

Indian Spiritual Nationalism

Second Edition





A Compilation from the Works of
Sri Aurobindo and the Mother

Compiled by Jamshed M Mavalwalla

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A Compilation from the Works of Sri Aurobindo

Sri Aurobindo Society
AUROPUBLICATIONS
POWERFUL THOUGHTS, INSPIRING VISION

Indian Spiritual Nationalism

Second Edition

First Edition: 2023
Second Edition: 2026

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www.aurosociety.org

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Earlier e-books released on India are:

1. *India and Her Mission*
2. *The Task of Building India Is Spiritual*
3. *The Splendour of Bharat's Past Be Reborn*
4. *Spirit of Kshatriya with a Large Liberal Ideal*
5. *Become Indian and Do Not Imitate the West*
6. *Qualities of the Indian Mind*
7. *Develop Original Thinking*
8. *The Mantra Vande Mataram*
9. *The Men Who Will Lead India*
10. *India One and Indivisible*

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 eleventh and final e-book in the series on India, titled *Indian Spiritual Nationalism*. 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.

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—What Is Indian Nationalism?

1.

"Nationalism is, after all, primarily an emotion of the heart and a spiritual attitude and only secondarily an intellectual conviction." (CWSA 7: 331)

2.

"What is Nationalism? [Indian] Nationalism is not a mere political programme; Nationalism is a religion that has come from God; Nationalism is a creed in which you shall have to live. Let no man dare to call himself a Nationalist if he does so merely with a sort of intellectual pride, thinking that he is more patriotic, thinking that he is something higher than those who do not call themselves by that name. If you are going to be a Nationalist, if you are going to assent to this religion of Nationalism, you must do it in the religious spirit. You must remember that you are the instrument of God for the salvation of your own country. You must live as the instruments of God." (CWSA 7: 818–819)
[Here the word religion is used in the sense of spirituality.]

3.

"This tide [of Indian Nationalism] was not created by any human power, nor can any man impose on it a limit or a bourne. … Nationalism is itself no creation of individuals and can have no respect for persons. It is a force which

God has created, and from Him it has received only one command, to advance and advance and ever advance until He bids it stop, because its appointed mission is done. It advances, inexorably, blindly, unknowing how it advances, in obedience to a Power which it cannot gainsay, and everything which stands in its way, man or institution, will be swept away or ground into powder beneath its weight. Ancient sanctity, supreme authority, bygone popularity, nothing will serve as a plea.

It is not the fault of the avalanche if it sweeps away human life by its irresistible and unwilled advance; nor can it be imputed as moral obliquity to the thunderbolt that the oak of a thousand years stood precisely where its burning hand was laid. Not only the old leaders but any of the new men whom the tide has tossed up for a moment on the crest of its surges, must pay the penalty of imagining that he can control the ocean and impose on it his personal likes and desires. These are times of revolution when tomorrow casts aside the fame, popularity and pomp of today. The man whose carriage is today dragged through great cities by shouting thousands amid cries of 'Bande Mataram' and showers of garlands, will tomorrow be disregarded, perhaps hissed and forbidden to speak. So it has always been and none can prevent it. How can such-and-such a barrister, editor, professor whom his personal talents have brought forward for a time, say to Revolution, 'Thou shalt be my servant' or to Chaos, 'I will use thee as the materials

of my personal aggrandisement'? As the pace of the movement is accelerated, the number of those who are left behind will increase ... Only the self-abnegation which effaces the idea of self altogether and follows the course of the revolution with a childlike belief that God is the leader and what He does is for the best, will be able to continue working for the country. Such men are not led by personal ambition and cannot therefore be deterred from following the will of God by personal loss of any kind." (CWSA 7: 868–869)

4.

"Nationalism is a divinely appointed shakti of the Eternal and must do its God-given work before it returns to the bosom of the Universal Energy from which it came." (CWSA 7: 750)

5.

"Nationalism is simply the passionate aspiration for the realisation of that Divine Unity in the nation, a unity in which all the component individuals, however various and apparently unequal their functions as political, social or economic factors, are yet really and fundamentally one and equal. In the ideal of Nationalism which India will set before the world, there will be an essential equality between man and man, between caste and caste, between

class and class, all being as Mr. Tilak has pointed out different but equal and united parts of the Virat Purusha as realised in the nation. The insistent preaching of our religion and the work of the Indian Nationalist is to bring home to every one of his countrymen this ideal of their country's religion and philosophy. We are intolerant of autocracy because it is the denial in politics of this essential equality, we object to the modern distortion of the caste system because it is the denial in society of the same essential equality." (CWSA 7: 679)

6.

"Nationalism cannot be so easily dismissed. A force which has shaken the whole of India, trampled the traditions of a century into a refuse of irrecoverable fragments and set the mightiest of modern Empires groping in a panic for weapons strong enough to meet a new and surprising danger, must have some secret of strength and therefore of truth in it which is worth knowing. To get at the heart of Nationalism we must first clear away some of the misconceptions with which its realities have been clouded. We must know what Nationalism is not before we ask what it is.

Extremism in the sense of unreasoning violence of spirit and the preference of desperate methods, because they are desperate, is not the heart of Nationalism. The Nationalist is no advocate of lawlessness for its own sake,

on the contrary he has a deeper respect for the essence of law than anyone else, because the building up of a nation is his objective and he knows well that without a profound reverence for law national life cannot persist and attain a sound and healthy development. But he qualifies his respect for legality by the proviso that the law he is called upon to obey is the law of the nation, an outgrowth of its organic existence and part of its own accepted system of government." (CWSA 7: 1111)

7.

"Farther the Nationalist never loses sight of the truth that law was made for man and not man for the law. Its chief function and reason for existence is to safeguard and foster the growth and happy flowering into strength and health of national life and a law which does not subserve this end or which opposes and contradicts this end, however rigidly it may enforce peace, order and security, forfeits its claim to respect and obedience. Nationalism refuses to accept Law as a fetish or peace and security as an aim in themselves; the only idol of its worship is Nationality and the only aim in itself it recognizes is the freedom, power and well-being of the nation. It will not prefer violent or strenuous methods simply because they are violent or strenuous, but neither will it cling to mild and peaceful methods simply because they are mild and peaceful. It asks of a method whether it is effective for its purpose,

whether it is worthy of a great people struggling to be, whether it is educative of national strength and activity, and these things ascertained, it asks nothing farther." (CWSA 7: 1112)

8.

