

India saw from the beginning, — and even in her ages of reason....

All India Magazine October 2023

India of the ages is not dead nor has she spoken her last creative word; she lives and has still something to do for herself and the human peoples....

If India is to survive, she must be made young again. Rushing and billowing streams of energy must be poured into her; her soul must become, as it was in the old times, like the surges, vast, puissant, calm or turbulent at will, an ocean of action or of force.

Bande Mataram

Bande Mataram
Weekly Edition.
PUBLISHED EVERY SUNDAY

This is an hour in which, for India as for the world ...

Mother India is not a piece of earth; she is a Power, a Godhead...

So with India rests the future of the world

Be grateful to the birds.

Cover Page Picture:

(About "the Mother's map of India", which includes Pakistan, Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Burma and Sri Lanka. The "partition" mentioned in the first sentence below is that of Pakistan and India.)

The map was made after the partition.

It is the map of the true India in spite of all passing appearances, and it will always remain the map of the true India, whatever people may think about it.

CWM 13: 360

The Mother



Bande Mataram was the daily newspaper published from Kolkata as an organ of India's political awakening to the idea of Poorna Swaraj (complete independence). It was started by Sjt Bipin Chandra Pal following the partition of Bengal by the British in 1905. Sri Aurobindo joined it in August 1906 as its most powerful voice and edited it as well. He remained in charge of the paper until 02nd May 1908. The present issue draws heavily from Sri Aurobindo's writings during that period now part of the Bande Mataram (CWSA 6-7).

ALL INDIA MAGAZINE

A Monthly Magazine of Sri Aurobindo Society

Annual Subscription: Rs.200 in India, US \$ 25 by Air-mail

Owner: Sri Aurobindo Society

Printer: Swadhin Chatterjee for Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press

Publisher: Pradeep Narang for Sri Aurobindo Society

Published from: Society House, 11 Saint Martin Street, Puducherry - 605 001

Printed from: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, No 38, Goubert Avenue,
Puducherry - 605 001, India.

Editor: Dr. Alok Pandey

Registered with the Registrar of Newspapers for India : No. 22334/71

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BANDE MATARAM

Matter shall reveal the Spirit's face. — Sri Aurobindo

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Editorial note: A new India is rising before the eyes of the world. The rise of India is not for herself alone but for the good of the earth and humanity. But for this to happen and for India to fulfil her purpose, she must first discover herself. She must dive deep into her wise and mighty spirit and draw her strength from her perennial founts to revivify herself and the world. This issue is dedicated to the soul of Mother India.



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

The Mother

Mother India

INVOCATION

15 August 1947

O our Mother, O Soul of India, Mother who hast never forsaken thy children even in the days of darkest depression, even when they turned away from thy voice, served other masters and denied thee, now when they have arisen and the light is on thy face in this dawn of thy liberation, in this great hour we salute thee. Guide us so that the horizon of freedom opening before us may be also a horizon of true greatness and of thy true life in the community of the nations. Guide us so that we may be always on the side of great ideals and show to men thy true visage, as a leader in the ways of the spirit and a friend and helper of all the peoples.

CWM 13: 352

Mother as Bhawani

Who is Bhawani, the mother, and why should we erect a temple to Her?

In the unending revolutions of the world, as the wheel of the Eternal turns mightily in its courses, the Infinite Energy which streams forth from the Eternal and sets the wheel to work, looms up in the vision of man in various aspects and infinite forms. Each aspect creates and marks an age. Sometimes She is Love, sometimes She is Knowledge, sometimes She is Renunciation, sometimes She is Pity. This Infinite Energy is Bhawani. She also is Durga, She is Kali, She is Radha the Beloved, She is Lakshmi. She is our Mother and the Creatress of us all.

In the present age, the Mother is manifested as the mother of Strength. She is pure Shakti.

*

Mother as Shakti

But in India the breath moves slowly, the afflatus is long in coming. India, the ancient mother, is indeed striving to be reborn, striving with agony and tears, but she strives in vain. What ails her, she, who is after all so vast and might be so strong? There is surely some enormous defect, something vital is wanting in us; nor is it difficult to lay our finger on the spot. We have all things else, but we are empty of strength, void of energy. We have abandoned Shakti and are therefore abandoned by Shakti. The Mother is not in our hearts, in our brains, in our arms.

The wish to be reborn we have in abundance, there is no deficiency there. How many attempts have been made, how many movements have been begun, in religion, in society, in politics! But the same fate has overtaken or is preparing to overtake them all. They flourish for a moment, then the impulse wanes, the fire dies out, and if they endure, it is only as empty shells, forms from which the Brahma has gone or in which it lies overpowered with *tamas* and inert. Our beginnings are mighty, but they have neither sequel nor fruit. ...

The deeper we look, the more we shall be convinced that the one thing wanting, which we must strive to acquire before all others, is strength — strength physical, strength mental, strength moral, but above all strength spiritual which is the one inexhaustible and imperishable source of all the others. If we have strength, everything else will be added to us easily and naturally. In the absence of strength we are like men in a dream who have hands but cannot seize or strike, who have feet but cannot run.

The Shakti of millions

For what is a nation? What is our mother-country? It is not a piece of earth, nor a figure of speech, nor a fiction of the mind. It is a mighty Shakti, composed of the Shaktis of all the millions of units that make up the nation, just as Bhawani Mahisha-Mardini sprang into being from the Shaktis of all the millions of gods assembled in one mass of force and welded into unity. The Shakti we

call India, Bhawani Bharati, is the living unity of the Shaktis of three hundred millions of people; but she is inactive, imprisoned in the magic circle of *tamas*, the self-indulgent inertia and ignorance of her sons. To get rid of *tamas* we have but to wake the Brahma within.

*

India cannot perish, our race cannot become extinct, because among all the divisions of mankind it is to India that is reserved the highest and the most splendid destiny, the most essential to the future of the human race. It is *she* who must send forth from herself the future religion of the entire world, the Eternal religion which is to harmonise all religion, science and philosophies and make mankind one soul. In the sphere of morality, likewise, it is her mission to purge barbarism (*mlecchahood*) out of humanity and to *aryanise* the world. In order to do this, she must first re-aryanise herself.

CWSA 6 - 7: 79-84

The message of the Mother

When, therefore, you ask who is Bhawani the mother, She herself answers you, "I am the Infinite Energy which streams forth from the Eternal in the world and Eternal in yourselves. I am the Mother of the Universe, the Mother of the Worlds, and for you who are children of the Sacred land, *aryabhumi*, made of her clay and reared by her sun and winds, I am Bhawani Bharati, Mother of India."

Then if you ask why we should erect a temple to Bhawani the mother, hear Her answer, "Because I have commanded it and because by making a centre for the future religion, you will be furthering the immediate will of the Eternal and storing up merit which will make you strong in this life and great in another. You will be helping to create a nation, to consolidate an age, to *aryanise* a world. And that nation is your own, that age is the age of yourselves and your children, that world is no fragment of land bounded by seas and hills, but the whole earth with her teeming millions."

