a religion which embraces all that the heart, the brain, the practical faculty of man can desire but she has not yet applied it to the problems of modern politics. This therefore is the work which she has still to do before she can help humanity; the necessity of the mission is the justification for her resurgence, the great incentive of saving herself to save mankind is the native power which will give her the force, the strength, the vehemence which can alone enable her to realise her destiny. No lesser ideal will help her through the stress of the terrible ordeal which she will in a few years be called to face." (CWSA 7: 1017)

V—This *Sanātana Dharma* Has Many Scriptures: Veda, Vedanta, Gita, Upanishad, Darshana, Purana, Tantra, Bible and Koran

1.

"We do not believe that by changing the machinery so as to make our society the ape of Europe we shall effect social renovation. Widow-remarriage, substitution of class for caste, adult marriage, intermarriages, interdining and the other nostrums of the social reformer are mechanical changes which, whatever their merits or demerits, cannot by themselves save the soul of the nation alive or stay the course of degradation and decline. It is the spirit alone that

saves, and only by becoming great and free in heart can we become socially and politically great and free.

... The world moves through an indispensable interregnum of free thought and materialism to a new synthesis of religious thought and experience, a new religious world-life free from intolerance, yet full of faith and fervour, accepting all forms of religion because it has an unshakable faith in the One. The religion which embraces Science and faith, Theism, Christianity, Mahomedanism and Buddhism and yet is none of these, is that to which the World-Spirit moves. In our own, which is the most sceptical and the most believing of all, the most sceptical because it has questioned and experimented the most, the most believing because it has the deepest experience and the most varied and positive spiritual knowledge,—that wider Hinduism which is not a dogma or combination of dogmas but a law of life, which is not a social framework but the spirit of a past and future social evolution, which rejects nothing but insists on testing and experiencing everything and when tested and experienced turning it to the soul's uses, in this Hinduism we find the basis of the future world-religion. This *sanātana dharma* has many scriptures, Veda, Vedanta, Gita, Upanishad, Darshana, Purana, Tantra, nor could it reject the Bible or the Koran; but its real, most authoritative scripture is in the heart in which the Eternal has His dwelling. It is in our inner spiritual experiences that we shall find the proof and source

of the world's Scriptures, the law of knowledge, love and conduct, the basis and inspiration of Karmayoga." (CWSA 13: 5–6)

VI—As the Indian Mind Advances Westward, It Must Inevitably Carry with It Yoga

1.

"As the Indian mind, emerging from its narrow mediaeval entrenchments, advances westward towards inevitable conquest, it must inevitably carry with it Yoga & Vedanta for its banners wherever it goes. Brahmajnana, Yoga & Dharma are the three essentialities of Hinduism; wherever it travels & find harbourage & resting place, these three must spread." (CWSA 12: 64)

2.

"The world at large does not live by the pure intellect, concrete itself it stands by things concrete or practical, although, immaterial in its origin, it bases practicality upon abstractions. A goal of life, a practice of perfection and a rational, yet binding law of conduct,—these are man's continual quest, and in none of these demands is modern Science able to satisfy humanity. … What Science could not provide India offers, Brahman for the eternal goal, Yoga for the means of perfection, dharma (swabhavaniyatam karma) for the rational yet binding law of conduct.

Therefore, because it has something by which humanity can be satisfied & on which it can found itself, the victory of the Indian mind is assured." (CWSA 12: 64–65)

Section Twelve: Why Only India Can Spiritualise Humanity?

I—All Other Nations Have Fallen Away from Spirituality

1.

"Spirituality is not the monopoly of India; however it may hide submerged in intellectualism or hid in other concealing veils, it is a necessary part of human nature. But the difference is between spirituality made the leading motive and the determining power of both the inner and the outer life and spirituality suppressed, allowed only under disguises or brought in as a minor power, its reign denied or put off in favour of the intellect or of a dominant materialistic vitalism. The former way was the type of the ancient wisdom at one time universal in all civilised countries—literally, from China to Peru. But all other nations have fallen away from it and diminished its large pervasiveness or fallen away from it altogether as in Europe. Or they are now, as in Asia, in danger of abandoning it for the invading economic, commercial, industrial, intellectually utilitarian modern type. India alone, with whatever fall or decline of light and vigour, has remained faithful to the heart of the spiritual motive. India alone is still obstinately recalcitrant; for Turkey and China and Japan, say her critics, have outgrown that foolishness, by which it is meant that they have grown rationalistic and materialistic. India alone as a nation, whatever individuals or a small class may have done, has till now refused to give

up her worshipped Godhead or bow her knee to the strong reigning idols of rationalism, commercialism and economism, the successful iron gods of the West. Affected she has been, but not yet overcome. Her surface mind rather than her deeper intelligence has been obliged to admit many Western ideas, liberty, equality, democracy and others, and to reconcile them with her Vedantic Truth; but she has not been altogether at ease with them in the Western form and she seeks about already in her thought to give to them an Indian which cannot fail to be a spiritualised turn. The first passion to imitate English ideas and culture has passed; but another more dangerous has recently taken its place, the passion to imitate continental European culture at large and in particular the crude and vehement turn of revolutionary Russia. On the other hand one sees a growing revival of this ancient Hindu religion and the immense sweep of a spiritual awakening and its significant movements. And out of this ambiguous situation there can be only one out of two issues. Either India will be rationalised and industrialised out of all recognition and she will be no longer India or else she will be the leader in a new world-phase, aid by her example and cultural infiltration the new tendencies of the West and spiritualise the human race. That is the one radical and poignant question at issue. Will the spiritual motive which India represents prevail on Europe and create there new forms congenial to the West, or will European rationalism and

commercialism put an end for ever to the Indian type of culture?