"This is the word that has been put into my mouth to speak to you today. What I intended to speak has been put away from me, and beyond what is given to me I have nothing to say. It is only the word that is put into me that I can speak to you. That word is now finished. I spoke once before with this force in me and I said then that this movement is not a political movement and that nationalism is not politics but a religion, a creed, a faith. I say it again today, but I put it in another way. I say no longer that nationalism is a creed, a religion, a faith; I say that it is the Sanatana Dharma which for us is nationalism. This Hindu nation was born with the Sanatana Dharma, with it it moves and with it it grows. When the Sanatana Dharma declines, then the nation declines, and if the Sanatana Dharma were capable of perishing, with the Sanatana Dharma it would perish. The Sanatana Dharma, that is nationalism. This is the message that I have to speak to you." *Uttarpara Speech* (CWSA 8: 12)

Section Two—True Indian Nationalism Is an Expression of a Nation's Authentic Temperament Which Is Spiritual

Section Two—True Indian Nationalism Is an Expression of a Nation's Authentic Temperament Which Is Spiritual

1.

"We need to ask ourselves what Indian Nationalism is. For, on the answer will depend our own future and the role we shall play in world-history.

Indian Nationalism is not a simple phenomenon: it has many meanings and directions. All who have felt the Indian heart and fought for the independence of our country have contributed some special colour to this Nationalism. But if we wish to drive to the truest significance we must pick out the figure owing to whom the national awakening first took place in its most marked and conscious form.

Nationalism, to be the truest, must be not only a movement against a foreign rule but also an expression of a nation's authentic temperament. At times the authentic temperament is seen best when everything touched by foreign influences is cut away and the typical power of the nation's consciousness is found in its stark nakedness." (IWSKDS: 54)

2.

"It is in the nineteenth century that India began slowly to arise out of the decline into which she had fallen—the decline whose one result was her defeat at the hands of foreign invaders and another the strong stamp put on her by the culture of those who held her in subjection. …

Denuded altogether of westernisation the only Indian feature seemed the superstition-ridden illiteracy of the common peasant or at the best the stagnant though not uncultured religious conventionalism of the common pundit. …

Then a strange thing occurred. Out of a temple in which the Goddess Kali was worshipped by stagnant though not uncultured religious conventionalism there came a man who had all the outer look of representing superstition-ridden illiteracy. … He came with a religious message but it was something the pundit was utterly incapable of. He came with an absolute lack of education but it was something quite unlike the ignorance of the peasant. … In him the westernised Indians saw authentic India stand up, clear of every colour of the West, clear even of every tinge of what typical India appeared to be in that age—a representative was he of some hidden essence of the national being, the country's very soul in pure power. At one stroke the emergent Nationalism was made to recognise its central meaning and direction. The attractive veil of westernisation fell from the eyes, the feebleness of the country's decadence went out of the limbs and India knew what she was and grasped the essential energy of her own self.

Ramakrishna, the illiterate man from the temple of conventional Kali-worship, was a veritable colossus of mystical experience: in him direct and immediate

realisation of the Divine Being reached an intensity and variety which made him a marvellous summing-up of the whole spiritual history of India, with a face carrying the first gleam of a new age of the human soul—the age that will be known as the Aurobindonian. He could neither read nor write English: not even a word of English could he understand. Bengali itself he could only speak: he had no schooling at all. All that he had was God: he could unite himself with the Supreme Omniscience, his heart's home was the Infinite, he lived constantly in the Eternal. The Divine Being and the Divine Force that he called the Mother were a presence with him at all times—from deep within him, from near and far around him, from some absolute transcendence high above. His feelings were not of the ordinary emotional kind but radiant with the true spontaneous psyche which is an everlasting spark of the Supreme, a child of the World-Mother. His thoughts were not of the brain-mind but luminous with an intuitive perception which was in contact with the inward as well as the outward. Apparently ignorant but wise beyond measure, frail and helpless to an initial view yet a power-house that could move the world, poor and ascetic yet holding the thrill of the Beauty that is immortal, he sat day after day at Dakshineswar with the most educated men of Calcutta about him together with simple village folk. And from his strange spiritual personality the true Indian Nationalism was born. For the first time came the

awareness of what it was that had to be resurrected and put against the shallow vitalism from the West that was keeping India in chains or, at its most benevolent, bringing her up to be an artificially galvanised part of its own glittering scheme." (IWSKDS: 54–56)

3.

"Of course, the Indian genius is not confined to spirituality pure and simple, not even to a many-sided spirituality to the exclusion of all other modes of being. The very fact that Ramakrishna's chosen instrument for world-work was Vivekananda, a complex passionate analytic mind, a highly cultured master of system and organisation, a richly endowed physical nature, shows that India moves instinctively to grip earth no less than heaven. At least the intention of Ramakrishna was to reshape through Vivekananda the whole of the country's life in the light of God-realisation. But by embodying in his own figure a stark spirituality, as it were, he performed the catharsis that was most needed in the country's consciousness if accretions and superfluities, illusions and delusions, waste matter and foreign matter were to be swept off and prevented from obscuring and obstructing the growth of Indian Nationalism." (IWSKDS: 56)

Section Three: Four Types of Nationalism in India

1. First: Spiritual Nationalism's Innate Bent Is Mystical, So the Patriotic Fervour Is Directed Only Towards the Divine Spirit

"If it was the shock of sheer spirituality in the figure of Ramakrishna that gave birth to Indian Nationalism by kindling in the nation a consciousness of its own typical genius, we should do well to guard against satisfaction with any lesser type of nationalist aspiration. The type truly in consonance with the cathartic shock from Ramakrishna is summed up in the famous cry of Bankim's song, Vande Mataram—'I bow to you, O Mother.' The movement is basically religious, it is towards the Divine—the country is viewed as a Goddess who is not only its collective soul but also a face and form of the World-Mother, the creatrix of the universe. When the innate turn of the nation is mystical, even the patriotic fervour can be directed only to the Divine Spirit, and unless the country is felt as that Spirit's emanation this fervour will never fulfil the national life: such is the philosophy behind Vande Mataram. And it was sought to be made country-wide by Sri Aurobindo in his political days." (IWSKDS: 56–57)

2. Second Nationalism: Stands for India's Freedom

"There is a second type of Nationalism which is not directly spiritual but charged with indigenous history. Since India's history cannot be separated from the spiritual quest, here also is a sense of the World-Mother just as in the first type indigenous history is ever alive, but the stress now falls less upon the Divine Presence than upon the particular face and form She assumes in the country's collective soul as felt in the traditional ideals and institutions, the characteristic customs and festivals,—in short, the whole historic consciousness. This Nationalism has the roots of its politics in the popular *dharma*. It is the one fostered by Balgangadhar Tilak. … Patriotism which, for the second type, stands in need of no defence and aims first and foremost at the country's freedom and the expression of the country's historic nature and does not bind itself to rigid dogmas of method, patriotism which says 'Swaraj is my birthright' and will not fight shy of violent revolution and effective secret strategy, is not acceptable." (IWSKDS: 57)