Come then, hearken to the call of the Mother. She is already in our hearts waiting to manifest Herself, waiting to be worshipped, — inactive because the God in us is concealed by *tamas*, troubled

by Her inactivity, sorrowful because Her children will not call on Her to help them. You who feel Her stirring within you, fling off the black veil of self, break down the imprisoning walls of indolence, help Her each as you feel impelled, with your bodies or with your intellect or with your speech or with your wealth or with your prayers and worship, each man according to his capacity. Draw not back, for against those who were called and heard Her not, She may well be wroth in the day of Her coming; but to those who help Her advent even a little, how radiant with beauty and kindness will be the face of their Mother!

CWSA 6: 89

Sri Aurobindo

The future of India is very clear.

India is the Guru of the world.

The future structure of the world depends on India. India is the living soul. India is incarnating the spiritual knowledge in the world. The Government of India ought to recognise the significance of India in this sphere and plan their action accordingly.

CWM 13: 353

The Mother

Arise, O! India



This is an hour in which, for India as for all the world, its future destiny and the turn of its steps for a century are being powerfully decided, and for no ordinary century, but one which is itself a great turning-point, an immense turn-over in the inner and outer history of mankind. As we act now, so shall the reward of our karma be meted out to us, and each call of this kind at such an hour is at once an opportunity, a choice, and a test offered to the spirit of our people. Let it be said that it rose in each to the full height of its being and deserved the visible intervention of the Master of Destiny in its favour.

CWSA 1: 413

Sri Aurobindo

The Real Difficulty

The real difficulty is always in ourselves, not in our surroundings. There are three things necessary in order to make men invincible, Will, Disinterestedness and Faith. We may have a will to emancipate ourselves, but sufficient faith may be lacking. We may have faith in our ultimate emancipation, but the will to use the necessary means may be wanting. And even if there are will and faith, we may use them with a violent attachment to the fruit of our work or with passions of hatred, blind excitement or hasty forcefulness which may produce evil reactions. For this reason it is necessary, in a work of such magnitude, to have resort to a higher Power than that of mind and body in order to overcome unprecedented obstacles. This is the need of sadhana.

God is within us, an Omnipotent, Omnipresent, Omniscient Power; we & He are of one nature and, if we get into touch with Him and put ourselves in His hands, He will pour into us His own force and we shall realise that we too have our share of godhead, our portion of omnipotence, omnipresence and omniscience. The path is long, but self-surrender makes it short; the way is difficult, but perfect trust makes it easy.

Will is omnipotent, but it must be divine will, selfless, tranquil, at ease about results. "If you had faith even as a grain of mustard-seed," said Jesus, "you would say to this mountain, Come, & it would come to you." What was meant by the word Faith, was really Will accompanied with perfect sraddha. Sraddha does not reason, it knows; for it commands sight and sees what God wills, and it knows that what is God's will, must happen. Sraddha, not blind but using sight spiritual, can become omniscient.

Will is also omnipresent. It can throw itself into all in whom it comes into contact and give them temporarily or permanently a portion of its power, its thought, its enthusiasms. The thought of a solitary man can become, by exercise of selfless and undoubting Will, the thought of a nation. The will of a single hero can breathe courage into the hearts of a million cowards.

This is the sadhana that we have to accomplish. This is the condition of our emancipation. We have been using an imperfect will with imperfect faith and imperfect disinterestedness. Yet the task we have before us is not less difficult than to move a mountain.

The force that can do it, exists. But it is hidden in a secret chamber within us and of that chamber God holds the key. Let us find Him and claim it.

CWSA 1: 536-37

Past dawns and future noons

THERE are many who, lamenting the by-gone glories of this great and ancient nation, speak as if the Rishis of old, the inspired creators of thought and civilisation, were a miracle of our heroic age, not to be repeated among degenerate men and in our distressful present. This is an error and thrice an error. Ours is the eternal land, the eternal people, the eternal religion, whose strength, greatness, holiness may be over clouded but never, even for a moment, utterly cease. The hero, the Rishi, the saint, are the natural fruits of our Indian soil; and there has been no age in which they have not been born. Among the Rishis of the later age we have at last realised that we must include the name of the man who gave us the reviving mantra which is creating a new India, the mantra *Bande Mataram*.

The Rishi is different from the saint. His life may not have been distinguished by superior holiness nor his character by an ideal beauty. He is not great by what he was himself but by what he has expressed. A great and vivifying message had to be given to a nation or to humanity; and God has chosen this mouth on which to shape the words of the message. A momentous vision had to be revealed; and it is his eyes which the Almighty first unseals. The message which he has received, the vision which has been vouchsafed to him, he declares to the world with all the strength that is in him, and in one supreme moment of inspiration expresses it in words which have merely to be uttered to stir men's inmost natures, clarify their minds, seize their hearts and impel them to

things which would have been impossible to them in their ordinary moments. Those words are the mantra which he was born to reveal and of that mantra he is the seer.

CWSA 1: 637

The necessity of sacrifice

He who seeks to fill India with the Nationalist faith must first recognise this supreme necessity of sacrifice. The truth that he inculcates has had its martyrs in every country of the world and it cannot be otherwise in India. Everything that he asks of the nation requires sacrifice, and in order that the nation that has been under subjection for centuries may awaken to the truth of his idea, to the greatness of his faith, he must be the first to set the example....

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. While we insist on reorganising the nation into a democratic unity politically, we recognise that the same principle of reorganisation ought to and inevitably will assert itself socially; even if, as our opponents choose to imagine, we are desirous of confining its working to politics, our attempts will be fruitless, for the principle once realised in politics must inevitably assert itself in society. No monopoly racial or hereditary can form part of the Nationalist's

scheme of the future, his dream of the day for the advent of which he is striving and struggling.

CWSA 6-7: 677-80

Hinduism and human civilisation

The fulfilment of Hinduism is the fulfilment of the highest tendencies of human civilisation and it must include in its sweep the most vital impulses of modern life. It will include democracy and Socialism also, purifying them, raising them above the excessive stress on the economic adjustments which are the means, and teaching them to fix their eyes more constantly and clearly on the moral, intellectual and spiritual perfection of mankind which is the end.

CWSA 6-7: 685

Need of faith and selflessness

God is doing everything. We are not doing anything. What He bids us suffer, we suffer because the suffering is necessary to give others strength. When He throws us away, He does so because we are no longer required. If things become worse, we shall have not only to go to jail, but give up our lives and if those who seem to stand in front or to be absolutely indispensable are called upon to throw their bodies away, we shall then know that that also is wanted, that this is a work that God has asked us to do, and that in the place of those who are thrown away, God will bring many more. He Himself is behind us. He Himself is the worker and the work. He is immortal in the hearts of His people.... Many have come to this belief through the longing to live for their countrymen, to suffer for their countrymen, because God is not only here in me, He is within all of you; it is God whom I love, it is God for whom I wish to suffer. In that way many have come to do what God bade them do and He knows which way to lead a man. When it is His will, He will lead him aright.