Not, then, whether India is civilised is the query that should be put, but whether the motive which has shaped her civilisation or the old-European intellectual or the new-European materialistic motive is to lead human culture. Is the harmony of the spirit, mind and body to found itself on the gross law of our physical nature, rationalised only or touched at the most by an ineffective spiritual glimmer, or is the dominant power of spirit to take the lead and force the lesser powers of the intellect, mind and body to a more exalted effort after a highest harmony, a victorious ever-developing equipoise? India must defend herself by reshaping her cultural forms to express more powerfully, intimately and perfectly her ancient ideal. Her aggression must lead the waves of the light thus liberated in triumphant self-expanding rounds all over the world which it once possessed or at least enlightened in far-off ages. An appearance of conflict must be admitted for a time, for as long as the attack of an opposite culture continues. But since it will be in effect an assistance to all the best that is emerging from the advanced thought of the Occident, it will culminate in the beginning of concert on a higher plane and a preparation of oneness." (CWSA 20: 64–66)

2.

"It is the continuation of what Sri Aurobindo said in one of his letters: he says that India has done much more for spiritual life with her methods than Europe has done with all her doubts and questionings. That's exactly it. It is a kind of refusal—the refusal to accept a particular method of knowledge which is not the purely material one, and the denial of experience, of the reality of experience." (CWM 10: 210)

II—The Indian Mind Believes That the Ultimate Truths Are Truths of the Spirit

1.

"The Indian mind holds on the contrary that the Rishi, the thinker, the seer of spiritual truth is the best guide not only of the religious and moral, but the practical life. The seer, the Rishi is the natural director of society; to the Rishis he attributes the ideals and guiding intuitions of his civilisation. Even today he is very ready to give the name to anyone who can give a spiritual truth which helps his life or a formative idea and inspiration which influences religion, ethics, society, even politics.

This is because the Indian believes that the ultimate truths are truths of the spirit and that truths of the spirit are the most fundamental and most effective truths of our existence, powerfully creative of the inner, salutarily

reformative of the outer life. To the European the ultimate truths are more often truths of the ideative intellect, the pure reason; but, whether intellectual or spiritual, they belong to a sphere beyond the ordinary action of the mind, life and body where alone there are any daily verifying "tests of values". These tests can only be given by living experience of outward fact and the positive and practical reason. The rest are speculations and their proper place is in the world of ideas, not in the world of life." (CWSA 20: 113)

Section Thirteen: Indian Spirituality Should Be in Tune with Contemporary Needs

I—New Discoveries of the Supreme Spirit's Hidden Powers Are Always Possible to Carry the Transformative Urge Further

1.

"Here we may enter a *caveat.* Revivalism in so far as essential Hindu spirituality with its myriad-aspected realisation of both inner and outer truth is revived is a progressive force. But it should keep clear of sticking to past achievements and declaring that the *ultima thule* [the highest degree attainable] has been reached. New discoveries of the Supreme Spirit's hidden powers are always possible—or at least novel developments of known powers in order to carry further the transformative urge in man and bring it into tune with contemporary modern needs. Surely, it cannot be said that even India has completely found the secret of life's transformation. An immense inner enlightenment is not enough: the outer mind has to be more than merely purified and made plastic to the inner truth, the outer vitality has to be more than merely inspired by the inner dynamism, the outer physicality has to be more than made a mere medium of the inner stability -- they have themselves to grow divine by the direct descent of some perfect counterpart of not only our selfhood but also of our instrumental nature. Towards whatever spiritual discipline that would effect this complete change in us we have to move, for the whole

many-sidedness of past Hinduism has no meaning if it bars an extension of the spiritual new-birth. Revivalism should never be a magnificent stagnancy." (IWSKDS: 41–42)

Section Fourteen: Our Ideal Is Not the Spirituality That Withdraws from Life but Conquers Life by the Power of the Spirit

I—With the Progress of Time, the Need of Humanity Demands a New Orientation

1.

"Our endeavour shall be to prepare the paths and to accomplish the beginning of a great and high change which we believe to be and aim at making the future of the race and the future of India. Our ideal is a new birth of humanity into the spirit; our life must be a spiritually inspired effort to create a body of action for that great new birth and creation.

A spiritual ideal has always been the characteristic idea and aspiration of India. But the progress of Time and the need of humanity demand a new orientation and another form of that ideal. The old forms and methods are no longer sufficient for the purpose of the Time-Spirit. India can no longer fulfil herself on lines that are too narrow for the great steps she has to take in the future. Nor is ours the spirituality of a life that is aged and world-weary and burdened with the sense of the illusion and miserable inutility of all God's mighty creation. Our ideal is not the spirituality that withdraws from life but the conquest of life by the power of the spirit. It is to accept the world as an effort of manifestation of the Divine, but also to transform humanity by a greater effort of manifestation than has yet been accomplished, one in which the veil between man and God shall be removed, the

divine manhood of which we are capable shall come to birth and our life shall be remoulded in the truth and light and power of the spirit. It is to make of all our action a sacrifice to the master of our action and an expression of the greater self in man and of all life a Yoga." (CWSA 13: 509)

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