3. Third: Ethical Nationalism's Religious Bent Serves God by Serving Men

"A third type is an ethical Nationalism in which certain moral doctrines are set up for the patriot's guidance, chiefly the doctrines of non-violence and ingenuousness. Its fosterer is Mahatma Gandhi. … A particular brand of moral self-discipline deriving mainly from the Buddhist strand of

our culture, subsumes patriotism here, just as the mystic's élan takes it up in the *Vande Mataram* type; but there is a difference in that the latter has a wideness and a plasticity which has a keen tact of the moment wedded to loyalty to ideals and, besides, it looks for its inspiration towards a Light beyond the trenchant mind's temperamental ideals. Ethicism is surely not spurned by it, but there is little adherence to one or another fixed and exclusive dogma: a large nobility is sought after and the idealism is not averse to a variety in the means of action.

… The third type is never without a religious bent, though the bent is towards serving God by serving men in a way the mind suggests rather than towards calling down a more than mental Power to guide one in work for that Power amongst men." (IWSKDS: 57–58)

4. Fourth: Secular Nationalism Will Be Haunted by the Division of a Deeply Religious Country through Rationalistic Realism

"A fourth type that has developed both by sympathy with the third and by appreciation of the latter's effectiveness at certain junctures of the nationalist movement is one bringing a blend of the rationalistic mind which has had so much to say in the modern West. Its representative is Jawaharlal Nehru. It cuts the ethical completely off from the mystical. … The fourth type is non-religious, wholly

secular. The country is no face and form of the Supreme Divine: it is not even a collective soul that can be addressed as Mother, except metaphorically. It is only a community of individuals, a mass of human creatures, a great group of people with common traditions and a common territory. This Nationalism need not lack patriotic fervour or an upshot of noble deed. But, however noble the secular nationalist may be, he is bound to be uncomfortably haunted by a division in his own Indianness: on one side the historic pull of a country deeply religious, if not always God-lit and on the other the doctrinaire drag of a rationalistic 'realism'. Also, the secular nationalist is bound to come upon a limit to his effectivity, for he will put himself at variance with the whole trend of India's development and he will have to make an attempt at jettisoning the most important part of the experience and thought embalmed in the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Gita, experience and thought which fundamentally make India Indian. The only advantage he brings is enfranchisement from superstitious orthodoxy, from narrow insularity of outlook—an openness to world-forces, a tendency to international vision." (IWSKDS: 58)

Section Four: Spiritual Nationalism Combines the Advantages of Other Types of Nationalism at a Higher Level

1.

"But this advantage [*of Secular Nationalism*] is just as much compassed by a truly spiritual Nationalism: an inner largeness breaks through sectarianism as well as communalism, an intuitive capacity is there for seizing on the essentially progressive elements everywhere and assimilating the best of the Occident into the Orient. When it is the World-Mother that is worshipped, there can be no imprisonment in small formulas: the mind is wide open to the world. At the same time, no loss is suffered of the delightful differentia that constitutes nationhood, for the World-Mother is seen focussed as the single unifying soul of the motherland. It thus combines the quality of the second type of Nationalism with that of the fourth, while transcending both, and in that transcendence it resembles the third type but even beyond the latter it goes to the supra-ethical source of all ethics. Thus it combines the advantages of all the four types in a value higher than theirs.

This higher value not only answers most truly to the Indian genius and thereby promises to advance it the best but also makes a power that can carry India to a future greater than any possible to other countries on the strength of their own Nationalism: it promises to place India in the van of the world as a leader in the evolution of consciousness from the human to the divine." (IWSKDS: 58–59)

2.

"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)

3.

"The new Nationalism is a creed, but it is more than a creed; it is a method, but more than a method. The new Nationalism is an attempt at a spiritual transformation of the nineteenth century Indian; it is a notice of dismissal or at least of suspension to the bourgeois and all his ideas and ways and works, a call for men who will dare & do impossibilities, the men of extremes, the men of faith, the prophets, the martyrs, the crusaders, the [. . .] & rebels, the desperate venturers and reckless doers, the initiators of revolutions." (CWSA 7: 1108)

Section Five: The Ideal of Indian Patriotism

1.

"The … supreme service of Bankim to his nation was that he gave us the vision of our Mother. The bare intellectual idea of the Motherland is not in itself a great driving force; … It is not till Motherland reveals herself to the eye of the mind as something more than a stretch of earth or a mass of individuals, it is not till she takes shape as a great Divine and Maternal Power in a form of beauty that can dominate the mind and seize the heart that these petty fears and hopes vanish in the all-absorbing passion for the Mother and her service, and the patriotism that works miracles and save a doomed nation is born." (CWSA 1: 639–640)

2.

"The obvious course is to recognise that politics is religion and infuse it with the spirit of religion; for that is the true patriotism which sees God as the Mother in our country, God as s*akti* in the mass of our countrymen, and religiously devotes itself to their service and their liberation from present sufferings and servitude." (CWSA 6: 237)

3.

"Love has a place in politics, but it is the love of one's country, for one's countrymen, for the glory, greatness and happiness of the race, the divine *ananda* of self-immolation for one's fellows, the ecstasy of relieving their sufferings,

the joy of seeing one's blood flow for country and freedom, the bliss of union in death with the fathers of the race. The feeling of almost physical delight in the touch of the mother-soil, of the winds that blow from Indian seas, of the rivers that stream from Indian hills, in the hearing of Indian speech, music, poetry, in the familiar sights, sounds, habits, dress, manner of our Indian life, this is the physical root of that love. The pride in our past, the pain of our present, the passion for the future are its trunk and branches. Self-sacrifice and self-forgetfulness, great service, high endurance for the country are its fruit. And the sap which keeps it alive is the realisation of the Motherhood of God in the country, the vision of Mother, the knowledge of the Mother, the perpetual contemplation, adoration and service of the Mother." (CWSA 7: 1118–1119)

4.

"Our [Indian] ideal of patriotism proceeds on the basis of love and brotherhood and it looks beyond the unity of the nation and envisages the ultimate unity of mankind. But it is a unity of brothers, equal and free men that we seek, not the unity of master and serf, of devourer and devoured. We demand the realisation of our corporate existence as a distinct race and nation because that is the only way in which the ultimate brotherhood of humanity can be achieved, not by blotting out individual peoples and

effacing outward distinctions, but by removing the internal obstacles to unity, the causes of hatred, malice and misunderstanding. A struggle for our rights does not involve hatred of those who mistakenly deny them. It only involves a determination to suffer and strive, to speak the truth boldly and without respect of persons, to use every lawful means of pressure and every source of moral strength in order to establish ourselves and disestablish that which denies the law of progress." (CWSA 8: 153)

5.