Another thing, which is only another name for faith, is selflessness.... It is a religion which we are trying to live. It is a religion

by which we are trying to realise God in the nation, in our fellow-countrymen. We are trying to realize Him in the three hundred millions of our people. We are trying, some of us consciously, some of us unconsciously, we are trying to live not for our own interests, but to work and to die for others. When a young worker in Bengal has to go to jail, when he is asked to suffer, he does not feel any pang in that suffering, he does not fear suffering. He goes forward with joy. He says, "The hour of my consecration has come, and I have to thank God now that the time for laying myself on His altar has arrived and that I have been chosen to suffer for the good of my countrymen. This is the hour of my greatest joy and the fulfilment of my life." This is the second aspect of our religion, and is the absolute denial of the idea of one's separate self, and the finding of one's higher eternal Self in the three hundred millions of people in whom God Himself lives.

The third thing, which is again another name for faith and selflessness, is courage. When you believe in God, when you believe that God is guiding you, believe that God is doing all and that you are doing nothing, what is there to fear? How can you fear when it is your creed, when it is your religion, to throw yourself away, to throw your money, your body, your life and all that you have, away for others? What is it that you have to fear? There is nothing to fear. Even when you are called before the tribunals of this world, you can face them with courage. Because your very religion means that you have courage. Because it is not you, it is something within you. What can all these tribunals, what can all the powers of the world do to that which is within you, that Immortal, that Unborn and Undying One, whom the sword cannot pierce, whom the fire cannot burn, whom the water cannot drown? Him the jail cannot confine and the gallows cannot end. What is there that you can fear when you are conscious of Him who is within you? Courage is then a necessity, courage is natural and courage is inevitable.... If you have not the divine strength of faith and unselfishness, you will not be able to escape from other

attachments, you will not like to bear affliction simply for the sake of a change by which you will not profit. How can courage come from such a source? But when you have a higher idea, when you have realised that you have nothing, that you are nothing and that the three hundred millions of people of this country are God in the nation, something which cannot be measured by so much land, or by so much money, or by so many lives, you will then realise that it is something immortal, that the idea for which you are working is something immortal and that it is an immortal power which is working in you. All other attachments are nothing. Every other consideration disappears from your mind, and, as I said, there is no need to cultivate courage. You are led on by that power. You are protected through life and death by One who survives. In the very hour of death, you feel your immortality. In the hour of your worst sufferings, you feel you are invincible.

CWSA 6-7: 827-30

Do not be afraid

The self-respect of the nation is our religion, self-sacrifice is our only action or duty. We ought to give proper scope for the divine qualities in us to shine forth. Trifling emotions ought to be given up. Do not be afraid even if you are required to die. Do not retreat; bear pain for the sake of the nation. God is your support. If you do this, the Indian nation will, in an instant, get back its former splendour and glory. It will take its place at the side of the independent nations of the world; it will educate other nations; it will shed the lustre of true knowledge, and it will inculcate the principles of Vedanta. Our nation will come forward to benefit the human race and the whole world. Before it the whole world will tremble! But when? Only when we all are prepared to repay our debt to the nation.

CWSA 6-7: 860

Revolutions

Revolutions are incalculable in their goings and absolutely uncontrollable. The sea flows and who shall tell it how it is to flow? The wind blows and what human wisdom can regulate its motions? The will of Divine Wisdom is the sole law of revolutions and we have no right to consider ourselves as anything but mere agents chosen by that Wisdom. When our work is done, we should realise it and feel glad that we have been permitted to do so much. Is it not enough reward for the greatest services that we can do, if our names are recorded in History among those who helped by their work or their speech or better, by the mute service of their sufferings to prepare the great and free India that will be? Nay, is it not enough if unnamed and unrecorded except in the Books of God, we go down to the grave with the consciousness that our finger too was laid on the great Car and may have helped, however imperceptibly, to push it forward? This talk of services is a poor thing after all. Do we serve the Mother for a reward or do God's work for hire? The patriot lives for his country because he must; he dies for her because she demands it. That is all.

CWSA 6-7: 869-70

The Sanjivani Mantra

When a great people rises from the dust, what *mantra* is the *sanjivani mantra* or what power is the resurrecting force of its resurgence? In India there are two great *mantras*, the *mantra* of "Bande Mataram" which is the public and universal cry of awakened love of Motherland, and there is another more secret and mystic which is not yet revealed. The *mantra* of "Bande Mataram" is a *mantra* once before given to the world by the Sannyasins of the Vindhya hills. It was lost by the treachery of our own countrymen because the nation was not then ripe for resurgence and a premature awakening would have brought about a speedy downfall. But when in the great earthquake of 1897 there was a voice heard by the Sannyasins, and they were conscious of the decree

of God that India should rise again, the *mantra* was again revealed to the world. It was echoed in the hearts of the people, and when the cry had ripened in silence in a few great hearts, the whole nation became conscious of the revelation.

CWSA 6-7: 877

India's Mission

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

CWSA 6-7: 890

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

The Mother

Truth is the rock

When we are on the subject, let us be frank. Truth is the rock on which the world is built. *Satyena tishthate jagat*. Falsehood can never be the true source of strength. When falsehood is at the root of a movement, that movement is doomed to failure. Diplomacy can only help a movement if the movement proceeds upon truth. To make diplomacy the root-principle is to contravene the laws of existence.

CWSA 6-7: 882

The Glory of God in Man

Whoever is still under the influence of intellectual pride, is shocked when people depreciate the reason as the supreme guide. He asks how is it possible for a man of culture to depreciate the reason and exalt some extraneous influence like that which people call God? But these doubters are under the influence of European materialism which tries to confine man to his material portion and deny him the possibility of a divine origin and a divine destiny. When Europe left Christianity to the monk and the ascetic and forgot the teachings of the Galilean, she exposed herself to a terrible fate which will yet overtake her. God in man is the whole revelation and the whole of religion. What Christianity taught dimly, Hinduism made plain to the intellect in Vedanta. When India remembers the teaching she received from Shankaracharya, Ramanuja and Madhva, when she realises what Sri Ramakrishna came to reveal, then she will rise. Her very life is Vedanta.

Who is a Hindu

If anyone thinks that we are merely intellectual beings, he is not a Hindu. Hinduism leaves the glorification of intellectuality to those who have never seen God. She is commissioned by Him to speak only of His greatness and majesty and she has so spoken for thousands of years. When we first received a European education, we allowed ourselves to be misled by the light of science. Science

is a light within a limited room, not the sun which illumines the world. The Aparā Vidya is the sum of science but there is a higher Vidya, a mightier knowledge. When we are under the influence of the lower knowledge, we imagine that we are doing everything and try to reason out the situation we find ourselves in, as if our intellect were sovereign and omnipotent. But this is an attitude of delusion and Maya. Whoever has once felt the glory of God within him can never again believe that the intellect is supreme. There is a higher voice, there is a more unfailing oracle. It is in the heart where God resides. He works through the brain, but the brain is only one of His instruments. Whatever the brain may plan, the heart knows first and whoever can go beyond the brain to the heart, will hear the voice of the Eternal.

The great rule of life

God is behind this movement and He does not need anyone to tell Him how to bring it to success. He will see to that Himself. Whatever plans we may make, we shall find quite useless when the time for action comes. Revolutions are always full of surprises, and whoever thinks he can play chess with a revolution will soon find how terrible is the grasp of God and how insignificant the human reason before the whirlwind of His breath. That man only is likely to dominate the chances of a revolution, who makes no plans but preserves his heart pure for the will of God to declare itself. The great rule of life is to have no schemes but one unalterable purpose. If the will is fixed on the purpose it sets itself to accomplish, then circumstances will suggest the right course; but the schemer finds himself always tripped up by the unexpected.

CWSA 6-7: 890-93

India is the guru of the nations

One thing only we are sure of, and one thing we wear as a life-belt which will buoy us up on the waves of the chaos that is coming on the land. This is the fixed and unalterable faith in an overruling Purpose which is raising India once more from the dead,

the fixed and unalterable intention to fight for the renovation of her ancient life and glory. Swaraj is the lifebelt, Swaraj the pilot, Swaraj the star of guidance. 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 readorned. 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 a degradation, her soul too calm and self-sufficient for such a surrender. If again an economical revolution is inevitable, it is because the fine but narrow edifice of her old industrial life will not allow of Swaraj in commerce and industry. The industrial energies of a free and perfect national life demand a mightier scope and wider channels. Neither need we fear that the economic revolution will land us in the same diseased and disordered state of society as now offends the nobler feelings of humanity in Europe. 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 organized 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 harmonize the world and the spirit.

If we realise this truth, if we perceive in all that is happening a great and momentous transformation necessary not only for us but for the whole world, we shall fling ourselves without fear or misgivings into the times which are upon us. India is the *guru* of the nations, the physician of the human soul in its profounder maladies; she is destined once more to new-mould the life of the world and restore the peace of the human spirit. But Swaraj is the necessary condition of her work and before she can do the work, she must fulfil the condition.

CWSA 6-7: 905-06

The mission of India

Her mission is to point back humanity to the true source of human liberty, human equality, human brotherhood. When man is free in spirit, all other freedom is at his command; for the Free is the Lord who cannot be bound. When he is liberated from delusion, he perceives the divine equality of the world which fulfils itself through love and justice, and this perception transfuses itself into the law of government and society. When he has perceived this divine equality, he is brother to the whole world, and in whatever position he is placed he serves all men as his brothers by the law of love, by the law of justice. When this perception becomes the basis of religion, of philosophy, of social speculation and political aspiration, then will liberty, equality and fraternity take their place in the structure of society and the Satya Yuga return. This is the Asiatic reading of democracy which India must rediscover for herself before she can give it to the world. It is the *dharma* of every man to be free in soul, bound to service not by compulsion but by love; to be equal in spirit, apportioned his place in society by his capacity to serve society, not by the interested selfishness of others; to be in harmonious relations with his brother men, linked to them by mutual love and service, not by shackles of servitude, or the relations of the exploiter and the exploited, the eater and the eaten. It has been said that democracy is based on the rights of man; it has been replied that it should rather take its stand on the duties of man; but both rights and duties are European ideas. Dharma is the Indian conception in which rights and duties lose the artificial antagonism created by a view of the world which makes selfishness the root of action, and regain their deep and eternal unity. Dharma is the basis of democracy which Asia must recognise, for in this lies the distinction between the soul of Asia and the soul of Europe. Through Dharma the Asiatic evolution fulfils itself; this is her secret.

CWSA 6-7: 931-32

The Need of the Moment

All that we do and attempt proceeds from faith, and if we are deficient in faith nothing can be accomplished. When we are deficient in faith our work begins to flag and failure is frequent; but if we have faith things are done for us. No great work has ever been done without this essential courage. Misled by egoism, we believe that we are working, that the results of what we do are our creation, and when anything has to be done we ask ourselves whether we have the strength, the means, the requisite qualities, but in reality all work is done by the will of God and when faith in Him is the mainspring of our actions, success is inevitable. Sometimes we wish a thing very intensely and our wish is accomplished. The wish was in fact a prayer, and all sincere prayer receives its answer. It need not be consciously addressed to God, because prayer is not a form of words but an aspiration. If we aspire, we pray. But the aspiration must be absolutely unselfish, not alloyed by the thought of petty advantages or lower aims if it is to succeed. When we mingle self with our aspirations, we weaken to that extent the strength of the prayer and the success is proportionately less. CWSA 6-7: 937

India, — past and future

In former ages India was a sort of hermitage of thought and peace apart from the world. Separated from the rest of humanity by her peculiar geographical conformation, she worked out her own problems and thought out the secrets of existence as in a quiet *ashram* from which the noise of the world was shut out. Her thoughts flashed out over Asia and created civilisations, her sons were the bearers of light to the peoples; philosophies based themselves on stray fragments of her infinite wisdom; sciences arose from the waste of her intellectual production. When the barrier was broken and nations began to surge through the Himalayan gates, the peace of India departed. She passed through centuries of struggle, of ferment in which the civilisations born of her ran-

dom thoughts returned to her developed and insistent, seeking to impose themselves on the mighty mother of them all. To her they were the reminiscences of her old intellectual experiments laid aside and forgotten. She took them up, rethought them in a new light and once more made them part of herself. So she dealt with the Greek, so with the Scythian, so with Islam, so now she will deal with the great brood of her returning children, with Christianity, with Buddhism, with European science and materialism, with the fresh speculations born of the world's renewed contact with the source of thought in this ancient cradle of religion, science and philosophy. The vast amount of new matter which she has to absorb, is unprecedented in her history, but to her it is child's play. Her all-embracing intellect, her penetrating intuition, her invincible originality are equal to greater tasks. The period of passivity when she listened to the voices of the outside world is over. No longer will she be content merely to receive and reproduce, even to receive and improve.