"Patriots do not love their country only when she is rich, powerful, great and has much to give them; love for country has been most ardent, passionate, absolute when the country was poor, degraded, miserable, having nothing to give but loss, wounds, torture, imprisonment, death as the wages of her service; yet even knowing that they would never see her free, men have lived, served and died for her—for her own sake, not for what she could give. Men have loved Truth for her own sake and for what they could seek or find of her, accepted poverty, persecution, death itself; they have been content even to seek for her always, not finding, and yet never given up the search. That means what? That man, country, Truth and other things besides can be loved for their own sake and not for anything else, not for any circumstance or attendant quality or resulting enjoyment, but for something absolute that is either in

them or behind their appearance and circumstance." (CWSA 29: 11–12)

6.

"Politics itself, that apparent game of strife and deceit and charlatanism, can be a large field of absolute idealisms. What of patriotism … in its aspects of worship, self-giving, discipline, self-sacrifice? The great political ideals of man, monarchy, aristocracy, democracy, apart from the selfishnesses they serve and the rational and practical justifications with which they arm themselves, have had for their soul an ideal, some half-seen truth of the absolute and have carried with them a worship, a loyalty, a loss of self in the idea which have made men ready to suffer and die for them." (CWSA 25: 166)

7.

"Various ideas were put forward with more or less authority as to the necessary conditions of international peace. The crudest of these was the foolish notion, created by a one-sided propaganda, which imagined that the destruction of German militarism was the one thing needful and in itself sufficient to secure the future peace of the world. The military power, the political and commercial ambitions of Germany and her acute sense of her confined geographical position and her encirclement by an unfriendly alliance

were the immediate moral cause of this particular war; but the real cause lay in the very nature of the international situation and the psychology of national life. The chief feature of this psychology is the predominance and worship of national egoism under the sacred name of patriotism. Every national ego, like every organic life, desires a double self-fulfilment, intensive and extensive or expansive. The deepening and enriching of its culture, political strength and economic well-being within its borders is not felt to be sufficient if there is not, without, an extension or expansion of its culture, an increase of its political extent, dominion, power or influence and a masterful widening of its commercial exploitation of the world. This natural and instinctive desire is not an abnormal moral depravity but the very instinct of egoistic life; and what life at present is not egoistic? But it can be satisfied only to a very limited degree by peaceful and unaggressive means. And where it feels itself hemmed in by obstacles that it thinks it can overcome, opposed by barriers, encircled, dissatisfied with a share of possession and domination it considers disproportionate to its needs and its strength, or where new possibilities of expansion open out to it in which only its strength can obtain for it its desirable portion, it is at once moved to the use of some kind of force and can only be restrained by the amount of resistance it is likely to meet. If it has a weak opposition of unorganised or ill-organised peoples to overcome, it will

not hesitate; if it has the opposition of powerful rivals to fear, it will pause, seek for alliances or watch for its moment. Germany had not the monopoly of this expansive instinct and egoism; but its egoism was the best organised and least satisfied, the youngest, crudest, hungriest, most self-confident and presumptuous, most satisfied with the self-righteous brutality of its desires. The breaking of German militarism might ease for a moment the intensity of the many-headed commercial wrestle but it cannot, by the removal of a dangerous and restless competitor, end it. So long as any kind of militarism survives, so long as fields of political or commercial aggrandisement are there and so long as national egoisms live and are held sacred and there is no final check on their inherent instinct of expansion, war will be always a possibility and almost a necessity of the life of the human peoples." (CWSA 25: 477–478)

8.

"Nationalism has been hitherto largely a revolt against the tendency to shape ourselves into the mould of Europe; but it must also be on its guard against any tendency to cling to every detail that has been Indian. That has not been the spirit of Hinduism in the past, there is no reason why it should be so in the future. In all life there are three elements, the fixed and permanent spirit, the developing yet constant soul and the brittle changeable body. The

spirit we cannot change, we can only obscure or lose; the soul must not be rashly meddled with, must neither be tortured into a shape alien to it, nor obstructed in its free expansion; and the body must be used as a means, not over-cherished as a thing valuable for its own sake. We will sacrifice no ancient form to an unreasoning love of change, we will keep none which the national spirit desires to replace by one that is a still better and truer expression of the undying soul of the nation." (CWSA 8: 66)

Section Six: Our Faith in Nationalism Is That God Is the Leader and Guide of Our Movement

1.

"Our position is that Nationalism is our faith, our *dharma*, and its realisation the duty which lies before the country at the present moment. If so, it is a thing which must be done and from which we cannot turn merely because the forces are against us. … Shall we then turn from our work? Shall we deny God? Rationality demands that we should. And if we do not, it is simply because it would be to deny God, because we have 'mere' faith, because we believe that God is within us, a spiritual force strong enough to overcome all physical obstacles, weaknesses, disabilities, that God is in the movement, that He is its leader and guides it, that we belong to the world and the future and are not a spent and dying force. This faith we hold because we understand the processes by which He works and can therefore see good in evil, light in the darkness, a preparation for victory in defeat, a new life in the apparent process of disintegration." (CWSA 8: 85–86)

2.

"... Nationalism has come to the people as a religion, and it has been accepted as a religion. But certain forces which are against that religion are trying to crush its rising strength. It always happens when a new religion is preached, when God is going to be born in the people, that such forces rise with all their weapons in their hands to

crush this religion. ... a new religion, a religion divine and sattwic has been preached, and this religion they are trying with all the weapons at their command to crush. By what strength are we ... able to survive? Nationalism has not been crushed. Nationalism is not going to be crushed. Nationalism survives in the strength of God and it is not possible to crush it, whatever weapons are brought against it. Nationalism is immortal; Nationalism cannot die, because it is no human thing. It is God who is working ... God cannot be killed, ... And suppose that God puts you this question, how will you answer it? Have you got a real faith? Or is it merely a political aspiration? Is it merely a larger kind of selfishness? ... Do you hold your political creed from a higher source? Is it God that is born in you? Have you realised that you are merely the instruments of God, that your bodies are not your own? You are merely instruments of God for the work of the Almighty. Have you realised that? If you have realised that, then you are truly Nationalists; then alone will you be able to restore this great nation. ... then there will be a blessing on our work, and this great nation will rise again and become once more what it was in the days of its spiritual greatness. ... You are the instruments of God to save the light, to save the spirit of India from lasting obscuration and abasement." (CWSA 7: 819–820)

3.