CWSA 6-7: 1020-21

Living Swaraj

How then can we live Swaraj? By abandonment of the idea of self and its replacement by the idea of the nation. As Chaitanya ceased to be Nimai Pandit and became Krishna, became Radha, became Balaram, so every one of us must cease to cherish his separate life and live in the nation. The hope of national regeneration must absorb our minds as the idea of salvation absorbs the minds of the *mumukshu*. Our *tyaga* must be as complete as the *tyaga* of the nameless ascetic. Our passion to see the face of our free and glorified Mother must be as devouring a madness as the passion of Chaitanya to see the face of Sri Krishna. Our sacrifice for the country must be as enthusiastic and complete as that of Jagai and Madhai who left the rule of a kingdom to follow the *sankirtan* of Gauranga. Our offerings on the altar must be as wildly liberal, as remorselessly complete as that of Carthaginian

parents who passed their children through the fire to Moloch. If any reservation mars the completeness of our self-abandonment, if any bargaining abridges the fullness of our sacrifice, if any doubt mars the strength of our faith and enthusiasm, if any thought of self pollutes the sanctity of our love, then the Mother will not be satisfied and will continue to withhold her presence. We call her to come, but the call has not yet gone out of the bottom of our hearts. The Mother's feet are on the threshold, but she waits to hear the true cry, the cry that rushes out from the heart, before she will enter. We are still hesitating between ourselves and the country; we would give one anna to the service of the Mother and keep fifteen for ourselves, our wives, our children, our property, our fame and reputation, our safety, our ease. The Mother asks all before she will give herself. Not until Surath Raja offered the blood of his veins did the Mother appear to him and ask him to choose his boon. Not until Shivaji was ready to offer his head at the feet of the Mother, did Bhavani in visible form stay his hand and give him the command to free his people. Those who have freed nations, have first passed through the agony of utter renunciation before their efforts were crowned with success, and those who aspire to free India, will first have to pay the price which the Mother demands. The schemes by which we seek to prepare the nation, the scheme of industrial regeneration, the scheme of educational regeneration, the scheme of political regeneration through self-help are subordinate features of the deeper regeneration which the country must go through before it can be free. The Mother asks us for no schemes, no plans, no methods. She herself will provide the schemes, the plans, the methods better than any that we can devise. She asks us for our hearts, our lives, nothing less, nothing more. Swadeshi, National Education, the attempt to organise Swaraj are only so many opportunities for self-surrender to her. She will look to see not how much we have tried for Swadeshi, how wisely we have planned for Swaraj, how successfully we have

organised education, but how much of ourselves we have given, how much of our substance, how much of our labour, how much of our ease, how much of our safety, how much of our lives. Regeneration is literally rebirth and rebirth comes not by the intellect, not by the fullness of the purse, not by policy, not by change of machinery, but by the getting of a new heart by throwing away all that we were into the fire of sacrifice and being reborn in the Mother. Self-abandonment is the demand made upon us. She asks of us, "How many will live for me? How many will die for me?" and awaits our answer.

CWSA 6-7: 1031-33

India must remain India

If India follows in the footsteps of Europe, accepts her political ideals, social system, economic principles, she will be overcome with the same maladies. Such a consummation is neither for the good of India nor for the good of Europe. If India becomes an intellectual province of Europe, she will never attain to her natural greatness or fulfil the possibilities within her. *Paradharmo bhayavahah*, to accept the *dharma* of another is perilous; it deprives the man or the nation of its secret of life and vitality and substitutes an unnatural and stunted growth for the free, large and organic development of Nature. Whenever a nation has given up the purpose of its existence, it has been at the cost of its growth. India must remain India if she is to fulfil her destiny. Nor will Europe profit by grafting her civilisation on India, for if India, who is the distinct physician of Europe's maladies, herself falls into the clutch of the disease, the disease will remain uncured and incurable and European civilisation will perish as it perished when Rome declined, first by dry rot within itself and last by irruption from without. The success of the national movement, both as a political and as a spiritual movement, is necessary for India and still more necessary for Europe. The whole world is interested in seeing that India becomes free so that India may become herself. CWSA 6-7: 1041

The work before us

The work now before us is of the sternest kind and requires men of an unflinching sternness to carry it out. The hero, the martyr, the man of iron will and iron heart, the grim fighter whose tough nerves defeat cannot tire out nor danger relax, the born leader in action, the man who cannot sleep or rest while his country is enslaved, the priest of Kali who can tear his heart out of his body and offer it as a bleeding sacrifice on the Mother's altar, the heart of fire and the tongue of flame whose lightest word is an inspiration to self-sacrifice or a spur to action, for these the time is coming, the call will soon go forth. They are already here in the silence, in the darkness slowly maturing themselves, training the muscles of the will, tightening the strings of the heart so that they may be ready when the call comes. Whoever feels the power of service within him, let him make sure of himself while there is yet time; for the present is an hour of easy probation, of light tests in which the punishment of failure is also light, but whoever fails in the day that be coming, will be thrown away not into the rubbish heap as the Conventionalists will be thrown, but into the fire of a great burning. For all who now declare themselves Nationalists the tests will be far severer than that before which the place-hunter, the title-hunter, the popularity hunter, the politician of mixed motives and crooked ways, the trimmer, the light speaker and ready swearer of the old politics have paled and recoiled so early and so easily. The profession of Nationalism should not be lightly made but with a full sense of what it means and involves. The privilege of taking it is attended with severe pains and penalties for those who take it lightly. If we are few, it matters little, but it is of supreme importance that the stuff of which we are made should be sound. What the Mother needs is hard clear steel for her sword, hard massive granite for her fortress, wood that will not break for the handle of her bow, tough substance and true for the axle of her chariot. For the battle is near and the trumpet ready for the signal.

CWSA 6-7: 1059-60

Sri Aurobindo

The Nation Idea

Birth of Indian Nationalism

It is the soul within us that decides, that makes our history, that determines Fate, and the material nature, material events only shape themselves under the limitations of Space and Time to give an outward body and realisation to the decisions of the soul. The day of a nation's independence is not the day when the administrative changes are made which complete the outward realisation of its independence but the day when it realises in its soul that it is free and must be free. For it is the self-sufficing separate-ness of a nation that is its independence, and when that separate-ness is realised and recorded as a determined thing in ourselves, the outward realisation is only a question of time. The seventh of August was the birthday of Indian Nationalism, and Indian Nationalism, as we pointed out the other day, means two things, the self-consecration to the gospel of national freedom and the practice of independence. Boycott is the practice of independence. When therefore we declared the Boycott on the seventh of August, it was no mere economical revolt we were instituting, but the practice of national independence; for the attempt to be separate and self-sufficient economically must bring with it the attempt to be free in every other function of a nation's life; for these functions are all mutually interdependent. August 7th is therefore the day when Indian Nationalism was born, when India discovered to her soul her own freedom, when we set our feet irrevocably on the only path to unity, the only path to self-realisation. On that day the foundation-stone of the new Indian nationality was laid.