"The Nationalist creed is a gospel of faith and hope." (CWSA 6: 356)

4.

"Steadfastness, courage, a calm and high spirit are what we now need, wisdom to plan and act, not prudence to abstain from action. Nationalism tempered by expediency is like the French despotism tempered by epigrams. The epigrams undermined the despotism, the expediency is likely to undermine and in some quarters is visibly undermining the Nationalism. More 'incalculable injury' is likely to be done by teaching of this kind at this juncture than by the removal of any great man, however pre-eminent and inspiring his greatness." (CWSA 8: 91)

Section Seven: Nationalism, by Awakening a Great Spiritual Force, Transformed the Petty and Weak Patriotism of Nineteenth-Century India

1.

"The old patriotism of the nineteenth century in India was petty, unscrupulous, weak, full of insincerities, concealment, shufflings, concerned with small material interests, not with great ideals, though not averse to looking intellectually and from far-off at great objects. It had neither inspiration nor truth nor statesmanship. Nationalism has done part of the work … by awakening a great spiritual force in the country and giving the new generation great ideals, a wide horizon of hope and aspiration, an intense faith and energy. It has sought … to raise up the moral condition of the nation to the height of love, strength, self-sacrifice, constancy under defeat, unwearied and undaunted perseverance, the habit of individual and organised action, self-reliance and indomitable enterprise; …" (CWSA 8: 187)

2.

"He [Rishi Bankim Chandra] had a positive vision of what was needed for the salvation of the country. He saw that the force from above must be met by a mightier reacting force from below,—the strength of repression by an insurgent national strength. He made leave the canine method of agitation for the leonine. The Mother of his vision held trenchant steel in her twice seventy million

hands and not the bowl of the mendicant. It was the gospel of fearless strength and force which he preached under a veil and in images in *Ananda Math* and *Devi Chaudhurani.* And he had an inspired unerring vision of the moral strength which must be at the back of the outer force. He perceived that the first element of the moral strength must be *tyaga,* complete self-sacrifice for the country … His workers and fighters for the motherland are political *byragees* who have no other thought than their duty to her and have put all else behind them as less dear and less precious and only to be resumed when their work for her is done. Again, he perceived that the second element of the moral strength needed must be self-discipline and organization. … Lastly, he perceived that the third element of the moral strength must be the infusion of religious feeling into patriotic work. The religion of patriotism,—this is the master idea of Bankim's writings. … In *Ananda Math* this idea is the keynote of the whole book and receives its perfect lyrical expression in the great song which has become the national anthem of United India. This is the second great service of Bankim to his country that he pointed out to it the way of salvation and gave it the religion of patriotism." (CWSA 1: 639)

3.

"A band of men is needed who can give up everything for their country, whose sole thought and occupation shall be the stimulation of the movement by whatever means the moment suggests or opportunity allows. If such a band can be got together, then only will real work as distinct from the work of preparation be possible; for the salvation of a country cannot be the work of our leisure moments, the product of our superfluous energy or the result of a selfish life in which the country comes in only for the leavings. Devoted servants of India are needed who will ask for no reward, no ease, no superfluities, … This attitude of utter self-abandonment is the first condition of success. *Sannyasa*, utter and inexorable, *tyaga*, unreserved and pitiless, *mumuksutva*, burning and insatiable, must be the stamp of the true servant of India." (CWSA 7: 1070–1071)

4.

"In the Swadeshi agitation this part, the most important and necessary of the three, has been played by the students. It is they who have been the active missionaries of Swadeshism, carrying it into practice with the divine ardour and eagerness of youth, without the reserves of caution, temporising, doubt, half-belief with which colder age would have killed it in its birth; wherever they went,

they have created a permanent Swadeshi atmosphere in which the tender plant of Nationalism could grow, could put forth leaf and bud, could flower into the religion of patriotism." (CWSA 7: 429)

5.

"They [British] do not care very much if certain academical ideas of liberalism or nationalism are imparted to the young by their teachers, but they desire to stop the active habit of patriotism in the young; for they know well that a mere intellectual habit untranslated into action is of no value in after life. The Japanese when they teach Bushido to their boys do not rest content with lectures or a moral catechism; they make them practise Bushido and govern every thought and action of their life by the Bushido ideal. This is the only way of inculcating a quality into a nation, by instilling it practically into the minds of its youth at school and College until it becomes an ingrained, inherent, inherited national quality. This is what we have to do with the modern ideal of patriotism in India. We have to fill the minds of our boys from childhood with the idea of the country, and present them with that idea at every turn and make their whole young life a lesson in the practice of the virtues which afterwards go to make the patriot and the citizen. If we do not attempt this, we may as well give up our desire to create an Indian nation altogether; for

without such a discipline nationalism, patriotism, regeneration are mere words and ideas which can never become a part of the very soul of the nation and never therefore a great realised fact. Mere academical teaching of patriotism is of no avail. The professor may lecture every day on Mazzini and Garibaldi and Washington and the student may write themes about Japan and Italy and America without bringing us any nearer to our supreme need,—the entry of the habit of patriotism into our very bone and blood. The Roman Satirist tells us that in the worst times of imperial despotism in Rome the favourite theme of teachers and boys in the schools was liberty and tyrannicide;—but neither liberty nor tyrannicide was practised by the boys when they became men; rather they grew up into submissive slaves of the single world-despot. It is for this reason that the men of the new party have welcomed the active association of our students with political meetings, with the propagation and actual practice of Swadeshi, with the volunteer movement in its various forms,—not, as has been malevolently suggested, out of a turbulent desire to make use of unripe young minds to create anarchy and disorder, but because they see in this political activity in the young the promise of a new generation of Indians who will take patriotism earnestly as a thing to live and die for, not as the pastime of leisure hours. Nobody who believes that such patriotism is the first

need of this country can consistently oppose the participation of students in politics. When Indian nationality is a thing realised and the present unnatural conditions have been remedied, then indeed this active participation may be brought under restriction and regulation; for then the inherited habit of patriotism, the atmosphere of a free country and the practice and teaching of the Bushido virtues within the limits of home and school life will be sufficient. But before then to submit to restrictions is to commit national suicide." (CWSA 7: 455–456)

Section Eight: Indian Nationalism Points to a Great and Splendid Destiny in the Comparatively Near Future

1.