CWSA 6-7: 623

Our First Anniversary

The *Bande Mataram* has completed the first year of its existence. It was started on the 6th of August last year and its anniversary falls strictly on that date. But it is only in the fitness of things

that the organ of Indian Nationalism should choose the birthday of Nationalism in the country for the purpose of observing its anniversary. The 7th of August, therefore, has another importance to the Nationalists of Bengal who brought into existence their accredited journal just in time to hail that historic date. We shall only be telling the truth if we notice here that the birth of our paper took place under the most favourable auspices. It came into being in answer to an imperative public need and not to satisfy any private ambition or personal whim; it was born in a great and critical hour for the whole nation and has a message to deliver which nothing on earth can prevent it from delivering. The *Bande Mataram* has been before the public for a year and it has, we believe, rendered a tolerably fair account of itself. It claims that it has given expression to the will of the people and sketched their ideals and aspirations with the greatest amount of fidelity. It is for this reason that it has received a splendid reception in almost all the provinces of India. The amount of support it has got in the first year of its existence surpasses all previous records in Indian journalism. The political ideal of the people has changed, the desire for freedom is a force to be reckoned with and if anybody has any doubt on the point, success of the *Bande Mataram* should set it at rest. Our constituents are aware of the difficulties in our way and we hope they will stand by us till we shall have fulfilled our mission.

CWSA 6-7: 629

The basis of caste and its degeneration

Caste was originally an arrangement for the distribution of functions in society, just as much as class in Europe, but the principle on which the distribution was based in India was peculiar to this country. The civilisation of Europe has always been preponderatingly material and the division of classes was material in its principles and material in its objects, but our civilisation has always been preponderatingly spiritual and moral, and caste division in India had a spiritual object and a spiritual and moral ba-

sis. The division of classes in Europe had its root in a distribution of powers and rights and developed and still develops through a struggle of conflicting interests; its aim was merely the organisation of society for its own sake and mainly indeed for its economic convenience. The division of castes in India was conceived as a distribution of duties. A man's caste depended on his *dharma*, his spiritual, moral and practical duties, and his *dharma* depended on his *swabhava*, his temperament and inborn nature. A Brahmin was a Brahmin not by mere birth, but because he discharged the duty of preserving the spiritual and intellectual elevation of the race, and he had to cultivate the spiritual temperament and acquire the spiritual training which could alone qualify him for the task. The Kshatriya was a Kshatriya not merely because he was the son of warriors and princes, but because he discharged the duty of protecting the country and preserving the high courage and manhood of the nation, and he had to cultivate the princely temperament and acquire the strong and lofty Samurai training which alone fitted him for his duties. So it was with the Vaishya whose function was to amass wealth for the race and the Sudra who discharged the humbler duties of service without which the other castes could not perform their share of labour for the common good. This was what we meant when we said that caste was a socialistic institution. No doubt there was a gradation of social respect which placed the function of the Brahmin at the summit and the function of the Sudra at the base, but this inequality was accidental, external, *vyavaharika*. Essentially therewas, between the devout Brahmin and the devout Sudra, no inequality in the single Virat Purusha of which each was a necessary part. Chokha Mela, the Maratha Pariah, became the guru of Brahmins proud of their caste purity; the Chandala taught Shankaracharya: for the Brahman was revealed in the body of the Pariah and in the Chandala there was the utter presence of Shiva the Almighty. Heredity entered into caste divisions, and in the light of the conclusions of modern knowledge who shall say erroneously? But it entered

into it as a subordinate element. For Hindu civilisation being spiritual based its institutions on spiritual and moral foundations and subordinated the material elements and material considerations. Caste therefore was not only an institution which ought to be immune from the cheap second-hand denunciations so long in fashion, but a supreme necessity without which Hindu civilisation could not have developed its distinctive character or worked out its unique mission.

But to recognise this is not to debar ourselves from pointing out its later perversions and desiring its transformation. It is the nature of human institutions to degenerate, to lose their vitality, and decay, and the first sign of decay is the loss of flexibility and oblivion of the essential spirit in which they were conceived. The spirit is permanent, the body changes; and a body which refuses to change must die. The spirit expresses itself in many ways while itself remaining essentially the same, but the body must change to suit its changing environments if it wishes to live. There is no doubt that the institution of caste degenerated. It ceased to be determined by spiritual qualifications which, once essential, have now come to be subordinate and even immaterial and is determined by the purely material tests of occupation and birth. By this change it has set itself against the fundamental tendency of Hinduism which is to insist on the spiritual and subordinate the material and thus lost most of its meaning. The spirit of caste arrogance, exclusiveness and superiority came to dominate it instead of the spirit of duty, and the change weakened the nation and helped to reduce us to our present condition. It is these perversions which we wish to see set right. The institution must transform itself so as to fulfil its essential and permanent object under the changed conditions of modern times. If it refuses to change, it will become a mere social survival and crumble to pieces. If it transforms itself, it will yet play a great part in the fulfilment of civilisation.

CWSA 6-7: 682-84

What is the Indian Nation

Our personality, our constitution is made up of three parts. We have three types of body, gross, subtle and causal. In the same way the nation has three bodies. According to our philosophy it is not only the outward appearance, the gross body, that makes a complete man. All three bodies have to be taken into account; only then can we get some understanding of him. As with a man, so with a nation. To think about our nation is first to think about our physical motherland. Stretching from the Himalayas in the north to Kanyakumari in the south, its boundaries are formed by the seas on the east and west. Ganga, Jamuna, Narmada, Krishna, Godavari flow here unceasingly; here are ancient cities, tall and imposing temples, artistically designed palatial homes. Such is the part of this earth we call India. It is this picture, this figure that comes to us when we speak of our nation. This is the gross body of our nation. Bankim Chandra's song *Bande Mataram* describes this aspect very beautifully. Thirty-three crores of people live on this land with their joys and sorrows, their good and bad desires: they are all part of its subtle body. Then there are aspects of the country which may undergo changes in the course of time, yet always remain in the body, in seed-state, as permanent as the atom; they are always present there and, being the origin, it is out of them that the future takes shape. This is the causal body of the nation.

But this is not enough. According to our scriptures, when we think of a man we think not only of his present condition but also of his past and future. The same is true of a country. When we speak of the rivers, mountains and cities of our country, we have in mind not only the present, not at all. What we speak of is a history of five thousand years. When we speak of Delhi and Agra, does not the image of Delhi as it was during Emperor Akbar's time stand before your mind's eye? That is why, in speaking of the nation, we should recall the great achievements of our ancestors; then Shivaji, Asoka and Akbar at once become an integral part of our nationhood. So too the ancient Rishis. CWSA 6-7: 812-13

Nationalism is a religion

Have you realised what Nationalism is? Have you realised that it is a religion that you are embracing? If you have, then call yourselves Nationalists; and when you have called yourselves Nationalists, then try to live your Nationalism. Try to realise the strength within you, try to bring it forward so that everything you do may be not your own doing, but the doing of that Truth within you. Try so that every hour that you live shall be enlightened by that presence, that every thought of yours shall be inspired from that one fountain of inspiration, that every faculty and quality in you may be placed at the service of that immortal power within you. Then you will not say, as I have heard so many of you say, that people are so slow to take up this idea, that people are so slow to work, that you have no fit leaders, and that all your great men tell you a different thing and none of them is ready to come forward to guide you in the path that is pointed out. You will have no complaints to make against others, because then you will not need any leader. The leader is within yourselves. If you can only find Him and listen to His voice, then you will not find that people will not listen to you, because there will be a voice within the people which will make itself heard. That voice and that strength is within you. If you feel it within yourselves, if you live in its presence, if it has become yourselves, then you will find that one word from you will awake an answering voice in others, that the creed which you preach will spread and will be received by all and that it will not be very long, as in Bengal it has not been very long, it has not taken a century or fifty years, it has only taken three years to change the whole nation, to give it a new spirit and a new heart and to put it in front of all the Indian races. From Bengal has come the creed of Nationalism, and from Bengal has come the example of Nationalism.

CWSA 6-7: 830-31

Nationalism is a force which God has created

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. Men who are now acclaimed as Extremists, leaders of the forward movement, preachers of Nationalism and embodiments of the popular feeling will tomorrow find themselves left behind, cast aside, a living monument of the vanity of personal ambition. The old leaders claim eternal leadership because they have rendered services — some few eloquent speeches or well-

written petitions, to wit; but before we are much older, those who are serving their country by personal suffering and self-sacrifice will find that they too must not presume on their services. 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 6-7: 668-69

Swaraj

When we speak of Swaraj we mean the principle of national life independent of any form of government. The word Swaraj is not a new word but an old one. It is as old as literature and civilisation. The meaning of Swaraj, in our ancient literature, is the spiritual condition of the soul which attains to Mukti. When the soul is independent of everything but itself, when it exists in the joy of its light and greatness, when it is Mukta, that is Swaraj. According to our ancient philosophy, *sarvam paravasham duhkham sarvam atma-vasham sukham*: All dependence upon others is misery; all dependence upon ourselves is bliss. This is the fundamental truth. To get rid of Maya, bondage, is the ideal of our ancient religion. It is the sole object of human existence, human life.

Let us apply the word Swaraj to national life. The national soul desires a reformed life. The national self is our Swaraj. The national self magnifies the national soul, that is, the soul of three hundred millions. The history of the world teaches us that when a nation is dependent it begins to decay, it begins to lose its power; it loses its strength, it loses its manhood and lastly it is broken to pieces and becomes weak and helpless. This is what history teaches us and what reason tells us.

CWSA 6-7: 840-41

Swaraj as freedom

Swaraj is the direct revelation of God to this people, — not mere political freedom but a freedom vast and entire, freedom of the individual, freedom of the community, freedom of the nation; spiritual freedom, social freedom, political freedom. Spiritual freedom the ancient Rishis had already declared to us; social freedom was part of the message of Buddha, Chaitanya, Nanak and Kabir and the saints of Maharashtra; political freedom is the last word of the triune gospel. Without political freedom the soul of man is crippled. Only a few mighty spirits can rise above their surroundings, but the ordinary man is a slave of his surroundings and if those be mean, servile and degraded, he himself will be mean, servile and degraded. Social freedom can only be born where the soul of man is large, free and generous, not enslaved to petty aims and thoughts. Social freedom is not a result of social machinery but of the freedom of the human intellect and the nobility of the human soul. A man who follows petty ends cannot feel his brotherhood with his fellows, for he is always striving to raise himself above them and assert petty superiorities. If caste makes him superior or money makes him superior, he will hug to his bosom the distinctions of caste or the distinctions of wealth. If political freedom is absent, the community has no great ends to follow and the individual is confined within a narrow circuit in which the superiority of caste, wealth or class is the only ambition which he can cherish. If political freedom opens to him a wider horizon, he forgets the lesser ambitions. Moreover a slave can never be noble and broad-minded. He cannot forget himself in the service of his fellows for he is already a slave and service is the badge of his degradation, not a willing self-devotion. When man is thus degraded, it is idle to think that society can be free.

So too spiritual freedom can never be the lot of many in a land of slaves. A few may follow the path of the Yogin and rise above their surroundings, but the mass of men cannot ever take the first step towards spiritual salvation. We do not believe that the path

of salvation lies in selfishness. If the mass of men around us is miserable, fallen, degraded, how can the seeker after God be indifferent to the condition of his brothers? Compassion to all creatures is the condition of sainthood, and the perfect Yogin is he who is *sarvabhutahite ratah*, whose mind is full of the will to do good to all creatures. When a man shuts his heart to the cries of sufferings around him, when he is content that his fellow-men should be sorrowful, oppressed, sacrificed to the greed of others, he is making his own way to salvation full of difficulties and stumbling-blocks. He is forgetting that God is not only in himself but in all these millions. And for those who have not the strength, spiritual freedom in political servitude is a sheer impossibility. When India was free, thousands of men set their feet in the stairs of heaven, but as the night deepened and the sun of liberty withdrew its rays, the spiritual force inborn in every Indian heart became weaker and weaker until now it burns so faintly that aliens have taken upon themselves the role of spiritual teachers, and the people chosen by God have to sit at the feet of the men from whose ancestry the light was hidden. God has set apart India as the eternal fountain-head of holy spirituality, and He will never suffer that fountain to run dry. Therefore Swaraj has been revealed to us. By our political freedom we shall once more recover our spiritual freedom. 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 6-7: 874-76

The Asiatic Role

The genius of the Hindu is not for pure action, but for thought and aspiration realized in action, the spirit premeditating before the body obeys the inward command. The life of the Hindu is inward and his outward life aims only at reproducing the motions of his spirit. This intimate relation of his thought and his actions is the secret of his perpetual vitality. His outward life, like that of other nations, is subject to growth and decay, to periods of great-

ness and periods of decline, but while other nations have a limit and a term, he has none. Whenever death claims his portion, the Hindu race takes refuge in the source of all immortality, plunges itself into the fountain of spirit and comes out renewed for a fresh term of existence. The elixir of national life has been discovered by India alone. This immortality, this great secret of life, she has treasured up for thousands of years, until the world was fit to receive it. The time has now come for her to impart it to the other nations, who are now on the verge of decadence and death. The peoples of Europe have carried material life to its farthest expression, the science of bodily existence has been perfected, but they are suffering from diseases which their science is powerless to cure. England with her practical intelligence, France with her clear logical brain, Germany with her speculative genius, Russia with her emotional force, America with her commercial energy have done what they could for human development, but each has reached the limit of her peculiar capacity. Something is wanting which Europe cannot supply. It is at this juncture that Asia has awakened because the world needed her. Asia is the custodian of the world's peace of mind, the physician of the maladies which Europe generates. She is commissioned to rise from time to time from her ages of self communion, self-sufficiency, self-absorption and rule the world for a season so that the world may come and sit at her feet to learn the secrets she alone has to give.