"The primary aim of the prophets of Nationalism was to rid the nation of the idea that the future was limited by the circumstances of the present, that because temporary causes had brought us low and made us weak, low therefore must be our aims and weak our methods. 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. As a justification of what might otherwise have seemed a dream and as an inexhaustible source of energy and inspiration, they pointed persistently to the great achievements and grandiose civilisation of our forefathers and called on the rising generation to recover their lost spiritual and intellectual heritage. It cannot be denied that this double effort to realise the past and the future has been the distinguishing temperament and the chief uplifting force in the movement, and it cannot be denied that it is bringing back to our young men originality, aspiration and energy. … 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. We must admit that the instrument which we cherished and for which such sacrifices were made, has proved insufficient and threatens, in unfit hands, to lose its promise of fulfilment and be diverted to lower ends. But the movement is greater than its instruments. We must strive to prevent the destruction of that which we have created and, in the meanwhile, build up a centre of culture, freer and more perfect, which will either permeate the other with itself or replace it if destroyed. Finally, the artistic awakening has been commenced by that young, living and energetic school which has gathered round the Master and originator, Sj. Abanindranath Tagore. The impulse which this school is giving, its inspired artistic recovery of the past, its intuitive anticipations of the future, have to be popularised and made a national possession." (CWSA 8: 245–246)

2.

"All political ideals must have relation to the temperament and past history of the race. The genius of India is separate from that of any other race in the world, and perhaps there is no race in the world whose temperament, culture and

ideals are so foreign to her own as those of the practical, hard-headed, Pharisaic, shopkeeping Anglo-Saxon. … The return of India on her eternal self, the restoration of her splendour, greatness, triumphant Asiatic supremacy is the ideal of Nationalism. Is it doubtful which ideal will be more acceptable to the nation, that which calls on it to murder its instincts, sacrifice its future and deny its past for the advantage of an inglorious security, or that which asks it to fulfil itself by the strenuous reassertion of all that is noble and puissant in the blood it draws from such an heroic ancestry as no other nation can boast?" (CWSA 7: 1087)

3.

"The New Nationalism, I said in a former article, in this Review, is a negation of the old bourgeois ideals of the nineteenth century. It is an attempt to relegate the dominant bourgeois in us to his old obscurity, to transform the bourgeois into the Samurai and through him to extend the workings of the Samurai spirit to the whole nation. Or to put it more broadly, it is an attempt to create a new nation in India by reviving in spirit & action ancient Indian character, the strong, great and lofty spirit of old Aryavarta, and setting it to use and mould the methods and materials of modernity for the freedom, greatness and well-being of a historic and immortal people. … in India of the immemorial past, India of the clouded but fateful

present, India leonine, mighty, crowned with her imperial diadem of the future; a common spirit of enthusiasm, hope, the desire to dare and do all things so that our vision of her future may be fulfilled greatly and soon. This is the heart of Nationalism." (CWSA 7: 1110)

4.

"The ideal creates the means of attaining the ideal, if it is itself true and rooted in the destiny of the race." (CWSA 7: 1087–1088)

5.

"... have to be told that the supreme test of nationalism is a belief in the future of the nation and a love for it — with all its weaknesses." (CWSA 6: 252)

6.

"The new movement [of Nationalism] … is born of a conviction that the time has come when India can, should and will become a great, free and united nation. It is not a negative current of destruction, but a positive, constructive impulse towards the making of modern India. It is not a cry of revolt and despair, but a gospel of national faith and hope. Its true description is not Extremism, but Democratic Nationalism." (CWSA 7: 354–355)

7.

"Without a great ideal there can be no great movement. Small baits of material advantages will not nerve them to high endeavour and heroic self-sacrifice; it is only the idea of … national greatness that has that overmastering appeal. We must not bend the knee to others but try to be worthy of our past—here is an ideal which, if set forth with conviction and power, cannot fail to inspire self-sacrificing action. We need faith above all things, faith in ourselves, faith in the nation, faith in India's destiny. A dozen men rendered invincible by a strong faith in their future have in other times spread the contagion of nationalism to the remotest corner of vast countries. Unbelief is blind—it does not see far ahead, neither stimulates strength nor inspires action. The lack of this faith has kept our moderate politicians tied down to a worn-out ideal which has lost its credibility. No man can lead a rising nation unless he has this faith first of all, ..." (CWSA 7: 348)

8.

"The spiritual force within not only creates the future but creates the materials for the future. It is not limited to the existing materials either in their nature or in their quantity. It can transform bad material into good material, insufficient means into abundant means." (CWSA 8: 184)

Section Nine: The Spirit of the Indian Nationalism Is to Build India for the Sake of Humanity

1.

"Our aim will therefore be to help in building up India for the sake of humanity—this is the spirit of the Nationalism which we profess and follow. We say to humanity, 'The time has come when you must take the great step and rise out of a material existence into the higher, deeper and wider life towards which humanity moves. The problems which have troubled mankind can only be solved by conquering the kingdom within, not by harnessing the forces of Nature to the service of comfort and luxury, but by mastering the forces of the intellect and the spirit, by vindicating the freedom of man within as well as without and by conquering from within external Nature'." (CWSA 13: 6–7) (CWSA 8: 26–27)

2.

"Recently, however, the gospel of Nationalism has made so much way that the organs of this school in Bengal have accepted many of its conclusions and their writings are coloured by its leading ideas. But the fundamental idea of the movement as a divine manifestation purposing to raise up the nation not only for its own fulfilment in India but for the work and service of the world and therefore sure of its fulfilment, therefore independent of individuals and superior to vicissitudes and difficulties, is one which they cannot yet grasp. It is a sentiment which has been growing

upon us as the movement progressed, but it has not yet been sufficiently put forward by the organs of Nationalism itself, partly because the old idea of separating religion from politics lingered, partly because the human aspects of the Nationalist faith had to be established before we could rise to the divine. But that divine aspect has to be established if we are to have the faith and greatness of soul which can alone help us in the tremendous developments the signs of the time portend. There is plenty of weakness still lingering in the land and we cannot allow it to take shelter under the cry of expediency and rationality and seek to kill the faith and force that has been born in the hearts of the young. … The gospel of Nationalism has not yet been fully preached; its most inspiring tenets have yet to be established not only by the eloquence of the orator and inspiration of the prophet but by the arguments of the logician, the appeal to experience of the statesman and the harmonising generalisations of the scientist." (CWSA 8: 94–95)

"To recover Indian thought, Indian character, Indian perceptions, Indian energy, Indian greatness, and to solve the problems that perplex the world in an Indian spirit and from the Indian standpoint, this, in our view, is the mission of Nationalism. We agree … that an exclusive preoccupation with politics and economics is likely to dwarf our growth and prevent the flowering of originality and

energy. We have to return to the fountainheads of our ancient religion, philosophy, art and literature and pour the revivifying influences of our immemorial Aryan spirit and ideals into our political and economic development." (CWSA 8: 245)

3.

"The movements of the last century failed because they were too purely intellectual and had not an enlightened heart behind them. Nationalism has striven to supply the deficiency; it has poured the inspirations of the heart into a swifter and more discerning intellectual activity. But Nationalism also has been defective; it has been Indian in sentiment and aspiration, European in practice and actuality. It has helped itself with the intellect, rejoicing in its own lightness, clearness, accuracy, shrewd insight, but it has not been sufficiently supported by inspired wisdom. It has attached itself to imaginations and idealisms, but has not learned to discern the deeper Truth and study the will of God. It has been driven by ardent and vehement emotions, but was defective in clear will-power and the pure energy that is greater and more impetuous than any passionate feeling. Either Nationalism will purify itself, learn a more sacred truth and command a diviner impulse, or it will have to abandon utterly its old body and get itself a new. The pressure of events seems to be pointing in the

latter direction. But in either case defeat cannot be the end, victory must be the end." (CWSA 8: 464–465)

4.

"Just as the uniqueness of the individual must never be regimented out of existence but carefully woven into a social symphony, so too the uniqueness of the national collectivity must be cherished without setting it at odds with the rest of mankind. Every large human aggregate has its distinct qualities of culture that are precious and that could never emerge if the aggregate did not stand out in its own right. Nationalism is vital to the full development of humanity." (IWSKDS: 21)

5.

"The evolution of the nation is the growth which is most important now to humanity, because human selfishness, family selfishness, class selfishness having still deep roots in the past must learn to efface themselves in the larger national self in order that the God in humanity may grow. Therefore it is that Nationalism is the dharma of the age, and God reveals himself to us in our common Mother. The first attempts to form a nationality were the Greek city, the Semitic or Mongolian monarchy, the Celtic clan, the Aryan kula or jati. It was the mixture of all these ideas which went to the formation of the mediaeval nation and evolved the

modern peoples. Here again, it is the readiness to sacrifice self-interest, family interest, class interest to the larger national interest which is the condition of humanity's fulfilment in the nation and to die for its welfare or safety is the supreme act of self-consummation in the larger national ego. There is a yet higher fulfilment for which only a few individuals have shown themselves ready, the enlargement of the self to include all humanity. A step forward has been taken in this direction by the self-immolation of a few to humanitarian ideals, but to sacrifice the interests of the nation to the larger interest of humanity is an act of which humanity in the mass is not yet capable. God prepares, but He does not hasten the ripening of the fruit before its season. A time will come when this also will be possible, but the time is not yet. Nor would it be well for humanity if it came before the other and lesser identification were complete; for that would necessitate retrogression in order to secure the step which has been omitted. The advance of humanity is a steady progress and there is no great gain in rushing positions far ahead, while important points in the rear are uncaptured." (CWSA 8: 138–139)

6.

"With us today Nationalism is our immediate practical faith and gospel not because it is the highest possible synthesis, but because it must be realised in life if we are to have the

chance of realising the others. We must live as a nation before we can live in humanity. It is for this reason that Nationalist thinkers have always urged the necessity of realising our separateness from other nations and living to ourselves for the present, not in order to shut out humanity, but that we may get that individual strength, unity and wholeness which will help us to live as a nation for humanity. A man must be strong and free in himself before he can live usefully for others, so must a nation. But that does not justify us in forgetting the ultimate aim of evolution. God in the nation becomes the realisation of the first moment to us because the nation is the chosen means or condition through which we rise to the higher synthesis, God in humanity, God in all creatures, God in Himself and ourself." (CWSA 8: 84–85)

Section Ten—The Idea of Nationalism Is More Powerful Than Armies

1.

"The mistakes which despots, benevolent or malevolent, have … is that they overestimate their coercive power, which is physical and material and therefore palpable, and underestimate the power and vitality of ideas and sentiments. A feeling or a thought, Nationalism, Democracy, the aspiration towards liberty, cannot be estimated in the terms of concrete power, in so many fighting men, so many armed police, so many guns, so many prisons, such and such laws, ukases, and executive powers. But such feelings and thoughts are more powerful than fighting men and guns … Their beginning are feeble, their end is mighty. … Thought is always greater than armies, more lasting than the most powerful and best-organised despotism [dictatorship]. It was a thought that overthrew the despotism of centuries in France and revolutionised Europe. It was a mere sentiment against … which brought to nought the administrative genius, the military power, the stubborn will of Aurangzeb, … the physical power and organisation behind the insurgent idea are ridiculously small, the repressive force so overwhelmingly, impossibly strong that all reasonable, prudent, moderate minds see the utter folly of resistance and stigmatise the attempt of the idea to rise as an act of almost criminal insanity. But the man with the idea is not reasonable, not prudent, not moderate. He is an extremist, a fanatic. He knows that his idea is bound to conquer, …

He knows that in the fight with brute force the spirit, the idea is bound to conquer…. The idea or sentiment is at first confined to a few men whom their neighbours and countrymen ridicule as lunatics or hare-brained enthusiasts. But it spreads and gathers adherents who catch the fire of the first missionaries and creates its own preachers and then its workers who try to carry out its teachings in circumstances of almost paralysing difficulty. … The idea creates its martyrs. And in martyrdom there is an incalculable spiritual magnetism which works miracles. A whole nation, a whole world catches the fire which burned in a few hearts; the soil which has drunk the blood of the martyr imbibes with it a sort of divine madness which it breathes into the heart of all its children, until there is but one overmastering idea … It is at this moment that the idea begins to create its heroes and fighters, whose numbers and courage only multiplies and confirms until the idea militant has become the idea triumphant. Such is the history of the idea, so invariable in its broad lines that it is evidently the working of a natural law." (CWSA 07: 493–494)

2.

"The whole nation is the seat of Nationalism." (CWSA 7: 847)

3.

"The wave of Nationalism in the land is surely not so spent, but will rise the higher for the obstacles thrown in the way of its advance." (CWSA 7: 499)

4.

"To allow the voice of Nationalism to be silenced would be to play into the hands of the adversary to whom we owe no duty. The gospel of Nationalism has to be preached with unflinching candour, but Nationalist organs will be perfectly within their rights if they protect their writers so long as it is humanly possible to protect them and so prolong their own career of propagandist usefulness." (CWSA 7: 694)

Section Eleven: The Spirit of Nationalism Can Overcome Difficulties Created by the Divisions

1.