CWSA 6-7: 1019-20

Essential condition of Swaraj

Another essential condition of Swaraj is that we should awaken the political sense of the masses. There may have been a time in history when it was enough that a few classes, the ruling classes, the learned classes, at most the trading classes should be awake. But the organisation of the modern nation depends on the awakening of the political sense in the mass. This is the age of the people, the million, the democracy. If any nation wishes to survive in the modern struggle, if it wishes to recover or maintain Swaraj,

it must awaken the people and bring them into the conscious life of the nation, so that every man may feel that in the nation he lives, with the prosperity of the nation he prospers, in the freedom of the nation he is free. This work again depends on the village Samiti. Unless we organise the united life of the village we cannot bridge over the gulf between the educated and the masses. It is here that their lives meet and that they can feel unity. The work of the village Samiti will be to make the masses feel Swaraj in the village, Swaraj in the group of villages, Swaraj in the district, Swaraj in the nation. They cannot immediately rise to the conception of Swaraj in the nation, they must be trained to it through the perception of Swaraj in the village. The political education of the masses is impossible unless you organise the village Samiti.

CWSA 6-7: 1049

Party and the Country

The uses of party are a secret known only to free nations which value their freedom above all other things. Men of free minds and free habits are too strong of soul to be the slaves of their party feelings and too robust of mind to submit to any demand for the sacrifice of their principles on the altar of expediency. It is only in a servile nation unaccustomed to the habits of freemen that party becomes a master and not an instrument. The strength of mind to rise above personal feeling, the breadth of view which is prepared to tolerate the views of others while fighting resolutely, even aggressively, for one's own, the generosity of sentiment which can clasp the hand of an opponent so long as the claims of patriotism are satisfied, these are qualities that do not grow in the barren soil of servitude or flourish in its vitiated atmosphere. The pains of wounded vanity are as strong in slaves as in children; the pride which will not forgive defeat, the malice which broods over an affront for ever, the narrowness which does not allow good in an opponent or honesty in his opinions, while arrogating all virtues for oneself and one's party, these are the growth of the unhealthy air

of slavery. So long as these are present, party is a curse because it becomes faction. And without party self-government is impossible.

CWSA 6-7: 1061

Federal lines

The nation-idea in India will realise itself, in all its departments, along what may be called federal lines, — it will be a union of different nationalities, each preserving its own specific elements both of organisation and ideal, each communicating to the others what they lack in either thought or character, and all moving together towards one universal end, both in civic and social life, progressively realising that end along its own historic and traditional lines, and thus indefinitely drawing near to each other, without, for an equally indefinite period, actually losing themselves in any one particular form of that life, whether old or new. The Mahomedan, the Hindu, the Buddhist, the Christian in India will not have to cease to be Mahomedan, Hindu, Buddhist, or Christian, in any sense of the term, for uniting into one great and puissant Indian nation. Devotion to one's own ideals and institutions, with toleration and respect for the ideals and institutions of other sections of the community, and an ardent love and affection for the common civic life and ideal of all — these are what must be cultivated by us now, for the building up of the real Indian nation. To try to build it up in any other way will be impossible, whether that way be the way of the Brahmo, the Christian, or the propagandist Mahomedan. To make any attempt along any of these lines, will not make for but work against national unity; and the reckless men who organised this so-called national dinner will, if they persist in their folly, instead of bringing the different races and religions together, only help to arouse the opposition of orthodoxy everywhere, and drive the great forces that range always with orthodoxy to an attitude of open hostility to the great national movement, and bring about a reaction that will seek to accentuate those very differences and tighten those very bonds of caste and custom which in

their unphilosophic and unscientific zeal they are trying by these wrong and obtrusive methods to obliterate and loosen. It is in this view that we condemn the folly that was perpetrated on Friday last under the name of a National Dinner. CWSA 6-7: 169

Nation and Country

What is a nation? We have studied in the schools of the West and learned to ape the thoughts and language of the West forgetting our own deeper ideas and truer speech, and to the West the nation is the country, so much land containing so many millions of men who speak one speech and live one political life owing allegiance to a single governing power of its own choosing. When the European wishes to feel a living emotion for his country, he personifies the land he lives in, tries to feel that a heart beats in the brute earth and worships a vague abstraction of his own intellect. The Indian idea of nationality ought to be truer and deeper. The philosophy of our forefathers looked through the gross body of things and discovered a subtle body within, looked through that and found yet another more deeply hidden, and within the third body discovered the Source of life and form, seated for ever, unchanging and imperishable. What is true of the individual object, is true also of the general and universal. What is true of the man, is true also of the nation. The country, the land is only the outward body of the nation, its *annamaya kosh*, or gross physical body; the mass of people, the life of millions who occupy and vivify the body of the nation with their presence, is the *pranamaya kosh*, the life-body of the nation. These two are the gross body, the physical manifestation of the Mother. Within the gross body is a subtler body, the thoughts, the literature, the philosophy, the mental and emotional activities, the sum of hopes, pleasures, aspirations, fulfilments, the civilisation and culture, which make up the *sukshma sharir* of the nation. This is as much a part of the Mother's life as the outward existence which is visible to the physical eyes. This subtle life of the nation again springs from a deeper existence in the causal body of the nation,

the peculiar temperament which it has developed out of its ages of experience and which makes it distinct from others. These three are the bodies of the Mother, but within them all is the Source of her life, immortal and unchanging, of which every nation is merely one manifestation, the universal Narayan, One in the Many of whom we are all the children.

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

CWSA 6-7: 1115-16

Sri Aurobindo

There are periods in the history of the world when the unseen Power that guides its destinies seems to be filled with a consuming passion for change and a strong impatience of the old. The Great Mother, the Adya Shakti, has resolved to take the nations into Her hand and shape them anew. These are periods of rapid destruction and energetic creation, filled with the sound of cannon and the trampling of armies, the crash of great downfalls and the turmoil of swift and violent revolutions; the world is thrown into the smelting pot and comes out in a new shape and with new features. They are periods when the wisdom of the wise is confounded and the prudence of the prudent turned into a laughing-stock; for it is the day of the prophet, the dreamer, the fanatic and the crusader, — the time of divine revelation when Avatars are born and miracles happen.

CWSA 6-7: 311

Sri Aurobindo



*Let us all work for the
greatness of India.*

CWM 13: 368

The Mother



*Our Gratitude and consecration to the
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Rs.30.00

Vol. 53, No.3

Regd.:SSP/PY/42/2021-2023

ISSN 0972-0782

WPP No. TN/PMG/(CCR)/WPP-471/21-2023

Date of Publication: 01.10.2023 (Monthly)

RNI No. 22334/71

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