"One might just as well say that different chemical elements cannot combine into a single substance as that different races cannot combine into a single nation. There is no such irreconcilable divergence between the races in India as to make their union an impossibility. If we turn to unity of language we find a respectable number of nations which do not speak a single language. Three languages are spoken in Switzerland, the same number in France, while Welsh holds its own in Great Britain. Unity of language, therefore, is not necessary to nationality, only the recognition of one prevalent language as the State language is required. If America, needing to be addressed in fourteen languages by her would-be Presidents is a nation, if the Swiss speaking three different languages on equal terms are a nation, what reason is there that the people of India should not federate into a single political unity?" (CWSA 7: 668)

2.

"As for the religious difficulty, it is an old bogey. We do not deny the difficulty created by the divisions between the Mahomedans and Hindus, but it is idle to say that the difficulty is insuperable. If the spirit of nationalism conquered the much fiercer intolerance of the religious struggles in Europe after the reformation, it is not irrational

to hope as much for India in the twentieth century." (CWSA 7: 668–669)

Section Twelve: The Education System Must Foster the Spirit of Nationalism Which Alone Can Make India a Great Nation

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1.

"We have all realised that the education the Government prescribes for our young men is not calculated to help in developing the manhood of the nation. The system of education that prevailed before the passing of the Universities Act was bad enough. But this education as deformed by the provisions of the Act was a direct attempt to stem the tide of political progress in India and produce men minus a backbone. Now that we have realised that to help the growing race consciousness in India we must have a system of education consistent with the traditions of the people and calculated to foster that spirit of Nationalism which alone can make a nation great, it is the duty of every Indian to help the inauguration of such a system of education and place it on a firm footing. The duty becomes all the more sacred in the face of the powerful opposition that such a system of education is sure to encounter at the hands of the bureaucracy whose interests are likely to be injured by it. It is only the unanimous support of the country that can make such an opposition fruitless. And it is a significant sign of the times that students all over the country are realising it. We are sure it will not be long before the whole country is on fire with a desire to strengthen the national system of education that has been inaugurated …" (CWSA 7: 541)

2.

"And a 'defective education' alone is not responsible for the shyness of Indian capital. However, we too admit that the system of education, stamped with official approval, is responsible for much of our woe as it engenders a spirit of helpless dependence and sense of inferiority and discourages in Indians the confidence in one's own ability which is essential to enterprise. It is exactly for this reason that India has realised the necessity of a system of national education … And we are sure the awakened spirit of nationalism, when it receives the powerful stimulus of a system of national education, will make the people self-reliant and able to bring about India's industrial regeneration without the hollow sympathy and deceptive help of aliens." (CWSA 7: 588)

3.

"So far as possible, our ideas are being realised in practice wherever Nationalism is strong; but for their full effectiveness they need the whole nation at their back and it is therefore our first duty to convince the nation by exposing pseudo-Nationalism in all its workings." (CWSA 7: 334)

4.

"For good or for evil the middle class now leads in India, and whatever saving impulse comes to the nation, must come from the middle class, whatever upward movement begins, it must initiate and lead. But for that to happen the middle class must by a miracle be transfigured and lifted above itself; the natural breeding ground of the bourgeois, it must become the breeding ground of the Samurai. It must cease in fact to be a middle class and turn itself into an aristocracy, an aristocracy not of birth or landed possessions, not of intellect, not of wealth and commercial enterprise, but of character and action. India must recover her faculty for self-sacrifice, courage and high aspiration. Such a transformation is the work which has been set before itself by the new Nationalism; …." (CWSA 7: 1107–1108)

Section Thirteen: India Needs a Statesman Thoroughly Steeped in the Gospel of Nationalism

1.

"The country is in need of a statesman, yes: but what kind of statesman? He must be a man thoroughly steeped in the gospel of Nationalism, with a clear and fearless recognition of the goal to which we are moving, with a dauntless courage to aim consciously, steadily, indomitably towards it, with a consummate skill to mask his movements and aims when necessary and to move boldly and openly when necessary, and, last but not least, with an overmastering magnetic power and tact to lead and use and combine men of all kinds and opinions. Such a leader might organise the nation to some purpose, but those who shrink from following where their hearts and intellects lead them or who from party feelings or personal dislike or jealousy try to exclude powerful forces from the common national work cannot claim the name of statesman." (CWSA 7: 632)

2.

"If we look at Japan, we see that the Japanese people never forget their ancestors who offered their lives as a sacrifice for the sake of their country. This sense of sacrifice is always present in the Japanese blood. When a warrior fights for his country, he recalls those sacrifices. This is something we must learn from Japan. We must learn from the Japanese how to honour our ancestors and evoke the spirit of Nationalism by remembering them.

Whatever you do today, you are doing not for your own sake but to pay the debt you owe to them. This you must never forget. Not only your ancestors—the generations to come are also an organic component of your nation. When we envision an Indian nation, it should be along these lines. We should not be carried away by Western advances or cowed by their achievements. What we need is a wide, engaging vision of our nation and of nationalism; our action must match that vision and as a result our nation will produce great philosophers, statesmen, warriors and commanders. I don't say this will happen today, but surely it will happen in the future." (CWSA 7: 813)

3.

"There are two stages in the life of a nation, first, when it is forming itself or new-forming itself, secondly, when it is formed, organised and powerful. The first is the stage when Nationalism makes rightly its greatest demands on the individual, in the second it should abate its demands and, having satisfied, should preserve itself in Cosmopolitanism somewhat as the individual preserves itself in the family, the family in the class, the class in the nation, not destroying itself needlessly but recognising a larger interest. In the struggles of a subject nation to realise its separate existence, the larger interest can only be viewed in prospect and as a higher inspiration to a broadminded and generous patriotism. No sacrifice of the

nation to the larger interest is possible, for the nation must exist before it can sacrifice its interests for a higher good." (CWSA 8: 139–140)

Section Fourteen: Sri Aurobindo, the Poet of Patriotism, Prophet of Nationalism, and Lover of Humanity

Barrister Chittaranjan Das's defence of Sri Aurobindo in the Alipore Bomb Case Sessions Court concluded with an impassioned appeal that included the above-mentioned prophetic words

"*My appeal to you therefore is that a man like this who is being charged with the offences imputed to him stands not only before the bar in this Court but stands before the bar of the High Court of History and my appeal to you is this: That long after this controversy is hushed in silence, long after this turmoil, this agitation ceases, long after he is dead and gone, he will be looked upon as the poet of patriotism, as the prophet of nationalism and the lover of humanity. Long after he is dead and gone his words will be echoed and re-echoed not only in India, but across distant seas and lands. Therefore I say that the man in his position is not only standing before the bar of this Court but before the bar of the High Court of History.*

The time has come for you, sir, to consider your judgment and for you, gentlemen, to consider your verdict..."

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